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The interviews were transcribed and analyzed with ARCHITEXT, a text management program (Steffin and Jennings 1988). Any program that can count and alphabetize could be used.

Creating General Word Lists

Each word in each interview was identified alphabetically and by frequency of occurrence. Table 1 shows the first 10 words and the last 5 words from the frequency and alphabetic lists generated from the intercultural file. There is an option to delete "common" words such as "I," "a," and "the." We chose not to do this because we did not want to assume that "common" words in the Western context would be common in a Sino-American joint venture expatriate context. The frequency lists show which words informants mentioned most or least often. The alphabetic lists help us identify whether informants mentioned a specific word, and if so, how often.

There were 7479 unique words in the corpus of 76 intercultural conflict stories and 2747 unique words in the 76 intracultural conflict stories. We can compare the lists of words from the two files in search of clues about differences in the content of inter- and intracultural conflict because: a) we asked informants the same questions; b) we collected an intra- and an intercultural conflict story from each informant, and c) we have the same number of descriptions (76) in each file.

Creating Informant-Generated Categories

The next step was to identify those words most associated with "conflict." Instead of doing this ourselves, we identified three judges, all of whom had expatriate experience and who were blind to the conditions under study. The judges were told to broadly define "conflict" and were given neither a definition of conflict nor told what a conflict situation entails.

When they completed this task, the judges examined the alphabetic word lists from the intra- and intercultural scenarios. (All terms mentioned more than once in the interviews were on the lists.) The judges went through the lists and independently selected all terms in the lists that they felt were related to conflict. Then they went back over the lists

Developing Categories from Interview Data: Text Analysis and Multidimensional Scaling. Part 1

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Introduction

We report here on methodological problems involved in studying conflict in Sino-American joint ventures. Perhaps the first problem is that most organization theory has been developed in the West. We were not convinced that past conflict and negotiation theories would hold up even in the West, not to mention in the People's Republic of China. Another problem is that most studies of conflict in international business research build on data from established surveys. They are typically developed to gauge the attitudes and practices of Americans in U.S. organizations. (And even then, there is controversy about the applicability of these surveys in U.S. organizations.)

We decided to investigate conflicts in U.S.-foreign joint ventures from the point of view of the people who were experiencing those conflicts. We asked our informants (U.S. expatriates in the PRC) to describe situations in which they had experienced controversy in the workplace. In a two-part series, we demonstrate procedures for using text analysis, factor analysis, and multidimensional scaling to identify emic categories associated with conflict.

The Interviews

We interviewed 76 American managers who had recently worked in or were currently working in Sino-American joint

ventures and asked them to describe a conflict in which they were involved. Each manager described a situation with a same-culture manager (intracultural process) and a different-culture manager (intercultural process) in person in the PRC ($n=45$) or over the phone ($n=31$). To avoid potential order effects, the order in which the intra- and intercultural descriptions were collected was counterbalanced.

To ensure thorough descriptions, each respondent answered five questions: (1) "What is the nature of your relationship with this person (e.g., peer, superior, or subordinate; same or different department)?" (2) "Who else was involved?" (3) "What was the conflict about?" (4) "What caused the conflict?" (5) "Was the conflict resolved? If so, how? If not, what is its current status?"

We could not use tape recorders—collecting this sort of data is a sensitive issue in Communist China—but took notes as close to verbatim as possible. Twenty-eight of the 76 interviews were conducted with both authors present so we could compare notes and check the reliability of our note taking. We found no major discrepancies in what we recorded, and the conflict scenarios extracted from our notes were virtually identical.

