

Chapter 4 – MULTINATIONAL MILITARY TEAMS

by

A. J. van Vliet & D. van Amelsfoort

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the literature on cultural diversity in military teams. The introductory section will examine the notion of teams, particularly in relation to culture. Within this context, there will also be a discussion of some of the advantages and disadvantages of cultural diversity with respect to teams. The second section briefly describes the method that was used for a review of existing literature pertaining to military teams and multinational operations. In the final section, the literature will be discussed and some conclusions and recommendations will be made.

4.1.1 Teams

Before a discussion of teams and culture can begin, it may be useful to first define what is meant by the term “team.” In her review of the literature, Dyer (1984) noted that a clear definition of a team was not available. Therefore, she suggested that a team be considered as including two or more people, a common goal, specific role assignment, and interdependence (see also Salas, Bowers, & Cannon-Bowers, 1995). These elements were reiterated by other researchers during the 1980s (Modrick, 1986; Morgan, Glickman, Woodard, Blaiwes, & Salas, 1986). Orasanu and Salas (1993) expanded this early definition to include additional characteristics:

- a) Teams make decisions in the context of a larger task;
- b) Team members have specialized knowledge and skills relevant to the task and decision; and
- c) Task conditions under which teams operate often include high workload and time pressure.

In large part, the characteristics detailed by Dyer (1984) and Orasanu and Salas (1993) continue to be used today. Based on the above the following working definition of a team is proposed:

A team consists of two or more people with a common goal, making decisions in the context of a larger task. Each member has a specific role and specialized knowledge and skills relevant to the task and decision, and team members are interdependent.

When speaking of cultural diversity in teams, we are referring to three types of cultural diversity:

- *Cultural diversity within a team;*
- *Cultural diversity between or among teams; and*
- *Cultural diversity between a team and the social environment.*

This distinction helps identify the types of processes that are affected by cultural differences, and thus also the consequent effectiveness of the team in question. In this chapter, of particular interest is cultural diversity within multinational military teams, or between the militaries of different nations.

As mentioned before, the scope of this chapter is focused on how cultural differences or cultural factors affect team effectiveness, with specific interest in how team processes are affected by cultural factors. Because teams consist of individuals, differences at this level of analysis are of great importance, but teams also behave in an environment such as an organization (an agglomerate of other teams) and even at a more abstract level such as a nation or host of nations. Early literature on culture mainly focused on

how individuals, as representatives of certain ethnic backgrounds, can be distinguished due to their ethnic characteristics and in particular how they tend to behave or cope with certain situations from a socio-emotional or psychological perspective. The next two sections will address this point of view.

4.1.2 Cultural Diversity in Teams

Cultural diversity within teams has been associated with both advantages and disadvantages in terms of group creativity, flexibility, and problem solving ability (Day, Stinson, Cameron, & Catano, 2002). Compared to homogeneous groups, heterogeneous groups tend to make more creative and higher quality decisions (Adler, 1990; Kai, Bridgewater, & Spencer, 2001; Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1994). Heterogeneous groups are also more likely to consider a greater number of possible solutions and to discuss the implications of alternative solutions more thoroughly than homogeneous groups (Nemeth, 1985). Groupthink, a tendency for highly cohesive groups to use ineffective decision-making processes, is also less likely in diverse groups (Janis, 1972). Initially, diverse groups may experience more communication problems, but in the long term they may outperform homogeneous groups (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998). These improvements in creativity and problem solving have resulted in overall superior job performance for diverse groups (Wright, Ferris, Hiller & Kroll, 1995).

There are some drawbacks associated with diverse and heterogeneous groups, however. Homogeneous groups tend to be more cohesive, efficient, and productive in the short term than heterogeneous groups (McGrath, Berdhal, & Arrow, 1995) and to have fewer communication problems than heterogeneous groups (Chatman et al., 1998). Heterogeneous groups tend to be less socially integrated, have a greater potential for conflict (Berry & Kalin, 1995), and tend to experience more stress (Triandis et al., 1994) than homogeneous groups. Because diverse groups tend to be less cohesive, their members may spend more time establishing relationships than working on group tasks (Adler, 1990). Finally, heterogeneous groups tend to have higher member turnover (Chatman et al., 1998; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989). Some of the studies that have examined the effects of group diversity on cohesiveness, communication, and performance, however, have had methodological limitations that compromised their external validity and generalizability to real workplace situations (e.g., Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993).

4.1.3 Types of Multicultural and Multinational Collaborations

While much has been written on cultural dimensions, little if any research has been completed identifying different forms of multicultural and multinational (MC/MN) collaborations. Zaccaro, Salas, and Burke (2003) have identified four types of MC/MN collaboration based on their work with American soldiers in Bosnia. These are:

Integrated multicultural/multinational units. Soldiers and foreign nationals operate as part of the same unit with common operational missions. Another version of such teams is a unit from one nation with some foreign liaisons. These often happen at higher rank levels.

Partnering national units. One nation's units serve as partners with other national units. Each unit may have the same overall mission, but different operational missions. Conversely, the units may have the same operational mission but responsibility for different sectors in the operating environment.

Subordinated foreign national units. Foreign units are placed under the command of another national unit and commanding officer. Zaccaro et al. (2003) note that in the American case, this is a rare occurrence.

Embedded units. A national unit is embedded within and is operating from a foreign culture. This type of MC/MN collaboration is noted by Zaccaro et al. (2003) as being the oldest and most familiar to American soldiers.

This raises a number of questions, such as: Does cultural diversity within or between teams affect the productivity or effectiveness of military teams in multinational operations and if so, how?

4.2 METHOD

In order to better understand the impact of cultural diversity on teams within multinational operations, a review of the current literature in the area was conducted. Although relatively little research exists specifically looking at this issue, a body of literature that concerned teams and team-building which can inform an understanding of the dynamics of teams in multinational situations could be identified. For ease of analysis, this research was grouped around some broad themes such as inter-group relations, cross-cultural adaptability, and inter-group activities.

4.2.1 Inter-Group Relations

A multinational team will always be faced with a number of issues that stem from inter-group relations and dynamics. For example, in a peacekeeping mission, which falls into the category of military operations other than war, the difference in cultures, languages, religions, military values and level of expertise will be accentuated (Plante, 1998).

Inter-group relations, while being influenced by the composition of the groups themselves, are subject to a number of tendencies. The most common tendencies are ethnocentrism, social isolationism, prejudices and stereotyping, and marginalization. Quite often, a given tendency will feed on another one. Thus, the ethnocentric approach of judging others from one's own perspective might very well include a number of prejudices and stereotypes (Plante, 1998). For example, Western culture has long considered itself to be far more technologically advanced than any other culture and many Westerners have developed a number of stereotypes about the "technologically challenged people of the Third World." Marginalization and ostracism (which can be considered as marginalization to the extreme) are aspects of group behavior that can simply be defined as the refusal to associate with, or the isolating or rejection of, a group. This isolation can take a number of forms from highly visible to barely noticeable actions. It can vary from subtle treatment and polite exchanges to total exclusion and outright hostility toward a particular group of individuals. Usually, it is based on the tendencies discussed above and will appear along racial, cultural or religious lines. It also can be based on expected skills, values or behavior. In most cases, there is a significant amount of ignorance implied (Plante, 1998).

What does this mean for the collaboration of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) soldiers with, for instance, NATO and non-NATO countries? According to Canadian General Maisonneuve: "[In the Implementation Force, IFOR] problems of interoperability are lessened by the fact that most of the troops are from NATO" (1997, p. 149). However, while there appears to be a common military culture that promotes effective co-ordination among NATO countries, significant differences arise when the Canadian military, for instance, works with some non-NATO countries. The Ethics Survey conducted with Canadian Forces members revealed that cultural tensions are prevalent in multinational deployments. As mentioned by McKee (Chapter 2), these tensions included differences between Canadian and some other United Nations (UN) forces on substantive ethical issues, such as participating in the black market. Other problems arose from different value systems among the contingents (Winslow, 1999).

In the last 5 years, the UN has made substantial efforts to improve the effectiveness of its peacekeeping operations. However, the intensive effort to persuade developing countries to contribute troops has created a number of challenges at the operational level. These problems affect the cohesion and loyalty of a group, which are considered important components of combat effectiveness. Loyalty is encouraged at all levels, as military values and structures grant primacy to collective goals (Winslow, 1998). This is reminiscent of Toennies' (1963) notion of *Gemeinschaft*, which refers to a social state in which belonging is pervasive and where primary group relations predominate: Individuals exhibit strong allegiance to their group and the group exerts social control over the individual member. In the military, group allegiance is seen to be essential to combat effectiveness. Strong affective ties bind soldiers into a fighting unit in which they are willing to sacrifice their lives for each other. Military culture emphasizes "belonging" while training

rewards group performance. Exaggerated loyalty to the primary group, however, can lead members to work at counter purposes to the overall goals of a mission. Thus, assembling and leading a multinational force remains a complex and challenging task for any commander (see Febraro, Chapter 3). In order to succeed, the operational commanders must optimize the forces assigned and create a truly integrated team. This will likely involve the task of training and development. Commanders must keep in mind, however, that success might rest with the weakest contingent; thus, they can ill afford to leave out or to marginalize any contingent within a multinational force.

4.2.2 Cross-Cultural Adaptability

One way to help ensure inclusion of all contingents is to build cross-cultural openness and adaptability. Drawing on a study of Australian Defence Force peacekeepers that highlighted the importance of cross-cultural issues in peace operations, Schmidtchen (1997a) developed an instrument, the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Scale (CCAS). The CCAS quantifies individual cross-cultural adaptability and is based on the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Model depicted in Figure 4.1 (Schmidtchen, 1997b).

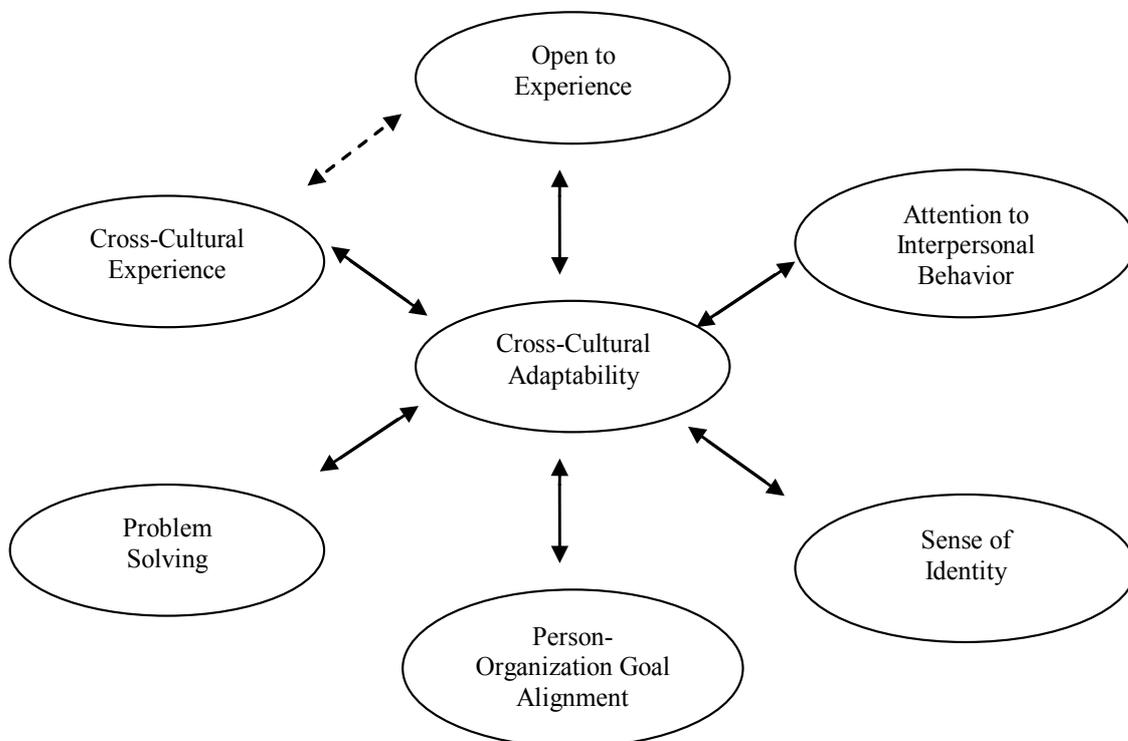


Figure 4.1: Peace Operations Cross-Cultural Adaptability Model.

The CCAS is composed of 53 items that measure the following six domains of cross-cultural adaptability:

Openness to Experience. Peacekeepers must be open to new ideas because they are continually presented with a range of different cultures. These cultures may be organizational (e.g., UN and other non-governmental organizations), military (e.g., peacekeepers from other nations or other services), or ethnically based. The maintenance of consent, a fundamental principle of peace operations, is supported by the peacekeepers’ ability to recognize, adapt to, and integrate ideas and ways of doing things that are different from their own.

Attention to Interpersonal Relations. People who are successful in cross-cultural environments are skilled in their ability to recognize and attend to interpersonal relations. They are attentive to verbal

and nonverbal communication cues and the context in which they occur; they are also sensitive to the impact of their behavior on those with whom they interact, and can accurately communicate their intentions in a sensitive and meaningful way.

Sense of Identity. When entering cross-cultural situations, an individual's beliefs and values may be fundamentally challenged. In a peace operation where exposure to the culture is intense, emotional, but inherently short-term, it is important that service personnel have a high degree of self-awareness and maintain a strong sense of self-identity.

Person-Organization Goal Alignment. Peace operations present service personnel with a range of new roles that stem from the strategic role of the organization in which they serve. In the context of peace operations, the UN is a third-party mediator and monitor. This role must be reflected at every level of the force and in the actions of the individual. Consequently, it is important that the peacekeeper's values and beliefs be consonant with those of the organization.

Problem Solving. Peace operations and cross-cultural environments consistently present service personnel with novel problems in a novel context. In these situations, the individual has limited ability to generalize from previous training and experience. In such a socially ambiguous environment, the ability to identify problems, produce novel solutions, and learn from experience is fundamental to successful performance.

Cross-Cultural Experience. Previous experience in, or exposure to, cross-cultural conditions or a propensity to participate in these types of conditions can provide the individual with skills, abilities and attitudes that can be successfully transferred to the peace operations environment.

The purpose of Vanderpool's (2002) study was to confirm the accuracy and appropriateness of the six factors and their constituent items originally identified by Schmidtchen. The CCAS was administered to 751 members of the Canadian Forces and 563 members of the Australian Defence Force. The results suggest that a five-factor structure would be more appropriate for the CCAS. These factors are interpersonal relations/sense of identity, openness to experience, organizational goals, problem solving, and cross-cultural experience. However, further research is required to verify the factors identified and to determine the predictive validity of the CCAS.

4.3 INTER-GROUP ACTIVITIES

4.3.1 Inter-Group Planning

Effective coalition operations begin with thorough planning that includes all participating organizations in clearly defined, appropriate roles. Two key factors that influence the success of inter-group planning for coalition operations are described below.

Inclusion planning. This factor is the degree to which all participating coalition organizations are included in planning prior to deployment. It can range from being fully inclusive of all organizations to being fully exclusive, where each organization develops its own plans independently. When implemented well, inclusion planning creates a positive first step in relationship building between coalition partners and facilitates the exchange of valuable information throughout the operation.

Common and consistent goal. This factor is the degree to which all participating coalition organizations agree on a common objective and strategy (role compatibility) prior to deployment. It can range from being fully agreed upon by all organizations to being conflicted, where each organization pursues objectives independently. The development of a common and consistent goal fosters relationship building between coalition partners and facilitates the exchange of information throughout the operation.

Inter-group planning builds a foundation of trust for a coalition operation. It must be acknowledged that cultural differences between groups can add to the challenges of inter-group planning – these differences may mean that planning is carried out differently by the groups involved (e.g., different levels of personnel involved, different planning procedures). However, inclusion planning can facilitate the formation of a common and consistent goal even between groups with dissimilar purposes and perspectives, if the planning process focuses on the big picture and on the population needing assistance. In turn, inter-group bias and perceptions of “us” versus “them” are lessened, and unity of purpose is strengthened. Participants contribute to the plan of operations, lessening the chances for misattribution of intent and the development of feelings of inequity. Early inter-group planning paves the way for later inter-group coordination.

4.3.2 Inter-Group Coordination

After the initial planning has been completed, co-ordination must occur throughout all phases of an operation in order for it to succeed. Inter-group coordination (along with communication) helps to ensure positive relations and efficiency. There are two key factors that influence the success of inter-group coordination for coalition operations:

Service-Oriented Military. This factor relates to the existence of behaviors that reflect mission appropriate service to the affected population and to participating organizations. These behaviors can range from a full customer service orientation where the military seeks to understand how to serve and behaves accordingly to a take-charge mentality where there is no customer focus. A service orientation is particularly important in operations other than war that require a high degree of customer focus, such as relationship building, diplomacy, negotiation, understanding, and problem solving. When implemented well, a service orientation facilitates teamwork, high morale, trust, and good will among contingents.

Task Reciprocity. This factor refers to the existence of a reciprocal helping relationship among groups such that “you help me do what I need to do for the good of the mission, I help you do what you need to do for the good of the mission.” This reciprocity is based on the viewpoint that all mission participants have valuable roles to fulfil, and mutual helping is the only way for all participants to succeed. Social identity of groups is maintained, but the groups are perceived to be of fairly equal status. Seiple (1996) refers to this mindset as “altruistic self interest,” that is, the cornerstone of interaction between, for instance, the military and non-government organizations (NGOs). When implemented well, task reciprocity contributes toward solid working relationships and leads to high cooperation among organizations and high mission commitment.

Effective inter-group coordination results when roles are clearly defined. Groups with differences in the amount of specialists or generalists on staff may find that task-role linkages need to be explicitly defined for coordination efforts to proceed smoothly. Personnel that provide liaison to the other groups are essential for on-going coordination. In addition, problems due to misattribution of intent are reduced when supportive relationships are established. Effective intergroup coordination also increases the efficiency of resource usage, thereby reducing conflicts due to resource scarcity.

4.3.3 Inter-Group Communication

A comprehensive, mutually agreed-upon plan forms the foundation of an effective coalition operation. Inter-group communication is the means by which organizations share information on the development and execution of plans. Two key factors influence the success of inter-group communication for coalition operations:

Inter-organizational communication. This factor is the degree of information sharing between leaders belonging to different groups (e.g., participating militaries, the UN, NGOs). It can range from being inclusive so that all organizations share and minimize gaps, to exclusive where participating

organizations do not share any information. When implemented well, inter-organizational communication creates ease and speed in accomplishing difficult tasks, improves planning, and reduces major mistakes.

Information transfer. This factor is the degree of information flow from group leaders to those performing task assignments in the field. It can range from being fully transferred so that all field personnel are informed of plans, to minimally transferred where, due to technological difficulties or lack of a system, field personnel are not informed. When implemented well, information transfer enhances unity of effort by facilitating efficient task execution.

Effectively functioning inter-group communications are key to coalition operations (see also Riedel, Chapter 6). Aside from the obvious issue of the technology used by the different groups, a protocol for communications is important for defining how communications occur (see Masakowski, Chapter 7). Again, cultural differences may play a part. Differences in hierarchy and the absence or presence of gatekeepers set limits on who communicates with whom. Further, it is hypothesized that these differences are associated with protocols for one-way (usually top down) or two-way communication. Differences in these areas may be overcome by creating communications protocols specifically designed for and bounded by the needs of the specific operation. Without effective communications, personnel may be performing needless tasks or may be put into harm's way. The likelihood of misattributions, inter-group bias, and conflict over resources is increased in the absence of effective inter-group communication.

4.3.4 Inter-Group Training

Inter-group training is an essential pre-mission/between mission method for assuring positive relations, knowledge, and teamwork (see also Febbraro, Chapter 3). It prepares groups to be at their best when working with each other under the stress of disaster, war, or other unusual circumstances in which coalitions often function. Two key factors influence the success of inter-group training for coalition operations:

Cultural awareness. This factor refers to behavior by military personnel that takes into account the values of the host nation and participating organizations. When implemented well, this factor promotes positive goodwill, publicity, and enhanced ability for effective operations. The consequences of poor cultural awareness can be serious, such as alienation of the host populace and the creation of threatening conditions for military personnel.

Combined rehearsal. This factor refers to specific combined training or simulation exercises prior to or during a mission that allows all organizations an opportunity to start building unity of effort. When implemented well, combined rehearsal facilitates unity of effort, and reduces inefficiency and mistrust.

Inter-group training is the ultimate facilitator of success. There is no substitute for experience in how to plan together, share resources, or establish effective communications. However, as noted above, resistance to shared training has been encountered. Issues such as military security and control of exercises as well as NGOs' desire to maintain neutrality must be considered. As these diverse groups increasingly find themselves as partners in real operations, creative solutions are being developed. For example, the Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance in Hawaii has expedited combined exercises and exchanges between the military and NGO communities.

4.4 BARRIERS TO TEAMWORK

As discussed throughout this report, four cultural factors have emerged as barriers to the teamwork process (Bowman & Pierce, 2003; Klein, Pongonis, & Klein, 2000). The first, *power distance*, describes the extent to which less powerful individuals in a system accept inequality. In low power distance

relationships, working patterns are more egalitarian and team processes more collaborative and interactive. Alternately, in high power distance teams, leaders tend to be directive, thereby constraining team creativity and collaboration. An example of how power distance imbalances act as a barrier to teamwork will clarify this problem. If team members are high on the power distance dimension, then they will be less likely to ask for clarification of a task requirement, possibly leading to incorrect or partial completion of the job.

The second cultural factor, *tolerance for uncertainty*, reflects the amount of discomfort experienced by an individual in the presence of unknown factors. A low tolerance is marked by a search for details through rules and structure, whereas individuals or teams who act in the face of incomplete knowledge (who make decisions while moving) are exhibiting a high tolerance for uncertainty. This difference can cause problems in a team if members with high and low tolerances must work together. One will start slowly, collecting as much data as possible, while the other will move quickly toward an end product.

The *individualism-collectivism* dichotomy is the third dimension, which reflects a preference for working alone or in a group. This dimension includes a preference for building relationships among team members as contrasted with a focus on individual task achievement. Individualists often view the mission as primary and relationships among team members as secondary; collectivists view team relationships as critical to producing a viable team product.

Finally, cultural differences emerged in the *cognitive process of reasoning*. For instance, variance was identified in concrete versus hypothetical thought patterns. Hypothetical thinkers are capable of envisioning several solutions to a problem, while concrete thinkers prefer to have detailed plans of action and frequently use previously employed solutions to solve new tasks. These differences cause problems in a team setting when a course of action is unclear or when conditions require changes to a plan. The hypothetical thinker is capable of generating several possible solutions, which may be viewed by a concrete thinker as avoiding the problem at hand. Similarly, variances in dialectical reasoning have also been found. Consistent with the Greek and Roman tradition of logical discussion, dialectical reasoning selects the best course by debating alternatives. Discussion is viewed as helping to sharpen distinctions and highlight strengths and weaknesses of each view and maximize the quality of solutions. However, not all cultures agree on the value of such dialectical reasoning.

In addition to the four dimensions discussed above, *activity orientation* is another dimension on which cultures vary: Activity orientation refers to the way a culture's members think about life, work, and relationships (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Two basic activity orientations include the "doing" and the "being" orientations. National groups characterized by "doing" view work- and achievement-related activities as the desirable focus of their activity. Groups characterized by "being," on the other hand, view relationships and enjoyment of life as the desirable focus of activity.

In short, if multinational military operations are to work effectively, it is vital that there is an understanding of the complexities presented by national cultural differences (Klein et al., 2000). The challenges posed by national cultural differences are compounded by the distributed decision-making that characterizes many multinational military operations.

Sutton and Pierce (2003) proposed that situation assessment, coordination, roles and responsibilities, and support behavior are four fundamental aspects of team performance that are consistent across teams, multinational or not. Conceptualizing teamwork in these terms emphasizes cognitive functions that manifest in measurable behaviors (for a detailed review, see McGlynn, Sutton, Sprague, Demski, & Pierce, 1999). Behaviors associated with team functions are, for example, information exchange regarding team tasks, goals, and mission (situation assessment); response sequencing, time, and position coordination of responses (coordination); load balancing, matching member resources to task requirements (assigning roles and responsibilities); and general activity monitoring, including adjustments of team and

member activities in response to errors and omissions (support behavior) (Fleishman & Zaccaro, 1992). Individuals can have significantly different culturally based cognitive biases that influence their behavior.

In concert with the cognitive biases of others, these behaviors will either enhance or damage team performance. Leaders and team members who recognize such biases and understand the implication of culture’s impact on situation assessment, coordination, assigning of roles and responsibilities, and support behavior are better prepared to adapt, as needed, to ensure mission success. It may be proposed that the relationship between culturally based cognitive dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, activity orientation, and thinking orientation) and team performance functions (situation assessment, coordination, assigning of roles and responsibilities, and support behavior) can be behaviorally defined. Once defined, a framework for understanding cultural diversity in cognition and teamwork will provide insight into culturally based cognitive biases on teams that will further enhance an understanding of the relationship between cognitive behaviors and adaptive performance. This knowledge should lead to improved adaptive team performance in joint, interoperable, multinational operations.

The goal of the work of Bowman (2002) was to develop and validate a model representing the relationship between cultural dimensions and team performance functions. Data collection occurred over a period of 12 months wherein four trips were made to the Stabilization Force headquarters in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Table 4.1: Framework for Understanding Cultural Diversity in Cognition and Teamwork

Framework for Understanding Cultural Diversity in Cognition and Teamwork					
National Cultural Dimension	Team Performance Functions				
	Range	Situation Assessment	Coordination	Assigning Roles & Responsibilities	Support Behavior
Power Distance	High	Vertical	Centralized	Rank	Leader
	Low	Horizontal	Decentralized	Expertise	Team
Uncertainty Avoidance	High need for Certainty	Detailed Info	Well defined	Highly Specialized	Formal
	Low need for Certainty	General Info	Ad hoc	Multi-functional	Informal
Activity Orientation	Independent	Direct Comms	Doing	Skills & Abilities	Task
	Interdependent	Indirect Comms	Being	Connections	Relationship

Collaboration on multinational teams, whether to combat terrorism or keep the peace, places a premium on cultural competence and adaptable teamwork. As the definition of what constitutes adaptable behavior on multinational military teams becomes clearer, a look at the value of understanding the effect of culture on teamwork becomes necessary. As has been seen, many barriers to adaptability are directly attributable to cultural cognitive diversity. Following are just a few examples noted by Bowman (2002).

Power Distance

- If team members are high in power distance, then they may not share information that could alter a decision, believing that it is the leader’s responsibility to make decisions.
- If a leader is high in power distance, then team members may not be used to exploit their best skills, possibly resulting in miscommunication, lack of coordination, and loss in shared situational awareness.

Uncertainty Avoidance

- If team members have a high need for certainty, then they may ask for so much guidance and information that they no longer provide unique contributions to the task.
- If a leader has a high need for certainty, then the task may become so detailed and structured that it obviates any creative action on the part of the team members, thereby defeating the purpose of team action. The corollary to this condition is that:
 - If the leader has too low a need for certainty, then they may not cover sufficient details in an operation and not provide team members with enough information for them to do their jobs.

Activity Orientation

- If team members have an independent rather than an interdependent orientation, then they may be moving from task to task without developing a team culture or team situational awareness.
- If a leader is independent rather than interdependent oriented, then they may disregard some team members' contributions if they do not obviously contribute to the task at hand. Information and opportunities for shared situational awareness may be lost.

Thinking Orientation

- If leaders and team members are too hypothetical in their thinking, then it may be difficult to reach closure on an issue as members continue to generate hypotheses.
- If leaders and team members are concrete thinkers, then they may miss information that may be relevant to a task but outside the mainstream.

The central purpose of Bowman's (2002) program of research was to facilitate adaptable teamwork, specifically on multinational military teams, through the development of objective force leader and soldier learning opportunities. Bowman proposed to expand understanding of the relationship between cultural, social cognitions, and team performance functions through theoretical and practical research in collaboration with members of the multinational team commanding forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other multinational venues. Selection of representative dimensions of cultural variability may be revised to include one of the most researched in relation to cognitive processes, the individualism-collectivism dimension. Using the framework as a basis, it was Bowman's aim to develop products to increase cultural awareness and multinational team adaptability. Bowman proposed to include evaluation of performance measures that predict adaptable team performance and the development of a Likert-type scale to measure the degree to which team members' cognitions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and activity orientation can affect team situational awareness, coordination, assigning of roles and responsibilities, and support behavior.

One of the main distinguishing features of current deployments is the fact that units are very often formed by several military contingents, differing in size and composition and coming from different nations. This requires, among many other things, a high level of interculturalism within units, since it can be assumed that different cultures are linked to different nations, and that diverse military cultures are involved, even though a certain universal military culture could be assumed to exist. But diversity means also different rules and organizational features for the various national contingents, and different equipment and resources, not to mention different languages. Since cooperation is required such diversity has to be managed successfully for the sake of the mission itself.

Indeed, as earlier mentioned, there are stressors and difficulties that arise from diversity within multinational forces. In such a context a sort of "culture shock" can be expected. Difficulties arise from relations with other units' members of different nationality and language that can then affect performance.

They can also give rise to feelings of relative deprivation, defined as a sharp perception of unfair differences in such things as wages and equipment among contingents (see McKee, Chapter 2). On the other hand there is interesting evidence that, though it is limited in scope and details, is enough to invalidate the most pessimistic hypotheses on the incidence of problems posed by intercultural relations and the deficiencies in professional education and training that might cause them. Indeed, the simple findings expounded below point unmistakably to fewer difficulties than could reasonably be expected.

A study by Boene (2002) found that only 38% of the total officer sample reported difficulties and problems in interpersonal relations with colleagues from other national contingents, and of those, less than 3% reported that these difficulties were frequent (the remaining 35% saw these difficulties as intermittent). When difficulties are considered, lower ranked officers mentioned “problematic cross-national relations” less often (less than 30%) than did senior officers (between 40% and 55%), and the same was true for younger officers (i.e., 25 – 35 years old). With respect to the source of problematic intercultural relations, these were registered as indicated in Table 4.2 below. As can be seen, the main difficulties arose from general cultural diversity (language, culture) and from diversity in military culture (divided loyalties, mission interpretation, professional preparation, ethical codes of conduct). The fact that such difficulties are less frequent than might be expected does not mean that they are not relevant for unit performance, however.

Table 4.2: Source of Intercultural Problematic Relations (adapted from Boene, 2002, p. 93)

Source of difficulty	%
Language	46,1
Divided Loyalties (NATO, UN, Country...)	32,6
Cultural differences	31,2
Mission diverging interpretations	31,2
Interoperability problems	28,4
Professional preparation	28,4
Different ethical codes	24,8
Communication	22
Rivalries	17
RoE	16,3
Other	4,2

Note: Percentages exceed 100 because more than one item could be chosen by respondents.

4.4.1 Diversity Among the Multinational Forces Deployed

On the basis of earlier research, van Amelsfoort and van Vliet (2004) developed a framework in which team functioning is influenced by three sorts of factors: situational, personal, and team. The focus of this research is on cultural differences within the team and between the team and the host nation. The model suggests that cultural diversity within a team can be considered a resource if teams are exposed to a highly (culturally) diverse environment. This resource would enhance observation, appraisal of situations and coping with ambiguous situations. A questionnaire has been developed and administered based on this model; however results and analysis are still pending publication.

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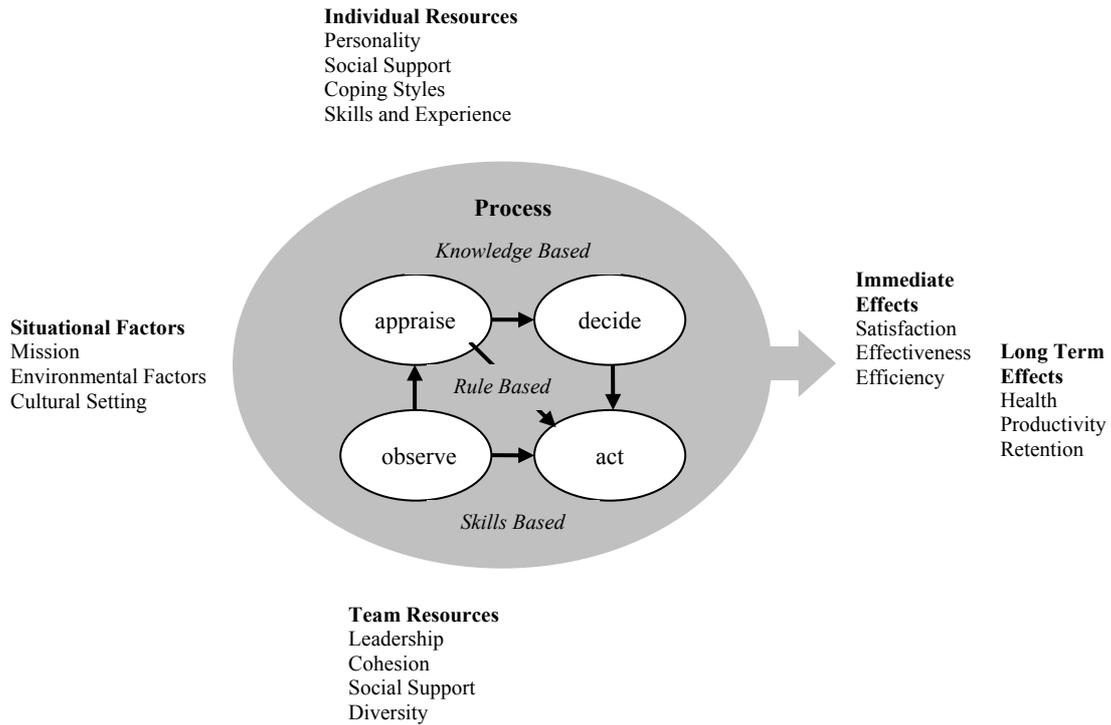


Figure 4.2: Framework for Team Functioning (van Amelsfoort & van Vliet, 2004).

Fidock (2002) developed a framework within which current and future model development can be assessed in terms of representing organizational behavior. Organizational behavior can be conceptualized in terms of six key attributes with associated variables. The six attributes are technology, structure, culture, processes, people, and resources (see Figure 4.3).

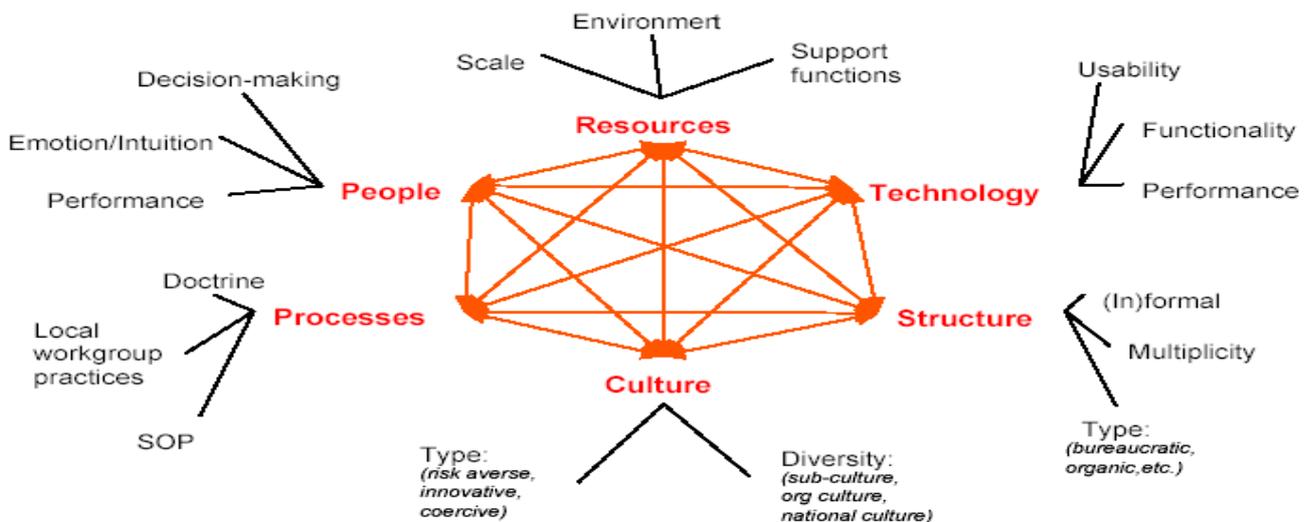


Figure 4.3: Framework for Organizational Behavior (Fidock, 2002).

4.5 CONCLUSION

The foregoing literature review suggests consensus on a number of points. When groups possessing diverse cultural and organizational backgrounds must work together, differences among them can become major impediments to mission success. Gaining an awareness of these differences is a necessary first step in developing strategies to overcome these differences and forge effective working alliances. In nearly every coalition operation, personnel from diverse groups are expected to interact effectively in order to achieve mission objectives. The organizations involved, such as the host government, the military, and NGOs, frequently struggle in this effort. Knowledge of inter-group variations in core cultural values and their related behavioral consequences can help to promote positive inter-group relations. Implementation of planning, coordination, communication, and training processes that are designed to meet the needs of diverse groups is required to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of coalition operations.

Although theoretical and empirical studies on this subject exist outside the military context (see, e.g., Hofstede 1980, 1991), the subject is almost non-existent within military boundaries. The military organization has such specific characteristics that the theories based on civil organizations do not necessarily generalize to this type of organization. On the other hand the generic dimensions originally identified by Hofstede on which cultures may differ seem to be supported within a military context. Different authors may reformulate these dimensions somewhat or add a dimension due to their specific interest, but in general the five-dimension approach seems to be rich enough to allow for the different cultural distinctions, but parsimonious enough to remain generic.

On the whole, much work remains to be done. There is a need for access to empirical studies that test theories and models in this area in order to develop a knowledge base for informing policy relating to multinational military teams.

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