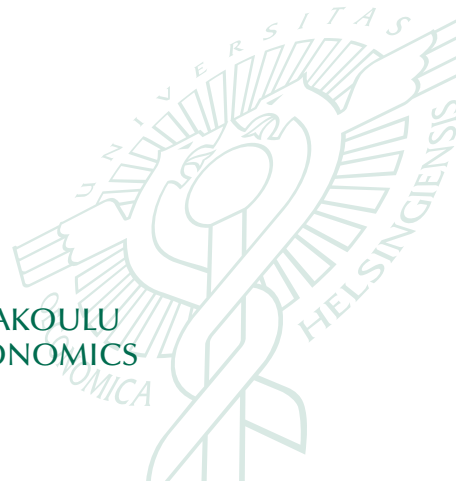Sampo Tukiainen

Finnishness in Cross Cultural Interaction

in International Engineering Projects

Sampo Tukiainen

Finnishness in Cross Cultural Interaction in International Engineering Projects

ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis is an empirically informed cultural study in an international, cross cultural setting. More specifically, the culture and the cultural identity examined here can be considered as that of Finnishness as it appears in cross cultural interaction in large, international engineering projects. The empirical focus is on the experiences of Finnish project managers. The thesis is primarily designed to provide an answer to the following research question: What kind of representation of Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity can be constructed based on the experiences of Finnish project managers of large and complex international engineering projects?

In the organizational and management research, cultural studies have a relatively long history. Traditionally these have focused on cultural studies in single settings, i.e. studying a particular organizational culture in its home environment. In addition, due to the processes of internationalization and globalization, cultural studies in international organizational settings have also turned into an established field of research. This doctoral thesis builds on the latter approach to studying cultures in organizational contexts. That is, the thesis provides a portrayal of Finnishness as it appears in cross cultural interaction in situations where organizational groups with different (national) cultural backgrounds meet, interact, and collaborate with each other.

In addition to the empirical contributions, this doctoral thesis is designed to provide one answer to the pleas increasingly voiced within the international cross cultural management research for more refined and in-depth cultural conceptualizations, methodologies, and portrayals. That is, in this stream of literature the need to move beyond its incumbent paradigm, and consequently, the need for more refined cultural understanding and portrayals have been increasingly expressed. By building on one of the proposed ways of refinement, this thesis then serves as one example for other more in-depth cultural portrayals to come.

Keywords: Finnishness, culture, cross cultural interaction, international engineering projects

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ESSAYS

Essay I: Sampo Tukiainen, *Coping with Cultural Differences in a Finnish - Polish Engineering Project: A Finnish Project Managers' View*, unpublished manuscript

Essay II: Sampo Tukiainen, *Responding to Cultural Dominance in Cross Cultural Interaction: Experiences of Finnish Project Managers*, unpublished manuscript*

Essay III: Sampo Tukiainen, *"Where Did Our Collaboration Disappear?" – Dynamics of Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism in Two Consecutive Projects*, unpublished manuscript**

Essay IV: Sampo Tukiainen, *Cultural Research in the International Project Management Literature: A Comment on Methodology*, unpublished manuscript

* This essay is based on an earlier work: Tukiainen, S., Coping with Cultural Dominance in Cross Cultural Interaction, in Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Intercultural Collaboration, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 18-20, 2010 © ACM, 2010. http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/1841853.1841901

** This essay is forthcoming in a revised form in Primecz, H., Romani, L., and Sackmann, S. (eds.): *Cross-Cultural Management in Practice: Culture and Negotiated Meanings*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

1. INTRODUCTION

This doctoral thesis is an empirically informed cultural study in an international, cross cultural organizational setting. The culture and the cultural identity examined here can be considered as that of Finnishness as it emerges in international, cross cultural interaction among project managers of large, international engineering projects. The thesis originates from the visionary insights of a small group of colleagues at Stanford University, VTT, and Aalto University School of Economics who back in 2003 launched a research program focused on studying cultural phenomena and implications in large and complex, international engineering projects. Over the following years this program expanded also to cover other thematic research areas in the chosen organizational context, and brought in colleagues from the Aalto University School of Technology. However, this doctoral thesis builds on the initial idea of focusing on cultural phenomena in international engineering projects, reporting my contribution to the work carried out in the overall research program.

Cultural studies in organizational and management research have a relatively long history. Traditionally, these have focused on cultural studies in single settings, i.e. studying a particular organizational culture in its "home environment" (e.g. Van Maanen, 1975). In addition, due to the processes of internationalization and globalization, comparative cultural research and studies of cross cultural interaction in international organizational settings has become an established field of research (see Sackmann & al., 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). This doctoral thesis builds on the latter approach to the cultural studies in organizational contexts. More specifically, the thesis provides a cultural portrayal of Finnishness as it seems to appear in cross cultural interaction, that is, in a setting where organizational groups with different (national) cultural backgrounds meet, interact, and collaborate with each other.

Springing from these premises, the thesis provides an answer to the following research question: *What kind of representation of Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity can be constructed based on the experiences of Finnish project managers of large and complex international engineering projects?* In this thesis, the cultural representation I

will provide as one possible answer to this research question builds upon four distinct case(s) studies, each having their independent perspectives, approaches, and arguments. Taken together, however, the essays complement each other, and within the premises of the aforementioned organizational context, they bring forth different aspects of Finnishness and of the Finnish cultural identity in different socio-cultural settings and in different kinds of power and business relationships.

In addition to the empirical contributions, this doctoral thesis is also designed to provide one answer to the pleas increasingly voiced within international cross cultural management research for more refined and "in-depth" cultural conceptualizations, methodologies, and portrayals (Jackson & Aycan, 2001, 2006; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). That is, during the past decade, discontent within this stream of literature has been expressed towards some features of its incumbent cultural paradigm (Tayeb, 2001; McSweeney, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Williamson, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). Consequently, the need to elaborate on this paradigm and move towards more refined and in-depth cultural understanding and portrayals have been expressed. By building on one of the proposed ways of refinement (Søderberg & Holden, 2002), this thesis then takes one step towards this direction, serving as one example for other such cultural portrayals to come.

The thesis begins by reviewing the two main streams of cultural research in the organizational and management literature. The purpose of this review is to position this study and the cultural understanding adopted here in the field of cultural studies of organizations and management. Following the literature review, existing organizational and management research on Finnishness and on the Finnish cultural identity are presented. This is followed by an introduction to the context of this study and to the research methodology. The four essays comprising the bulk of this thesis are presented next. Then, based on the essays a summary of the emerging Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity is constructed. Finally, some thoughts and ideas for further advancing the cultural studies and representations in the international cross cultural management research are contemplated upon.

PART I: TO STUDY A CULTURE

To study a culture has traditionally been inspired by the desire to understand and bring forth the immense range of human ingenuity and diversity in relation to social settings as well as to the physical and spiritual worlds (Spradley, 1979). Often the notion of "studying a culture" also brings to mind images of anthropologists in faraway places conducting field research among native tribes and villages, trying to unravel and describe ways of living that seem highly exotic and "unfamiliar" from the Western point of view. However, in Western social sciences, cultural studies have also been conducted in the more familiar and close-by settings. These studies have also transferred to organizational and management studies during the past 40 years or so. In these studies international settings, nationalities, and national cultural identities have become of special interest in the wake of the globalizing and internationalizing trade and corporate world. Concomitantly, these studies have shown how localities, nationalities, and national cultural identities continue to matter despite the globalization and some of its alleged features leading to cultural convergence across nationalities (Leung & al. 2005; Kirkman & al., 2006; Yeganeh & Su, 2006).

Cultures and cultural identities can be studied in many ways and by focusing on many aspects and manifestations of cultures (Martin, 2002). As will be seen in the second part of this thesis, within organizational and management research Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity has also been studied in many ways as well as given many characterizations. However, the purpose of the first part of this thesis is to lay the groundwork, i.e. to position the approach I have selected for studying Finnishness in the field of cultural studies in organizations and management. In order to do this, in the following sections I will briefly review the two main approaches to studying cultures that have been used predominantly in this literature. By building on this review, I will then clarify the approach to cultural studies that this thesis is based upon. Consequently, this review will clarify my epistemological and ontological understanding of the culture concept and the way to study it in international contexts.

2. CULTURAL STUDIES IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Cultural studies have a long history in the Western social sciences. Indeed, within its basic domain of anthropology, cultural studies are said to reach back over a hundred years to such early 20th century pioneers as Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski, who are often credited for being among the first anthropologists to live in other societies, doing participant observation, and producing ethnographies (Martin, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). Within the Western social sciences, cultural studies have also been carried out in a variety of scientific disciplines. For example, in such disciplines as sociology, psychology, and management, cultural studies have been conducted for decades (Sackmann & Phillips, 2004).

However, despite such a long history and disciplinary variety, or perhaps exactly because of this, there seems to be widespread lack of consensus on the meaning of the concept of culture (Smircich, 1983; Martin, 2002). For example, it has become near customary to point out that as early as 1952, American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn had already distinguished 164 different definitions of culture (e.g. Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Holden 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002). Consequently, there is considerable lack of consensus not only on how to define culture, but also on what it is, what are its constituents, how it should be treated both epistemologically and ontologically, and finally and perhaps most importantly, how are cultures to be studied and described.

Owing to this variety and non-uniformity, there is also a multitude of possibilities to classify, categorize, and review the existing cultural studies in the Western social sciences. However, as this is doctoral research and a thesis situated in the academic discipline of organizational and management studies, the following review and chronology of sorts constructs a view on the predominant ways of the scholarly treatment of culture and cultural phenomena as it appears within this particular academic field.

Cultural studies in single settings: organizational culture studies

In organizational and management studies, the culture concept has been incorporated from its basic domain of anthropology, and as implied above, these studies are often characterized by lack of consensus about the concept, its meaning, and the ways to study it in this particular academic discipline (Barley, 1983; Smircich, 1983; Frost & al., 1991; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Sackmann, 1997; Martin 2002). However, some general trends in the cultural studies of organizations and management can be distinguished.

For example, the concept of culture and the cultural viewpoint to organizations and organizational phenomena became a widely applied research perspective in organizational studies during the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, it can be said that these studies became an established field of research by the 1980s in the wake of such popular books as those published by Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and Waterman (1982), as well as by such groundbreaking work as that of, for example, Van Maanen (1975), Martin and Siehl (1983), Barley (1983), and Schein (1985). It has also been argued that initially studies of organizational cultures gained popularity mainly due to its enticing promise for business managers, as an understanding was aired that "good" organizational cultures provided the foundation to high organizational performance and success (cf. Smircich, 1983; Frost & al. 1991; Martin 2002). In addition to such managerial faddish origins, however, it was the aforementioned scholarly work on organizational cultures appearing at that time that helped in establishing the foundation for its academic importance and status as well as its ever continuing popularity among researchers.

A significant feature of such research on organizational cultures has been that they are studies predominantly based on examinations in *single organizational settings*. In other words, a characteristic of this research is that they attempt to study and describe the culture(s) of specific organizations in great depth and detail. Well-known examples of these kinds of single setting studies include Whyte's work on restaurants (1955, 1991), Van Maanen's work in a police agency (e.g. Van Maanen, 1973, 1974, 1975) and in Disneyland (1991), Barley's work in a funeral home (Barley, 1983) and in hospitals

(Barley, 1986), Meyerson and Martin's work on Peace Corps/Africa (Meyerson & Martin, 1987), and Schein's (1985, 1991) and Kunda's (1992) work in business organizations. In these studies, organizational cultures have been studied by focusing on, for example, stories, myths, legends, symbols, ceremonies, values, and shared assumptions underlying and constituting organizational life (e.g. Pettigrew 1979; Barley, 1983; Martin & Powers, 1983; Schein, 1985, 1991; Kunda, 1992). Hence, a characteristic of this work is that, despite being focused on examining cultures in single settings, they also highlight how cultures can be "operationalized" in a multitude of ways and how its examination can be approached from different viewpoints (cf. Barley, 1983; Smircich, 1983).

Another prominent feature of these studies on organizational cultures is that in methodological terms they are based on the traditional anthropological approach building on long term fieldwork, participant observation, and ethnographies (the works of Van Maanen (e.g., 1973, 1974, 1975) and Kunda (1992) are prime examples of this kind of research). Concomitantly, a central feature of these organizational culture studies is the idea of describing a particular culture as it appears from the insider's point of view. Thus, in line with traditional cultural anthropology, the organizational culture studies are *emic* studies with the purpose of grasping the world from the cultural native's perspective and describing it by using their indigenous language, constructs, and concepts. In this sense this research is very much akin to the classic work by Margaret Mead (1953), Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (1958), and Clifford Geertz (1973), which are based on moving to and living in another society for an extended period of time (from a year upwards), and producing "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973), that is, in-depth and detailed written representations of a particular culture.

However, perhaps the most important feature of the organizational culture studies is that they have brought forth the idea of portraying organizations *as* cultures. In other words, these studies show that, perhaps more than anything, culture can be used as a *metaphor* of organizations, where organizations are likened to cultures (Smircich, 1983; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002). In this way, culture in fact becomes a *perspective* or a "lens" that can be used for studying organizational life and phenomena. As a

consequence, adopting the cultural perspective and using culture as a metaphor for organizations has enabled and led the researchers to study, first and foremost, organizational phenomena from a collective, symbolic perspective, focusing on the shared meanings, beliefs, and interpretations ascribed to, for example, organizational practices, behavioral patterns and norms, occupational roles and contents, recruit socialization and training, performance appraisal and rewarding, organizational stories and histories, special jargon, meetings, ceremonies, rites, etc.

In this way, these studies are very much in line with the *interpretive* anthropological culture research tradition, where the primary focus of research is on the meanings and interpretations that a particular group of people attaches to real world events, symbols, objects, and social phenomena (cf. Sackmann, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). Thus, for the proponents of this strand of cultural research (e.g. Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1979), it is the collective, shared meanings and interpretations of the social and natural world that are considered to "constitute" a culture. Consequently, the purpose of cultural research is to try and unravel the cultural insiders' (i.e. its members') view on how they give meaning to different aspects and expressions of the social and physical world they live and operate in; how they categorize that world and the meanings it is given; as well as how these are structured and organized into dynamic systems of significance and importance within the cultural community (cf. Spradley, 1979; Barley, 1983; Van Maanen, 1991).

Taken together, it is then obvious that such organizational culture studies differ somewhat from the majority of the mainstream organizational and management research in the sense that they are not that much focused on specifying causalities or explaining organizational performance. Rather, they can be seen as micro level studies focused on specifying organizational symbolism (Smircich, 1983; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002). In addition, these studies are often neither normative nor prognostic. Rather, they focus on seeking ways to give a representation of the human ingenuity in meaning making and in ordering the social and physical worlds that people encounter in organizational settings.

Cultural studies in comparative settings: international cross cultural management research

In addition to the organizational culture studies described above, another line of cultural inquiry established during the past 30 years in organizational and management research is international cross cultural management research (cf. Sackmann & al., 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). As this line of research deals specifically with the international aspects of cultures and cultural phenomena in organizations, it is also highly salient with regard to this doctoral thesis and its focus. Hence, compared to the above review on organizational culture studies, somewhat more space for reviewing this literature is devoted in the following sections.

As the name implies, international cross cultural management research are cultural studies in international settings focused in explaining "the behavior of people in organizations around the world" and showing "how to work in organizations with employee and client populations from many different cultures" (Adler, 1997: 10). According to one, historical perspective, this literature originates from the international economic development following the World War II (Sackmann, 1997; Gajewsksa de Mattos & al., 2004; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). As (US-based) companies and economies strengthened their international expansion, the implications of cultures and cultural differences on management, organizing, and organizational practices started to become visible and increased their salience. Up until then, much of the academic management studies had been US based and dominated by US viewpoints and perspectives. Consequently, management and management studies were considered to be universal, culminating in the assumption that the same organization and management practices could be applied anywhere and everywhere without taking cognizance of the national context. (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Sackmann, 1997; Jackson & Aycan, 2001)

However, by the 1970s, as the argument goes, based on the work by Haire et al. (1966) it had become obvious that management and business practices might differ between countries due to factors with cultural features and properties, questioning the

predominant universalistic assumption of organizing and management (Sackmann, 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Leung & al., 2005; Peterson, 2007). As a consequence, the idea of national cultures (i.e. that a country could have a distinct culture of its own) and especially the possible existence of cultural differences between nations became salient and gained a priority status in organizational and management studies (ibids.). Therefore, comparative, cross cultural management studies broke into the field driven by the imperative to show that cultural differences across nations exist, that they have an impact on a wide range of organizational and management practices, and especially that no universal ways to organize and manage exists (Haire & al., 1966; Hofstede, 1980; Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Trompenaars, 1993). Hence, with a swift stroke organizing and management was made culturally and nationally contingent.

In this development, a landmark study was that of Hofstede (1980), which above all introduced a framework and a "tool" for operationalizing national cultures for research purposes without the need to engage in time consuming and meticulous ethnographic, anthropological culture studies favored by other scientific disciplines. Another milestone achieved with this work was that it provided a robust, "scientific" framework for "casting doubts on the universal validity of management theories" (Hofstede, 1991: ix) and for increasing the plausibility that managerial and organizational practices could be dependent on national cultures (cf. Trompenaars, 1993). In his approach, it was argued that each nation possesses a unique, shared combination of universal societal values that could be used as an embodiment and an expression of that particular country's culture. In addition, these values could be categorized according to a finite set of universal value dimensions, and most importantly, by means of arithmetic reductionism each particular country could be given a relative position along the culture dimensions. Consequently, this kind of dimensional positioning created the basis for an objective, universal terminology according to which national cultures and their properties could be distinguished, characterized, and their differences observed and compared.

The introduction of this framework then launched a scholarly craze producing hundreds and hundreds of cross cultural management studies arguing and showing how different

aspects of management and leadership practices and organizational behavior are contingent or affected by national cultures (see Kirkman & al., 2006 for a comprehensive review). Since Hofstede, this stream of research has also produced a number of competing frameworks, most notably those of Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz (1994), and the GLOBE project (House & al., 2004). Some well-known examples of these cross cultural management studies are such works as those of Ronen and Shenkar (1985) on clustering countries according to their national cultural similarities, Kogut and Singh (1988) on the cultural "distance" between countries, Hoecklin (1993, 1995) on the relationship between cultural differences and competitive advantage, Newman and Nollen (1996) on the "fit" between management practices and national cultures in multinational corporations, and Barkema and Vermeulen (1997) on the effects of cultural differences on international joint venture performance.

An extensive review of all these studies lies well beyond the scope of this doctoral study. However, some predominant features common to the cultural studies in this mainstream cross cultural management research can be highlighted: Firstly, these studies are predominantly *etic* studies, adopting a cultural outsider's perspective in describing a (national) culture with objective and universal measures and terminology (cf. Jackson & Aycan, 2001, 2006; Martin, 2002; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). In other words, these studies have been built on the idea of developing a universal language for describing national cultures for comparative purposes and for observing the differences between them. For example, one well known cultural aspect, or dimension, that national cultures can be characterized is *power distance* (Hofstede, 1980). This is a cultural construct labelled and defined by Hofstede (1980), indicating the extent to which power inequalities are expected and accepted in a particular national culture. In addition, according to Hofstede (1980) in "high" power distance cultures, managers are autocratic and there are, for example, wide salary ranges between managers and workers (and vice versa for "low" power distance cultures).

Secondly, and as already implied above, the mainstream cross cultural management research is *positivistic* and *functionalist* in its epistemic orientation (cf. Holden, 2002; Martin 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Williamson, 2002; Yeganeh & Su, 2006;

Peterson, 2007). Hence, in this research (national) cultures have been considered as independent variables having an impact on organizing, management, and organizational outcomes (cf. Smircich, 1983; Martin, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002). Consequently, these are nomothetic studies in search for law-like causation between cultures, cultural constructs, and organizational phenomena (cf. Williamson, 2002). For example, in the organizational context of this thesis, Zwikael et al. (2005) have shown how national culture has an impact on project management styles. Another exemplar from different context is Hui et al. (2004), who have shown how national culture mediates the effect of empowerment on job satisfaction. At a country level, Kwok and Tadesse (2006) have established a link between national culture and the organization of national financial systems. And as an example of the effects of cultures and organizational outcomes, Hennart and Zeng (2002) have studied the impact of cultural differences on joint venture longevity, arguing that this can be negatively affected by cultural differences.

Thirdly, in terms of cross cultural interaction and organizational outcomes the mainstream cross cultural management research is also often characterized by *determinism*. For example, in terms of cross cultural interaction and organizational outcomes, the predominant view has been that national cultural differences are a cause of adverse effects such as miscommunication, misunderstandings, cultural clashes, and outright business failures (Hofstede, 1980; Kogut & Singh, 1988; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Holden, 2002). These notions have also given rise to the popular idea of cultural "distance" (Kogut & Singh, 1988), stating that the likelihood of the adverse effects increases as the differences between national cultures become larger (e.g. Li & Guisinger, 1991; Datta & Puia, 1995; Barkema & al., 1997; Luo & Peng, 1999). As a contrast, arguments have also been made that cultural differences can lead to increased creativity, problem solving ability, efficient adaptation to foreign contexts, and to increased competitive advantage (Hoecklin, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Morosini & al., 1998; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). For example, Morosini et al. (1998) have shown that mergers between culturally "distant" countries can outperform those between culturally "closer" countries.

Fourthly and perhaps most conspicuously, the mainstream cross cultural research is *metonymic* by nature in the sense that with regards to the scope of the cultural representation, relatively small sample sizes are used and generalized to the larger cultural population (i.e. a given country). As a consequence, this research has had the tendency to provide broad cultural representations depicting general values or behavioral tendencies ascribed to a particular nationality (see e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Javidan & al., 2006). To exemplify this with the culture focused in this thesis, Finland and the Finnish culture in the original Hofstede –study (1980) was considered relatively individualistic, feminine, democratic, and informal. In a similar spirit, based on Hofstede (1980) inspired dimensional based cultural operationalization, for example, Javidan et al. (2006: 77) described that "[t]he Brazilian employees will not be as forthcoming with their ideas and input as typical American employees are", while Adler (1997: 60) claimed that "Americans tell the same "truth" to everyone, without regard for the nature or depth of the relationship", and Schneider and Barsoux (1997: 96) that "managers in Sweden […] pay very little attention to formal structure or hierarchy".

Consequently and finally, the mainstream cross cultural research is often characterized by *exclusivity*. That is, in these studies national cultures are described to be, for example, high in the cultural dimension of individualism which excludes them from being high in collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; House & al., 2004). Or they are said to be universalist but not particularist (Trompenaars, 1993). Indeed, this kind of dimensional, bi-polar, either-or logic is frequent and predominant in the existing international business and cross cultural management research (e.g. Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Trompenaars, 1993; Hoecklin, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Javidan & al., 2006). Based on such notions, the idea of "cultural fit" has also appeared that cross cultural managers, either explicitly or implicitly, are often advised to "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" (Trompenaars, 1993; Newman & Nollen, 1996; Javidan & al., 2006). For example, when in Brazil, cross cultural managers are advised that "[i]n developing a business strategy for the team's product, it is important to keep in mind Brazil's low scores on performance orientation and future orientation and its high score on power distance. The process of strategy development needs to allow for input from

the employees, but the manager needs to be patient and to make an effort to encourage and facilitate the employees' participation." (Javidan & al., 2006: 77).

To summarize all of the above, it is obvious that mainstream cross cultural management studies are macro-level cultural research by nature. They adopt an entire nationality/country as a unit of analysis, yielding cultural portrayals based on broad tendencies in national values, preferences, and behavioral patterns. In methodological terms, these portrayals are often based on large-N survey studies, where the analysis builds on mathematical aggregation and averages. In these studies, national culture is also treated as an independent variable and an entity, which any particular country possesses or "has" (cf. Smircich, 1983; Martin, 2002), and which has an impact on many an organizational and managerial phenomena.

Needs for development in cross cultural management research

Notwithstanding the above, during the recent decade the needs to develop traditional cultural understanding and operationalization in international cross cultural management research have been increasingly voiced. In addition to some alleged methodological deficiencies (McSweeney, 2002; Graen, 2006), a need for further development has been seen, for example, in the tendency of this approach to generalize national cultures to single, homogenous entities without considering the myriad of different cultures constantly emerging, evolving, and existing within and across national boundaries (Nasif & al., 1991; Sackmann, 1997; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003a; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). Obviously any given country can be seen to comprise of a countless number of divergent (sub)cultures (e.g. ethnic, racial, religious, regional, rural, urban, gender based cultures etc.) that may be separate, overlapping, nested or live in harmony or in conflict with each other (Sackmann, 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005). In addition, for example, in international workplaces national cultures often come into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultures (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003a), and a myriad of working cultures emerge in interaction between and in combination of cultural groups from different countries (Brannen & Salk, 2000).

On the other hand, the tendency towards exclusivity that is often inherent in mainstream cross cultural management studies have also been seen to be in need of development. As brought forward above, in this tradition nationalities and national cultures are positioned on the value dimensions according to aggregated, average scores. Consequently, this gives national cultures a context independent characterization based on exclusive, either-or logic (Sackmann, 1997; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). However, it has also been pointed out that considerable value and behavioral variation exists beyond the national averages (Hambrick & al., 1998; Tayeb, 2001; Williamson, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002), and that depending on the context and situation, one cultural value can become salient with its opposite receding into background (and vice versa) (Osland & Bird, 2000). Hence, it has been argued that the dominant either-or logic should be replaced with a both-and logic, accepting the "paradoxical" nature of (national) cultures (Sackmann, 1997; Osland & Bird, 2000; Martin, 2002). In other words, the fact that, depending on the situation, national cultures can be, for example, both individualistic and collectivistic or universalist and particularist (Wels, 1996; Osland & Bird, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005) should be taken into account.

Hence, due to reductionist exclusivity, cultural portrayals in the mainstream cross cultural management research have been seen to produce somewhat generalized portrayals of cultures and cultural behavior – a monolithic view of a culture – without duly acknowledging the cognitive and behavioral dualism and ambiguity present in every culture (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Osland & Bird, 2000; Martin, 2002, Yeganeh & Su, 2006). Indeed, in their seminal work, Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988) have argued that many cultural studies adopt an understanding according to which culture is something that is shared, common, and similarly interpreted between cultural members. This kind of understanding is called the *integration* perspective to cultures. From this perspective, cultural members share the same values, understandings, and behavioral traits; they attach consistently similar meanings to different things; they categorize and structure their experiences and interpretations of the surrounding social and natural world in shared, unambiguous ways.

However, Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988) also argue that many larger cultural groups (e.g. organizations, societies, countries) often consist of a "mosaic" of subcultures. Consequently, it is within these subcultures that similar behaviors, values, meanings, and interpretations of the social and physical world appear unambiguously between cultural members. However, differences and ambiguities between the subcultures exist, distinguishing and separating them from each other. Hence, this kind of cultural understanding emphasizing subcultural demarcation is called the *differentiation* perspective to cultures.

Finally, Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988) argue that within cultures and subcultures there are bound to exist cultural manifestations that are ambiguous, inconsistent, and only partially shared. Hence, behavioral traits expressing contrasting values appear; ambiguities in interpreting the social and physical world exist; and structuring and categorization of experiences and interpretations among cultural members is unclear. Such cultural understanding emphasizing the dualism and ambiguities present in every culture is called the *fragmentation* perspective to cultures. Based on these distinctions, Martin (2002) then argued that without taking into account all these three perspectives, our understanding of any given culture will be highly partial and misleading.

Relational cultural understanding – a way to develop cross cultural management research

As can be seen from the above, needs have been expressed for refining the cultural conceptualization and portrayals in the cross cultural management research. As a consequence, an alternative approach, showing merits especially in examining cultures and cultural phenomena as they appear in international cross cultural interaction, has gained prominence during the past decade. According to this *relational*, social constructivist understanding, in international cross cultural interaction cultures, cultural specifics and identities are dynamic, constantly evolving social constructs that materialize based on the sensemaking processes (Weick, 1995) of the involved actors themselves (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara,

2003). Hence, this approach and cultural conceptualization builds especially on the notion that in contemporary, globalizing organizations, cultural groups and communities come across and interact with a variety of other cultural groups. Consequently, cultures and cultural identities are seen to be constantly (re)produced and (re)constructed in multiple ways and for multiple reasons in social encounters and interaction between the cultural groups. Hence, this approach especially stresses cultural emergence and that cultures come "into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultural communities" (Søderberg & Holden, 2002: 112).

This kind of relational, social constructivist cultural understanding therefore turns the focus from the universalistic, value dimension based cultural portrayals to the subjective cultural construction and culturally dependent sensemaking and behavior of the involved actors. Hence, from this perspective cultures are not understood solely in an essentialist sense, i.e. as underlying structural forms that have an effect on its members thinking and behavior (cf. Hambrick & al., 1998; Leung & al., 2005). Rather, the relational cultural understanding extends the essentialist understanding by adding another layer and treating cultures and cultural identities as multidimensional products of the actors' sensemaking and behavioral processes, catalyzed by the interaction with different cultural groups (cf. Osland & Bird, 2000).

Moreover, as exemplified by Vaara et al. (2003a: 65):

> "For example, Finns and Swedes are usually characterized as being very much alike when compared with, for example, the French or Italians. If, however, we concentrate on Finnish-Swedish relationships, the perceived national differences will be emphasized when Finns and Swedes are asked to describe themselves and their next-door neighbors."

Hence, this cultural understanding especially acknowledges the importance of different contexts and situations, which are seen to reveal and construct different aspects of a particular culture as well as yield different kind of cultural identification. In other words, according to this understanding cultures and cultural specifics become a

reflection of the context and situation, and unlike the mainstream cross cultural management research tradition, no stable cultural form, substance, or identity is assumed (Osland & Bird, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003). At the same time, the relational cultural understanding relaxes on the assumption of cultural exclusivity (i.e. if a particular culture is high in power distance, this excludes it from being the opposite), allowing the potential existence of cultural dualism and that both ends of a cultural value dimension can be present in a particular culture (cf. Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004)

Springing from these premises, recent studies have then began to provide insights into the actors' cultural sensemaking, interpretation, and (re)constructions as they appear in cross national and cross cultural interaction and in different kinds of cross cultural settings (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004; Barinaga, 2007). For example, Vaara et al. (2003a) studied a bank merger in a Nordic setting, focusing on the cultural constructions of Swedes, Finns, Danes, and Norwegians. In this study the authors especially illustrated how cultures and cultural features could come into existence in cross cultural interaction between the national cultural groups. It was also shown how historical and organizational contingencies could affect the emergence and appearance of these cultures. Moreover, in the same volume (Søderberg & Vaara, 2003) different aspects of the cross national merger, e.g. post-merger integration processes, knowledge transfer, etc. were studied, providing an in-depth understanding of the situated cultural sensemaking and emergence between the four national groups. In a similar vein, Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) in their study of an Israeli-American merger, and Gajewsksa-De Mattos et al. (2004) in their study of German-Polish mergers, illustrated how national cultural specifics were constructed in relation to the national groups involved, and in line with Vaara et al. (2003a), how these constructions could become infused, for example, by historical occurrences and relations between the nationalities.

In addition to the institutional or structural (see e.g. Whitley, 1992) and the more cognitive and behavioral (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993) aspects of cultures, the relational, social constructivist culture studies have also acknowledged another

epistemological layer, according to which cultures in international cross cultural interaction can have their origins in other social processes within and between the cultural groups. Indeed, these studies have illustrated how culture formation and construction has been involved in such processes as enacting group boundaries and identities (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Vaara & al., 2003a, b), enhancing group self-esteem and self-worth (Salk & Brannen, 2000; Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Vaara & al., 2003 a; Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004), making sense of social complexity and initiating organized action (Barinaga, 2007), establishing power positions between groups (Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004), and serving the purposes of organizational politicking (Vaara, 2000). As a consequence, these notions especially stress the situated and context dependent emergence and appearance of (national) cultures and their specific features.

Furthermore, these studies have illustrated how cultural sensemaking, depending on the situation and context, can create different kinds of cultural relationships. As one example, these studies have shown how a sense of superiority and inferiority between nationally divided groups can become highly commonplace in the cross cultural settings (cf. Salk & Shenkar, 2001). Furthermore, it has been shown how these attributions can be fluid and changing, that is, the cultural features giving rise to superiority or inferiority might not be applied equally to all aspects and situations of the cross cultural interaction (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003). In addition, as argued by Gajewsksa-De Mattos et al. (2004) the "inferior traits" of one's own cultural group can be turned the other way around and construed as more appealing and "superior" by the group members themselves.

Taken together, the relational, social constructivist cultural understanding can be seen to hold great promise in answering some of the expressed needs for refining the existing cultural portrayals in the cross cultural management research. That is, this kind of cultural understanding seems particularly suitable when taking into account the context and situation dependency of cultures and cultural features. Secondly, this cultural understanding especially builds on the notion that, in cross cultural encounters (national) cultures and cultural identities are constantly (re)produced and

(re)constructed in multiple ways and for multiple reasons in the interaction between the cultural groups. Furthermore, this approach gives way to acknowledging and examining cultural dualism and the emergence of "contrasting" cultural traits and manifestations in a particular cultural group. Consequently, because of these features, this approach, above all, holds great promise in examining cultures, cultural features, and identities, as they emerge and appear in organizational settings characterized by international cross cultural interaction.

These features then make the relational cultural understanding highly significant from the perspective of this doctoral thesis, as the purpose is to examine Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity as they emerge and appear in cross cultural interaction in large international engineering projects. Consequently, in the empirical examination in this study, I will lean more towards this cultural understanding and conceptualization in order to (re)construct a cultural representation of Finnishness and of Finnish cultural identity. This epistemological and ontological stance has also been driven by my desire to follow the advice of Adler (1997), Schneider and Barsoux (1997), and Osland and Bird (2000), i.e. to take one, albeit modest step forwards from the more macro-level cultural portrayals, and begin to approach the anthropological, interpretative cultural understanding introduced at the beginning of this part – a cultural understanding that I personally hold to be of great academic value and interest in developing the cultural portrayals in the cross cultural management literature.

PART II: TOWARDS FINNISHNESS AND THE FINNISH CULTURAL IDENTITY IN INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING PROJECTS

In the previous part the overall approach to the cultural examination in this thesis was elaborated and positioned in the field of cultural studies in organization and management. As disclosed at the end of the part, this thesis builds upon the relational, social constructivist cultural understanding – an approach deemed especially suitable for studying cultures and cultural identities in instances of international, cross cultural interaction.

In this second part of the thesis, the main focus is on (re)constructing a cultural representation of Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity that builds on the aforementioned approach. The bulk of this part consists of four independent case(s) studies. These can be considered as providing different aspects to Finnishness and to Finnish cultural identity in the chosen organizational context. Yet, taken together they can be seen to build towards the cultural representation that concludes this part.

However, before delving into the essays, the next chapter sets the stage by taking a look at some of the existing portrayals of Finnishness in the organizational and management literature.

3. EXISTING PORTRAYALS OF FINNISH (MANAGEMENT) CULTURE

Within the organizational and management literature, Finnishness and Finnish management culture has appeared in multiple studies. As pointed out above, Finland and the Finnish culture already appeared in the original Hofstede study (1980). In this study, Finnish culture was positioned and compared against other nations according to its placement in the now famous dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity/femininity. Finnish culture's relative positions on these axes and some of the related manifestations have also been reviewed in Tainio and Santalainen (1984). To summarize these studies, Finland scored above average in individualism/collectivism, and below average in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and in masculinity/femininity. Based on these results, some of the characterizations given to Finnish culture in the Tainio and Santalainen's (1984) study were, for example, high respect for quality of life, people, and the environment as well as care for the equality of people and sympathy for the underdog. A person's identity was considered to be constructed more in collectives rather than by individual efforts. In the organizational context Finns were also considered to have relatively high regard for "participative" decision making style as well as for planning and written rules and regulations.

Two decades later, Finnishness and Finnish management culture were also described by Lewis and Gates (2003) in a report reminiscent to that of the Hofstede studies. By that time, Finland had joined the EU and opened up its borders to foreign investments as well as become a nation consistently ranking among the most competitive in the world. During such economic conditions, Lewis and Gates (2003) described Finnishness and Finnish leadership as a hybrid between "linear-active" and "reactive" cultural types, when compared to other nations and nationalities. Based on this classification, a great many of the characteristics and tendencies of Finns and Finnish leaders in particular were listed. These included, among others, reticence, use of silence, humbleness, good listening without interruptions, long pauses between speech turns, concealment of feelings, the belief that statements are promises, directness, and reliability, to name but of few. According to their overall leadership style, Finnish managers were considered to

lie "somewhere between Swedes and the British – more democratic than the latter but more autocratic than the former" (Lewis & Gates, 2003: 16). Some of the characteristics of Finnish managers were also likened to those found in the Far East, rather than in the neighboring Northern European countries.

In addition to these, Säntti (2001), for example, has reviewed and summarized previous studies on Finnishness and Finnish management culture, comparing these against the Swedish culture. In his review, Finnish corporate culture was seen as characterized, for example, by spontaneity and favor for action, flexibility, formality, individual responsibility, impatience, preference for spoken agreements, individuality, super honesty, proneness to conflicts, and centralized decision making. Finnish management culture was also described as Byzantine, i.e. characterized by "a tightly hierarchic rule-bound culture" with "calculated subservience and flattery of superiors" (Junkkari, 2000 in Säntti, 2001: 31-32). Finns were considered straightforward, and as reticent, to disfavor "small talk". A corollary seemed to be the preference for Finns to go straight into the point in meetings and in social interaction in order for not wasting time on "trivialities". Also, individualism and personal achievements were favored, as was distinguishing oneself from others. Some other characteristics of the Finnish management style were goal orientation and focus on financial results, preference for keeping a distance between the leaders and the subordinates, and disfavor for such leadership aspects as giving feedback and advice. (Säntti, 2001)

Other studies have characterized Finnishness and the Finnish management culture in the following ways: The Finns and Finnish managers are straightforward and honest (Coutu, 2004). They are humble (ibid.). According to Kallasvuo (2007), at a corporate level being humble means, for example, that the customer has to be listened to and ideas have to be searched outside one's own organization. According to Tienari et al. (2004) Finnish managers are almost always strict and situationally sensitive. Finnish subordinates are led "from the front" by "walking the talk" and by showing one's own example. On the other hand, in comparison with Swedes, the Finnish management style is also said to be too authoritarian and needlessly straightforward. (ibid.) The Finns are seen as extremely work-oriented (Kortteinen, 1992; Hofstede, 1980 in Granlund &

Lukka, 1997). Social interaction is not a major part of Finnishness. In corporate life, the Finnish communication style is considered informal. However, small talk is avoided by Finns, which is bound to make them appear to be straightforward and give rise to the tendency of proceeding straight to the point. As a consequence, traditionally, the Finns have been in favor of keeping silent, for example in meetings. A highly central feature of Finnishness is also said to be that one means exactly what one says and that the sense of responsibility for what has been agreed is high. (Granlund & Lukka, 1997)

As a part of the GLOBE project (House & al., 2004), Lindell and Sigfrids (2008) described Finns in the following ways: The Finns are high in the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance. They are also quite individualistic. They are low in in-group collectivism and in humane orientation. Finns have a medium to low assertiveness and performance orientation. However, they are hard working and work holds a central position in their values. In terms of power distance, Finnish managers believe in the delegation of responsibility. Hence, the power distance in Finnish society is relatively low. Consequently, managers' ideas can be questioned, and decision making is often taken to the lower levels in the hierarchy. However, in comparison with the Swedes, Finnish managers are considered to be more authoritarian. This is also reflected in the appreciation of fast decision making. Yet, hierarchies are seen to be lower than in Sweden. Competent managers are, above all, task managers (cf. Laurent, 1983). Hence, Finnish managers should have a thorough knowledge of their own areas in order to be considered effective. Yet, the Finnish manager should, above all, have excellent skills in handling relationships with their subordinates in order to be taken as a competent manager.

Also as mentioned earlier, Vaara et al. (2003a) studied Finnishness and the Finnish management culture as it appears in cross cultural interaction, i.e. in the context of an international merger. In this context Finnish culture could be seen to interact with three other Nordic cultures (Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish). Focusing on the construction and sensemaking of cultural stereotypes in cross cultural interaction, some of the salient features of Finnishness then appeared in the following way: Finnish managers perceived themselves to be action-oriented, effective, and enduring (endowed with stamina). On

the other hand, Danish and Swedish managers saw Finnish management as hierarchical and authoritarian, favoring a top-down army-like management style and structure. Danes also considered Finns to be pragmatic and effective decision makers able to produce "impressive results" (Vaara & al., 2003a: 75). Norwegians, on the other hand, seemed to consider Finns as introverts. For Norwegians, the Finnish management style also appeared to be highly centralized with decision making power laying firmly on the managers and superiors.

To conclude from these observations, it is obvious that Finnishness and Finnish management culture can be characterized in a wide variety of ways. It also becomes evident that some of these characterizations are contradictory. For example, according to some studies Finns prefer equality between people and disfavor individualism (Tainio & Santalainen, 1984 based on Hofstede, 1980), whereas in Säntti's (2001) review Finns were found to be individualistic and explicit in their distinctions between leaders and subordinates. Based on Hofstede (1980) one could also deduce that Finns prefer "participative" decision making as well as such formalities as written rules and responsibilities, whereas once again, in Säntti's (2001) review, Finnish managers were described as prefering centralized decision making and spoken agreements. Top-down decision making was also brought forward by Vaara et al. (2003a: 75), where it was perceived by Norwegians that "[i]n Finland, a boss is a boss" and by Swedes that Finns are overly authoritarian. Finally, for example Tienari et al. (2004) concluded that the Finns prefer to be led "from the front" whereas, for example, Myers et al. (1995) excluded the Finns from such cultures.

These observations then point to the need to examine cultures and cultural identities in a context and situation dependent manner, as discussed in Part I of this thesis. In addition, and also in line with Osland and Bird (2000), these observations warrant inquiries into the possible explanations for the appearance of the different or contrasting cultural features in different kinds of situations and contexts. Consequently, these two notions will be emphasized in the empirical examination in this thesis. That is, in this study special attention will be paid to the different, and often contrasting, features of Finnishness as they emerge and appear in different kinds of socio-cultural and business

settings in the organizational context of international engineering projects. In addition, some possible explanations to the salience of a particular aspect of Finnishness and of the Finnish cultural identity in a given situation will be sought for and examined.

Before that, however, the next chapter will focus on elaborating some of the ways in which the large scale, international engineering projects make for an interesting and promising context for cultural studies in general, and for examining Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity in particular.

4. LARGE, INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING PROJECTS AS A CONTEXT FOR STUDYING FINNISHNESS

Large scale, international engineering projects such as the building of a fifth nuclear plant in Finland, the Euro Tunnel between France and England, or the Burj Dubai skyscraper in the United Arab Emirates constitute a highly significant business sector in the world (Miller & Lessard, 2000; Chevrier, 2003; Flyvbjerg & al., 2003; Shore & Cross, 2005; deCamprieu & al., 2007; van Marrewijk, 2007), not only in an economic and social sense but also in a political and strategic sense (Perkins, 2005). As one indicator of the significance of these projects, right before the financial meltdown of 2008, the global construction market and spending hit a peak value of USD 5,8 trillion. As a comparison of this magnitude, the size of the global film and movie industry is estimated roughly at one hundredth of this, amounting to USD 55 billion (Kauppalehti, 6.8.2009). While it is forecasted that the 2007 level of global construction spending would not be reached again until 2011, it is still expected that this market will grow between 4 and 5 per cent annually during the next decade (Hazelton, 2009).

While there seems to be no formal definition for such "large engineering projects", some features nevertheless seem common to these projects. For example, according to Miller and Lessard (2000), large engineering projects comprise such ventures as, for example, "airports, urban-transport systems, oil fields, and power systems" (ibid: 1). Hence, from one perspective, they can be seen as construction projects. In addition to the Finnish nuclear plant, the Euro Tunnel, and the Burj Dubai, other famous examples of such projects mentioned in the exiting literature are the Three Gorges Dam in China, the Øresund bridge between Denmark and Sweden (e.g. Flyvbjerg & al., 2003), or the Sydney Opera House (Jugdev & Müller, 2005). In addition to such infrastructural facilities and buildings, large engineering projects can also deemed to comprise of, for example, telecommunications systems and networks, motorway and railroad networks, and pipelines for transporting oil and gas (Miller & Lessard, 2000; Flyvbjerg & al. 2003). Thus, large engineering projects can come in many forms and represent different

industries and sectors such as energy, transportation, manufacturing, petrochemicals, and arms (Miller & Lessard, 2000)[1].

Another aspect of these projects is their inherent, and continuously increasing, technological complexity (Miller & Lessard, 2000; Flyvbjerg & al, 2003; Geraldi & Aldbrecht, 2007). Indeed, it is often said that these are projects that "transform daring utopias into reality" (Miller & Lessard, 2000: 1). Because of such inherent complexity, these projects are often carried out in collaboration with a number of partnering organizations of various kinds (Morris & Hough, 1987; Turner, 1999; Miller & Lessard, 2000). These include stakeholders such as project developers, contractors, subcontractors, sponsors, investors, insurers, consultants, and governmental organizations and authorities. Consequently, the number of participating organizations can easily become extremely high. For example, in the case of the fifth nuclear power plant in Finland, simply the number of the different subcontractors and suppliers already amount to 1500. Often these projects also involve interaction and collaboration with other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, different kinds of activist groups, and even with highly prominent government heads. This was exemplified recently by the paper and pulp mill built in Uruguay by the Finnish company Botnia, which ultimately involved the intervention of the King of Spain and the President of the USA in the conflicts between the governments of Uruguay and Argentina and a number of activist groups (Aaltonen & al., 2008).

Finally, these projects are increasingly international endeavours, having often a global reach in their employment effects (Turner, 1999; Miller & Lessard, 2000; Chevrier, 2003; Flyvbjerg & al., 2003; Shore & Cross, 2005). As an example of this dimension, in the case of the fifth nuclear plant in Finland the owner of the plant is a Finnish company TVO, the reactor is provided by the French firm Areva and the turbine by Siemens from Germany. Subcontractors and suppliers directly involved in the project come from 42 countries. In spring 2009, of the over 4000 strong workforce on the project site, one third were Finns, one third Polish, the rest being from Germany, France, and Slovakia among others. In addition to the Finnish shareholders, finance for this project has

---

[1] Turner (1999: 2) simply refers to these as the "traditional major projects from heavy engineering, or WETT, industries: water, energy, transport and telecommunications".

mainly come from Germany and France. In a similar way, the Burj Dubai tower is designed by a US company Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, while the tower construction is carried out by the South-Korean firm Samsung in collaboration with Besix from Belgium and Arabtec from the United Arab Emirates. The project developer is a local company Emaar Properties with Turner Construction Company from the US being the construction manager. On the project site, Burj Dubai is being built by an international workforce with workers from such countries as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, and the Philippines.

Taken together, as an organizational context for cross cultural management research in general, and for examining cultures in international, cross cultural interaction in particular, these kinds of large engineering projects can be considered highly interesting and informative for a number of reasons. Firstly, they involve the simultaneous presence of a wealth of different national and cultural groups, working together in a fixed geographical position for an extended period of time. Secondly, this work is often tightly coordinated with significant financial and business related pressure to get the cross national and cross cultural collaboration up and running as quickly as possible. Thirdly, these projects are carried out between legally independent, separate organizations with divergent business objectives and priorities (cf. Morris & Hough, 1987; Turner, 1999; Miller & Lessard, 2000; Flyvbjerg & al., 2003; Grün, 2004). Fourthly, despite these complexities, in these projects the pre-specified output has to be produced one way or another, building on the collaboration between the nationally, organizationally, and professionally diverse parties. Consequently, in these projects the emergence of cultures and cultural identities as well as "cross cultural friction" (Shenkar, 2001) can often be abundant (Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Shore & Cross, 2005). This occurs as time is short and different cultural groups can often be expected to behave in a manner most familiar to them, while simultaneously trying to dominate and convince each other of the superiority of their practices as well as pursue their own, independent business interests and goals (Turner, 1999).

In addition, from the perspective of examining Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity in international cross cultural settings, these projects are also highly intriguing. This is

because in these projects the Finnish project managers, as representatives of a relatively small and peripheral culture, not only meet their neighboring and familiar cultures (compare Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004), but in addition interact with (from the Finnish perspective) distant and foreign, and especially much larger and more predominant cultures (in geopolitical and historical terms). Thus, these projects can be considered as revealing aspects of Finnishness in a wide range of different kinds of international socio-cultural settings and power and business relationships in this highly contemporary organizational context. Moreover, and as said above, these projects are often highly fast-paced and time and resource constrained, leading the cultural groups trying to behave according to their "cultural default" (cf. Leung & al., 2005). Thus, it can be anticipated or expected that this organizational context is bound to bring forth aspects of Finnishness in its "default state".

Finally, it can also be said that apart from the research carried out by Søderberg and Vaara (2003), there seems very little, if none, that examines Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity as it becomes constructed in cross cultural interaction in contemporary organizational contexts. Moreover, these examinations seem to be even more non-existent when it comes to the aspects of Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity as they emerge based on the experiences of Finnish project managers operating in large, international engineering projects. Therefore, it can be said that this study contributes to complementing the existing portrayals of Finnishness by insights from this highly dynamic, high velocity multinational and multicultural organizational environment.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As stated earlier, the overall approach in this thesis builds on the relational, social constructivist cultural understanding (Søderberg & Holden, 2002), focusing on the specifics of Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity as it appears based on the different kinds of cultural sensemaking and construction processes of the Finnish project managers. Consequently, instead of relying on large-N survey studies customary in many cross cultural management studies (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Harrison & al., 1999; Pheng & Yucuan, 2002; Zwikael & al., 2005; Bredillet & al., 2010), this thesis builds on a more in-depth examination of a limited number of projects and project managers selected as targets of qualitative analysis. Hence, with this orientation, this thesis follows the ideal brought forward in the relational, social constructivist cultural understanding as well as takes a step to approaching the traditional, anthropological culture studies.

Case study setting

As highlighted in the introduction, this doctoral research is based on my work during a research program that was originally launched in 2003. Hence, in addition to the theoretical rationale disclosed above, this doctoral research also became a multiple case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003) for practical reasons. That is, as the research program involved private companies as paying clients, one type of output that the participating companies paid for were project specific, qualitative case studies carried out in each of the companies. As multiple companies participated, and multiple projects were studied, each researcher in the program was assigned with multiple case projects. The selection of these projects was made by the participating companies, and as a consequence I did not have much practical influence in selecting them. Some general guidelines for case project selections were given to the companies by the research group. However, ultimately the representatives of the companies made the decisions themselves. In other words, theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) was initially intended, yet it failed to materialize. However, as the essays in this thesis will

reveal, theoretical sampling was nevertheless achieved ex post facto, enabled by the sheer number of the case projects provided by the companies.

Between the years 2003 and 2008, I conducted qualitative case studies, both by myself and in collaboration with research colleagues, in fourteen different projects in the companies participating in the research program. Seven different Finnish companies were involved in carrying out these projects. The total number of studied projects and participating companies in the research program was higher than this, however, these fourteen projects and seven companies represent those that I became involved with and where I had research responsibilities. Despite being mostly a publicly funded research project, I agreed with the participating companies not to disclose any project or company specific data. Hence, particular details on the projects (such as company names, prices, dates, durations, industries etc.) cannot be given here. However, it can be said that all the Finnish companies represent highly significant global players in their respective industries, and all the case study projects belong to the category of large, international engineering projects as defined and classified earlier.

Data collection

Because the multiple case nature of design of this doctoral study, and as was necessary to examine simultaneously multiple projects, the kind of long-term (from one year upwards) fieldwork built on participant observation which is often favored in the anthropological culture research was not possible. As a consequence, I took *ethnographic interviewing* (Spradley, 1979) as the primary data collection method. Ethnographic interviewing is a specific research method springing from the interpretive cultural research tradition aimed at obtaining data suitable for cultural inference and ethnographies. Thus, it builds strongly on the aforementioned culture as a metaphor approach and on the ontological assumption according to which culture is a perspective applied to examining the social and natural world as well as something to be inferred by the researcher, rather than being solely an entity or a variable existing "out there". For a thorough overview and guidance to this data collection technique and philosophy, the reader is advised to refer to Spradley (1979).

In addition to being a somewhat obvious choice for cultural inquiry, another highly salient feature of the Spradley (1979) type of ethnographic interviews also made them attractive for me: This technique builds on naturalism (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2001) in its insistence that the researcher refrains from attempts to manipulate the research setting, and also on emotionalism (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Silverman, 2001) in that it rejects standardized, preconceived structured interviews based on existing theory, relying instead on initially highly open-ended interviews. Thus, in this technique the purpose is to try and let worldviews, sensemaking, and interpretations of the interviewees unfold with as little as possible of researcher induced guidance intermingling with their perception on social and natural reality and ordering. I considered this as a highly important aspect, as in line with the relational, social constructivist cultural understanding, my purpose was to try to examine the emerging subjective cultural sensemaking and constructions of the interviewees without my interference as much as possible (cf. Søderberg & Holden, 2002).

In the studied projects I conducted a total of 47 ethnographic interviews. The overall total number of interviews that were available, and that I worked with, from all the case study projects in the research program amounted was considerably higher. However, the 47 interviews taken into account in this doctoral study consisted of those that I personally conducted by myself or with accompanying research colleagues. All the interviewees were interviewed from one to four times. Thirtynine interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Eight interviews in the early phases of the research were not tape recorded because of issues of confidentiality. However, thorough notes were made during these interviews. All the interviews with the Finnish informants were conducted in Finnish (my native language), and with the foreign informants, in English. All the foreign informants had a fluent command of English, and I have received training on English throughout my entire educational career. Thus, no difficulties in conducting the interviews in English were met.

In selecting the interviewees, the principle of finding the "most" knowledgeable informants, i.e. those people deemed to have the most experience on the projects and on

the cross cultural interaction in them, was initially followed (cf. Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). By request, these were pointed out to me by the companies participating in the research, and initially these were the Finnish project managers of the case study projects. This was followed by the "snowball effect" (Eisenhardt, 1989), that the initial informants either mentioned or were asked for other knowledgeable informants. Consequently, the interviewees consist of mostly Finnish project managers and supervisors with their foreign counterparts representing the minority. Table 5.1 summarizes the companies, projects studied by their location, the nationalities of the main cultural groups (from the Finnish perspective), and the overall interview statistics[2].

In line with the ethnographic interviewing technique, and as mentioned above, the interviews relied initially on highly open-ended questions. Hence, the interviews usually began with *descriptive* questions (Spradley, 1979) by asking the interviewees to talk about the project under scrutiny in their own words. The specific questions used were, for example: "Could you tell me about the project X in your own words?" or "From your point of view, could you tell me, what is it that this project is all about?". Instead of such *grand tour* questions (ibid.), sometimes the interviews began with *structural* questions (ibid.) by asking about the role and duties of the interviewees in the projects. After these introductory questions, the interviews usually proceeded with another set of *descriptive*, *grand tour* questions focused on the project progress. Inspired by Spradley (1979), questions such as "Could you give me a grand tour of the project, what has happened so far?" were asked. In addition, *structural* questions (ibid.) such as "Could you tell me about some of the most memorable events of the project for you?" could also be asked.

From then on, the interviews developed according to the issues brought up by these questions. Thus, in line with the advice of Spradley (1979), no pre-planned interview structure was developed. Instead, the subsequent questions in the later stages of the interviews, or in subsequent interviews with a specific informant, were *mini-tour*, *structural*, and *contrast* questions (ibid.) used to elaborate on specific themes or issues

---

[2] More specific details of the project and interview statistics are also given in each of the following four essays, as the number of projects and interviews included and analyzed vary per essay.

Table 5.1. Summary of the data collection statistics

Company	*Project location*	*Main nationalities*	*Number of interviews*	*Interviewees*
Company A	Syria	Finnish, Syrian, Japanese	3	1 Finnish project manager
Company B	St Petersburg 1	Finnish, Russian, Swedish	2	2 Finnish project managers
Company C	China 1	Finnish, Chinese	9	2 Finnish project managers, 2 Chinese project managers, 2 Finnish directors, 1 German director
	South-Africa	Finnish, South-African	3	2 Finnish project managers
Company D	Poland 1, Poland 2	Finnish, Polish, American	11	4 Finnish project managers, 1 Polish project manager, 1 Finnish director, 1 Polish director
	West-Europe*	Finnish, West-European, Turkish, American	3	1 Finnish project manager
	Germany	Finnish, German	3	1 Finnish project manager
	China 2	Finnish, Chinese	1	2 Chinese project specialists
Company E	Russia	Finnish, Turkish, Russian	7	2 Finnish project managers, 3 directors
Company F	EU 1, EU 2	Finnish, Britain, Spanish, Italian, German, Belgian	1	1 Finnish director
	St Petersburg 2	Finnish, Russian, Japanese	1	1 Finnish project manager, 1 Finnish director
Company G	Ukraine	Finnish, Ukrainian, Turkish	3	2 Finnish project managers
Companies total	*Projects total*		*Interviews total*	
7	14		47	

* West-Europe is a pseudonym for the country where the project was carried out. I agreed the use of this pseudonym with the company representatives based on their suggestion for protecting the company's and the project's anonymity. The project was carried out in one country in Western Europe.

brought up by the interviewees. Hence, such questions as "You mentioned delays, could you give me an example of a delay in this project?" (i.e. a structural question) or "In your own words, could you tell me what is the difference between this kind of crisis and that kind of crisis?" (i.e. a contrast question) were asked in order to elaborate on the themes and issues brought up by the interviewees.

In addition to the interviews, secondary data such as monthly project progress reports, project design reports, contractual documents between the partnering organizations in the projects, samples from internal correspondence, earlier studies conducted in the participating companies, as well as newspaper and other media articles were included in the data collection. This kind of data was mainly used to complement the interviews and in many parts to verify the accuracy of the interview data. This kind of data also assisted me to familiarize myself with the companies and the studied projects. At the same time, numerous formal and informal discussions with the representatives of the companies, workshops, and meetings were carried out, which also served to increasemy understanding and deepening my relations with the subjects of the study. During the data collection period, I also carried out a minor consultancy program in one of the companies. In this program I acted as a process consultant (Schein, 1999), rather than as an external expert. Designing and implementing this program involved numerous discussions with the company representatives, also serving to deepen my understanding of the company and the studied projects.

Data analysis

All in all, the interviews as the primary source of data provided highly vivid and life-like portrayals of both the projects as well as the interviewees' sensemaking and constructions of Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity in the studied projects. In analyzing the data an approach leaning towards the inductive case study method was adopted (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The specific actions taken in the data analysis vary somewhat between the essays. Thus, they are presented in detail in each. However, below I will present the overall process of the data analysis that eventually yielded and dictated the foci of each of the essays.

In sum, the foci of the essays developed as a result of a process of iterative "systematic combining" (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). This was a process whereby data collection and data analysis were constantly overlapping (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989), as well as coevolving and being constantly informed by existing theories and theoretical frameworks. In plain terms, it can be said that this approach was characterized by continuous back-and-forth movement between theory and practice, between theoretical frameworks and empirical observations, each informing the other as the research process evolved.

In practice, the process of "systematic combining" in my case included the following steps: Firstly, after conducting an interview, it was transcribed either by myself (in the early phases of this research) or by a Finnish company specialized in transcribing interviews (in the later stages of the research). This was followed by within-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989) where a particular interview was coded and thematically categorized (cf. Eskola & Suoranta, 1998) according to the themes and issues brought up in the interview. Within-case analysis also included different kinds of write-ups of rough descriptions of each case project according to the way they appeared based on the collected data (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). During the different stages of the research, these analyses were also discussed with the professors supervising the work and with research colleagues. These measures served to increase understanding of the data (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989) and to decide future directions in the data collection.

Cross-case analyses (ibid.) for pattern recognition and construct development were also conducted in parallel with within-case analysis. This was based on the coding, thematical categorization, and emerging themes and constructs from the within-case analysis. Within-case and cross-case analyses were also constantly compared and iterated with existing theory for the purposes of developing and revising the (cultural) constructs, guiding the focus of subsequent data collection, and developing theoretical sampling of the case study projects. In other words, such constant comparison and iteration with existing theory served to increase the "fit" between the data and theory (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989). These iterative rounds were made multiple times during the progress of the research, and consequently, the foci of the essays gradually began to

emerge. In addition, these rounds served to develop the emergent theoretical sampling of the essays as, in light of the existing literature, "polar types" and unusual and revelatory projects were identified and studied. Also serendipitous findings during the research process, where the uniqueness of a specific project was understood in light of existing theory, were taken advantage of (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Consequently, it can be said that the foci of the essays, and thus, the concluding portrayal of Finnishness and of Finnish cultural identity represent those aspects that iteratively became salient in terms of what the data provided vis-à-vis the existing literature.

Research quality assessment

When assessing the quality of qualitative cultural research, Martin (2002) suggests employing different kind of evaluation criteria than the traditional ideas of validity and reliability used in more quantitatively oriented research. Thus, she suggests, for example, *authenticity* as one evaluation criteria, where cultural research is evaluated according to its capability to convey the reader of the researcher genuinely having "been out there" in the field, living in another society. Moreover, according to Martin (2002) authenticity is preferred over such evaluation criteria as accuracy in that the former is used to convey the researcher trying his or her best at representing what he or she has "observed without any assertion that those observations were objective, accurate, or exactly like what another observer might have seen" (ibid.: 280). Thus, as qualitative cultural research is, by definition, subjective and interpretative, such authenticity is preferred over the more traditional criteria of reliability that are often used in evaluating the more positivistic research where objectivity of the results is sought.

Consequently, despite not being able to move on to the project sites for participant observation, I have tried my best to convey the interview data in a kind of "being there" format. Thus, for example, I consider the choice of using the ethnographic interviewing technique, which builds on encouraging the interviewees to come forth with their own "unique ways of defining the world" (Denzin, 1970 in Silverman, 2001: 92), as a means to contribute significantly towards this aim. In addition, in the essays I have frequently

used relatively long excerpts and quotes from the interview data (compare e.g. Brannen & Salk, 2000; Gajewsksa–De Mattos & al., 2004; Barinaga, 2007) in order to build understanding of the context that the quotes and excerpts are related to. Also, as most of the excerpts and quotes are my translations from Finnish to English, I have tried my utmost best to translate not only the "what" of that being said, but also to preserve the original innuendos and sentiments related to the ways that something has been said in the interviews – that is, to convey to the reader the "how" of that being said.

Another way to evaluate the quality of qualitative cultural research suggested by Martin (2002) is the *plausibility* of the portrayals and examined phenomena. She suggests that plausibility is often already enhanced by the choice of the study context, that is, an atypical and exceptional research context might be selected, assuming that it highlights and illustrates the phenomena under study in exceptionally revelatory ways. From this perspective, I have tried to increase the plausibility of the portrayals and inferences that I have made by studying Finnishness in an organizational context where it should emerge and become observable particularly well. As brought out, large, international engineering projects are carried out in cooperation with multiple organizations from different countries with a highly international and numerous workforce gathered on a single project site, working in a highly time constrained environment towards a common, concrete output. As also brought out, over the years, these projects have become increasingly complex and international, increasing also the challenges related to cross national interaction and collaboration. Taken together, in such an organizational form Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity could be expected to stand out more "sharply" when compared with some other, "less intensive" forms of international organizational collaborations (compare e.g. Barinaga, 2007).

I also consider the idea of *fairness* (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) to be an important aspect in evaluating this doctoral research. Fairness implies to the ideal that "all stakeholder views, perspectives, claims, concerns, and voices should be apparent in the text (ibid.: 180). Thus, from this perspective it would be essential to evaluate whose voices are heard in the research and what kind of voices they are. In the case of this research, it has to be acknowledged that the ideal of fairness does not become fulfilled. Firstly, and as

stated earlier, the interviews mostly represent the views expressed by Finnish project participants, whereas other nationalities are in a minority position. In addition, the number of different nationality groups in the projects I studied was so vast, that it was simply not possible for me to cover all of these. Secondly, I interviewed only project managers, directors, and project management team members, leaving out the rest of the specialists, project workforce, sponsors, bankers, investors, governmental authorities, non-governmental organizations, activist groups, etc., which all have had an influence in these projects and in the cross national interaction taking place in them. Finally, the essays and the cultural portrayal building on them focus mostly on the experiences of the Finnish project managers. Thus, it is strongly emphasized that the views brought forth in the essays represent, first and foremost, those of the Finnish management of the case study projects. Consequently, the portrayal of Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity depicted in this study represents that of how the Finnish project managers see themselves, excluding the portrayals of how other cultural groups might see Finns.

Furthermore, in assessing the *internal validity* (Yin, 2003) of this research, I reckon that the interviews that I have conducted were by no means mere instances for collecting "objective" data, but instead, influenced by a multiplicity of factors such as, for example, me being "used" for transmitting messages and viewpoints to elsewhere in the organizations under scrutiny (cf. Søderberg, 2006). The interviewees might have also wanted to cast themselves and their organizations in a positive light as in many cases the scrutinized projects were highly problematic, fraught with difficulties, and as sensitive and problematic issues were discussed during the interviews. In addition, the studied projects were so complex that it can be assumed that the interviewees were forced to make generalizations and oversimplifications in describing their experiences, all increasing the likelihood of retrospective bias (March & Sutton, 1997). Finally, it takes time to establish rapport and trust with the interviewees in order for them to be able to disclose confidential experiences, especially in case of those projects that were highly difficult to carry out.

However, in order to lessen the impact of these factors on the data collected with the interviews, I undertook a number of measures. For example, in order to lessen the

"courier" effect, I explicitly stated in the interviews that I am an academic researcher and an outsider aiming to collect experiences and "tales from the field", and that the individual interview data will not be transmitted as such elsewhere to the parent organizations of the interviewed informants. In order to lessen the possible need to make a positive appearance, I also stated that I would like to hear these tales in the way that the informants have experienced them, that there is no need to make things appear more positive than they actually have been and that I am not there to make any judgments of, for example, how things should be. For lessening the retrospective bias and the problem of generalization and oversimplification by the informants, I interviewed several informants from the same project whenever possible. This helped me to establish rapport and trust, as well as a certain amount of friendship, trust, and contiguity between myself and the informants. In terms of the case study projects, interviews in projects that had been finalized were also coupled with interviews in on-going projects in order to complement the purely retrospective data with more "real-time" data.

Finally, in terms of *reflexivity* (Martin, 2002), as the studied projects in many cases had been highly troublesome, it can be assumed that at least some of the interviewees might have initially felt that I am an outside "detective" of sorts, an agent hired by the top management with a mission to find out what has been wrong with the projects. Consequently, it can be assumed that some of the informants could have felt compelled to refrain from discussing sensitive or confidential issues with me, especially when I was tape recording the interviews. In order to lessen this possibility, I explicitly stated to the interviewees that it is not my intention in any way to use the data obtained against them. I also described that Non Disclosure Agreements had been signed between me, the research project, and the companies providing the case study projects. Finally, I promised to send the research reports and publications for double checking before publishing or presenting them.

As a consequence, an overall impression that I had from the interviews was that I was extremely delighted to see and hear how openly all the interviewees described their experiences, both those that they considered as positive highlights of the projects as

well as the more mundane and the not so pleasant ones. All the interviewees were willing to share their time, despite many of them being extremely pressed and busy. I was offered open handed and unconditional help and assistance by the informants. And many times, especially in the more troubled projects, I felt that the interviewees were highly sincere and open in discussing the difficulties they were facing, making me feel an appreciated and welcomed "someone to talk to".

6. OVERVIEW OF THE ESSAYS

Essay I: Coping with Cultural Differences in a Finnish - Polish Engineering Project: A Finnish Project Managers' View

To start off, the first essay focuses on a single highly complex, yet successful (in terms of project management) international engineering project. The essay examines what kind of managerial and leadership process is required for the project managers to cope with the cultural differences and contribute to achieving cross cultural collaboration. More specifically, the paper examines the cooperation between Finnish and Polish project teams in a project carried out in Poland, while focusing on the Finnish project managers' experiences in coping with the cultural differences and in developing cross cultural collaboration. In this essay, from the collaborative perspective the Finnish project managers can be seen to be in a dominating position in the sense that they were representatives of a Finnish parent company on the local Polish project teams as well as the provider of the technological core of the project. The Finnish project managers also had prior experience of the Polish market.

While contributing to the existing literatures on coping with cultural differences and on project managers' roles and actions in a successful project, this essay also begins to build a portrayal of Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity in multiple ways. More specifically, the essay builds understanding on the kinds of cultural differences that the Finnish project managers perceive between the Finns and the Poles. Concomitantly, this yields a representation of Finnishness in this kind of a bi-national setting. Moreover, the essay provides understanding of how the Finnish project managers, being in a dominant position, approach the development of cross cultural collaboration, building of the project culture, as well as some of the fundamental project managerial tasks. Finally, the essay provides a view on how the Finnish project managers approach the cultural differences, project management, and cross cultural collaboration in different phases of the project and under different circumstances in terms of whether the project is progressing as planned or is in a more stressful stage.

Essay II: Responding to Cultural Dominance in Cross Cultural Interaction: Experiences of Finnish Project Managers

In comparison with the first essay, the second essay then puts Finnish project managers in a contrasting position. That is, by building on a multiple cases study this essay examines the ways in which the Finnish project managers, being in a subjugated position, cope with cultural dominance exhibited by their project partners. Hence, in the essay, the Finnish project managers interact with many cultural groups representing different nationalities that one way or another are seen to be in a dominant position over the Finns. As pointed out earlier, in large international engineering projects cultural dominance or at least the attempts of it are often abundant for multiple reasons. As a consequence, this essay contributes to the existing cross cultural management literature by specifying some of the ways in which the Finnish project managers "fight" against such dominance as well as try to compensate for their cultural "weaknesses" in order to advance their positions.

Hence, this essay serves as a means for building a relational cultural portrayal of Finnishness and Finnish identity from a subjugated cross cultural perspective. This yields a portrayal of Finnishness and its perceived differences in relation to a multitude of other cultures. The essay also highlights some of the contrasting manifestations that this kind of cultural examination begins to bring out. That is, the essay shows how the Finnish project managers not only condescend to the cultural dominance exhibited by their partners, but also actively and creatively use the possibilities granted by the project organizational form in fighting against being dominated. Moreover, the essay highlights some of the meanings and interpretations attributed to the different situations that bring out these contrasting tendencies. This also draws out some of the meanings and interpretations attached by the Finnish project managers to many a highly central project managerial issues and areas.

Essay III: "Where Did Our Collaboration Disappear?" – Dynamics of Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism in Two Consecutive Projects

The third essay portrays the Finnish project managers in a highly politicized situation, in the midst of reorganization between two consecutive projects and the ensuing cross cultural power plays. More specifically, this essay builds on the same Finnish – Polish setting as the first one, however, this time the focus is on examining the reasons for the unraveling of the collaborative spirit that was achieved in the project examined in the first essay. Hence, the essay contributes to the existing cross cultural management literature by specifying how and why established cross cultural collaboration can come apart and be replaced with heightened nationalism. Moreover, this essay adds to the cultural portrayals provided by the earlier essays by bringing forth a kind of threshold that, for the Finns, seems to trigger the salience of nationalism and national cultural identification. The third essay also provides a portrayal of one kind of cultural identity that the Finnish project managers seem to revert to in a situation characterized by power plays and politicking.

Essay IV: Cultural Research in the International Project Management Literature: A Comment on Methodology

Finally, the fourth essay is a theoretical comment to the scholarly treatment of the culture concept and cultural implications in the contemporary project management literature. More specifically, by building on a multiple cases study this essay argues for the need to refine the current cultural understanding and portrayals in this stream of literature. Moreover, the essay brings out five highly predominant (from the Finns' perspective) project management areas, and illustrates how the Finnish project managers seem to distinguish themselves as a distinct cultural group in these areas. Hence, this essay pits the Finnish project managers against a variety of different national cultural groups, providing a cultural portrayal of Finnishness in terms of the five project management areas and vis-à-vis the different cultural groups.

However, the special focus of this essay is in showing how the Finnish project managers, while distinguishing themselves as a cultural group, not only exhibit certain kinds of "stereotypical" traits in the project management areas examined, but also behave in a contrasting manner that is bound to create cultural dualism and ambiguity. Thus, this essay departs from the traditional portrayals in the cross cultural management literature, and like the second essay, takes a step towards a more interpretive cultural representation of Finnishness by highlighting how contrasting cultural tendencies can be present in a particular national group. This examination also contributes to the cultural portrayal of Finnishness by bringing out some of the sensemaking and meanings that the project managers seem to attribute to the situations yielding the contrasting cultural tendencies.

7. ESSAYS

ESSAY I: COPING WITH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN A FINNISH - POLISH ENGINEERING PROJECT: A FINNISH PROJECT MANAGERS' VIEW

Sampo Tukiainen

Unpublished manuscript

Abstract

This paper focuses on a single highly complex, yet successful (in terms of project management) international engineering project, and examines what kind of managerial and leadership process is required for the project managers to cope and live with cultural differences. The empirical focus is on the experiences of Finnish project managers engaged in collaboration with their Polish counterparts and project teams. Based on empirical analysis, the paper argues that in this particular case this process consists of four distinct elements, which are described as *cognitive*, *affective*, *rationalistic*, and *coercive*. Highlighting these elements adds to the existing literature by illustrating how multifaceted a process this can be even for project managers who are in a dominant position and have previous cross cultural experience of the particular culture within which they are collaborating and operating. That is, the paper shows how this can be a process calling for the complex interplay of learning, emotions, reasoning and adaptation, as well as explicit, coercive actions. Based on empirical insights, this paper then extends various popular views in the existing cross cultural management research in relation to achieving high performance and effective cross cultural collaboration.

1. INTRODUCTION

> *"What was surprising to us is that we could make the [Finnish – Polish] project organization work as well as it did. We clearly had two cultures in the project organization, which gave extra flavor to the project management and execution. However, it was amazing to see how we were able to make it work as good as it was. It was amazing to see how in cooperation things went all the time from difficult moments to a better direction." (Finnish project manager)*

During the 2000s, project teams from a Finnish company joined forces with teams from its Polish subsidiary and began to carry out a large engineering project in Poland. Even before the beginning of the project execution phase, it had already become evident that the project would be one of the most complex deliveries in the two companies' history. From the technical perspective, the project represented an unprecedented scale and scope for the two companies. From the cross cultural perspective, the project exhibited many characteristics often associated with "large" cultural differences between the Finnish and Polish project teams (Kogut & Singh, 1988; Morosini & Singh, 1994; Olie, 1994; Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997; Gómez-Mejia & Palich, 1997; Maczynski & al, 1997; Lewis & Gates, 2003). In addition, it was the first instance of a jointly executed project between the two partners.

Thus, the project seemed to bear many of the a priori characteristics that past research often associates with a pronounced likelihood of failure (Hofstede, 1980; Kogut & Singh, 1988; March & al., 1991; Trompenaars, 1993; Schein, 1999; Turner, 1999; Miller & Lessard, 2000; Chan & Tse, 2003; Henrie & Sousa-Poza, 2005). Yet, a few years later, from the perspective of the two companies, the project was described as one of the most successful in their history, creating something of a legend and a benchmark widely referred to in the companies' discourse. More specifically, the project seemed to bear the characteristics of project management success (cf. De Wit, 1988; Cooke-Davies, 2002) as it was completed within time, on budget, and according to the planned quality specifications[3].

Inspired by such an outcome, this paper adopts a cultural perspective, and sets out to shed light on the ways in which the cultural differences between the two partners were coped with in this highly intriguing project. Without a question, studies on project success and failure have been at the heart of the project management research during the past 40 years (Morris, 1983; Morris & Hough, 1987; Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Turner, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Söderlund, 2002, 2004; Jugdev & Müller, 2005; Ivory & Alderman, 2006). Consequently, "umpteen number of factors that may affect success on a project" (Prabhakar, 2005: 53) can be seen. However, in case of international projects, the need to cope with cultures and cultural differences has been recognized as especially important, because they are argued to be sources of complications, difficulties, and outright project failures if left unmanaged (e.g. Schneider, 1995; Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Henrie & Sousa-Poza, 2005; Shore & Cross, 2005; Zeng & al., 2005).

In the existing literature, several approaches and practices used by project managers for coping with the cultural differences have been recognized (Schneider, 1995; Chevrier, 2003; Mäkilouko, 2004). In general, these tend to be in line with mainstream cross cultural management studies, and point out that the basic principles of *ignoring*, *minimizing* and *utilizing* cultural differences (cf. Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997) are employed by the project managers. Another, more normative suggestion builds on the traditional idea of creating highly integrated, "strong" project cultures with

---

[3] Specific evidence suggesting that project management success was achieved in this case will be provided in the methodological section of the paper.

standardized and harmonized project practices cutting across cultural groups and divisions (cf. Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Olie, 1994; Schneider, 1995; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Dinsmore & Codas, 2006). On the other hand, the adverse effects of "tight" integration of the cultural groups have also been recognized, and thus, cultural autonomy has been suggested instead (Slangen, 2006).

What is missing from the extant studies, however, is any kind of description and analysis of how complex a process it can be for the project managers to achieve these basic principles in a highly challenging – yet in terms of project management, successful – project. From the cultural perspective, this obviously varies depending, for example, on the position, organizational and national background, and cross cultural experience of the project manager (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988; Mäkilouko, 2004). Hence, in this paper the empirical focus is on the Finnish project managers' experiences (the nationality of the author), who could be considered to represent the dominant party as representatives of the Finnish parent company and the technology provider (cf. Adler, 1997). In this particular project there were two project managers from the Finnish parent company; both had prior experience on the Polish market before assuming the leadership of the current project.

Based on the empirical evidence, this paper then highlights four distinct elements in the process that the Finnish project managers seemingly have gone through, and which seems to produce the basic principles of coping with the cultural differences: *cognitive*, *affective*, *rationalistic*, and *coercive*. Highlighting these elements then adds to the existing literature by illustrating how complex and multifaceted a process this can be even for the project managers who can be considered to be in a dominant position and have previous cross cultural experience of the particular culture within which they are collaborating and operating. Hence, the paper shows how this can be a process calling for the complex interplay of learning, emotions, reasoning and adaptation, as well as explicit, coercive actions, which ultimately manifest as the basic principles described above. Consequently, building on these insights this paper then extends the popular stereotypical cultural portrayals and the consequent "When in Rome, do as the Romans

do" -maxim (e.g. Trompenaars, 1993; Newman & Nollen, 1996; Javidan & al., 2006), arguing for the need for more fine-grained cultural understanding in cross cultural management. In addition, the paper extends many of the deterministic and unidirectional arguments related to achieving high performance and successful cross cultural collaboration (e.g. Schneider, 1995; Li & Hambrick, 2005; Dinsmore & Codas, 2006).

The remainder of the paper is structured in the following way: Firstly, the extant literature on coping with cultural differences is reviewed. In this review it will be shown that both general cross cultural management as well as project management studies build strongly on the idea of either, *ignoring*, *minimizing*, or *utilizing* the cultural differences. It will also be shown that in this literature little attention has been paid to the lived experiences of the project managers and to the kind of processes they might have to go through when coping with cultural differences. Secondly, the research methodology is presented. This is followed by the empirical analysis and discussion of the case study project. Finally, conclusions are made and implications for literature are highlighted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consequences of cultural differences

As stated earlier, despite being a highly multifaceted issue, defining the factors leading to project success lies at the heart of project management research (Morris, 1983; Morris & Hough, 1987; Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Turner, 1999; Söderlund, 2002, 2004; Jugdev & Müller, 2005; Ivory & Alderman, 2006). The underlying motive for this is the established view according to which projects are often highly prone to failure, and as a consequence seldom materialize as planned (Miller & Lessard, 2000; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Engwall, 2002; Flyvbjerg & al., 2003).

In this literature, cultures and cultural differences have been found to be significant sources of complications, difficulties, and project failures, especially in international

settings (e.g. Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Henrie & Sousa-Poza, 2005; Shore & Cross, 2005; Dinsmore & Codas, 2006). This is also in accordance with the prevalent view in the international comparative and cross cultural management literature, that (national) cultural differences can often be sources of miscommunication, misunderstandings, cultural clashes, and business failures, when people and organizations come to work together in the international workplace (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). Concomitantly, it is commonplace that cultural clashes, "us-versus-them" attitudes, and ethnocentrism erupt between teams and workgroups, splitting them into conflicting subgroups with nationalism and national cultural polarizations hindering effective team work (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Yeganeh & Su, 2006).

On the other hand, contrasting arguments have also been expressed. For example, the presence of cultural differences has been associated with the potential for increased creativity, problem solving ability, efficient adaptation to foreign contexts, and as a consequence increased competitive advantage (Hoecklin, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). In addition, taking into consideration the realities of a contemporary multinational and multicultural workplace and organizational life, the notion of cultural differences necessarily leads to clashes and collaborative difficulties has been challenged (e.g. Brannen & Salk, 2000; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). For example, Brannen and Salk (2000) in their study of a German-Japanese joint venture showed, that a priori recognized national cultural differences were not effective predictors of the challenges and issues that arouse between the two groups, neither did they prevent the emergence of a shared working culture and effective collaboration. In addition, Salk and Brannen (2000) have shown that teams with considerable cultural differences can still be high performing. Moreover, Morosini et al. (1998) have shown that mergers between culturally "distant" countries can outperform those between culturally "closer" countries.

Thus, as can be seen from the above, within cross cultural management literature, contradictions and ambiguity reign over the potential organizational consequences of

cultural differences. This implies that there is hardly a simple unidirectional causality between cultures, cultural differences, and organizational outcomes. In fact, as argued by Chevrier (2003: 142), whether cultural differences lead to negative or positive consequences seems to be dependent on the "contextual and intermediate variables". Consequently, the idea of the need to manage cultural differences has been put forward and emphasized (Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Holden, 2002). As argued by Adler (1986: 118): "Only if well managed can culturally diverse groups hope to achieve their potential productivity." Hence, in this way the management has been turned into one possible explanatory variable.

Managing cultural differences

In the existing cross cultural management literature, perhaps the most conspicuous suggestion for managing or coping with cultural differences in multicultural and national organizations builds on a threefold approach: Managers are said (or advised) to either *ignore*, *minimize*, or *utilize* the cultural differences (Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). *Ignoring* cultural differences springs fundamentally from the assumption that "business is business" around the world, and that universal principles of managing and organizing can be applied regardless of the culture and locale. Thus, this approach assumes that practices developed in one culture can be readily transferred to another. In this approach, cultures and their consequences are also considered irrelevant in organizational life. Should problems arise, they are not attributed to cultural differences. On the other hand, the possible benefits of cultural differences might be missed with this approach. Schneider and Barsoux (1997) call this approach ethnocentric as it assumes that there is only one best way to organize. It is also argued to be the most common way to cope with the cultural differences (Adler, 1997).

On the other hand, *minimizing* cultural differences and their potentially harmful consequences builds on the recognition of cultural differences and their importance. Yet, in this approach cultural differences are still seen as a problem and a threat to effective work. Thus, they should be minimized by creating sameness and unity, standardizing work practices and operations across cultural groups, or isolating the

different cultures in order to reduce the potential for conflicts. According to Schneider and Barsoux (1997) this coping mechanism can appear in multiple forms. Some managers and organizations minimize cultural differences by attempting to *integrate* them by creating an overarching, "global" culture, and this way to assimilate all the different sub-cultures into one, common whole. Another way is to build on the idea of isolating the different cultures, and thus, create cultural *segregation*. This approach allows each party to operate in ways that are characteristic to their own cultures. Yet another way is to create buffers between the conflicting cultures (e.g. regional headquarters between the global head office and the national units or managers between culturally divided teams). The idea in this approach is to link the cultures by a third party acting as a mediator and a buffer between the potentially conflicting parties. Of these different mechanisms, the first resembles an ethnocentric approach in its insistence of one unifying culture, while the latter two are said to build on a regiocentric or polycentric approach allowing each party, more or less, to "do their own thing" (Schneider & Barsoux, 1997: 214).

Finally, *utilizing* cultural differences builds on the recognition of cultural diversity as a potential source and an opportunity for learning, creativity, and competitive advantage (Hoecklin, 1993). Thus, in this approach, cultural differences are recognized and valued as well as utilized and leveraged. Pluralism is nurtured and tapped. Equifinality is assumed, i.e. it is recognized that "many equivalent ways […] to live, to work, and to reach a final goal […] exist" (Adler, 1997:107). In this approach, the benefits are mostly sought after by recognizing and adapting to the peculiarities of a particular culture or locale; by recognizing from the culturally diverse pool of possibilities the most beneficial practices with regard to specific tasks; or by carrying out operations in the culture best suited to a given task. Thus, cultural contingency (i.e. "the best way is dependent on the culture") is acknowledged in multiple ways that, according to Schneider and Barsoux (1997), render this approach as geocentric, taking inputs from multiple sources. Although promising the greatest rewards, utilizing cultural differences has also been found to be the most seldom used way to cope with cultural differences (Adler, 1997).

Managing cultural differences in an international project context

Despite their recognized significance, studies on the ways in which to manage or cope with cultural differences in the existing project management literature, however, seem to be highly scarce. In fact, to date the identified cross cultural coping mechanisms seem to be more or less variants of the basic mechanisms described above. For example, in her study on multinational projects, Chevrier (2003) identified three different strategies or approaches used by project managers in coping with cultural differences. Firstly, some of the project managers were reported to pay no particular attention to cultural differences. Thus, this approach is highly reminiscent to ignoring cultural diversity (cf. Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). However, Chevrier (2003) elaborates this coping mechanism by describing that in the studied projects, this approach built on appealing to self-control of the team members as a means for tolerating differences and making concessions for the benefit of the team. Hence, this implies that rather than ignoring cultural differences, they were acknowledged and attempts were made to minimize their negative implications. Indeed, according to her findings, this approach involved two different discourses: one specifically aimed at downplaying the significance of the cultural differences, and another one stressing their possible benefits.

The second mechanism identified by Chevrier (2003) was to try and create personal relationships between team members. The rationale behind this approach seemed to build on the idea that friendships might enable effective creation of mutual agreements and working arrangements. As put by Chevrier (2003: 146): "Frequent communications with other team members make it possible to discover through a trial-and-error process what is acceptable for the partners and what one cannot go against." This approach is also highly reminiscent of that suggested by Brannen and Salk (2000) in their study of establishing a "negotiated" working culture in an international joint venture organization. According to these authors, creating effective collaboration in multicultural organizations can be accomplished by engaging in constant negotiations over mutually agreed and appropriate work practices and processes, which gradually enacts a shared working culture between the partners. Hence, this approach builds on

the idea of creating integration and unity, and through that way tries to minimize cultural differences or their negative consequences.

According to Chevrier (2003), the third way used by project managers to cope with cultural differences, was to try and set up transnational cultures. Once again, this runs similar to the suggestions put forward by Schneider and Barsoux (1997), and builds on the idea of minimizing cultural differences. Thus, some of the studied project managers reported drawing upon, for example, occupational, professional, or organizational cultures in order to unify the project teams. This approach seems to build on the assumption that common professional or organizational cultures and identities might supersede the national ones. However, in her studies Chevrier (2003) also found that despite the project managers' efforts to establish such overarching cultures, these remained in a highly undeveloped stage. In addition, as shown by Salk and Shenkar (2001) national cultural identities, once established, can be the dominant lens for interpreting social reality, enduring over time and resisting alternative social identities (e.g. project, joint venture, company, etc.).

Furthermore, building on the highly central notion in international cross cultural management studies, according to which national cultures, histories, and institutional particularities in conjunction give rise to distinct management cultures and practices (e.g. Hofstede, 1980, Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997), Mäkilouko (2004) studied the leadership styles of Finnish project managers when coping with cultural differences. Once again, the findings seemed to comply with those in the more general cross cultural management studies described above. Thus, according to Mäkilouko (2004), Finnish project managers most often seemed to rely on ignoring cultural differences. The second most often used mechanism seemed to build on the idea of minimizing the negative consequences of cultural differences through buffering by creating cultural segregation. Hence, building on this mechanism the teams were allowed to utilize the operating methods most familiar to them, while the project managers acted as a mediating and unifying link between the teams. Finally, the least used coping mechanism seemed to build on promoting unity and the emergence of

personal relationships between the project members, in much the same way as indicated by the studies of Chevrier (2003).

In addition to these, Schneider (1995), emphasizing especially the principle of coping with cultural differences by minimizing them and creating "strong", integrated project cultures (see e.g. Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Olie, 1994), argues that the key to effective and competent international and intercultural cooperation in projects is the standardization of management and work practices across cultural groups. In other words, the objective is to develop "a common way of behaving and thinking", corresponding to universal best practices (Schneider, 1995: 249). Consequently, "costs of mistakes and untapped potential can be minimized" (ibid.: 249) and a new, common project culture created. Dinsmore and Codas (2006) also advocate the convergence idea, and thus, the creation of an integrated project culture as a way to succeed in international projects. According to these authors, an integrated project culture can be achieved in a highly systematic and rational manner:

> "Forming a project culture is a project in itself; therefore it must have an objective, a schedule, resources, and a development plan. Its execution becomes the responsibility of the management team. The objective of building a project culture is to attain a cooperative spirit, to supplant the our-side-versus-your-side feeling with a strong "our project" view. The project culture is developed around the commonalities of both groups…"
> (Dinsmore & Codas, 2006: 405-6)

Hence, taking all this together, regardless of the stream of literature, the findings related to coping with cultural differences seem highly similar. That is, managers are predominantly seen to follow the principle of selecting between ignoring, minimizing, or utilizing the cultural differences. As also seen, another highly central notion is that coping with cultural differences is best achieved by striving towards integrated and unified, i.e. "strong" project cultures (cf. Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982) across the initially divergent groups.

However, when taking a closer look at the studies described above, it becomes evident that these are built on multiple case analyses, providing illustrations of the general approaches or basic principles of coping with the cultural differences. For example, Chevrier (2003: 147) describes that: "If leaders of international project teams cannot draw upon shared national cultures, they may resort to other international cultures such as professional or corporate cultures to federate participants". In a similar fashion, Mäkilouko (2004: 391) attests that: "In close agreement with the literature, an ethnocentric leadership style was found and was most common among the project leaders (40 out of 47)". Usually these kind of statements are then fleshed out with a few examples of what kinds of actions these might include (e.g. social events, informal meetings, team building), or include normative suggestions to project managers of what they should do, for example, to "[u]nderstand the cultural differences – use the cultural dimensions to know what differences to expect between people from different cultures" (Binder, 2007: 42).

Yet, what is missing in these studies is any kind of illustration and analysis of the lived experience of the project managers, and of the complexity involved in the process of coping with the cultural differences and achieving the aforementioned basic principles in a highly challenging, yet successful project. Thus, to complement the existing studies, this paper illustrates a single case analysis, and highlights from one (national) cultural perspective four distinct elements in the process that produce the basic principles of coping with cultural differences: *cognitive*, *affective*, *rationalistic*, and *coercive*. By highlighting these elements this paper then aims to bringing forward a glimpse of the complexities related to achieving the basic principles of coping with the cultural differences. Hence, by focusing on the experiences of Finnish project managers, who could be considered to be organizationally and technologically in a dominant position, the paper highlights how complex and multifaceted a process this can be, even for project managers that are in such an advantageous position.

3. EMPIRICAL SETTING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case study setting

As has been mentioned, the project under scrutiny (EPC PROJECT from now on) was carried out in Poland by teams from a Finnish parent company and its Polish subsidiary during the early 2000s[4]. Within its industry, this corporation is a highly significant global player, and the EPC PROJECT can be considered to belong to the category of "large engineering projects" as classified by Miller and Lessard (2000). As also stated, from a research point of view, this project was made especially interesting because, despite many inherent a priori features suggesting the presence of an increased likelihood of failure, the EPC PROJECT was eventually marked by characteristics associated with project management success (as distinct from project success, see De Wit, 1988; Cooke-Davies, 2002). This could be concluded, for example, from the following statements:

> *"What was surprising to us was that we could execute the project more or less the way it was planned. For us it was a totally new kind of project, we hadn't delivered anything like that before… We did it in time, below budget, and the performance, [it] is above guaranteed." (Finnish project manager)*

> *"The [EPC PROJECT] is one of the most successful projects [of the company] with an outstanding performance." (Conclusion in an internal project review report)*

> *"Our hand-over of the [EPC PROJECT] marked the conclusion of a very successful project…" (CEO of the Polish subsidiary in the company annual report)*

> *"Overall, the project went very well, we were on schedule… Financially a very good project. The customer is happy… I'm happy as a project director, that the project was so successful and good. The company management is also happy." (Finnish project manager)*

---

[4] In order to protect the company and its identity, the researcher has agreed not to disclose any specific details on the project such as the project type, size, names of the partners, etc. The case description in this research has been sent for approval and accepted by the company's representatives.

These quotes describe the project outcome from multiple sources and perspectives. Evidently many of the statements can be regarded as subjective and influenced by the context of the statement. However, the author of this paper also had access to all the monthly project progress reports, and according to these documents the project progressed constantly in or ahead of schedule. Towards the end of the project, an unexpected delay threatened the planned schedule, which was also noted in the project progress reports. However, this was countered by speeding up the project execution process. The planned project schedule also had a built-in time reserve for such delays. Thus, according to the progress reports, the project was finally handed over to the customer according to the planned schedule. Also according to the official documents, the EPC PROJECT was delivered within budget, and it met the guaranteed quality specifications or exceeded them in some areas. Based on this evidence, it is thus concluded that the project met the standard criteria of *project management success* (cf. Cooke-Davies, 2002).

The EPC PROJECT became available as a case study target when the Finnish parent company decided to participate in a multidisciplinary research program, where the author of the paper was working as a researcher. In this research program, the author's focus was in applying a cultural perspective to examining the experiences of Finnish project managers in cross national interaction in international engineering projects. Consequently, the Finnish company discussed in this paper expressed their wish to conduct a case study examining the EPC PROJECT, because it was considered to have been exceptionally challenging, yet producing a highly respectable outcome from the focal companies' perspective. Simply put, the company representatives wanted to gain more understanding and perspectives on the cross cultural collaboration achieved during the EPC PROJECT.

Data collection

Often the preferred research methods in these kinds of studies include ethnography and long-term, field-based participant observation (Martin, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips,

2004). However, in this particular case this research approach and field studies on the project site were not possible due to the timing of the research, that is, the EPC PROJECT had been finalized and handed over to the customer just prior to the beginning of the case study. As a consequence, interviews in the spirit of the ethnographic interviewing technique suggested by Spradley (1979) were opted for as the primary research method. This interview methodology and research philosophy was preferred and chosen as it was considered to provide an opportunity to let the interviewees tell about their experiences in their own words, to allow multiple perspectives and interpretations of the project actuality to emerge, as well as reduce the likelihood of the researcher imposing his or her worldview, values, and ideologies on the subject of the study.

Building from these premises, the interview data were collected by interviewing the Finnish and Polish project managers (2 Finns, 1 Pole), two Finnish project supervisors, the vice president of the Finnish parent company (a Finn), and the CEO of the Polish subsidiary (a Pole). These people represent the majority of the key personnel and the managerial board in the EPC PROJECT. Each of the informants was interviewed one to four times, and each interview lasted between one to two hours. The Finns and the Poles were interviewed separately. Altogether 11 tape recorded interviews (9 Finnish and 2 Polish) were carried out by the researcher. In the case of the Finns the interviews were conducted in Finnish, and with the Poles in English. Each of the Poles had highly international work experience and excellent command of the English language. The author has also received continuous training in English throughout his educational life, starting from the early youth. Thus, no difficulties in conducting the interviews in English were met.

Taken together, the interviews focused predominantly on the experiences of the two Finnish project managers in coping with cultural differences and developing cross cultural collaboration. These views were complemented and verified by the interviews with the other Finnish key personnel. In order to gain understanding of the Polish perspective, the Polish project manager and the CEO of the Polish subsidiary were interviewed. However, these informants were each interviewed only once. In order to

gain more understanding of the Polish perspectives and viewpoints, the Polish project manager was contacted for additional interviews several times. However, all of these requests were refused. The Polish CEO also became unavailable for further interviews, as he left the company. As a consequence, the analysis and representation of the empirical data in this paper focuses on the Finnish perspective, although it is complemented by the Polish perspectives whenever possible.

During the data collection period, the author also carried out a consultancy project in the Finnish parent company. In this project the author acted as a process consultant (Schein, 1999), rather than as an external expert. Designing and implementing this project involved numerous discussions with the company representatives and the Finnish managers of the EPC PROJECT, which served to deepen the author's understanding of the project. These discussions were not tape recorded, however, the author wrote down detailed memos during all of them. In addition, secondary data such as monthly project progress reports, project design reports, contractual documents between the Finns and the Poles, samples from internal correspondence, earlier studies conducted in the Finnish parent company, as well as newspaper and other media articles were included in the data collection. This kind of data was mainly used to complement the interviews and in many places to verify the accuracy of the interview data.

The data collection started out by interviewing the two Finnish project managers. The purpose was to familiarize the author with the project management's view on the course of events in the EPC PROJECT. The interviews began with *descriptive questions* (see Spradley, 1979) by asking the interviewees to tell about the project in their own words. Following Spradley (1979), the specific questions used were, for example: "Could you tell me about the EPC PROJECT in your own words?" or "From your point of view, could you tell me, what is it that this project was all about?" After these introductory questions, the interviews proceeded to inquire about the project progress. The questions asked were, for example: "Could you give me a grand tour of the project, what has happened?" or "Could you tell me about some of the most memorable events of the project for you?" The idea was to gradually pinpoint and focus on how the project managers remembered different project situations and phases, i.e. what had happened,

what had been done, and what had been the consequences? In the spirit of Brannen and Salk (2000), references to cultural differences or (national) cultural identities were initially avoided by the author as far as possible. However, it quickly became obvious that all the interviewees referred to this kind of discourse throughout their accounts. Thus, the author also felt permitted to use such discourse in the subsequent interviews.

Each interview was transcribed as well as discussed between the author, one research colleague, and one professor. The purpose of such group analysis was to determine the main findings of each interview as well as to provide direction for further inquiry. As more data were gathered and analyzed, a plot-like story gradually began to evolve, depicting the main events of the EPC PROJECT. Further interviews and the relevant informants were then determined on the basis of filling in the "blanks" in the previously collected data. Thus, as the interviews progressed, they became gradually more focused and structured, leading to discovering different perspectives and interpretations on the project events. However, special care was taken in ensuring that even in the later interviews the interviewees were not strictly guided by the author. The purpose was to let through the interviewees' own story, while the author, from time to time, could point out issues for elaboration based on the "blanks" or ambiguities in the data.

Data analysis

The data analysis proceeded in three distinct stages. Firstly, a written synthesis and process description was created, which focused on describing the development of the cooperation between the Finns and the Poles as it was conveyed by the interviewees. This description provided a view according to which cooperation throughout the project oscillated constantly between times of significant cross cultural conflicts and times of increased collaboration and mutual adaptation. Secondly, this process description was regrouped into specific phases according to where significant cross cultural challenges were met in the project. The specific actions taken and the processes that the project management seemingly had to go through when coping with the cultural differences in these phases were also described. This regrouping verified that all the three basic principles (ignore, minimize, utilize), as well as cross cultural integration and

segregation as a means to cope with the cultural differences appeared in this project. More importantly, this round of analysis revealed that the actions and processes involved in coping with the cultural differences were different in kind, and that they could be distinguished according to the "essence" they seemed to reflect. Hence, the overall process of coping with the cultural differences could be seen to consist of several distinct, but interlinked elements that were labeled by the author as *cognitive*, *affective*, *rationalistic*, and *coercive*. At the final stage, these distinct elements were taken as a focus of recategorizing the data.

In the following analysis, empirical evidence from the interviews on these four distinct elements is presented separately. However, as will be elaborated in the discussion following the analysis, their interplay is also reflected upon and further elaborated on in the concluding sections of this paper. The empirical evidence is presented in the order of dominance that these elements played in the interview accounts (cf. Vaara, 2002). Hence, as evidence pointing to the *cognitive* and *affective* elements was given the most emphasis in these accounts, they are presented first. These are then followed by the descriptions on the *rationalistic* and the *coercive* elements, which were both given relatively less emphasis in the interview accounts.

In the following analysis, the existence of cultural differences is understood based on the *relational* perspective to cultures (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004; Barinaga, 2007). According to this view, in cross national interaction (national) cultural differences "come into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultural communities" (Søderberg & Holden, 2002: 112), hence being dependent on the actors involved and comparisons made. Thus, in the following analysis cultural differences are assumed to emerge and exist as the interviewees' subjectively experience them, instead of being objective entities induced by an outside researcher. The cultural understanding in this paper also builds on the "culture as a metaphor" perspective advocated especially in organizational culture studies (Smircich, 1983; Martin, 2002). According to this perspective, for example, working and management practices within a certain work group can be considered as cultural features to the extent, that they are shared and accepted within that group, as

well as similar kinds of meanings are attached to these practices by the group members. To the extent that these shared practices and the meanings attached to them differ *between* groups, cultural differences can then be seen to exist in that group population.

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Cognitive elements of coping with the cultural differences

Based on the interview accounts, it can be seen that the process of coping with cultural differences and developing cross cultural collaboration consisted predominantly of *cognitive* elements. Central to these was learning to understand the cultural differences and the rationale behind the worldview of the "others", as well as to adapt and make behavioral adjustments based on such learning.

An illustration of the cognitive elements could be found, for example, from the early phases of the EPC PROJECT. Of those times a Finnish project manager recalled that the initial signs of the disagreements and conflicts between the Finnish and Polish project teams gradually began to emerge as the operations in Poland began to pick up pace. The origins of the disagreements were described in the following way:

> *"[The disagreements] started when the operations in Poland became active, and they started mostly from the different views of understanding what are the grounds for selecting for example the subcontractors ... it's a project execution related thing that a foreigner easily has in foreign markets, that you usually select the subcontractors based on hard facts. But our Polish organization had to think about the implications that these selections had on the local market, how is the [the Polish subsidiary] that they manage perceived in that market, and how are they perceived in the future... especially in that kind of culture like Poland it's more important that you have the connections and relationships and you understand to work together... In Finland and in Germany we usually look at the numbers, facts, and references, and make the selection based on cold numbers" (Finnish project manager)*

In order to cope with these cultural differences, the partners seemed to be able to agree and utilize the cultural differences by selecting some of the subcontractors according to the local way. However, it also seems evident that this kind of understanding and

agreement developed as a consequence of a specific learning process that the Finnish project managers seemed to undergo. As described by a Finnish project manager:

> "For example, one subcontractor was like, we thought it was financially unstable. Looking at the numbers we would've taken the second one... But this company was a local company in the town where we were working on [the EPC PROJECT]. And this town is like many other Polish towns, where they cut down industry and close firms, and there's lots of unemployed... And at last we gave the job to this company like our local guys suggested, or advised. And this was thought to be very positive in that situation and in that town where we were like three, four years... In fact, [the subcontractor] went bankrupt later, but at least we helped it for a little time. These sorts of things come back very quickly to your project in that kind of culture. [If one does not help] it can make it difficult to take care of something else, someone can think that it has been our fault, that this [subcontractor] has gone bankrupt... this is just part of the soft issues that a new contractor has to learn... but at first we just couldn't understand it the way [the Polish project managers] did." (Finnish project manager)

Another example of cognitive elements contributing to coping with cultural differences could be seen during the execution phase of the EPC PROJECT. During those times, it gradually became evident that the differences in project management and execution practices between the partners began to hinder cooperation. In the face of these cultural differences, a tendency for the Finns to impose their ways of working on the Poles emerged. From the Polish perspective, however, this was considered as arrogance that not only strained the relations within the project organization, but also harmed the cooperation with the local third parties:

> "If somebody doesn't like to listen, even being on a working level, and is forcing his own decisions at the management level, this is arrogance... We had a strategy for the market at that time... and we needed local partners with this strategy... and for example, it was right after I had a very good discussion with the CEO of [one partner] company... there is a phone call from this CEO and he named a supervisor from Finland who had made him angry by saying that: "You don't know how to do it, it must be done this and that way." (Polish CEO)

As one way of coping with these tensions, it seemed that minimizing the implications of cultural differences by cultural segregation gradually emerged, allowing each party to

operate in their own characteristic ways. However, at least from the Finnish perspective, moving towards this kind of state required a learning process that was said to take place during everyday operations:

> *"[For example] when we learned to know how good [a certain Polish team member] is, how well he does what he does, we kind of learned to give him some slack, we didn't doubt him, we didn't watch after him. By watching him do his job we figured out we could let him have lots of responsibility… and I have to say, when we learned to trust these guys during this project, we weren't so strict with the one and only right way to do things… For example, [the Polish project manager's] strong role and skills in managing the site led to a situation where, I'd say halfway from the execution phase, might have been even earlier, the site organization and all those practicalities and leading were done the way he saw best. He did it in his way and did an excellent job, I'll have to admit." (Finnish project manager)*

Such learning processes among the project managers were also recognized by the Finnish vice president:

> *"…[in the EPC PROJECT] the project managers also had this Finland – Poland fight naturally, but then when these guys kind of found each others' strengths, their responsibilities were modified so that each had an area where he was strong, so that helped it a lot." (Finnish vice president)*

Cognitive elements were also described to be a source of possibilities to partly ignore cultural differences as well as to minimize their implications by providing buffers between the conflicting parties. One example of this took place towards the end of the project, when a significant delay in the project progress occurred. In order to catch up with this, it was described that the project execution process was significantly sped up. At this stage, it also seemed that the Finns once again strongly imposed their ways of operating on the Poles. When reflecting on their possibilities for such behavior, a Finnish project manager described the following:

> *"I don't want to claim any unnecessary credits, but I think that it had something to do with me and [a Finnish colleague] already familiarizing ourselves with the Poles since 1996. We kind of knew what it is in their objections and resistance that has to be taken seriously and what we can just be bypassed, and what are the strings that we have to pull in order to*

get them to accept our decisions. However, it seemed that our supervisors below us had more difficulties when the Polish project management kind of overrode them, so we were able to kind of mitigate those situations." (Finnish project manager)

Thus, it seems that even the ability to ignore cultural differences seemed to require a learning process that built on getting to understand and distinguish between those aspects that could be ignored from those that could not be bypassed. As also becomes evident, this kind of understanding seemed to permit Finnish project managers to act as buffers between the conflicting parties, and in that way to minimize the negative consequences of cultural differences.

Affective elements of coping with the cultural differences

In the interview accounts, it became evident that *affective* elements were also highly central to the process of coping with the cultural distance and developing cross cultural collaboration. These kinds of elements were about emotions and mostly marked by the emerging sense of togetherness and common commitments, as well as mutual respect and trust between the two parties.

Such affective elements could be seen to take place, for example, during the early execution phase of the EPC PROJECT. As implied above, it initially seemed that the whole project organization was heading towards a highly polarized state between the two partners. For example, the Polish project manager described that:

"In general, the challenge in this kind of project is that of two countries, they split into two camps. In this project, it was worse because the design was in Finland while the [project was carried out] in Poland."

At that time, the decisions regarding the management structure of the project, as well as the status and positions of the Finnish and Polish project managers had already been a matter of debate. In addition, the Finnish project managers described that they had favored the use of a significant number of Finnish expatriates in the project organization on site in Poland, which especially seemed to aggravate the growing tensions.

Eventually, these were said to have escalated as the differences in the project management and execution practices between the two parties collided.

As one form of managerial intervention for alleviating these tensions and developing cross cultural collaboration, a series of team building sessions were set up for the whole project organization. Consequently, it seemed that these sessions provided a time and a place where affective processes generating possibilities to develop cross cultural collaboration began to take place. As explained by a Finnish project manager:

> *"...as I said we had this Finland – Poland fight right at the beginning ... so we set up four of these kinds of sessions where we have tried to get people to understand that this is one project, this is one company, and we are all in the same boat, and we are doing the same project, and we should have the same goal, and stuff like this. So that we could make this cooperation and mutual understanding work, and I think we have succeeded pretty well."*

As becomes evident, the team building sessions seemed to serve for the development of a sense of togetherness and unity, contributing to the minimizing of cultural differences. In other words, this seemed to build towards establishing a sense of common goals and identity between the conflicting parties, and assimilating the cultural differences into an overarching project culture.

As described by the Polish CEO, these sessions were also considered to be a place catalyzing the emergence of mutual respect between the parties:

> *"... both of the sides, when they met first time for two or three days in a remote place, realized that they represent really the [same] values, experience, and professionalism, so they started to respect each other and it was very important."*

In addition, the Finnish project managers emphasized that the team building sessions were perceived, first and foremost, to catalyze the process of establishing mutual trust between the two partners:

> *"[The external consultant] was the one who understood what the disagreements were all about, he was the one who showed us that they were about the distrust both parties had towards each other's methods and work habits. Before that, we couldn't understand it, we were just annoyed because [the Poles] didn't seem to play by the same rules as us…"* (Finnish project manager)

However, as brought out in the following elaboration, establishing trust between the partners was especially seen as a slow and gradual process taking place during the everyday work rather than being an immediate outcome resulting from the team building sessions:

> *"…but I'd like to add that the trust wasn't created in those sessions. It's like they served more to open up things that were behind the distrust… but I'd say that the trust was created only by working together day by day."* (Finnish project manager)

Combining these notions then with those described in the preceding section, it is also evident that the emergence of trust, at least from the Finnish perspective, was interlinked with the cognitive elements of coping with the cultural differences. Thus, gradually learning to understand each others' capabilities seemingly lead to the establishment of mutual trust towards each others' operating methods, and resulted in the lessening of the Finns' tendency to impose their ways of operating on the Poles. This also allowed cultural diversity to exist. In other words, in the EPC PROJECT the combination of the cognitive and affective elements seemed, on the one hand, to contribute to possibilities to integrate the project organization and, on the other hand, gradually allowed each party to operate in the way most familiar to them.

Rationalistic elements of coping with the cultural differences

Compared to the two previous, in the interview accounts less emphasis was put in elements of coping with the cultural differences that could be best described as *rationalistic*. These were characterized by the traditional management ideal of rational reasoning and deliberate, sometimes anticipatory action for containing the cultural clashes and promoting the possibilities for effective cross cultural collaboration.

Notions implying such rationalistic elements during the EPC PROJECT could be already found from times prior to the execution phase of the project. For example, the Polish CEO recalled the following:

> *"We also faced these problems [of cooperation between the Finns and the Poles] fortunately before the complex projects like [the EPC PROJECT] or others came, and we had to solve them… we started to work on how to solve it, me and the CEO at that time in Finland… and usually it took us, any new principles of cooperation took us a couple of months from the decision between us to the implementation… I understood that, as in [the EPC PROJECT] the financial closing was postponed, we had time for building up the team. If we would not have had this time, the storming phase of the team would have happened at the time we should already be focused on project execution…"*

As illustrated by this excerpt, these elements involved the kind of mentality and action usually attributed with rational management processes, i.e. anticipating the future, selecting between alternatives, and choosing and making decisions on appropriate action and ways to proceed.

This kind of deliberate and rational action targeted at coping with the cultural differences was also implied by a Finnish project manager:

> *"We were conscious, and we tried to understand that it's possible that there's this kind of cross cultural clash… it was like we had conflicts that we tried to, one way or another, but very consciously manage and reduce."*

In the following excerpt, and as a part of the rationalistic elements of coping with the cultural differences related to the project management and execution practices, a Finnish project manager also elaborates on how it came to be that he and his Finnish colleague decided to move on the project site in Poland for the project execution phase. As can be seen, in addition to being a kind of rational decision, this act also seems to contain linkages with the cognitive (i.e. learning to understand the different worldviews) and affective (i.e. developing mutual trust) elements in achieving cross cultural collaboration:

> *"We went there because we had already executed projects in Poland, so we had learned to know the country and those ways to operate there… so we thought that if we were on site we can be near all the time… it's easier to manage the project… You could also interpret this so that we didn't fully trust that our Polish part of the project management team can execute this whole thing by themselves… So neither of them had, you know, [our company] way to manage and do these things."*

During the actual execution phase of the EPC PROJECT, the rationalistic elements involved in coping with the cultural differences and developing cross cultural collaboration were described, for example, in the following way:

> *"Many times after a problematic situation or meeting I had to meet with our Finnish supervisors and we had to discuss these matters through. We discussed that when people come from different backgrounds, we just have to accept and understand that there are many ways of reaching a certain milestone. It can't be that ours would be the one and only way… And I also stressed, that after a specific target and approach has been set, we have to use all our skills to proceed to that target along the path we have chosen, whether or not we think that it could be reached with another, perhaps more familiar way." (Finnish project manager)*

Thus, the rationalistic elements could be seen to consist of appeals to pure reasoning for accepting the cultural differences. The excerpt above also implies the ways in which the project managers acted as a buffer or a mediating link between the conflicting parties, and in that way contributed to minimizing the implications of cultural differences.

Once again, the rationalistic elements were also implied to link together with the affective elements of establishing mutual respect and trust between the two parties. For example, a Finnish project manager described the following with regard to the aforementioned team building sessions:

> *"…in these sessions, for example, we simply made a list of who has done what. As I said, it was like the Poles thought that can the Finns execute these kinds of projects and the Finns thought that, well, can the Poles execute any modern project whatsoever. So [the consultant] made this huge paper on the wall, where we put names and after a name we wrote that who has done what. So there you could clearly see that who has been doing what kind of a project and when."*

In this excerpt, the Finnish project manager described how the creation of mutual respect and trust required explicit action in bringing out and objectively authenticating the experience, capabilities, and skills of the two parties. This kind of action was then considered integral in gradually building towards the possibilities for minimizing the likelihood of the cultural clashes by developing acceptance for each party to operate in the way most familiar to them.

Another example of the rational elements used to minimize the likelihood of cultural clashes was given by a Finnish project manager:

> *"We were already finalizing the project… and our Finnish specialists, they had this way of operating that they go through the process charts and they use this kind of colored marking style describing the sequence, and they also mark with colors those things that have been already taken care of… and without their knowledge, we also converted these to Polish and made Excel sheets where we didn't use the process charts. We kind of translated the process charts into verbal form… so we did the same thing simultaneously in two different ways, without the parties becoming aware of it more or less."*

Thus, this example illustrates how the two different ways to accomplish a certain task were deliberately isolated from each other, aiming at minimizing the likelihood of clashes and conflicts between the two parties.

Coercive elements of coping with the cultural differences

Finally, a relatively little emphasized elements involved in the process of coping with cultural differences and developing cross cultural collaboration between the two contesting parties could be described as *coercive*. At the heart of the coercive elements was the exercise of managerial power and authority for minimizing the implications of the cultural differences or for deliberately ignoring them.

For example, and as briefly mentioned above, towards the end of the project a significant delay suddenly appeared. This was said to be caused by certain activities by the project client. Consequently, for the first time during the EPC PROJECT, a threat of

having to postpone some of the targeted end dates of the project emerged. However, the Finnish project managers emphasized that they did not want this to happen, and as a result a vigorous speeding up of the project progress was initiated. The Finnish project managers described this as a situation where they also felt compelled to take matters into their own hands:

> *"In that situation we felt like we wanted to keep matters in our own hands, we started to run the daily operations… However, there were situations where we weren't so diplomatic. We rather pushed the decisions through than searched for a "Swedish" style of consensus. There was the timetable pressure, and we kind of acted based on our experience and what we felt right. We still tried to discuss matters so that we could make fact based decisions. But it was more like "the one who knows, wins" rather than looking for consensus or compromises." (A Finnish project manager)*

Thus, it seems that in this situation the Finns utilized the dominant position they seemed to possess, leading to the momentary strengthening of the attempts to impose their ways of operating on the Poles. Consequently, cultural differences between the two parties were seemingly ignored.

However, it is noteworthy to emphasize here that, as described above, such deliberate ignoring of cultural differences was linked to the cognitive elements, being purportedly facilitated by the Finnish project managers learning to understand those aspects in the Poles' resistance that could be ignored and bypassed. As stated by a Finnish project manager:

> *"I don't want to claim any unnecessary credits, but I think that it had something to do with me and [a Finnish colleague] already familiarizing ourselves with the Poles since 1996. We kind of knew what is it in their objections and resistance that has to be taken seriously and what we can just be bypassed, and what are the strings that we have to pull in order to get them to accept our decisions."*

Hence, in this way the possibilities to ignore cultural differences were argued to be dependent on the particular learning processes that the project managers had experienced.

Another example of the coercive elements seemed to occur when, also towards the end of the project, a new team of specialists was brought in from Finland in order to take care of a special project phase. This was to be carried out in collaboration with a Polish team. However, once again this seemed to highlight the cultural differences and aggravate the cultural clashes in the EPC PROJECT. As described by a Finnish project manager:

> *"We had two supervisors, a Finn and a Pole, and the process was supposed to be the Finn's responsibility, and the Pole was supposed to make sure that everything goes according to the Polish standards and regulations. And we at the project management thought that, well, they'll get along. But it failed. In this case the Polish manager, for example, spoke Polish to his guys, and, well the Finnish manager, he and a couple of other guys, they just were there and talked to nobody… This was really bad and eventually we couldn't accept it. [This] was such a busy phase that you don't have time to wait that these guys get to know themselves."*

In addition, the Finns once again in this situation were claimed to show the tendency to impose their ways of doing things on the Poles, just as had been the case earlier in the project. This also seemed to resurface the polarization of the project organization between the two parties.

However, as emphasized by the Finnish project manager, this was a pressing phase of the project, and a natural, "cognitive way" of coping with the cultural differences, i.e. relying on the two teams to learn to know and appreciate each other, and consequently utilize the cultural differences and synergy would be too time consuming. Thus, to cope with the situation, it seemed that on the one hand, coercion and managerial authority was used to minimize the cross cultural clashes by making adjustments to team composition. As can be seen from the following excerpt, this also became coupled with the cognitive elements related to gradually learning the most effective ways to cope with the cultural differences in different kinds of project situations:

> *"Eventually we had to do it like we had a couple of times earlier and that is that we had to choose in this situation what resource fit better into the team, even if we had to lose a lot of competence. So in this way we had to let the Finnish supervisor go, and we lost a lot of competence in that. But*

we kept his number two guy, as well as the Polish supervisor…" (Finnish project manager)

On the other hand, it seemed that the project managers on both sides also exercised their rights to decide on the responsibilities and duties themselves. As a consequence:

> *"…and we also started to do it by ourselves in the sense that we took this process under our wings so to say, so we didn't leave [the Finnish and Polish specialists] by themselves… It was like, the three of us, we took it under daily control and we started to manage it by ourselves… and I was there always… like a mitigator in this situation. Normally we wouldn't have done it this way, normally we have the specialists taking care of these things." (Finnish project manager)*

Thus, as a consequence of such coercive actions, the Finnish and Polish project managers also seemed to minimize the harmful implications of cultural differences by acting as a buffer and a mediating link between the two parties.

5. DISCUSSION

As can be seen, in this highly complex project, which nevertheless was marked by project management success (as distinct from project success, see Cooke-Davies, 2002), all the three basic principles introduced in prior scholarly literature on coping with the cultural differences were apparent. Thus, the empirical analysis reveals that the Finnish project managers of the EPC PROJECT not only *ignored* cultural differences, but also attempted to *minimize* them and their negative implications as well *utilize* the differences for the benefit of the project. Hence, in line with the arguments in the existing literature, the analysis shows that a combination of the basic cross cultural coping principles were being employed, sometimes all three appearing simultaneously (Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Chevrier, 2003). Also in line with the existing literature, the analysis highlighted that multiple variants of a particular principle could be used in order to cope with a certain cross cultural challenge. Furthermore, as could also be seen, coping with the cultural differences involved both *integration* in the form of creating unity and sameness, and *differentiation* in allowing each party to operate in the ways most familiar to them.

However, the specific purpose of this paper was to provide a glimpse at how complex a process it can be for project managers to actually achieve these basic principles of coping with cultural differences. As the paper built mostly on the experiences of the Finnish project managers', who could be described to be in a dominant position as the representatives of the parent company and the technology provider, the paper especially showcases how complex a process this can be even for managers in such a position. Consequently, building on the empirical analysis, this paper highlighted that the process of coping with cultural differences was characterized by four distinct elements labeled as *cognitive*, *affective*, *rationalistic*, and *coercive*. In other words, it seemed that producing the basic principles required to cope with cultural differences, at least from the Finnish perspective, required all these four elements.

In the interview accounts, references implying to the *cognitive* elements were the most frequent. From this perspective, coping with cultural differences and developing cross cultural collaboration required gradual learning to understand the cultural differences between the partners and the rationale behind the worldview of the "others". The second highly central element in the cross cultural coping process was that of *affective*, implying that a sense of togetherness as well as mutual respect and trust had to be achieved for both creating unity between the two parties as well as allowing each one to operate on the way most familiar to them. Thirdly, *rationalistic* elements were involved, which consisted of deliberate, rational action taken to minimize the likelihood of cultural clashes, as well as explicit reasoning in order to accept the existence of cultural heterogeneity. Finally, and also of lesser emphasis were the *coercive* elements that coping with the cultural differences seemed call for, especially during the more challenging project phases. These were marked by the exercise of the project managerial power and authority for minimizing the likelihood of cross cultural clashes and for acting as a buffer between the contesting parties.

Adding to the previous literature on cross cultural processes (Vaara, 2000), the empirical analysis in this paper also highlighted important linkages and tight coupling between these different elements (cf. Weick, 1990; Inkpen & Currall, 2004). More

specifically, in this multidimensional interplay, at least from the Finnish perspective, highly central were the cognitive elements and the gradual learning to understand the cultural differences between the project partners, as well as an acknowledgement of their respective strengths and capabilities. These elements seemed to be fundamental, gradually contributing to the emergence of the affective aspects related to the establishment of mutual respect and trust between the partners. That is, as the different worldviews became more familiar, and as the capabilities and strengths of the partners were recognized, this seemingly also led to the gradual development of respect and trust between the partners. Consequently, both integration and unity as well as differentiation and cultural segregation (i.e. the possibilities to allow each party to operate in the way most familiar to them) gradually seemed to emerge, leading to the lessening of the cultural clashes. Interestingly, and in contrast with some arguments emphasizing operative integration (e.g. Schneider, 1995), this seems to suggest that a project organization could be "integrated" and "united" despite that the parties operate in ways that are most familiar to them. That is, it seemed to be the cognitive and affective elements manifesting as the sense of mutual trust and cross cultural acceptance being the uniting element, despite that the cultural groups could operate in totally different ways.

Similarly, the empirical analysis in this paper highlighted that many of the rationalistic elements involved in the process of coping with the cultural differences could become intertwined with the cognitive and affective elements. For example, the decision with regard to the Finnish project managers' relocation to the project site was considered a feasible option due to their prior learning and accumulated experience in working in the Polish market. In addition, this deliberate decision could be seen as one part in the series of actions aimed at achieving the necessary mutual trust between the partners. As also shown, in order to achieve this trust and respect, and consequently to allow the emergence of cultural segregation within the project organization, deliberate actions had to be taken, for example during the team building sessions, for verifying the skills and capabilities of the partners (e.g. compiling the list illustrating explicitly the prior experience of the partners). At the same time, this seemed to call for explicit appeals to

pure reasoning in order to accept the existence of multiple, culturally dependent ways to reach a particular objective.

Even the coercive elements could be seen to become intertwined with the cognitive elements and the learning processes during the project. This could be seen, for example, in the catch-up of the suddenly occurring delay during the final stages of the project, where the Finns seemed to strongly impose their ways of operating on the Poles. However, as brought out by the Finnish project manager, this kind of deliberate, coercive action was purportedly facilitated by the Finnish project managers learning to understand those aspects of the Poles' resistance that could be ignored and bypassed, allowing them to mitigate the emerging clashes. In this pressing situation, the affective elements also surfaced, as the deliberate ignoring of cultural differences was seemingly driven by the trust of one's own ways of operating rather than that of the others. Moreover, when the clashes between the Finnish and Polish specialists and their teams in the final stages of the project occurred, the Finnish project managers stressed that the decision to let the Finnish specialist go was strongly influenced by their prior experience and learning, according to which it was more beneficial to choose those people who fit better into the team even at the expense of losing technical competence. Furthermore, this decision was also linked to the cognitive elements in the sense that it was argued that there was not enough time to let the Finnish and Polish specialists go through the necessary cognitive process of learning to accept each other. Thus, coercive actions had to be resorted to.

Based on these insights, this paper then extends and complements many a common notion and argument in the existing cross cultural management literature. Firstly, the paper extends the purely stereotypical portrayals present in many a cross cultural management research in general, and in the cultural project management studies in particular. That is, in this research, cultures are often portrayed in a kind of stereotypical, either – or fashion (see e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Pheng & Yucuan, 2002; Tan & Chong, 2003; Chen & Partington, 2004; Shore & Cross, 2005; Zwikael & al., 2005; deCamprieu & al., 2007). Hence, for example, Finns are described, to be low – and consequently not high – in the cultural dimension of power distance

(Hofstede, 1980, 1991). Yet, according to the evidence in this paper, towards the Poles the Finns seemed to exhibit tendencies in accordance with high power distance. Hence, these contrasting observations are in favor of the views according to which "cultural behavior" is strongly dependent on the situation and the combination of the interacting cultural groups (Osland & Bird, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003).

Secondly, and as a consequence of the argument expressed above, this paper extends the popular "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" -maxim present implicitly or explicitly in many a cross cultural management study (see e.g. Trompenaars, 1993; Newman & Nollen, 1996; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Javidan & al, 2006). To be more specific, in the existing studies, for example, the Poles have been considered to be high in power distance (Maczynski & al., 1997; Gajewsksa-de Mattos & al., 2004). Yet, when the Finns exhibited similar behavior towards the Poles, i.e. did as the Romans do, this seemingly aroused heavy resistance. Specifying and verifying the particular reasons leading to such resistance is beyond the scope of this research. However, in some of the interviews with the Poles, it was brought out that the Finns were taken as people belonging to the former Soviet bloc, which was a common target of resistance for the Poles. In other interviews it was speculated that the Finns' behavior violated the Poles identification with their own superiors. Hence, these notions also point to the significance of the particular combination of the interacting cultural groups (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003) and to the importance of taking into account the particular national background of the dominant party (cf. Morgan, 2007). These notions also point to the need to go beyond the popular stereotypical cultural understanding, towards more refined situation and context dependent cultural understanding.

Thirdly, the paper presents somewhat of a challenge to the cultural determinism often present in cultural project management studies (e.g. Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Henrie & Sousa-Poza, 2005; Shore & Cross, 2005; Dinsmore & Codas, 2006). As expressed earlier, in these studies cultural differences are predominantly seen as a source of project problems and failures. However, this paper showcases that cultural

differences do not necessarily undermine successful delivery of a project. Moreover, in many a cultural study, it is assumed that the "larger" the cultural differences (i.e. cultural distance) between the cultural groups, the more likely it is to cause problems (Kogut & Singh, 1988; Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997). Conversely, the greater the cultural "fit", the more successful the cross cultural collaboration is predicted to be (Newman & Nollen, 1996). However, this paper shows that even though the Finnish and Polish project teams could be considered as "possessing" large a priori cultural differences/and distance (see Maczynski & al., 1997), successful project delivery was still possible. Consequently, this paper argues against the views according to which cultural clashes, cultural subgroup salience, emotional conflicts, task conflicts, and behavioral disintegration would necessarily be sources of poor performance (e.g. Li & Hambrick, 2005). This strengthens the arguments that cross cultural organizations with large a priori cultural differences can still be high performing (Salk & Brannen, 2000). Moreover, this highlights that high performing organizations can be riddled with conflicts and that the decisive factors – or combination of factors – have to be searched for elsewhere.

Finally, the paper extends the common unidirectional assumptions in cross cultural management research in two important ways. First, in the existing literature ignoring cultural differences is often considered, implicitly or explicitly, as something negative, whereas cultural synergy and utilizing the cultural differences is seen as commendable (Hoecklin, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). However, as shown in this paper, this can be highly dependent on the situation as, for example, during the abrupt delay towards the end of the project, ignoring the cultural differences seemed to be a viable option[5]. Second, the common assumption of the benefits and need of integrating the cross cultural organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Olie, 1994) are also strongly reflected in the existing project management literature (Schneider, 1995; Dinsmore & Codas, 2006). On the other hand, some studies also point out the benefits

---

[5] This does not, however, imply in any way that the Finnish way would have been the only alternative in this situation, as the Polish way could also have been equally effective. Rather, the point here is that in such a situation, it seems to be important to quickly revert to whatever corrective actions there might be which can lead to or may require ignoring cultural differences.

and need of cultural autonomy (Slangen, 2006). However, this paper favors instead a view that successfully coping with cultural differences can depend on constant balancing between homogeneity and integration as well as heterogeneity and differentiation during the different stages and parts of the project. Consequently, instead of being a unidirectional search for a static, homogenous or heterogeneous state of affairs, coping with cultural differences can call for a dynamic process built on living with constant "acculturative tension" (Elsass & Veiga, 1994).

Hence, to summarize, from a cultural perspective this paper then extends the idea of a unidirectional, deterministic way of "successfully" coping with cultural differences or managing in a multicultural project. Moreover, the paper challenges the idea of using cultural stereotypes in predicting the outcomes of cross cultural interaction in an international project environment (cf. Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Shore & Cross, 2005; Javidan & al., 2006). As has been highlighted in this study, both of these processes can be dependent, for example, on such "uncontrollable" elements as social learning and emotions, making them highly unpredictable beforehand. Hence, this makes it extremely difficult to predict, from the cultural perspective, the outcomes of cross cultural interaction and multicultural projects in international settings.

As shown in this paper, a managerially successful project can still be achieved despite many a missing "critical success factor" (cf. Söderlund, 2004; Newman & Nollen; 1996). Consequently, this strengthens the suggestions that the complex interplay of the elements that *are* present in a particular project (Weick, 1990; Inkpen & Currall, 2004) is decisive. Hence, this paper is in line with the views expressing that (cultural) management studies could benefit from detailed, in-depth case analyses of the actual lived experiences of managers (cf. Söderlund, 2004; Cicmil & al., 2006), as well as from in-depth examinations of the interlinkedness of the different factors affecting the outcome of a project.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to examine and analyze what kind of managerial and leadership process is required for the project manager(s) to cope and live with cultural differences, while helping the project teams they lead to achieve effective cross cultural collaboration. The empirical focus was a complex Finnish – Polish engineering project carried out in Poland by a Finnish parent company and its Polish subsidiary. From a research point of view, this project was interesting because an established view in the existing literature is that both successful projects and effective cross cultural cooperation is often highly difficult to achieve (Cooke-Davies, 2002; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). Yet, empirical evidence from the project studied implies that in this particular case, both project management success as well as cross cultural cooperation were effective enough to allow project delivery within time, on budget, and according to the planned quality specifications. Inspired by such an outcome this paper then provided an in-depth examination into the ways in which the Finnish project managers in this particular case coped with the cultural differences as well as contributed to achieving cross cultural collaboration between the Finnish – Polish project teams.

Building on the empirical analysis, this paper revealed four distinct elements in the process that the Finnish project managers seemingly went through during the different stages of the project. These were described as *cognitive*, *affective*, *rationalistic*, and *coercive*. Highlighting these elements then added to the existing cross cultural management literature by illustrating how complex and multifaceted process it could be to cope with the cultural differences even for managers that could be deemed to be in a dominant position. Consequently, the paper highlighted how this could become a process calling for the complex interplay of learning, emotions, reasoning and adaptation, as well as explicit, coercive actions, which ultimately manifested as the basic principles of coping with the cultural differences that have been introduced in the prior literature. Consequently, building on these insights this paper then extended the stereotypical cultural portrayals and the popular "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" -maxim, arguing for the need for more fine-grained cultural understanding in instances

of cross cultural management. In addition, the paper extended many of the deterministic and unidirectional arguments related to achieving high performance and successful cross cultural collaboration.

This paper and the research results are affected by the usual limitations relating to the use of retrospective data on the basis of the analysis (March & Sutton, 1997). Thus, the informants may not have been able to accurately recall past events, and in the face of the complexity of the examined process, they may have been compelled to revert to (causal) oversimplifications (ibid.). However, in order to lessen the impact of these limitations, the data were collected from multiple informants representing multiple viewpoints as well as by using different kinds of sources, such as interviews, discussions, project progress reports, and other secondary sources. Thus, it was possible to verify from multiple sources the accuracy of the most salient pieces of data and arguments introduced in this paper.

In addition, as the paper builds on an inductive, single case study approach aimed at theory generation rather than hypothesis testing (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), the research results are bound to be case-specific rather than being readily generalizable to other contexts. Case-specificity is also increased by the inherently context specific ways to cope with the cultural differences (Chevrier, 2003). However, the purpose of this paper has been to contribute to the existing cross cultural management literature by providing one illustrative sample of the lived experiences of the cross cultural managers, instead of giving a prescriptive, normative sample of what should be done. In addition, the author believes that in relation to the results presented here, similar kinds of elements involved in the processes of coping with the cultural differences can also be found elsewhere in other cross cultural contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Adler, N. (1986) *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior.* Boston: Kent Publishing Company.

Adler, N. (1997) *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 3rd edition.* Boston: Kent Publishing Company.

Barinaga, E. (2007) "Cultural Diversity" at Work: "National Culture" as a Discourse Organizing an International Project Group. *Human Relations*, 60, 2, 315-340.

Barkema, H.G. and Vermeulen, F. (1997) What Differences in the Cultural Backgrounds of Partners are Detrimental for International Joint Ventures? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 28, 4, 845-864.

Binder, J. (2007) *Global Project Management: Communication, Collaboration and Management across Borders.* Burlington: Gower Publishing.

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.

Cartwright, S. and Cooper, C. (1993) The Role of Culture Compatibility in Successful Organizational Marriage. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 7, 57-67.

Chan, E.H.W. and Tse, R.Y.C. (2003) Cultural Considerations in International Construction Contracts. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 129, 4, 375-381.

Chen, P. and Partington, D. (2004) An Interpretive Comparison of Chinese and Western Conceptions of Relationships in Construction Project Management Work. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 397-406.

Chevrier, S. (2003) Cross-Cultural Management in Multinational Project Groups. *Journal of World Business*, 38, 141-149.

Cicmil, S., Williams, T., Thomas, J., and Hodgson, D. (2006) Rethinking Project Management: Researching the Actuality of Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 24, 675-686.

Cooke-Davies, T. (2002) The "Real" Success Factors on Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 20, 185-190.

De Camprieu, R., Desbiens, J. and Feixue, Y. (2007) Cultural Differences in Project Risk Perception: An Empirical Comparison of China and Canada. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 7, 683-693.

De Wit, A. (1988) Measurement of Project Success. *International Journal of Project Management*, 6, 3, 164-170.

Deal, T. and Kennedy, A. (1982) *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life.* Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Dinsmore, P.C. and Codas, M.M.B. (2006) Cultural Challenges in Managing International Projects. In Dinsmore, P.C. and Cabanis-Brewin, J. (eds.) *The AMA Handbook of Project Management*. New York: Amacom.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 4, 523-550.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007) Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 1, 25-32.

Elsass, P.M. and Veiga, J.F. (1994) Acculturation in Acquired Organizations: A Force-Field Perspective. *Human Relations*, 47, 431-453.

Ely, R.J. and Thomas, D.A. (2001) Cultural Diversity at work: The Effects of Diversity Perspectives on Work Group Processes and Outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 2, 229-273.

Engwall, M. (2002) The Futile Dream of the Perfect Goal. In Sahlin-Anderson, K. and Söderholm, A. (eds.), *Beyond Project Management – New Perspectives on the Temporary Permanent Dilemma*. Malmö: CBS Press.

Flyvbjerg, B., Bruzelius, N. and Rothengatter, W. (2003) *Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gajewsksa-De Mattos, A., Chapman, M., and Clegg, J. (2004) Poles and Germans: An International Business Relationship. *Human Relations*, 57, 8, 983-1015.

Gómez-Mejia, L.R. and Palich, L.E. (1997) Cultural Diversity and the Performance of Multinational Firms. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 28, 2, 309-335.

Henrie, M. and Sousa-Poza, A. (2005) Project Management: A Cultural Literary Review. *Project Management Journal*, 36, 1, 5-14.

Hoecklin, L.A. (1993) *Managing Cultural Differences for Competitive Advantage*. London: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Holden, N.J. (2002) *Cross-Cultural Management: A Knowledge Management Perspective*. Dorchester: Prentice Hall.

Inkpen, A.C. and Currall, S.C. (2004) The Coevolution of Trust, Control, and Learning in Joint Ventures. *Organization Science*, 15, 5, 586-599.

Ivory, C. and Alderman, N. (2005) Can Project Management Learn Anything from Studies of Failure in Complex Systems? *Project Management Journal*, 36, 3, 5-16.

Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Sully de Luque, M., and House, R.J. (2006) In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, February, 67- 90.

Jugdev, K. and Müller, R. (2005) A Retrospective Look at Our Evolving Understanding of Project Success. *Project Management Journal*, 36, 4, 19-31.

Kogut, B. and Singh, H. (1988) The Effect of Culture on Foreign Entry Mode. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 19, 3, 411-432.

Lewis, R.D. and Gates, M. (2003) Finns as Leaders – Corporate Ethics and Values. *Työn Tuuli*, 1, 12-21.

Li, J. and Hambrick, D.C. (2005) Factional Groups: A New Vantage on Demographic Faultlines, Conflict, and Disintegration in Work Teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48, 5, 794-813.

Maczynski, J., Lindell, M., Motowidlo, S.J., Sigfrids, C., and Jarmuz, S. (1997) A Comparison of Organizational and Societal Culture in Finland and Poland. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 28, 3, 269-278.

Mäkilouko, M. (2004) Coping with Multicultural Projects: The Leadership Styles of Finnish Project Managers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 5, 387-396.

March, J.G. and Sutton, R.I. (1997) Organizational Performance as a Dependent Variable. *Organization Science*, 8, 6, 698-706.

March, J.G., Sproull, L.S., and Tamuz, M. (1991) Learning from Samples of One or Fewer. *Organizational Science*, 2, 1, 1-13.

Martin, J. (2002) *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Miller, R. and Lessard, D.R. (2000) *The Strategic Management of Large Engineering Projects: Shaping Institutions, Risks and Governance*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Morgan, G. (2007) National Business Systems Research: Progress and Prospects. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23, 127-145.

Morosini, P. and Singh, H. (1994) Post-cross-border Acquisitions: Implementing National-culture-compatible Strategies to Improve Performance. *European Management Journal.* 12, 390-400.

Morosini, P., Shane, S., and Singh, H. (1998) National Cultural Distance and Cross-Border Acquisition Performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 29, 1, 137-158.

Morris, P.W.G. (1983) Managing Project Interfaces – Key Points for Project Success. In Cleland, D.I. and King, W.R. (eds.) *Project Management Handbook*. New York: Van Nostrand.

Morris, P.W.G. and Hough G.H. (1987) *The Anatomy of Major Projects – A Study of The Reality of Project Management*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Nahavandi, A. and Malekzadeh, A.R. (1988) Acculturation in Mergers and Acquisitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 13, 79-90.

Newman, K.L. and Nollen, S.D. (1996) Culture and Congruence: The Fit between Management Practices and National Culture. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 27, 4, 753-779.

Olie, R. (1994) Shades of Culture and Institutions in International Mergers. *Organizations Studies*, 15, 381-398.

Osland, J.C. and Bird, A. (2000) Beyond Sophisticated Stereotyping: Cultural Sensemaking in Context. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14, 1, 65-77.

Peters, T. and Waterman, R. (1982) *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies.* New York: Harper & Row.

Pheng, L.S. and Yuquan, S. (2002) An Exploratory Study of Hofstede's Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Construction Projects. *Management Decision*, 40, 1, 7-16.

Pinto, J.K., & Slevin, D.P. (1987). Critical Factors in Successful Project Implementation. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management,* 34, 1, 22-28.

Prabhakar, G.P. (2005) An Empirical Study Reflecting the Importance of Transformational Leadership on Project Success across Twenty-Eight Nations. *Project Management Journal*, 36, 4, 53-60.

Sackmann, S.A. and Phillips, M.E, (2004) Contextual Influences on Culture Research – Shifting Assumptions for New Workplace Realities. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 4, 3, 370-390.

Salk, J.E. and Brannen, M.Y. (2000) National Culture, Networks, and Individual Influence in a Multinational Management Team. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 2, 191-202.

Salk, J.E. and Shenkar, O. (2001) Social Identities in an International Joint Venture: An Exploratory Case Study. *Organization Science*, 12, 2, 161-178.

Schein, E.H. (1999) *Process Consultation Revisited: Building the Helping Relationship*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Schein, E.H. (1999) *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide: Sense and Nonsense About Culture Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schneider, A. (1995) Project Management in International Teams: Instruments for Improving Cooperation. *International Journal of Project Management*, 13, 4, 247-251.

Schneider, S.C. and Barsoux, J.-L. (1997) *Managing across Cultures*. London: Prentice Hall.

Shore, B. and Cross, B.J. (2005) Exploring the Role of National Culture in the Management of Large-Scale International Science Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 55-64.

Slangen, A.H.L. (2006) National Cultural Distance and Initial Foreign Acquisition Performance: The Moderating Effect of Integration. *Journal of World Business*, 41, 161-170.

Smircich, L. (1983) Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 3, 339-358.

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Holden, N. (2002) Rethinking Cross-Cultural Management in a Globalizing Business World. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 2, 1, 103-121.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) (2003) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Söderlund J. (2002) On the Development of Project Management Research: Schools of Thought and Critique. *International Project Management Journal*, 8, 1, 20-31.

Söderlund, J. (2004) Building Theories of Project Management: Past Research, Questions for the Future. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 183-191.

Tan, W. and Chong, W. (2003) Power Distance in Singapore Construction Organizations: Implications for Project Managers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 21, 529-536.

Trompenaars, F. (1993) *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business.* London: Economist Books.

Turner, J.R. (1999) *The Handbook of Project-Based Management: Improving the Processes for Achieving Strategic Objectives, 2nd edition.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Vaara, E. (2000) Constructions of Cultural Differences in Post-Merger Change Processes: A Sensemaking Perspective on Finnish-Swedish Cases. *M@n@gement*, 3, 3, 81-110.

Vaara, E. (2002) On the Discursive Construction of Success/Failure in Narratives of Post-merger Integration. *Organization Studies*, 23, 2, 211-248.

Vaara, E., Risberg, A., Søderberg, A.-M., and Tienari, J. (2003) Nation Talk: The Construction of National Stereotypes in a Merging Multinational. In Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Weick, K.E. (1990) The Vulnerable System: An Analysis of the Tenerife Air Disaster. *Journal of Management*, 16, 3, 571-593.

Yeganeh, H. and Su, Z. (2006) Conceptual Foundations of Cultural Management Research. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management.* 6, 3, 361-376.

Zeng, S.X., Xie, X.M., Tam, C.M., and Sun, P.M. (2009) Identifying Cultural Difference in R&D Project for Performance Improvement: A Field Study. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 10, 1, 61-70.

Zwikael, O., Shimizu, K. and Globerson, S. (2005) Cultural Differences in Project Management Capabilities: A Field Study. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 454-462.

ESSAY II: RESPONDING TO CULTURAL DOMINANCE IN CROSS CULTURAL INTERACTION: EXPERIENCES OF FINNISH PROJECT MANAGERS

Sampo Tukiainen

Unpublished manuscript

Abstract

In international cross cultural management studies, the bulk of the literature treats cultures from the *essentialist* perspective, where cultures are seen as independent variables, having an objective essence and an impact on a wide variety of organizational phenomena. However, according to the *relational* perspective to cultures, in cross cultural interaction and interfaces cultures and their implications come into existence in relation to different cultural communities as a result of the subjective sensemaking by the involved actors themselves. Existing literature building on this cultural understanding has also shown that such cultural sensemaking is often infused with perceived cultural dominance exhibited by one party over another. This paper examines how Finnish project managers engaged in highly complex, international engineering projects cope with and respond to the cultural dominance expressed by their project partners. The paper highlights that the managers not only condescend to their subjugated positions, but also use various tactics as countermoves against the perceived dominance. Based on these findings, the paper then extends the idea of cultural determinism present in many an *essentialist* cultural study. That is, instead of portraying the project managers solely as "dopes of the cultures", the paper advocates individual volition and "cultural agency", where the managers are seen to be capable of using different kinds of tactics to counteract the cultural forces at play. This notion then suggests caution in utilizing the ever popular cultural stereotypes in predicting and advising on cultural implications in cross cultural interaction and interfaces.

1. INTRODUCTION

> *"This kind of fast decision making and reacting, as I've said many times, it's quite different to what the Finns or the Westerners are used to… So if we compare Turkish with Russian or Ukrainian, so the Ukrainians, they proceed strictly according to the protocol. It's like the old Russian protocol according to which you proceed, with using polite wordings you present all the negative things also. So in this sense, this Turkish, or Greek approach as well, is much more straightforward."* (Finnish project manager)

In international cross cultural management studies, traditionally the bulk of the literature has been built on the *essentialist* research tradition (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; cf. Søderberg & Holden, 2002). In these studies cultures have been equated to countries and treated as independent variables existing "out there", which are then argued to have an impact on a wide range of organizational and managerial phenomena (cf. Smircich, 1983; Martin, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Kirkman & al., 2006). Concomitantly, in this research tradition, operationalizing a particular (national) culture has been the task of the researcher, where the approach based on the

universal cultural value dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Schwartz, 1994; House & al., 2004) has enjoyed immense academic popularity (see Kirkman & al., 2006; Gerhart, 2008). As a result, these studies have predominantly provided cultural portrayals in a generalized, context independent, and purportedly objective manner (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997, House & al., 2004).

However, as exemplified by the opening quote above, according to the *relational* perspective to cultures (see e.g. Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003a), in cross national and cross cultural interaction and interfaces cultures often "come into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultural communities" (Søderberg & Holden, 2002: 112). Hence, from this perspective, instead of being objective entities or variables existing "out there", cultures and cultural features are seen to become social constructions, depending on the subjective sensemaking and comparisons made by the involved actors themselves. Moreover, this kind of cultural understanding emphasizes the context specificity of cultures and cultural features, as different contexts and situations are seen to reveal and bring forth different aspects of a particular culture (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Vaara & al., 2003a, b; Gajewska-De Mattos & al., 2004; see also Osland & Bird, 2000).

In the existing literature building on this kind of cultural understanding, it has also been shown how in cross cultural interaction and interfaces, cultural perceptions often become infused with feelings of cultural superiority and inferiority, and especially cultural dominance of one party over another (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004; see also Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Jackson & Aycan, 2006). Interestingly, however, thus far these studies have not paid any attention to the ways in which the subjugated parties might actually cope with the perceived cultural dominance expressed by another party. Indeed, the existing studies have focused more on a different epistemological layer, highlighting how cultural constructions can become involved in other social processes such as enacting group boundaries and identities (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003), enhancing group self-esteem and self-worth (Salk & Brannen, 2000; Ailon-Souday & Kunda,

2003; Vaara & al, 2003a; Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004), making sense of social complexity and initiating organized action (Barinaga, 2007), as well as serving the purposes of organizational politicking (Vaara, 2000).

Inspired by such a gap in the prior research, this paper builds on *relational* cultural understanding and empirically examines how Finnish (the nationality of the author) project managers engaged in highly complex, international engineering projects cope with and respond to the cultural dominance expressed by their project partners. As a target of such inquiry, this kind of a managerial and organizational setting is considered highly interesting. Firstly, in these projects the Finnish project managers, as representatives of a relatively small and peripheral culture, not only meet their neighboring cultures (compare Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004), but also have to interact with distant and especially larger and more predominant cultures. Secondly, these are projects dependent on tightly coupled and coordinated collaboration of a large number of people and groups representing different organizations and cultures, each with their own independent objectives and priorities (cf. Morris & Hough, 1987; Turner, 1999; Miller & Lessard, 2000; Flyvbjerg & al., 2003; Grün, 2004). Consequently, in these projects "cross cultural friction" (Shenkar, 2001) can be abundant (Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Shore & Cross, 2005) as the parties often try to dominate and convince each other of their superiority (cf. Vaara & Tienari, 2003) or for business related reasons (Turner, 1999).

Based on the empirical evidence, the paper then highlights how the Finnish project managers not only condescend to being culturally dominated by their project partners, but also creatively and actively use the possibilities granted by the project organizational form and managerial discretion to counteract the perceived subjugation. More specifically, the paper shows how the project managers in different situations use tactics such as *contractual discretion, creating autonomy, metonymic demarcation, teaming up with other cultures, buffering,* as well as *direct resistance* to compensate for perceived cultural weaknesses and to fight against being dominated.

Based on these insights this paper then extends the idea of cultural determinism advocated in many an essentialist cultural study (e.g. Hostede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; House & al., 2004). In these studies, organizational actors are often portrayed as being "dopes of the cultures" (cf. Barinaga, 2007). As a consequence, should variation exist in cultural behavior, it is attested either to the differences in the actors' identification to the central values of a particular culture or to the effects of exogenous forces at play (Hambrick & al., 1998; Salk & Brannen, 2000; Salk & Shenkar, 2001; Leung & al., 2005). However, this paper advocates individual volition and certain kinds of "cultural agency" where the managers, depending on the meanings attached to specific situations, are seen as capable of using the possibilities granted by their organizational environment to counteract and shape the impact of the cultural forces at play (cf. Tsoukas, 1989). This notion then suggests caution in using the ever popular cultural stereotypes in predicting and advising on cultural implications in cross cultural interaction and interfaces (see e.g. Javidan & al., 2006). Finally, at a more general level, the paper sets an example for (project) managers in the emerging and non-Western markets, which can be seen to be often in a somewhat similar position facing post-colonial, Western cultural dominance in international ventures (cf. Jackson & Aycan, 2006).

The rest of the paper is structured in the following way: Firstly, it begins with a brief literature review introducing and distinguishing the two perspectives to cultures mentioned above. This review is used to build the case justifying the focus of this research as well as its contributions. Secondly, the empirical research setting and methodology is presented. This is followed by the empirical data and its analysis. Finally, the main arguments of this paper are summarized and their implications are discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultures as independent variables having an objective essence

In international cross cultural management studies, traditionally the bulk of the literature has been built on the comparative, *essentialist* research tradition (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; see Holden, 2002 for review). In these studies culture has been equated to a nation or a country, and given characterizations of an objective nature according to universal, quantifiable cultural value dimensions. In this research tradition cultures have also been seen as context independent, relatively static, internally homogenous and consistent social systems, giving rise to management and organizational practices and cultures specific to a particular country (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997, House & al., 2004). Consequently, in this tradition cultures have been assumed to "have" an essence of their own, which can be dissected by scientific methodology and scrutiny by outside researchers.

This research tradition has been argued to have its roots in international economic development following World War II (Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). As companies and economies strengthened their international expansion, the implications of national cultures and national cultural differences on management, organizing, and organizational practices increased their salience. A landmark study by Hofstede (1980) then introduced a framework which could be used to operationalize these cultures for research purposes without the need to engage in time consuming and meticulous ethnographic, anthropological studies of cultures. In this approach societal values were used as an embodiment and an expression of cultures, which could be categorized and quantified for characterizing and distinguishing national cultures. Over the years**,** this approach has also enjoyed an "explosive" increase in scholarly popularity and has been seminal in arguing that cultural differences across nations exist, having a nomothetic (law-like) impact on a wide range of organizational and managerial practices and phenomena (see Kirkman et al., 2006 for review).

An illustrative example of the pervasiveness of the *essentialist* research tradition is the cultural theorizing in the literature dealing with the organizational context of this paper, i.e. international projects, which seems to build almost exclusively on this kind of cultural understanding (e.g. Harrison & al., 1999; Keil & al., 2000; Pheng & Yucuan, 2002; Tan & Chong, 2003; Chen & Partington, 2004; Shore & Cross, 2005; Zwikael & al., 2005; deCamprieu & al., 2007; Ozorhon & al., 2008; Zeng & al., 2009). To exemplify some of these studies, for example Pheng and Yucuan (2002) utilized Hofstede's framework to describe the Singaporean and Chinese construction project cultures, as well as the main differences between these two cultures. On the other hand, Harrison et al. (1999), also building on the Hofstede framework showed how national culture affected the differences between US and Chinese respondents in their propensity to continue unprofitable projects. By building on the three competing cultural value frameworks (i.e. those of Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; and Schwartz, 1994), Chen and Partington (2004) then showed that some of the basic Western conceptions of project management are not supported in China despite the country's gradual cultural convergence towards the West. And in an exemplar of a classic Hofstede–type cross national comparative study, Zwikael et al. (2005) identified cultural differences in project management styles between Japanese and Israeli project managers.

Cultures as subjective constructs in cross national interaction and interfaces

However, during the past decade, another understanding on cultures has gradually gained prominence. This understanding builds on the notion that in contemporary, globalizing organizations, cultures and cultural communities come across and interact with a variety of other cultures (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003). As a consequence, in such cross cultural and cross national interaction and interfaces, cultures are argued to be *relational* in the sense that cultures and cultural features are seen to be constantly produced and reproduced in social encounters between groups and individuals of different nationalities (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003). Hence, this perspective shifts attention strongly to cross national social interaction and interfaces, emphasizing that in such

situations cultures "come into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultural communities" (Søderberg & Holden, 2002: 112).

This kind of *relational* understanding also makes cultures and their salient features socially constructed and highly contextual, turning the focus to the subjective cultural sensemaking (cf. Weick, 1995) of the involved actors themselves. Moreover, according to this understanding, different contexts and situations are seen to reveal and construct different aspects of a particular culture – i.e. cultures and cultural features become a reflection of the context and situation (e.g. Vaara & al., 2003a) – and unlike in the essentialist research tradition, no stable cultural form or substance is assumed (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; cf. Osland & Bird, 2000). As exemplified by Vaara et al. (2003a: 65):

> "For example, Finns and Swedes are usually characterized as being very much alike when compared with, for example, the French or Italians. If, however, we concentrate on Finnish-Swedish relationships, the perceived national differences will be emphasized when Finns and Swedes are asked to describe themselves and their next-door neighbors."

Consequently, micro level examinations providing insights into the actors' sensemaking and constructions of national cultural features as they become produced in cross national and cross cultural interaction and interfaces, as well as in different kinds of organizational settings, have become increasingly popular (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Vaara & al. 2003a, b; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004; Barinaga, 2007). As an example of these studies, Vaara et al. (2003a) studied a bank merger in a Nordic setting, focusing on the cultural constructions of Swedes, Finns, Danes, and Norwegians. In this study the authors, on the one hand, showed how significant cultural differences were perceived to exist between all the nationalities involved. On the other hand, the authors also highlighted how in certain areas and situations, for example, the Swedes and Finns or the Norwegians and Danes were seen to share significant similarities and be on the same wavelength. In a similar way, both Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) in their study of an Israeli/American merger and Gajewsksa-De Mattos et al. (2004) in their study of

German/Polish mergers showed how national cultural characterizations could become constructed in relation to and between the actors involved, and how these cultural perceptions and constructions were something that could not be grasped with the traditional *essentialist* cultural understanding.

Cultural dominance

However, in addition to showing how cultures come into existence in relation to and in contrast with different cultural communities, *relational* cultural studies have also highlighted that in cross cultural interaction and interfaces, cultural perceptions often become infused with feelings of cultural superiority and inferiority, and especially perceptions of cultural dominance exhibited by one party over another (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004; see also Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Jackson & Aycan, 2006). In other words, this research has shown how cross cultural interaction and interfaces are prone to becoming contested terrains, where each of the parties attribute their cultural characteristics (sometimes even those that are considered "negative") with feelings of superiority and centrality, while showing expressions of inferiority and disregard towards the others. Consequently, each party, by virtue of their perceived cultural superiority, often try to convince and impose their cultural, organizational, and managerial praxis onto others, giving rise to perceived cultural dominance of one party over another (Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Very & al, 1997; Vaara & al., 2003a; Vaara & al., 2003c). In this way, cross cultural interaction and interfaces are also often turned into political clashes and debates over who controls whom in the collaboration (e.g. Søderberg & Vaara, 2003).

Yet, despite these notions, it seems that the existing cultural research building on the *relational* understanding has not paid much attention to the ways in which the parties that find themselves in a subjugated position might actually cope with and react in the face of the perceived dominance exhibited by another cultural group. Indeed, it seems that in line with the discourse analytic principles of studying organizational phenomena (see e.g. van Dijk, 1993; Mumby & Clair, 1997; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000a, b;

Heracleous & Hendry, 2000; Oswick & al., 2000) many of the existing studies have focused on another epistemological layer, highlighting how constructions of national cultures can become involved in other social processes in organizations such as enacting group boundaries and identities (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003), enhancing group self-esteem and self-worth (Salk & Brannen, 2000; Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Vaara & al, 2003a; Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004), making sense of social complexity and initiating organized action (Barinaga, 2007), as well as serving the purposes of organizational politicking (Vaara, 2000).

To cope with the cultural dominance, the extant literature usually advises against vesting disproportionate power to one cultural group (Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). In practice, this seems appropriate, for example, in international mergers where the aim is equality and balance of power between the partners (e.g. Vaara & Tienari, 2003). Yet, the organizational context of this paper, i.e. large international engineering projects, is a special case in the sense that right from the outset they are not meant to be mergers of equals. Rather, they are high velocity collaborations where a vast number of different organizations and stakeholders, all with their independent business priorities and objectives, are governed by contractual arrangements with in-built properties of inequality, subordination, and client-contractor relationships affecting cross cultural interaction (cf. Morris & Hough, 1987; Turner, 1999; Miller & Lessard, 2000; Flyvbjerg & al., 2003; Grün, 2004). Hence, these are organizational contexts with endogenous properties turning them into natural breeding grounds for cultural dominance, attempts of cultural hegemony, and control of one cultural group over another.

Based on the experiences of the Finnish project managers involved in such large scale, international engineering projects, this paper then highlights that in line with the existing research building on *relational* cultural understanding, the cultural sensemaking and constructions of these managers are strongly infused with feelings of being faced with cultural dominance from their project partners. However, the paper underscores that the Finnish project managers do not only sit idle and condescend to the cultural dominance exhibited by their project partners, but also creatively and actively

use the possibilities granted by the project organizational form and managerial discretion to counteract the perceived subjugation. More specifically, the paper shows how the project organizational form and managerial discretion permits the project managers in different situations to use tactics such as contractual discretion, creating autonomy, metonymic demarcation, teaming up with other cultures, buffering, as well as direct resistance in order to compensate for perceived cultural weaknesses and to fight against being dominated. However, before turning to further elaborate on these tactics, the empirical setting and research methodology is presented in the following section.

3. EMPIRICAL SETTING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case study projects

The empirical material in this paper builds on a qualitative case study of four (4) international engineering projects. All of the case study projects involved major Finnish companies acting either as main contractors or as main subcontractors. All of the projects also involved different Finnish companies and were carried out in countries other than Finland. As the author has agreed with the companies not to disclose any project specific economic or financial data, particular details on the projects (such as company names, prices, dates, durations, industries etc.) cannot be given here. However, it can be said that all of the four Finnish companies represent highly significant global players in their respective industries, and all the four case study projects belong to the category of "large infrastructural engineering projects" as classified by Miller and Lessard (2000). In the rest of this paper, these four case study projects are identified and referred to according to the country in which the projects were carried out. Hence, the projects are called as *Russian*, *Chinese*, *Ukrainian*, and *West-European*[6] project.

---

[6] West-Europe is a pseudonym for the country where the project was carried out. The author agreed upon the use of this pseudonym with the company representatives based on their suggestion for protecting the company's and the project's anonymity. The project was carried out in one country in Western Europe.

The selection of the case study projects was based on the following logic: The author of this paper took part in a cross disciplinary research program launched by a small group of professors and researchers from a business university, a technical university, and a technical research centre in Finland. In this research, the author's focus was in applying a cultural perspective to examining the experiences of Finnish project managers in cross national interaction in international engineering projects. The research program was publicly funded, however, private companies were also involved in the research as paying clients. Consequently, the case study projects were given to the author from the participating companies, and thus, the author did not have any practical influence in selecting the projects. Some general guidelines for case project selections were given to the companies by the research group. However, ultimately the representatives of the companies made the decisions themselves, and seemingly chose projects that in one way or another were significant for them and where informants for data collection were readily available. In the research program the author conducted case studies in a total of 14 different projects in the companies participating in the research program. However, the four case study projects providing the data for the empirical analysis in this paper were picked by the author as representatives of those where he had the principal research responsibility and with which he became the most intimately involved.

Moreover, as circumstances are said to condition the data obtained from the informants (Silverman, 1997), the selection of the four cases was further affected by the following rationale targeted at introducing elements of theoretical sampling to this research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007): Two of the four projects had been seemingly highly problematic ones, whereas the other two were significantly less so. Hence, the author anticipated that cultural sensemaking and constructions might appear in different ways in these two "types" of projects. Consequently, by a combination of the more and less troubled projects it was anticipated that a more balanced view on the expressions of cultural dominance and the ways it is being coped with could be obtained than by focusing only on either type of projects. In addition, two of the projects had been already completed at the time of the case study, whereas two were still ongoing. Hence, in order to lessen "retrospective recall" bias (March & Sutton, 1997), this kind of combination was assumed to allow enriching of the purely retrospective data with

more "real-time" data. Although the Russian, the Ukrainian, and the West-European projects involved cross cultural interaction between Finnish project managers and their Turkish counterparts, this kind of national focus was not intentional. Rather, for this research the primary criteria for the case project selection were the above mentioned properties of the case projects, and the author's intimate knowledge on the projects.

Data collection

In light of the present research focus, participant observation in the project sites would have been the most preferred choice in order to examine the cultural sensemaking and perceived cultural dominance as they appear and happen in "real-time". However, as the author took part in a research program where he had to conduct simultaneously multiple case studies carried out by multiple companies in multiple locations, participant observation and field studies on the project sites were not possible. Hence, *ethnographic interviews* (Spradley, 1979) were selected as the primary data collection method. As for the present purposes a thorough introduction to this research method and philosophy would become too lengthy, the reader is advised to refer to Spradley (1979) for an overview, clarification, and guidance.

However, it is noteworthy here to emphasize one highly salient feature of the ethnographic interviews: In ethnographic interviewing, the primary purpose is to reduce the likelihood of the researcher imposing his or her worldview, concepts, ideologies, categorizations or values on the subject of the study (Spradley, 1979). Thus, in this technique the purpose is to try and let the worldview and language of the interviewees unfold with as little as possible of the researcher induced guidance intermingling with the interviewees' perception on social and natural ordering and reality. As a consequence, ethnographic interviews are characterized by initially asking the interviewees highly open questions, which subsequently develop into more focused ones based on the stories and themes that unfold during the interviews. Hence, the questions presented by the interviewer during a particular interview are not guided by preconceived hypotheses made by the researcher, but instead by the stories, themes, and

emphasis unfolding as the interviewee is allowed to freely describe his or her world and experiences.

In this research, and following the example outlined by Brannen and Salk (2000), the benefit of this kind of interview approach was that it initially enabled the author to avoid references to cultures, cultural differences, nationalities, or national social identities as far as possible. This was considered important in order to let the informants judge and construct by themselves whether or not cultures, cultural sensemaking, and cultural dominance played any particular part and relevance whatsoever when recounting their experiences. However, in all of the interviews it quickly became obvious that all the informants voluntarily and frequently reverted to national cultures, constructing national identities, cultural features, and especially perceived cultural dominance when recounting their experiences (cf. Vaara & al., 2003a).

Emerging from these premises, this paper then builds on ethnographic interviews of the Finnish project managers of all the four case study projects. Consequently, four different project managers were interviewed. Altogether 11 interviews were made for this study. Hence, all the project managers were interviewed three (3) times, excluding the manager of the Ukrainian project who was interviewed twice. Each interview lasted between one to two and a half hours. Each of the interviews was tape recorded and later transcribed. All the interviews were made in Finnish (the native language of the author and the interviewees). As the following case analysis leans heavily on quotes and excerpts from the transcribed interview data, these were translated from Finnish to English by the author. In this translation utmost care was taken in preserving the original tone and innuendos of the interviews in order to not only produce direct translations of the quotes but also to transmit the overall mood of a particular excerpt.

The interviews began with *descriptive questions* (Spradley, 1979) by asking the interviewees to talk in their own words about the project under scrutiny. The specific questions used were, for example "Could you tell me about project X in your own words?" or "From your point of view, could you tell me, what is it that this project is all about?". Sometimes the interviews began by asking about the role and duties of the

interviewed managers in the projects. After these introductory questions, the interviews proceeded to inquire about the project progress. Inspired by Spradley (1979), the questions asked were, for example, "Could you give me a grand tour of the project, what has happened so far?" or "Could you tell me about some of the most memorable events of the project for you?".

From there on, the questions followed the issues brought up during the interviews, thus, being highly influenced by the unfolding stories. However, the author still used an overall interview guideline according to which the idea was to gradually pinpoint how the project managers recalled and made sense of the different project situations and phases, i.e. what had happened, what had been done, and what had been the consequences? When reaching this level in the interviews, constructions of (national) cultural features, as well as perceptions of cultural dominance had already appeared "by itself" as a significant and salient way for expressing the experiences of the interviewees.

Data analysis

In analyzing the data, the following steps were taken: Firstly, all the transcribed interviews were read through on a word-by-word basis. Secondly, every reference to nationalities and cultures in the different interviews of a particular project manager were highlighted and color-coded. Thirdly, all these references were combined and sorted project-by-project according to the order they appeared in the interviews of a specific project manager. As a consequence, compilations of project manager (and project) specific cultural constructions were obtained. Fourthly, inspired by Vaara et al. (2003a, b), particularly "robust" and frequently appearing instances of cultural sensemaking exhibited by a specific project manager were identified and singled out. Based on these exemplars, project manager specific synthesis in the form of a written tale highlighting the ways these individuals expressed cultural constructions and differences was produced by the author. At this stage, these were kept as individual, separate accounts (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989).

However, based on the individual, written synthesis, it was discovered that in the cases of all of the interviewed project managers, the particularly robust instances of cultural sensemaking were tightly coupled with feelings of cultural dominance. That is, the cultural sensemaking and constructions of the Finnish project managers were coupled with these managers expressing feelings that they were being defendants and facing dominance from other cultural groups. However, the analysis also showed that these managers actively and creatively used the possibilities granted by the project organizational form as well as their managerial discretion to fight against being dominated and to improve their positions and bargaining power vis-à-vis the other cultural groups.

For the following empirical analysis and discussion, the individual project and project manager specific accounts were combined and the different tactics utilized by the Finnish project managers were taken as a basis of categorizing and presenting the data. It is to be noted also that despite that the emphasis in the following analysis is in the manifestations of cultural dominance, this does not, however, imply that all the cultural sensemaking and constructions of the interviewed project managers were coupled with, or expressed feelings of, being dominated. Rather, this emphasis reflects the author's willingness to focus on and single out some of the most central elements in the cultural sensemaking and constructions that the interviewees seemingly were conveying in their accounts.

4. EMPIRICAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

Condescending to being culturally dominated

To start off, it is evident that in some situations the cultural sensemaking and constructions implied that the interviewed project managers felt compelled to just tolerate and condescend to the cultural dominance to which they perceived to be subjected to. For example, the manager of the Russian project described the following:

> *"The Germans, they are really strict… it's really tough with them. Or the French, they are also that way, they are really strict, all the time*

demanding everything and at the same time they won't give up anything… I don't like to raise conflicts, but this might be an individual characteristic. But I guess the Finns are a bit kind… I think we rather settle with things, we try as much as possible to avoid any bigger conflicts … If we would carry out the project by strictly reading written contracts, there would be quite a lot of conflicts on the project site… In these projects, every change [compared to plans] should be considered opportunities for making money. But this is something that we don't necessarily do… I think that we often think that if we complain about this, then the others can accuse us about something else… Perhaps this is one reason and the other is that we always think that they [the Turkish customer] are our clients or something, that we are afraid that the continuation of the business relationship is dependent on some small thing… In Central-European countries these big companies, who have contracts and all sorts of paper filling, they have people who take care of these."

As can be seen, in this excerpt the Finnish project manager renders the Finns as "kind" due to the tendency to try and avoid causing conflicts or showing opportunistic behavior. Consequently, the project manager constructs cultural "distance" with certain other cultures that are considered more "strict" and "tough". Simultaneously, the project manager also expresses feelings of being in a defendant position towards these larger and more central (in terms of geography and historical geopolitical position) cultures. Yet, in this excerpt it also seems that, in this particular instance the project manager sees no other option than to tolerate and condescend to being in this kind of a subjugated position. However, as also brought out, it seems that such condescending behavior (which in fact further strengthens the perceived cultural differences between the Finns and the other cultures) is related to the project manager's willingness to protect the customer relationship (*"…we always think that they [the Turkish customer] are our clients or something, that we are afraid that the continuation of the business relationship…"*). Hence, this suggests a certain degree of agency in the project manager's behavior in the sense that it also seems to be his choosing and desire towards the customer relationship that seems to dictate his behavior, instead of being purely a "victim" of the cultures at present (both the Finnish and the others).

In a similar way, the manager of the Ukrainian project describes his experiences, this time in relation to the subcontractor selections of the project:

"Well we had this one main contractor, a Turkish firm, which was recommended by our [Turkish] client, who said that the business will be good if we choose this subcontractor. Actually, it was this kind of "must", I wasn't there myself but I heard afterwards that [the Turkish client] had simply said that "this is the subcontractor, here's its prices, take it or leave it". You know, this kind of straightforward approach. And of course this [Turkish client] is very important customer to our company, so it's difficult to say "no", and then this subcontractor has very strong relations to [the client]."

As can be seen, in this excerpt the Finnish project manager constructs the Turks as "straightforward" (such a cultural construction also repeated itself throughout his interviews). Concomitantly, this cultural construction becomes embedded in an expression of being in a subjugated position towards the Turkish client as well as the Turkish subcontractor. Yet, condescending to the subjugated position seems to be, once again, related to the perceived customer relationship (*"...And of course this [Turkish client] is very important customer to our company, so it's difficult to say "no", and then this subcontractor has very strong relations to [the client]"*) rather than simply to the cultural characteristics experienced by the project manager. Hence, in line with the experiences of the manager of the Russian project, it is also the meaning attached to customer relationship that seems to dictate the way that the cultural dominance in this situation is coped with (i.e. by tolerating and condescending to the dominance expressed by the Turks).

The final two, highly similar examples of cultural sensemaking and construction, which convey condescending behavior in the face of perceived cultural dominance come from the managers of the Ukrainian and West-European projects respectively:

"...so it's quite different than what the Finns or the Westerners are used to. That is... you have to be polite and you don't want to raise your voice because you weren't allowed to do that at home... so in this way, this Turkish, or Greek approach is much more straightforward... So in these Monday project meetings [with the client], we talked about this kind of barbequing, like is everybody ready to be barbequed... and everybody knew what it meant... So in these meetings we always discussed about the project situation and the details, everything. And in these meetings everybody was barbequed on their own turn, like why haven't you done anything to this and that, why is this late and so on. It was like all the time down to details. And it's a fact that in a project like this, there's always

something that hasn't gone exactly as planned. But it's like we think the project as a large entity, as a total process that produces these outcomes. But then our client, they always take this small nuance there, and they point out that. So it's like if 99% of the project is correct, they always point out the 1% and demand, why is this like this… they just say that it's important for them." (Finnish manager of the Ukrainian project)

"We've run against the West-European regulations here… here these kind of [regulative] issues are paid really strong attention. It is much more than what we are used to, and I guess it's this kind of West-European way, where in [this] world companies and all these liability issues and legislation and so on have led to these things being under the most attention… so the interpretation of these regulations goes a bit overboard in my mind, but you know, it's some kind of a fear that causes the client to behave this way, and actually there's not much you can do about it, you just have to accept it… There is a certain criteria according to which these things have to be done, and if we think we fulfil those criteria, it should be enough, but the client wants always more and more… so if they would've been allowed to take care of all this, they would've probably done it a little bit differently, and they assumed that we're going to do it like they want it to be done, but of course we had our own interpretation about what is it that the law requires…" (Finnish manager of the West-European project)

As becomes evident, in the first of the above excerpts, the manager of the Ukrainian project illustrates some general cultural traits of the Finns and the Turks, creating cultural distance between these groups. Simultaneously, cultural proximity is created between the Finns and the "Westerners" as well as between the Turks and the Greeks. In addition, in the second excerpt similar kinds of differences and distance between the Finns and the West-Europeans are constructed by the manager of the West-European project. In terms of Hofstede (1980), it could be said that in these two quotes the Finns are perceived to be low in uncertainty avoidance, while the Turks and the West-Europeans are considered to be high in that respect. In the case of the Turks and the Finns, the Hofstede (1991) indexes seem to support the experiences of the project manager. Yet, in the case of the "West-European" country and the Finns, these indexes seem to be in contrast with the project manager's accounts. More importantly, however, in these excerpts the cultural constructions, perceived differences, and culturally subjugated position of the Finns become clearly evident, as well as how this is also

being tolerated because of the client–contractor relationship (*"…it's some kind of a fear that causes the client to behave this way, and actually there's not much you can do about it, you just have to accept it…"*). Secondly, these quotes vividly illustrate how cultural dominance is clearly related to the questions of who is running the project, how it is done, and whose practices are going to be used.

Contractual discretion

However, in addition to merely condescending to the cultural dominance bestowed upon the Finns, the Finnish project managers also described various tactics that were utilized as countermoves to the dominating tendencies exhibited by other cultural groups. A kind of an "inherent", natural tactic was seemingly provided by the projects being carried out by a consortium of independent organizations governed by contractual arrangements. This seemed to enable the Finnish project managers to use the contracts as a tool for defense in the face of the perceived cultural dominance from the other partners. For example, the manager of the Chinese project described the following:

> *"And then every once in a while we might look into our eyes [with the Chinese client] and know that this is something that we disagree with… And then the contract is a pretty good friend, where you can always find something for backup, and try if that would solve the disagreement."*

This kind of tactic relating to *contractual discretion* was also expressed by the manager of the Russian project, despite his earlier views according to which it was customary for the Finns to refrain from reverting strictly to the contracts. As can also be seen, in the following example this project manager points out that this tactic could be used especially when unexpected delays happened and things started to go wrong in the project:

> *"Of course, if we begin to be late, if the construction is delayed, then we start to search for the reasons. And then we look at the contract, for example we might say that "Hey, according to the contract you should've finished this phase, but now it's late, so we couldn't do our part." There's*

> *a lot of these… These things happen a lot and that's when we look for the contract for help."*

With reference to Hofstede (1991), although the index in that study suggests that the Finns are low in uncertainty avoidance, the excerpts above, however, point out also that at times the project managers can exhibit behavior that contrasts that of the Hofstede indexes. Consequently, these observations are in line with Osland and Bird (2000), according to whom both ends of a particular cultural dimension are present in every culture, but that their occurrence is dependent on the situation.

Creating autonomy

Another tactic, this time in relation to the aforementioned subcontractor selections, was described by the manager of the Chinese project in the following way:

> *"…And then we somehow had in the back of our minds that what if we wouldn't count everything on one card, so we actually chose two subcontractors, so that we could keep up a little bit of fear and rivalry between those two… you know, the first [subcontractor] was a favorite of our client, and the client would've wanted us to use even more of that one subcontractor, but we kind of hesitated, because it's like you don't quite know these Chinese markets, so we didn't dare to put it all on this one subcontractor. And especially when you don't quite know the couplings between the client and the subcontractor… So we feared exactly the same, that we would become trapped between the client and the subcontractor [from the same culture]. Because when you don't know the couplings between the client and the subcontractor, you could become screwed really badly in those things, if you're not careful."*

As seen, in this excerpt the Finnish project manager describes how he, and his company, tried to reduce the likelihood of being subjected to cultural dominance by utilizing the possibilities granted by the project organizational form. That is, by tapping into the leeway offered by the fact that the project was carried out by independent companies, the Finnish project manager and his company utilized their discretion and selected another subcontractor alongside the one proposed by the customer. In this way, the Finns were seemingly able to *create autonomy* from the dominance that could stem

from the possible alliance between the Chinese client and subcontractor. In essence, in this way the Finns were able to reduce the dependency from these two partners and isolate the possible source of cultural dominance.

Metonymic demarcation

Sometimes the Finnish project managers could be subjected to cultural dominance because they were outnumbered, for example, in a negotiation situation. In such a situation *metonymic demarcation* could be used to even out the balance of power between the cultural groups. Metonymy is a concept that refers to an act where one thing is contiguously attributed or generalized to be a part and act as a representative of a larger entity. This kind of tactic became evident, for example, in the interview accounts of the manager of the Chinese project:

> *"It's like there's really a lot of Chinese [in the negotiations] and just a few of us [Finns]… and naturally you always need the nerves of a cow when negotiating with the Chinese… So the Chinese, they are typically this kind of people that there's lots of them. So often on the customer's side, on the opponent's side… you could easily have thirty persons as your opponents … and you just have to have the nerves, or at least I've found it important to just be calm and listen. Just listen, listen and listen calmly to their requirements and standpoints… and especially that you don't take any stand, you don't get provoked no matter what. And then, when you just take your time and listen, you begin to gradually understand their standpoints and what is it that they are really after… And in general, many times the Chinese when they are negotiating, even just by themselves… they just make a lot of noise and wave hands in the air and stuff like that… But when you just sit and wait patiently, the situation always calms down with them… and then when the time comes, that's when you clearly tell your viewpoint and say without hesitating what is [our company's] standpoint…"*

As can be seen, in this excerpt the Finnish project manager, among others, constructs a stereotype of the Chinese being numerous in a negotiation situation, which contrasts with the image of the Finns being generally fewer in numbers. The two parties are also cast as opponents, where the Finns are seemingly in a subjugated position due to being

outnumbered by the Chinese. However, as expressed in the final sentence of the quote (*"...and then when the time comes, that's when you clearly tell your viewpoint and say without hesitating what is [our company's] standpoint…"*), it seems that in this situation the Finnish project manager uses metonymic demarcation, i.e. presents himself as a representative of a larger organizational entity in order to even out the power imbalance, while demarcating his company and the client as independent from each other. Consequently, the project manager creates autonomy for himself and his company in the face of the dominance exhibited by the Chinese.

Teaming up with other cultural groups

In the following excerpt from the manager of the West-European project, another tactic is described that seemed to occur as an unexpected difficulty was encountered during the already highly troubled project. In this example, the project manager is describing his experiences of coping with cultural dominance exhibited by a Turkish subcontractor:

> *"Now that this [surprise] was found, the Turks are delaying the works, because they are saying that it's not their responsibility if there's something surprising. On the other hand we're saying that we couldn't any way have surveyed the areas [so thoroughly]… The Turks are now kind of threatening us with the schedule and on the other hand, we're threatening not to pay for the extra work. But the Turks are now dominating, because for us the project timeline is critical, because the penalties are so high… Usually the Finns have been a bit weak in demanding anything, but now that we have these American [managers] with us, we've also been more strict and more demanding than normally. Germans would've been much more strict in this situation, compared to Finns."*

In this excerpt, once again, the Finns are described as too "kind" or "weak" in making strict demands, which also seems to differentiate them from Americans and Germans. Furthermore, despite being a representative of the main contractor, the Finnish project manager seems to be in a subjugated position due to the perceived bargaining power of the Turkish subcontractor in this aggravated situation. Thus, this excerpt vividly illustrates how in these projects the party that, in a contractual sense, should be in a

dominating position (the Finns as the main contractor of the project) can at times be the party that is actually being dominated. This excerpt also implies that in these projects, because of the independent business priorities and objectives, such situational possibilities are taken advantage of, although this might run counter to the overall project progress. Most importantly, however, as can also be seen from this excerpt, the subjugated position of the Finns is purportedly ameliorated by *teaming up with another cultural group*, namely the American project partner. Consequently, the Finnish "cultural weakness" seemingly becomes compensated.

Buffering

The following example also comes from the manager of the West-European case, describing another tactic that he seemingly used when faced by the dominating tendencies of the project customer during a highly troubled project state. This quote builds on the aforementioned comments from this manager, according to which the Finns and the West-European customer had clashes in terms of who is in charge of the project and whose practices are going to be used, culminating in disputes over the way in which certain local regulations should be interpreted. As brought out in an earlier quote, the Finnish project manager considered the customer's demands unreasonable. Yet, these were condescended to seemingly in order to preserve the client–contractor relationship. However, in the following quote he also describes another tactic, which was used in order to counteract the effects of the Finns being in a subjugated position:

> *"… I'm in contact with the client almost every day, and I kind of have to protect our own site people, site supervisors from this kind of, should I say overwhelming attention of the client, if you know what I mean. [The client] wants this and that and I'm just trying to be a filter in between so that our people could just focus on their jobs… so we have these weekly meetings… and they take hours, and we just discuss and discuss, and argue, and the thing is now that I kind of sit in those meetings [with the client] and I don't invite our supervisors there more than just to drop by. So I kind of try to keep our men doing their jobs and I'll take care of all the explaining [to the client] although I'm not the best expert in every field, but I'll just*

have to try to cope with it and keep our people at work instead of sitting in meetings."

Thus, it could be said that this description is a "textbook" example of the implementation of *buffering* (e.g. Scott, 1997), i.e. using an intermediary to isolate the "core" of the organization in order to enable that it continues its operations unhampered. Hence, in this situation the project manager himself seemed to act as an intermediary, seemingly isolating the Finnish site supervisors from the demands and cultural dominance exhibited by the client, and thus, allowing them to focus on carrying out their tasks the way they saw fit.

Direct resistance

Finally, in some situations the Finnish project managers seemed to use the leeway and discretion granted by the project organizational form and reverted to *direct resistance* in coping with the cultural dominance exhibited by their partners. Such resistance seemed to occur especially in the more troubled projects when the project seemed to be in a state of crisis. Direct resistance was described, for example, by the manager of the Ukrainian project in the following way when explaining his actions as he was trying to steer the project out of the crisis situation:

> *"So what I did was that I wanted to make a really thorough and detailed analysis of where we are at the moment... And especially what has been the reason that we are not where we are supposed to be. And even our own management began to worry that why don't I do anything. But I had a couple of guys and we did this analysis about what is the situation in each site. And we wanted to be really sure that it truly is accurate before going to present it to the client... and then I went to present it to the client by myself. And there was this Turkish delegation on the other side of the table when I presented these figures. And of course it turned into quite a shouting from their side, that this is unacceptable... it took about half an hour of that monologue, but then I just said that this is what I can truly promise you, and that other people have been giving you overoptimistic estimates and promises, but I won't be doing that to you. So they kind of accepted that from me... But it's like, if we have our target here and this*

here is where we start [draws two points on a piece of paper], here we have the Nordic people, and we go straight like this [draws a straight line between the two points]. So we have plans, schedule, and we proceed [according to the straight line]... But Southern-Europeans do it like this [draws a winding, curvy line between the two points], they run back every once in a while, although they might hit the goal eventually... But if we have a kind of systematic progress, we think and slice the target into smaller parts and proceed one part at a time, then this kind of fox loops will drop off [points to the winding Southern-European line on the paper]. But when we actually proceeded in our way [points to the straight "Nordic" line on the paper], our client was like "Why don't you do anything?" All this hassle and running around was missing... and if you can't show that to the client, they think that now you're not doing anything and that you don't care... It's like you really should show that you are doing something... although the results aren't necessarily as good as if you would proceed systematically."

As can be seen from this lengthy quote, the Finnish project manager likens the Finns to Nordic cultures and the Turks to Southern-Europeans, simultaneously constructing divergent ways of coping with the crisis for these two cultural groups. Building on Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), the cultural differences constructed in this excerpt can also be seen as a "classic" example of the differences in meaning attached to the nature of human activity, and more specifically to *doing* versus *being*. According to these authors, in some cultures it is customary to place value more on *doing*, leading to quick decisions and action. As a contrast, some cultures value *being* more, leading to time spent more on analyzing and planning.

Interestingly however, according to Schneider and Barsoux (1997) Nordic managers (including the Finns) are argued to place more value on *doing*, i.e. "to take action and to figure things out along the way" (ibid., 1997: 33). Yet, this argument seems to be in stark contrast with the cultural sensemaking of the Finnish project manager himself, who clearly gives more emphasis on *being* and that "it is better to get it right up front (figuring things out first) than waste time doing it the wrong way" (ibid., 1997: 33). It also becomes evident that the project manager in this situation clearly uses his managerial discretion, and as a representative of a company independent of the project client, both sticks to his characteristic crisis management style and principles (*"...But if we have a kind of systematic progress, we think and slice the target into smaller parts and proceed one part at a time, then this kind of fox loops will drop off..."*) and stands

against the client's demands and dominance when presenting his analysis and estimates of the situation (*"…this is what I can truly promise you, and that other people have been giving you overoptimistic estimates and promises, but I won't be doing that to you. So they kind of accepted that from me…"*).

To finish off, the manager of the West-European project also expressed a similar kind of direct resistance towards the tendencies of cultural dominance (described in the earlier excerpts from this manager). The following quote was expressed when this project was also in a highly troubled state:

> *"[The customer] seems to live on papers and documents, hassling with all those documents, the more there is the better it seems to be… we could easily have all our supervisors just reporting to them all day, but we don't want that. We want to [finish this project] and minimize all the paperwork… and we get complaints all the time… but we think that we will now [finalize this project] with those papers that we think are necessary to make, and [the client] will just have to accept it and not interfere with us. We will do nothing more or if we have to, we'll do it when it benefits the project, we won't do anything that's just nice to know… They will just have to accept this, it's that simple, when there are no papers then there are no papers. Of course they complain all the time, but so what, it's tolerable."*

5. DISCUSSION

As shown by the above analysis, there is much cultural sensemaking and construction in the accounts of the interviewed project managers. From the *relational* perspective to cultures (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003) this exemplifies well how, in cross national and cross cultural interaction, cultures become constantly produced and reproduced in social encounters and interaction between groups and individuals of different nationalities (ibids.). Hence, the analysis strongly highlight that in cross cultural social interaction cultures are made sense of and interpreted by the involved actors themselves, and as a consequence come "into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultural communities" (Søderberg & Holden, 2002: 112).

Moreover, and as could be seen, much of the cultural sensemaking expressed by the Finnish project managers are infused with feelings of cultural superiority and inferiority, and especially feelings of being in a subjugated position in the face of cultural dominance exhibited by their project partners. Hence, these findings further strengthen the insights brought forward in existing *relational* cross cultural management research, highlighting that such cultural constructions often become manifestations and reflections of cultural dominance (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos, 2004; see also Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Jackson & Aycan, 2006).

However, despite producing a variety of cultural characterizations, as well as cultural distance or proximity between the project partners, the purpose of this paper has not been so much in specifying the cultural characteristics and differences created by the disclosed cultural constructions. Rather, the purpose has been in examining empirically the ways in which the expressions and manifestations of cultural dominance that these constructions are infused, are coped with by the parties involved. More specifically, the purpose of the paper has been in showing how Finnish project managers, as representatives of a relatively small and peripheral culture, cope with the cultural dominance exhibited by their project partners from significantly larger and more central cultures in the course of carrying out large and complex international engineering projects. As a target of such inquiry, this kind of a managerial and organizational setting was considered highly interesting, as in these projects "cross cultural friction" (Shenkar, 2001) is often abundant (Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Shore & Cross, 2005), and as was seen, the parties often try to dominate and, for example, convince each other of the superiority of their ways of operating.

Based on the empirical evidence, the paper then highlights how there were many situations where the Finnish project managers obviously condoned to the cultural dominance by their project partners. However, the empirical examination also highlighted that often this seemed to be coupled with the client–contractor relationships, i.e. the project managers' perceived need as contractor to maintain tensionless relationships with the project client as far as possible. As the empirical evidence built

from a comparative study of less and more troubled projects, it can also be said that tolerating cultural dominance seemed to take place during the less troubled projects and project phases. Hence, these remarks begin to point to a certain kind of "cultural agency" in the sense that it seemed to be the meaning attached to the customer relationship as well as to the project state and phase that dictated the project managers' behavior, instead of them being solely "victims" of the cultures at present (both the Finnish and the others).

However, in addition to condescending to being culturally dominated, the paper first and foremost highlights that there was also ample evidence of Finnish project managers creatively and actively using the possibilities granted by the project organizational form and managerial discretion to counteract the perceived subjugation. More specifically, the analysis showed how the project managers used tactics such as *contractual discretion, creating autonomy, metonymic demarcation, teaming up with other cultures, buffering,* as well as *direct resistance* to compensate for perceived cultural weaknesses and to fight against being dominated.

That is, the project managers could use the contracts between the different project partners as tools for defense when being in a subjugated position, implying a contractual discretion inherent in the project organizations. Secondly, the project managers could use their organizational and managerial leeway, and for example, influence partner selections in order to create autonomy and reduce the dependency from those project partners that could be deemed as (potential) sources of cultural dominance. Thirdly, by presenting themselves as part of a larger organizational entity (i.e. as a representative of a company or a corporation) instead of acting as individuals, the project managers could plead the "organizational stance" and create metonymic demarcation for counteracting cultural dominance when feeling culturally outnumbered. Fourthly, the Finnish project managers could team up with other cultural groups in order to compensate for their "cultural weaknesses". Fifth, buffering, i.e. using intermediaries between cultural groups seemed to be a tactic that allowed the Finns to "shield" themselves from the effects of cultural dominance, and to continue operating in the way most familiar to them. Finally, the Finnish project managers, especially in the more troubled projects and

in crisis situations, could revert to direct resistance granted by their organizational and managerial discretion, and simply go about executing the project in their own way.

Based on these insights, this paper then extends in two ways such cultural determinism that is often advocated by *essentialist* cultural studies (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; House & al., 2004). Firstly, in these studies, and in the plethora of the research following on from these works, (national) cultures are often assumed to have a deterministic property in the sense that they are seen as independent variables having a unidirectional and nomothetic (law-like) impact on organizational actors' values and behaviors, and consequently, on organizational phenomena and outcomes (e.g. Javidan & al., 2006; Kirkman & al., 2006). As is well known, the tendency of these studies is to produce an either–or understanding and stereotypical depiction of cultural behavior. That is, e.g. Finns are seen to have either low or hi uncertainty avoidance but not both (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). However, in line with Osland and Bird (2000), even the few empirical examples in this paper illustrate how in a particular culture both "ends" of a cultural dimension can be present, and hence, depending on the situation "a particular value becomes dominant […], while in other circumstances, this same value recedes into the background" (Osland & Bird, 2000: 70). As also pointed out, this notion is further strengthened by the empirical observations according to which the cultural traits of the Finnish project managers in some situations seemed to contrast with the findings in the earlier studies.

Secondly, the observations bring forth a kind of "cultural agency", where organizational actors are seen as capable of using individual volition and the possibilities granted by their organizational environment to counteract the possible cultural forces at play. In other words, although the empirical observations examined here point out that there may be certain cultural features creating a subjugated position for a particular cultural group, the cultural members may still use different ways to compensate for these features. Hence, siding with Barinaga (2007), the empirical evidence in this paper advocates a view that the organizational actors in cross cultural interaction and interfaces are not merely "dopes of the cultures" (cf. Garfinkel, 1967; McSweeney, 2002; Williamson, 2002) in a deterministic sense. Instead, as became evident the project

managers could choose and activate different kinds of tactics that enabled compensating and supplementing certain cultural tendencies such as being "weak" in making demands or being few in numbers when in a negotiation situation, causing manifestations running against the constructed stereotypes. This also extends earlier studies where it is often assumed that should variation exist in cultural behavior, it is either due to the differences in the actors' identification to the central values of a particular culture or to the effects of exogenous forces at play (Hambrick & al., 1998; Salk & Brannen, 2000; Salk & Shenkar, 2001; Leung & al., 2005).

All in all, the results in this paper then suggest a certain degree of caution when using the ever popular stereotypical cultural understanding produced by the *essentialist* cultural studies in predicting and advising on cultural phenomena in cross cultural interaction and interfaces (see e.g. Javidan & al., 2006). Rather, in line with Osland and Bird (2000) as well as Friedman and Berthoin Antal (2005), with regard to developing cultural theorizing in cross cultural management literature, the results of this paper advocate (re)turning towards the classical *interpretive* cultural understanding brought forth in organizational culture studies (e.g. Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002). In these studies the target of inquiry is the situational meanings and meaning structures that a certain social group attaches to its social and physical world. Consequently, culture is assumed to be a metaphor, i.e. a lens and a perspective that focuses attention to these shared, situational meanings and meaning structures. For example, in relation to the evidence presented above, from this perspective the research target could be the perceived differences that the Finnish project managers see in those situations where they condescend to being culturally dominated compared to those where they directly resist it. This would shed light on the kinds of meanings attributed to these different situations, as well as their relative importance for this particular cultural group.

Finally, and in a more practical sense, this paper answers the plea of Jackson and Aycan (2006) to pay more attention to cross cultural interaction and interfaces instead of focusing on cross cultural comparisons. These authors raise the concern that in existing cross cultural management studies little attention has been paid to the issues of power and international power relations. Concomitantly, the authors point out that in

international endeavors power imbalances often arise as indigenous cultures in the emerging and non-Western markets and countries are disparaged in favor of the post-colonial, Western cultural dominance and pressure (ibid.). However, the existing research rarely tackles these issues, and consequently, there is a lack of understanding on how these dynamics manifest and are dealt with in different cross cultural contexts. From this perspective, this paper sends a clear message to (project) managers in these markets and countries, where large engineering projects are often carried out and where local managers might encounter such dominance and pressure (see e.g. Muriithi & Crawford, 2003; Chen & Partington, 2004). Thus, as shown in this paper, there are numerous possibilities for these managers to take advantage of project organizational form and managerial discretion as a means to counter the tendencies of cultural dominance if and when they choose to do so.

6. CONCLUSIONS

By building on the *relational* cultural understanding, this paper set out to empirically examine the ways in which the expressions and manifestations of cultural dominance are coped with by the involved parties in the context of international engineering projects. More specifically, the purpose of the paper was to show how Finnish project managers, as representatives of a relatively small and peripheral culture, cope with the cultural dominance exhibited by their project partners from significantly larger and more central cultures as they are carrying out large and complex international engineering projects. Based on the empirical evidence from four different case study projects, the paper then highlighted how the Finnish project managers not only condescended to the cultural dominance exhibited by their project partners, but also creatively and actively used the possibilities granted by the project organizational form and managerial discretion to counteract the perceived subjugation. More specifically, the paper showed how the project organizational form and managerial discretion allowed the project managers in different situations to use tactics such as contractual discretion, creating autonomy, metonymic demarcation, teaming up with other cultures, buffering, as well as direct resistance to compensate for perceived cultural weaknesses

and to fight against being dominated. The empirical evidence also implied that tolerating cultural dominance was seemingly apparent during the less troubled project phases, whereas the more active and direct forms of resistance were used in the more troubled project phases and in crises.

Based on these findings this paper then extended the idea of cultural determinism that is often advocated by the mainstream *essentialist* cultural studies. That is, instead of being "dopes of the cultures", this paper advocated certain a kind of "cultural agency" where the managers, in so choosing, were seen as capable of using the possibilities granted by their organizational environment to counteract the cultural forces at play. Consequently, this notion extended the earlier studies where it is often assumed that should variation exist in cultural behavior, it is either due to the differences in the actors' identification to the central values of a particular culture or to the effects of exogenous forces at play. Moreover, based on the idea of "cultural agency", the paper also suggested caution in using the ever popular cultural stereotypes in predicting and advising on cultural behavior in cross cultural interaction and interfaces. Although culture(s) can be seen to "have" causal power reminiscent of the understanding brought forward in mainstream cross cultural management studies, its realization is clearly contingent upon the managers' actions, introducing indeterminacy and diversity to the cultural implications. Finally, and at a more general level, the empirical evidence in this paper sets out an example for (project) managers in the emerging and non-Western markets, who can be seen to be often in a somewhat similar position facing post-colonial, Western cultural dominance in international ventures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Adler, N. (1997) *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 3rd edition.* Boston: Kent Publishing Company.

Ailon-Souday, G. and Kunda, G. (2003) The Local Selves of Global Workers: The Social Construction of National Identity in the Face of Organizational Globalization. *Organization Studies*, 24, 7, 1073-1096.

Alvesson, M. and Berg, P.O. (1992) *Corporate Culture and Organizational Symbolism.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2000a) Varieties of Discourse: On the Study of Organizations through Discourse Analysis. *Human Relations*, 53, 9, 1125-1149.

Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2000b) Taking the Linguistic Turn in Organizational Research: Challenges, Responses, Consequences. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 36, 2, 136-158.

Barinaga, E. (2007) "Cultural Diversity" at Work: "National Culture" as a Discourse Organizing an International Project Group. *Human Relations*, 60, 2, 315-340.

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.

Chan, E.H.W. and Tse, R.Y.C. (2003) Cultural Considerations in International Construction Contracts. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 129, 4, 375-381.

Chen, P. and Partington, D. (2004) An Interpretive Comparison of Chinese and Western Conceptions of Relationships in Construction Project Management Work. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 397-406.

De Camprieu, R., Desbiens, J. and Feixue, Y. (2007) Cultural Differences in Project Risk Perception: An Empirical Comparison of China and Canada. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 7, 683-693.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 4, 523-550.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007) Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 1, 25-32.

Flyvbjerg, B., Bruzelius, N. and Rothengatter, W. (2003) *Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Friedman, V. J. and Berthoin Antal, A. (2005) Negotiating Reality: A Theory of Action Approach to Intercultural Competence. *Management Learning*, 36, 1, 69-86.

Gajewsksa-De Mattos, A., Chapman, M., and Clegg, J. (2004) Poles and Germans: An International Business Relationship. *Human Relations*, 57, 8, 983-1015.

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Gerhart, B. (2008) Cross Cultural Management Research: Assumptions, Evidence, and Suggested Directions. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 8, 3, 259-274.

Grün, O. (2004) *Taming Giant Projects: Management of Multi-Organization Enterprises*. Berlin: Springer.

Hambrick, D.C., Canney Davison, S., Snell, S.A., and Snow, C.C. (1998) When Groups Consist of Multiple Nationalities: Towards a New Understanding of the Implications. *Organization Studies*, 19, 2, 181-205.

Harrison, P. D., Chow, C.W., Wu, A., and Harrell, A.M., (1999) A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Managers' Project Evaluation Decisions. *Behavioral Research in Accounting*, 11, 143-160.

Heracleous, L. and Hendry, J. (2000) Discourse and the Study of Organization: Toward a Structurational Perspective. *Human Relations*, 53, 10, 1251-1286.

Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Holden, N. (2002) *Cross-Cultural Management: A Knowledge Management Perspective*. Dorchester: Prentice Hall.

House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Gupta, V. and GLOBE Associates (2004) *Leadership, Culture, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Jackson, T. and Aycan, Z. (2006) Editorial: From Cultural Values to Cross Cultural Interfaces. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 6, 1, 5-13.

Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Sully de Luque, M., and House, R.J. (2006) In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, February, 67- 90.

Keil, M., Tan, B.C.Y., Wei, K-K., Saarinen, T., Tuunainen, V., and Wassenaar, A. (2000) A Cross-Cultural Study on Escalation of Commitment Behavior in Software Projects. *MIS Quarterly*, 24, 2, 299-325.

Kirkman, B.L., Lowe, K.B., and Gibson, C.B. (2006) A Quarter Century of *Culture's Consequences*: A Review of Empirical Research Incorporating Hofstede's Cultural Values Framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37, 285-320.

Kluckhohn, F. and Strodtbeck, F. (1961) *Variations in Value Orientations*. Illinois: Evanston.

Leung, K., Bhagat, R.S., Buchan, N.R., Erez, M., and Gibson, C.B. (2005) Culture and International Business: Recent Advances and their Implications for Future Research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 36, 357-378.

March, J.G. and Sutton, R.I. (1997) Organizational Performance as a Dependent Variable. *Organization Science*, 8, 6, 698-706.

Martin, J. (2002) *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

McSweeney, B. (2002) Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and Their Consequences: A Triuph of Faith – a Failure of Analysis. *Human Relations*, 55, 1, 89-118.

Miller, R. and Lessard, D.R. (2000) *The Strategic Management of Large Engineering Projects: Shaping Institutions, Risks and Governance.* Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Morris, P.W.G. and Hough G.H. (1987) *The Anatomy of Major Projects – A Study of The Reality of Project Management*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Mumby, D.K. and Clair, R.P. (1997) Organizational Discourse. In van Dijk, T.A. (ed.) *Discourse as Social Interaction – Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction Volume 2.* London: Sage Publications.

Muriithi, N. and Crawford, L. (2003) Approaches to Project Management in Africa: Implications for International Development Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 21, 309-319.

Osland, J.C. and Bird, A. (2000) Beyond Sophisticated Stereotyping: Cultural Sensemaking in Context. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14, 1, 65-77.

Oswick, C., Keenoy, T.W., and Grant, D. (2000) Discourse, Organizations and Organizing: Concepts, Objects and Subjects. *Human Relations*, 53, 9, 1115-1123.

Ozorhon, B., Arditi, D., Dikmen, I., and Birgonul, M.T. (2008) Implications of Culture in the Performance of International Construction Joint Ventures. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 134, 5, 361-370.

Pheng, L.S. and Yuquan, S. (2002) An Exploratory Study of Hofstede's Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Construction Projects. *Management Decision*, 40, 1, 7-16.

Sackmann, S.A. and Phillips, M.E, (2004) Contextual Influences on Culture Research – Shifting Assumptions for New Workplace Realities. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 4, 3, 370-390.

Salk, J.E. and Brannen, M.Y. (2000) National Culture, Networks, and Individual Influence in a Multinational Management Team. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 2, 191-202.

Salk, J.E. and Shenkar, O. (2001) Social Identities in an International Joint Venture: An Exploratory Case Study. *Organization Science*, 12, 2, 161-178.

Schneider, S.C. and Barsoux, J.-L. (1997) *Managing across Cultures*. London: Prentice Hall.

Schwartz, S.H. (1994) Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Cultural Dimensions of Values. In Kim, U., Triandis, H.C., Kagitcibasi, C., Choi, S., and Yoon, G. (eds.) *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method, and Applications*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Scott, W.R. (1997) *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Shenkar, O. (2001) Cultural Distance Revisited: Towards a More Rigorous Conceptualization and Measurement of Cultural Differences. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32, 3, 519-535.

Shore, B. and Cross, B.J. (2005) Exploring the Role of National Culture in the Management of Large-Scale International Science Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 55-64.

Silverman, D. (ed.) (1997) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Smircich, L. (1983) Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 3, 339-358.

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Holden, N. (2002) Rethinking Cross-Cultural Management in a Globalizing Business World. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 2, 1, 103-121.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) (2003) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Tan, W. and Chong, W. (2003) Power Distance in Singapore Construction Organizations: Implications for Project Managers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 21, 529-536.

Trompenaars, F. (1993) *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. London: Economist Books.

Tsoukas, H. (1989) The Validity of Idiographic Research Explanations. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 4, 551-561.

Turner, J. R. (1999) *The Handbook of Project-based Management: Leading Strategic Change in Organizations, 3rd edition.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Vaara, E. (2000) Constructions of Cultural Differences in Post-Merger Change Processes: A Sensemaking Perspective on Finnish-Swedish Cases. *M@n@gement*, 3, 3, 81-110.

Vaara, E. and Tienari, J. (2003) The "Balance of Power" Principle: Nationality, Politics and the Distribution of Organizational Positions. In Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Vaara, E., Risberg, A., Søderberg, A-M., and Tienari, J. (2003a) Nation Talk. The Construction of National Stereotypes in a Merging Multinational. In Søderberg, A-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) (2003) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Vaara, E., Tienari, J., and Säntti, R. (2003b) The International Match: Metaphors as Vehicles of Social Identity-Building in Cross-Border Mergers. *Human Relations*, 56, 4, 419-451.

Vaara, E., Tienari, J., and Björkman, I. (2003c) Best Practice is West Practice? A Sensemaking Perspective on Knowledge Transfer. In Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

van Dijk, T.A. (1993) Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4, 2, 249-283.

Very, P., Lubatkin, M., Calori, R., and Veiga, J. (1997) Relative Standing and the Performance of Recently Acquired European Firms. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18, 8, 593-614.

Weick, K. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Williamson, D. (2002) Forward from a Critique of Hofstede's Model of National Culture. *Human Relations*, 55, 11, 1373-1395.

Zeng, S.X., Xie, X.M., Tam, C.M., and Sun, P.M. (2009) Identifying Cultural Difference in R&D Project for Performance Improvement: A Field Study. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 10, 1, 61-70.

Zwikael, O., Shimizu, K. and Globerson, S. (2005) Cultural Differences in Project Management Capabilities: A Field Study. *International Journal of Project Management*. 23, 454-462.

ESSAY III: "WHERE DID OUR COLLABORATION DISAPPEAR?" – DYNAMICS OF ETHNOCENTRISM AND ETHNORELATIVISM IN TWO CONSECUTIVE PROJECTS

Sampo Tukiainen

Unpublished manuscript

This essay is forthcoming in a revised form in Primecz, H., Romani, L., and Sackmann, S. (eds.): *Cross-Cultural Management in Practice: Culture and Negotiated Meanings*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Abstract

It is typical within cross cultural interaction that ethnocentrism (i.e. the tendency to consider one's own culture and worldview central and superior to others) occurs. On the other hand, some groups are able to reduce these tendencies and develop ethnorelativism (i.e. the capability to understand, appreciate, and adapt to different cultures and worldviews). Moreover, the existing literature argues that such ethnorelativism is likely to extend and transfer to future cross cultural collaborations. However, this argument contrasts with the observations made from two consecutive projects, where ethnorelativism achieved in one project is displaced by ethnocentrism in a subsequent project. Based on such observations, this paper sets out to seek answers to why ethnorelativism in this case does not transfer to the subsequent project despite that such transfer is implied in the existing literature. The paper specifies how and why the discontinuity between the two consecutive projects can become a triggering event where increased ethnocentrism becomes a necessary "resource", causing the displacement of established ethnorelativism. Consequently, it is argued that extending ethnorelativism to future collaborations is not a simple matter of experiential learning. Instead, it is argued to be dependent on the supporting organizational contingencies, structures, and incentive systems. Hence, the paper reminds us that in addition to cultures having an effect on organizing and management, cross cultural phenomena can also be influenced by the pertinent business interests and political features of organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

> *"In the preceding [project]… at the beginning we had this fight between the Finns and the Poles… and we tried to make people understand that this is one project, this is one company, and that we are all in the same boat… so that we could make cooperation and mutual understanding work. And I think we succeeded pretty well I'd say… Of course now with [the consecutive project] we have to start all over again, you know, it's still the fights about what comes from Finland and what comes from Poland, who knows better how to do it, who should be the leader and so on." (Finnish project manager)*

In cross cultural[7] collaboration it is commonplace that nationalism and national cultural polarizations erupt between workgroups, splitting them into conflicting subgroups with "us-versus-them" attitudes and cultural clashes hindering effective team work (Hofstede, 1980; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Hinds & Bailey, 2003; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003; Cramton & Hinds, 2005; Gibson & Grubb, 2005). Concomitantly, *ethnocentrism* (i.e. the belief of one's own culture and worldview being

---

[7] In line with mainstream international cross cultural management literature (see Sackmann & al., 1997), in this paper the term "cross cultural" is used as a metaphor for "cross national". Thus, culture is considered to encompass and used interchangeably as a synonym for nationality, as is predominant in the cross cultural management literature (Sackmann & al., 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004).

central and superior to others) is bound to become highly salient between the subgroups (Adler, 1997; Cramton & Hinds, 2005). Yet, contrasting tendencies have also been observed, as some groups are able to develop *ethnorelativism* (i.e. understanding, appreciation, and adaptation to the different worldviews and cultures), leading to gradually emerging, shared working cultures between the workgroups (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Salk & Brannen; 2000; Cramton & Hinds, 2005; Gibson & Grubb, 2005). Moreover, such ethnorelativism is argued to extend beyond immediate collaboration, i.e. to generalize to involve other groups representing the same cultures and nationalities, and produce effective work and cooperation in future cross cultural collaborations (Cramton & Hinds, 2005).

Such arguments on the transferability and generalization of ethnorelativism, however, seem to contrast with the message and spirit conveyed in the opening quote of this paper. In this quote a Finnish project manager recounts his personal experiences from two consecutive projects carried out together with his Finnish colleagues and Polish counterparts, implying the erosion of ethnorelativism and the collaborative spirit at the beginning of the second project. Inspired by such apparent contradiction between practice and what is implied in theory, this paper delves into the world of international engineering projects and examines in detail the dynamics of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism within a Finnish – Polish project management team. As the apparent displacement of ethnorelativism with increased ethnocentrism takes place right after the seemingly fruitful cooperation in a preceding project, the paper asks: Why does the ethnorelativism not transfer from the earlier project to the subsequent one, despite such being implied in the existing literature?

With this kind of focus, this paper sets out to extend existing studies on cross cultural subgroup collaboration (e.g. Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997; Laurila, 1997; Lau & Murnighan, 1998; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Cramton & Hinds, 2005; Gibson & Grubb, 2005; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005; Li & Hambrick, 2005). In this literature, there seems to be no empirical research on how established ethnorelativism between cultural subgroups might come apart and be displaced by increased ethnocentrism. More specifically, we lack

understanding of the kinds of triggering events, and on how and why these work in preventing the transfer and extension of ethnorelativism from one instance of collaboration to another. In the project organizational studies, general difficulties across projects in maintaining relationships and sense of mutual interdependence between project partners is a well known phenomenon (Hadjikhani, 1996; Cova & Salle, 2000). In a wider sense, this relates to the difficulties in transferring experiences and practices between projects, which has been recognized as a particular problem of the project organizational form (Prencipe & Tell, 2001; Newell & al., 2004; Scarbrough & al., 2004). However, even this literature does not shed light on the kinds of triggering events as well as on how these come to prevent the transfer of ethnorelativism from one project to another.

Consequently, this paper argues that in this particular case, the discontinuity between the two projects becomes a triggering event, where ethnocentrism becomes involved as a necessary "resource" in a highly intricate web of divergent concerns and interests, causing the displacement of established ethnorelativism. More specifically, this paper illustrates that the discontinuity between the consecutive projects marks a transition where the organizational and managerial structures as well as the division of work and responsibilities (and thus, the allocation of profits, costs, and risks) between the project partners are renegotiated. Consequently, this reorganization triggers the salience of i) the properties and requirements of the new project, ii) divergent organizational needs and priorities, as well as iii) divergent managerial ambitions and visions. In the face of these concerns and interests it is then argued that ethnocentrism becomes turned into a multifaceted "resource" used both as a justified, valid argument as well as a scapegoat in legitimizing the stances of the two parties. Hence, it is argued that extending ethnorelativism to future collaborations is not a simple matter of experiential learning. Instead, it is argued to be dependent on the supporting organizational contingencies, structures, and incentive systems.

With these insights, this paper contributes to the existing literature in the following ways: Firstly, by empirically examining the dynamics of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, this paper expands and elaborates the earlier conceptual arguments

proposed by Cramton and Hinds (2005). Secondly, this research answers calls for extending and deepening the studies on developing shared working cultures in international collaborations (e.g. Brannen & Salk, 2000; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Salk & Shenkar, 2001) by examining how established working cultures and collaborations may come apart. Finally, this paper fundamentally serves to remind us that in addition to cultures having an effect on organizing and management, cross cultural phenomena can also be influenced by the pertinent business needs and political features between the partners (cf. March, 1962), turning these into such contextual and situational elements that international cross cultural management research should not overlook in the way it has often done previously (e.g. Adler, 1997; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Gibson & Grubb, 2005; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005).

The remainder of the paper begins with a literature review presenting briefly the main arguments in the existing research on ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Also some central ideas related to the challenges in maintaining partnerships and transferring experiences and learning across projects are briefly reviewed. Secondly, the case study setting and research methodology is presented. Thirdly, the paper proceeds to empirically show that ethnorelativism between the Finns and the Poles was achieved in the first of the studied projects, which however, was replaced by heightened nationalism and increased ethnocentrism in the second one. This is followed by a detailed description of the events leading to this situation. Finally, the empirical description is analyzed, and results and conclusions vis-à-vis the research question and existing literature are highlighted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism in cross cultural collaboration

As previously stated, in the international business environment and collaborative ventures cultural heterogeneity is often seen to bring about an increased likelihood of nationalism and national cultural polarization, splitting organizations and teams into

nationally and culturally divided subgroups (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Salk & Shenkar, 2001; Cramton & Hinds, 2005). As a consequence, cultural clashes and conflicts, "us-versus-them" attitudes, disagreements, distrust, miscommunication, and discrimination emerge between the blocs (Hofstede, 1980; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003).

A fundamental and frequent phenomenon in such confrontations is the emerging salience of *ethnocentrism* (Sumner, 1906; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Hofstede, 1980; Adler, 1997). Ethnocentrism appears when people and groups construct a polarized social reality and divide the world into in-groups and out-groups (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Feelings of superiority and centrality are then attached to the in-groups and their worldview, while the out-groups are treated with derogation and even hostility. In the organizational environment, the in-group and its members' working methods are considered as the best way to work and organize, while those of the out-group are generally treated with disregard and feelings of inferiority. The consequences of such ethnocentrism are often considered to be detrimental to work team effectiveness, as the contesting subgroups are seen to clash or distance themselves from each other when showing mutual disregard and collaborative difficulties (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Cramton & Hinds, 2005).

However, not all multinational organizations and work groups behave this way. As a counterpoint to ethnocentrism, some cross cultural organizations and work groups are able to develop *ethnorelativism* (Cramton & Hinds, 2005). In the cross cultural contexts, ethnorelativism appears when people and groups are able to recognize the differences and similarities between them, to understand and appreciate the diverse national and cultural contexts, and to adapt their behavior and attitudes for advancing the development of mutually appropriate behavior (Bennett, 1986; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Salk & Brannen, 2000; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Cramton & Hinds, 2005). As a consequence, achieving ethnorelativism is argued to bridge gaps and lead to increased collaboration and effective team work between subgroups (Cramton & Hinds, 2005). Indeed, tendencies related to ethnorelativism such as mutual positive appreciation, accepting and adapting to local norms, convergence of the work practices, development

of shared, "negotiated" working cultures, and high integration and performance of multinational teams have been also empirically acknowledged (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Salk & Brannen, 2000).

Previous research has recognized different degrees of both ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. For example, Bennett (1986) describes a framework consisting of multiple cognitive states or stages through which people may proceed, starting from the more ethnocentric behavior and proceeding towards showing more ethnorelativistic tendencies. According to this model, *ethnocentrism* may appear in three different ways: by *denial*, *defense*, or *minimization* of the cultural differences. In *denial* one's own culture is considered as the only one, and cultural differences are basically ignored or they are not noticed. One's own culture is also considered as the only real one, as cultural differences or other cultures are not taken into account, or they are considered to belong to an undefined population of "others". In *defense*, cultural differences are recognized as real, but they are discriminated. In this mode the world is divided into "us" and "them" and cultural differences are considered as a threat. Consequently, one's own culture is defended and considered superior to others. In *minimization* certain features of one's own culture are considered universal, surpassing and neutralizing cultural differences. Thus, the significance or extent of cultural differences is downplayed. People exhibiting minimization may also perceive cultural differences as something to be corrected by making others behave more similar to themselves.

In Bennett's (1986) model, *ethnorelativism* is also considered to take three different forms, namely *acceptance*, *adaptation*, or *integration*. In *acceptance* people are able to recognize different cultures and cultural differences, and these are also accepted to be equally important and valuable as one's own. In this mode, people might still have prejudices towards others or some elements of other cultures might be judged negatively. However, those features or cultural differences do not diminish the value or importance of other cultures. Instead they are considered equally human. In *adaptation*, people start to incorporate cues from other cultures into their own worldview, as well as adapt their behavior accordingly. In this way people are able to exhibit empathy towards other cultures, i.e. they become adept at taking others' perspective and shifting one's

frame of situational interpretation to match with the others. As stated, particular to this mode is that these shifts are not only cognitive; they also include behavioral changes. In *integration*, cultural differences and features of different cultures are ingrained so that it enables moving in and out of different worldviews to the extent that one begins to develop a new, multicultural identity. Thus, identities emerge that are amalgamations of multiple worldviews, lying "at the margins of two or more cultures and central to none" (Hammer & al., 2003: 425).

From the perspective of this paper, a highly significant set of arguments related to transferring and generalizing *ethnorelativism* to future collaborations has then been developed by Cramton and Hinds (2005). Building on the intergroup contact hypothesis (Pettigrew, 1986, 1998), these authors argue that ethnorelativism is likely to transfer to involve future cross cultural collaborations in a number of ways. For example, according to Cramton and Hinds (2005) developing positive views about individuals of an out-group will generally transfer to cover the entire out-group. As an extension to this argument, they continue that when people "learn to appreciate one another's differences, they are likely to generalize these positive views to future teammates from the same cultures and locations" (Cramton & Hinds, 2005: 243). Performance wise, as people begin to acknowledge and understand different worldviews and become able to work across those differences – i.e. develop ethnorelativism – that capability is also argued to transfer to improved functioning of future cross cultural collaborations (ibid.). In a similar way, it is argued that as people create multicultural understanding and cultural intelligence (LaFromboise & al., 1993; Earley & Ang, 2003), competence "will likely transfer to future teams with membership from those cultures in which team members have developed competence" (Cramton & Hinds, 2005: 243). Finally, it is argued that ethnorelativism can transfer beyond the cultures and nationalities one has had direct experience with (Cramton & Hinds, 2005).

However, looking at the existing research on cross cultural subgroup collaboration (e.g. Barkema & Vermeulen, 1997; Laurila, 1997; Lau & Murnighan, 1998; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Cramton & Hinds, 2005; Gibson & Grubb, 2005; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005: Li & Hambrick, 2005), there

seem to be no empirical studies that examine the dynamics between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. More specifically, there seem to be no studies that take under empirical scrutiny the possibilities that ethnorelativism indeed would transfer and generalize from one collaboration to another. In other words, the existing research on cross cultural subgroup collaboration focuses predominantly on studying the implications of subgroup formation and composition on various organizational outcomes (e.g. Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Lau & Murnighan, 2005), the antecedents to developing cross cultural collaboration (e.g. Gibson & Grubb, 2005), or the ways in which conflicting subgroups might become more integrated (Laurila, 1997; Brannen & Salk, 2005). Yet, these studies fall short on describing how established cross cultural collaboration might come apart and be replaced by more conflicting periods. Hence, in terms of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, we seem to lack understanding on the kinds of triggering events that might cause ethnocentrism to supersede ethnorelativism, as well as the ways in which these might work in preventing the transfer and extension of ethnorelativism from one instance of collaboration to another.

Transferring experience and maintaining partnerships across projects

In contrast with some other types of more "permanent" organizational forms (e.g. mergers and acquisitions), projects, however, are often described as "temporary" organizational arrangements (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). In other words, they are often established in order to carry out a specific, one-off task in a pre-specified time period after which the project organization dissolves (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Turner, 1999; PMBOK, 2004; Söderlund, 2004; Whitley, 2006). Even in the case of consecutive projects, their temporary nature can create a discontinuity, where the business does not go on "as usual", dissolving the collaboration between the project partners (Hadjikhani, 1996; Cova & Salle, 2000).

Consequently, difficulties in transferring experiences, partnerships, and learning across projects is a well documented phenomenon in the existing project management literature (Hadjikhani, 1996; Cova & Salle, 2000; Prencipe & Tell, 2001; Scarbrough & al., 2004). For example, the temporary nature of projects may entail a new constellation

of people being created every time a new project is started (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Prencipe & Tell, 2001). This may make it difficult to build on established relationships and cooperation from the preceding projects (Schein, 1999a). On the other hand, project organizations might suffer from losing the sense of mutual interdependence between the partners during the time gap between consecutive projects, making it difficult to maintain partnerships and collaboration across projects (Hadjikhani, 1996; Cova & Salle, 2000). This can be a consequence, for example, of the changes in interests or partner objectives that the project discontinuity allows to emerge (Hadjikhani, 1996). Because of the unique, one-off nature of many a project, practices, experience, and learning may also be developed within a project, which might not be readily repeated in successive projects (Prencipe & Tell, 2001; Scarbrough & al., 2004).

However, in terms of the dynamics between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, it is apparent that in addition to the cross cultural management literature, the existing project management literature does not shed light on the dynamics of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism either. Hence, this line of literature does not come to explain how and why the discontinuity between two consecutive projects might become a kind of triggering event increasing the salience of ethnocentrism, and the ways in which this might come to work in preventing the transfer of ethnorelativism from one project to another. Thus, developed from these premises, this paper focuses on showing how the discontinuity between the two examined projects can become a triggering event, increasing the salience of ethnocentrism by involving it in a highly intricate web of divergent concerns and interests and causing the displacement of established ethnorelativism.

3. METHODOLOGY

Case study setting and data collection

The two consecutive projects studied in this research (FIRST PROJECT and SECOND PROJECT from now on) were carried out in Poland by a Finnish parent company and

its Polish subsidiary during the 2000s[8]. Both of the projects could be considered as belonging to the category of "large infrastructural engineering projects" as classified by Miller and Lessard (2000). These projects were selected as research targets when the Finnish parent decided to participate in a publicly and privately funded research program focusing on the experiences of Finnish project managers in cross cultural interaction in international engineering projects. In this research program one of the author's initial responsibilities was to examine the FIRST PROJECT, because representatives from the Finnish parent company expressed interest in gaining more understanding on the successes that they had achieved in cross cultural and cross national collaboration during that project. However, by a serendipitous finding during the examination of that project, the research phenomenon of this paper became evident. As a consequence, the SECOND PROJECT was prompted by the author to be included in the examination, which was also agreed by the Finnish company.

To answer the research question, open interviews, in the spirit of the ethnographic interviewing technique (Spradley, 1979), were opted as the primary research method. This interview methodology and research philosophy was preferred and chosen, as it was considered to provide an opportunity to let the interviewees tell about their experiences in their own words, to allow multiple perspectives and interpretations of the lived actuality to emerge, as well as to reduce the likelihood of the author imposing his worldview, ideas, and thoughts on the subjects of the study. All this was considered vital, as the author's wish was to make sure that there would be enough "space" and leeway for the different interviewees' experiences and viewpoints to emerge with the author induced distortion intermingling with the data as little as possible.

Building from these premises, the data were collected by interviewing the Finnish and Polish project managers (2 Finns, 1 Pole), two Finnish project supervisors, the vice president of the Finnish parent company (a Finn), and the CEO of the Polish subsidiary (a Pole). These people represent the majority of the key personnel and the managerial board in both projects. Each of the informants was interviewed one to four times, and

---

[8] In order to protect the company and its identity, the researcher has agreed not to disclose any specific details on the projects such as the project type, size, names of the partners, etc. The empirical case description in this paper has been sent for approval and accepted by the company's representatives.

each interview lasted between one to two hours. The Finns and the Poles were interviewed separately. Altogether 11 tape recorded interviews (9 Finnish and 2 Polish) were conducted by the author. In the case of the Finns the interviews were conducted in Finnish, and with the Poles in English, which was also the lingua franca in the two projects. Each of the Poles had highly international work experience and excellent command of the English language. The author has also received continuous training in English throughout his educational life, starting from the early youth. Thus, no difficulties in conducting the interviews in English were met.

Taken together, the interviews focused predominantly on the experiences of the two Finnish project managers in coping with cultural differences and developing cross cultural collaboration. These views were complemented and verified by the interviews with the other Finnish key personnel. To gain understanding of the Polish perspective, the Polish project manager and the CEO of the Polish subsidiary were interviewed. However, these informants were each interviewed only once. In order to gain greater understanding on the Polish perspectives and viewpoints, the Polish project manager was contacted for additional interviews several times. However, all of these requests were refused. The Polish CEO also became unavailable for further interviews, as he left the company. As a consequence, the analysis and representation of the empirical data in this paper reflects mostly the Finnish perspective, although it is complemented by the Polish perspectives whenever possible.

During the data collection period, the author also carried out a consultancy project in the Finnish parent company. In this project the author acted as a process consultant (Schein, 1999b), rather than an external expert. Designing and implementing this project involved numerous discussions with the company representatives and the Finnish managers of the two projects examined here, which served to deepen the author's understanding of these projects. These discussions were not tape recorded, however, the author wrote down detailed memos during all of them. In addition, secondary data such as monthly project progress reports, project design reports, contractual documents between the Finns and the Poles, samples from internal correspondence, earlier studies conducted in the Finnish parent company, as well as newspaper and other media articles

were included in the data collection. This kind of data was mainly used to complement the interviews and in many parts to verify the accuracy of the interview data.

Data collection commenced by interviewing the Finnish project managers. The purpose was to familiarize the researcher with the project management's view on the course of events in the FIRST PROJECT, which had just been finalized. The interviews began with *descriptive questions* (Spradley, 1979) by asking the interviewees to tell about the FIRST PROJECT in their own words. The specific questions used were, for example, "Could you tell me about the FIRST PROJECT in your own words?" or "From your point of view, could you tell me, what is it that this project is all about?" After these introductory questions, the interviews proceeded to inquire about the project progress. The questions asked were, for example, "Could you give me a grand tour of the project, what has happened?" or "Could you tell me about some of the most memorable events of the project for you?" The idea was to gradually pinpoint and focus on how the project managers remembered different project situations and phases, i.e. what had happened, what had been done, and what had been the consequences?

It was during these first interviews with the Finnish project managers, that the research phenomenon of this paper was then brought up. For example, in one of the interviews, a Finnish project manager expressed, without the author specifically probing for it, his astonishment with regard to the appearance of ethnocentrism during the organizing of the SECOND PROJECT, although from his perspective effective collaboration and ethnorelativism had just been achieved in the preceding FIRST PROJECT. At the time of the interviews, the SECOND PROJECT was in transition from its organizing to its execution phase.

As the interviews progressed, each interview was transcribed after being carried out as well as discussed between the author, one research colleague, and one professor. The purpose of such group analysis was to determine the main findings of each of the interviews as well as to provide direction for further inquiry. As more data were gathered and analyzed, a plot-like story gradually began to evolve, depicting the main events from the FIRST PROJECT leading to the SECOND PROJECT. Also, as the

research phenomenon of this paper was recognized, further interviews focused on that, and relevant informants were determined on the basis of filling in the "blanks" found in the previously collected data. Thus, as the interviews progressed, they gradually became more focused and structured, developing into finding out different perspectives and interpretations of the events leading to the appearance of ethnocentrism at the beginning of the SECOND PROJECT. However, special care was taken in ensuring that even in the later interviews the researcher would not strictly guide the informants. The purpose was to still let through the informants' own story, while the researcher, from time to time, could point out issues for elaboration based on the "blanks" in the earlier data.

For the empirical case description in the following section, a plot-like story based on the interview data describing in detail the events leading from the FIRST PROJECT to the SECOND PROJECT was then constructed by the author. This entity was however broken down into smaller segments, and in the following section, the empirical case description starts firstly by highlighting the kind of *ethnorelativism* that was achieved in the FIRST PROJECT. Building on Bennett's (1986) model introduced in the literature review, it will be shown that *acceptance* and *adaptation* between the Finns and the Poles were achieved. Secondly, it will be shown, that this kind of ethnorelativism did not transfer to the beginning of the SECOND PROJECT. Instead, *ethnocentrism*, and especially *defense* of one's own superiority and worldview appeared on both sides during the organizing for the SECOND PROJECT. This will be followed by a detailed description of the events (as experienced by the interviewees) that led to the appearance of such ethnocentrism. In the concluding sections of the paper, this description will then serve as a basis for the analysis of the reasons preventing ethnorelativism from transferring across the two projects, as well as for the conclusions and contributions of this paper.

4. CASE DESCRIPTION

Signs of ethnorelativism in the FIRST PROJECT

The following excerpts from the FIRST PROJECT describe in general, as well as in detail, the ethnorelativism and collaboration between the Finns and the Poles that was seemingly achieved during the project:

> "During the execution phase of [the FIRST PROJECT] I think we succeeded in creating pretty much what you could call a unified team… We've had to replace some people on both sides, but all in all, the team work has improved constantly during the project." (Polish project manager)

> "…I think that at the commissioning, the very good cooperation between [the Polish and Finnish project managers] caused that, even if from time to time there were these kinds of situations, they didn't allow them to develop to a dangerous level…" (Polish CEO)

> "… at the beginning [of the FIRST PROJECT] we had this fight between the Finns and the Poles… and we tried to make people understand that this is one project, this is one company, and that we are all in the same boat, and we're making one project, and that there should be one common outcome and things like that, so that we could make the cooperation and mutual understanding work. And I think we succeeded pretty well I'd say…" (Finnish project manager)

These excerpts reflect a (subjective) reality that the interviewed managers on both sides emphasized and had experienced during the FIRST PROJECT: initial ethnocentrism and disputes between the Finns and the Poles, a split of the project organization into two camps, yet, followed by times of gradual rapprochement and increase in cooperation.

Furthermore:

> "…So without a facilitator, without an external, neutral party, probably we would have failed, because we could see even in the management, that one side is representing one nation and the other side the other one… First session probably was a shock to some of the people because, both of the sides when they met for the first time for two or three days in a remote place, they realized that both of the sides really represent professionalism.

So they started to respect each other and it was very important… I think after the second session we had with the facilitator… they understood that the only way is to look for the cooperation, consensus, and respect on both of the sides." (Polish CEO)

"There were people in Poland who knew how to execute these kind of projects… but it wasn't that efficient or modern, it was a way people were used to do it, not very sophisticated methods…So technically knowledge and competence was and is in Poland, but this modern way of how to proceed and how to execute a project is something what Poland has to learn all the time." (Polish project manager)

"Many times after a problematic situation or meeting I had to meet with our Finnish supervisors and we had to discuss these matters through. We discussed that when people come from different backgrounds, we just have to accept and understand that there are multiple ways of reaching a certain milestone. It can't be that ours would be the one and only way… And I also emphasized, that after a specific target and approach has been set we have to use all our skills to proceed to that target along the chosen path, whether or not we think that it could be accomplished in another, perhaps more familiar way." (Finnish project manager)

"…[in the FIRST PROJECT] the project managers also had this Finland – Poland fight naturally, but then when these guys kind of found each others' strengths, their responsibilities were modified so that each had an area where he was strong, so that helped it a lot." (Finnish vice president)

Excerpts such as these point to the gradual development of ethnorelativistic thinking and more specifically to *acceptance* in Bennett's (1986) terms, where one's own cultural view is accepted to be just one of many other important or appropriate worldviews.

Finally:

"I think it's ok to think like [the Polish project managers] thought, we just couldn't understand it like that at first. [The Polish project managers] thought that the contracts we make with the subcontractors have more effects than just this one project… One subcontractor was like, we thought it was financially unstable. Looking at the numbers we would've taken the second one… But this financially unstable company was a local company in the town where we were working on [the FIRST PROJECT]. And this town is like many other Polish towns, where they cut down industry and close firms, and there's lots of unemployed… And at last we gave the job

to this company like our local guys suggested, or advised. And this was thought to be very positive in that situation and in that town where we were like three, four years... These sorts of things come back very quickly to your site in that kind of culture. [If one does not help] it can make it difficult to take care of something else, someone can think that it has been our fault, that this [subcontractor] has gone bankrupt, when we have not given them some job, that would've helped them survive longer... this is just part of the soft issues that a new contractor has to learn." (Finnish project manager)

This example implies that in addition to *acceptance*, a deeper level of ethnorelativism, namely *adaptation*, was also achieved during the FIRST PROJECT. As brought out earlier in the literature review, *adaptation* to cultural differences occurs when one becomes able to understand appropriateness in another culture and when one can act and feel emphatically in and towards other cultures (Hammer & al., 2003).

Thus, it seems that various forms of ethnorelativism and cross cultural appreciation were achieved during the FIRST PROJECT, although the project had initially been characterized by ethnocentrism between the two partners. Moreover, it is noteworthy that this is the kind of understanding and learning that, according to the existing literature, is supposed to extend and generalize to involve other groups of the same nationalities and cultures, as well as to promote effective cooperation in future cross cultural collaborations (Cramton & Hinds, 2005).

Signs of ethnocentrism in the SECOND PROJECT

However, let us now consider the following sentiments during the early phases of the subsequent SECOND PROJECT:

"What I have tried to describe here is that during the FIRST PROJECT we learned to cooperate pretty well, but once again, now that the SECOND PROJECT is about to start, there were signs of [the Finns and the Poles] splitting apart, pulling strings in opposite directions and trying to dominate the project." (Finnish project manager)

"...[in the SECOND PROJECT] we had a very similar situation than in the FIRST PROJECT, you know about who should be on top as a first, [a Finn or a Pole?] ... At the time I was completely against having a Finn as

> *a project director, because we knew that most of the activities are in Poland, we already knew that we have experienced, tested people, and this customer was a different customer than the customer [in the FIRST PROJECT]... Yeah, you are right, we had the problem, you know, who should be at the top, and at that time I strongly said: No, now is the time to have a Pole." (Polish CEO)*

As can be seen, during the early phases of the SECOND PROJECT, ethnocentrism once again seemed to become highly salient. To be more specific, both parties seemed to exhibit thinking and behavior in line with *defense* (Bennett, 1986) when considering and promoting one's own culture and worldview as the only appropriate and viable one. Consequently, the "mutual positive distinctiveness" (Cramton & Hinds, 2005) and ethnorelativism achieved in the FIRST PROJECT did not seem to extend beyond that project or to generalize to lasting mutual appreciation also involving the SECOND PROJECT.

In the following section, events leading to this kind of situation with further evidence on the increased ethnocentrism are examined in more detail.

Organizing for the SECOND PROJECT and reappearing ethnocentrism

Based on the interviews, it became evident that the SECOND PROJECT had been under development for years, and that it was the first implementation of a technological innovation made by the Finnish parent company. It also became evident that due to local political pressure, initially the customer in Poland had planned for more conventional technology to be utilized in the project. As a consequence, the decision to go with the new technology had required significant efforts to win over the customer as well as the necessary public support for it. In these efforts, the role of the Polish subsidiary's CEO was considered crucial. For example, a Finnish supervisor described the following:

> *"You know, [the SECOND PROJECT], for getting this project to us [the Polish CEO's] personal input solely was something like 50%, he really had influence and power in this situation."*

During its tendering phase, it had also been planned that the SECOND PROJECT be organized according to a "one project team" principle, meaning that a single project manager was to be responsible for both the operations in Finland and in Poland. According to the original plans the project was to be led and managed by the Finns. However, these plans were changed and a project organization divided according to the operations in Poland and in Finland was adopted as a basis of the negotiations. One rationale behind this change was described by the Finnish vice president in the following way:

> *"Anyway, in [the winter] we were thinking these issues, dividing the scope… so that [the Polish subsidiary] would be responsible for everything that's happening in Poland, and [the Finnish parent company] would deliver all that is coming outside of Poland. So that was the principle during the FIRST PROJECT more or less, and we tried to use the same principle then in this SECOND PROJECT… here's one organization chart… kind of same principle than we had in [the FIRST PROJECT]… we wanted to have the best people, kind of repeat it with the same team the same kind of concept…"*

As can be seen, there seemed to be attempts to transfer the principal experiences from the FIRST PROJECT and carry out the SECOND PROJECT with the same personnel. Yet, this kind of planning seemed to ignite a series of heavy disagreements between the two parties. As was explained by the Finnish vice president:

> *"Then we had to think about the dual-headed management model, that would be there, because we had two strong guys… and we really thought that how to combine this, because we kind of wanted that [the Finnish project manager] has to be there so that we can take care of the technology and all the stuff that's related to the Finnish project execution model. And then we saw [the Polish project manager] as a specialist in Poland, with the Polish organization and operations, so both had like clear roles and strengths… But then we had these disagreements… and we thought that what was good if we have [the Finnish project manager] as a project director. We thought that should [the Polish project manager] then have a role more in the steering group… Then one perspective was that a Pole has to have customer responsibility because of the language and culture… That was the way we thought it and all the time it bothered us seriously that we had two managers."*

In this situation, both parties seemed to favor their own candidates as the overall project director. For example, the Polish CEO described his stance as follows:

> *"At the time I was completely against having a Finn as a project director, because we knew that most of the activities are in Poland, we already knew that we have experienced, tested people, and this customer was a different customer than the customer [in the FIRST PROJECT]. This customer and CEO were very, very sensitive about making [our company] operations in Poland as real Polish ones. So, I said okay, we cannot do it the way we did on [the FIRST PROJECT], we have to have [the Polish project manager] as project director and [the Finnish project manager] as his deputy... I even thought that if we would have another project for [the Finnish project manager]... we don't need to use the two best resources on only one project, even if the project is very strategic one."*

In contrast, the Finns seemed to consider the situation quite differently:

> *"For example, here we can see that we had in early [spring] a project director discussion... and we discussed about how to manage the customer, how [the Finns] managed customers in different projects, and we said that a Finn has been able to work with a Polish customer before, hasn't he? We had kind of different perspectives, we had the experience in [the FIRST PROJECT], then the customer perspective, and then this kind of internal perspective from different parts of the organization, how [the Finnish project manager] is appreciated, how [the Polish project manager] is appreciated as project director. We had a clear understanding that [the Polish project manager]... he was appreciated in taking care of the Polish side... but for managing this really technological, really advanced project... we wanted, because it's a first of a kind project, we wanted to have a senior person who is very experienced and understands the Finnish project culture, and we saw [the Finnish project manager] as that kind of person... This was the opinion extensively among the Finns, including me." (Finnish vice president)*

In addition, these disagreements did not only limit the decisions on the overall project director of the SECOND PROJECT. Initially the rest of the project organization of the SECOND PROJECT had also been planned to be staffed extensively with Finnish project personnel and expatriates. However, this seemed to raise objections from the Polish side, extending the disagreements. From the Finnish perspective, these disagreements were described as follows:

"[The Poles] thought that they had learned everything from us [Finns] that we can possibly teach them… they thought that now in this new project, they can do it almost all by themselves… we could see this many times, like in dividing the project scope and staffing the project organization." (Finnish project manager)

"They were heated discussions during the spring… how to organize the responsibilities between Finland and Poland throughout the project organization, and who will manage the project…" (Finnish vice president)

Thus, the disagreements eventually turned out to encompass the project organization, the division of work and responsibilities, and the management structure of the SECOND PROJECT in their entirety.

Expressed factors underlying the reappearing ethnocentrism

As has been recounted thus far, the negotiations for the organizing of the SECOND PROJECT gave rise to a situation wherein the ethnocentric tendencies took over and overrode the ethnorelativism and cross cultural appreciation achieved during the FIRST PROJECT. When describing these experiences, the interviewees in their accounts also expressed underlying reasons for their standpoints during the negotiations, opening the lid on the possible rationales for the reappearance of ethnocentrism.

For example, the Finns admitted that:

"If we think that it's a whole new type of technology that we haven't delivered anywhere before, and it includes a lot of product development and such, so we wanted to keep it in our hands, at least the technology. And I guess that this was also reflected in our views and opinions." (Finnish project manager)

"I guess it's some sort of jealousy… We were thinking like, since we are the technology provider, shouldn't we be in charge of the project, especially because it's the first time that the technology is used." (Finnish project manager)

Hence, as can be seen, the Finns took pride in themselves as the developer of the new technology, naturalizing also their standpoints.

On the other hand, the Finns in this situation also seemed to express concerns over the complexity of this unique project, and consequently, over the specific skills and competencies needed for its successful delivery:

> "...it is first of a kind in the world, not just for us, but in the world, and so the starting point has to be, that you have to have the best possible competences and skills, that it will be successful, and I guess you sort of tend to trust yourself more." (Finnish project manager)

> "If we think of our subsidiaries, they don't have the knowledge, they can't do it. I've been in the company twenty years, and I'm still learning new things every day. If some guy says that he's been here three years and he's ready, it won't be true. So it takes years, I think ten years is a short time..." (Finnish supervisor)

On the other hand, and as also implied in the earlier excerpts, the Poles seemed to emphasize their market knowledge and understanding of the customer needs. As described by the Polish CEO:

> "...and this customer was a different customer than the customer [in the FIRST PROJECT]. This customer and CEO were very, very sensitive about making [our company] operations in Poland as real Polish ones... so, at that time I strongly said "No, now is a time to have a Pole [as a project director]"... if I would not have had the right people, then I would not have forced. Being the manager of a company or being responsible for the project execution, you know, you have to look from the available resources, best resources first. That must be the first criteria. So nationality was not the criteria, but if I have two equals, and maybe the other equal is younger and highly acceptable to this customer..."

The negotiations over the SECOND PROJECT also brought to the fore sentiments that seemed to reflect some highly fundamental factors contributing to the stances exhibited by the two parties. Judging by these sentiments, the partners seemed to be driven by highly similar, yet divergent business interests on an organizational level. As described in the comments below, firstly by the Polish CEO:

> "What I think is that the Finns just might be afraid of losing their jobs to us. I've heard it elsewhere too. They just might feel threatened by [the

> *Poles], because at that time it was clearly stated that the [importance of the] Polish subsidiary and market will grow."*

Although this comment is speculative, it points to the fact that despite the Finnish parent company's operations originated from a community with a rich industrial heritage and success, today the community struggles hard to maintain previous employment levels as well as its business and industrial attractiveness. Thus, from this perspective the management of the Finnish parent company had great interest in trying to secure the Finns' positions in the SECOND PROJECT.

On the other hand, the situation did not seem to be all that different in Poland either. As pointed out by the Finnish project manager, reflecting on his experiences from the FIRST PROJECT, which had been delivered near to the town where the SECOND PROJECT was to be located:

> *"…but this financially unstable company was a local company in the town where we were working on [the FIRST PROJECT]. And this town was like many other Polish towns, where they cut down industry and close firms, and there's lots of unemployed…"*

Thus, it seemed that at that time there were also economically struggling areas in Poland, and thus, it was important not only to preserve the levels of employment, but evidently to increase the skills and competences of the Polish workforce as well. The latter point was also emphasized by the Polish CEO in the following way:

> *"… [The Polish subsidiary] is a matured company with really good and experienced people, and [the SECOND PROJECT] is the last opportunity to change the approach to the selection of key personnel for the project teams. Nationality can't have priority because Polish specialists will lose their motivation for further development and initiative, and they will never overcome the role of assistants."*

Finally, and in addition to the above, the partners also seemed to be driven by highly similar, yet divergent business interests on an individual manager's level. For example a Finnish project manager stressed that:

"There are two companies involved, both with their own management whose responsibility is to make good profit… So both managements have their incentives based on their own units' financial performance… and it's also always nice to be interviewed by the local business press, when things are going well, and then it's this project that generates those profits and turnover, either there or here."

Conclusion of the disagreements over the SECOND PROJECT

A culmination to the negotiations described above came during the project kick-off seminar, after almost six months of negotiations between the parties. By that time, an agreement on the dual-headed project organization and the split of responsibilities between the Finns and the Poles had been achieved. However, during the kick-off seminar this agreement and the proposed project organization model raised objections among some of the attendees, which partly led to continuing the negotiations on organizing the SECOND PROJECT.

Eventually, during the following six months, a decision was reached that the project would be organized based on the principle of a single responsible party. However, in contrast with the original plans, a conclusion was reached according to which the project was to be led by the Poles and the project organization staffed extensively with Polish specialists.

5. DISCUSSION

As can be seen, the empirical evidence presented above illustrates that ethnorelativism was achieved during the FIRST PROJECT, despite being initially plagued by significant levels of ethnocentrism and cross cultural polarization of the project organization. Yet, despite this achievement, ethnocentrism once again displaced ethnorelativism at the beginning of the SECOND PROJECT. As will also become evident from the analysis below, multiple underlying factors can be found to account for such displacement of ethnorelativism with increased ethnocentrism:

Institutional and cultural factors

To begin with, it is evident that the properties of the SECOND PROJECT can be considered as an impetus for increased ethnocentrism. More specifically, as the SECOND PROJECT introduced the first application of a significant new technological innovation, it can be seen as a cause of justified concerns, manifesting as increased ethnocentrism and feelings of superiority on both sides. For example, and as the empirical evidence points out, significant efforts had been made in Poland in order to win over customer acceptance and local public support for the new technology. Thus, from the Polish perspective, maintaining local acceptance could be of utmost importance, and they might have been correct in their concerns with regard to the inexperience that the Finns had in working with the Polish third parties (*"…Practically it was difficult to cooperate effectively, especially in a country where parent company representatives, they don't understand the country at all…"*). Other studies have also recognized Finns, in general, as having such difficulties in Poland, especially in establishing the necessary personal relationships with local authorities and third parties (Heliste & al., 2007). In addition, the Polish project manager was described (also by the Finns) to have had many years' worth of earlier personal experience in relation to the specific customer of this project. Thus, coupled with the Poles' accumulated experience from the FIRST PROJECT (*"…we already knew that we have experienced, tested people…"*) the displacement of ethnorelativism with ethnocentrism, and the Poles' felt superiority can be seen as a justified and valid expression of concerns over the needed capabilities.

On the other hand, the Polish subsidiary and its staff have a very different and especially much shorter history than its Finnish parent company. The subsidiary was established by the Finns in the mid 1990s for developing and expanding manufacturing and construction capabilities of the Finnish technology in the Polish and other nearby markets. As a comparison, the Finnish parent has decades' worth of technological experience, and the new technology applied in the SECOND PROJECT was developed by the company on the basis of its earlier technologies. Considering their understanding on the evolution of this technology and its application over the decades, the Finns could

be correct in arguing that they were more skilled in managing and executing this highly important project in this particular situation (*"...If some guy says that he's been here three years and he's ready, it won't be true. So it takes years, I think ten years is a short time..."*). In addition, as the new technology had not been applied and tested anywhere before the SECOND PROJECT, it still contained many uncertainties[9]. Thus, the Finns' hesitation over the adequacy of the Poles' experience, based solely on the FIRST PROJECT, could be even more justified. Moreover, the Finns had experience in the Polish market even prior to the FIRST PROJECT, justifying their claims over their adequate market knowledge[10] (*"...we said that a Finn has been able to work with a Polish customer before, hasn't he?"*). Consequently, from this vantage, the increased ethnocentrism and superiority felt by the Finns could also be seen as a plausible and justified argument.

Affective factors

Yet, it is entirely possible that all of the stances outlined above represent a manifestation of jealousy over the new project. For example, as one of the Finnish project managers admitted, their demands over the control of the SECOND PROJECT could indeed be seen as such (*"I guess it's some sort of jealousy... We were thinking like, since we are the technology provider, shouldn't we be in charge of the project..."*), and it is also easy to imagine such feelings appearing on the Polish side because of their considerable impact on getting the project awarded in the first place (*"You know, [the SECOND PROJECT], for getting this project to us [the Polish CEO's] personal input solely was something like 50%..."*). As a consequence, however, instead of representing a form of justified and valid arguments, from this perspective, the increased ethnocentrism and the arguments it comprised (i.e. the Finnish technological superiority/market inferiority vs.

---

[9] For example, one of the Finnish supervisors interviewed described the new technology and the significant new equipment involved in the project, arguing that "… we are talking about a totally different world here… I would say that there's nobody who knows exactly what kind of piece of hardware we're dealing with… it would be totally different if we would know exactly what kind of equipment it is… but now we don't know that."

[10] The Finnish parent company had delivered projects to the Polish market as a subcontractor prior the two consecutive projects examined in this paper. Some of these projects were also in progress at the time of the negotiations for the SECOND PROJECT described here. In addition, the two Finnish project managers of the FIRST PROJECT were the first two employees of the Polish subsidiary as it was established in the mid 1990s

the Polish market superiority/technological inferiority) turns ethnocentrism into a scapegoat for backing up and legitimizing the demands of both parties.

Organizational and managerial factors

In addition, the SECOND PROJECT can also be seen to be embedded in the wider organizational realities of the two partners. This kind of viewpoint is also in line with Engwall (2003), according to whom "no project is an island" (ibid: 789), rather than being influenced by its surrounding organizational realities. From this perspective, the SECOND PROJECT, instead of being an independent entity, can then be seen to become a "tool" needed for achieving both organizational as well as managerial ambitions and visions.

Thus, looking from the organizational perspective first, and as brought out in the empirical evidence, the Finnish parent company has had a significant part in a community with decades' old history of rich industrial activity and success. Yet, today the same community struggles very hard to maintain its previous employment levels as well as its business and industrial attractiveness. In a similar way, and as also brought out, there also seemed to be struggling economic and social areas in Poland, and especially in this particular industry. Hence, from this perspective, on an organizational level, both of the parties seemed to have similar, yet divergent business needs in maintaining and most likely increasing the significance, employment levels, and competences of their respective business units.

For example, the Finnish parent company could have had a great interest in trying to secure the Finns' positions in the SECOND PROJECT, and in that way use this particular project to contribute to the employment levels, social welfare, and industrial attractiveness of the town where the company originated (*"What I think is that the Finns just might be afraid of losing their jobs to us…"*). Likewise, the Polish subsidiary could also have a great interest not only in preserving the levels of employment, but also in increasing the skills and competences of the Polish workforce (*"…where we were working on [the FIRST PROJECT]. And this town was like many other Polish*

towns, where they cut down industry and close firms, and there's lots of unemployed…"). As a consequence, securing the Poles' dominant position in the SECOND PROJECT could contribute significantly to reaching this target. Thus, from this perspective, ethnocentrism and the arguments it comprised of, can be seen as a resource needed for legitimizing the demands on both sides, while being used (deliberately or unconsciously) as a scapegoat covering the wider organizational stakes and interests that the two partners had in the project.

In a similar way, looking from an individual manager's perspective, the SECOND PROJECT can be seen as a "tool" needed for fulfilling the ambitions and visions of individual managers. As pointed out by one of the Finnish project managers, the SECOND PROJECT was to be a joint venture carried out in cooperation by two independent business unit, where the managers had independent incentives and career targets. Thus, the individual managers on both sides could have great interest in securing the dominant positions in the SECOND PROJECT, and use that as a tool for fulfilling their individual ambitions and visions (*"…there are two companies involved, with both their own management whose responsibility is to make good profit… and then it's this project which generates those profits and turnover, either there or here."*). From this perspective, the difficulties and disagreements in deciding the project manager ("a Finn or a Pole?") as well as whether or not to use Finnish expatriates in the project organization, and the resultant ethnocentrism could be seen as manifestations of power plays between individual managers (cf. Vaara, 1999). Once again, appealing to national strengths and weaknesses, and the consequent displacement of ethnorelativism by increased ethnocentrism can then be seen as a necessary tool for backing up the demands of the two partners, while providing an excuse for covering or advancing the different stakes and interests that the managers had in the project.

Taken together, it is then evident that during the transition between the two projects ethnocentrism becomes involved in a highly multifaceted manner in an intricate web of divergent concerns and interests between the two partners. To be more specific, it is clear that the discontinuity between the FIRST and the SECOND PROJECT gave rise to a transition during which the organizational and managerial structures as well as the

division of work and responsibilities (and thus, the allocation of profits, costs, and risks) between the two partners were renegotiated. In other words, the fundamental premises for the collaboration between the two partners became under renegotiation. Consequently, and as shown, i) the properties and requirements of the new project, ii) the divergent organizational needs and priorities, as well as iii) the divergent managerial ambitions and visions, all increased in salience, giving rise to a highly intricate web of interlinked concerns and interests. In the face of these concerns and interests, ethnocentrism was then needed as a multifaceted "resource" used as a justified, valid argument as well as a scapegoat in legitimizing the stances of the two parties (cf. Vaara, 2000). Hence, ethnorelativism could become replaced by (reoccurring) ethnocentrism.

With these results, this paper then contributes to the previous research on the dynamics of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism in the international workplace (e.g. Cramton & Hinds, 2005; Gibson & Grubb, 2005). Through an empirical examination the paper extends these conceptual studies by specifying one type of triggering event that can activate the otherwise latent subgroup "faultlines" (Lau & Murnighan, 1998, 2005) or factions (Li & Hambrick 2005), and by specifying the ways this works to prevent ethnorelativism from transferring from one instance of collaboration to another. In addition, and as called for by Brannen and Salk (2000), the examination in this paper extends contextually and temporally the research on developing shared, "negotiated" working cultures in international collaborative ventures (e.g. Brannen & Salk, 2000; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Salk & Shenkar, 2001) by showing how and why such working cultures might not be a stable state of affairs, persisting automatically without any repercussions to more conflict prone phases of collaboration.

Consequently, this paper first and foremost argues that extending ethnorelativism from one instance of collaboration to another or maintaining the emerging, "negotiated" working cultures is not a simple matter of learning from experience and applying this learning to another time and place. That is, at least at the managerial level this can depend on whether or not the organizational contingencies, structures, and incentive systems are congruent and support the appearance and extension of ethnorelativism. Hence, in a more general sense this argument serves to remind us that in addition to

cultures having an effect on management and organizing, cross cultural phenomena can be influenced by the pertinent business interests and political features between the partners (cf. March, 1962), and that in cross cultural organizational theorizing such contextual and situational elements should not be forgotten as often is the case (e.g. Adler, 1997; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Gibson & Grubb, 2005; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005).

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to empirically examine the dynamics of ethnocentrism (i.e. the tendency to consider one's own worldview and culture as central and superior to others) and ethnorelativism (i.e. the capability to understand, appreciate, and adapt to different cultures and worldviews) across two consecutive Finnish – Polish projects. The paper began by pointing out that in international collaborations often ethnocentrism and the "us-versus-them" attitudes become commonplace, leading to conflicts and fights between culturally and nationally divided subgroups. On the other hand, in some instances the clashing parties are able to develop ethnorelativism, learn to appreciate each other and the different worldviews, and consequently adapt to each other and increase cooperation. Moreover, in the existing literature ethnorelativism and the related positive effects are argued to extend and generalize to involve other groups representing the same nationalities and cultures, as well as to promote effective work and cooperation in future cross cultural and cross national collaborations.

Based on these premises, the paper focused on empirically examining the collaboration between a group of Finnish and Polish project managers in two consecutive projects, where the dynamics of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism seemed to contrast with the propositions in the existing theory. Thus, in this case the ethnorelativism achieved in one project did not seem to transfer and generalize to involve the subsequent project. Instead, at the beginning of the new project, ethnocentrism seemed to take over and unravel the earlier collaborative spirit and mutual appreciation. Hence, this paper set out to find out why in this particular case ethnorelativism did not transfer between the projects as implied in the extant literature.

Based on the empirical analysis, this paper highlighted that the discontinuity between the consecutive projects marked a transition where the organizational and managerial structures as well as the division of work and responsibilities (and thus, the allocation of profits, costs, and risks) between the project partners were renegotiated. Consequently, this became a triggering event where the properties and requirements of the new project, divergent organizational needs and priorities, as well as divergent managerial ambitions and visions all increased in salience. As a consequence, the paper argued that in the face of these concerns and interests, ethnocentrism turned into a multifaceted "resource" used both as a justified, valid argument as well as a scapegoat in legitimizing the stances of the two parties. Hence, established ethnorelativism could become displaced by increased ethnocentrism. Based on this, the paper then argued that extending ethnorelativism to future collaborations might not be a simple matter of experiential learning, instead of being dependent on the supporting organizational contingencies, structures, and incentive systems.

In terms of research limitations, this paper and these conclusions are affected by the usual limitations related to the use of retrospective data as a basis for analysis (March & Sutton, 1997). Thus, the informants may not have been able to accurately recall past events, and in the face of the complexity of the examined process, may have been compelled to revert to (causal) oversimplifications (March & Sutton, 1997). However, in order to lessen the impact of these limitations, data were collected from multiple informants representing multiple viewpoints as well as by using different kinds of sources, such as interviews, discussions, project progress reports, and other secondary sources. Thus, it was possible to verify from multiple sources the accuracy of the most salient pieces within the data and the arguments introduced in this paper.

In addition, as the paper builds on an inductive, single case study approach aimed at theory generation rather than hypothesis testing (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), the research results are bound to be case-specific rather than being readily generalizable to other contexts. However, the author believes that in relation to the results presented here, similar kinds of challenges related to the dynamism between

ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism can also be found in cross cultural contexts elsewhere.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Adler, N. (1997) *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 3ʳᵈ edition.* Boston: Kent Publishing Company.

Barkema, H.G. and Vermeulen, F. (1997) What Differences in the Cultural Backgrounds of Partners Are Detrimental for International Joint Ventures? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 28, 4, 845-864.

Bennett, M. J. (1986) A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10, 2, 179-196.

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.

Cova, B. and Salle, R. (2000) Rituals in Managing Extrabusiness Relationships in International Project Marketing: A Conceptual Framework. *International Business Review*, 9, 6, 669-685.

Cramton, C. D. and Hinds, P. J. (2005) Subgroup Dynamics in Internationally Distributed Teams: Ethnocentrism or Cross-National Learning? *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 26, 231-263.

Earley, P.C. and Ang, S. (2003) *Cultural Intelligence: An Analysis of Individual Interactions across Cultures.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Earley, P.C. and Mosakowski, E. (2000) Creating Hybrid Team Cultures: An Empirical Test of Transnational Team Functioning. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 1, 26-49.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 4, 523-550.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007) Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 1, 25-32.

Ely, R.J. and Thomas, D.A. (2001) Cultural Diversity at Work: The Effects of Diversity Perspectives on Work Group Processes and Outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 2, 229-273.

Engwall, M. (2003) No Project Is an Island: Linking Projects to History and Context. *Research Policy*, 32, 5, 789-808.

Gibson, C. and Vermeulen, F. (2003) A Healthy Divide: Subgroups as a Stimulus for Team Learning Behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48, 202-239.

Gibson, C.B. and Grubb, A.R. (2005) Turning the Tide in Multinational Teams. In Shapiro, D.L., Von Glinow, M.A., and Cheng, J.L.C. (eds.) *Managing Multinational Teams: Global Perspectives*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Hadjikhani, A. (1996) Project Marketing and the Management of Discontinuity. *International Business Review*, 5, 3, 319-336.

Hammer, M.R., Bennett, M.J., and Wiseman, R. (2003) Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: The Intercultural Development Inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 4, 421-443.

Heliste, P., Mattila, M., and Stachowiak, K. (2007) *Puola Suomalaisyritysten Toimintaympäristönä.* Helsinki: Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulu.

Hinds, P.J. and Bailey, D.E. (2003) Out of Sight, Out of Sync: Understanding Conflict in Distributed Teams. *Organization Science*, 14, 6, 615-632.

Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Kirkman, B.L. and Shapiro, D.L. (2005) The Impact of Cultural Value Diversity on Multicultural Team Performance. In Shapiro, D.L., Von Glinow, M.A., and Cheng, J.L.C. (eds.) *Managing Multinational Teams: Global Perspectives*. Oxford: Elsevier.

LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H.L.K., and Gerton, J. (1993) Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 114, 3, 395-412.

Lau, D.C. and Murnighan, J.K. (1998) Demographic Diversity and Faultlines: The Compositional Dynamics of Organizational Groups. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 2, 325-340.

Lau, D.C. and Murnighan, J.K. (2005) Interactions within Groups and Subgroups: The Effects of Demographic Faultlines. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48, 4, 645-659.

Laurila, J. (1997) Discontinuous Technological Change as a Trigger for Temporary Reconciliation of Managerial Cultures: A Case Study of a Finnish Paper Industry Company. In Sackmann, S.A. (ed.) *Cultural Complexity in Organizations: Inherent Contrasts and Contradictions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

LeVine, R. and Campbell, D. (1972) *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior.* New York: Wiley.

Li, J. and Hambrick, D.C. (2005) Factional Groups: A New Vantage on Demographic Faultlines, Conflict, and Disintegration in Work Teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48, 5, 794-813.

Lundin, R. and Söderholm, A. (1995) A Theory of the Temporary Organization. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 11, 4, 437-455.

March, J.G. (1962) The Business Firm as a Political Coalition. *Journal of Politics*, 24, 4, 662-678.

March, J.G. and Sutton, R.I. (1997) Organizational Performance as a Dependent Variable. *Organization Science*, 8, 6, 698-706.

Miller, R. and Lessard, D.R. (2000) *The Strategic Management of Large Engineering Projects: Shaping Institutions, Risks and Governance.* Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Newell, S., Laurent, S., Edelman, L., Scarbrough, H., Swan, J., and Bresnen M. (2004) Cross-Project Learning: The Importance of Social Mechanisms. *Paper presented at the 20th EGOS Colloquium*, July 1-3, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Pettigrew, T.F. (1986) The Intergroup Contact Hypothesis Reconsidered. In Hewstone. M. and Brown, R. (eds.) *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pettigrew, T.F. (1998) Intergroup Contact Theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65-85.

PMBOK (2004) *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, 3rd edition.* Newtown Square: PMI.

Prencipe, A. and Tell, F. (2001) Inter-Project Learning: Processes and Outcomes of Knowledge Codification in Project-Based Firms. *Research Policy*, 30, 9, 1373-1394.

Sackmann, S.A. and Phillips, M.E, (2004) Contextual Influences on Culture Research – Shifting Assumptions for New Workplace Realities. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 4, 3, 370-390.

Sackmann, S.A., Phillips, M.E., Kleinberg, M.J., and Boyacigiller, N.A. (1997) Single and Multiple Cultures in International Cross-Cultural Management Research: Overview. In Sackmann, S.A. (ed.) *Cultural Complexity in Organizations: Inherent Contrasts and Contradictions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Salk, J.E. and Brannen, M.Y. (2000) National Culture, Networks, and Individual Influence in a Multinational Management Team. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 2, 191-202.

Salk, J.E. and Shenkar, O. (2001) Social Identities in an International Joint Venture: An Exploratory Case Study. *Organization Science*, 12, 2, 161-178.

Scarbrough, H., Swan, J., Laurent, S., Bresnen, M., Edelman, L. and Newell, S. (2004) Project-Based Learning and the Role of Learning Boundaries. *Organization Studies*, 25, 9, 1579-1600.

Schein, E.H. (1999a) *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide: Sense and Nonsense of Culture Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schein, E.H. (1999b) *Process Consultation Revisited: Building the Helping Relationship*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Schneider, S.C. and Barsoux, J.-L. (1997) *Managing across Cultures.* London: Prentice Hall.

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Sumner, W.G. (1906) *Folkways*. Boston: Ginn & Bo.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) (2003) *Merging across Borders: People, Culture and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Söderlund, J. (2004) On the Broadening Scope of the Research on Projects: A Review and a Model for Analysis. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 8, 655-667.

Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1986). The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour. In Worchel, S. and Austin, W.G. (eds.) *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Chicago: Nelson.

Turner, J. R. (1999) *The Handbook of Project-based Management: Leading Strategic Change in Organizations, 3rd edition.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Vaara, E. (1999) *Towards a Rediscovery of Organizational Politics: Essays on Organizational Integration Following Mergers and Acquisitions*. Academic Dissertation, Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration.

Vaara, E. (2000) Constructions of Cultural Differences in Post-Merger Change Processes: A Sensemaking Perspective on Finnish-Swedish Cases. *M@n@gement*, 3, 3, 81-110.

Whitley, R. (2006) Project-based Firms: New Organizational Form or Variations on a Theme? *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 15, 1, 77-99.

ESSAY IV: CULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT LITERATURE: A COMMENT ON METHODOLOGY

Sampo Tukiainen

Unpublished manuscript

Abstract

In the existing international project management literature, the significance of cultures and cultural perspective to project management has been acknowledged. Yet, cultural studies in this literature continue to be relatively scarce. Consequently, there is little discussion about the methodology of such research, despite being a controversial topic elsewhere in the organizational studies field. Instead, the existing cultural research in project management follows the Hofstede style research tradition prevalent in the wider international business and cross cultural management studies. However, recently the explanatory and descriptive capacity of this highly popular approach has been seriously called into question. Among others, it has been criticized for producing grossly simplified cultural portrayals, depicting stereotypical behavioral traits without taking into account behavioral dualism and ambiguity present in any particular culture. Consequently, the stereotypical representations of (national) cultures have been considered incomplete and potentially misleading. Building on a qualitative case study of six international engineering projects, this paper joins the critics and argues for the need to move beyond the reductionist, quantitative Hofstede style cultural research tradition in order to advance the cultural theorizing of project management.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the existing project management literature, the significance of cultures and cultural perspective to international project management has been acknowledged (e.g. Turner, 1999; Henrie & Sousa-Poza, 2005; Shore & Cross, 2005). Despite this recognition, however, cultures and cultural phenomena are relatively sparsely researched topics in this stream of literature. For example, when compared to the traditional studies on organizational cultures (see e.g. Frost & al., 1991; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002), or to the wide variety of comparative cross cultural management studies in the context of international mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, and foreign direct investment operations (see Kirkman & al. 2006 for review), cultural studies in project management can be characterized as nascent both in number as well as in depth of scholarly understanding.

In addition to these shortcomings, and perhaps as a consequence, there is little discussion in the international project management literature about the methodology of cultural research, despite being a heatedly debated topic, for example, in the mainstream organizational culture literature (e.g. Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002). Instead, existing cultural research in the international project management literature (e.g. Turner,

1999; Shore & Cross, 2005; Zwikael & al. 2005; de Camprieu & al. 2007; Zeng & al. 2009) mainly follows the prevalent research tradition in the wider international business and cross cultural management studies. These are studies characterized by the ubiquitous Hofstede (1980) or Trompenaars (1993) type of cultural understanding, where cultures are equalled with nations (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004) and where they are treated as independent variables affecting different areas of organizational life and behavior (see e.g. Nasif & al., 1991; Javidan & al. 2006; Kirkman & al. 2006). These are also representatives of the comparative, essentialist cultural research tradition (cf. Smircich, 1983; Nasif & Al., 1991; Søderberg & Holden, 2002), where a reductionist approach is employed that operationalize cultures according to a set of bi-polar value dimensions. Consequently, these studies convey cultural portrayals founded on the popular metonymic assumption stating that the essence of a national culture is in that its members share consistent values and preferences, which give rise to behavioral characteristics emphasizing one end of a value dimension while excluding the other (e.g. Javidan & al. 2006).

However, recently in international cross cultural management studies, the explanatory and descriptive capacity of this highly popular approach has been seriously called into question (Osland & Bird, 2000; McSweeney, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). In addition to the methodological critique (Nasif & al., 1991; McSweeney, 2002), this approach has been considered insensitive to the myriad of different cultures constantly emerging, evolving, and existing within and across national boundaries (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004), while also grossly oversimplifying the multifaceted social phenomena of culture by reducing it to a set of arithmetic dimensions and aggregated statistical scores (Tayeb, 2001; Martin, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). More importantly, the traditional approach, due to its basis in exclusive either-or logic, has been considered as giving rise to generalized cultural portrayals, depicting stereotypical behavior without taking into account the behavioral dualism and ambiguity present in any particular culture (Sackmann, 1997; Osland & Bird, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Martin, 2002; Yeganeh & Su,

2006). Hence in simple terms, the stereotypical behavioral portrayals and representations of a national culture have been considered to be potentially misleading.

Thus, based on a simple empirical examination, the purpose of this paper is to show that this critique is well deserved, and that it should be taken seriously into account in scholarly attempts to advance cultural theorizing in the international project management literature. By centring around the assumption that a (national) culture is manifested by its members' common, stereotypical behavior (cf. Adler, 1997; Leung & al., 2005; Javidan & al. 2006), this paper shows five project management areas where a group of Finnish (the nationality of the author) project managers of large international engineering projects not only express stereotypical, one-way behavior but also highly contrasting behavior that is bound to create cultural dualism and ambiguity within this national group. Furthermore, building on these empirical observations as well as on the profound theoretical advances made elsewhere in the cultural studies of organizations, this paper argues that existing cultural research in the international project management literature generally ends at the point that it should actually start. Hence, in order to advance the academic cultural understanding in the international project management literature, as well as to avoid the possibly misleading cultural representations, this paper joins the critics and argues for the need to move beyond traditional reductionist, quantitative, and universal (national) culture studies (cf. Osland & Bird, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Friedman & Berthoin Antal, 2005; Jackson & Aycan, 2006; Yeganeh & Su, 2006).

This paper is organized in the following way: Firstly, a literature review showing that the existing project management literature predominantly builds on the Hofstede style[11] to cultural understanding and operationalization is presented. The literature review continues by presenting the extant scholarly critique expressed towards this kind of cultural research. Secondly, the research methodology of this study is outlined. Thirdly,

---

[11] From here on, in this paper the term "Hofstede style" cultural understanding and operationalization covers not only the seminal framework by Hofstede (1980), but also the competing frameworks subsequently introduced by Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz (1994), and the GLOBE project (House & al., 2004). As all of these frameworks build on highly similar reductionist cultural understanding and quantitative operationalization, they are therefore bundled together and labelled according to the initial founding father of this type of cultural study.

the empirical case analysis laying the foundation for the argument of this paper is presented. Fourthly, building on the empirical analysis the paper concludes with a discussion arguing that the critique towards the traditional quantitative cultural studies should be taken into account, and that future cultural studies in the literature on international project management should go beyond the stereotypical cultural understanding provided by these studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing cultural research in the international project management literature

As stated earlier, the significance of cultures and the cultural perspective to international project management has been recognized in the extant literature, albeit from a somewhat lopsided perspective, because cultures and cultural differences have been mostly considered as sources of complications, difficulties, and project failures (e.g. Turner, 1999; Chan & Tse, 2003; Henrie & Sousa-Poza, 2005; Shore & Cross, 2005). Despite this recognition of significance, however, cultural studies in the international project management literature continue to be relatively scarce. As stated by Henrie and Sousa-Poza (2005: 13): "Earlier literature reviews and this review show a consistently low level of culture-specific literature within the leading project management journal publications." In addition to journal publications, the same seems to apply to cultural studies in books written by leading project management scholars. Also, in extending the Henrie and Sousa-Poza (2005) review, an EBSCOhost search with the terms "culture" and "project" was conducted for the present study, yielding 757 scholarly publications between 2005 and 2009. Yet, even this addition did not alter the situation with regard to the state of cultural studies of international project management.

Consequently, when compared to cultural studies in other streams of organizational literature, cultural research in project management seems to lose out both in number and in depth of scholarly understanding. For example, studies in organizational cultures had already become an established field of research by the 1980s in the wake of such popular books as those published by Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and

Waterman (1982), as well as by academic work such as Van Maanen (1974, 1975), Martin and Siehl (1983), Barley (1983), and Schein (1985). In the international cross cultural management literature, the introduction of the famous multidimensional framework by Hofstede (1980) then launched a scholarly craze producing hundreds upon hundreds of cross cultural management studies showing how different aspects of management and leadership practices and organizational behavior are contingent on national cultures (see Kirkman et al., 2006 for a comprehensive review). Since Hofstede, this stream of research has also produced a number of competing frameworks, most notably those of Trompenaars (1993), Schwartz (1994), and by the GLOBE project (House & al., 2004). By the 1990s, cultural research in the context of (international) mergers and acquisitions had also gained significant momentum, as researchers adopted a cultural perspective in explaining the often met challenges in post-merger integration processes (e.g. Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988; Haspeslagh & Jemison, 1991; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Olie 1994; Morosini & Singh, 1994).

In addition to being few in number, cultural studies in the international project management seem to be predominantly founded on traditional Hofstede style cultural understanding and operationalization. For example Harrison et al. (1999), by building on Hofstede's framework, showed how national culture affected the differences between US and Chinese respondents in their propensity to continue unprofitable projects. A similar approach was used by Keil et al. (2000) in their study of national cultural effects in commitment behavior to troubled software projects. On the other hand, Pheng and Yucuan (2002) utilized Hofstede's framework to describe the Singaporean and Chinese construction project cultures, as well as the main differences between these cultures. Building on the aforementioned three competing cultural value frameworks (i.e. those of Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; and Schwartz, 1994), Chen and Partington (2004) showed that some of the basic Western conceptions of project management are not supported in China despite the country's gradual cultural convergence towards the West. In an exemplar of a classic Hofstede type cross national comparative study Zwikael et al. (2005) identified cultural differences in project management styles between Japanese and Israeli project managers. In a similar vein, by building on Hofstede's and Schwartz's frameworks, de Camprieu et al. (2007)

examined cultural differences in project risk perception among Canadian and Chinese respondents. Hence, as becomes obvious from these brief examples, the existing cultural studies in the international project management literature mostly approach cultural operationalization by strongly drawing upon the dimensional, value based cultural framework originally conceived by Hofstede (1980), and later complemented by other competing frameworks built on the same underlying cultural understanding.

Basic underpinnings of the Hofstede style research tradition

In addition to the existing international project management literature, by far the vast majority of the international business and cross cultural management studies has been built on the comparative research tradition and on the dimensional cultural operationalization first introduced by Hofstede (Sackmann, 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Leung & al., 2005; Kirkman & al., 2006; Gerhart, 2008). This research tradition has been argued to have its roots in international economic development following World War II (Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). As companies and economies strengthened their international expansion, the implications of cultures and cultural differences on management, organizing, and organizational practices increased their salience. This notion was also gradually adopted in the organizational and management literature that up until then had been geared towards finding universal organization and management practices applicable regardless of the national context (i.e. "the one best way") (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1999). The landmark study by Hofstede (1980) then introduced a framework that could be used to operationalize national cultures for research purposes without the need to engage in time consuming and meticulous ethnographic, anthropological studies of cultures. This approach also enjoyed an "explosive" increase in scholarly popularity, and was seminal in arguing that cultural differences across nations exist, having an impact on a wide range of organizational practices and aspects (Kirkman & al., 2006).

This cultural operationalization, as well as competing frameworks (Trompenaars, 1993; Schwartz, 1994; House & al., 2004), all build upon the notion of societal values (i.e. common preferences of the ways things ought to be) being an embodiment and

expression of cultures (cf. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). This foundation is based on the alleged existence of a finite set of fundamental universal problems to which every society is bound to find its own characteristic solutions (Hofstede, 1980; Schein, 1985; Trompenaars, 1993). These distinct solutions are then argued to emerge as common values of a given society, forming the core of its culture and distinguishing it from others (ibid.). Building on these assumptions, the groundbreaking argument made by Hofstede (1980) and by the competing frameworks has been that universal problems can be categorized into value dimensions, and the culture specific solutions (i.e. values) given a statistical measure for positioning a national culture along any particular value dimension. Consequently, this kind of dimensional positioning is argued to create the basis for an objective, universal terminology according to which cultures can be characterized and their differences observed. As an example, one of the value dimensions identified by Hofstede (1980) was power distance, indicating the extent to which power inequalities among members of a country are socially accepted. According to Hofstede (1991) the Nordic countries, for example, score low in power distance (indicating general opposition to significant societal power inequalities), whereas some Asian countries score high on that dimension (indicating general acceptance of significant power inequalities between members of a society).

Perhaps the most conspicuous consequence of this kind of cultural operationalization, however, is that the values are assumed to transmit and manifest in culture specific behavioral patterns (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Osland & Bird, 2000; Leung & al. 2005; Javidan & al. 2006; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). As put by Adler (1997: 15): "values in turn affect their attitudes about the form of behavior considered more appropriate and effective in any given situation" or by House et al. (2002: 5): "[t]his approach to the assessment of culture grows out of a psychological/behavioral tradition, in which it is assumed that shared values are enacted in behaviors, policies, and practices". Hence, to continue the power distance example introduced in the previous paragraph, in countries with low power distance superiors and subordinates are argued to consider each other fairly equally and these roles might be assigned on a task-to-task basis (Hofstede, 1980). For example, in the United States or in the Nordic countries, subordinates take part in decision making, and consequently,

do not take for granted autocratic managers who make decisions all by themselves or micromanage the subordinates (Javidan & al., 2006). Naturally in high power distance countries, contradicting behavior occurs. Building on another cultural dimension, namely universalism/particularism (Trompenaars, 1993), in universalist countries such as the United States or Canada extensive and highly detailed written contracts are used in defining business relationships and to ensure the mutual commitment of the business partners (Trompenaars, 1993; Adler, 1997). In contrast, in particularist cultures such as those found in Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin countries, it is the personal relationships between business partners that count. Thus, friendships on a personal level are developed in order to ensure commitment between business partners (ibid.).

Criticism towards the Hofstede style research tradition

During the recent years, however, the traditional Hofstede style to cultural understanding and operationalization has received increasing scholarly criticism. In addition to alleged methodological deficiencies (McSweeney, 2002; Graen, 2006), criticism has been directed, for example, to the tendency of this approach to generalize national cultures to single, homogenous, and monolithic entities without considering the myriad of different cultures constantly emerging, evolving, and existing within and across national boundaries (Nasif & al., 1991; Sackmann, 1997; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). Obviously any given country can be seen to comprise of a countless number of divergent (sub)cultures (e.g. ethnic, racial, religious, regional, rural, urban, gender based cultures etc.) that may be separate, overlapping, nested or live in harmony or in conflict with each other (Sackmann, 1997; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005). In addition, cultures do not respect national borders as, for example, in international workplaces national cultures come into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultures (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003), and as diverse working cultures emerge in interaction between and in combination of cultural groups from different countries (Brannen & Salk, 2000).

On the other hand, although grounded in a positivistic and functionalist research paradigm designed to yield generalizable, law-like descriptions and predictions of national cultures and their organizational implications, thus far the Hofstede tradition has been argued to provide neither convincing generalizations nor a sound basis for predicting cultural implications on organizational phenomena and behavior (Martin, 2002; Chevrier, 2003; Slangen, 2006; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). One reason for this has been argued to spring from the reductionist exclusivity of this cultural operationalization (Yeganeh & Su, 2006). In this tradition, nationalities and national cultures are positioned on the value dimensions by aggregated, average scores. Consequently, this gives national cultures a static, context independent characterization based on either-or logic (Sackmann, 1997; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). Hence, national cultures are described to be, for example, high on the cultural dimension of individualism which excludes them from being high on its opposite dimension of collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; House & al., 2004). Or they are said to be universalists, but not particularists (Trompenaars, 1993).

However, research has shown that a foundation based on reductionism and mathematical representation grossly oversimplifies the multifaceted phenomena of culture, as considerable variation exists beyond the mathematical averages (Tayeb, 2001; Søderberg & Holden, 2002), because national cultures can be both individualistic and collectivistic or universalist and particularist (Wels, 1996; Osland & Bird, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005), and because depending on the context and situation, one cultural value can become salient with its opposite receding into background (and vice versa) (Osland & Bird, 2000). Hence, the critics argue that the dominant either-or logic should be replaced with both-and logic, accepting the "paradoxical" nature of (national) cultures (Sackmann, 1997; Osland & Bird, 2000; Martin, 2002).

Furthermore, because of reductionist exclusivity, the cultural portrayals based on the Hofstede tradition have been accused of producing oversimplified, stereotypical generalizations of cultural behavior without duly acknowledging the behavioral dualism and ambiguity present in every culture (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Osland &

Bird, 2000; Martin, 2002, Yeganeh & Su, 2006). Indeed, stereotypical and one-sided behavioral portrayals of national cultures are frequent and predominant in the existing international business and cross cultural management literature (e.g. Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Trompenaars, 1993; Hoecklin, 1993; Adler, 197; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Javidan & al., 2006). For example, Javidan et al. (2006: 77) describe that "[t]he Brazilian employees will not be as forthcoming with their ideas and input as typical American employees are", while Adler (1997: 60) claims that "Americans tell the same "truth" to everyone, without regard for the nature or depth of the relationship", and Schneider and Barsoux (1997: 96) that "managers in Sweden […] pay very little attention to formal structure or hierarchy". Yet, according to the critics these stereotypes can be severely misleading because considerable within-culture variance in behavior, and especially as cultural dualism manifested by behavior expressing contrasting cultural values is bound to exist and appear within any given culture (Wels, 1996; Brannen & Salk, 2000; Tayeb, 2001; Osland & Bird, 2000; Martin, 2002).

Following these remarks, in the rest of this paper an argument based on empirical evidence is built according to which the criticism towards Hofstede style cultural research is well deserved, and that this should be taken into account in order to advance cultural theorizing in the international project management literature. Thus, focusing on the behavioral aspects of national cultures, it will be shown that a group of Finnish (the nationality of the author) project managers in charge of carrying out large scale international engineering projects not only express stereotypical, one-way traits but also highly contrasting behavior, creating cultural dualism and ambiguity within this national group.

In line with the seminal work of Meyerson and Martin (1987) as well as Martin and Meyerson (1988), it is then argued that describing cultural behavior from the stereotypic Hofstedian viewpoint gives only a partial understanding based on an *integrative* [12]

---

[12] In their seminal work, Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988) have shown that many cultural studies adopt a cultural understanding according to which culture is something that is shared, common, and similarly interpreted between cultural members. This kind of understanding is called the *integration* perspective to cultures. From this perspective, cultural members share the same values, understandings, and behavioral traits; they attach consistently similar meanings to different things; they categorize and structure their experiences and interpretations of the surrounding social and natural

(Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988) viewpoint to cultures. Yet, as shown by Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988), this can lead to severely biased and misrepresentative cultural understanding because dualism (Tayeb, 2001) and ambiguity (Frost & al., 1991; Martin, 2002) are bound to exist in every culture but are not duly taken into account. Hence, it is argued that in order to obtain a more accurate understanding of any given culture, cultural dualism and ambiguity in line with the *fragmentation* perspective to cultures (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988) should be also taken into account, and in fact, used as a starting point for going beyond a merely stereotypical, and possibly misleading cultural understanding (cf. Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997).

3. EMPIRICAL SETTING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case study setting

The empirical material in this paper builds on a qualitative case study of six (6) international engineering projects. All of the case study projects were carried out by Finnish companies acting either as main contractors or as main subcontractors. Altogether four (4) different Finnish companies were involved here. Thus, in some cases one company carried out two of the studied projects. As the author has agreed with the companies not to disclose any project specific economic or financial data, particular details on the projects (such as company names, prices, dates, durations, industries etc.) cannot be given here. However, it can be said that each of the four

---

world in shared, unambiguous ways. However, Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988) argue that many larger cultural groups (e.g. organizations, societies, countries) often consist of a "mosaic" of subcultures. Consequently, it is within these subcultures that similar behaviors, values, meanings, and interpretations of the social and physical world appear unambiguously between cultural members. However, differences and ambiguities between the subcultures exist, distinguishing and separating them from each other. This kind of cultural understanding emphasizing subcultural demarcation is called the *differentiation* perspective to cultures. Finally, Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988) argue that within cultures and subcultures cultural manifestations that are ambiguous, inconsistent, and only partially shared are bound to exist. Hence, behavioral traits expressing contrasting values appear; ambiguities in interpreting the social and physical world exist; structuring and categorization of experiences and interpretations among cultural members is unclear. Such cultural understanding emphasizing the dualism and ambiguities present in every culture is called the *fragmentation* perspective to cultures. Based on these distinctions, Martin (2002) then argues that without taking into account all these three perspectives, our understanding of any given culture will be highly partial and misleading.

Finnish companies represent highly significant global players in their respective industries, and all of the six case study projects belong to the category of "large infrastructural engineering projects" as classified by Miller and Lessard (2000).

The selection of the case study projects was based on the following logic: The author of this paper took part in a cross disciplinary research program launched by a small group of professors and researchers from a business university, a technical university, and a technical research center in Finland in 2003. In this research, the author's focus was in applying a cultural perspective to examining the experiences of Finnish project managers in cross national interaction in international engineering projects. The research program was publicly funded; however, private companies were also involved as paying clients in the research. Consequently, the case study projects were given to the author from the participating companies, and thus, the author did not have any practical influence in selecting the projects. Some general guidelines for case project selections were given to the companies by the research group. However, ultimately the representatives of the companies made the decisions themselves, and seemingly chose projects that in one way or another were significant for them and where informants for data collection were readily available.

Between the years 2003 – 2008 the author conducted case studies in a total of 14 different projects in the companies participating in the research program. However, the six case study projects providing the data for the empirical analysis in this paper were picked by the author as representatives of those where he had the principal research responsibility and within which he became the most intimately involved. In the following empirical analysis, these six case study projects are identified and referred according to the country where the projects were carried out. Hence, from here on the projects are called as *Russian*, *Polish*, *Chinese*, *South-African*, *Ukrainian* and *West-European*[13] project/case.

---

[13] West-Europe is a pseudonym for the country where the project was carried out. The author agreed the use of this pseudonym with the company representatives based on their suggestion in order to protect the company's and project's anonymity. The project was carried out in one country in Western Europe.

Data collection

In cultural studies based on the anthropological research tradition, the preferred research method is ethnography and long term, field-based case studies (Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1979; Martin, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). However, as the author took part in a research program where he had to conduct multiple case studies simultaneously in multiple companies and locations within a relatively short time period, ethnographic participant observation and long term field studies at the project sites were not possible. Thus, ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) were selected as the primary data collection method. This is an interview methodology and research philosophy that allows the researcher to obtain cultural data without long term participant observation. Obviously, the depth of cultural understanding based solely on ethnographic interviews will not be parallel to that of the participant observation based ethnography. Nevertheless, ethnographic interviews provide a way to reach cultural members' ways to interpret, make sense, categorize, and structure their social and natural world, as well as to seek insiders' language, constructs, and concepts and the meanings attached to them. In other words, such interviews provide data allowing the examination of properties that many a cultural researcher considers as the "core" of cultural inquiry (see e.g. Spradley, 1979; Frost & al., 1991; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002).

For present purposes a thorough introduction to the ethnographic interviewing technique and philosophy would become too lengthy, therefore an interested reader is advised to refer to Spradley (1979) for an overview, clarification, and guidance. However, it is noteworthy here to emphasize one highly salient feature of ethnographic interviews: In ethnographic interviewing, the primary purpose is to reduce the likelihood of the researcher imposing his or her worldview, concepts, ideologies, categorizations or values on the subject of the study (Spradley, 1979). Thus, in this technique the purpose is to try and let the worldview of the interviewees unfold with as little as possible of researcher induced distortion and guidance intermingling with the interviewees' perception on social and natural ordering and reality. As a consequence, ethnographic interviews are characterized by initially asking the interviewees highly open questions, which subsequently develop into more focused ones based on the

stories and themes that unfold during the interviews. Hence, the questions presented by the interviewer during a particular interview are not guided by preconceived hypotheses made by the researcher, but instead by the stories, themes, and emphasis unfolding as the interviewee is allowed to freely describe his or her world and experiences. However, fundamentally, all the questions aim at unraveling the interviewees' way of interpreting and structuring the surrounding social and natural world, serving as a springboard for cultural inference.

In the six case study projects a total of 40 ethnographic interviews, consisting mainly of descriptive questions (see Spradley, 1979), were conducted by the author and his three research colleagues taking part in the research program described above. Interviews were conducted with project participants from different hierarchical levels and from different parts of the case project networks. However, for present purposes, 18 interviews from the 40 were selected for analysis. All of these interviews were carried out by the author, and in some he was also accompanied by a research colleague. Each of the interviews lasted between one to two and a half hours. All the interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. The rationale underlying the selection of the 18 interviews was that each of them was conducted with Finnish project managers from the different companies. Hence, these interviewees with different organizational backgrounds were considered to form a cultural group sharing a similar professional and national background. In the six case study projects, seven Finnish project managers were interviewed as one project had two project managers. Consequently, each of the project managers was interviewed more than once. A summary of the interview statistics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview statistics.

Project Host Country	Total # of interviews per project	# of interviewed Finnish project managers	# of analyzed project manager interviews
Russia	6	1	3
Poland	11	2	5
China	6	1	3
South-Africa	3	1	2
Ukraine	11	1	2
West-Europe	3	1	3
Total	**40**	**7**	**18**

Cultural operationalization and data analysis

As interview data were gathered from informants engaged in cross national interaction and collaboration, the cultural operationalization in this paper builds on the *relational* understanding to cultures (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Vaara & al., 2003; Gajewsksa-De Mattos & al., 2004; Barinaga, 2007). According to this view, in cross national interaction (national) cultural features "come into existence in relation to and in contrast with other cultural communities" (Søderberg & Holden, 2002: 112), hence being dependent on the actors involved and comparisons made. This kind of subjective, social construction of cultural features can be considered intelligible as one often becomes aware of cultures and cultural features only after leaving one's own cultural "homebase" and when confronted with other cultures (Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). In cross national interaction, such cultural sensemaking and construction often becomes noticeable as talk about cultures and cultural differences, i.e. "culture discourses" expressed by the actors involved emerge (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Vaara & al., 2003; Barinaga, 2007). This kind of discursive sensemaking of one's own cultural features (and those of the others) was also plentiful in the interviews, appearing on its own without the author specifically probing for it.

Emerging from these premises, the following steps were then taken in analyzing the data: Firstly, all the transcribed interviews were read through on a word-by-word basis.

Secondly, every reference to cultural sensemaking in the form of "culture discourse" in the different interviews of a particular project manager were highlighted and color-coded. Thirdly, all these references were compiled project by project. Hence, a collection of project specific "culture discourse" expressed by the interviewed project managers was obtained. Fourthly, these compilations were compared across the projects in order to find any commonalities between the interviewed project managers. At this stage, it became evident that, regardless of their organizational background, there were five common project management areas that exhibited significant amounts of "culture discourse" by all the interviewed project managers. These common project management areas were descriptively labeled (by the author) as: 1) subcontractor selections; 2) project manager's role; 3) documentation, reporting, and supervision; 4) contracts, project plans, and deviations from plans; and 5) conflicts and crisis behavior.

In the following empirical analysis these five common project management areas are taken as a basis for cultural depiction. As previously stated, within these areas national cultural sensemaking and "culture discourse" was abundant among the interviewed project managers, and building on particularly robust and frequently appearing expressions, a cultural depiction in line with the *integration* perspective (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988; Martin, 2002), emphasizing the common, stereotypical cultural traits and behavior was easy to come by. In the following analysis, such an integration perspective in each of the five project management areas is first illustrated.

Within the same areas the "culture discourse" expressed by the interviewees also differentiated the Finnish project managers greatly from other national cultural groups, making them a distinct cultural subgroup among other project participants. Hence, a cultural depiction emphasizing the *differentiation* perspective (ibid.) is also illustrated. What is also noteworthy is that within each of the project management areas, this perspective actually served to significantly strengthen the impressions conveyed by the stereotypical, integration perspective.

Finally, and in line with the argument made in this paper, it became evident that within each of the project management areas, behavior in stark contrast with that portrayed in the integration perspective was as easy to find, which then served to create cultural dualism and ambiguity. Hence, a depiction in line with the *fragmentation* perspective to cultures (ibid.) is highlighted in each of the five project management areas.

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Subcontractor selections

Integration perspective

Following the project life-cycle, the first project management area where frequent cultural sensemaking in the form of "culture discourse" seemed to occur were the criteria used for the subcontractor selections during the project planning phase. In all of the case study projects, the interviewees had been involved or had led a process of selecting technologically specialized subcontractors utilized for specific project tasks and phases.

From the integration perspective to cultures, the following cultural depiction with shared, common behavioral traits then became evident: With regard to subcontractor selections, common and shared among the project managers was to try and select the subcontractors based on "hard" data and their financial performance. Hence, it seemed that for the project managers, it was the perceived competences, capabilities, and prior organizational performance that would be used as the main criteria for selecting the subcontractors.

For example, the project manager of the Chinese project described this in the following way:

> *"So our local office [in China] kind of searched for these suppliers for different phases of the project, according to their technological specialization… we really checked these companies' backgrounds as far*

as it's possible in China, you know, financial information, financial statements…"

This was also echoed by the project manager of the Polish project:

> *"It's a project execution related thing that a foreigner easily has in foreign markets, that you usually select the subcontractors based on hard facts… In Finland and in Germany we usually look at the numbers, facts, and references, and make the selection based on cold numbers."*

Differentiation perspective

Subcontractor selections were also a project management area that aroused sensemaking turning the interviewed project managers into a cultural subgroup distinct from others. This kind of differentiation also strengthened the image conveyed by the integration perspective to the subcontractor selections illustrated above. For example, as described by the project manager of the Polish project:

> *"But our Polish organization had to think about the implications that these selections had in the local market, how are they understood in that market, and how are they understood in the future… especially in that kind of culture it's more important that you have the connections and relationships and you understand to work together…"*

In the excerpt above, the interviewed project manager describes the difference between his "Finnish" approach and that of his Polish counterparts. Thus, in this project the basic approach with emphasis on the subcontractors' financial performance seemed to be at odds with the local approach, emphasizing the selection of the subcontractors based on the cooperative relationships between local companies.

This kind of discrepancy was also implied by the manager of the Chinese project:

> *"…you know, the first [subcontractor] was a favorite of our client, and they would've wanted us to make even more use of that one subcontractor, but we kind of hesitated, because it's like you don't quite know these Chinese markets, so we didn't dare to put it all on this one subcontractor.*

And especially when you don't quite know the couplings between the client and the subcontractor."

Fragmentation perspective

However, looking from the fragmentation perspective, situations were brought up in the interview accounts which contrasted with the integration and differentiation perspectives described above and created dualism and ambiguity within this cultural group. This evidence also made the subcontractor selections seemingly a less straightforward and unambiguous process than that which could be expected from the two prior perspectives. For example, the manager of the Ukrainian project described:

"Well we had this one main contractor, a Turkish firm, which was recommended by our client, who said that the business will be good if we choose this subcontractor. Actually, it was this kind of "must", I wasn't there myself but I heard afterwards that [the client] had simply said that "this is the subcontractor, here's its prices, take it or leave it"... And of course this [client] is a very important customer to our company, so it's difficult to say "no", and in addition this subcontractor has very strong relations to [the client]..."

Somewhat similar experiences were recounted by the manager of the Polish project:

"One subcontractor was like, we thought it was financially unstable. Looking at the numbers we would've taken the second one... But this company was a local company in the town where we were working on [the project]. And this town is like many other [local] towns, where they cut down industry and close firms, and there's lots of unemployed... And at last we gave the job to this company like our local guys suggested, or advised."

As can be seen, these views clearly highlight the basic argument made by Osland and Bird (2000) that cultures cannot be understood simply as stereotypical characterizations emphasizing one end of a value or preference orientation, as in certain situations one cultural trait might recede into the background, while a contrasting one takes over and becomes salient.

Project manager's role

Integration perspective

Another project management area with frequent cultural sensemaking in the interview accounts was related to the role of the project manager. From the integration perspective, the shared and common way to perceive this role seemed to be one in which the project managers emphasized the empowerment and self-guidance of their subordinates, i.e. the project engineers, experts, and workforce. Hence, from this perspective, the interviewed project managers seemed to lead the projects "from a distance"[14] relegating considerable decision making authority and discretion to their subordinates. Consequently, the shared and common assumption among the interviewees was seemingly that the decision making authority and expertise are not the sole property of the project manager. Instead decision making power could reside on those people that are the experts in their respective project areas. For example, the manager of the Russian project put it in very straightforward terms, when stating that:

> *"A manager should ask that person's opinion who has experience… in Finland the specialists are probably much more independent and self-guiding than somewhere else."*

In a similar vein, the project manager of the Polish case described that:

> *"…those guys who take care of those areas of the project… they all have their own project there, and they are experts in that field. So I can't see that there's too much things where I can say to them how to run things, except what is related to a kind of general taking care or managing things, or synchronizing activities…"*

---

[14] In some of the case study projects this could be taken literally as the interviewed project manager led an overseas project based in his home office in Finland.

Differentiation perspective

From the differentiation perspective, this kind of cultural behavior also distinguished the interviewed project managers as a cultural subgroup different from others. For example, the manager of the Chinese project described that:

> *"And then I've noticed that it's kind of important for the Chinese, that they kind of expect from us a leading role, that we should be telling them how to do something… But now these Chinese have had to grow… to take care of things by themselves. So there's been a huge place for growth to these guys, that there's no Finnish guy to show them how to take care of things, and that instead they have to learn self-guidance."*

The following comparison between the Finns and the French made by the project manager from the Russian case also underscores the differentiation from other cultural groups, and strengthens the image conveyed by the integration perspective to the project manager's role:

> *"A long time ago we sent these kind of instruction booklets to our companies around Europe, and the French ordered 150 of them. But after a while one of us visited there and noticed that all the booklets were just there in a shelf, and we wondered why they hadn't been given to the users. And the answer was that if the booklets would be given to the users, they would know more than the supervisor who ordered them. I've never noticed this kind of attitude in Finland. I don't think it's bad that one's own subordinate knows more than yourself."*

Fragmentation perspective

However, from the fragmentation perspective, it once again seemed that the role of the project manager was not as clear-cut as the two perspectives described above would lead us to believe. The following excerpts from different project managers all create cultural dualism and ambiguity, implying that under certain conditions the interviewed project managers could take matters firmly in their own hands and assume a more involved managerial role. These accounts range from depictions of the less extreme project managerial interventions to the more extreme ones, starting with the experiences of the project manager in the Ukrainian case:

> *"Yeah, I went there first as an overall country manager… but then this one project met some serious difficulties, and I was asked to take it under special care. So I kind of became the project manager of that whole project."*

The second example is from the manager of the West-European project:

> *"…I have now moved here on site for the rest of the project. So I now take care of the site director duties in addition to being the project manager… Because we had this problem and we had to solve it some way, I was meant to come here later anyway… but now because of this problem, I think that the only solution was that I came here now."*

Finally, the manager of the Polish project describes his experiences in a conflict situation:

> *"…so we had two experts for this phase, from two different countries… And in the project management we believed that they will get along, but it didn't work… In this situation the other expert spoke his language to his own guys and the other one just hang around with two or three of his guys and spoke nothing to anyone… so finally we [in the project management] started to do it by ourselves in the sense that we took this process under our wings so to say… It was like, we took it under daily control and we started to manage it by ourselves… and I was there always… like a mitigator in this situation. Normally we wouldn't have done it this way, normally we have these specialists taking care of these things."*

Thus, as can be seen, in situations such as crises and conflicts, the interviewed project managers, instead of being "distant" and empowering, seemed to assume a more up-close and highly involved management style.

Documentation, reporting, and supervision

Integration perspective

A third project management area distinguished from the interviews accounts was related to information sharing and supervisory activities between the project partners. In the case study projects, due to their large size and their technological and structural

complexity, the documentation and reporting of activities and project progress and supervision between the partners was considered integral to managing and coordinating the myriad of activities and processes of the different parties.

However, looking from the integration perspective, common and shared among the interviewed project managers seemed to be a perception that the documentation and reporting practices could in fact be a nuisance, increasing bureaucracy and taking time away from effective project management and execution. This attitude was especially prevalent if and when the interviewed project managers felt that they were coerced into following the documentation and reporting practices "to the letter" as stated in the project contracts. Hence, it seemed that the project managers often assessed the actual usefulness of the documentation and reporting practices according to their practical contribution to the project execution. Consequently, such documentation and reporting that did not directly contribute to the progress of the project was considered somewhat irrelevant and trivial. As the manager of the Polish project put it:

> *"It's been really difficult with the client and its consultant all this bureaucracy and paperwork that they have wanted and demanded. You have to make all these documents and plans and reports, papers that nobody ever reads after we have produced them. So there's really a lot of this."*

Such a viewpoint was also coupled with the attitudes towards being supervised by the project partners. For example, the manager of the Ukrainian project vividly described that:

> *"So these project meetings on Mondays, we called them "barbequing", like "Is everybody ready to be barbequed now?"...In those meetings everybody was barbequed [by the client], why isn't anything done to something, why is this or that late, and so on. It was all about details. And it's a fact that every time in a turn-key project like this there's always some little detail that isn't exactly like planned. But we think this project as one large process that produces certain finished outputs. But our client always looks at some tiny nuance, and focuses at that. It's like if 99% is correct, they still find something and ask and demand that why is this or that like this."*

Differentiation perspective

This kind of attitude towards documentation, reporting, and supervision also turned the interviewed project managers into a cultural subgroup. The following example is from the manager of the Russian project:

> *"For example, with [the Turkish client], if things are going well, I don't think that they read the contract that much. But it's totally different with the Germans, they are more strict, they might demand that "Hey, you should have reported this and that today", something that has absolutely no impact whatsoever on the project. The Germans might be more strict with these things…but this [Turkish client], they don't make such demands like, for example, the Americans. With Americans, you have to report everything all the time, that where's your workforce right now and what did they do yesterday at 11 o'clock, and whatever."*

As another example, subcultural differentiation in this project management area was also expressed by the project manager of the West-European case in the following way:

> *"…the West-Europeans are highly bureaucratic and hierarchical. They like procedures and documentations. Procedures have to be always clearly there, otherwise nothing can happen or function if you don't have enough papers to show what you're going to do…"*

Fragmentation perspective

As stated earlier, ambiguity and contrasting accounts were also present in the interview accounts relating to documentation, reporting, and supervision. For example, there were accounts revealing that, in contrast with the integration perspective, the interviewed project managers could also require thorough reporting from other project partners. This is exemplified in the following quote from the manager of the Chinese project:

> *"When the Chinese have learned this kind of reporting, it's been alright, but we've have to teach them all this. But now we get really good reports from them. So that last trip I took to China showed me that it's pretty much accurate what they report. It was just that I myself had some doubts that could it be that the Chinese have a different idea on the progress [of*

the project] and all this… because it's been really a big thing for our Chinese guys to learn that I really do want to now how things really are."

Furthermore, in the following depiction, the manager of the Russian project presents himself as an advocate of close supervision of the partners.

"[Many times] there are many subcontractors and you should look after them so that they don't break our equipment and stuff. Of course [on the project site] they scratched things and all that, so this kind of supervision should be pretty good…"

Finally, there were accounts illustrating close supervision of the project partners carried out by the interviewed project managers. For example, the project manager of the South-African case described the following:

"Well, we visit the [subcontractors] when needed, like the more there's problems the more often we visit them to talk about issues. You know, the old truth is that the one who's more active gets a better service from the subcontractors. So we plain and simply go to visit them… during the final stages of the project we visited some of them once a week."

Contracts, project plans, and deviations from plans

Integration perspective

A closely related project management area to the previous one was also the project managers' attitudes and perceptions with regard to the project contracts, plans, and deviations from the plans that occurred during the projects. From the integration perspective, a commonly held perception was that project contracts and plans, in much the same way as documentation and reporting, could be a hindrance or nuisance to effective project management and execution (especially if followed to the letter). For example, the project manager of the Russian case stated clearly that:

"It's quite a lot of feeling in [managing the project], it's not all just information and data … For example, I might do a project plan at the beginning, but I don't necessary follow it if everything goes well and is allright."

The manager of the South-African project also commented on some of the negative (from his perspective) aspects related to adhering strictly to the project contracts and plans:

> "It gives this kind of annoying flavor to this project, it's like all this friendly cooperation has disappeared and instead it's the cold contract that dictates all and that's it… so it's like earlier there used to be a shared interest to get the project finalized, but now it seems that the sole purpose is to just comply with the contract to the letter. So there's quite a difference, it's gone from getting the project finalized to just making sure that the contract is fully complied with."

It also became evident that these were projects of such size and complexity that frequent surprises, failures, deviations from project plans, and changes made along the way were the "order of the day". As a consequence, change management and claiming[15] were an integral part of these projects. However, in these projects claiming could also be an effective way for one project party to profit from the surprises, changes, and failures at the expense of another party. Consequently, claims and claiming behavior often turned into a target of serious debates as well as a cause of conflicts and strained relations, sometimes ending up in extended legal battles between the project participants.

Claiming was also an area where active cultural sensemaking occurred among the interviewed project managers. In this area, shared and common was a view that the utilization of claiming for making extra profits was somewhat unethical and often a cause of unnecessary complications to effective project management and execution. This was expressed, for example, by the manager of the South-African project, making some critical remarks on the claiming behavior of one of the project participants:

> "…in addition, I've never heard before that there would be these kinds of claims issued here and there. You know, a delay is a relative concept, with some particular part it could be easier… but to say that the whole project is delayed, for whatever reason, that's much harder… So it's interesting that in this project [one key subcontractor] made this quite hefty claim

---

[15] Claiming refers to a formal process of determining and assigning responsibility and liability for any given surprise, failure, change or deviation, as well as formally agreeing on compensations and on the ways to bear the incurred costs and realized risks between the project partners.

against the client because of delays… to lay such a claim on the table at such an early phase of the project, oh well. When I spoke with this client, he said that he will only deal according to the contract with this subcontractor, he will not tolerate anything else from now on. So it's like one broken relationship already."

Differentiation perspective

Contracts, project plans, and deviations from the plans were also an area where subcultural distinction and differentiation occurred frequently in the interview accounts. For example, the manager of the Polish project stated that:

> *"For example, the Brits and Americans often try to make profit from changes in the project, and they are very strict with these. We Finns have a much more humane approach."*

These experiences were also echoed, for example, by the manager of the South-African project:

> *"It's definitely an American way to focus strictly on fulfilling the contracts. Let's say that we have had this project where we have produced all the equipment, and there's an external client. So then this client might have a dedicated person, whose designated job is to go through the contract step-by-step to the letter, and see where somebody has made a mistake that they can claim and send a bill afterwards."*

Perceived cultural differences were also present in the accounts of the project manager of the Russian case:

> *"In Sweden they have very strict regulations and such things, so I think that Russians are more creative in their job… For example, if we had shipment failures, for example they might notice that "hey, that hole is in a wrong place, what are we gonna do now?" So the Russians will drill the holes by themselves. The Swedes would've first asked for new deliveries and then said that this is going to cost extra money… For example, if you have a shipment failure to Germany, it will immediately cause all these accusations that "now there's been a failure", although you just could get away with it with just a bit of creativity."*

Fragmentation perspective

Yet, there were also interviewee accounts creating dualism and ambiguity within this project management area. For example, the manager of the Russian project described the following claiming behavior on his behalf:

> *"For example in this project we had to drill a lot of [extra] holes and when we began to look into this matter, we noticed that our subcontractor had left out the holes… So now [the Russian workers] had to inspect and make each of the holes properly and this meant extra work for them, and it wasn't easy. When I heard about this I made a claim."*

There also seemed to be situations where the interviewed project managers could revert to the project contracts. The following example comes from the manager of the Chinese project:

> *"And then every once in a while we might look into our eyes [with the client] and know that this is something that we disagree with… And then the contract is a pretty good friend, where you can always find something for backup, and try if that would solve the disagreement."*

Also, the manager of the Russian project emphasized that:

> *"Of course, if we begin to be late, if the construction is delayed, then we start to search for the reasons. And then we look at the contract, for example we might say that "Hey, according to the contract you should've finished this phase, but now it's late, so we couldn't do our part." There's a lot of these… These things happen a lot and that's when we look for the contract for help."*

Thus, as can be seen, despite the common critical sentiment towards the project contracts, the project managers also brought out instances where they themselves had utilized the contracts, for example, as tools for self defense.

Conflict and crisis behavior

Integration perspective

The final project management area distinguished from the interview accounts was related to behavior in project conflicts and crises. From the integration perspective, it seemed that common among the interviewees was to try and avoid conflicts as much as possible. For example, the project manager from the Russian case stated that:

> *"I'd rather settle things. I try as much as I can to avoid any bigger conflicts… so I try to settle things on the spot… If we have good site managers, they often do it like "if you agree to do that, we'll agree to do this". This is a way to level out disagreements or conflicts, very rarely do we go to court."*

In the following quote, the manager of the Chinese project also emphasizes that taking things to court is an extreme and highly unlikely option for him:

> *"…yep, ultimately we settle these things in the international court… but that's if there would be a really big disagreement, so it's really difficult to see at the moment, that what would be such a cause."*

In addition, a common and shared way to behave in crisis situations also appeared in the accounts of the project managers. Based on the interviews, this could be described as "systematic", "analytic" or "rationalistic", meaning that the crises should be carefully analyzed and the responses well planned before engaging in corrective actions. For example, in the following excerpt the manager of the Ukrainian project expresses his malcontent with regard to the crisis behavior and lack of systematic action that had occurred in the project he was assigned to take control of:

> *"…well simply put, we didn't have our process ready at that time… and if you don't have your organization and processes ready, then you have to have these emergency meetings, we could have them on Saturday evenings at 10 o'clock… And if you haven't specified your process, or there are elements missing in that, then it's a chaos. And I'd say that at that time our situation was pretty close to that… And in those emergency meetings, there could be decisions according to which we should start running in*

this direction. And then that particular direction could be all wrong, and then you would have to run to the opposite direction even faster… and in this way you actually end up losing the ability for this kind of systematic approach."

Differentiation perspective

Once again, from the differentiation perspective cross cultural, comparative sensemaking in this management area was evident in the interview accounts, giving rise to subcultural demarcation. For example, as stated by the manager of the Russian project:

> *"I don't like to raise conflicts, but this might be an individual characteristic. But I guess the Finns are a bit kind… The Germans, they are really strict… it's really tough with them. Or the French, they are also that way, they are really strict, all the time demanding everything and at the same time they won't give up anything."*

Or as expressed by the manager of the South-African project with regard to crisis management:

> *"I'd say that when compared to the Finns, a Finn is clearly calmer and more considerate. So I quickly developed this favorite saying of mine, that on the project site things are done by taking two steps forwards and then one step back, two steps forth, one back. So it's like things are done when they appear in front of you, and you don't plan anything ahead… So the time perspective is really here and now, in just carrying out the project. So this is my experience that there's this kind of difference, I mean lack of long term perspective and planning."*

These views were also closely in line with the experiences of the manager of the Ukrainian project:

> *"For example, if we have our target here and this here is where we start [draws starting and target points on a piece of paper], here we have the Nordic people, and we go straight like this [draws a straight line from the start to the target]. So we have plans, schedule, and we proceed [according to a straight line]… But Southern-Europeans do it like this [draws a winding, curvy line from the start towards the target], they run back every once in a while, although they might hit the goal eventually…*

But if we have a kind of systematic progress, we think and slice the target into smaller parts and proceed one part at a time, then this kind of fox loops will drop off [points to the winding "Southern-European" line on the paper]."

Fragmentation perspective

Finally, the following quotes highlight that dualism and ambiguity was also present within this content theme. For example, the project manager of the South-African case recounted that:

"Well, our Finnish culture… on the other hand, we are flexible and adapt to a certain point, but it's more like what's reasonable, and especially, if something is our mistake, we will naturally pay for that. But what we think is unreasonable, that's when we'll fight and we are very stubborn… Nowadays, this [subcontractor] thinks that I'm really stubborn if anything. But I'm not stubborn, I've paid it all, and especially I'm happy to pay if it's been our mistake. But I'm just holding on my own, that's two different things."

Pointing to an emerging cross national alliance, the manager of the West-European project also described a situation where conflict was not shirked:

"Now that this [surprise] was found, the Turks are delaying the works, because they are saying that it's not their responsibility if there's something surprising. On the other hand we're saying that we couldn't any way have surveyed the areas [so thoroughly] … Usually us Finns have been a bit weak in demanding anything, but now that we have these North-American [managers] with us, we've also been more strict and more demanding than normally."

The following quote from the manager of the South-African project also elaborates on crisis behavior, pointing out different ways to act in different kinds of crises as well as revealing some of the underlying reasons for these differences:

"Naturally, if we have a real crisis, then every once in a while you have to just quickly go ahead and take whatever corrective actions you can instead of thinking and planning for your response… but it's different if you are delayed from the project schedule, no matter how little or how much, you still have time to think and plan for your actions… so in that

situation it's better to proceed systematically, rather than jump to action and then notice that "oh-oh, this wasn't the right direction after all", and then fix the mistakes for one day, and then once again work like crazy for two days, and fix those mistakes for one day. So there a more systematic approach could yield more fruitful results than just jumping around as much as you can. But it's different in emergencies where you have to act fast."

The same kind of elaboration was also made by the manager of the Chinese project:

"But in this situation, I just thought that this problem had to be solved… So I had to get those engines immediately out of my hands to be repaired, this was the number one priority… So in that kind of emergency, you have to distinguish those things that have to be immediately taken care of from those things that you can think through more thoroughly. So you can't actually say that you have to think very thoroughly before you do anything… Rather, in this kind of emergency you have to have the first aid immediately at hand, kind of get the casualty to hospital as fast as you can, figuratively speaking, and then start to investigate more thoroughly that what had happened and what should be done."

5. DISCUSSION

As becomes evident, even a relatively small number of interviews (compared to the classical, anthropological culture studies) can exhibit cultural sensemaking by the interviewees conveying various characterizations of the behavioral traits and idiosyncrasies that the Finnish project managers seem to have. This also seems to turn the project managers into a cultural subgroup distinct from others. Based on these accounts, it would then be fairly easy to adopt the integration and differentiation perspectives to cultures (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988) and construct a highly straightforward, stereotypical depiction of "Finnish project management culture". For example, it could be said that in this culture it is customary to try and select the subcontractors based on objective assessment of their competences, skills, and prior organizational performance. In a similar way, it could be said that in this culture it is typical to place emphasis on the expertise of the subordinates, granting them the freedom to make decisions in their fields of expertise. Following the example set by Shore and Cross (2005), these cultural traits could then be seen to express such

underlying cultural value dimensions as universalism (Trompenaars, 1993) and low power distance (Hofstede, 1980) respectively.

However, as has been shown, in all of the depicted project management areas, it is possible to find evidence on the existence of cultural behavior in stark contrast with the image conveyed by the integration and differentiation perspectives, giving rise to cultural dualism (Tayeb, 2001) and ambiguity (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988; Martin, 2002). For example, in addition to objective criteria used as a basis for subcontractor selections, in the projects studied these were also selected based on the candidates' social status in the local community or their relationships with other project stakeholders. Similarly, there were situations such as project crises where the project managers could become more involved, taking decision making and operative tasks firmly into their own hands. These examples illustrate that in addition to universalism and low power distance, under certain conditions behavior expressing the contrasting values of particularism (Trompenaars, 1993) and high power distance (Hofstede, 1980) occur among the project managers. In terms of Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988), these observations then lend themselves to cultural understanding in line with the fragmentation perspective to cultures.

Hence, it is argued here that paying attention solely to stereotypical cultural behavior in line with the integration perspective (which Hofstede style cultural research often leads us to do) might easily lead to incomplete and possibly misleading cultural depictions and understanding. Therefore, in line with the arguments made by Osland and Bird (2000) as well as Martin (2002), it is argued that cultural dualism and ambiguity (i.e. the fragmentation perspective) has to be taken into account in order to gain a more accurate and comprehensive cultural understanding. Consequently, as the existing cultural studies in the international project management research predominantly builds on the Hofstede style research tradition (e.g. Turner, 1999; Shore & Cross, 2005; Zwikael & al. 2005; de Camprieu & al. 2007; Zeng & al. 2009), it is suggested here that to advance this literature, researchers should move beyond the Hofstedian tradition and complement this with studies fully acknowledging cultural dualism and ambiguity, thus,

incorporating the fragmentation perspective to cultures in their studies (cf. Martin, 2002).

This also gives rise to a parallel argument stating that in its current state existing cultural research in the international project management literature often ends at the point at which it should start. Consequently, it is suggested here that cultural researchers of project management should especially seek out evidence pointing to behavioral dualism and ambiguity, and take that as a starting point for their studies (cf. Schneider & Barsoux, 1997; Osland & Bird, 2000). This suggestion is based on the following rationale: In anthropology, it has long been acknowledged that cultural members behave according to the different meanings and interpretations they attach to real world events, symbols, objects, and social phenomena (see e.g. Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1979). In fact, many a cultural researcher considers these shared meanings and interpretations, as well as the social categorization and structuring they create as the essential "core" of culture (see e.g. Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1979; Frost & al., 1991; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002). Consequently, the purpose of research should be to try and unravel these meanings and interpretations, and focus on the categorization, structuring, and organizing of the social and physical world that they create among cultural members.

From this perspective, taking contrasting cultural behavior as a starting point would then be a way to pinpoint those situations that are attached to essentially divergent meanings or that are interpreted in different ways within a particular culture. For example, in the context of this study, project crises and the less tumultuous times could be seen as precisely such situations with fundamentally divergent meanings, giving rise to contrasting cultural behavior in terms of the project managerial involvement in operational issues. Furthermore, it could be seen that there were different types of crises, giving rise to different types of crisis management styles. Then, by asking the informants one of the most powerful questions available to cultural researchers, i.e. "What is the difference (from the informants' perspective) between the situations where contrasting behavioral traits occur?", researchers would be well on their way of unravelling the underlying meanings and interpretations different situations are given by the cultural members (cf. Spradley, 1979). Consequently, the first steps towards a

deeper understanding of a particular cultural group would be taken, which would go beyond the stereotypes, duly acknowledge cultural dualism and ambiguity, and look towards the underlying categorization, structuration, and organizing of the surrounding social and physical world within which the cultural members are embedded (cf. Schneider & Barsoux, 1997).

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined five distinct project management areas where a group of Finnish project managers of international engineering projects distinguished themselves as a cultural subgroup, exhibiting shared behavioral traits distinct from other cultural groups. Based on an integration perspective to cultures (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988), a cultural depiction emphasizing the common stereotypical traits within the five project management areas was then constructed. This portrayal was also complemented and strengthened by a cultural depiction in line with the differentiation perspective to cultures (ibid.). However, the purpose of this examination and cultural depiction was to show that for cultural theorizing of project management, these depictions and understandings are inadequate and one-sided, because behavioral traits in stark contrast with the stereotypical depictions were highly prevalent among this group. Consequently, in the empirical examination the stereotypical cultural depictions were complemented with illustrations of cultural dualism (Tayeb, 2001) and ambiguity (Martin, 2002), lending itself to a cultural depiction in line with the fragmentation perspective to cultures (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988).

Building from these illustrations, it was then argued that, because existing cultural studies in the international project management literature predominantly build on Hofstede style cultural research, and consequently give rise to stereotypical, integrative cultural portrayals, this kind of cultural representation and understanding can be highly incomplete and potentially misleading. Indeed, cultural research building on the well-known universal value frameworks (Hostede, 1980; Trompenaars, 1993; Schwartz, 1994; House & al., 2004) has received increasing scholarly critique (e.g. Osland & Bird,

2000; McSweeney, 2002; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Sackmann & Phillips, 2004; Yeganeh & Su, 2006). As such critique is supported by the empirical examination in this paper, it was suggested that this critique is well deserved and should be taken seriously in the future cultural project management studies. Hence, to advance the cultural theorizing of international project management, moving beyond traditional reductionist, quantitative, and universal (national) culture studies was suggested (cf. Osland & Bird, 2000; Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Friedman & Berthoin Antal, 2005; Jackson & Aycan, 2006; Yeganeh & Su, 2006).

Consequently, it was argued that in its current state cultural research in the international project management literature generally ends at the point where it should actually start. Thus, it was suggested that cultural researchers of project management, instead of looking for stereotypical behavior, should especially seek out evidence pointing out behavioral dualism and ambiguity, and take that as a starting point for their studies. This suggestion was based on the notion according to which such recognition brings forth the possibility for tapping into the differences in meaning and interpretations that cultural members attach to different situations exhibiting seemingly contrasting behavioral traits. In anthropology, this has been considered as the "core" of cultures and cultural reseach for long, along with the categorization, structuration, and organizing of the real world events, symbols, objects, and social phenomena that these meanings and interpretations create (e.g. Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1979; Frost & al., 1991; Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Martin, 2002). Thus, effectively, it was suggested that future cultural studies in the international project management literature could do well by incorporating the conceptualizations, research methods, and operationalizations introduced previously in the organizational culture literature as well as in the wider anthropological research tradition (see Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1979; Smircich, 1983; Martin, 2002).

To conclude, it can be said that to date existing cultural research in the international project management literature has been built on the *etic* understanding on cultures, attempting to generate an objective, universal way for enabling *outsiders* to describe a (national) culture and its implications to project management. However, as shown, there are several limitations to this approach, hindering the development of cultural

understanding in this stream of literature. Hence, to complement these studies, it has been suggested that future studies could move towards the *emic* understanding on cultures, i.e. seeking out the cultural *insiders'* perspective by focusing on their indigenous language, constructs, and concepts, as well as on the ways in which they give meaning, interprete, and structure the social and physical world within which they are embedded.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Adler, N. (1997) *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 3rd edition.* Boston: Kent Publishing Company.

Ailon-Souday, G. and Kunda, G. (2003) The Local Selves of Global Workers: The Social Construction of National Identity in the Face of Organizational Globalization. *Organization Studies*, 24, 7, 1073-1096.

Alvesson, M. and Berg, P.O. (1992) *Corporate Culture and Organizational Symbolism.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Barinaga, E. (2007) "Cultural Diversity" at Work: "National Culture" as a Discourse Organizing an International Project Group. *Human Relations*, 60, 2, 315-340.

Barley, S.R. (1983) Semiotics and the Study of Occupational and Organizational Cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 3, 393-413.

Boyacigiller, N.A. and Adler, N.J. (1991) The Parochial Dinosaur: Organization Science in a Global Context. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 2, 262-290.

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.

Cartwright, S. and Cooper, C. (1993) The Role of Culture Compatibility in Successful Organizational Marriage. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 7, 57-67.

Chan, E.H.W. and Tse, R.Y.C. (2003) Cultural Considerations in International Construction Contracts. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 129, 4, 375-381.

Chen, P. and Partington, D. (2004) An Interpretive Comparison of Chinese and Western Conceptions of Relationships in Construction Project Management Work. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 397-406.

Chevrier, S. (2003) Cross-Cultural Management in Multinational Project Groups. *Journal of World Business*, 38, 141-149.

De Camprieu, R., Desbiens, J. and Feixue, Y. (2007) Cultural Differences in Project Risk Perception: An Empirical Comparison of China and Canada. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 7, 683-693.

Deal, T. and Kennedy, A. (1982) *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life.* Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Friedman, V. J. and Berthoin Antal, A. (2005) Negotiating Reality: A Theory of Action Approach to Intercultural Competence. *Management Learning*, 36, 1, 69-86.

Frost, P.J., Moore, L.F., Louis, M.R., Lundberg, C.C., and Martin, J. (eds.) (1991) *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Gajewsksa-De Mattos, A., Chapman, M., and Clegg, J. (2004) Poles and Germans: An International Business Relationship. *Human Relations*, 57, 8, 983-1015.

Geertz, G. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Graen, G.B. (2006) In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross-Cultural Lesson in Leadership from Project GLOBE: A Response Viewed from the Third Culture Bonding (TCB) Model of Cross-Cultural Leadership. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, November, 95-101.

Harrison, P. D., Chow, C.W., Wu, A., and Harrell, A.M., (1999) A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Managers' Project Evaluation Decisions. *Behavioral Research in Accounting*, 11, 143-160.

Haspeslagh, P.C. and Jemison, D.B. (1991) *Managing Acquisitions: Creating Value through Corporate Renewal*. New York: The Free Press.

Henrie, M. and Sousa-Poza, A. (2005) Project Management: A Cultural Literary Review. *Project Management Journal*, 36, 1, 5-14.

Hoecklin, L.A. (1993) *Managing Cultural Differences for Competitive Advantage*. London: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

House, R., Javidan, M., Hanges, P., and Dorfman, P. (2002) Understanding Cultures and Implicit Leadership Theories across the Globe: An Introduction to Project GLOBE. *Journal of World Business*, 37, 3-10.

House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Gupta, V. and GLOBE Associates (2004) *Leadership, Culture, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Jackson, T. and Aycan, Z. (2006) Editorial: From Cultural Values to Cross Cultural Interfaces. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 6, 1, 5-13.

Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Sully de Luque, M., and House, R.J. (2006) In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, February, 67- 90.

Keil, M., Tan, B.C.Y., Wei, K-K., Saarinen, T., Tuunainen, V., and Wassenaar, A. (2000) A Cross-Cultural Study on Escalation of Commitment Behavior in Software Projects. *MIS Quarterly*, 24, 2, 299-325.

Kirkman, B.L. and Shapiro, D.L. (2005) The Impact of Cultural Value Diversity on Multicultural Team Performance. In Shapiro, D.L., Von Glinow, M.A., and Cheng, J.L.C. (eds.) *Managing Multinational Teams: Global Perspectives*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Kluckhohn, F. and Strodtbeck, F. (1961) *Variations in Value Orientations*. Illinois: Evanston.

Leung, K., Bhagat, R.S., Buchan, N.R., Erez, M., and Gibson, C.B. (2005) Culture and International Business: Recent Advances and their Implications for Future Research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 36, 357-378.

Martin, J. (2002) *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Martin, J. and Meyerson, D. (1988) Organizational Culture and the Denial, Channelling and Acknowledgment of Ambiguity. In Pondy, L., Boland, R. Jr., and Thomas, H. (eds.) *Managing Ambiguity and Change*. New York: John Wiley.

Martin, J. and Siehl, C. (1983) Organizational Culture and Counterculture: An Uneasy Symbiosis. *Organizational Dynamics*, 12, 52-64.

McSweeney, B. (2002) Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and Their Consequences: A Triuph of Faith – a Failure of Analysis. *Human Relations*, 55, 1, 89-118.

Meyerson, D. and Martin, J. (1987) Cultural Change: An Integration of Three Different Views. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24, 6, 623-647.

Miller, R. and Lessard, D.R. (2000) *The Strategic Management of Large Engineering Projects: Shaping Institutions, Risks and Governance.* Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Morosini, P. and Singh, H. (1994) Post-cross-border Acquisitions: Implementing National-culture-compatible Strategies to Improve Performance. *European Management Journal.* 12, 390-400.

Nahavandi, A. and Malekzadeh, A.R. (1988) Acculturation in Mergers and Acquisitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 13, 79-90.

Nasif, E.G., Al-Daeaj, H., Ebrahimi, B., and Thibodeaux, M.S. (1991) Methodological Problems in Cross-Cultural Research: An Updated Review. *Management International Review*, 31, 1, 79-91.

Olie, R. (1994) Shades of Culture and Institutions in International Mergers. *Organizations Studies*, 15, 381-398.

Osland, J.C. and Bird, A. (2000) Beyond Sophisticated Stereotyping: Cultural Sensemaking in Context. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14, 1, 65-77.

Peters, T. and Waterman, R. (1982) *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies.* New York: Harper & Row.

Pheng, L.S. and Yuquan, S. (2002) An Exploratory Study of Hofstede's Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Construction Projects. *Management Decision*, 40, 1, 7-16.

Sackmann, S.A. (1997) Introduction. In Sackmann, S.A. (ed.) *Cultural Complexity in Organizations: Inherent Contrasts and Contradictions.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Sackmann, S.A. and Phillips, M.E, (2004) Contextual Influences on Culture Research – Shifting Assumptions for New Workplace Realities. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 4, 3, 370-390.

Schaffer, B.S. and Riordan, C.M. (2003) A Review of Cross-Cultural Methodologies for Organizational Research: A Best-Practices Approach. *Organizational Research Methods*, 6, 2, 169-215.

Schein, E.H. (1985) *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schneider, S.C. and Barsoux, J.-L. (1997) *Managing across Cultures*. London: Prentice Hall.

Schwartz, S.H. (1994) Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Cultural Dimensions of Values. In Kim, U., Triandis, H.C., Kagitcibasi, C., Choi, S., and Yoon, G. (eds.) *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method, and Applications*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Shore, B. and Cross, B.J. (2005) Exploring the Role of National Culture in the Management of Large-Scale International Science Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 55-64.

Slangen, A.H.L. (2006) National Cultural Distance and Initial Foreign Acquisition Performance: The Moderating Effect of Integration. *Journal of World Business*, 41, 161-170.

Smircich, L. (1983) Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 3, 339-358.

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Holden, N. (2002) Rethinking Cross-Cultural Management in a Globalizing Business World. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 2, 1, 103-121.

Tayeb, M. (2001) Conducting Research Across Cultures: Overcoming Drawbacks and Obstacles. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 1, 1, 91-108.

Trompenaars, F. (1993) *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. London: Economist Books.

Turner, J. R. (1999) *The Handbook of Project-based Management: Leading Strategic Change in Organizations, 3rd edition.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Vaara, E., Risberg, A., Søderberg, A.-M., and Tienari, J. (2003) Nation Talk: The Construction of National Stereotypes in a Merging Multinational. In Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Van Maanen, J. (1974) Working the Street: A Developmental View of Police Behavior. In Jacob, H. (ed.) *The Potential for Reform of Criminal Justice*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Van Maanen, J. (1975) Police Socialization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 20, 207-228.

Wels, H. (1996) Strategy as Paradox and Paradox as Strategy. Images of and Paradoxes in Chinese Culture: Expatriate Managers in Sino-Western Joint Ventures. In Koot, W., Sabelis, I., and Ybema, S. (eds.) *Contradictions in Context*. Amsterdam: VU University Press.

Yeganeh, H. and Su, Z. (2006) Conceptual Foundations of Cultural Management Research. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management.* 6, 3, 361-376.

Zeng, S.X., Xie, X.M., Tam, C.M., and Sun, P.M. (2009) Identifying Cultural Difference in R&D Project for Performance Improvement: A Field Study. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 10, 1, 61-70.

Zwikael, O., Shimizu, K. and Globerson, S. (2005) Cultural Differences in Project Management Capabilities: A Field Study. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 454-462.

8. CONCLUSION: THE EMERGING REPRESENTATION OF FINNISHNESS AND FINNISH CULTURAL IDENTITY

This chapter (re)constructs a representation of Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity based on the four essays reported in the previous chapter. Although each essay had different research questions, methodologies, and arguments, taken together they can be seen to provide a basis for a cultural representation and bring forth highly salient aspects of Finnishness and the Finnish cultural identity appearing in these projects. More specifically, these essays can be seen to illustrate how Finnish project managers contribute to developing project culture while being in a dominant cross cultural position; how Finnish project managers can behave while being in a subjugated position vis-à-vis their project partners; what can be a basis of Finnish identity in a highly politicized situation; and what kind of cultural dualism can emerge in relation to some highly (from the Finns' perspective) predominant project management areas.

Essay I:

The first essay portrayed Finnish project managers in a highly dynamic (in terms of the cooperative atmosphere) collaboration with their Polish counterparts in a complex, yet successful project. As also brought out, in this project the Finnish project managers could be considered as the dominant party due to them being representatives of the technology provider and the parent company of the Polish subsidiary. In terms of (re)constructing a cultural representation based on the Finnish project managers' experiences, several cultural themes can then be highlighted:

Firstly, it is obvious that in the interaction with their Polish counterparts, it seems that initially the Finns' identity became strongly built on their technological capabilities, which was considered to justify the attempts to carry out the project according to the "Finnish way". In terms of cultural ambiguity and dualism (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988), herein can also be found an interesting cultural "paradox": Although in the interviews the Finnish project managers often emphasized that they are proponents of providing empowerment and autonomy to their subordinates (i.e. they

believe in the expertise of their subordinates), they nevertheless seemed to behave in a somewhat contrasting manner in their interaction with the Poles. Thus, it seemed that with regards to their own subordinates, the Finnish managerial identity was build on a preference for "low" power distance (Hofstede, 1980), yet, emerging from the Finns' perceived technological competence, the opposite tendencies were seemingly exhibited towards the Poles. As elicited in the essay, according to the CEO of the Polish subsidiary the Finns' tendency to bring forth their ways of operating was also apparent lower down in the hierarchy. Moreover, as reported in the essay, lessening this kind of technological identification was seemingly a long-term, gradual process, further implying its salience and strength.

Secondly, the evidence in the first essay, in Laurent's (1983) terms, clearly reflects the Finns' tendency to approach organizing from a task system orientation, i.e. to build on the principle of specifying organizational tasks first and then assigning the tasks with specialists with the necessary technological capabilities, whose decisions, judgment, and expertise are to be respected (Laurent, 1983; Adler, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). In addition to the overall tendencies of the Finns, this could be seen, for example, in the subcontractor selections. As brought out, for the Finnish project managers the preference in foreign markets was to select the subcontractors based on their financial performance. Therefore, the Polish approach emphasizing the social relationships and networks initially seemed somewhat difficult to come to terms with for the Finns. However, herein lies another cultural "paradox" or ambiguity: In the interviews the Finnish project managers mentioned that for this particular project they had also selected subcontractors in Finland based on established relationships. Hence, in Finland they could seemingly behave in a manner that ran contrary to their preferences on a foreign market. However, in this case it was stressed that in the Polish market the financial performance of the subcontractors suggested by the Poles seemed questionable to the Finns. Also, it seemed challenging for the Finns to learn to understand the societal position of the proposed subcontractors as well as the significance of these positions to the local market.

This brings us to the third cultural theme evidenced by the first essay: The technology-based identification was clearly emphasized in the Finns' way of developing trust towards their Polish counterparts. In the interviews, it became evident that for the Finnish project managers, developing trust towards the project partners was based on the partners' technological capabilities and expertise. This notion also begins to build understanding on how cognitions could gradually turn into affections during the project. That is, when the Finns gradually during every-day work became aware of the Polish counterparts' competence and began to see their viewpoints, it purportedly led the way for reciprocal trust to develop. This notion can also begin to explain both of the above mentioned cultural paradoxes. In other words, as trust of the partners' technical capabilities began to develop, the Finnish project managers seemingly also lessened their tendencies to favor the "Finnish way". Consequently, the "high" power distance (Hofstede, 1980) exhibited by the Finns gradually turned into "low" power distance towards the Poles. Likewise, technical expertise as a basis of trust can be seen to explain the contrasting preferences in the subcontractor selections. That is, the original preference for selecting the subcontractors in the foreign market based on their financial performance (as a contrast to the relationship orientation in the home market) could be seen to be due to the Finns not being fully aware of the capabilities of the suggested subcontractors. However, as the Finnish project managers gradually learned to understand the Polish viewpoints and when mutual trust began to emerge, the relationship orientation on the Polish market also seemed to make sense for the Finns.

Fourthly, and as already implied, the essay strongly emphasized cultural learning and the consequent change experienced by the Finnish project managers. Initially the Finns' identity was built on the technological and task orientation, which, however, gradually developed towards the relationship orientation. This was perhaps the most evident in staffing the project teams, as in the interviews the Finnish project managers emphasized that at the beginning of the project they had based staffing decision mainly on the candidates' technical expertise. However, during the project this approach seemingly gave way to the tendency to select the project team members in the different project phases according to the candidates' anticipated "fit" into the team – even at the expense of "losing" technical expertise. Moreover, the essay highlighted that despite having

been organizationally and technologically in a dominant position, the Finns nevertheless took it seriously to try and begin to understand the Polish identity, viewpoints, and the ways of operating in the local market. Clearly, the combined cognitive and affective processes producing such cultural learning and change also brought about cooperative and project progress related benefits, as illustrated in the essay.

Finally, however, the essay also highlighted the importance of the project state in the cultural "traits" of the Finns. That is, as the unexpected delay occurred towards the end of the project, the Finns seemed to revert back to their tendency to emphasize the "Finnish way" of operating. Hence, it can be said that the project state seemed to be an important situational factor contributing to the Finns' thinking and behavior. In other words, it seemed that during the less tumultuous times, the volition to learn and adapt to the foreign colleagues' management and working practices and worldviews was evident and possible. However, during the crisis situation, the Finns seemed to interpret that there was no time for such learning and adaptation. Hence, the most familiar ways to navigate out of the difficult situation were reverted to. Consequently, tendencies exhibiting high power distance once again resurfaced.

These two final notions also make a significant contribution to the existing cultural portrayals in general, as well as to those covering the Finnish managerial cultural identity in particular. That is, in the existing cross cultural management literature these portrayals tend to be somewhat static and omit considerations of dynamism, oscillation, and development when depicting cultural "traits" (e.g. Suutari & Riusala, 2001; Mäkilouko, 2004). Moreover, usually the existence of contrasting traits, i.e. cultural fragmentation and dualism (Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Martin & Meyerson, 1988) has been treated as a situation dependent structural consequence (Osland & Bird, 2000). However, this portrayal adds to this literature by illustrating a logic underlying the cultural development and dualism apparent in this particular case. Thus, in this case it seemed to be the gradual development of trust as well as the perceived state of the project (including the perceived amount of time available for managerial maneuvering) that seemed to bring out the contrasting cultural tendencies and dictate whether the Finns exhibited "high" or "low" power distance (Hofstede, 1980), or universalism or

particularism (Trompenaars, 1993) for that matter. Obviously, learning to understand some of the worldviews of the Poles also induced changes in the Finnish project managers' identification, thinking and behavior, leading to acculturation (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988) and to the appearance of cultural dualism during the project.

Essay II:

In the second essay the Finns were portrayed in a contrasting position when compared to the first essay. That is, in this essay the Finnish project managers recounted their experiences when being in a culturally subjugated position towards other cultural groups.

As became evident in this essay, the Finnish cultural identity revolving around the idea of "kindness" or "good-heartedness" became strongly emphasized. Thus, when in a subjugated position, Finnishness in comparison with other nationalities seemed to be built on the idea of contributing to the project progress by withholding from causing complications and conflicts along the way. Consequently, in the projects examined in the second essay, Finnish "kindness" or "good-heartedness" could be seen to consist of the following properties: the Finns seemed to avoid appearing as conflict-prone; contracts and project plans were seen more as guidelines to be flexibly complied with rather than something to be taken literally; claiming[16] and trying to benefit from "every" change made to the project plans and contracts during the project execution was refrained from; and appearing as opportunistic was avoided. Concomitantly, the Finnish project managers saw themselves less "tough" and "strict" than many of their foreign counterparts, or in terms of Hofstede (1980) less uncertainty avoidant than the colleagues.

However, the essay also highlighted some of the meanings attached by the project managers to the project plans, contracts, claiming and conflict avoidance, as well as to what they viewed as opportunism. Firstly, it seemed that the Finns saw the literal

---

[16] Claiming refers to a formal process of determining and assigning responsibility and liability of any given surprise, failure, change or deviation, as well as formally agreeing on compensations and on the ways to bear the incurred costs and realized risks between the project partners.

adherence to project plans and contracts, as well claiming and trying to benefit from project changes as something that could jeopardize customer relationships. Hence, it became evident that many of the aspects related to the project management were interpreted from the point of view that emphasized their implications with regards to the customer relationship. Thus, for example claiming and trying to benefit from changes could be seen as opportunistic behavior that could put a strain on these relationships. Similarly, following the project plans and contracts to the letter could, on the one hand, provide possibilities for claiming and for benefitting from changes. On the other hand, these could also lead to the project managers appearing as conflict prone and opportunistic, which could run the risk of harming the customer relationship. Secondly, the aforementioned issues were also interpreted according to their anticipated effect on the project progress. Thus, it seemed that adhering strictly to the project plans and contracts, as well as appearing as conflict prone and opportunistic – either by themselves or by their project partners – could be deemed as behavior that could put a serious strain on the project progress and cooperation between the partners.

Taken together, the above notions then highlight how the Finnish project managers interpreted many of the project management issues in terms of their effects on the customer relationships and project progress, as well as how they viewed the trade-offs between short-term individual (in terms of themselves or their company) and more long-term collective (in terms of the partner relationships and project progress) good. On the other hand, it also became evident that this kind of sensemaking provided the other project parties with a way to control the Finns. That is, the other project partners could try and attempt to keep the Finnish project managers at bay by adhering strictly to project plans and contracts, and demanding this from the Finns also. Hence, as the Finns seemingly would not normally follow the project plans and contracts to the letter, as well as try to make claims and benefit from every change and amendment made to the plans and contracts, this provided the others with a convenient way to point out the deficiencies of the Finns and exert control over them.

However, it also became evident that the kind of sensemaking and behavior described above seemed to appear on many an occasion when the projects were progressing

smoothly and when there were no apparent crises looming over the projects. However, during difficult times and project crises, contrasting cultural sensemaking, thinking, and behavior seemed to appear. Hence, whereas during the good times, being "kind" and accepting subjugation could be deemed to have a positive effect on customer relationships and project progress, in bad times the Finnish project managers could appear to be "high" in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). As could be seen, in such situations, and in the face of conflicting interests, the project plans and contracts could be seen as tools for self-defense, for example, when being accused of the difficulties. Also, when the timely delivery of the project was at stake, the Finns could appear as strict and defiant, if not solely by themselves, then at least by teaming up with other more "tough" cultural groups in order to compensate for the perceived cultural deficiencies. Thus, it seemed that when their own business seemed to be threatened, contrasting behavior to the otherwise "easy-going" Finns could be elicited.

Crises and project difficulties could also bring out other cultural aspects of the Finnish project managers. That is, in difficult situations the Finns could appear as analytic and systematic in the sense that the corrective actions could be taken after a period of analyzing the situation and planning for the appropriate responses. Once again, being systematic and showing the tendency for planning did not mean the project managers strictly abided by the project plans and contracts. Rather, in such situations plans, contracts, and constant reporting could be seen to further hinder the project progress. Hence, for the project managers, being analytic and carefully planning the corrective actions based on the analyses seemed as a way to minimize the possibility of "going further astray", whereas for some other cultural groups this could appear as indecisiveness and that nothing is being done to correct the crisis. Yet, in these situations the tendency to judge actions from the perspective of project progress seemed so fundamental that it apparently overrode the other central framework of sensemaking, i.e. the tendency to make sense of issues in terms of their anticipated implications on the customer relationships. Hence, in difficulties and crises the Finnish project managers could exhibit direct resistance towards the project partners, and in those situations even the customer relationships did not ensure subjugation and "kindness" on behalf of the Finnish project managers.

In these situations, the Finns could also appear to show tendencies related to high power distance (Hofstede, 1980). As became evident, during the difficult times when the project delivery was jeopardized, the Finnish project managers could appear as authoritarian and attend project meetings and reviews solely by themselves. However, from the managers' perspective this was seemingly not a manifestation of authoritarianism and high power distance or a way to make all the decisions by themselves. Rather this was deemed as a way to ensure that the subordinates could focus on their work and keep the project progressing as efficiently as possible. Hence, this could be seen as a way for the project managers to "sacrifice" themselves on behalf of the subordinates. In this way the project managers could also "violate" the otherwise central principle according to which they believed in the expertise of their subordinates and the accompanying right to take part in decision making. Consequently, the project managers could make decisions concerning issues beyond their expertise, something that was not preferred during the less tumultuous project phases. Thus, this could be interpreted as one manifestation of "pragmatism" from the Finnish project managers' perspective as well as a benefit for the project.

With these notions the second essay and the above cultural portrayal then contribute in multiple ways to the existing cultural portrayals in the cross cultural management literature in general, and to the depictions of the Finnish management culture in particular: Firstly, the essay and the above portrayal take a step towards the interpretive cultural paradigm and illustrate the kind of meanings that different situations yielding contrasting cultural behavior are attributed with. As could be seen, the two central frameworks that the Finnish project managers used to assess the implications of their actions were the anticipated implications both on the customer relationship as well as on the project progress.

Secondly, the above portrayal brought out a kind of cultural "threshold" pointing out the structure of significance between these two frameworks. That is, it seemed that during the project crises, the perceived implications of the project managers' actions in terms of the project progress was considered more decisive than the customer relationships, as

direct resistance towards the customer could appear during the difficult times. As illustrated in the essay, this could be partly explained by the perceived threat and financial sanctions to the project managers' own companies' business which the exceeding of the project deadlines could inflict.

Thirdly, and finally, in contrast with mainstream cross cultural management studies assuming a more deterministic understanding in terms of (national) cultures (see e.g. the review by Kirkman & al., 2006), this essay elicits the idea of cultural agency, i.e. the project managers not being mere "dopes" of their cultures (Garfinkel, 1967). Thus, the essay draws out multiple ways in which the project managers could compensate for their perceived cultural deficiencies, and counteract the perceived cultural forces during the different project situations and phases.

Essay III:

The third essay, building on the experiences of the same project managers as the first essay, continues the same theme of the technological identification appearing in the Finnish project managers' interaction with their Polish counterparts. However, the essay adds to the first by disclosing another cultural "threshold", which further strengthens the perceived salience of the technological identification among the Finnish project managers. This essay also acknowledges that in international cross cultural interaction cultural features and identities can be a consequence of structural factors (Whitley, 1992), cognitive factors (Hofstede, 1980), and affective and political factors (Vaara, 2000; Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Barinaga, 2007). Consequently, the essay shows how the Finns technological identification in the highly politicized situation examined in the essay could originate both from structural and cognitive components as well as from social construction because of affective and political reasons.

As a political "tool" such an identity formation can then be controversial as a basis of inference for "real" cultural representation. However, the point here is that as a political "tool" the national identification can also point out a kind of national cultural threshold, where the potential crossing of this threshold is considered as too grave a violation that

politicking is launched. From this perspective, the constructions of national cultural identities are not arbitrary. Hence, the third essay highlights that as the organizing activities for the focal project of the essay could endanger the continuity of the Finns' technological position and the related employment effects, national cultural identities began to emerge. Therefore, this highlights the salience and significance of the technological capabilities and identity for the Finns in the cross cultural interaction examined in the third essay.

Essay IV:

The fourth essay then summarizes many of the aspects illustrated above as well as adds some new ones. Building on a multiple cases study, in this essay the focus was on a few selected project management areas where national cultural identification among the Finnish project managers was particularly strong and where they seemed to distinguish themselves from other national cultural groups. However, the special focus of the essay, from a cultural viewpoint, was to empirically examine the cultural ambiguity and dualism present in the introduced management areas. Hence, this essay not only brought forth stereotypical traits seemingly exhibited by the Finnish project managers but also examined manifestations of the behavior running in contrast with the stereotypes, contemplating on the meanings and interpretations attached to these situations.

From the perspective of the first management area introduced in the essay, i.e. subcontractor selections, in the foreign markets the preference for the Finnish project managers seemed to be to select the subcontractors based on their objective financial performance. As stated earlier, in Laurent's (1983) terms this contributes to the image of the task oriented Finns. However, the essay also brought out examples of situations where the Finnish project managers had not behaved this way. Instead, the subcontractors had been selected by adapting to the preferences of another project party. Consequently, in some situations the demands in relation to the financial performance of the subcontractors were eased. It also seemed that this kind of adaptation took place as a result of complying with the client's demands or due to a reliance on the other parties having longer experience in the project host country's market.

According to the second project management area introduced in the essay, the Finnish project managers seemed to distinguish from their foreign counterparts by placing emphasis on the empowerment and autonomy of their subordinates. In other words, the expertise of the subordinates was relied upon, for example, in decision making situations. Hence, in Hofstede's (1980) terms this points to a preference for low power distance. However, as illustrated in the essay, there were also situations where the Finnish project managers seemed to take the matters firmly into their own hands, running in contrast with the general preference. Thus, situations appeared where the tendency to lead the projects "from a distance" was countered, and instead the project managers assumed operative responsibilities. As also illustrated, these tendencies seemed to appear in the more difficult and conflict prone situations. That is, it seemed that the more difficult situations were interpreted in a way leading to the usual low power distance being replaced by tendencies pointing to high power distance.

The third management area introduced in the essay was then related to the supervisory activities between the project participants. In this area the general tendency for the Finnish project managers was to behave in a way that exhibited particularism in Trompenaars's terms (1993) or low uncertainty avoidance in Hofstede's terms (1980). Hence, the general preference was to avoid "bureaucracy" in order to contribute to the smooth progress of the project. Consequently, documentation and reporting demands from the project partners that were considered "excessive" were disfavored and "tight" supervision exhibited by the project partners was not preferred. These were all considered to hinder project execution rather than to advance it. However, as before there were instances where the contrasting tendencies also surfaced, and the Finnish project managers seemed to appear to be universalistic in Trompenaars's terms (1993) or high in uncertainty avoidance (cf. Hofstede, 1980). For example, the Finnish project managers might require accurate reporting from their own subordinates, as this was considered a way to be "on top" of the project progress, i.e. to have a realistic understanding on how the project is progressing in any particular situation. The interviewees also mentioned that they could exhibit "tight" supervision of their own

subcontractors as this was considered to yield a higher level of service from the subcontractors.

The fourth management area examined in the essay introduced the Finnish project managers' general approach towards the project plans and contracts, and in much the same way as above, these were seemingly followed to the extent that was considered necessary to advance project progress. Hence, according to the project managers, project plans and contracts in general were not followed literally, as this was deemed to hinder the project progress as well as to put a strain on partner relationships within the project. Yet, situations with contrasting tendencies also appeared. That is, for example in difficult situations such as in conflicts with the project partners or when unexpected delays happened, project plans and contracts were taken more literally. In those situations these were deemed as "tools" for defense rather than being a hindrance for project execution. Thus, as can be seen, the Finnish project managers could be particularistic and low in uncertainty avoidance, as well as universalistic and high in uncertainty avoidance depending on the way the situations were interpreted.

Finally, in terms of conflict behavior, the Finnish project managers in general seemed somewhat conflict avoidant. This seemed to be due to conflicts being considered as a way to strain client relationships as well as hinder the smooth progress of the project. As a consequence, conflicts were best seen to be resolved "on the spot" on the project site, and for example taking legal action was seemingly considered as a last resort to be used only when all other measures for settling the disputes failed. In crisis situations, on the other hand, the Finnish project managers appeared as highly analytic and oriented towards "being" (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). However, once again in the interview accounts there were references to situations where the contrasting tendencies also appeared. For example, when their "own money", i.e. their own company's profits seemed to be at question, the Finnish project managers could appear as defiant and fight for their good. It was also illustrated that in terms of crisis management, there seemed to be different kinds of crises requiring different kinds of approach to solving them. Consequently, some of these situations seemed to call for quick actions first and then

followed by more analytic behavior in contemplating the possible causes of the crisis. Hence, orientation towards "doing" (ibid.) could also appear.

Taken together, this cultural portrayal of Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity then contributes to the existing cultural representations in the general cross cultural management literature as well as in the international project management literature by building on the arguments of Meyerson and Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988). As has been elicited, according to these authors cultures not only consist of elements that point to coherence and integrity, but also of elements producing cultural dualism and ambiguity. Yet, thus far neither in general cross cultural management research nor in the project management literature have such notions been taken into account in cultural portrayals. Secondly, in line with the three other essays, the fourth one also contributes to the existing literature by taking a step towards interpretative anthropological cultural understanding by highlighting some of the meanings and meaning structures that the Finnish project managers seem to attribute to the situations exhibiting the contrasting cultural tendencies.

Reflections on prior research on Finnishness

In relation to the existing literature on Finnishness and the Finnish management culture, three cultural themes then become highly salient and warrant closer explanation:

High and low power distance

Firstly, in terms of power distance, contrasting tendencies have been observed in earlier studies where, for example, Hofstede (1980) and Lindell and Sigfrids (2008) found the preference for low power distance to be predominant among Finns. However, as brought out earlier, for example, Vaara et al. (2003a) highlighted the opposite. Based on the empirical depiction above, it can then be argued that the tendency and preference for low power distance among the Finnish project managers seems to be first and foremost a kind of "default" assumption and preference applicable during "normal" times. Hence,

in such situations the tendency to rely on the expertise and decision making of the subordinates seemed salient.

However, as described, during the more troubled project phases, the Finnish project managers seemed to exhibit high power distance, i.e. to take matters into their own hands and engage in operative decision making. Hence, in these situations these managers seemed to "lead from the front" and show their own example (see also Tienari & al., 2004). Furthermore, in some situations the tendencies reminiscent of high power distance could also be perceived as a way to promote project progress, i.e. to ensure that the subordinates could focus on their work and keep the project progressing as efficiently as possible. Hence, this could be seen as a way for the project managers to "sacrifice" themselves on behalf of the subordinates. Finally, in terms of high power distance, such tendencies among the Finnish project managers could also be related to the perceptions and trust on the project partners' capabilities both in the less and more stressful project phases.

Task and relationship orientation

Secondly, and in terms of the task orientation of the Finnish managers (cf. Laurent, 1983), for example according to Lindell and Sigfrids (2008), the Finnish managers were found to be, first and foremost, task oriented in their management style. Such tendencies were salient also in the empirical depiction above. That is, when operating in a foreign market or with foreign counterparts, there seemed to be a tendency for the Finnish project managers to emphasize issues such as the financial performance of the partnering organizations or the technical expertise of the foreign counterparts instead of, say, the partners' social position in a particular social network in the foreign market. These tendencies could be seen, for example, in the subcontractor selections as well as in establishing trust between the Finns and their foreign colleagues in the case of not having much prior experience of the partners. This could also be seen as a defense mechanism against becoming tricked in the foreign market.

Yet, tendencies pointing to the salience of the relationship orientation among the Finnish project managers were also evident. Based on the empirical evidence these contrasting tendencies could then be explained by a desire to maintain frictionless relationships with the project client. That is, for example abiding with the customer's suggestions in terms of the subcontractor selections was considered to be a way to contribute to smooth relationships between these partners although this could run against the more task oriented "default" preferences of the Finns.

High and low uncertainty avoidance

Thirdly, in terms of uncertainty avoidance, for example Hofstede (1980) and Granlund and Lukka (1997) pointed out the salience of low uncertainty avoidance among the Finns, whereas Lindell and Sigfrids (2008) and Vaara et al. (2003a) reported the opposite. Based on the empirical evidence presented in this thesis, the Finnish project managers also exhibited low uncertainty avoidance, or particularism in Trompenaars's (1993) terms, by avoiding, for example, "meticulous" reporting demands or strict adherence to the contracts. Consequently, the Finnish project managers often seemed to consider themselves as (too) "kind" or "good-hearted" in comparison with other cultural groups. However, from their perspective this could be explained as a contribution to maintaining smooth customer relationships as well as promoting the project's progress. That is, according to the Finnish project managers, being high in the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance was seen as a way to cause conflicts, and put a strain on customer relationships and on project progress. Consequently, from their perspective, the opposite, i.e. low uncertainty avoidance/particularism was favored.

However, it can also be said that the above tendencies seemed to appear when the projects were progressing well. Yet, when the projects were in a more troubled state, contrasting tendencies, i.e. high uncertainty avoidance, or universalism in Trompenaars's (1993), terms seemed to appear among the Finnish project managers. During such phases, for example, the project contracts and claiming were clearly seen as useful tools for defending their positions and interests. In addition, thorough reporting practices could also be demanded, and "tight" supervision could be exhibited

towards the project partners under the Finnish project managers' supervision. Such reporting demands and supervision tendencies could also be exhibited during the less troubled phases in order to prevent the troubles from appearing or escalating.

Such appearance of the contrasting tendencies of uncertainty avoidance could also be seen to reveal that perhaps the most salient frame of interpretation for the Finnish project managers was the perceived impact of the different actions on the project progress. This can be considered to be understandable as often the financial sanctions for their companies in case of failing to meet the project milestones and deadlines were considerable. Therefore, it seems natural that appearing as either high or low in the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance, or universalist/particularist for that matter, seemed to be dictated by the perceived implications both in promoting the project progress and in defending their companies' financial stakes, sometimes even at the expense of the customer relationships.

All in all, these observations and notions are then in line with and strengthen the arguments that it pays to examine cultures and cultural identities as relational, situated, and context dependent phenomena, as well as pay attention to the interpretations that a particular cultural group attaches to different situations (Osland & Bird, 2000; Martin, 2002).

9. FURTHER DIRECTIONS FOR REFINING CULTURAL PORTRAYALS

In this doctoral study, the relational, social constructivist understanding of cultures (Søderberg & Holden, 2002; Søderberg & Vaara, 2003) was adopted as the basis for the cultural portrayal of Finnishness and Finnish cultural identity described above. As disclosed, this choice was made in order to aim at a cultural representation that could answer some of the calls for more refined cultural portrayals compared to what has been customary in mainstream cross cultural management research during the past decades.

As was also brought out, this approach was considered especially suitable for cultural studies in settings involving cross cultural interaction. This was due to the relational, social constructivist cultural understanding having its basis in the notion according to which in international cross cultural interaction, cultures and cultural identities come into existence in relation to other cultures and cultural groups. This cultural conceptualization also acknowledges that in cross cultural interaction cultures and cultural identities are constantly (re)produced by the involved actors themselves, having their origins in institutional (Whitley, 1992), cognitive and behavioral (Hofstede, 1980), as well as affective and business related factors (Vaara, 2000).

Emerging from these premises, the cultural representation of Finnishness and of Finnish cultural identity produced here brought forth not only the cultural commonalities but also the cultural dualism and ambiguities present in this cultural group. Perhaps more importantly, the cultural representation above also shed light on some of the interpretations, meanings, and meaning structures attributed to the different situations by Finnish project managers. Consequently, this portrayal took the first steps towards the more interpretative, anthropological cultural understanding endorsed in the classic organizational culture studies.

Yet, from the perspective of the interpretative, anthropological cultural research, the cultural representation above still leaves untouched and undisclosed a whole world of cultural phenomena – and consequently cultures – that are bound to emerge in organizational settings characterized by cross cultural interaction. That is, as was

brought forward in Part I of this thesis, for cultural anthropologists building on the interpretative tradition the purpose is not only to describe cultural characteristics, behavioral traits, or value preferences, but rather to examine and convey the indigenousness of a cultural group by describing it from the insiders' perspective by use of its native constructs and concepts.

In this particular study, an illustrative example of such indigenous cultural elements would be the notion of the "Turkish barbequing" brought forward by one of the project managers in Essay II. This notion is a prime example of the myriad of such insiders' expressions that exist and become constructed – and thus, lead to the emergence of cultures – in the cross cultural interaction taking place in these projects. As explained by the project manager in question, "Turkish barbequing" became a construct used and shared by the actors involved, and more importantly, its meaning was shared and understood among these actors, hence becoming a cultural construct for them.

However, the interpretative cultural research is not only about indigenous concepts or wordings developed and shared by the cultural groups engaging in cross cultural interaction. As this thesis has touched upon, in international and inter-organizational settings such as the ones examined here, there would be endless possibilities for studying from the insiders' perspective the shared, collective meanings, beliefs, and interpretations that a particular project group ascribes; for example, to different kinds of project practices and processes, management and leadership styles, project managers' and supervisors' roles, difficulties and unexpected events during the projects, project progress and performance evaluation, plans and contracts, stories and histories, special jargon, professional language, meetings, ceremonies, rites, jokes and humor, national artefacts, local histories, environment, etc. Additionally, and staying faithful to the interpretative, anthropological tradition, of interest would be not only the meanings and interpretations ascribed by the project groups to these elements. Indeed, of specific importance and interest would be the categorizations, structuring, and ordering of the social and physical world that these meanings, interpretations, and sensemaking create within a particular cultural group.

In addition, there are very few studies that would build on the interpretative cultural tradition and focus on the differences between groups in such international projects as those examined here (Chen & Partington, 2004 being an exception in this regard). In other words, there are very few studies that would take under examination multiple cultural groups; study within each of these some of the shared interpretations and meanings attached to the different situations, events, symbols, objects, or social phenomena that the groups encounter; produce an ethnography of each of these groups; and then compare them together for unravelling their differences. Yet, as earlier brought out, large, international engineering projects would offer excellent opportunities for producing such comparative ethnographies, as in many of these the actual project execution is focused on a fixed site with the cultural groups collaborating and working together for producing their output. In addition, there would be considerable and highly interesting possibilities for applying this approach to studying the acculturation (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988) and cultural evolution resulting from the diffusion of the cultural elements between the different groups over the project phases.

Finally, in terms of the ever intriguing implications of cultural differences (cf. Martin, 2002), there seems to be no studies that would build on the above described comparative ethnographies and specify the kinds of implications that the differences between cultural groups in interpretations and meanings attached to the social and physical world have. In other words, the majority of the research examining the implications of cultural differences on organizational life seems to be of the traditional "black box" type. In these studies the general cultures or cultural differences are described along with the outcomes, yet, the processes by which the cultural differences are supposed to transmit to the organizational outcomes are left unspecified. Consequently, the results of these studies have been inconclusive and controversial, implying an incomplete understanding of the decisive factors. Thus, there would be a plethora of possibilities for cultural studies that acknowledge that it is groups of people attaching different kinds of interpretations and meanings to the social and physical world that have an effect on organizational life; would specify those differences by building on the interpretative cultural research tradition; and finally, would specify in

processes of micro-level interaction the kinds of outcomes that the differences in meanings and interpretations seem to cause in various project situations and stages.

All in all, despite building on such observations in one organizational form, these kinds of future contributions would arguably have the potential for more general contributions to international cross cultural management research due to the properties of this particular organizational form described above. Hence, I believe that such future contributions would help in carrying us to the next level of cultural studies in international cross cultural management research. More specifically, I believe that such cultural portrayals could take us towards meaningful and productive directions in refining the representations and explanations of cultures and cultural phenomena in the international workplaces.

REFERENCES

Aaltonen, K., Kujala, J., and Oijala, T. (2008) Stakeholder Salience in Global Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 26, 509-516.

Adler, N. (1997) *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, 3rd edition.* Boston: Kent Publishing Company.

Ailon-Souday, G. and Kunda, G. (2003) The Local Selves of Global Workers: The Social Construction of National Identity in the Face of Organizational Globalization. *Organization Studies*, 24, 7, 1073-1096.

Alvesson, M. and Berg, P.O. (1992) *Corporate Culture and Organizational Symbolism.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Barinaga, E. (2007) "Cultural Diversity" at Work: "National Culture" as a Discourse Organizing an International Project Group. *Human Relations*, 60, 2, 315-340.

Barkema, H.G. and Vermeulen, F. (1997) What Differences in the Cultural Backgrounds of Partners are Detrimental for International Joint Ventures? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 28, 4, 845-864.

Barkema, H.G., Shenkar, O., and Vermeulen, F. (1997) Working Abroad, Working with Others: How Firms Learn to Operate International Joint Ventures. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 2, 426-442.

Barley, S.R. (1983) Semiotics and the Study of Occupational and Organizational Cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 3, 393-413.

Barley, S.R. (1986) Technology as an Occasion for Structuring: Evidence from Observations of CT Scanners and the Social Order of Radiology Departments. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 31, 1, 78-108.

Boyacigiller, N.A. and Adler, N.J. (1991) The Parochial Dinosaur: Organization Science in a Global Context. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 2, 262-290.

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.

Bredillet, C., Yatim, F., and Ruiz, P. (2010) Project Management Deployment: The Role of Cultural Factors. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28, 183-193.

Chan, E.H.W. and Tse, R.Y.C. (2003) Cultural Considerations in International Construction Contracts. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 129, 4, 375-381.

Chen, P. and Partington, D. (2004) An Interpretive Comparison of Chinese and Western Conceptions of Relationships in Construction Project Management Work. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 397-406.

Chevrier, S. (2003) Cross-Cultural Management in Multinational Project Groups. *Journal of World Business*, 38, 141-149.

Coutu, D.L. (2004) Putting Leaders on the Couch. A Conversation with Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries. *Harvard Business Review*, 82, 1, 64-71.

Datta, D.K. and Puia, G. (1995) Cross-Borser Acquisitions: An Examination of the Influence of Relatedness and Cultural Fit on Shareholder Value Creation in US Acquiring Firms. *Management International Review*, 35, 4, 337-359.

De Camprieu, R., Desbiens, J. and Feixue, Y. (2007) Cultural Differences in Project Risk Perception: An Empirical Comparison of China and Canada. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 7, 683-693.

Deal, T. and Kennedy, A. (1982) *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life.* Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Denzin, N. (1970) *The Research Act in Sociology*. London: Butterworth.

Dubois, A. and Gadde, L.-E. (2002) Systematic Combining: An Abductive Approach to Case Research. *Journal of Business Research*, 55, 553-560.

Earley, P.C. and Mosakowski, E. (2000) Creating Hybrid Team Cultures: An Empirical Test of Transnational Team Functioning. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 1, 26-49.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 4, 523-550.

Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007) Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 1, 25-32.

Ely, R.J. and Thomas, D.A. (2001) Cultural Diversity at Work: The Effects of Diversity Perspectives on Work Group Processes and Outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 2, 229-273.

Eskola, J. and Suoranta, J. (1998) *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Flyvbjerg, B., Bruzelius, N. and Rothengatter, W. (2003) *Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frost, P.J., Moore, L.F., Louis, M.R., Lundberg, C.C., and Martin, J. (eds.) (1991) *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Gajewsksa-De Mattos, A., Chapman, M., and Clegg, J. (2004) Poles and Germans: An International Business Relationship. *Human Relations*, 57, 8, 983-1015.

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Geertz, G. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Geraldi, J.G. and Adlbrecht, G. (2007) On Faith, Fact, and Interaction in Projects. *Project Management Journal*, 38, 1, 32-43.

Graen, G.B. (2006) In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross-Cultural Lesson in Leadership from Project GLOBE: A Response Viewed from the Third Culture Bonding (TCB) Model of Cross-Cultural Leadership. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, November, 95-101.

Granlund, M. and Lukka, K. (1997) From Bean-Counters to Change Agents: The Finnish Management Accounting Culture in Transition. *Liiketaloudellinen Aikakauskirja*, 3, 213-255.

Grün, O. (2004) *Taming Giant Projects: Management of Multi-Organization Enterprises*. Berlin: Springer.

Haire, M., Ghiselli, E.E., and Porter, L. (1966) *Managerial Thinking: An International Study*. New York: Wiley.

Hambrick, D.C., Canney Davison, S., Snell, S.A., and Snow, C.C. (1998) When Groups Consist of Multiple Nationalities: Towards a New Understanding of the Implications. *Organization Studies*, 19, 2, 181-205.

Harrison, P. D., Chow, C.W., Wu, A., and Harrell, A.M., (1999) A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Managers' Project Evaluation Decisions. *Behavioral Research in Accounting*, 11, 143-160.

Hazelton, S. (2009) *Global Construction Outlook: Short-term Pain, Long-term Gain*. IHS GLOBAL Insight.

Hennart, J.-F. and Zeng, M. (2002) Cross-Cultural Difference and Joint Venture Longevity. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 33, 4, 699-716.

Hoecklin, L.A. (1993) *Managing Cultural Differences for Competitive Advantage*. London: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Hoecklin, L.A. (1995) *Managing Cultural Differences: Strategies for Competitive Advantage*. London: Addison-Wesley.

Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Holden, N. (2002) *Cross-Cultural Management: A Knowledge Management Perspective*. Dorchester: Prentice Hall.

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (1997) Active Interviewing. In Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative Research. Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Gupta, V. and GLOBE Associates (2004) *Leadership, Culture, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hui, M. K., Au, K., and Fock, H. (2004) Empowerment Effects across Cultures. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 35, 46-60.

Jackson, T. and Aycan, Z. (2001) International Journal of Cross Cultural Management – Towards the Future. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 1, 1, 5-9.

Jackson, T. and Aycan, Z. (2006) Editorial: From Cultural Values to Cross Cultural Interfaces. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 6, 1, 5-13.

Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Sully de Luque, M., and House, R.J. (2006) In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, February, 67- 90.

Jugdev, K. and Müller, R. (2005) A Retrospective Look at Our Evolving Understanding of Project Success. *Project Management Journal*, 36, 4, 19-31.

Kallasvuo, O.-P. (2007) Humility. *Harvard Business Review*. 85, 1, 16.

Kirkman, B.L. and Shapiro, D.L. (2005) The Impact of Cultural Value Diversity on Multicultural Team Performance. In Shapiro, D.L., Von Glinow, M.A., and Cheng, J.L.C. (eds.) *Managing Multinational Teams: Global Perspectives*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Kirkman, B.L., Lowe, K.B., and Gibson, C.B. (2006) A Quarter Century of *Culture's Consequences*: A Review of Empirical Research Incorporating Hofstede's Cultural Values Framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37, 285-320.

Kluckhohn, F. and Strodtbeck, F. (1961) *Variations in Value Orientations*. Illinois: Evanston.

Kogut, B. and Singh, H. (1988) The Effect of National Culture on the Choice of Entry Mode. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 19, 3, 411-432.

Kortteinen, M. (1992) *Kunnian kenttä: suomalainen palkkatyö kulttuurisena muotona*. Helsinki: Hanki ja jää.

Kunda, G. (1992) *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kwok, C.K.Y. and Tadesse, S. (2006) National Culture and Financial Systems. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37, 227-247.

Laurent, A. (1983) The Cultural Diversity of Western Conceptions of Management. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 13, 1-2, 75-96.

Leung, K., Bhagat, R.S., Buchan, N.R., Erez, M., and Gibson, C.B. (2005) Culture and International Business: Recent Advances and their Implications for Future Research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 36, 357-378.

Lewis, R.D. and Gates, M. (2003) Finns as Leaders – Corporate Ethics and Values. *Työn Tuuli*, 1, 12-21.

Li, J. and Guisinger, S. (1991) Comparative Business Failures of Foreign-Controlled Firms in the United States. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 22, 2, 209-224.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (2000) Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Lindell, M. and Sigfrids, C. (2008) Culture and Leadership in Finland. In Chhokar, J.S., Brodbeck, F.C., and House, R.J. (eds.) *Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

Luo, Y. and Peng, M.W. (1999) Learning to Compete in a Transition Economy: Experience, Environment, and Performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 30, 2, 269-296.

March, J.G. and Sutton, R.I. (1997) Organizational Performance as a Dependent Variable. *Organization Science*, 8, 6, 698-706.

Martin, J. (2002) *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Martin, J. and Meyerson, D. (1988) Organizational Culture and the Denial, Channelling and Acknowledgment of Ambiguity. In Pondy, L., Boland, R. Jr., and Thomas, H. (eds.) *Managing Ambiguity and Change*. New York: John Wiley.

Martin, J. and Powers, M. (1983) Truth or Corporate Propaganda: The Value of a Good War Story. In Pondy, L., Frost, P., Morgan, G., and Dandridge, T. (eds.) *Organizational Symbolism*. Greenwich: JAI.

Martin, J. and Siehl, C. (1983) Organizational Culture and Counterculture: An Uneasy Symbiosis. *Organizational Dynamics*, 12, 52-64.

McSweeney, B. (2002) Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and Their Consequences: A Triuph of Faith – a Failure of Analysis. *Human Relations*, 55, 1, 89-118.

Mead, M. (1953) *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: Modern Library.

Meyerson, D. and Martin, J. (1987) Cultural Change: An Integration of Three Different Views. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24, 6, 623-647.

Miller, R. and Lessard, D.R. (2000) *The Strategic Management of Large Engineering Projects: Shaping Institutions, Risks and Governance.* Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Morosini, P., Shane, S., and Singh, H. (1998) National Cultural Distance and Cross-Border Acquisition Performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 29, 1, 137-158.

Morris, P.W.G. and Hough G.H. (1987) *The Anatomy of Major Projects – A Study of The Reality of Project Management*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Myers, A., Kakabadse, A., McMahon, T., and Spony, G. (1995) Top Management Styles in Europe: Implications for Business and Cross-National Teams. *European Business Journal*, 7, 1, 17-27.

Mäkilouko, M. (2004) Coping with Multicultural Projects: The Leadership Styles of Finnish Project Managers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22, 387-396.

Nahavandi, A. and Malekzadeh, A.R. (1988) Acculturation in Mergers and Acquisitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 13, 79-90.

Nasif, E.G., Al-Daeaj, H., Ebrahimi, B., and Thibodeaux, M.S. (1991) Methodological Problems in Cross-Cultural Research: An Updated Review. *Management International Review*, 31, 1, 79-91.

Newman, K.L. and Nollen, S.D. (1996) Culture and Congruence: The Fit between Management Practices and National Culture. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 27, 4, 753-779.

Osland, J.C. and Bird, A. (2000) Beyond Sophisticated Stereotyping: Cultural Sensemaking in Context. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14, 1, 65-77.

Patton, M.Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2nd edition*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Perkins, J. (2005) *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*. New York: Plume.

Peters, T. and Waterman, R. (1982) *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies.* New York: Harper & Row.

Peterson, M.F. (2007) The Heritage of Cross Cultural Management Research: Implications for the Hofstede Chair in Cultural Diversity. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 7, 3, 359-377.

Pettigrew, A. (1979) On Studying Organizational Cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 4, 570-582.

Pheng, L.S. and Yuquan, S. (2002) An Exploratory Study of Hofstede's Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Construction Projects. *Management Decision*, 40, 1, 7-16.

Ronen, S. and Shenkar, O. (1985) Clustering Countries on Attitudinal Dimensions: A Review and Synthesis. *Academy of Management Review*, 10, 3, 435-454.

Sackmann, S.A. (1997) Introduction. In Sackmann, S.A. (ed.) *Cultural Complexity in Organizations: Inherent Contrasts and Contradictions.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Sackmann, S.A. and Phillips, M.E, (2004) Contextual Influences on Culture Research – Shifting Assumptions for New Workplace Realities. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 4, 3, 370-390.

Sackmann, S.A., Phillips, M.E., Kleinberg, M.J., and Boyacigiller, N.A. (1997) Single and Multiple Cultures in International Cross-Cultural Management Research: Overview. In Sackmann, S.A. (ed.) *Cultural Complexity in Organizations: Inherent Contrasts and Contradictions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Salk, J.E. and Brannen, M.Y. (2000) National Culture, Networks, and Individual Influence in a Multinational Management Team. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 2, 191-202.

Salk, J.E. and Shenkar, O. (2001) Social Identities in an International Joint Venture: An Exploratory Case Study. *Organization Science*, 12, 2, 161-178.

Schaffer, B.S. and Riordan, C.M. (2003) A Review of Cross-Cultural Methodologies for Organizational Research: A Best-Practices Approach. *Organizational Research Methods*, 6, 2, 169-215.

Schein, E.H. (1985) *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E.H. (1991) The Role of the Founder in the Creation of Organizational Culture. In Frost, P.J., Moore, L.F., Louis, M.R., Lundberg, C.C., and Martin, J. (eds.) *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Schein, E.H. (1999) *Process Consultation Revisited: Building the Helping Relationship*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Schneider, S.C. and Barsoux, J.-L. (1997) *Managing across Cultures*. London: Prentice Hall.

Schwartz, S.H. (1994) Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Cultural Dimensions of Values. In Kim, U., Triandis, H.C., Kagitcibasi, C., Choi, S., and Yoon, G. (eds.) *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method, and Applications*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Shenkar, O. (2001) Cultural Distance Revisited: Towards a More Rigorous Conceptualization and Measurement of Cultural Differences. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32, 3, 519-535.

Shore, B. and Cross, B.J. (2005) Exploring the Role of National Culture in the Management of Large-Scale International Science Projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 55-64.

Silverman, D. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction, 2nd edition*. London: Sage Publications.

Smircich, L. (1983) Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 3, 339-358.

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Suutari, V. and Riusala, K. (2001) Leadership Styles in Central Eastern Europe: Experiences of Finnish Expatriates in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 17, 249-280.

Säntti, R. (2001) *How Cultures Interact in an International Merger*. Academic Dissertation. Tampere: Tampereen yliopistopaito Oy Juvenes Print.

Søderberg, A.-M. (2006) Narrative Interviewing and Narrative Analysis in a Study of a Cross-Border Merger. *Management International Review*, 46, 4, 397-416.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Holden, N. (2002) Rethinking Cross-Cultural Management in a Globalizing Business World. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*. 2, 1, 103-121.

Søderberg, A.-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) (2003) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Tainio, R. and Santalainen, T. (1984) Some Evidence for the Cultural Relativity of Organizational Development Program. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 20, 2, 93-111.

Tayeb, M. (2001) Conducting Research across Cultures: Overcoming Drawbacks and Obstacles. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 1, 1, 91-108.

Thomas, E.M. (1958) *The Harmless People*. New York: Random House.

Tienari, J., Huhtinen, A.-M., Vaara, E., and Syrjänen, M. (2004) Björn Wahlroos, suomalainen johtaminen ja sotilasdiskurssi. *Hallinnon tutkimus*, 2, 41-54.

Trompenaars, F. (1993) *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. London: Economist Books.

Turner, J. R. (1999) *The Handbook of Project-based Management: Leading Strategic Change in Organizations, 3rd edition.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Vaara, E. (2000) Constructions of Cultural Differences in Post-Merger Change Processes: A Sensemaking Perspective on Finnish-Swedish Cases. *M@n@gement*, 3, 3, 81-110.

Vaara, E., Risberg, A., Søderberg, A.-M., and Tienari, J. (2003a) Nation Talk: The Construction of National Stereotypes in a Merging Multinational. In Søderberg, A-M. and Vaara, E. (eds.) *Merging across Borders: People, Cultures and Politics*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Vaara, E., Tienari, J., and Säntti, R. (2003b) The International Match: Metaphors as Vehicles of Social Identity-Building in Cross-Border Mergers. *Human Relations*, 56, 4, 419-451.

Van Maanen, J. (1973) Observations on the Making of Policemen. *Human Organization*, 32, 407-418.

Van Maanen, J. (1974) Working the Street: A Developmental View of Police Behavior. In Jacob, H. (ed.) *The Potential for Reform of Criminal Justice*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Van Maanen, J. (1975) Police Socialization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 20, 207-228.

Van Maanen, J. (1991) The Smile Factory: Work at Disneyland. In Frost, P.J., Moore, L.F., Louis, M.R., Lundberg, C.C., Martin, J. (eds.) *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

van Marrewijk, A. (2007) Managing Project Culture: The Case of Environ Megaproject. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 290-299.

Weick, K. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Wels, H. (1996) Strategy as Paradox and Paradox as Strategy. Images of and Paradoxes in Chinese Culture: Expatriate Managers in Sino-Western Joint Ventures. In Koot, W., Sabelis, I., and Ybema, S. (eds.) *Contradictions in Context*. Amsterdam: VU University Press.

Whitley, R.D. (ed.) (1992) *European Business Systems: Firms and Markets in Their National Contexts*. London: Sage Publications.

Whyte, W.F. (1955) *Street Corner Society, 2nd edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Whyte, W.F. (1991) Street Corner Society: Excerpts from the Appendix to the 1955 Edition. In Frost, P.J., Moore, L.F., Louis, M.R., Lundberg, C.C., and Martin, J. (eds.) *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Williamson, D. (2002) Forward from a Critique of Hofstede's Model of National Culture. *Human Relations*, 55, 11, 1373-1395.

Yeganeh, H. and Su, Z. (2006) Conceptual Foundations of Cultural Management Research. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management.* 6, 3, 361-376.

Yin, R.K. (2003) *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Zwikael, O., Shimizu, K. and Globerson, S. (2005) Cultural Differences in Project Management Capabilities: A Field Study. *International Journal of Project Management*, 23, 454-462.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Junkkari, M. (2000) Elcoteq-filosofi Piippo herkistelee. *Helsingin Sanomat*, 27.8.2000.

Kauppalehti, 6.8.2009, Pelikehittäjiltä valuu rahaa ulkomaille.

HELSINGIN KAUPPAKORKEAKOULUN JA AALTO-YLIOPISTON KAUPPAKORKEAKOULUN
JULKAISUJA
Publications of the Helsinki School of Economics and Aalto University School of Economics

A-SARJA: VÄITÖSKIRJOJA - DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS. ISSN 1237-556X.

A:310.   JARI PAULAMÄKI: Kauppiasyrittäjän toimintavapaus ketjuyrityksessä. Haastattelututkimus
           K-kauppiaan kokemasta toimintavapaudesta agenttiteorian näkökulmasta.
           2008. Korjattu painos. ISBN 978-952-488-246-0, E-version: 978-952-488-247-7.

A:321.   BRETT FIFIELD: A Project Network: An Approach to Creating Emergent Business. 2008.
           ISBN 978-952-488-206-4, E-version: 978-952-488-207-1.

A:322.   ANTTI NURMI: Essays on Management of Complex Information Systems Development
           Projects. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-226-2.

A:323.   SAMI RELANDER: Towards Approximate Reasoning on New Software Product Company
           Success Potential Estimation. A Design Science Based Fuzzy Logic Expert System.
           2008. ISBN 978-952-488-227-9.

A:324.   SEPPO KINKKI: Essays on Minority Protection and Dividend Policy. 2008.
           ISBN 978-952-488-229-3.

A:325.   TEEMU MOILANEN: Network Brand Management: Study of Competencies of Place
           Branding Ski Destinations. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-236-1.

A:326.   JYRKI ALI-YRKKÖ: Essays on the Impacts of Technology Development and R&D
           Subsidies. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-237-8.

A:327.   MARKUS M. MÄKELÄ: Essays on software product development. A Strategic
           management viewpoint. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-238-5.

A:328.   SAMI NAPARI: Essays on the gender wage gap in Finland. 2008.
           ISBN 978-952-488-243-9.

A:329.   PAULA KIVIMAA: The innovation effects of environmental policies. Linking policies,
           companies and innovations in the Nordic pulp and paper industry.
           2008. ISBN 978-952-488-244-6.

A:330.   HELI VIRTA: Essays on Institutions and the Other Deep Determinants of Economic
           Development. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-267-5.

A:331.   JUKKA RUOTINEN: Essays in trade in services difficulties and possibilities.
           2008. ISBN 978-952-488-271-2, E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-272-9.

A:332.   IIKKA KORHONEN: Essays on commitment and government debt structure.
           2008. ISBN 978-952-488-273-6, E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-274-3.

A:333.   MARKO MERISAVO: The interaction between digital marketing communication and
           customer loyalty. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-277-4, E-version 978-952-488-278-1.

A:334.   PETRI ESKELINEN: Reference point based decision support tools for interactive multiobjective optimization. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-282-8.

A:335.   SARI YLI-KAUHALUOMA: Working on technology: a study on collaborative R&D work in industrial chemistry. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-284-2

A:336.   JANI KILPI: Sourcing of availability services - case aircraft component support. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-284-2, 978-952-488-286-6 (e-version).

A:337.   HEIDI SILVENNOINEN: Essays on household time allocation decisions in a collective household model. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-290-3, ISBN 978-952-488-291-0 (e-version).

A:338.   JUKKA PARTANEN: Pk-yrityksen verkostokyvykkyydet ja nopea kasvu - case: Tiede- ja teknologiavetoiset yritykset. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-295-8.

A:339.   PETRUS KAUTTO: Who holds the reins in Integrated Product Policy? An individual company as a target of regulation and as a policy maker. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-300-9, 978-952-488-301-6 (e-version).

A:340.   KATJA AHONIEMI: Modeling and Forecasting Implied Volatility. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-303-0, E-version: 978-952-488-304-7.

A:341.   MATTI SARVIMÄKI: Essays on Migration. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-305-4, 978-952-488-306-1 (e-version).

A:342.   LEENA KERKELÄ: Essays on Globalization – Policies in Trade, Development, Resources and Climate Change. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-307-8, E-version: 978-952-488-308-5.

A:343.   ANNELI NORDBERG: Pienyrityksen dynaaminen kyvykkyys - Empiirinen tutkimus graafisen alan pienpainoyrityksistä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-318-4.

A:344.   KATRI KARJALAINEN: Challenges of Purchasing Centralization – Empirical Evidence from Public Procurement. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-322-1, E-version: 978-952-488-323-8.

A:345.   JOUNI H. LEINONEN: Organizational Learning in High-Velocity Markets. Case Study in The Mobile Communications Industry. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-325-2.

A:346.   JOHANNA VESTERINEN: Equity Markets and Firm Innovation in Interaction. - A Study of a Telecommunications Firm in Radical Industry Transformation. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-327-6, E-version: 978-952-488-374-0.

A:347.   JARI HUIKKU: Post-Completion Auditing of Capital Investments and Organizational Learning. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-334-4, E-version: 978-952-488-335-1.

A:348.   TANJA KIRJAVAINEN: Essays on the Efficiency of Schools and Student Achievement. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-336-8, E-version: 978-952-488-337-5.

A:349.   ANTTI PIRJETÄ: Evaluation of Executive Stock Options in Continuous and Discrete Time. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-338-2, E-version: 978-952-488-339-9.

A:350.   OLLI KAUPPI: A Model of Imperfect Dynamic Competition in the Nordic Power Market. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-340-5, E-version: 978-952-488-341-2.

A:351.   TUIJA NIKKO: Dialogic Construction of Understanding in Cross-border Corporate Meetings. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-342-9, E-version: 978-952-488-343-6.

A:352.   MIKKO KORIA: Investigating Innovation in Projects: Issues for International Development Cooperation. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-344-3, E-version: 978-952-488-345-0.

A:353.   MINNA MUSTONEN: Strategiaviestinnän vastaanottokäytännöt - Henkilöstö strategia-viestinnän yleisönä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-348-1, E-versio: 978-952-488-349-8.

A:354.   MIRELLA LÄHTEENMÄKI: Henkilötietojen hyödyntäminen markkinoinnissa kuluttajien tulkitsemana. Diskurssianalyyttinen tutkimus kuluttajan tietosuojasta. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-351-1, E-versio: 978-952-488-352-8.

A:355.   ARNO KOURULA: Company Engagement with Nongovernmental Organizations from a Corporate Responsibility Perspective. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-353-5, E-version: 978-952-488-354-2.

A:356.   MIKA WESTERLUND: Managing Networked Business Models: Essays in the Software Industry. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-363-4.

A:357.   RISTO RAJALA: Determinants of Business Model Performance in Software Firms. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-369-6, E-version: 978-952-488-370-2.

A:358.   PASI P. PORKKA: Capacitated Timing of Mobile and Flexible Service Resources. 2010 ISBN 978-952-60-1000-7, E-version: 978-952-60-1001-4.

A:359.   MARJA-LIISA TRUX: No Zoo Ethnic Civility and its Cultural Regulation Among the Staff of a Finnish High-Tech Company. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1007-6, E-version: 978-952-60-1008-3

A:360.   TERHI CHAKHOVICH: Essays on Managerial Myopia and Subject Positions in Companies with Different Governance Structures. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1005-2, E-version: 978-952-60-1006-9.

A:361.   IRINA JORMANAINEN: Outcomes of Learning through International Joint Ventures for Local Parent Firms: Evidence from Russia. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1009-0, E-version: 978-952-60-1010-6.

A:362.   JOHANNA POHJOLA: Carbon Sinks in Mitigating Climate Change: Evaluation with Models of Varying Scope. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1011-3.

A:363.   NIINA ERKAMA: Critical Approaches to Global Organizational Restructuring Discursive Struggles over Legitimation and Resistance. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1012-0, E-versio: 978-952-60-1013-7.

A:364.   JOONAS ROKKA: Exploring the Cultural Logic of Translocal Marketplace Cultures: Essays on New Methods and Empirical Insights. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1018-2, E-version: 978-952-60-1019-9.

A:365.   ELINA HILTUNEN: Weak Signals in Organizational Futures Learning. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1022-9. E-version: 978-952-60-1039-7.

A:366.   PAAVO JÄRVENSIVU: Constructing a Service-Dominant Strategy: A Practice-Theoretical Study of a Start-Up Company. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1023-6, E-version: 978-952-60-1024-3.

A:367.   TERHI JOHANNA VAPOLA: Battleship Strategy: Exploring the Management of Global Innovation Constellations in High Technology Industries. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1030-4.

A:368.   LOTTA VÄÄNÄNEN: Human Capital and Incentives in the Creation of Inventions
- A Study of Finnish Inventors. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1031-1,
E-version: 978-952-60-1032-8.

A:369.   MIKA HYÖTYLÄINEN: Towards "Service Factory"
- Managing the Complexity of ICT Services. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1033-5,
E-version: 978-952-60-1035-9.

A:370.   SALLA HUTTUNEN: Problematic Talk. The Role of Multiple Understandings in
Project Meetings. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1034-2. E-version: 978-952-60-1038-0.

A:371.   ELINA HENTTONEN: An Ethnographic Study on Women's Small ICT Businesses in
Finland. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1042-7.

A:372.   ANNE SUNIKKA: Essays on Personalization in Multichannel Financial Services. 2010.
ISBN 978-952-60-1049-6. E-version: 978-952-60-1050-2.

A:373.   SAMPO TUKIAINEN: Finnishness in Cross Cultural Interaction in International
Engineering Projects. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1051-9. E-version: 978-952-60-1052-6.

B-SARJA: TUTKIMUKSIA - RESEARCH REPORTS. ISSN 0356-889X.

B:84.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN – RIITTA KOSONEN – JOHANNA LOGRÉN – KRISTO OVASKA:
Suomalaisyritysten strategiat Venäjän muuttuvassa liiketoimintaympäristössä.
2008. ISBN 978-953-488-212-5, E-versio: 978-952-488-241-5.

B:85.   MARJA MATTILA – EEVA KEROLA – RIITTA KOSONEN: Unkari suomalaisyritysten
toimintaympäristönä. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-213-2, E-versio: 978-952-488-222-4.

B:86.   KRISTIINA KORHONEN – ANU PENTTILÄ – MAYUMI SHIMIZU – EEVA KEROLA –
RIITTA KOSONEN: Intia suomalaisyritysten toimintaympäristönä.2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-214-9, E-versio: 978-952-488-283-5

B:87.   SINIKKA VANHALA – SINIKKA PESONEN: Työstä nauttien. SEFE:en kuuluvien nais- ja
miesjohtajien näkemyksiä työstään ja urastaan. 2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-224-8, E-versio: 978-952-488-225-5.

B:88.   POLINA HEININEN – OLGA MASHKINA – PÄIVI KARHUNEN – RIITTA KOSONEN:
Leningradin lääni yritysten toimintaympäristönä: pk-sektorin näkökulma. 2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-231-6, E-versio: 978-952-488-235-4.

B:89.   Ольга Машкина – Полина Хейнинен: Влияние государственного сектора на
развитие малого и среднего предпринимательства в Ленинградской области:
взгляд предприятий.2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-233-0, E-version: 978-952-488-240-8.

B:90.   MAI ANTTILA – ARTO RAJALA (Editors): Fishing with business nets – keeping thoughts
on the horizon Professor Kristian Möller. 2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-249-1, E-version: 978-952-488-250-7.

B:91.   RENÉ DE KOSTER – WERNER DELFMANN (Editors): Recent developments in supply
chain management. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-251-4, E-version: 978-952-488-252-1.

B:92. KATARIINA RASILAINEN: Valta orkesterissa. Narratiivinen tutkimus soittajien kokemuksista ja näkemyksistä. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-254-5, E-versio: 978-952-488-256-9.

B:93. SUSANNA KANTELINEN: Opiskelen, siis koen. Kohti kokevan subjektin tunnistavaa korkeakoulututkimusta. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-257-6, E-versio: 978-952-488-258.

B:94. KATRI KARJALAINEN – TUOMO KIVIOJA – SANNA PELLAVA: Yhteishankintojen kustannusvaikutus. Valtion hankintatoimen kustannussäästöjen selvittäminen. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-263-7, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-264-4.

B:95. ESKO PENTTINEN: Electronic Invoicing Initiatives in Finland and in the European Union – Taking the Steps towards the Real-Time Economy. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-268-2, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-270-5.

B:96. LIISA UUSITALO (Editor): Museum and visual art markets. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-287-3, E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-288-0.

B:97. EEVA-LIISA LEHTONEN: Pohjoismaiden ensimmäinen kauppatieteiden tohtori Vilho Paavo Nurmilahti 1899-1943. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-292-7, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-293-4.

B:98. ERJA KETTUNEN – JYRI LINTUNEN – WEI LU – RIITTA KOSONEN: Suomalaisyritysten strategiat Kiinan muuttuvassa toimintaympäristössä. 2008 ISBN 978-952-488-234-7, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-297-2.

B:99. SUSANNA VIRKKULA – EEVA-KATRI AHOLA – JOHANNA MOISANDER – JAAKKO ASPARA – HENRIKKI TIKKANEN: Messut kuluttajia osallistavan markkinakulttuurin fasilitaattorina: messukokemuksen rakentuminen Venemessuilla. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-298-9, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-299-6.

B:100. PEER HULL KRISTENSEN – KARI LILJA (Eds): New Modes of Globalization: Experimentalist Forms of Economics Organization and Enabling Welfare Institutions – Lessons from The Nordic Countries and Slovenia. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-309-2, E-version: 978-952-488-310-8.

B:101. VIRPI SERITA – ERIK PÖNTISKOSKI (eds.) SEPPO MALLENIUS – VESA LEIKOS – KATARIINA VILLBERG – TUUA RINNE – NINA YPPÄRILÄ – SUSANNA HURME: Marketing Finnish Design in Japan. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-320-7. E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-321-4.

B:102. POLINA HEININEN – OLLI-MATTI MIKKOLA – PÄIVI KARHUNEN – RIITTA KOSONEN: Yritysrahoitusmarkkinoiden kehitys Venäjällä. Pk-yritysten tilanne Pietarissa. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-329-0. E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-331-3.

B:103. ARTO LAHTI: Liiketoimintaosaamisen ja yrittäjyyden pioneeri Suomessa. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-330-6.

B:104. KEIJO RÄSÄNEN: Tutkija kirjoittaa - esseitä kirjoittamisesta ja kirjoittajista akateemisessa työssä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-332-0. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-333-7.

B:105. TIMO EKLUND – PETRI JÄRVIKUONA – TUOMAS MÄKELÄ – PÄIVI KARHUNEN: Kazakstan suomalaisyritysten toimintaympäristönä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-355-9.

B:106. ARTO LINDBLOM – RAMI OLKKONEN – VILJA MÄKELÄ (TOIM.): Liiketoimintamallit, innovaatiotoiminta ja yritysten yhteistyön luonne kaupan arvoketjussa.2009. ISBN 978-952-488-356-6. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-357-3.

B:107. MIKA GABRIELSSON – ANNA SALONEN – PAULA KILPINEN – MARKUS PAUKKU – TERHI VAPOLA – JODY WREN – LAURA ILONEN – KATRIINA JUNTUNEN: Responding to Globalization: Strategies and Management for Competitiveness. Final Report of a TEKES-project 1.8.2006-30.4.2009. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-362-7.

B:108. MATTI ROSSI – JONATHAN SPRINKLE – JEFF GRAY – JUHA-PEKKA TOLVANEN (EDS.) Proceedings of the 9th OOPSLA Workshop on Domain-Specific Modeling (DSM'09). 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-371-9. E--version: ISBN 978-952-488-372-6.

B:109. LEENA LOUHIALA-SALMINEN – ANNE KANKAANRANTA (Editors): The Ascent of International Business Communication. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-373-3. E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-381-8.

B:110. MIKKO VIEMERÖ: Tietosuoja sähköisessä kaupassa ja sähköisessä viestinnässä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-376-4.

B:111. RAIJA JÄRVINEN – JUHA UUSPELTO: Uhkaavatko asiakkaat? Kaupan henkilökunnan näkemyksiä turvallisuusuhkista. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-379-5. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-380-1.

B:113. LIISA UUSITALO – MIRELLA LÄHTEENMÄKI (TOIM.): Kuluttaja ja media tietotaloudessa. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-383-2. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-384-9

B:114. REIJO LUOSTARINEN: kansainvälinen liiketoiminta ja sen rooli Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulun kansainvälistymisessä. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1002-1. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-60-1004-5.

B:115. TIINA SCHMIDT – SINIKKA VANHALA: Henkilöstöjohtaminen Suomessa 1992-2009 Tutkimus suurten yritysten ja julkisten organisaatioiden henkilöstökäytäntöjen omaksumisesta ja konvergoitumisesta. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1017-5. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-60-1021-2.

B:116. KEIJO RÄSÄNEN: Joko tunnet tämän tutkijan? Esseitä akateemisesta työstä. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1026-7. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-60-1027-4.

B:117. RAIJA JÄRVINEN – MARKO JUVONEN: Turvallisuus kaupan vetovoimatekijäksi? Kokonaisvaltaisen riskienhallinnan toteutuminen kauppakeskusympäristössä toimivissa liikkeissä. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1036-6. E-versio: ISBN 978-952-60-1037-3.

B:118. ESKO PENTTINEN: Electronic Invoicing as a Platform for Exchanging Accounting Information – The Electronic Accounting Reference Concept. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1044-1, E-version: 978-952-60-1045-8.

B:119. RAIJA JÄRVINEN – JARMO HEINONEN (toim.): Kaupallisten keskusten turvallisuus ja kilpailukyky. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1046-5, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-60-1047-2.

B:120. Matti Rossi – Juha-Pekka Tolvanen – Jonathan Sprinkle – Steven Kelly (eds.): Proceedings of the 10th Workshop on Domain-Specific Modeling (DSM'10). 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1043-4.

N-SARJA: HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS. MIKKELI BUSINESS CAMPUS PUBLICATIONS.
ISSN 1458-5383

N:74.   MIKKO SAARIKIVI: Pk-yritysten kansainvälistymisen sopimukset.
        2008. ISBN 978-952-488-210-1.

N:75.   LAURA TUUTTI: Uutta naisjohtajuutta Delfoi Akatemiasta – hankkeen vaikuttavuus.
        2008. ISBN 978-952-488-211-8.

N:76.   LAURA KEHUSMAA – JUSSI KÄMÄ – ANNE GUSTAFSSON-PESONEN (ohjaaja):
        StuNet -Business Possibilities and Education - hankkeen arviointi.
        2008. ISBN 978-952-488-215-6.

N:77.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN – ERJA KETTUNEN – VISA MIETTINEN – TIINAMARI SIVONEN:
        Determinants of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship in Southeast Finland and
        Northwest Russia. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-223-1.

N:78.   ALEKSANDER PANFILO – PÄIVI KARHUNEN – VISA MIETTINEN: Suomalais-venäläisen
        innovaatioyhteistyön haasteet toimijanäkökulmasta. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-232-3.

N:79.   VESA KOKKONEN: Kasva Yrittäjäksi – koulutusohjelman vaikuttavuus.
        2008. ISBN 978-952-488-248-4.

N:80.   VESA KOKKONEN: Johtamisen taidot - hankkeessa järjestettyjen koulutusohjelmien
        vaikuttavuus. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-259-0.

N:81.   MIKKO SAARIKIVI: Raportti suomalaisten ja brittiläisten pk-yritysten yhteistyön
        kehittämisestä uusiutuvan energian sektorilla. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-260-6.

N:82.   MIKKO SAARIKIVI – JARI HANDELBERG – TIMO HOLMBERG – ARI MATILAINEN:
        Selvitys lujitemuovikomposiittituotteiden mahdollisuuksista rakennusteollisuudessa.
        2008. ISBN 978-952-488-262-0.

N:83.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN – SVETLANA LEDYAEVA – ANNE GUSTAFSSON-PESONEN –
        ELENA MOCHNIKOVA – DMITRY VASILENKO: Russian students' perceptions of
        entrepreneurship. Results of a survey in three St. Petersburg universities.
        Entrepreneurship development –project 2. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-280-4.

N:84.   PIIA NIKULA – ANU PENTTILÄ – OTTO KUPI – JUHANA URMAS –
        KIRSI KOMMONEN: Sirpaleisuudesta kilpailukyvyn keskiöön Asiantuntijoiden
        näkemyksiä luovien alojen kansainvälistymisestä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-346-7.

N:85   JUHANA URMAS – OTTO KUPI – PIIA NIKULA – ANU PENTTILÄ –
        KIRSI KOMMONEN: ” Kannattaa ottaa pienikin siivu” – Luovien alojen yritysten
        näkemyksiä kansainvälistymisestä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-347-4.

W-SARJA: TYÖPAPEREITA - WORKING PAPERS . ISSN 1235-5674.
ELECTRONIC WORKING PAPERS, ISSN 1795-1828.

W:440. KALYANMOY DEB – KAISA MIETTINEN – SHAMIK CHAUDHURI: Estimating Nadir
        Objective Vector: Hybrid of Evolutionary and Local Search. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-209-5.

W:441. ARTO LAHTI: Globalisaatio haastaa pohjoismaisen palkkatalousmallin. Onko löydettä-vissä uusia aktiivisia toimintamalleja, joissa Suomi olisi edelleen globalisaation voittaja? 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-216-3.

W:442. ARTO LAHTI: Semanttinen Web – tulevaisuuden internet. Yrittäjien uudet liiketoiminta-mahdollisuudet. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-217-0.

W:443. ARTO LAHTI: Ohjelmistoteollisuuden globaali kasvustrategia ja immateriaalioikeudet. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-218-7.

W:444. ARTO LAHTI: Yrittäjän oikeusvarmuus globaalisaation ja byrokratisoitumisen pyörteissä. Onko löydettävissä uusia ja aktiivisia toimintamalleja yrittäjien syrjäytymisen estämiseksi? 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-219-4.

W:445. PETRI ESKELINEN: Objective trade-off rate information in interactive multiobjective optimization methods – A survey of theory and applications. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-220-0.

W:446. DEREK C. JONES – PANU KALMI: Trust, inequality and the size of co-operative sector – Cross-country evidence. 2008. ISBN 978-951-488-221-7.

W:447. KRISTIINA KORHONEN – RIITTA KOSONEN – TIINAMARI SIVONEN – PASI SAUKKONEN: Pohjoiskarjalaisten pienten ja keskisuurten yritysten Venäjä-yhteistyöpotentiaali ja tukitarpeet. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-228-6.

W:448. TIMO JÄRVENSIVU – KRISTIAN MÖLLER: Metatheory of Network Management: A Contingency Perspective. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-231-6.

W:449. PEKKA KORHONEN: Setting "condition of order preservation" requirements for the priority vector estimate in AHP is not justified. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-242-2.

W:450. LASSE NIEMI – HANNU OJALA – TOMI SEPPÄLÄ: Misvaluation of takeover targets and auditor quality. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-255-2.

W:451. JAN-ERIK ANTIPIN – JANI LUOTO: Forecasting performance of the small-scale hybrid New Keynesian model. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-261-3.

W:452. MARKO MERISAVO: The Interaction between Digital Marketing Communication and Customer Loyalty. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-266-8.

W:453. PETRI ESKELINEN – KAISA MIETTINEN: Trade-off Analysis Tool with Applicability Study for Interactive Nonlinear Multiobjective Optimization. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-269-9.

W:454. SEPPO IKÄHEIMO – VESA PUTTONEN – TUOMAS RATILAINEN: Antitakeover provisions and performance – Evidence from the Nordic countries. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-275-0.

W:455. JAN-ERIK ANTIPIN: Dynamics of inflation responses to monetary policy in the EMU area. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-276-7.

W:456. KIRSI KOMMONEN: Narratives on Chinese colour culture in business contexts. The Yin Yang Wu Xing of Chinese values. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-279-8.

W:457. MARKKU ANTTONEN – MIKA KUISMA – MINNA HALME – PETRUS KAUTTO: Materiaalitehokkuuden palveluista ympäristömyötäistä liiketoimintaa (MASCO2). 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-279-8.

W:458. PANU KALMI – DEREK C. JONES – ANTTI KAUHANEN: Econometric case studies: overview and evidence from recent finnish studies. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-289-7.

W:459. PETRI JYLHÄ – MATTI SUOMINEN – JUSSI-PEKKA LYYTINEN: Arbitrage Capital and Currency Carry Trade Returns. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-294-1.

W:460. OLLI-MATTI MIKKOLA – KATIA BLOIGU – PÄIVI KARHUNEN: Venäjä-osaamisen luonne ja merkitys kansainvälisissä suomalaisyrityksissä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-302-3.

W:461. ANTTI KAUHANEN – SATU ROPONEN: Productivity Dispersion: A Case in the Finnish Retail Trade. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-311-5.

W:462. JARI HUIKKU: Design of a Post-Completion Auditing System for Organizational Learning. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-312-2.

W:463. PYRY-ANTTI SIITARI: Identifying Efficient Units in Large-Scale Dea Models Using Efficient Frontier Approximation. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-313-9.

W:464. MARKKU KALLIO – MERJA HALME: Conditions for Loss Averse and Gain Seeking Consumer Price Behavior. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-314-6.

W:465. MERJA HALME – OUTI SOMERVUORI: Study of Internet Material Use in Education in Finland. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-315-3.

W:466. RAIMO LOVIO: Näkökulmia innovaatiotoiminnan ja –politiikan muutoksiin 2000-luvulla. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-316-0.

W:467. MERJA HALME – OUTI SOMERVUORI: Revisiting Demand Reactions to Price Changes. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-317-7.

W:468. SAMULI SKURNIK: SSJS Strategiabarometri – kehitystyö ja nykyvaihe. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-319-1.

W:469. TOM RAILIO: A Brief Description of The Transdisciplinary Jurionomics and The Scandinavian Institutional Sources of Law Framework. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-324-5.

W:470. KALYANMOY DEB – KAISA MIETTINEN – SHAMIK CHAUDHURI: An Estimation of Nadir Objective Vector Using a Hybrid Evolutionary-Cum-Local-Search Procedure. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-326-9.

W:471. JENNI AHONEN – MARI ANTTONEN – ANTTI HEIKKINEN – JANI HÄTÄLÄ – JASMI LEHTOLA – LAURI NURMILAUKAS – TEEMU PELTOKALLIO – ANNINA PIEKKARI – MARJO REEN – SEBASTIAN SMART: Doing Business in Hungary. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-350-4.

W:472. MIKA WESTERLUND: The role of Network Governance in Business Model Performance. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-361-0.

W:473. DMITRY FILATOV – SINIKKA PARVIAINEN – PÄIVI KARHUNEN: The St. Petersburg Insurance Market: Current Challenges and Future Opportunities. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-365-8.

W:474. MARKKU KALLIO – MERJA HALME: Redefining Loss Averse and Gain Seeking Consumer Price Behavior Based on Demand Response. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-366-5.

W:475. JOHANNA BRAGGE – TUURE TUUNANEN – PENTTI MARTTIIN: Inviting Lead Users from Virtual Communities to Co-create Innovative IS Services in a Structured Groupware Environment. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-367-2.

W:476. RISTO RAJALA: Antecedents to and Performance Effects of Software Firms' Business Models. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-368-9.

W:477. HANNU SAARINEN: Käyttäjäinnovaatioiden mahdollisuudet ja ongelmat – tapaustutkimus peliteollisuuden käytännöistä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-382-5.

W:478. KATJA RUUTU: New Cultural Art Centres in Moscow and St. Petersburg. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1014-4.

W:479. ANNE SUNIKKA – LIISA PEURA-KAPANEN – ANU RAIJAS: Many Manifestations of Perceived Trust in the Wealth Management Context. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1015-1.

W:480. HILKKA MERISALO-RANTANEN: Integrating User Feedback Management, Information System and New Service Development: Case E-Banking Service. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1025-0.

W:481. PEKKA MALO – TEEMU PENNANEN: Reduced Form Modeling of Limit Order Markets. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1028-1.

W:482. PEKKA MALO – PYRY SIITARI: A Context-Aware Approach to User Profiling with Interactive Preference Learning. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1029-8.

W:483. Petri Järvikuona – Aleksander Panfilo – Päivi Karhunen – Riitta Kosonen: Yritysten palveluiden ulkoistamisen potentiaali Pietarissa suomalaistoimijoiden näkökulmasta. 2010. ISBN 978-952-60-1040-3. E-versio: 978-952-60-1041-0.