

Sociocultural Processes in Industrial Development Projects

The fieldwork approach of French contemporary anthropology is particularly adequate for technical assistance because of the high dynamics of the field, often an observation is a singular event because the dynamics changes with the participants' use the observation for their purposes. Studying the interaction between foreign and local experts as an overlapping of two micro-social spaces of communication is possible when the fieldwork methodology brings out and supports the idiosyncrasy of such an interaction.

Ethnographic studies of technology co-operation in World Bank-funded programmes have revealed three sociocultural processes (content, exchange and interface) which determine the outcome. These processes result in management tool categories for all operational aspects of technology co-operation. These processes reflect first of all the relations between technology experts, however, they have also a strong influence on tacit, explicit, disembodied and embodied knowledge exchanges. In general, these four knowledge components can not be addressed with similar effectiveness. A sample of technology parameters, employment terms and team conditions demonstrates management tools. The knowledge components are indirectly managed via the sociocultural processes shaping expert relations. Experts' control over their relations is improved and the outcome reflects their different skills.

To consolidate technology co-operation as a field for ethnography, different sectors of economies and types of companies have to be studied. The key question is whether the results obtained allow to overcome the commercial interests of such a co-operation, given the strategic importance of international technology co-operation.

Parameter	Indicative alternatives:	Sociocultural Process and Tool Extent
task structuration	horizontal - vertical	<content by exposing biases: extent rel. to HRM, sector or educational institutions <interface by changing competition: extent relative to larger social range but unit autonomy is possible with project history
local, foreign output	parallel - intermittent	<content: extent rel. to sectors because biases and ends have less scope <exchange by local / foreign attributes: extent rel. to historical unit (Friedman), economic and trade patterns
technology output	function - object	<content by differences in sociocultural ends: extent rel. to educational institutions, STS structures are most often institutionally defined
budgeting, inventories	aggregated - specific	<exchange weakly adding identity risks: extent relative to social identities <interface affected by categories but ambiguities are reduced: extent individual
performance indicator	discretionary - public	<content by indirectly strengthening attribution: extent HRM modes <interface ambiguity-fix: extent individuals
role conflict	passively - acknowledged tolerated	<exchange in endo-cases: extent social history in exo-cases weakly: ext. rel. historical unit <interface endo-cases weakly: social history exo-cases: forces unit out of social history
official reporting, documentation	integrated - individual	<content by strengthening attribution <exchange endo-cases: individual leaves group <interface only weakly: reduces rhetoric scale
meetings and agendas	separate, - intermittent fixed	<exchange by change in subject/object rel. in team: procedures adapt to social identity <interface by allowing ambiguity only when roles, rhetoric interact: ext. project unit
accessory data, calculations	extensive - little	<exchange exo-cases: shift alterity to other objects in social history, endo-cases: little <content by revealing ends: ext. rel. sector
non-essential aspects: hours, transport, etc	group - individual	<exchange exo-cases: social identity; endo-cases: individuals to pledge social identity <interface reduce/reinforce group identity: extent rel. to HRM modes and sector
language	dictionary - vernacular, no metaphors	< interface efforts to translate far more relevant than content, spec. k. corpora < content by labelling tacitness