

Jessica L. Wildman · Richard L. Griffith
Brigitte K. Armon *Editors*

Critical Issues in Cross Cultural Management

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Preface

The Value of Alternate Lenses to Leverage Culture

It has become somewhat of a tradition for my family to hire a professional photographer for the holidays or other special occasions. While it wasn't intentional, it became a way of documenting just how much my son has changed over the years.¹ The photographer that we hire is amazing. I find it hard to reconcile the images that I see from her photographs and the experience of being in the photo session. What seemed to be just an average day looks stunning in the pictures. Again and again, our photographer captures the perfect moment at the perfect time.

Being somewhat of a nerd, I became curious as to how she was able to capture such perfect photographs. I bought a SLR camera and tried to read some books and websites, but found it difficult to replicate the outcomes. After asking our photographer some questions, she shared one of the key elements of her success. She told me that the choice of lens had a great deal to do with her ability to get just the perfect shot.

The choice of lens allows one to gain a different perspective and to have a view of the world that would be invisible to the naked eye. So, while I was in the same physical space during the photo session, I could not see what our photographer could see.

Culture can operate in a similar fashion. Culture allows us to interpret and make sense of our world, and those who come from a similar culture share this interpretive framework. Just like the lens, some cultures focus on events that are close, while other cultures take the telescopic lens's perspective of the distant future.

In the modern world, it is becoming increasingly common to work and interact with people from very different cultures. Globalization brings us closer together, either physically or virtually through the means of electronic communication. English has been adopted as the international language of business. Thus, even though we may be from different cultures, we may speak the same language. Yet,

¹Story courtesy of the first author.

this common language may be deceiving. Its adoption doesn't mean that we have perfect understanding. What makes perfect sense to you may not make sense to your international partner, your international supplier, or your international market. We view the world through different lenses; our perspectives may not align, which can lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding, and lost opportunities.

To share key elements of success in understanding culture, we convened the first Cross-Cultural Management Summit in the spring of 2014. The Summit was hosted by the Institute for Cross-Cultural Management at Florida Tech, and this book is a product of that summit. Culture and organizational effectiveness was the theme that brought the Summit participants together. Each of the participants saw culture impacting their profession, and they gathered to learn more about culture from each other. For our participants from the corporate world, culture was an unknown variable that could impact their bottom line and add risk to their business. For participants from the military, knowledge regarding culture could improve the intelligence they gathered and make sure that our men and women in uniform came home alive. For our participants from academia, a better understanding of the context of cultural dilemmas may be a piece of an intellectual puzzle in a long a productive research career. So while our interest in culture was common ground, the background of the participants was quite varied. We feel that is the real strength of the Summit.

If we all came from the same background and had the same problems, the solutions available to us would be fixed and expertise more limited. However, the participants didn't have the same background, which gives us the opportunity to create and claim value. A quick examination of the summit participants revealed participants flew from China, Europe, Africa, and South America and represented equally diverse professional fields. Included in the participants was a former foreign area officer who used his cultural experienced gained in Indonesia to facilitate the success of a Marine Expeditionary Unit in Cambodia, the first US Marine back in that country since the last battle of the Vietnam War. Another participant was the Vice President of Nortel, who used her understanding of the value of family in Latin cultures to build business in Bolivia, not through the traditional gifts of liquor and cigars, but through family gifts that led to an invitation into the home of her future partners. Yet another participant was a cultural anthropologist who worked with the king of Tonga to improve the quality of life of people on the islands.

The goal of the Summit was to leverage these different vantage points to solve each other's problems, to gain a new perspective, and re-focus on our work. With the aid of a different lens, we might find a solution to our problem that wasn't apparent from our own point of view. In fact, one person's problem may actually be another person's solution. There is an old idiom "One man's trash is another man's treasure," and our hope was that through networking and sharing with other professionals, the participants of the Summit might stumble across just such a treasure.

While the collective wisdom in the room provided the potential for deep learning and problem solving, all of that potential needed to be unlocked before it could be shared. Because the participants of the Summit came from such varied backgrounds, they often spoke different professional "languages." Luckily, the staff of

ICCM often found themselves acting like interpreters, facilitating conversations by helping to translate language and keep conversations on track. With a just little help, we were able to unlock a lot of that hidden expertise through probing questions and explicit clarifications.

By no means was this process easy for any of the Summit participants. It took a lot of effort, patience, and perseverance. Lugging a camera bag full of lenses around is hard work. It is much easier to stick with our same old lens and same old habits. We asked participants of the Summit not only to lead discussions, but to follow tangents down a rabbit hole or two. We encouraged them to look for opportunities to share, question, and translate across professions and contexts. Luckily, the participants were up for the challenges. What resulted was a high energy exchange of thoughts, ideas, questions, and perspectives that lasted the duration of the Summit.

Reflecting on all we learned at the Summit, it would a shame if the lessons we learned weren't spread to a wider audience. The outcome of that sentiment is the book that you're now reading. Our goal for this edited volume was a wider dissemination of the lessons of the Summit so that the value created at the event could be claimed by other professionals with similar challenges.

The 2014 Cross Cultural Management Summit was an enjoyable and memorable event for us. We hope this book will be an enjoyable read for you, and allow you to borrow the lenses of some of thought leaders at the Summit. Perhaps with a change of perspective, your challenges may be drawn into sharper focus and the improved view offer new insights.

Melbourne, USA

Richard L. Griffith
Brigitte K. Armon

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Chapter 1

#TeamLeadership: Leadership for Today's Multicultural, Virtual, and Distributed Teams

Marissa L. Shuffler, William S. Kramer and C. Shawn Burke

Organizations today are increasingly reliant upon technology to bring together diverse teams of individuals from around the globe who can solve the challenges that are beyond the capabilities of a single person (Connaughton and Shuffler 2007). However, while such collaborations may bring together the expertise needed to solve problems, this does not mean that the team members are also experts in teamwork. Failures in communication, coordination, performance monitoring, and other teamwork processes due to issues of working across cultural, temporal, and digital boundaries have plagued teams for years, often with disastrous results (Salas et al. 2008). For example, the Mars Climate Orbiter was lost in 1999 when the engineering team, comprised of members from different countries, failed to coordinate effectively and used the wrong measurement system (meters vs. feet) to construct software, causing the orbiter to disintegrate when it entered the atmosphere at an incorrect angle (Sausser et al. 2009). Thus, in addition to possessing content area expertise, there may be other functions critical to effectively facilitating the necessary processes that enable subsequent team effectiveness when working across time, space, and cultures (Salas et al. 2009).

While the ability for teams to be distributed in numerous regions of the world and connected via virtuality does offer benefits, such contextually driven interactions can also pose a variety of challenges to critical team processes. Certainly,

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while virtuality offers the opportunity of being able to bring together teams of qualified individuals no matter what their geographic location (Maynard et al. 2012), it is important to note that this distribution of members and types of virtual tools utilized may impact how social presence—or a lack thereof—is conveyed in teams, which can in turn inhibit team processes and effectiveness (Kirkman and Mathieu 2005). This impact on social presence interacts further with the composition of the team, both in terms of deep and surface-level diversity issues which may challenge the norms and interactions of team development and teamwork itself (Burke et al. 2010).

Given these complexities that such teams may face, it is important to understand what factors may be able to help improve their performance and reduce the likelihood of critical errors such as those experienced by the Mars Orbiter team. One proposed avenue for effectively facilitating teamwork in complex environments is that of team leadership (Bell and Kozlowski 2002; Burke et al. 2011; Kayworth and Leidner 2001). The purpose of leadership in any given team is to establish goals and set direction that will lead to the accomplishment of these goals (Zaccaro et al. 2001). From a functional leadership perspective, this means performing a range of behaviors, both those specific to the task at hand as well as those behaviors aimed at enhancing the social climate of the team (Zaccaro et al. 2009). Previous research suggests that team leadership is a critical component of ensuring effective team processes and team outcomes (Burke et al. 2006; Salas et al. 2005; Zaccaro 2007).

However, team leadership does not necessarily have to rely solely upon a single individual, as is often the assumption (Pearce and Conger 2003). Indeed, there may be multiple leaders on a team, with different members sharing leadership responsibilities or rotating leadership to ensure effectiveness, referred to as collective leadership (Zaccaro and DeChurch 2011). While still a relatively new area of study, there have been promising findings supporting the idea that collective leadership—whereby multiple members participate in leading—can facilitate effective teamwork and enhance team performance (Balkundi and Harrison 2006; Carson et al. 2007; Mehra et al. 2006; Pearce and Conger 2003). Collective leadership in virtual, distributed, and multicultural environments may be even more effective than traditional vertical leadership, as having multiple team members step up to take on leadership needs can aid in ensuring specific team needs are being met across the team lifecycle (Day et al. 2006).

Thus, the purpose of the current paper is to explore existing research as it may contribute to our understanding of how to best utilize collective team leadership as a mechanism for effectively working in the multicultural, distributed, and virtual environments of today. We first briefly focus on defining the characteristics of complex multicultural, virtual, and distributed environments in terms of their impact on teamwork and team performance, then turn to examining the existing science regarding collective leadership. We then propose several recommendations regarding how such collective leadership may be best incorporated into teams facing these complexities of virtuality, multiculturalism, and distribution, including a discussion of the actionable strategies as well as future research directions. It is hoped that this white paper will serve as a starting point to further the discussion

regarding collective leadership as a potential avenue for enhancing teams facing the challenges and complexities of the twenty-first century.

Summary of the Science

Complexities in the Twenty-First Century: Multiculturalism, Virtuality, and Distribution

Today, global organizations are no longer the exception, but the norm (Burke et al. 2010). The resulting multicultural workforce can have tremendous benefits as talent and resources are no longer geographically constrained. Indeed, multicultural teams have rapidly increased in their prevalence across a range of organizations. Multicultural teams are defined as those whose members have diverse values and beliefs based on their cultural orientation (Von Glinow et al. 2004). In seeking to provide guidance to organizations there has been a fair amount of work conducted which examines multicultural differences in group or team-based work. For example, research has shown cultural differences have implications for cooperation (e.g., Kirkman and Shapiro 2001), communication (Conyne et al. 1999), feedback (Earley et al. 1999), conflict type (Elron 1998; Mortensen and Hinds 2001), efficacy (Gibson and Krikman 1999), adaptation (Harrison et al. 2000), decision-making (Kirchmeyer and Cohen 1992), and team performance (Gibson and Krikman 1999; Matveev and Nelson 2004).

Furthermore, given advances in technology and communication, such teams may operate in distributed locations, requiring them to collaborate through virtual media such as videoconferencing or teleconferencing (Connaughton and Shuffler 2007; Martins et al. 2004). Indeed, virtuality and distribution have become the norm in most team situations, with it no longer being a question of whether or not teams are virtual and distributed, but instead the degree to which teams are virtual and distributed (Kirkman and Mathieu 2005). Virtuality therefore has come to be viewed on a continuum, with low virtuality teams being those whose synchronous communications are rich in task information and social cues (e.g., videoconferencing) and high virtuality teams being those whose asynchronous communications are weaker in providing relevant task and social information (e.g., email, instant messaging). Distribution, while in research often dichotomized into full distribution or collocation, can also be viewed along a similar continuum, with teams capable of being partially distributed (e.g., half the team collocated, other members isolated) in many different possible configurations.

While this environment seems to be built for success, there is an ever-growing debate regarding whether multiculturalism, distribution, and virtuality in teams are in fact opportunities or instead crippling challenges to organizations (Stanko and Gibson 2009). If there are cultural differences in teamwork when looking intra-culturally across cultures, the challenges they pose are compounded when multiple

cultures are placed within a single team. However, it has been argued that these teams can be effective to the degree to which they are able to manage the need for consensus versus the need for diversity (Argote and McGrath 1993). While the diversity in skills and perspectives may benefit multicultural teams, the team also needs a degree of common ground in order to facilitate coordinated action and the understanding that leads to that coordination (Argote and McGrath 1993). Thus, as organizations increasingly rely on multicultural teams, a debate emerges regarding the challenges and opportunities of merging vastly different backgrounds, traditions, motivations, and concerns (Dinwoodie 2005). From one viewpoint, multiculturalism can challenge teams by making communication difficult and miscommunication more likely (Von Glinow et al. 2004). However, differences in culture can also bring together individuals whose unique experiences and expertise can be of great benefit to enhancing teamwork (Connaughton and Shuffler 2007). Therefore, it is critical to understand how to best leverage these unique qualities of multicultural teams.

Certainly, distribution and virtuality may be viewed as either advantages or disadvantages as well, depending on the context. Distribution of members can serve as a boundary, leading to lowered levels of interaction from both a task and a social perspective (Kraut et al. 2002; O’Leary and Cummings 2007). Less interaction means that team members will be less likely to convey that they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be successful as a team, causing other members to potentially ignore or misinterpret their attempts at influence (Zaccaro et al. 2012). Indeed, Kerr and Jermier (1978) note the role of physical distance creating conditions whereby effective teamwork may be challenging or altogether impossible. From a virtuality standpoint, teams that maximize the opportunities that are provided by virtuality can greatly benefit, such as the use of synchronous collaboration tools that can allow for simultaneous idea generation across space and time (Kirkman and Mathieu 2005). However, much like multiculturalism, the incorporation of virtuality can also impede teamwork, often due to a lack of social cues or difficulty sharing information (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2011). In sum, it is critical to not only understand how to best leverage culture and maximize it to the fullest extent possible, but also to create environments whereby teams are provided with the support needed to function effectively in virtual and distributed environments.

Collective Leadership: A Means for Enhancing Today’s Teams?

Given these complexities that teams today face, one avenue that may provide a source of support is that of leadership, particularly leadership at the collective team level (Pearce 2004). In looking at the literature on the leadership of collectives, the predominant amount of work that has been conducted, both conceptually and

empirically, examines leadership as a vertical influence process. While vertical leadership has a long history and is indeed important, it is but one type of leadership. Moreover, in the complex environments of the twenty-first century often it is impossible for one individual to have the requisite knowledge and skill to successfully enact vertical leadership to the exclusion of other forms of leadership. Others have also acknowledged that the sharing of leadership and responsibility within organizations is now critical to survival (Merken and Spencer 1998).

The notion of leadership being shared among individuals in collectives is not a new concept (e.g., Gibbs 1954); however, its focused study is a relatively new phenomenon across a range of disciplines (Yammarino et al. 2005). But, what does it mean to collectively lead? While there have been several conceptualizations put forth across disciplines (Carson et al. 2007), the common theme running throughout the various conceptualizations is that collective leadership involves the distribution of the leadership responsibilities throughout the team (Lambert 2002; Jackson 2000; Pearce and Conger 2003) and does not negate vertical leadership. In examining the literature on collective leadership what seems to differ among researchers is the manner in which the responsibilities are shared and the exact nature of what constitutes 'leadership.' For example, while some researchers explicitly view collective leadership as an emergent phenomenon that occurs within the team (Day et al. 2004), others do not disallow the possibility that shared leadership can be formally prescribed (Pearce and Sims 2002). In relation to form, the argument is that collective leadership is the "serial emergence of multiple leaders over the lifespan of the team" (Pearce and Sims 2002, p. 176) as compared to the notion of co-leadership. In a similar notion, Day et al. (2004) talk about leadership capacity which is a form of collective leadership conceptualized as an emergent state whereby social capital is built within the team. In sum, collective leadership involves both the delineation of who is leading, as well as the degree to what and how different leadership behaviors are distributed, rotated, or simultaneously shared among members (Zaccaro and DeChurch 2011).

Work on collective leadership recognizes the complexity present within organizational settings and relies on the underlying tenet that "those who are doing the job are [often] in the best position to improve it" (Jackson 2000, p. 16). This form of leadership has been argued to be most useful when tasks are interdependent and complex (Pearce 2004). Thus, collective leadership may be well suited for the demands of multicultural, virtual, and distributed environments. Further, collective leadership should be effective at facilitating the processes that comprise teamwork, which in turn should lead to enhanced team performance, as the relationship between teamwork and team performance has been well established (LePine et al. 2008; Marks et al. 2001). By having multiple team members fulfilling leadership needs as they arise, teams should have all necessary resources needed to ensure that all teamwork processes and emergent states develop and operate smoothly (Marks et al. 2000).

Indeed, a number of studies have illustrated the link between collective leadership and team outcomes (e.g., Avolio et al. 2009; Carson et al. 2007;

Kukenberger et al. 2011; Pearce and Sims 2002, 2002). Research has illustrated the impact of leadership as a collective team property on team outcomes, as it is proposed that contributing leadership both meets the needs of the team as well as increasing the commitment of members offering such leadership (Mathieu et al. in press). In addition to the work previously discussed by Pearce et al. (2001), Carson et al. (2007) found in their study of shared leadership, teams with more dense leadership networks (i.e., higher levels of shared leadership) were associated with higher levels of team performance as rated by clients. Other studies have offered support for the link between team leadership and team member satisfaction and overall effectiveness (e.g., Avolio et al. 2009; Ensley et al. 2006; Erez and Gati 2002). From a virtual context, Muethel et al. (2012) offered empirical support for the link between shared leadership and team performance in dispersed teams. Thus, while research in this area is still growing, there appears to be initial support to the idea that collective leadership does in fact have a positive influence for teams operating in complex environments.

Bridging the Gap: Evidence-Based Practices

Certainly, leadership has been argued to play a pivotal role in determining team effectiveness (Burke et al. 2006). Within multicultural, virtual, and distributed teams, leadership actions become even more important given the likelihood of the team exhibiting degradations in team coherence, which in turn, promotes the coordinated action indicative of effective teams. Promoting collective leadership may therefore help teams adapt to difficulties in execution and process loss. Drawing from several existing bodies of literature, we next offer several evidence-based practices that may aid practitioners in determining how to best promote collective leadership efforts within their teams.

First, organizations utilizing team members who are distributed should take the form of media that they use to communicate into consideration, particularly if those team members are to be involved in collective leadership. Social influence is a key defining factor of leadership, and without appropriate media to convey such social presence, leadership may suffer or fail to exist at the collective level (Hoch and Kozlowski in press). While text-based virtual tools such as instant messaging may offer benefits for enhancing other aspects of teamwork, in order to convey social presence needed for influence, teams would benefit from the use of richer media such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2011). However, this does not mean that all organizations must acquire the richest media possible, as there were not distinct differences for videoconferencing and teleconferencing. Therefore, it may be perfectly suitable for teams to continue to use teleconferencing in order to successfully convey the social presence needed for influencing others. Thus, it is important from a collective leadership standpoint that teams utilize appropriate media for conveying social presence.