

## **A Multinational Study of Factors Influencing Cross functional Conflict: the Case of the Automotive Industry**

Hamieda Parker and Tino Meuller  
University of Cape Town

Anthony D. Ross  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

### **Abstract**

As a result of the need for organizational agility and teamwork that is brought on by continuous change, cross-functional integration emerges as a significant and enduring trend in 21<sup>st</sup> Century organizations. Change within an organization generally involves multiple functions with the potential to cause cross-functional conflict. Conflict in return can result in friction losses that directly affect the bottom line as time and money is wasted. Drawing on organisational theory, five factors were identified which hold the potential to influence cross-functional conflict. This study examines cross-functional conflict in situations when teamwork is required to implement process improvements. A sample from the automotive industry in three countries (Germany, Mexico, and South Africa) was used to test the hypotheses developed in this study.

**Keywords:** conflict, reward structure, formalisation, leadership