Cultural Intelligence in Global Teams

A FUSION MODEL OF COLLABORATION

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This article introduces a new, culturally intelligent model of collaboration for global teams that is intended to enhance the likelihood of such teams making creatively realistic decisions. The conceptualization for this new fusion model of global team collaboration draws on the culinary tradition of fusion cooking, current political theorizing about pluralistic societies, as well as theories of information processing and political decision making. We describe how the fusion principle of coexistence facilitates information extraction and decision making, and we recommend formal interventions to counterbalance the unequal power relations among global team members. We contrast the fusion model to models of collaboration based on principles of the dominant coalition and of integration and/or identity, pointing out why fusion is a more culturally intelligent model for team collaboration, producing superior solutions to global problems.

Keywords: global teams; culture; creativity; group decision making; fusion

> Fusion cooking is about a sense of culinary adventure. It's about breaking down cultural barriers, trying new things, tasting the mouthwatering results of the best that the world of food has to offer. Tasting the difference.
>
> www.fusioncooking.com

Organizations are increasingly using global teams to manage the complexity of global markets and establish coordination across the whole global organization (Galbraith, 2000). These teams consist of members who have very different cultural and functional backgrounds and who differ in their assumptions about how to approach relationships and how to make decisions (Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000). They usually work on a complex task that will have an impact in more than one country and are expected to achieve

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innovative outcomes that will serve a widespread set of customers or solve problems in many areas simultaneously (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999; Snow, Snell, Canney Davison, & Hambrick, 1996). Such advantages are expected because of the variety of perspectives inherent in the heterogeneous composition of the team (e.g., Elron, 1997; Watson & Kumar, 1992). At the same time, however, such global teams may be particularly vulnerable to process losses because team members may be reluctant to contribute their unique knowledge; or, even when they share critical information, it may not be taken into account. Even teams that access and use critical information may suffer process losses when political issues emerge and the team's decision is challenged, delaying or even sabotaging the implementation of the global policy. Such process losses because of information-sharing deficits and political conflicts keep global teams from achieving their potential.

Our purpose was to develop a new model of collaboration for global teams to use during their face-to-face meetings. Our fusion model provides guidelines that are intended to reduce process losses and produce creatively realistic decisions. This outcome of creative realism is especially relevant as we focus on global teams whose task is to create global strategies or policies that will be implemented across the whole global organization. Creative and realistic outcomes serve purposes of novel solutions and implementation. In addition, we concentrate on the team's process during their face-to-face meetings when norms for operation are established and complex decisions are made.[1] Our reasoning is that the quality of a global team's decisions is closely related to the degree to which team members' unique perspectives are utilized with respect to information extraction and decision making. Teams that excel in these two tasks should be able to reach decisions that incorporate the best knowledge available across the global organization and decisions that are politically acceptable and, therefore, can be implemented across the whole global organization.

As we address the influence of different cultural precepts toward teamwork and unequal power relations inherent in global teams, we argue that the dynamics governing global teams cannot be managed successfully by simply extending the insights from group decision making based on research that is primarily North American. Rather, it is our aim to introduce a fusion model of team collaboration that effectively addresses the cultural and political differences among the team members and produces creatively realistic team decisions.

We propose that the fusion model will be more culturally intelligent than the dominant coalition or the integration and/or identity models of team col-

laboration previously discussed in the literature (Canney Davison, 1996; Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). Our perspective on cultural intelligence in the context of global teams is decidedly structural. Although cultural intelligence was initially defined as a person's capability to develop entirely novel behavior if required (Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Peterson, 2004), our approach relies neither on having one or more culturally intelligent team members nor on training all team members to be culturally sensitive. Instead, we propose a structural intervention, fusion, that has cultural intelligence, or the ability to transform the processes of the group, built into its principles. It is certainly possible that global team members will become more culturally intelligent as a result of experience in global teams using the fusion model of collaboration. However, our purpose in introducing the fusion model is to enhance the likelihood of creatively realistic solutions to global problems, not to affect individual differences.

We begin by introducing the concept of fusion as it is used in cooking, which provides our primary metaphor, and then discuss how the principle of fusion is treated in current political theory. This theorizing provides a basis for our fusion model of global team collaboration. As we develop our model, we define our criterion, creative realism, and the two teamwork tasks of information extraction and decision making. We also describe two contextual factors: conflicting cultural precepts and unequal power that are likely to cause process losses because of overemphasis on common knowledge and political conflicts. We briefly introduce two other models of collaboration, familiar from the prior primarily North American research on teams. We call these the *dominant coalition* and *integration and/or identity models* and compare and contrast them with the fusion model. Although we are optimistic about fusion collaboration, we also recognize that some fused combinations simply do not work—fusion cooking is sometimes called confusion cooking—and we conclude with a discussion of principles to avoid confusion.

Our fusion model of global team collaboration contributes to the development of the theory and practice of managing teams that are culturally diverse. By fusing concepts from the theory as it is used in cooking and other arts and social and political theory, with concepts from information-processing and political decision-making theories, we are proposing a new model of team collaboration that is distinct from the available dominant coalition and integrative-identity models. Our elaboration of the fusion model provides guidance for managers who must lead teams who are culturally diverse toward creative and realistic decisions.

FUSION: A METAPHOR FOR COEXISTENCE OF DIFFERENCES

The fusion model of team collaboration produces creative and realistic solutions to global challenges because it recognizes and respects team members' differences and combines them in ways that preserve the unique qualities of those differences. This central principle of the fusion model of team collaboration—the coexistence of differences—comes from the conceptualization of fusion as it is used in cooking, fashion, other arts, as well as from insights of political theory.

Our primary metaphor is *fusion cooking*, a culinary method that combines and substitutes ingredients or cooking techniques from different cultural traditions while preserving their distinctly cultural flavors, textures, and presentations (Carpenter & Sandison, 1994). For example, fusion chefs may substitute a spice, sauce, or cooking technique from an Asian culture in a French or Italian recipe. Fusion chefs are motivated to draw on their own creativity to startle, please, and educate their customers' palates. To develop our fusion model of global team collaboration, we drew on four fusion cooking principles: respect for ingredients from many different cultures; a value for combining a variety of cultural ingredients; the goal of producing creative, unique but realistic dishes; and the preservation of the identity of the cultural ingredients in those dishes. Applying these principles to global teams implies that team members will need to recognize and respect each other's cultural differences, reject ethnocentrism, and preserve their different cultural identities as they work toward creative solutions. Just as it takes a wide variety of ingredients and cooking techniques to make a truly remarkable dish, it takes preserving team members' cultural diversity to produce a truly remarkable global solution.

Our conceptualization of a fusion model of team collaboration is also motivated by social and political theorizing about democracy in plural societies (Benhabib, 1996; Giddens, 1999). Democracy is a political form that recognizes heterogeneity and nonunity. So-called otherness is acceptable so long as otherness does not destroy the democracy (Lefort, 1981). Political theorists identify conditions necessary to achieve democracy, including the rights of minorities to express their culture not only in their own private spheres but also in public spaces (A. Phillips, 1993), procedures to ensure that different cultural groups have a fair opportunity to participate in public discussions (Young, 1996), and opportunities for conversation between different cultural groups (Mouffe, 1996). The purpose of having these condi-

tions in a society is not to facilitate a cultural consensus or integration but to facilitate recognition that everybody does not have to have the same ideas and goals in life (Bauman, 1999). This theoretical perspective does not try to resolve cultural pluralism. Instead, it advocates strengthening democracy in pluralistic societies by building democratic structures and processes that respect cultural differences. The central principle of pluralistic democracy is compatibility of actions, from which we take our key principle of fusion collaboration—coexistence of differences.

Before developing the implications of this principle for global teams, we want to acknowledge the underlying assumption of this principle. Coexistence of differences requires respect for and tolerance of cultural differences that in itself may be a cultural value and/or personal attitude. The principle assumes what Hannerz (1990) called a cosmopolitan orientation or a willingness to engage with the other. It entails openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity. Consequently, members of some societies and cultures may be more willing than others to respect cultural differences and subscribe to a fusion approach to team collaboration. Despite this caveat, we believe that global teams are small pluralistic societies and that like pluralistic societies, global teams will benefit from collaboration that respects, relies on, and uses cultural differences. It is, therefore, our aim to develop a structural approach that guides and transforms global team processes in order to realize creative global solutions.

CREATIVE REALISM AND THE TASKS OF INFORMATION EXTRACTION AND DECISION MAKING

To start developing the fusion model of team collaboration, we first define our criterion, creative realism. We then describe two global team tasks: information extraction and decision making that need to be accomplished to produce strategies and policies that are creatively realistic.

Creative ideas are novel solutions to problems (Guilford, 1959). Some creative ideas are more realistic, that is, connected to current ideas and knowledge (Finke, 1995), than others. Realistic ideas are more likely to be implemented (Thompson, 2003). It is because of the combination of creativity—highly original, novel, and imaginative—and reality—connected to current knowledge and structures—that we chose creative realism as our criterion. When global teams' strategies and policies are novel and innovative, they provide the global organization with unique standing in its markets. However, if the strategies and policies are unrealistic, that is, too far

removed from current strategy or policy or from currently available means of implementation, the opportunity nascent in the creative idea cannot be harvested. Therefore, the success of the global team depends on the creativity and realism of the solutions it identifies.

There are two key team tasks involved in the production of ideas that meet the standard of creative realism: information extraction and decision making. These tasks relate to the two fundamental skills involved in creative thinking: divergent thinking and convergent thinking (Guilford, 1959, 1967). Divergent thinking involves the development of ideas that move outward from the problem and corresponds to teams' information extraction task; convergent thinking moves inward toward a problem solution and is involved when teams are making decisions (Thompson, 2003).

INFORMATION EXTRACTION

The diversity of viewpoints and relationships that characterize global team members and their social networks provide the potential that diverse information will be available to the team during the task of information extraction (Adler, 1997). Several studies have pointed to the advantages of cognitive cultural heterogeneity as heterogeneous groups tend to outperform homogeneous groups with respect to generating more and higher quality ideas, identifying problem perspectives, and generating solution alternatives (e.g., Lovelace, Shapiro, & Weingart, 2001; Watson & Kumar, 1992; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Other studies suggest that the influence of diversity is negative because it hampers information sharing and decision making (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; see also Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003, for a review).

To take advantage of the cognitive capacity embedded in heterogeneous global teams, members need to think divergently, to search across the breadth of the organization and its environment for unique information and then share that unique information with the group. The problem is that research on information exchange shows that groups often fail to maximize the contribution of all members (Stasser & Stewart, 1992). Team members dwell on their common knowledge and fail to glean important unique knowledge from each other. The effect of group-member heterogeneity on this process loss, called the common knowledge effect (Gigone & Hastie, 1993) or collective information sharing bias (Wittenbaum, Hubbell, & Zuckerman, 1999), is inconclusive and extremely complex because team members typically diverge and converge on a variety of different diversity measures (see Thomas-Hunt, Ogden, & Neale, 2003). Consequently, despite the potential

of their heterogeneity, global teams are very likely to be vulnerable to process losses because of the common knowledge effect.

DECISION MAKING

The second key task of a global team is to use the information it has extracted to make a decision about the global strategy or policy. Choosing among ideas involves convergent thinking. Convergent thinking is facilitated when benchmarks, such as the criterion of creative realism, are available. However, this task, too, may be negatively influenced by the same heterogeneity that hampers the sharing of unique information (e.g., O'Reilly et al., 1989; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). During decision making, team members are likely to focus on the implementation implications of the decision. This can lead to political behavior and conflict (Pfeffer, 1981) that is directed toward furthering self- or subgroup interests at the expense of others' well-being (Darr & Johns, 2004; Kacmar & Baron, 1999). A highly politicized decision-making climate may prevent a team from reaching a decision at all (Peterson, 1999) much less a creatively rational decision. Therefore, because political conflict threatens the implementation of the decision, the realism part of our criterion, it needs to be understood and managed if the team is going to be successful.

Figure 1 illustrates our proposition that creatively realistic strategies and policies will most likely result when teamwork tasks of information extraction and decision making take maximum advantage of team members' cultural diversity. Figure 1 also identifies two factors endemic to global teams: different cultural precepts about collaboration and unequal power that we propose will particularly influence the process losses of common knowledge effects and political decision making, reducing the team's ability to take advantage of its cultural diversity. The three collaboration models we discuss—fusion, dominant coalition, and integration and/or identity—provide different approaches to managing the process losses that interfere with effective teamwork.

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS: CULTURAL PRECEPTS AND UNEQUAL POWER

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN PRECEPTS FOR TEAMWORK

Global team members have different preconceptions about teamwork (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; Earley & Gibson, 2002; Gibson & Zellmer-

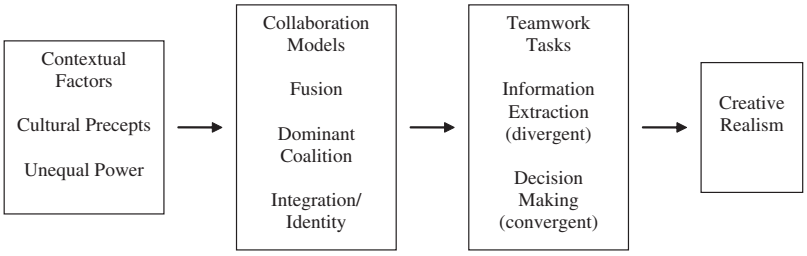

Figure 1: Factors Influencing Creative Realism in Global Teams

Bruhn, 2001). They come to the group setting with very different understandings of how to interact with each other and how to approach the team task. We call these sets of norms or standards for appropriate behavior based on prior cultural experience *precepts*. Cultural differences in precepts for teamwork are likely to lead to conflict over the processes to be used to perform the task. This conflict arises because when individuals form new groups they import norms for group interaction from their previous group experiences (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991; Feldman, 1984). Because members of global teams are selected from throughout the global organization, their cultural precepts for teamwork are likely to interfere with the tasks of information extraction and decision making.

There is substantial evidence that team members from different cultures have different precepts for teamwork. With respect to information sharing, team members from collective cultures, where social harmony is valued, are not likely to share ideas that would make them stand out from the group (Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). Team members from hierarchical cultures, where status differences hold sway, may be reluctant to suggest ideas that might conflict with those put forth by the leader or the high status members (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). With respect to decision making, team members from highly analytical cultures may wish to thoroughly evaluate all ideas before selecting the very best; while those from less analytical cultures may wish to evaluate ideas only until the team identifies one that meets the team's minimum criteria (Brett, 2001). Team members from collective cultures are likely to want to review the so-called finalist ideas with their constituencies before the decision is made; while team members from individualist cultures appear to be more comfortable "selling" the solution to constituencies when it is arrived at (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). Furthermore, the cultural precepts of some team members may lead to behavior that is viewed

as paradoxical to team members from other cultures. For instance, French managers with their confrontational communication style actively engage in information sharing but ultimately follow the decisions of high-status members (Earley, 1999).

In identifying these differences in cultural precepts for teamwork, we do not wish to imply that the meaning of precepts available to, for example, team members from individualistic cultures is completely unavailable to members from collective cultures (Morris & Gelfand, 2004). People, even those who live in individualistic cultures, have experience in collective environments such as the family. Our point is that some precept meanings are more accessible to some team members and other precept meanings are more accessible to others because of the contexts in which they normally interact. When participating in a global team, members' behaviors may be affected by not only their dominant culturally based precepts but also by the particular context in which the team is operating. Teams have many tasks, and some tasks may cue different interpretations of precepts. For example, team members from hierarchical cultures seemingly participating freely may suddenly withdraw when the team switches from generating ideas to making decisions. Or the need to communicate with sponsors may cause team members from high context cultures, where communications are implicit and indirect (Hall, 1976), to painstakingly frame high-context communications when they had been participating in team deliberations in a low context, direct manner. The challenge then in developing collaboration within global teams is not development of and conformity to a homogenous team culture but the construction of a team culture that recognizes the differences among team members and allows them to coexist or to fuse. Consequently, coexistence of cultural differences is the first principle of a culturally intelligent team model.

UNEQUAL POWER RELATIONS AMONG TEAM MEMBERS

Differences in power influence the dynamics of teams that are culturally diverse and the extent to which team members can contribute to the team's tasks. Although there are many possible sources of power such as functional expertise and social connections, we focus here on two that are extremely relevant to the context of global teams: the power of a team member's unit in the global organization and the team member's fluency with the team's common language.

Some team members will be more powerful than others because their unit or subsidiary is making larger organizational contributions because of servicing larger markets, having lower labor cost structures, or higher market

capitalizations. It is not just affiliation that makes these team members powerful but what that affiliation implies: access to resources and information that are not available to team members from less powerful units. Scholars taking a political perspective on decision making (e.g., Darr & Johns, 2004; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1974) strongly acknowledge that subunit power affects organizational decisions by causing coalition formation. However, decisions based on considerations of subunit power are likely to be maladaptive and incorrect as they support the interests' of the subunits in power or involve actions that mainly serve to maintain that power.

In addition, team members' power is affected by their fluency with the teams' common language (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999; Janssens & Brett, 1997). Because members of global teams are likely to have different native languages, one of the first decisions a global team must make is what language(s) it will use for communication. A common choice is to use English because of its use in business around the world, or to use the language of headquarters because of the influence of team members from headquarters. Although this choice may be made without reflection, it is not a neutral decision. The choice is also a political one enfranchising team members who have facility with the common language and disenfranchising those who do not (Janssens, Lambert, & Steyaert, 2004). Team members who are fluent in the common language are likely to dominate discussion, hindering the exposition of the perspectives of members who are less able or less willing to express their opinions in a language that is not their primary language. Thus, choice of the team's lingua franca will enfranchise some team members and disenfranchise others.

Unequal power relations among team members because of the power of team members' operating units, their facility with the team's lingua franca, or other factors are expected to contribute to process losses in information sharing and decision making. Several studies have indicated that power-related issues profoundly influence the degree to which a team member contributes information as well as the degree to which the group incorporates that information into its final decision. One group of scholars found that low-status members participate less and exert less influence on group decisions than high-status members (see Bonito & Hollingshead, 1997, for a review). Despite the importance of what low-status members may have to contribute, their low status is a barrier to getting their information into the group discussion (Hollingshead, 1996). Other scholars (e.g., K. W. Phillips, 2003; Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003) have shown that members who are socially isolated participate more in discussions and express greater unique knowledge than members who are socially connected because the latter suppress sharing

of their divergent knowledge so as not to annoy and distance those with whom they are socially connected.

Despite their differential effects and logics, these studies point to the complexity of unequal power relations and support our argument that unequal power relations are likely to contribute to process losses in information extraction and decision making. Therefore, as a second principle for a culturally intelligent model of global team collaboration, we propose that such a model needs to explicitly counterbalance power differences enfranchising low-status team members. Previous research supports this proposition. For example, equal sharing of basic group characteristics was critical for the formation of a hybrid culture (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000) or a synergistic team (Adler, 1997).

TOWARD A FUSION MODEL: FUSING DIFFERENT CULTURAL PRECEPTS

Developing a fusion model of global team collaboration to generate creative and realistic solutions to global problems, we first describe the general philosophy of this model. We then rely on the metaphor of *fusion cooking* and the theoretical distinction between the coordinative and integrative points of view in political theorizing to further define our fusion model of collaboration. After this initial description, we apply the fusion approach to information extraction and decision making through practices of meaningful participation.

A FUSION MODEL OF COLLABORATION

Our fusion model of collaboration "fuses" or combines different cultural precepts for teamwork while maintaining the distinct flavor of different precepts and then uses this fused process of collaboration to address the tasks of information extraction and decision making. Fusing culturally different precepts for teamwork does not require that all aspects of every team member's culturally diverse precepts for teamwork exist simultaneously in the group process. Instead, fusion creates a process in which some cultural precepts from here are joined with some from there, and a process that is sufficiently flexible so that at a later time or in response to a different aspect of the task, some cultural precepts from there can be joined with some from here. By fusing different precepts of teamwork, the model respects team members' cultural differences. The goal of fusion collaboration is to encourage a member to contribute to information extraction or decision making when that mem-

ber's knowledge, expertise, or contacts become relevant to the group's task. Fusion collaboration is not about a few members dominating the group process, nor is it about everyone being equal all the time. It is also not about making trade-offs or side payments to so-called buy members' participation, nor is it about relying on superordinate goals to generate compromise and consensus. In this section, we first develop the fusion principle of coexistence by returning to the metaphor of fusion cooking and to political theory. We then propose how the principles of the fusion model can be applied in the context of the teamwork tasks of information extraction and decision making.

DEFINING A FUSION MODEL OF TEAM COLLABORATION

There are several ways to develop a fusion dish in which flavors, textures, and culinary traditions coexist (Rice, 1998). One approach is to substitute an ingredient from one culture into a dish of another. For example, one can use Japanese *wasabi* rather than horseradish to flavor a European-style braised oxtail. Global teams following this approach to fusion might substitute the practice of formal voting with informal voting, for example, discussing issues at coffee breaks, head nodding, eye contact, all practices found to be effective in managing conflict in global teams (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). This is a nice example of how a nonconfrontational precept for conflict management is fused into the team's model of collaboration. A second approach to fusion cooking is to introduce the unexpected. An example is to fill gnocchi with a puree of truffles and turnips, or use Illinois corn and leeks. In the case of global teams, a leader may introduce visual images into a verbal presentation to help team members who are less fluent in the lingua franca. Sometimes, fusion cooking is not so much a question of ingredients but of technique. A chef might prepare lamb with Asian vegetables by using the classic French sauté technique followed by deglazing the pan with wine. An example of this third approach to fusion is mixing cultural precepts for decision making. Consider the dilemma of consultation with sponsors and constituencies in a global team. Members from collective cultures may want to involve sponsors and constituencies in a meaningful way before decisions are made, while members from individualistic cultures may be comfortable with selling the group's decision to constituencies after it has been made. One way to fuse these two precepts about managing boundaries is to allow them to coexist by giving team members all available information in advance so that those from collective cultures can consult with their sponsors prior to a meeting in which a decision is made. Alternatively, team decisions can be made contingent on approval, or breaks can be used so that especially team members from collective cultures can consult with their home organization

before agreeing to a course of action. In sum, the fusion cooking metaphor illustrates three means of achieving coexistence: replace one cultural precept by another, introduce a new precept, and mix precepts. Any of these approaches to fusion should lead to a collaboration model that strives for coexistence by respecting different cultural precepts of teamwork and valuing the distinct perspectives of all team members.

Our fusion model of team collaboration is also informed by social and political theorizing about plural societies in which an important distinction is made between integrative and coordinative perspectives (de Ruijter, 1995, 2002; Wallace, 1962). The political theorizing provides a basis for understanding why fusion collaboration is not about a few group members dominating the group process, or about equality in all circumstances, or about members making trade-offs or side payments to resolve procedural conflict, or about generating superordinate goals and consensus.

The advocates of the integrative perspective in political theory argue that a plural society can only function adequately if there is communality of fundamental values among the various groups in society. (Please note that *integration* as used in political theory does not mean the same thing as *integration* as used in negotiation theory. To further distinguish these concepts, we have added *identity* to this term as is appropriate from a political theory perspective.) According to the integrative-identity perspective, cultural conformity is a condition of and a vehicle for obtaining full citizenship because a society will disintegrate if its members are not interconnected by commonly held motives, cognitions, and values. At the core of the integrative-identity perspective is the assumption that one cultural form is superior to others. Because the dominant cultural form is likely to be the one judged superior, the integrative-identity perspective also confirms the dominant cultural form and reinforces its social hierarchical status. The integrative-identity perspective is the theoretical basis for assimilation programs that are focused on breaking down and transforming ethnic identity. The offer these programs make to integrate minority groups into the dominant culture may be represented as tolerance. However, from a coordinative point of view, such an offer, in fact, confirms the values of the dominant culture because the minority group must trade off at least some of its cultural values as the price of gaining the benefits of assimilation (Bauman, 1991).

Coordinative political theorists offer an alternative perspective that is consistent with our fusion model of collaboration. This perspective focuses on the compatibility not the commonality of views and practices (de Ruijter, 1995, 2002). These theorists reject the integrative-identity notion that for

society to function members must be interconnected by commonly held motives, cognitions, and values. Coordinative theorists place less stringent, and they argue more realistic, demands on different groups living together within a nation-state: groups with different identities must work to make their actions compatible. The mechanism for generating compatibility is dialogue among cultural groups, geared toward identifying compatibilities, not developing a shared system of basic values, or a common worldview, and not based on trade-offs in which groups retain their highest valued activities in return for giving up lower valued ones. This core idea of compatibility is respect for and tolerance of cultural differences. This core precept leads to coexistence not integration and/or identity.

It is precisely the coordinative theorists' idea of coexistence that corresponds to our notion of fusion. Fundamental to a fusion model of team collaboration is respect for and tolerance of cultural differences that lead to a coexistence of different cultural precepts. A similar argument was made by DiStefano and Maznevski (2000) who suggested that the best global teams find a way to agree that different members can operate under different norms. However, in contrast to our argument, these scholars went on to emphasize the importance of developing a shared ground and superordinate goals (see also Maznevski, 1994; Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000). Earley and Mosakowski's (2000) hybrid team model and Adler's (1997) synergistic team model recognize, as does the fusion model, that global team members will have different precepts for teamwork, and argue that effective teams will generate a hybrid or synergistic teamwork model of its own. A fusion model of team collaboration is different because of principles of coexistence and flexibility. Instead of developing a hybrid or synergistic process by choosing the team's own unique precepts for, say, information extraction, a fusion team will allow different precepts to coexist. In addition, a fusion team may use one precept for information extraction at one point in time and switch to a different one at a different time, or use several at the same time. From our perspective, the advice to generate a hybrid or synergistic model of teamwork, although far superior to adopting the teamwork model of the dominant coalition, is inconsistent with the notion of fusion that focuses on coexistence and flexibility.

Proposition 1: Coexistence of cultural differences can be achieved through identifying compatibility of cultural precepts, which can be realized by replacing one cultural precept by another, introducing a new cultural precept, or mixing cultural precepts.

A FUSION APPROACH TO INFORMATION EXTRACTION AND DECISION MAKING

The goal of fusion collaboration is to elicit a member's contribution to information extraction and decision making when that member's knowledge or technical or social expertise is relevant to the group's overall task. This inclusive pattern of interaction is not so much an issue of equal participation but of meaningful participation—a dialogue that team members enter when they believe they have unique information to contribute (Brett, 2001; Janssens & Brett, 1997). The idea is that by fusing different cultural precepts for teamwork the resulting coexistence of different precepts for information extraction and decision making will generate different and less biased information and decisions. Thus, in addition to the principle of coexistence, the fusion model of collaboration also stands on a principle of meaningful participation.

Although meaningful participation was originally conceived of at the level of the individual group member (Janssens & Brett, 1997), in global teams it may be even more successfully practiced by subgroups constituted to handle specific aspects of teamwork. For example, subgroups of team members with similar cultural precepts for information extraction can go about that task in the manner in which they are most comfortable. Team members from collective cultures can consult with their local constituencies, and team members from individualistic cultures can seek input from experts. Then as the teamwork task evolves, new subgroups may form to evaluate options against the criteria of creativity and relevance. For example, key stakeholders or sponsors of the global team may need to be informed of the team's progress, and a newly constituted subgroup representing the diversity of the team's membership may be constituted to engage in this task of advocacy: with collective members handling advocacy to collective stakeholders, and individualistic members to individualistic stakeholders. The general idea is that a dynamic approach toward subgroup formation is likely to preserve divergent thinking within the global team and respond best to the potentially diverse cultural realities within which the global team's creative strategy or policy has to succeed.

Using subgroups to achieve meaningful participation in the fusion model is consistent with other emerging research on the utility of subgroups in team decision making (Gebhardt & Meyers, 1995; Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003). The reason subgroups can (although they do not always succeed, see Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003) facilitate information extraction is that subgroups provide for a cohort of people who share a similar perspective (Asch, 1956). Thus, team members have the support of their subgroup when introducing

and advocating unique information. Teams seem to benefit more from differences between team members if there are also similarities present in the form of subgroups (Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003). In addition, because the same unique information can be advocated consistently by multiple members of the subgroup, subgroups can advocate a position more effectively than individuals increasing the likelihood that the subgroups' unique ideas are incorporated into the team's final decision (Gebhardt & Meyers, 1995).

Although the scholars cited above consider subgroups to be a rather fixed result of overlap across multiple demographic characteristics, we point out the importance of creating fluid subgroups that provide for a cohort regarding the task or issue at hand. Such fluid subgroups or subgroups in which team members' roles and responsibilities shift according to the team's task facilitate the fusion principle of meaningful participation because this dynamic approach encourages different team members to contribute at different times.

Proposition 2: Meaningful participation in information extraction can be achieved by relying on multiple subgroups that reconstitute themselves in different configurations as the team's task changes.

Meaningful participation needs to be established not only in information extraction but also in decision making. To achieve creative realism, team members need to work together to transform the creative ideas into workable strategies and policies. This convergent decision-making task requires generating options that incorporate as much as possible the different information and perspectives developed during the divergent information extraction task. Meaningful participation in decision making is critical because it augments the team's capacity for making novel linkages and associations.

Meaningful participation in decision making can be encouraged by focusing on multiple criteria, that is, creativity and realism. For example, teams following fusion principles might agree to discuss the novelty and originality of options, as well as the realism or the degree to which the ideas are connected to current knowledge in or accessible to the organization. Evaluating options using multiple criteria structures decision making, allowing team members to anticipate each other's moves and contribute meaningfully. Focusing on the dual criteria of creativity and realism has the further benefits of emphasizing that options need to be multifaceted, and that some options are likely to meet the standards of creativity better than realism, and vice versa. Emphasizing the dual criteria in the decision-making phase is expected to preserve the cultural differences that are so important for creativity.

The use of multiple criteria is consistent with the task of developing creative solutions to global problems.

Proposition 3: Meaningful participation in decision making can be achieved by focusing on the criteria of creativity and realism.

It is quite possible that the subgroups that facilitated meaningful participation in information extraction will interfere with decision making. This is because subgroups are likely to try to protect their political self-interests by supporting or refusing to support one or another precept for decision making. To manage this conflict, team members need to be vigilant about adhering to the fusion principles of coexistence and meaningful participation during decision making. Nevertheless, when application of these two principles still leaves the team in conflict over its procedures for decision making, it may be possible to resolve the differences by adhering to other fusion principles, for example, by replacing one cultural precept with another that is more acceptable to a larger number of team members, by introducing a new cultural precept in lieu of those in conflict, or by creatively mixing cultural precepts.

When none of the fusion principles works and conflict is stifling team progress toward reaching a decision, we suggest voting. We acknowledge the disadvantages of voting such as having clear winners and losers and the failure of voting to reflect the strength of individual preferences (Thompson, 2004). However, our preference for voting, either formally or informally, openly or privately depending on the voting precept that the group is most comfortable with, is because voting preserves differences and gets decisions made. After the vote, even though some team members' favored precept was chosen, and other members' favored precept was not, the rejected precept still has legitimacy and a recognized constituency. Other procedures for ending the conflict, for example the leader decides, do not preserve the legitimacy of the rejected precept and may intimidate its constituency. Empirical support for this guideline of voting is offered by Peterson's study (1999) that found that under conditions of high conflict, majority rule was better than consensus for getting decisions made and generating satisfaction with the decision. Therefore, when consensus about the team's decision-making precept is not forthcoming because of a highly politicized process, despite other safeguards of the fusion model, voting is our recommendation.

Proposition 4: Conflict among cultural precepts for teamwork can be managed by coexistence, meaningful participation, replacement, creating a new precept, or mixing precepts.

Proposition 5: When conflict in the group is high, voting sustains the legitimacy of the rejected precept, retains its constituency, and allows the group to move on.

In sum, fusion collaboration relies on principles of coexistence via replacing one precept with another, creating a new precept, or mixing precepts creatively; meaningful participation via multiple dynamic subgroups; focusing on multiple not single criteria to evaluate options; and ultimately when necessary, voting to minimize process losses in the tasks of information extraction and decision making and to maximize the development of strategy and policy that are creative and realistic.

Proposition 6: Meaningful participation of team members in information extraction and decision making will reduce process losses and increase the likelihood of realistically creative ideas.

COMPARING FUSION TO THE DOMINANT COALITION AND INTEGRATION AND/OR IDENTITY MODELS

The fusion model of collaboration is fundamentally different from the dominant coalition model that stresses only one perspective, and the integration and/or identity model that emphasizes cooperative collaboration when a common identity has been developed. We discuss here how these two other models of team collaboration are less culturally intelligent because of the way in which they handle the teamwork tasks of information extraction and decision making as well as their approaches to procedural conflict.

DOMINANT COALITION MODEL

In the dominant coalition model of team collaboration, a coalition of members directs the process of information extraction and decision making. The dominant coalition may be a majority of the team; however, it may also be a minority group, or even an individual. A common situation that engenders the dominant coalition model is when the team has a national headquarters' coalition whose native language is also the team's lingua franca (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999).

The coalition's precepts will govern the team's information extraction and decision making. Furthermore, when there is conflict in the team over cultural precepts, the coalition will make choices, and those choices will likely be ones that promote the coalition's interests and protect its dominance. For example, the coalition may control information extraction by managing interaction with the team's constituents. It may control decision making by defining the criteria for creativity and reality and then applying its standards to the ideas generated by the team.

Thus, a dominant coalition sets the scene, overrides differences that are not in line with its logic, and suppresses other perspectives. This creates a less culturally intelligent team model because it discourages meaningful participation in information extraction and decision making, thereby increasing process losses and reducing the likelihood that the team who is culturally diverse will generate realistically creative decisions.

Proposition 7: The dominant coalition model will be less effective in generating creative realism than the fusion model.

INTEGRATION AND/OR IDENTITY MODEL

Two assumptions underlie the integration and/or identity model of team collaboration: team members will accept the goals and objectives of the team as their own; and members will sublimate subgroup identity to team identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). These assumptions imply that highly team-identified members will be motivated to promote the collective in-group interests, relative to self-interests or the interests of other groups such as constituencies (Turner, 1987). The mechanisms for generating integration and/or identity are the adoption of superordinate goals (Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000) and the cultivation of a team identity. Superordinate goals are based on team members' common interests (Adler, 1997). They are usually stated in sufficiently broad terms that if they do not actually encompass members' individual interests, they do not deny them either. Superordinate goals provide general direction; however, they can also serve as criteria for resolving conflict over cultural precepts: what is best for the company or even the team as a whole. Cultivating a team identity by, for example, emphasizing team members' similarities and equality, or distinguishing out-groups, fosters cooperation because members who cooperate are welcomed and empowered, and members who do not are socially sanctioned and disenfranchised (Turner, 1987).

The principles of superordinate goals and team identity are likely to generate information extraction and decision making that relies strongly on the team itself and less strongly on the team's constituencies. Teams operating under this model of collaboration may manage information extraction by polling members for ideas, though not necessarily by encouraging members to seek information outside the group (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Integration and/or identity teams will handle decision making by putting team and organizational needs before individual needs and by seeking consensus. Conflict over precepts will be handled similarly by evoking the superordinate goal and emphasizing team identity.

Thus, information extraction and decision making in integration and/or identity teams may be more encompassing than in dominant coalition teams; however, there are still serious risks of process losses. The risk for information extraction is that to maintain team identity team members cede local identity and, in doing so, discount the culturally based views and ideas of local sponsors. Integration and/or identity teams may also function in terms of information extraction at the level of their least productive member. The reason is that to work at a higher level would be to negate the least productive member's ability to contribute. A major factor that generates process losses in decision making in teams with this model is compromise (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000), which results from premature movement to consensus with dissenting opinions being suppressed or dismissed (Hackman & Morris, 1975). Another process loss in decision making is if the group's superordinate goal, generated through an inclusive, egalitarian consensus process, provides too low a standard of performance. This might occur if the team selects ideas that meet all members' minimum criteria but are, as a result, less creative and/or less realistic than ideas that cannot be endorsed by all members. Finally, strong reliance on identity for conflict management creates conformity pressure and silent accommodation to the so-called will of the group.

Previous theorizing has held up this model of team collaboration where team identity plays the central mediating process—as the most likely to lead to optimal team performance (see Tyler & Blader, 2000, for a review). Even in the case of teams who are culturally diverse where members have multiple group identities because of their local jobs, their local cultures, and their own social relationships, team identity remains a central, mediating variable in understanding the team's functioning (Shapiro, Furst, Spreitzer, & Von Glinow, 2002) and the managerial implications are to make team identity salient.

We propose that the integration and/or identity collaborative process will be more culturally intelligent than the dominant coalition model because its approach to the extraction of information and decision making will generate fewer process losses than the dominant coalition model. However, we think that the emphasis on team identity will generate a collaborative team process that is less culturally intelligent than the fusion model because of greater information-extraction and decision-making process losses, leading to inferior creative realism.

Proposition 8: The integration and/or identity model will be less effective in generating creative realism than the fusion model.

TABLE 1
Three Models of Global Team Collaboration

Principles	*Fusion Model*	*Dominant Coalition Model*	*Integration and/or Identity Model*
Starting Point	*Differences*	*Differences*	*Differences*
Mechanism	Dialogue via meaningful participation to seek compatibility of cultural precepts	Imposition of power	Consensus seeking via subordination of individual differences to team interests
Result	Coexistence of different precepts	Imposition of dominant coalition's precepts	Generation of superordinate team precepts

CONTRASTING MODELS OF COLLABORATION

The fusion, dominant coalition, and integration and/or identity models lead to very different processes of information extraction, decision making, as well as approaches to conflict management. The distinct philosophical principles underlying each model are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. Although it is possible that future research and theorizing will generate a set of contingencies identifying under what conditions each model is superior, we propose that for teams who are culturally diverse trying to generate realistically creative ideas to solve global problems, the fusion model is a more culturally intelligent team model than the integration and/or identity model that, in turn, will be more culturally intelligent than the dominant coalition model.

MAKING FUSION HAPPEN: COUNTERBALANCING POWER DIFFERENCES

The fusion model of team collaboration aims to be culturally intelligent through encouraging the meaningful participation of team members who are culturally diverse when their knowledge, expertise, or social contacts become relevant to the team's task. To facilitate creative initiatives, this model encourages information extraction and decision making that rely on dynamic responsibility (shifting subgroups) and focus on multiple criteria. Although the principles underlying fusion set a norm for meaningful participation, unequal power of team members may still hinder the identification of unique knowledge and the transformation of that information into creative solutions.

TABLE 2
Models of Global Team Collaboration and the Tasks of Information Extraction, Decision Making, and Conflict Management

Principles	*Fusion Model*	*Dominant Coalition Model*	*Integration and/or Identity Model*
Responsibility for information extraction	Dynamic subgroups	Dominant coalition	Group as a whole
Philosophy of decision making	Focus on multiple criteria	Dominant coalition	Consensus
Conflict management approach	Strive for coexistence; Voting as ultimate solution	Dominant coalition	Subordination of individual interests to superordinate interests

Therefore, we recommend formal interventions to counterbalance power differences. However, before we discuss the possible actions leaders of teams who are culturally diverse can take to neutralize the effects of power differences, we first compare the fusion model to the two other models of global team collaboration regarding their assumptions about power differences.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT POWER

The fusion and dominant coalition models of team collaboration explicitly acknowledge the existence of power differences in global teams. As discussed, these power differences among team members who are culturally diverse are inherent because of differences in the power of team members' units in the global organization and the team members' fluency in the common language of the team, among other factors. Global teams that function according to the dominant coalition model accept the unequal distribution of resources and influences. However, in contrast to the fusion model, no explicit interventions are taken to create a more balanced participation. Dominant coalition teams' processes of information extraction and decision making reflect the interests and perspectives of the most powerful members of the team.

In contrast to the fusion and dominant coalition models, the integration and/or identity model assumes equality among the team members; however, the model is not without power implications, for example, whose identity does the team adapt? The model implies that the team's identity is neutral;

TABLE 3
Models of Global Team Collaboration and Unequal Power Relations

Principles	*Fusion Model*	*Dominant Coalition Model*	*Integration and/or Identity Model*
Assumption	Assumption of unequal power	Assumption of unequal power	Assumption of equal power
Action	Formal interventions to counterbalance unequal power	Acceptance of inequality	No explicit attention to unequal power relations

however, political theorists writing about integration into a society suggest that the powerless sublimate their identity to the identity of the powerful in return for being allowed to participate as equals in the society. In the context of teams who are culturally diverse, even though the integration and/or identity model is based on principles of egalitarianism, some team members will possibly identify more fully with the team than others and those that identify less are likely to accommodate silently to avoid social ostracism. If this happens, the contribution of team members who identify more fully with the team will carry more influence than the opinions of those who identify less. Thus, even in the ostensibly egalitarian integration and/or identity model, power differences are relevant to team functioning. Table 3 summarizes these differences between the models with respect to unequal power.

COUNTERBALANCING POWER DIFFERENCES

Because the fusion model seeks to foster meaningful participation among team members who are culturally diverse, it may be necessary to intervene to neutralize power differences. We focus here on interventions to counterbalance the power differences because of the power of team members' unit in the global organization and the team members' level of fluency with the team's common language.

Overcoming power differences because of the power of team members' units. If a team who is culturally diverse is to create new knowledge, team members must share their individual knowledge and combine it (Okhuysen & Eisenhardt, 2002). As discussed before, status differences that reflect differential influence within the team can inhibit information sharing (Hollingshead, 1996). At the outset, members of a global team are likely to

know the unit and, therefore, the status of the unit that each member comes from. However, they are unlikely to know in what ways others are knowledgeable, expert, or connected. This combination of familiarity with status differences but unfamiliarity with knowledge differences is an important obstacle that may prevent meaningful participation of team members and contribute to process losses in the teamwork tasks of information extraction and decision making. We suggest some creative interventions, consistent with the fusion model, to overcome such power differences in the team.

Formal, nonelaborate interventions that encourage participation may help teams minimize process losses in information extraction (Henry, 1995; Okhuysen & Eisenhardt, 2002). For example, interventions that help groups manage time (Hollingshead, 1996) and encourage questioning improve group performance, apparently because they provide some standards for judging effective process and create a secondary process agenda (the primary agenda being the task agenda) to which the team members can occasionally turn to make those judgments (Okhuysen & Eisenhardt, 2002). An intervention that helps teams develop transactive memory—knowledge about what knowledge, expertise, and contacts are shared among team members and what members can contribute uniquely to the team (Wegner, 1986)—involves systematically assessing everybody's views (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Using brainstorming techniques where individuals or subgroups try to solve the problem working independently and then share solutions should also help develop meaningful participation that ignores status differences (Osborn, 1963).

Proposition 9: Formal interventions that address unequal power reduce process losses in information extraction and decision making and facilitate more creative and realistic solutions to global problems.

Overcoming common language differences. The capacity of team members who are culturally diverse to participate fully in the team will vary with their fluency in the team's lingua franca and their willingness to express their opinions in a language that is not their primary language. Previous research indicates that processes similar to meaningful participation are more likely to occur when groups are small and everyone is working in a second language, than when groups are larger and only some members are speaking their primary language (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). Similarly, Adler (1997) suggested choosing a language that nobody speaks as his or her native language. We suggest here some creative interventions consistent with the philosophy of the fusion model to address power and participation differences because of language fluency.

Leaders of teams who are culturally diverse might break a large team into smaller common-language brainstorming subgroups and have the most fluent common-language speaker report the subgroup's ideas. Another option is to encourage team members to speak in their own native language and have other members collectively translate (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). This approach may become cumbersome in large groups with many different native language speakers, and it does require bilinguals. However, it has the very nice secondary effect of making the task of passing the language hurdle a team task not an individual task. Even when all team members speak a common language, team leaders need to be aware of differences in use of this common language and the utility of having norms of understanding. Developing rules for clarification is an approach that may help team members overcome their reluctance—and fear of being judged incompetent—to say they don't understand. Agreeing on the team's response to a lack of understanding in advance makes the team responsible for understanding and legitimizes speaking up when clarification is needed (Brett, 2001).

Other techniques for increasing understanding when team members are working in a second language do not require endorsement by the group as a whole. These include, rephrasing to ensure one understands what has been said (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000) or checking comprehension (Adler, 1997), speaking slowly with intermediate pauses, avoiding long sentences, repeating the information using different vocabulary, using visual guides, designating someone to write down what has been decided, asking questions where the answer is not yes, handing out written summaries of the verbal presentation, and waiting when there is a silence (Adler, 1997; Van de Vijver, 2002).

Proposition 10: Formal interventions that address language and communication problems reduce process losses in information extraction and decision making and facilitate more creative and realistic solutions to global problems.

FUSION OR CON-FUSION?

Fusion cooking is sometimes also called con-fusion cooking. Although some combinations work, others do not. When fusion cooking works, it pleases the eye and the palate. When it doesn't, chaos reigns producing dishes that look and taste like mud. To avoid chaos, successful fusion chefs respect flavors, ingredients, and techniques of different ethnic cultures and rely on experiments and experience to fuse various cultural elements (Dornenburg & Page, 1996). The limitations to combining differences are

also reflected in the reasoning of the coordinative perspective on plural societies. Although this perspective favors compatibility of actions and coexistence instead of communality, there may be instances where practices and actions of different cultural groups conflict in fundamental ways, such as in the case of equal rights to men and women or the integrity of the human body (de Ruijter, 2002). Ethical choices may become inevitable if the dialogue among the different subgroups fails to find a path of coexistence.

A fusion model of global team collaboration is not without limitations. A team fusing too many cultural precepts at the same time may create chaos and confusion among members. The team may lose a sense of direction and lack coordination. Another potential weakness is that the fusion model's success is predicated on the conviction that many different cultural practices can coexist when there is respect for differences. However, some cultural practices, for example, whether to allow so-called gift giving, may be in fundamental conflict. This is most likely to occur when ethical standards are different. Although gift giving is common and ethical in some cultures, in other cultures personal gift giving in return for favorable treatment is illegal. Team members may legitimately question whether the team should engage in such a practice. To avoid confusion and friction, global teams may therefore engage in an assessment of precept compatibility. Not all precepts will be compatible. However, teams that identify incompatible precepts also may find that incompatibility only interferes in particular contexts, thereby narrowing the circumstances when choices among precepts have to be made. This approach to incompatibility sustains respect for unselected precepts and leaves them available for use in other circumstances. An important element of the selection process involves a judgment of the ethical appropriateness of a precept. It is at this point in the development of a fusion collaboration process that respect for differences must prevail. Even though the ethical selection rule may only be relevant occasionally, it should nevertheless be available to all team members.

CONCLUSION

Fusion is a new model of global team collaboration with conceptual roots in the well-known fusion style of cooking, fashion and other arts, and in the political theory articulating the coordinative perspective on plural societies. Extending the idea of fusion to teams who are culturally diverse offers a structural approach to instantiating cultural intelligence into global teams. The major threat to successful fusion collaboration is the belief that differ-

ences provide an excuse to opt out of dialogue. Engaging in dialogue concerning practices about which people differ and finding ways to fuse them is the challenge of any pluralistic community. The small-scale pluralistic society that is a culturally diverse team provides a microcosm of society in which such fusion principles can be tested and developed.

NOTE

1. Although most global teams are also virtual teams and use technology-mediated communication, we focus here on interaction during face-to-face meetings. Complex decisions are usually made in face-to-face meetings when the whole team is present. In contrast, virtual collaboration often entails further elaboration of decisions involving two to three team members. Future research however may benefit from studying how the virtual work of global teams may affect their ability to develop creative realism.

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