KATHOLIEKE
UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN

DEPARTEMENT TOEGEPASTE ECONOMISCHE WETENSCHAPPEN

RESEARCH REPORT 0323

FUSION COLLABORATION IN GLOBAL TEAMS

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D/2003/2376/23

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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)

ABSTRACT

This essay introduces a new model for facilitating collaboration in global teams that leads to creatively realistic solutions to global problems. The conceptualization for the fusion model of global team collaboration draws on the culinary tradition of fusion cooking and current political theorizing about pluralistic societies. 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 team members. We contrast the fusion model to models of collaboration based on principles of the dominant coalition and of integration/identity, pointing out why fusion should produce superior solutions to global problems.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are increasingly using global teams in order to manage the complexity of global markets. These teams have members from operating units and subsidiaries located in different parts of the world. Because of their lateral form, they are an important means of establishing coordination across the whole global organization (Galbraith, 2000). Major reasons for establishing global teams include the creation of creative global strategies that provide leverage in local markets, and policies that diffuse organizational learning throughout the global marketplace, as well as more global, and therefore more, efficient use of resources (Snow, Canney Davison, Snell, & Hambrick, 1996; Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). If global teams are to achieve these expected advantages, they need to excel in two tasks: extracting information from across the whole organization and making decisions that take into account the breadth and variety of that information. Through information extraction and decision making global teams should be able to develop strategy and policy that are both creative and realistic, that is, reach decisions that incorporate the best knowledge available across the global organization and decisions that

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can be implemented.

However, teams are notorious for failing to maximize their potential because of ineffective process (Steiner, 1972). Global teams may be particularly vulnerable to process losses for two reasons. First, they are likely to experience conflicting cultural precepts - differences among members about how to proceed with the information extraction and decision making tasks of teamwork. Second, they are likely to experience unequal power - some members for reasons of access to resources or even facility with the team's common language will have more influence than others.

In this paper we introduce a new model of collaboration for global teams that we call *fusion*. We propose that fusion will be superior to the dominant coalition or the integration/identity models of team collaboration previously discussed in the literature (Canney Davison, 1996; Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). Our reasoning is that a team's creative realism - the quality of the decisions it makes - is closely related to the degree to which team members' unique perspectives are utilized with respect to both information extraction and decision making. We argue that teams following fusion principles will be less likely to experience process losses than teams following principles of dominant coalitions or integration/identity, and therefore will be more likely to facilitate the development of strategy and policy that are both creative and realistic..

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, and contrast how the fusion model of global team collaboration addresses potential process losses due to these factors compared to the dominant coalition and integration/identity models. Although we are optimistic about fusion collaboration, we also recognize that some fused combinations simply do not work - fusion cooking is sometimes called con-fusion cooking – and we conclude with a discussion of principles to avoid con-fusion.

Our fusion model of global team collaboration contributes both to the development of the theory of group creativity and to the practice of managing global teams. By fusing concepts from social and political theory, group decision making theory, and the theory of fusion as it is used in cooking and other arts, 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 global teams 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, and 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 or 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 draw 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.

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Our conceptualization of a fusion model of team collaboration is also motivated by current social and political theorizing about democracy in plural societies (Benhabib, 1996; Giddens, 1999). Democracy is a political form that recognizes heterogeneity and non-unity. "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 (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 conditions 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. 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.

CREATIVE REALISM: THE GOAL OF GLOBAL TEAMS

The purpose of this paper is to develop the fusion model of team collaboration. In this section we define our criterion, creative realism, and describe the two tasks of 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 both 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 global teams' information extraction task; convergent thinking moves inward toward a problem solution and is involved when global teams are making decisions (Thompson, 2003).

The diversity of viewpoints and relationships that characterize global team members' social networks provide the potential for high quality information extraction (Adler, 1997; De Dreu & West, 2001; Paulus, 2000). To take advantage of this potential, global teams need to encourage members to think divergently and to search for divergent ideas across the breadth of the organization and its environment. Diverse information relevant to the task may be extracted from the range of perspectives that are present within the team or from sources and sponsors outside the team and even in the organization's environment. The importance of these extra-group activities is supported by previous research on teams. Teams that manage their boundaries by importing and exporting information are more creative than teams that do not (Ancona & Galdwell, 1992). Thus, the first key task of global team is to use its members' expertise and social networks to capture relevant and diverse information from all parts of the global organization and its environment.

The second key task of a global team is to make a decision about strategy or policy using the information it has extracted. The process of divergent information extraction means that some ideas will be better than others. Choosing among ideas involves convergent thinking. Convergent thinking is facilitated when benchmarks, such as the

criterion of creative realism are available. Furthermore, just as information extraction requires management of information across the team's boundaries, so does the task of decision making (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Meeting the realism criterion, for example, may depend on the "buy-in" of various constituencies to the team's creative idea. An innovative idea not supported by team's external stakeholders, and therefore unrealistic, is likely to fail in implementation.

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 the diversity of information available to the global team's members. Figure 1 also identifies two factors endemic to global teams: different cultural precepts about collaboration and unequal power that we propose will cause process losses (Steiner, 1972), reducing the team's ability to take advantage of its diversity. Our models of collaboration: fusion, dominant coalition, and integration/identity provide different approaches to managing the process losses that interfere with effective teamwork.

Insert Figure 1 about here

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS: CULTURAL PRECEPTS AND UNEQUAL POWER
Cultural Differences in Precepts for Teamwork

Global team members are likely to have different preconceptions about teamwork and these differences are likely to interfere with the tasks of information extraction and decision making. A *precept* is a standard or general rule of conduct. The "pre" in precept cues an important aspect of our conceptualization: precepts are pre-existing knowledge structures. They are organized sets of norms or standards for appropriate behavior based on prior experience. Since members of global teams are selected from throughout the global organization, their precepts for how to conduct the teamwork tasks of information extraction and decision making are likely to be different. This is because team members' precepts are influenced by the norms for social interaction that are characteristic of the culture in which they live and work.

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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, according to research on the development of group norms (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991), because when individuals form new groups they import norms for group interaction from their previous group experiences. It is therefore in the nature of global teams to differ on the processes of information extraction and decision making. Examples abound. Team members from hierarchical cultures, where status differences hold sway, may be very deferent to the team leader or high status team members and very reluctant to suggest ideas that might conflict with those put forth by the leader or the high status members (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). Team members from collective cultures, where social harmony is valued, may not wish to share ideas that would make them stand out from the group (Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). Similarly, team members from highly analytical cultures may wish to thoroughly evaluate all ideas before selecting the very best. Team members 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 may wish to review the "finalist" ideas with their constituencies before the decision is made; while team members from individualist cultures may wish to "sell" the solution to constituencies once it is arrived at (Canney Davison & Ward, 1999). Some team members may prefer voting to make decisions, others will want to push through to consensus, while still others will want the leader or dominant subgroup to make the decision (and take responsibility for it) (Schneider & Barsoux, 1997).

Given these differences in cultural precepts, global teams are likely to find themselves in conflict over how to do the tasks of information extraction and decision making. Global team members' conflicting cultural precepts about teamwork endanger the realization of advantages of the team members' diversity. Relevant information may not be available to the team because of process losses in information extraction. Even when relevant information is available to the team, the information may not be incorporated into the team's decision because of process losses in decision making. For example, important information available to team members via their extra-team social contacts will not be brought to a team that is operating like a skunk works cut off from its environment.

Alternatively, that important information may be available to the team as a whole, but not incorporated into the decision because a coalition dominated decision making. To avoid process losses in the tasks of information extraction and decision making, we argue that global team collaboration needs to allow different cultural precepts to coexist or to fuse.

In identifying these differences in precepts due to culture, we do not wish to imply that the meaning of precepts available to, for example, team members from individualistic cultures, where self interests dominate collective interests, is completely unavailable to members from collective cultures, where self interests are subordinate to collective interests or vice versa (Morris & Gelfand, in press). People, even those who live in individualistic cultures, have experience in collective environments like 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 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, and appeals are framed in terms of general principles instead of logic (Hall, 1976), to painstakingly frame high context communications when they had been participating in team deliberations a low context, direct manner. The challenge then in developing collaboration within global teams is not so much a matter of conformity to a homogenous team culture, but construction of a team culture that recognizes the differences among team members and allows them to co-exist.

Unequal Power Relations among Team Members

Differences in power influence team dynamics and the extent to which team members can contribute to the team's tasks. Although there are many possible sources of power differences such as functional expertise, we focus here on two that are especially salient

in the context of global teams: the power of a team member's unit in the global organization and the level of the team member's fluency with the team's common language.

Team members' influence is affected by the power of their unit or subsidiary in the global organization. Some units will be more powerful than others because they are making larger organizational contributions due to servicing larger markets, having lower labor cost structures, or higher market capitalizations. Team members from powerful units will have greater influence not just because of their affiliation with high powered units, but also because that affiliation implies that they will have access to resources and information that are not available to team members from less powerful units. Powerful team members can influence both information extraction and decision making. They can, for example, hinder the less powerful members from sharing information or from participating in decision making.

Team members' fluency with the teams' common language also will impact their capacity to influence the team (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, 2003). 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 due to the power of team members' operating units, their facility with the team's lingua franca, or other factors are inherent to global teams. This unequal power is likely to hinder widespread sharing of information

and widespread participation in group decision making, reducing the team's potential for creative realism. We propose that a team collaboration model needs to explicitly counterbalance power differences in order to minimize process losses in the tasks of information extraction and decision making.

TOWARDS A FUSION MODEL: FUSING DIFFERENT CULTURAL PRECEPTS

The challenge is how to generate collaboration that fully appreciates team members' differences and that results in creative and realistic solutions to global problems. We propose that a fusion model of global team collaboration will appreciate and preserve differences and at the same time facilitate teams in reaching creative and realistic decisions. To develop the fusion model of team collaboration, we return to the metaphor of fusion cooking and the theoretical distinction between the coordinative and integrative points of view in political theorizing. We compare the fusion model with the dominant coalition and integration/identity models of global team collaboration and discuss how each of the different models handles differences in cultural precepts in the context of the tasks of information extraction and decision making. We discuss managing unequal power in the subsequent section, Making Fusion Happen.

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 produce creative and realistic solutions to global challenges. Fusion collaboration has the following attributes. It 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 of collaboration in which some cultural precepts from here are joined with some from there, and a collaboration that is sufficiently flexible so that at a later time or in response to a different task, some cultural precepts from there can be joined with some from here. By fusing different precepts of teamwork, the model shows respect for team members' differences and flexibility in the use of cultural precepts. The goal of fusion collaboration is to

encourage a member to contribute to information extraction or decision making when that member's knowledge, expertise, or contacts become relevant to the group's task. Fusion collaboration is not about a few members dominating the group process. It is also not about making trade-offs or side payments to "buy" members' participation, nor is it about generating superordinate goals 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, e.g., 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 non-confrontational 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 (Wallace, 1962; de Ruijter, 1997; 2002). The political theorizing provides a basis for understanding why fusion collaboration is not about a few group members dominating the group process, 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. But, from a coordinative point of view, such an offer in fact confirms the values of the dominant culture, since 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, 1997; 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 tradeoffs in which groups retain their highest valued activities in return for giving up lower valued ones. This core idea of compatibility, grounded in respect for and tolerance of differences, leads to coexistence not integration/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 differences that lead to a coexistence of different cultural precepts.

Proposition 1: Coexistence of 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 which team members enter when they believe they have something to contribute (Janssens &

Brett, 1997; Brett, 2001). 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 information and different decisions. Thus, in addition to the principle of coexistence, the fusion model collaboration also stands on a principle of meaningful participation.

Meaningful participation can be achieved if the team relies on multiple 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; yet, with collective members handling advocacy to collective stakeholders, and individualistic members to individualistic stakeholders. The general idea is that a dynamic approach towards subgroup formation is likely to preserve divergent thinking within the global team and respond best to the potentially diverse realities within which the global team's creative strategy or policy has to succeed. Multiple 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

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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, in the case of the teams we are discussing, the criteria of 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 prior to making a decision. 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 differences that are so important for creativity. The process of decision making following multiple criteria is therefore 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 fusion principles of coexistence and meaningful participation will be an anathema to some members of the team. Conflict among members about precepts (procedural conflict) (Jehn, 1995) is highly likely in global teams. To manage this procedural conflict, team members need to be vigilant about adhering to the fusion principles of coexistence and meaningful participation. When application of the these two principles still leave the team in conflict, it may be possible to resolve the procedural 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, we suggest voting. Our preference for voting, either formally or informally, openly or

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privately depending on the voting precept that the group is most comfortable with, is because voting preserves differences. 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.

> *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: Voting sustains the legitimacy of the rejected precept and retains its constituency.*

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 both 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 THE FUSION TO THE DOMINANT COALITION AND INTEGRATION/IDENTITY MODELS

The fusion model of collaboration is fundamentally different from the dominant coalition model which stresses only one perspective, and the integration/identity model which emphasizes cooperative collaboration once a common identity has been developed. We discuss here how these two other models of global team collaboration 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, but it may also be a minority group, or even an individual. A common situation which 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 collaborative process that discourages meaningful participation in information extraction and decision making, thereby increasing process losses and reducing the likelihood that the team will generate realistically creative ideas.

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

Integration/Identity Model

Two assumptions underlie the integration/identity model of team collaboration: team members will accept the goals and objectives of the team as their own; and members will identify primarily with the team (Ashfort & 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 like constituencies (Turner, 1987). The mechanisms for generating integration/identity are the adoption of superordinate goals, and 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

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either. Superordinate goals provide general direction; but 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. Team identity fosters cooperation, because members who cooperate with the team's superordinate goal 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. Integration/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/identity teams may be more encompassing than in dominant coalition teams, but there are still serious risks of process losses. The risks for information extraction are that to maintain team identity, team members cede local identity and in doing so discount the views and ideas of local sponsors. Integration/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 risk generating process losses in decision making is a premature movement to consensus, with dissenting opinions being suppressed or dismissed (Hackman & Morris, 1975). Another process loss in decision making is that the group's superordinate goal, generated through a 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, both 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 "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 global teams where members have multiple group identities due to 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 this collaborative process will be superior to the dominant coalition model with respect to both the extraction of information and decision making, therefore generating more realistically creative solutions than are possible with the dominant coalition model. However, we think that the emphasis on team identity will generate a collaborative team process that is inferior to the fusion model with respect to both information extraction and decision making process losses and creative realism.

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

Contrasting Models of Collaboration

The fusion, dominant coalition, and integration/identity models lead to very different processes of information extraction and 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 global teams trying to generate realistically creative ideas to solve global problems, the fusion model will be superior to the integration/identity model which in turn will be superior to the dominant coalition model.

Insert Table 1 and 2 about here

MAKING FUSION HAPPEN: COUNTERBALANCING POWER DIFFERENCES

The fusion model of global team collaboration aims to encourage the meaningful participation of team members 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. A fusion model therefore will use formal interventions to counterbalance power differences. However, before we discuss the possible actions fusion team leaders 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 global team members 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/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, but 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 global teams, even though the integration/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/identity model, power differences are relevant to team functioning. Table 3 summaries the differences between the models with respect to unequal power.

Insert Table 3 about here

Counterbalancing Power Differences

Because the fusion model seeks to foster meaningful participation among all team members, it may be necessary to intervene to neutralize power differences. We focus here on interventions to counterbalance the power differences due to 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 due to the power of team members' units. If a global team is to create new knowledge, team members must share their individual knowledge and combine it (Okhysen & Eisenhardt, 2002). Status differences that reflect differential influence within the team can inhibit information sharing. 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, non-elaborate interventions that encourage participation may help teams minimize process losses in information extraction (Henry, 1995; Okhysen & Eisenhardt, 2002). For example, interventions that help groups manage time 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 (Okhysen & 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 everyone tries to solve the problem working independently and then shares solutions should also help develop meaningful participation that ignores status differences (Osborn, 1957; 1963).

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

Overcoming common language differences. Team members' capacity 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). We suggest some creative interventions consistent with the philosophy of the fusion model to address power and participation differences due to language fluency.

Global team leaders might break a large team into smaller common language brainstorming groups and have the most fluent common language speaker report the subgroup's ideas. This approach should have the added benefit of reducing social loafing which is more difficult in smaller groups. 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), 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, and asking questions where the answer is not yes (Vande 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 individual 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 '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 global teams offers new ways of collaboration that connect – and at times maybe even transcend – cultural and group differences. The major threat to successful fusion collaboration is the belief that differences 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 which is a global team provides a microcosm of society in which such fusion principles can be tested and developed.

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TABLE 1

Three Models of Global Team Collaboration

Principles	Fusion Model	Dominant Coalition Model	Integration/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

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/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

TABLE 3

Models of Global Team Collaboration and Unequal Power Relations

Principles	Fusion Model	Dominant Coalition Model	Integration/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

FIGURE 1

Factors Influencing Creative Realism in Global Teams