

## ABSTRACT

MCGURRIN, DANIEL PAUL. Investigating Shared Norms in Multicultural Teams: Exploring How Team Member Scripts and Cognitive Adjustment Strategies Impact the Norm Formation Process. (Under the direction of Dr. Julia Storberg-Walker.)

The purpose of this study was to understand how shared norms are developed in the early phase of multicultural team (MCT) formation. The development of shared norms is recognized as critical to MCTs' contributions to organizations, and they are a result of the cognitive adjustment of the team members in recognition of their differences (Brandl & Neyer, 2009; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). Unfortunately, despite seeding the study team with members scoring high on a validated intercultural sensitivity instrument to maximize the potential for shared norm development, the data collected and analyzed for this study suggested that the team was not able to move through the important process of shared norm formation. Instead, the team created rather typical team norms that masked deep differences and diminished the team's ability to leverage its diversity. Consequently, the purpose of the study was amended during the data collection phase (when it became obvious that shared norms were not being developed) to focus on how team norms were being developed in the MCT during the study.

It is important to understand how MCTs develop norms because multicultural teams have been found to contribute a variety of benefits to organizations (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, & Jonsen, 2010). At the same time, research has indicated that MCTs typically struggle to establish the type of norms necessary to manage their cultural differences. (Begley & Boyd, 2003; Canney Davison & Ekelund, 2004; Earley & Gibson, 2002; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000; Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000). To discern between the two types of norms—those

that enhance cultural diversity and those that mask or diminish it--the study uses the phrase *shared norms* to represent the types of norms needed to manage cultural diversity, and uses the phrase *team norms* to represent the types of norms typically developed (as will be illustrated below) that mask or diminish cultural diversity.

Previous research has attempted to understand the challenges facing these teams as they begin to establish the types of norms that enhance performance and leverage the team's cultural diversity (e.g., shared norms). For example, research findings suggest the struggle to establish shared norms may be the result of time and performance pressures (Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003). Other research has found that team members from dominant cultures may impose their preferences on others (Begley & Boyd, 2003; Smolicz, 1984), or that team members possess a lack of training and skill in working across cultures (Brandl & Neyer, 2009). However, there is insufficient research on how MCTs develop norms to test these theories (Taggar & Ellis, 2007).

To address this gap, the study was designed to expand our understanding of MCTs by describing the development of norms during early team formation. In order to maximize the possibility that the team in the study could create the type of shared norms required to manage cultural differences (as identified by the meta-analysis of Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, & Jonsen, 2010) team members were selected purposively, based on previous research on norm development and divergent thinking enablers (see chapters 1 and 2 for details).

Despite the failure of the MCT to form shared norms, the study illuminates the intricate details of the norm development process of this MCT. Observations and interviews document the dominant influence of one team member on the norm development process, as well as illuminate the adaptation of the other team members to the preferences of the

dominant member. The rich description and analysis of the norm development process contributes to our theoretical understanding of MCT norm formation in two ways. First, study findings suggest three categories of scripts influence team member actions during norm development. Second, the study generated an innovative norm development model that combines a temporal sequence and patterns of member actions and reactions during the norm development process.

The findings of this study also suggest areas for further research. Can a taxonomy of script categories be created? Can the overlaps between team and norm development research fill gaps in our understanding of both? Finally, the conceptual framework used to guide the study suggests possible moderators of shared norm formation for future studies on MCT norm development.

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Investigating Shared Norms in Multicultural Teams: Exploring How Team Member Scripts  
and Cognitive Adjustment Strategies Impact the Norm Formation Process

by  
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## DEDICATION

To Michelle, Cam, Mitch and Danielle:

When this journey began three years ago, we sat down as a family and made a commitment to see it through to the end. I realize now how little we understood what we were committing to and the challenges it would present us as a family. Thank you for sticking with me through every phase, even when you did not understand why the many nights and weekends away from our time together were necessary. I'm looking forward to once again being able to enjoy just being together. It is only too apparent to me that time is flying by and soon my children will be off exploring their own adventures. But before then Mom and I are going to cherish every moment we have with you.

To my children: Cameron, Mitchell and Danielle. When I think about what motivated me to pursue this degree, I know that an important piece was the desire to show you that you could accomplish anything with hard work and dedication. I also hoped it would instill in you the value of continuing to make education and personal improvement an important part of your lives. Maybe the amount of work that was required will have the opposite effect (laughing), but you should know that the individual moments I'm most proud of in my life were also those that took the greatest effort and were filled with the greatest uncertainty of success. Challenge yourselves to always be improving and testing who you can be.

To my wife Michelle. Wow. Would we do this again? I know what a strain this has been on you and us. You have been so incredibly supportive, even when I made this difficult. Your love and presence in my life is the most important influence over what and

how I live my life, and you make this life valuable. I would never choose anything that would threaten that, yet this clearly was a test. I hope now, reaching the other side and seeing what the future holds, we will both see this test as having made us stronger and more prepared to take on greater tests in the future. And I know there will be greater tests because you have put so much of your own self-exploration and development opportunities on hold to support me in mine. Guess what: your turn.

Love always,

Dad/Dan

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Dan McGurrin is Director of Executive Education in the Poole College of Management at NC State University. Dan consults with corporate leaders on the strategic development of their organizations and people. Prior to joining NC State in 2011, he managed executive programs at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, Boston University, Indiana University - Bloomington and the Budapest University of Economic Sciences (now Corvinus University of Budapest). The 20+ year career in executive education has provided many rewarding experiences, and influences that led to the pursuit of a doctorate.

Dan's executive programs range from local executive development to global delivery of organization-wide leadership programs. Topics cover project leadership, virtual team management, managing innovation, matrix teams, and managing global enterprises. His recent work includes processes to address the demographic shift in organizations (engaging the departing workforce and recruitment and retention of new employees). Current and past clients include Alcatel-Lucent, AT&T, BayerCropscience, BCBSNC, Biogen, Chengdu Government (China), Cisco, Continental Tire (Germany), Eastman Chemical, EDS, Eisai, ExxonMobil, France Telecom (France), General Motors, HP, IBM, JSOC, Matav (Hungary), MetLife, NetApp, Patheon, Pentair, Pitney Bowes, PPD, PRA, Shenzhen Government (China), Sony Ericsson, Syngenta, Trex and USPS.

Dan previously worked at GlaxoWellcome Pharmaceuticals Inc. (now GlaxoSmithKline), where he was responsible for marketing research projects in the central nervous system therapeutic group. He spent 18 months running an executive education



organization in Budapest, Hungary, and taught business-to-business marketing to a Hungarian MBA class. Other international assignments included a consulting position at the Lek Ljubljana pharmaceutical company in Slovenia in 1994 and research on the economic transition in Russia during 1992.

Dan received a BA from the University of Richmond and an MBA from Indiana University in International Marketing. He sits on the review board of the Human Resource Development Review. Dan has previously held a board position with the International University Consortium for Executive Education (UNICON) and is a member of the Academy of Human Resource Development and Academy of Management. Language studies have included Bulgarian, German, Hungarian, Russian, Slovene and Spanish, though no conversational competence beyond English.

Dan's academic career has included years of teaching in Executive Education and degree courses on the topics of channel marketing, multicultural teams, organizational change, organizational leadership, project leadership, and specialty sessions related to generational shift in organizations and the evolution of the field of executive education. More recently, presentations and relationships made at the Academy of Human Resource Development have inspired more extensive exploration of a research path. The culmination of the doctoral process, with the completion of this study as well as a peer-reviewed publication on executive leadership in academia, is just the beginning of the next chapter.

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The completion of this research and doctoral program has only been possible through the encouragement and support of many colleagues and friends over the years. Anyone actually reading this section please forgive the length (there have been many years and many people to thank). And I seem to be exploring things chronologically lately, so...

My interest and exploration of intercultural learning has to begin with my inspirational grandfather, J. Harper McGurrin. After a lifetime of service to General Motors, he joined the International Executive Service Corps, to experience his next chapter in life serving the international community. The images, coins, trinkets and stories he brought back from his many travels inspired me in ways I'm still learning today. Thank you for setting the path for me Grandpa.

My parents, Don and Randie McGurrin, instilled in me a love for learning and understanding of the joy in educating others. It may be cliché, but they really did teach me that anything is possible with hard work and dedication. Mom and Dad, you gave up so much to give us whatever we needed. I hope you know your sacrifices did not go unnoticed, and I live each day trying to be as dedicated a parent as you were to us. Mike and Shannon, well I could never slow down and fall behind your lead. Today you are always there as support, whatever the challenge. Thanks for always being there.

My early higher education at the University of Richmond gave me the confidence that there was a broad world open to anyone willing to follow a different path. First, my friend Bobby Lilly (Esq), who took a scared, lost kid from a small town and opened so many doors for growth. Two professors in particular influenced me in important ways. Dr. Jack Welch,

who saw more in me than I saw in myself, and encouraged a young freshman to dare to be more. And Dr. Joseph Troncale, who pushed me to test my boundaries even after graduation, introducing me to the overwhelming challenge of international exploration. My first international trip, in Russia of the early 1990's, helped me to see the world for the first time through someone else's eyes.

At Indiana University, I was blessed to have the support and guidance of many faculty members, in particular Dr. Arvind Parkhe, Dr. Paul Marer, and CIBER Director Pat Eoyang. Only through their support, taking the not so obvious paths, was I able to pursue global adventures in languages and experiences during my time at Indiana.

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At that time I met the most influential person in my adult development, Cam Danielson. Cam, what you saw in me I have no idea, but thank you for exposing me at such an early age to a deeper understanding of what motivates and influences leaders. Once bitten I could not imagine spending my career in a different world than the one you presented.

Since then, your mentorship and friendship have been a stabilizing force throughout my challenging adventures.

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## CHAPTER ONE

In global business today, shared norms are a critical but poorly understood driver of team performance. Since the Hawthorne studies of the 1920's, the impact of norms has been recognized in work groups, yet direct research on norms remains extremely limited (Sherif, 1935; Taggar & Ellis, 2007). As cultural diversity in global business teams increases, the use of multicultural teams (MCTs) to accomplish work goals is expanding. These teams face the dichotomous challenge of diversity being at the heart of a MCT's potential value, yet the same diversity poses the greatest threat to shared norm development. Further, research confirms that developing shared norms is critical to MCTs' success, as research has highlighted the importance of shared norm development in meeting the challenge of team diversity and supporting multicultural team effectiveness (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Cseh, 2003; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000).

Multicultural teams (MCTs) are frequently formed to accomplish corporate global activities (Adler, 2002; Earley & Erez, 1997), to the point that "global organizations rely on creative and innovative multicultural teams to ensure organizational survival and competitive advantage" (Cseh, 2003, p. 27). One of the reasons for the expansion of MCTs is the perception of business leaders who believe by bringing together participants from different cultures, more valuable outcomes will be generated than is likely from a culturally homogeneous team (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Even at the executive level, where global business complexities require shared decisions involving multiple executives with diverse perspectives, the value of teams establishing effective norms is apparent.

Consider as an example a personal experience I had working with a multicultural team of executives from a U.S.-based global energy company. The senior leadership team was challenged with resolving a major conflict with a foreign government partner over contract commitments. The team members from the U.S. headquarters wanted to force the government partner to be accountable to the contract provisions and legally challenge the partner to fulfill their commitments. The members from other global regions had a different perspective. These members recognized the pressures on the foreign leadership team and interpreted the situation with a stronger emphasis on the long-term relationship. Fortunately, this MCT had created shared norms that allowed multiple perspectives to be aired and debated rather than defaulting to the dominant perspective. Together, the members of this MCT devised a strategy that would both express the importance of maintaining the contract terms, as well as recognize the government partner's challenges and concerns.

The success story above represents the value of MCTs working well together. The successful negotiation benefited from a diverse team that had learned how to respect and leverage their diverse perspectives through the development of shared norms. Shared norms are challenging to accomplish (due to team members' highly diverse experiences) but reap long-term rewards (due to the benefits of divergent thinking).

Team members can benefit from being exposed to the opinions of colleagues with different ideas and backgrounds, and studies demonstrate that team members can cognitively adapt to alternative perspectives. "When there is a minority opinion, majority members respond with increased cognitive flexibility. Ironically, this seems to occur because of the desire of the team to converge to a single outcome or decision. As majority members attempt

to explain away or somehow incorporate minority perspectives, they typically must reconceptualize their own perspectives on the task” (Mannix & Neale, 2005, p. 47). This cognitive shift by individual members requires a team that values their diversity, and has developed shared norms to guide team actions (Adair, Hideg & Spence, 2013; Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Brandl & Neyer, 2009).

Unfortunately, the challenges MCTs face often hinder performance, creativity, and team member satisfaction (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Stahl et al., 2010). While many MCTs are able to leverage their diversity to produce creative solutions, research on MCTs is clear that the teams also bring with them additional challenges and dilemmas. This research has documented the conflicts and process losses that increase as teams become culturally and demographically diverse (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Steiner 1972; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). Specifically, team members from different cultures often create a team that does not share similar norms, values and beliefs (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). As a result, MCTs face greater complexity than traditional teams in managing tasks, context, people, time, and technology (Gluesing & Gibson, 2004). Further, MCT members often encounter unique communication challenges that traditional teams have not had to contend with as MCTs must coordinate tasks and processes across boundaries of time, space, and layers of cultural complexity (Carmel, 1999). “Cultural differences within teams have the potential to pose barriers with respect to communication, relationship building, cooperation, and trust, influencing team members’ views of the group and both their own and others’ participation in it” (Mockaitis, Rose, &

Zettinig, 2012, p. 193). It is clear that MCTs face unique obstacles and challenges due to the diversity of their members.

To overcome their differences and work together, MCTs can develop a variety of team cultures and norms that emerge during the initial team formation stage (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Earley and Mosakowski (2000) suggest that at one end of the spectrum, MCTs can create a *unified* team culture that privileges one perspective over others. This study calls the norms developed by a unified team culture *team norms* or just *norms*, and these types of norms mask underlying differences and diminish a team's potential performance. At the other end of the spectrum, Earley and Mosakowski (2000) suggest that MCTs can create a *hybrid* team culture. At this end of the cultural spectrum, team members generate the development of *shared norms*. This study describes research on the importance of *shared norms* in MCTs (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Earley & Gibson, 2002; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000) and uses it to differentiate from the types of team norms often developed in project teams.

The distinction between shared norms and team norms is important. Researchers have found that a hybrid culture with shared norms improves team outcomes by creating culturally enhanced decision-making and communication (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Earley and Mosakowski (2000) showed that heterogeneous teams can be as successful as, or more so than, homogeneous teams if given sufficient time to develop common and effective shared identity, team efficacy, expectations, and intra-team communication.

However, not all teams are able to develop this type of hybrid culture that values diverse perspectives. Often teams allow a single perspective to guide team norms. Studies



suggest that time and performance pressures often cause MCTs to defer norm development to the influence of a dominant member rather than doing the hard work of negotiating and creating a hybrid team culture with agreed upon norms and values (Kelly & McGrath, 1985, Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003).

In addition to time and performance pressures, MCTs face other obstacles to developing a hybrid culture. Team members from different cultures will reflect cultural and individual preferences for working in teams, often based on their previous experiences (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Feldman, 1984; Schütz, 1944). Of particular importance, based on research by Earley and Mosakowski (2000) and a meta-analysis conducted by Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, and Jonsen (2010), are communication and conflict management issues that confound the team development process. These studies found that MCTs must develop shared norms to address their communication and conflict challenges or expect to continue to struggle with team effectiveness throughout their project.

**Team norms and shared norms.** Research on teams has found that norms are formed between the members of new teams during the early stages of team development (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991; Gersick, 1988). From the time of formation, team members are assessing each other, recognizing common and conflicting values and practices. As described above, this study discerns between team norms and shared norms. These are two different norm outcomes resulting from distinct processes. According to Bettenhausen & Murnighan (1985), team norms emerge through regular interactions and are the result of bargaining, threats and negotiation among team members at a relatively superficial level. As will be discussed, this category of norm development is in contrast to *shared* norm

development, which is the result of a much deeper integration of diverse views. In shared norm development, there is a recognition by team members of their cultural differences, a necessary cognitive adjustment by the members in recognition of these differences, and the eventual development, agreement and commitment by the members to new shared norms (Brandl & Neyer, 2009; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). Shared norm development is the desired outcome for MCTs.

Tuckman's (1965) seminal work on team development incorporates the process of norm development in his description of four sequential team stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing (and adjourning was later added). When team formation is not managed effectively, overcoming norm differences often requires a significant investment of time by the team members later in the project, popularly called the 'storming' phase (Tuckman, 1965). Too much time spent in the storming phase can consume a team, distracting it from organizational goals and limiting the contributions of all the team members. For a MCT, research suggests the forming stage requires the development of common agreement on team activities associated with team chartering (goal-setting, team efficacy), team composition (selection of roles and decision-making structure) and team processes (establishing ground rules for norms of behavior, building a culture of trust) (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001; Stahl et al., 2010).

Likewise, Gersick's (1988) research on team development found that teams' establish norms very quickly, at the time of formation, and additional research (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Katz, 1982) indicates that once established these norms are not likely to change. These studies illuminate the possibility of multiple pressures on MCTs during early

formation as norms are developed, and the challenges that will be faced to establish effective shared norms. These studies convincingly illustrate that shared norms within MCTs are particularly challenging because of the inherent cultural differences, and research has shown time and performance pressures on team norms has encouraged the team to default to a dominant model to meet their goals despite a direct trade-off in creating shared norms (Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003). While MCTs are expected to overcome their cultural differences, develop shared norms, and provide significant benefits to organizations, they often fall short of the unique value they promise.

### **Problem Statement**

Therefore, the problem addressed in this study was how MCTs can develop the type of shared norms that have been demonstrated to enhance MCTs capacity to effectively manage cultural differences despite project pressures. While research demonstrates clear evidence that shared norms are valuable in MCTs, there is a gap in the literature about exactly how shared norms are developed in teams (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Taggar & Ellis, 2007). Further, studies have found that time is a confounding challenge facing MCTs; research presented earlier has shown that MCTs will often allow a dominant team member to establish the team norms in order to meet performance and time goals, to the detriment of the team's creativity and satisfaction with the experience (Kelly & McGrath, 1985, Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003). If MCTs are to improve their effectiveness in today's demanding performance cultures, further research on the early formation stage of MCTs is needed to understand how MCTs develop the types of shared norms that facilitate high performance and satisfaction.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe in rich detail the development of shared norms during the early team formation of a MCT. For this study, the MCT team members were purposively selected to maximize the potential for shared norms to develop early in the team formation stage, and despite time and performance pressures. The MCT was formed with interculturally sensitive team members, identified using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale instrument, to attempt to overcome a barrier to MCT shared norm formation: the pressures of time and performance goals on the team. It was hypothesized that members with high intercultural sensitivity would be more able to recognize and value the cultural differences, and adapt their norm preferences to a shared model despite the project pressures (Bennett, 1986; Earley & Erez, 1997; Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

Unfortunately, the MCT in this study developed *team norms* aligned with a dominant model, rather than the type of *shared norms* that represent deep acknowledgement of the value of the team's diversity. The team norm formation was recognized early in the data collection process, and the study's purpose was slightly modified to focus on describing how the team norms developed in this MCT. The findings are expected to contribute to improving our understanding of MCT norm development.

## **Research Question**

The initial research question of this study was: how are shared norms developed in a MCT with interculturally sensitive members during early team formation? The study explored the actions of an interculturally sensitive MCT during early team formation. Unfortunately, a rival hypothesis (Yin, 2014), which the study sought to overcome, was

reflected in several of the study findings: the pressures to perform in a short-term project environment, despite high intercultural sensitivity, created the opportunity and positive support for hegemonic (dominant culture) team member behavior. When this rival hypothesis became apparent, the research question was altered to state: how are team norms developed in a MCT with interculturally sensitive members during early team formation?

### **Significance of the Study**

Improving the understanding of MCT norm formation provides critical insights that should expand research in the fields of MCT development and training, the role of leaders in guiding MCTs, educational policies on intercultural sensitivity, and other dynamic fields related to MCT effectiveness. Large countries, like the United States, struggle with consistently preparing leaders to be effective in intercultural situations (Scarr, 1993; Smolicz, 2004; Sonn, Bishop & Humphries, 2000). Whereas this may not have been as great an issue in the past (Easterly and Levine, 1997; Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005), global economic changes may give rise to a greater need for intercultural sensitivity in future U.S. leaders.

In recent years there has been a growing recognition that U.S. economic dominance is diminishing (Gurria & Tamaki, 2014). China is on a path to match U.S. GDP within the next 10-30 years, and India is not far behind (National Intelligence Council, 2012). For globally dispersed organizations, there is potentially a psychological shift coming; organizations who may have in the past allowed an American perspective and preferences to dominate decision-making may now feel more empowered to resist.

The significance of this shift for U.S. students will be even more acute in the event of diminished U.S. economic dominance. “For many decades now, non-western countries have

been trying to understand the west; however westerners have only begun recently to learn about non-western societies. Hence there will be a lot of catching up to do” (Tung, 1998, p.25). Perpetuating an image of U.S. students as culturally ignorant and insensitive in communicating with citizens from other nations we run the risk of producing a new generation of leaders ill-equipped to address the shifting global economic landscape and to work effectively in the increasingly common business structure of multicultural project teams. This study describes the value of intercultural sensitivity in MCT members, despite also recognizing this capability may not be the only factor necessary for MCT shared norm development.

### **Theoretical Framework: Social Constructionism**

This study of MCT norm development begins with the process by which norms are formed. From an epistemological perspective, social constructionism provides a foundation for the understanding of norm formation. As described by Berger and Luckman (1966), social constructionism describes how the “shared understandings among people give rise to rules, norms, identities, concepts, and institutions” (Schneider & Sidney, 2009, p. 106). As a new team meets and members begin to express their unique perspectives, a common set of rules emerge through interactions that guide team behavior.

Interactions between team members are critical to the development of the shared norms. Often the norm formation results from discussion within the group regarding their differences (Taggar & Ellis, 2007); shared norms represent an agreement formed between team members through a deep and open discussion of their differences. Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) found if the team members have similar backgrounds and experiences,

norms tend to form quickly and easily, as each action by the team reinforces their expectations. If, however, the team is a diverse one as in MCTs, “they will spend considerable time ‘getting to know’ one another and establishing a shared understanding of the group's mission and the actions that are appropriate for its performance” (p. 369).

Sherif (1936) theorized that once formed, these ‘social norms’ act as cognitive scripts for the team members that extend beyond the initial team where they are established and influence member interpretation and consequent actions in later teams. Team members create meaning from their experiences, which create cognitive scripts. These scripts generate meaning from future situations in which a similar interpretation of the context is determined. Sherif also believed that social norms are experiences resulting from or modified by collectively produced frames of reference. As a result, when new teams form, the team norms tend to reflect the past experiences of the individual members (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977; Schütz, 1944). Since these experiences are different for each member, a discussion or negotiation must take place in order to reach an agreement on a team norm. Only when the context is recognized as different from and in conflict with the members’ past situations do the members seek to adapt their models and form new shared norms (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977; Schütz, 1944).

Social constructionism is a critical lens to understand MCT formation, as the diverse cultural environment of the MCT is almost always a new context for the team members. The MCT members will attempt to recognize and understand their unique experiences, and create new, shared norms that reflect the integrated experiences of the members. In order for these shared norms to be effective, the members of the team must feel they were part of the

construction of the rules upon which the team operates (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Dominant culture and ethnocentric behavior are an opposing force prevalent in many MCTs. The monoculture influence on norm creation can inhibit the reconciliation of different scripts through a coercive emphasis on a single model. The social construction process in situations of monocultural influence can leave non-dominant team members feeling left out of the norm development process, resulting in a lack of team chemistry and a negative impact on team creativity (Brandl & Neyer, 2009; Earley & Gibson, 2002).

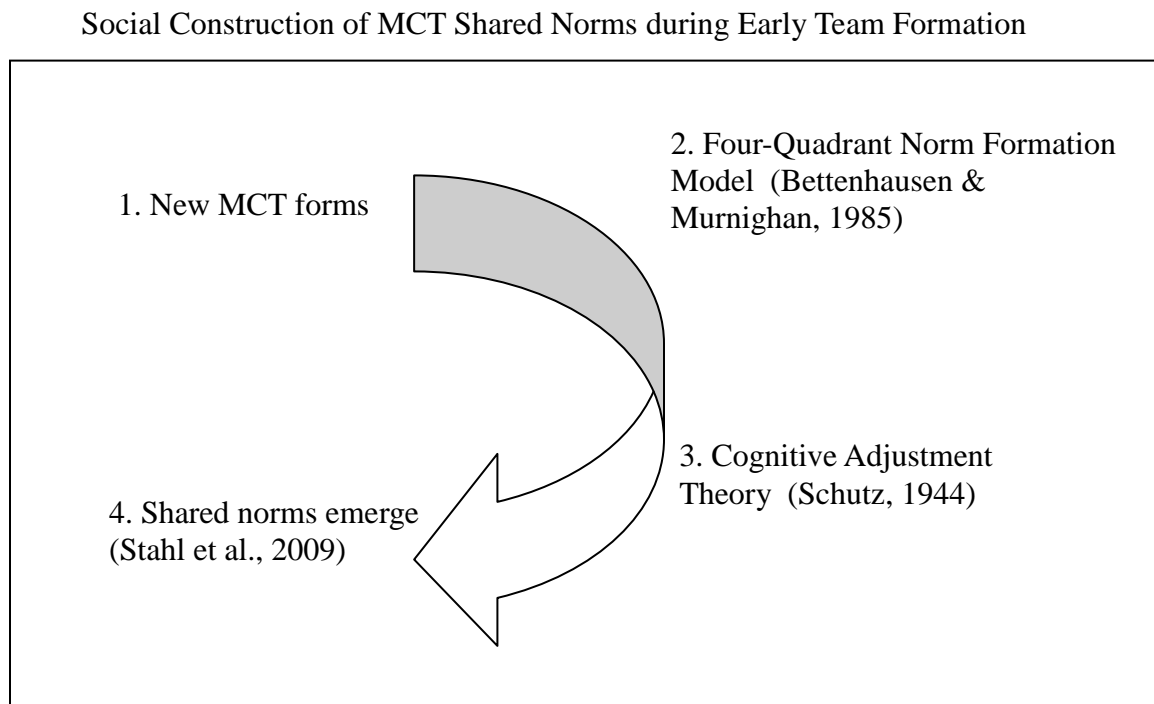
Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) noted other factors that can influence norm construction. In their study, they believed that competition with other groups and required co-dependence of the team members drove the teams to norm creation much quicker. The pressures of time and performance on construction of norms, however, have been found to support dominant culture influences as teams lean on the value of established models to move quickly to meet project goals (Kelly & McGrath, 1985, Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003). The hyper-competitive environment facing teams in today's market could be perceived as creating a similar dynamic. The pressures of time and performance goals on MCTs reflect a significant challenge to effective social construction of shared norms.

### **Conceptual Framework: Norm Formation Model**

For this study, the conceptual framework combined two research-based models to understand the process of norm formation. First, to understand the role of scripts and meaning making in MCT shared norm formation, this study adopted Bettenhausen and Murnighan's 1985 seminal four-box model of norm formation. This model enables researchers to understand and categorize the different types of initial interpretations of team



interactions. However, this model alone is limited in that it does not address how team members may adapt (or not adapt) to each other's perspectives and ways of understanding to form shared norms. Consequently, a second model is needed. After an extensive review of the literature, Schütz's (1944) Cognitive Adjustment Theory (CAT) extended the first model on interpretations of the interactions to consider adjustments team members go through as they move through time. See figure 1 below.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework of norm formation in an interculturally sensitive MCT

In one of the few empirical studies of norm formation, Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) generated a model of norm formation that categorizes how team members' initial efforts to define and apply scripts from past experience to their new team situation can vary.

According to the authors, “Our conceptualization distinguishes between an individual’s initial definition of the new situation and the script they use as a basis for that understanding.” (p. 354) When a new team meets and members begin to observe the behavior of their team mates, they attempt to make meaning of the situation based on past experiences. The four-box model provided a framework for understanding how team members can respond to new situations early in MCT formation and illuminates the role of previous experiences. More information about this model and related research is found in chapters two and three. However, as described above, the model is limited in its ability to describe the actions of MCT members as it does not address how MCT members might need to change or adapt cognitively to address team differences. As stated by Bettenhausen and Murnighan, “the identification of norms, especially implicit norms, is a difficult methodological issue” (1985, p. 368) and one likely faced in culturally diverse MCTs. To overcome this limitation of the Bettenhausen and Murnighan model, this study added elements of cognitive adjustment theory (Schütz, 1944) in order to analyze and understand how MCT members adapt to each other to form shared norms. Cognitive adjustment theory (CAT) is a highly-cited theory which is also described as a process of “letting-go and taking-on” a new set of norms (Osland, 2000, p. 235).

The final piece of the framework is the type of norms that an MCT will develop. It was important for this study to clearly identify the specific types of shared norms that generate the most value for MCT performance. Interestingly, a meta-analysis of research on MCTs (Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, and Jonsen, 2010) identified five critical areas of MCT norm development relating to creativity, conflict management, communication effectiveness,

satisfaction, and social integration. These five areas of norms guided the process of observations and development of an interview guide for the study, providing a focus and structure to data collection and analysis.

### **Method Overview**

This study of MCTs addressed the gap in the literature related to MCT norm development during early team formation. Existing research on MCTs has focused on performance outcomes and barriers to effective engagement. As such, the research is assessing the results of MCT efforts toward shared norm development without understanding this process. The question remained: how are norms formed in a MCT during early team formation?

In order to gain the broadest perspective and understanding of norm development and MCT interaction during team formation, a case study approach was selected to provide the richest contextual description. The case study approach is “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2012, p. 97). This study followed the members of a selected team through their phases of early team formation, and described their efforts to form team norms.

**Participant selection.** The team selected for the case study was from a master’s degree program on global management at a major university in the United States. The program is 1-year long and divides the classes between a fall semester in Europe and a spring semester in the U.S. During each spring semester, participants are placed in teams to conduct a corporate research project that comprises a significant portion of their time and class grade.

For this study, four members of a class of 24 ultimately participated in the study as the project team.

As described earlier, the team members in the study team were purposively selected to maximize the potential to develop the type of shared norms that leverage diversity. The study plan included an assessment of the entire class population to identify high scoring students on the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES). Based on these results, four students without previous experience working together and from four different cultures were selected. The selected students had scores in the “high” range on the assessment tool, representing team members who were likely to have the skills to work together with peers from different cultures. Details on the use of the IES instrument in the process of participant selection and its reliability/validity can be found in chapter three. When the students agreed to participate in the study, they were placed in a single project team.

**Data collection.** Data for this study included individual interviews and team meeting observations. Observations were conducted first. After obtaining informed consent, the interculturally sensitive team was observed over the first two weeks of their project in every team meeting. Team discussions were documented (see appendix A: Case Study Protocol) and audio taped. The observation data consisted of six team meetings. This timeframe was selected to align with research findings on team norms, which suggest that teams composed of diverse members usually recognize and respond to their different norm preferences within early team formation (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Gersick, 1988; Keane, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted second. Team members were interviewed individually to discuss their perspectives on the interactions of their team. The interview

guide (appendix F) was designed to provide a basic flow to the interview, while giving the researcher latitude to explore some elements in greater depth. As the study seeks deep, rich descriptions (Creswell, 2012) of team norm development, the flexible interview guide allowed the participants some ability to guide the conversation. As described in chapter three, the interviews were initially structured with questions developed from the observations of key conversations and decision points in the team meetings. These questions elicited information about how team members interpreted situations and acted during critical points in the team formation process.

After transcribing all of the recorded meetings and interviews, two types of data analyses were conducted. First, the data was analyzed using an open coding process. This process generated in-vivo themes and patterns directly from the data itself. A complete description of the open coding process is in chapter three. Second, the conceptual framework (figure 1) guided the structured data analysis, and a list of a-priori codes was generated from the framework (see chapter three). This analysis generated themes and patterns aligned with the conceptual framework, investigating the process by which participants interpret and act to develop the team norms.

### **Definition of Terms**

In addition to the definitions provided above, there are several additional terms that should be defined to understand the nature of the study.

Hybrid Culture – “A hybrid team culture consists of an emergent and simplified set of rules and actions, work capability expectations, and member perceptions that individuals within a team develop, share, and enact after mutual interactions” (Earley & Mosakowski,

2000, p. 27). This was also described as *collective reframing* by Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant (1997). Hybrid cultures are likely to form in teams whose members' value multiculturalism (Adair & Ganai, 2013).

Multicultural Teams - MCTs are teams composed of members from a variety of cultures. Earley and Mosakowski (2000) distinguish between moderately heterogeneous teams (includes homogeneous subgroups of members within the larger heterogeneous team) and highly heterogeneous teams (most, if not all, the team members differ from each other). McDonough, Kahn, and Barczaka (2001) distinguished MCTs from 'co-located' teams (members work in the same location), 'virtual' teams (members are culturally similar but not in the same location), and 'global' teams (members are located in different countries). (p. 111) Multicultural teams are sometimes referred to as cross-cultural teams or multinational teams.

Shared leadership – Carson (2005) defines shared leadership as “a group phenomenon. It represents a social process involving influence exhibited by many group members in the shaping of group tasks, motivation of group members, and stimulation of change and growth.” (p. 13) Shared leadership is often one type of shared norm in MCTs.

Team effectiveness – Hackman, Wageman, Ruddy and Ray (2000) define team effectiveness on 3 dimensions: first “the productive output of the team (product, service or decision) meets or exceeds the standards of quantity, quality, and timeliness of the team's clients ... It is the client's standards and assessments that count”; second “the social processes the team uses in carrying out the work enhance the members' capability to work

together interdependently in the future”; third “the team experience, on balance, contributes positively to the learning and person well-being of individual team members” (p.111).

### **Subjectivity Statement**

My own experience with MCTs began in 1995 while working in Budapest, Hungary. As the director of a USAID program funded to aid management development in a former Soviet-bloc country, I had the opportunity to work with a recently formed telecommunications joint venture of three companies: one German, one American and one Hungarian. The company decided to structure the joint venture into culturally distinct functions: the German leaders managed research and development and operations, the American leaders managed financial decisions and the Hungarian leaders managed marketing and human resources. Cross-functional teams were created to drive strategic decisions. Unfortunately, the company regularly found itself paralyzed by this structure as the distinct groups approached organizational planning and decisions from conflicting cultural perspectives.

After this initial experience, my career provided additional opportunities to work with MCTs. From 1997-2000, I managed a global development program for managers from U.S. and European companies. More recently, from 2003-2011, I managed a global development program for a Fortune 50 company. Two experiences working with this last group significantly influenced my perceptions of MCT challenges.

The first was a small, cross-functional and cross-cultural team working on a change management simulation. The team had a variety of choices on how to proceed through each step in the change process. One member of the team, a senior male engineer, took it upon

himself to influence and cajole team members until they agreed with his opinions. As a result of or despite this dominant influence over the team decisions, the simulation results were outstanding... until the very end of the simulation. Observing the group I could see dissention growing, but it was not affecting the performance. Then, in one of the group's last decisions, I asked a question (without intending to have any impact) that swung the group away from the dominant leader. The result was a significant, negative impact on their simulation performance. The team blamed the leader (the leader blamed me) for the poor result, feeling the outcome was the culmination of three hours of dominated decision-making, not simply one bad decision. Later, I considered the likelihood that the poor outcome was the result of the team's poor efforts early on to establish more effective norms and decision-making that valued their different ideas.

The second experience was observing a small team working together to solve each member's individual challenges. Each relied on the other to help identify a personal solution. The team was composed of one American, one Canadian, and two other participants from other cultures. The American member at one point made the comment, "I'm struggling to overcome the cultural differences within my team. The people from Thailand, Argentina and Hungary approach work so differently." At this point he turned to his Canadian team member and said, "I'm glad I have one Canadian on the team as we think alike." The Canadian smiled at him, then looked at me with a questioning look that said, "Really?".

This study inspired my own personal reflections on experiences with MCTs, seeing myself through the eyes of the participants. I tried not to let my own experiences impact the approach to the study, but rather used my own insights to interview the participants from the



perspective of someone who has experienced something similar and could ask intelligent, deeper questions about the nature of their experience.

### **Chapter Summary and Organization of the Study**

This study of the actions of an interculturally sensitive multicultural project team addressed a current gap in the literature regarding MCT norm development during early team formation. Extensive research has been conducted on MCTs performance over time, but these studies focus on the outcomes of MCT norm formation rather than the process itself, and fail to consider the influences of time and performance pressures on the interactions during the formation stage. The research question for this study and focus on team member actions bounded by the early formation process provides a rich understanding of how this interculturally sensitive team addressed the challenges of MCT norm formation.

The significance of this study and further research on the benefits of intercultural sensitivity for U.S. students in the market is discussed. I describe my personal experience and bias toward this challenge, but also evidence that supports this as an important topic for research. My hope is that the study will provide a foundation for and encourage additional qualitative and quantitative studies on the topic.

Chapter two explores the literature on multicultural teams, team development, team norms, norm formation, intercultural sensitivity, dominant cultures, and study abroad programs. The literature review provides support for the frameworks selected for the research design and analysis of research data, as well as an understanding of the previous research in this field.

Chapter three describes in greater detail the methodology that was used in researching this question of how norms develop during early team formation of a MCT composed of interculturally sensitive members. Chapter four presents the study's findings, presented so that the reader can understand and experience the MCT norm development process through the reflections of the team members. Chapter five compares the conclusions of the study to extant literature, and suggests implications for researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Current research on multicultural teams (MCTs) suggests that the value of divergent thinking resulting from diverse perspectives, experiences and values will produce more creative and valuable outcomes than the results of homogeneous teams (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Research also recognizes that this value will result only after team members develop shared team norms, and invest time in recognizing and valuing their diversity (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). The development of team norms happens early in team formation, however, and relatively little research has been conducted to understand how this process takes place.

This study expands the literature and our understanding of MCT team formation, and in particular norm development during the early formation stage. A literature review was conducted using web-based research in Google Scholar and through the North Carolina State University Library system access to various search engines (ERIC, JSTOR, and Web of Science) on key terms related to multicultural teams (multinational teams, culturally diverse teams, international teams, global teams), team development (team behavior, group development, team/group formation, work team creation), norm formation (social constructionism, norm formation models, and cognitive adjustment theory), intercultural sensitivity (cultural intelligence, cultural adaptability, intercultural competence, cultural diversity, multiculturalism); dominant culture (diversity, cultural racism, pluralism, hegemony); and study abroad (overseas study, foreign study, cross-cultural study). In order to conduct this review, various theories in these fields were considered. The selected theories presented here reflect those significantly cited by researchers in the field (landmark or

seminal studies), more recent studies that challenged or supported with additional insights the outcomes of the landmark studies and were further supported with citations by other researchers, new theories testing the basic assumptions of landmark studies that were significantly cited on listings, and new research exploring the actions of MCTs.

The literature review is presented so as to provide readers with an emergent understanding of the complex environment of MCTs, as well as the research support for this study's methodology and implications. This chapter is organized as follows: first, a description of existing research on multicultural teams, the models describing their actions and the influence of time on their outcomes is presented. Second, research on team formation is presented to illustrate the foundational models and current thinking on how teams develop. Third, the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study are presented and supported by the literature. Literature presented includes theories on social constructionism, norm formation and cognitive adjustment, and research on norm formation in MCTs. Fourth, research on the role of cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity in team formation is presented as well as its potential to impact this study. Fifth, a description of dominant culture and its impact on MCTs as well as its policy implications is offered. Sixth and lastly, a detailed description of the use of study abroad programs to overcome dominant culture influences of large countries is presented. This last topic is presented to support anticipated implications of the study in recognizing the changing dynamics in today's global market, and importance of this study for research and practical improvement of MCT performance and member development.

## **Multicultural Teams**

This section presents a summary of research on MCTs, specific models that help describe team and individual member behavior, and why time is such a significant influence on both.

Recent research on multicultural teams has focused on the challenges faced in overcoming cultural differences, the time required to achieve effective teamwork and the benefits that result from strong MCTs (Begley & Boyd, 2003; Brandl & Neyer, 2009; Canney Davison & Ekelund, 2004; Earley & Gibson, 2002; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000; Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000). Unfortunately, the research often attempts to consider these teams in a vacuum, unlimited by the pressures of performance goals, time deadlines, and resource constraints (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Sundstrom, DeMuse, & Futrell, 1990). The research outcomes focus on the benefit of MCTs, that if given the space to overcome their differences, and only the cultural ones not other differences (e.g. gender, age, race, background, etc), these culturally diverse teams will outperform more culturally homogeneous teams (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000).

Unfortunately, the pressures on teams are often not arbitrary factors that are controllable. For example and worthy of specific attention in this study, in today's hyper-dynamic work environment the time to produce a successful outcome is a significant force in team behavior. Organizations fear the "speed to commoditization" (von der Gracht & Stillings, 2013, p.600), the pace by which innovations become replicated by competitors, and thus evaluate team performance within shorter time periods than ever before. This ever

growing time pressure becomes an enormous weight on MCTs to produce results in a shorter time period than research indicates is needed to overcome their cultural differences (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Given this constraint and pressure on team members across all cultures, there may be a super-ordinate desire on the part of team members to emphasize their team goals and put aside the need to overcome their differences for the sake of the need to achieve. Earley and Mosakowski's (2000) research promoting the value of divergent thinking also recognizes that time is a critical factor to realize this benefit as MCTs have been shown to require significant temporal space for team members to overcome their cultural differences. In the short-term, homogeneous teams were shown to perform more effectively.

The value of a MCT's cultural diversity translating into divergent thinking benefits is balanced by the work required to establish convergent behaviors. Convergent behaviors are important to team performance as they "align the team around common objectives, commitment, or conclusions. Effective convergent behavior is necessary to build effective communication, or the sharing of common meaning, and social integration, or the development of group cohesion, commitment, and identity" (Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, & Jonsen, 2010, pp. 692). MCTs' cultural diversity tends to decrease convergent behavior in the short term, though the goal is to improve this through understanding of cultural differences. "Cultural differences within teams have the potential to pose barriers with respect to communication, relationship building, cooperation, and trust, influencing team members' views of the group and both their own and others' participation in it. Greater cultural diversity within the team is expected to result in more pronounced differences in attitudes and behaviors" (Mockaitis, Rose, & Zettinig, 2012, p. 193).

**MCT models.** In order to create an effective MCT, team members must seek to understand and respect their different perspectives, then act on this perception to build a unique team model. As stated by Earley and Mosakowski (2000), “we refer to an emergent and simplified set of rules, norms, expectations, and roles that team members share and ‘enact’.” (p.26) As described in figure 2, Govindarajan and Gupta’s (2001) model of the effective development process for global business teams recognizes that teams that perform with low levels of cognitive diversity move with higher speed but run the risk of making decisions of weaker quality. The pressure to move quickly can result in delays later in the project and/or failure to achieve outcomes. Simply seeking to leverage cognitive diversity without establishing cognitive integration also limits the team’s success as it will struggle to meet team goals. “Process mechanisms that recognize and anticipate such pitfalls — and integrate the best of individuals' ideas and contributions — are needed to help the team reconcile diverse perspectives and arrive at better, more creative and novel solutions.” (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001, p. 71)

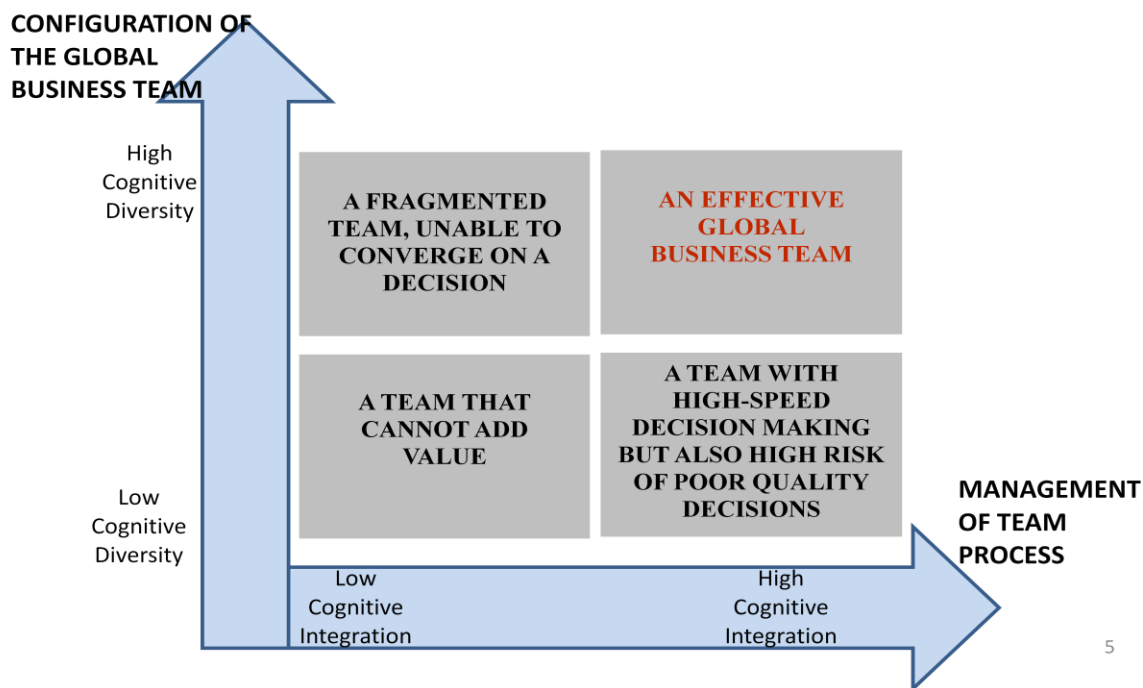
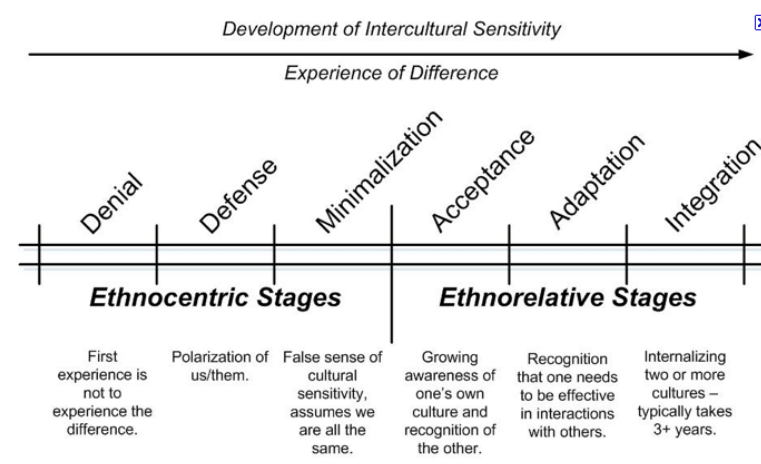


Figure 2. Govindarajan and Gupta's effective process for global business teams

Before we engage in a process design, however, the mere creation of a hybrid model assumes team members have the intercultural sensitivity to recognize and value the differences on the team. This is in fact a unique skill that requires extensive training, either through experience and reflection or purposeful development. Milton Bennett (1986, 1993b) created a framework for assessing this factor in his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (figure 3). The DMIS considers the manner in which an individual understands and responds to cultural differences. Three orientations refer to ethnocentric behavior; seeing the world through one's own culture (Denial, Defense, Minimization). The other three orientations describe ethnorelative behaviors, where one's culture is experienced in the context of other cultures (Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration). Bennett's model is



intended to provide a developmental model for improving intercultural sensitivity, reflecting Margaret Mead's quote "as the traveler who has once been from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own." (1928, p. 1)



*Figure 3.* Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Developing an ethnorelative perspective is not a simple training exercise unfortunately. For years there was a misperception that the benefits of cultural study should be the learning of language skills and an understanding of unique cultural stereotypes of specific countries. Chris Earley, in the development of his cultural intelligence theory (CQ), encourages a shift from improving our recognition of stereotypical behavior of groups to developing the ability to distinguish unique perspectives of individuals. "In a new cultural setting, familiar cues are largely or entirely absent (or present but misguided), so a common attributional and perceptual frame cannot be relied on. In this case, a person must develop a

common frame of understanding from available information, even though he or she may not have an adequate understanding of local practices and norms” (Earley & Ang, 2003, p. 61).

To clarify the different terminology being used, Bennett defines “the term ‘intercultural sensitivity’ to refer to the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences” and “the term ‘intercultural competence’ to mean the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways” (Hamner, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422). While researchers continue to seek a common grammar to discuss cultural development, terms like cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity can sometimes mask the chasm of psychological development required for many today to achieve the necessary cultural relativism to be effective in an increasingly global world. “Rather than be culturally sensitive (which implies some paternalism), we need to embrace cultural diversity (Trickett, Watts, & Birman, 1994) and approach other cultures with awe” (Sonn, Bishop & Humphries, 2000, p. 12).

As previously discussed, Stahl et al.’s (2010) meta-analysis reinforces that “a substantial body of research has been undertaken to examine the relationship between cultural diversity and team outcomes. This research has produced mixed, and often contradictory, results” (p. 690). The outcomes of the study found that “cultural diversity increases task conflict and reduces social integration among team members. These process losses may be offset by process gains in the form of enhanced creativity and, counter to our hypothesis, satisfaction with the team process” (p. 700). While the Stahl et al. model, presented in detail in chapter two, supports previous theories on heterogeneous and homogenous teams (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Katz, 1982;

Kirkman & Gibson, 2005; Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000), it is the moderating factor of team tenure that provides a particular insight for this study of norm formation during early team development.

**Team tenure.** Tenure, or the amount of time a team has spent together, has long been considered an important influence on the group's behaviors. Chatman and Flynn's (2001) research addressed the impact of time on cooperative norms, which "reflect the degree of importance people place on their personal interests and shared pursuits, shared objectives, mutual interests, and commonalities among members" (p. 956), and the recognition that there is a negative relationship with demographic heterogeneity early in group formation. Chatman and Flynn believe that the negative influence of demographic differences on group members might weaken over time, despite the recognition that similarity-attraction theory would state this relationship between demographic characteristics and behavior should remain stable (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Watson, Kumar, and Michaelsen (1993) and Harrison, Price and Bell (1998) also believed that the negative effects of cultural diversity decreased over time.

Time also allows culturally diverse teams to create a common identity, which contributes to their performance (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Other research has indicated the longer a team is together, the smoother and more automatic its processes become, for example in reducing conflict (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

We therefore expect tenure to decrease the degree to which cultural diversity negatively affects convergent process gains and divergent process losses, while at the same time improving the divergent process gain of creativity (Stahl et al., 2010, pp. 696-7). Katz

(1982) argues that teams seek stable and consistent practices, and in doing so they “become increasingly complacent about external events and new technological developments” (p.12). Automatic processes and complacency can hurt teams’ performance in the long run if they lead to decreased creativity (Austin, 1997). Creativity from divergent thinking is a primary benefit of MCTs.

Finally, the results of Stahl et al.’s team tenure analysis conversely suggests that “cultural diversity is associated with higher levels of conflict and less effective communication in teams that have spent more time together compared with teams with less tenure” (p. 702). While MCTs may benefit from divergent thinking over time, resulting in positive levels of creativity and social integration, communication and conflict challenges resulting from cultural differences are likely to be an on-going challenge. To understand this better, we need to explore the process of team and norm development.

### **Team Development**

Research presented in this section represents historical and seminal models of team development, support for and challenges to these models, and the call for further empirical research in this area.

Today, many researchers continue to recognize Tuckman’s *Developmental Sequence of Small Groups* (1965) as a landmark study, establishing a foundational understanding of team behavior. Google Scholar reports almost 5000 citations of this paper, and a study by Bonebright (2010) assessed various attempts to test and improve Tuckman’s model over the succeeding 40 years by Runkel, Lawrence, Oldfield, Rider, and Clark (1971), Heinen and Jacobsen (1976), Tuckman and Jensen (1977), Gersick (1988), Cohen and Bailey (1997), and

Miller (2003). Each of these studies supported Tuckman's model in the general sense of the stage progression. Offerman and Spiros (2001) conducted a survey of practitioners, 150 of whom responded to a question regarding models and theories useful with groups and teams. The respondents identified 250 different models and theories, but Tuckman's was the most popular with 16% of the respondents citing his model.

**Tuckman.** The Tuckman model is a four-stage developmental process, developed from the review of 55 research papers on therapy groups, training or T-groups, and natural and laboratory groups. The four stages are commonly referred to as forming, storming, norming, and performing, though these stages were actually designed to integrate two distinct models: the group-structure realm (the interpersonal communication in the group) and the task-activity realm (the process of completing the task). Each of the two original models must be considered to understand the distinct areas of interpersonal and task behavior. The group-structure stages include: 1) testing and dependence, 2) intra-group conflict, 3) development of group cohesion, and 4) functional role relatedness. The stages of task activity include: 1) orientation to task, 2) emotional response to task demands, 3) open exchange of relevant interpretations, and 4) emergence of solutions. Tuckman's effort to integrate these models into a single, sequential format to explain team development did not change the fundamental differences of interpersonal and task behavior, which must both be recognized when observing team interactions.

Tuckman's four-stage temporal sequence model is defined as: 1) forming – the initial orientation to the task and development of relationships within the team and external groups; 2) storming – a period of intergroup conflict and emotional reactions to the task demands; 3)

norming – group cohesion is established by creating shared mental models and norms; and 4) performing – team members begin to adapt in response to the functional role demands of the team assignment. This is the model many practitioners’ reference in team development, and succeeding research including those explored here define themselves based on either adherence and improvement to Tuckman’s model, or in contrast.

Tuckman and Jensen (1977) reviewed 22 empirical studies of team behavior, finding commonality with Tuckman’s model in most of the studies. Several of the studies identified an additional stage present in the behavior of many teams related to the process of team separation. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) offered to expand Tuckman’s original model to include a fifth stage, ‘adjourning’, recognizing research into a life-cycle model for groups that includes the “death of the group” (1977, p. 426). While Tuckman and Jensen’s research provides some support for the original model, they readily admit the model’s reliability continues to be limited due to insufficient empirical testing of the Tuckman model.

**Gersick.** More recent theories have expanded on Tuckman’s model, purporting to reflect a more accurate understanding of the real experience of teams. Gersick's (1988) research presents one enhanced theory that, while recognizing Tuckman’s temporal sequences, seeks to expand the understanding of team development in two important aspects: temporal pacing and ecological impacts on the teams. Taking a qualitative approach to observe the behavior of teams, Gersick suggests that project teams proceed in a "punctuated equilibrium" (1988, p. 9), an approach first developed by Eldredge and Gould (1977) in the field of natural history. Gersick described the model in two phases: Phase 1, groups “immediately established an integrated framework of performance strategies, interaction

patterns, and approaches toward its task and outside contexts” (p. 21). Often this would take place in the first meeting, setting a determined pattern of behavior that would last until the midpoint of the calendar time available to the team. At this midpoint, the teams checked their performance with outside input and engaged in significant changes to their strategies and approaches in response to this new information. The teams also recognized the time pressures that were mounting. Phase 2 reflected a commitment to the execution of team strategies devised at the midpoint. Success during Phase 2 reflected the effectiveness of the team’s work at the midpoint to re-position themselves with the goals of the project. Finally, the teams at the end of their time focused on producing final reports and individually reflecting on perceptions of team performance. The importance of the midpoint transition team meetings distinguishes Gersick’s research from previous team development studies, emphasizing a particular period of the team development process driving performance outcomes, and the major influences of time limits and outside contextual elements at this critical stage.

Gersick’s research has been cited by a number of leading researchers (Hackman & Wageman, 2005; McGrath, 1991; Utterback, 1994), but Sundstrom, DeMuse, and Futrell (1990) provide particular support to the fact that work teams cannot be seen in isolation from external influences, and consider the ecological influences on teams as critical to their effectiveness. Their ecological framework considers “work team effectiveness as dynamically interrelated with organizational context, boundaries, and team development” (p. 121). In demonstrating the various responses to ecological factors, the paper includes a taxonomy by Sundstrom and Altman (1989) that describes four types of work groups whose

boundaries create different demands for effectiveness: 1) advice and involvement groups; 2) production and service teams; 3) project and development teams; and 4) action and negotiation teams. Each of the teams had different responses to team differentiation, external integration, work cycles and outputs, and effectiveness was both affected by and evaluated based on these boundaries. Sundstrom, DeMuse, and Futrell contribution to our understanding of teams recognized that there was more complexity than could be described by a simple process. “Considering the variety of relationships between work teams and organizational contexts, it seems unlikely that a single sequence can describe the development of all kinds of teams” (1990, p. 127). The complex and diverse variables that must be considered in defining team context is a significant challenge that continues to hamper team development theories.

For many, Gersick’s theory presented additional guidance on how to understand the process of team development. Eisenhardt (1989) and Brown and Eisenhardt (1997), however, questioned the applicability of the theory to the behavior of real work teams. Fundamentally, Eisenhardt (1989) questions the appropriate use of case studies in theory-building by many researchers, and specifically cited Gersick’s 1988 study as one that “converted theory-testing research to theory-building research by taking advantage of serendipitous findings” (p. 536). Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) take further aim at Gersick, first in recognizing Gersick’s punctuated equilibrium model as being ‘in the foreground of academic study’ (p. 1), then challenging the temporal pacing of radical moments of action as out of step with the continuous change demands on workteams. “Change is not the rare, episodic phenomenon described by the punctuated equilibrium model but, rather, it is endemic to the way these



organizations compete” (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997, p. 1). Brown and Eisenhardt’s study (1997) of the influence of organizational change on team development has been cited over 3,000 times in Google Scholar, and represents a second area of debate as to whether team development theories reflect the behavior of real workteams in today’s dynamic business climate.

**TEAM model.** Prior to the publication of Brown and Eisenhardt’s challenge to Gersick’s study, an additional model for describing team development was proposed, attempting to integrate both the popular models of Tuckman and Gersick. The TEAM model developed by Morgan, Salas, and Glickman (1993) sought to solve the complexity of teams requiring different approaches presented by Sundstrom, DeMuse, and Futrell (1990), as well as address research that challenged Tuckman’s and Gersick’s linear approach to team development (Fischer, 1970; Hackman, 1986; McGrath, 1991; Poole, 1981). Morgan, Salas, and Glickman developed their study from data collected on the behavioral, attitude and performance of 13 naval tactical decision-making teams. The TEAM model is presented as a series of 9 stages that are “relatively informal, indistinct, and overlapping, because sharp demarcations are not often characteristic of the dynamic situations in which operational teams work and develop” (p. 280). The TEAM model considers the possibility that teams will begin development at different stages, spend different amounts of time at various stages, and proceed through the stages based on factors such as “characteristics of the team and team members, their past histories and experience, the nature of their tasks, and the environmental demands and constraints” (p. 280). Despite that statement, the pictorial representation of the model (p. 281) is a direct integration of Tuckman’s (1965) and Gersick’s (1988) linear

models, without a clear sense as to how teams might alter the sequence or enter at different phases.

The first stage of the TEAM model is 'Pre-Forming', reflecting the external forces that caused the team to be formed. The 'Forming' (second) stage represents the first team meeting during which team members establish expectations for the team outcomes and recognize their dependence on each other. The next three stages are presented as including Tuckman's Storming, Norming, and Performing as well as a single bucket referencing Gersick's Phase 1. At this point the TEAM model provides additional detail on team behavior. Stage five (Tuckman's Performing stage) is labeled 'Performing-I' and is described as "performance leading toward occasional inefficient patterns of performance" (p. 282). Stage six is labeled 'reforming', reflecting Gersick's midpoint transition period as teams reevaluate and transition to their Phase 2 strategies. Stage seven is 'Performing-II' and stage eight is 'conforming' during which the team completes the assignments. Stage nine is the 'de-forming' stage when accomplishments are reviewed and the team is dissolved. The TEAM authors' statement that "development of a team might be recycled from any of the final stages to an earlier stage if necessitated by a failure to achieve satisfactory performance or if adjustments to environmental demands are required or if problematic team interactions develop" (p. 282) is not explained in detail. The similarities to the Tuckman and Gersick sequences makes it difficult to understand how Morgan, Salas, and Glickman view the TEAM model as non-linear and designed to allow teams to recycle phases of the process. The model also states it provides an approach for various types of teams, but does not

sufficiently describe how it adapts to address the complexity of team context presented by Sundstrom, DeMuse, and Futrell (1990).

One important contribution of the TEAM model to our understanding of team development, however, is the emphasis on training and support systems required to assist in team evolution and maturation. Morgan, Salas, and Glickman found that “perceptions of team members concerning the performance processes of the team change over time as a function of training, that these processes are perceived to include both team-centered and task-centered activities, and that these activities are differentially weighted at different times during training” (p. 287). Previous research assessed team performance based on their behavior as the teams developed “generally from initial ineptness and exploratory interactions to the final levels of skilled performance that are manifested as team members learn to cooperate and coordinate their efforts effectively” (Morgan, Salas and Glickman, 1993, p. 282). By introducing the impacts of training and support to the development process, the researchers are integrating team development research with research on training practices related to the ability to improve team performance through intentional and deliberate external influences.

Each of the models presented above provides insights for our understanding of team development, though none are without significant conceptual challenges and fail to provide us with a single reliable theory of team development. The fact that the most recent model presented was developed in 1993 would also indicate that further advancement in theoretical research should have been made. But while research into team development continues to evolve, the research by Offerman and Spiros (2001) and Bonebright (2010) provides

empirical support that the theories presented here continue to be recognized as the foundational models for team development research.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Research on Norm Formation**

The research presented in this section represents much of the limited work in the field of norm formation. Much of the research is theoretical, describing models developed through qualitative studies and interpretations of observed data. Taggar and Ellis (2007) expressed their disappointment that despite “periodic calls for more systematic empirical attention” (p. 105), norm formation has been rarely studied.

Norms are defined as “social frames of reference (i.e. values, customs, stereotypes, conventions, etc.)” and “are regarded first as stimuli which meet the individual in his associations with others and then become interiorized” (Sherif, 1936, p. 1). The importance of norms in the workplace were first researched, or more accurately ‘discovered’, during the Hawthorne studies of the 1920’s at Western Electric. Researchers, intent on testing the impact of changing physical conditions on worker performance, instead witnessed informal workgroup formation and were one of the first to document this behavior. The informal workgroups were created within a manufacturing environment of their own accord and reflected norms of behavior that challenged the instructions presented by management, as well as challenging the researchers’ belief that they could rely on the current scientific explanation of performance influences. There was more complexity occurring than simply the variation of dependent variables to change performance.

Despite this early insight on the influence of workgroup behavior, workgroups would not become common in manufacturing for many years. Researchers, however, recognized an

influential dynamic that was not understood and began to design conceptual models to explain workgroup phenomena (Hackman, 1976; McGrath, 1964; Sherif, 1936; Vroom, 1969; Whyte, 1955). Empirical research, which has been limited in scope, would come much later.

**Hackman.** The more recent theories on team norms presented here will emphasize the importance of norms for team performance, how norms are defined, and the role of leaders in guiding and changing team norms. The first theory of group norms to consider is one related to their importance to the team. J. Richard Hackman has published 120 articles on the behavior of teams, his research beginning in 1967 and continuing for forty years including two articles in press today. Hackman (1986) determined that there are “group norms that will increase the likelihood that members will develop task appropriate performance strategies and execute them well” (p. 328). Hackman describes the norms as sequential, the first being a prerequisite for the second. First, a group must be able to self-regulate behavior in the team to execute performance strategies effectively. In order to self-regulate, the team must have consensus on the established norms, and reward or punish team members in accordance with the norms. The second norm supports situation scanning and strategy planning within the group. As previously mentioned, Katz (1982) found that groups over time become complacent and ignore external changes. Hackman believed the second group norm must address this limitation and encourage members to continue scanning the external environment, as well as fight against patterns of behavior that are detrimental to performance. Hackman (1986) was not concerned about how or when group norms were established, simply that they are important to the group and that they are “an aspect of group

design that often has been overlooked by both scholars and managers interested in work-team effectiveness” (p. 329).

The support for Hackman’s research is represented in research by Gladstein (1984), Guzzo and Shea (1992) and Tannenbaum, Beard, and Salas (1992), and together was used to develop a model by Campion, Medsker, and Higgs (1993) regarding the design of effective work groups and our understanding of team norms and behavior. The Campion, Medsker, and Higgs model focuses on five primary characteristics of an effective team: job design, interdependence, composition, context, and process. Campion, Medsker, and Higgs (1993) created a fifty-four item survey of team norms and behavior to assess these five characteristics (pp. 848-850).

**Feldman.** A second theory developed about the same time by Feldman (1984) addressed how group norms were defined, and identified four primary drivers of norm creation: “explicit statements by supervisors or co-workers; critical events in the group’s history; primacy; and carry-over behaviors from past situations” (p. 50). In Feldman’s model each of the drivers of norm creation provides a unique value to the team’s ability to succeed. Supervisors will set norms that will help the group perform more effectively, work within the culture and expectations of the organization, or promote the supervisors preferred behaviors. Critical events, both positive and negative, can establish group norms by signaling what is important to the organization or creating an environment in which groups must agree on norms. Primacy influence on norms is reflected in Gersick’s (1988) research, stating that the common behaviors and actions of the team are defined in the first meeting. Finally, many norms are carry-overs from the team members’ previous experiences in other groups.

Feldman recognizes, however, that his model was created conceptually without empirical evidence on workgroup norms. “Moreover, until it is known more concretely why norms develop and why they are strongly enforced, attempts to change group norms will remain haphazard and difficult to accomplish” (Feldman, 1984, p. 52).

**Taggar and Ellis.** Twenty years after this early research on team norms, Taggar and Ellis (2007) created a multilevel model of norm formation, and empirically studied the role of leaders on shaping norm creation and changing the expectations of the team. There were four hypotheses tested in their study: 1) leader expectations for how frequently they would display collaborative problem solving behaviors in a forthcoming team task will be positively associated with the negotiated team problem solving norms; 2) Average staff expectations for how frequently they would display collaborative problem solving behaviors will be positively associated with the negotiated team problem solving norms; 3) Leader and average staff collaborative problem solving expectations will interact to predict team norms, such that a leader can ameliorate the low expectations of staff; 4) Collaborative problem solving team norms will predict individual team member behaviors on (a) conflict resolution, (b) collaborative problem-solving, (c) communication, (d) goal setting/performance management, and (e) planning/task coordination.

The outcomes of Taggar and Ellis’s (2007) study supported each of their hypotheses. In particular, they found that the expectations leaders and staff bring to newly formed teams play a role in determining team norms, and team leaders with high expectations for problem-solving behaviors within a team can compensate for the staff’s low expectations. Koman and Wolff (2008) also found that leaders’ behaviors are important in the development of team

norms, demonstrating that a leader with strong emotional intelligence could improve the group norms. Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, and Trochim (2008) and Ayoko, Callan, and Härtel, (2008), similar to Taggar and Ellis, identified conflict resolution as one of the most influential elements of team norms that leaders can develop in order to change team norms and improve performance. The outcomes of the Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, and Trochim study also demonstrated that teams with positive norms achieved higher or increased performance and satisfaction, and these teams mentioned the importance of team norms for “proactive problem-solving, foreseeing and preventing problems, and learning to work with individual member’s unique traits” (2008, p. 177).

The research supports the notion that norms are important to team performance, certain factors drive the development of norms, and leaders can play a critical role in shaping team norms. Taggar and Ellis (2007) suggest that future research should expand on this, to consider integrating the work on the role of leaders in developing team norms and the process of team development. “Our model of leaders actively shaping team development could be integrated with Gersick's (1991) work on inertial revolution in teams” (Taggar & Ellis, 2007, p. 117).

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations for This Study**

Research on norm formation as it relates to MCTs and the design of this study is summarized here including literature on social constructionism, norm formation and cognitive adjustment theory that was used as a theoretical foundation for the study. Research supporting the conceptual framework developed for this study is presented at the end of this



section, describing how the use of this model guided an understanding of the interculturality sensitive MCT member actions toward norm formation.

**Social constructionism.** Despite calls by Taggar and Ellis and others for further research on norm formation, the area remains limited to a few studies (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Levine, Higgins, & Choi, 2000; Taggar & Ellis, 2007). This study expands our understanding of norm formation, a process that begins through the social construction of meaning. Social constructionism theory has its origins in various ontological efforts to explain the world around us. Edvardsson, Tronvoll, and Gruber (2011) describe it as a manner “to interpret the social world and to enhance understanding of how actors on a societal, group and individual level create, realize, and reproduce social situations and structures” (p. 329).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) in their development of social constructionism describe the following three conditions as being necessary in a complete picture of the social world: “Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product.” (p. 61). If we are to agree man is a ‘social product’, we can begin to understand the process of shared norm formation as being a product of many voices discussing, debating and eventually agreeing on a set of implicit and/or explicit guides or expectations of action.

The social constructionist perspective is the most appropriate theoretical model for this study, providing guidance for the qualitative study of the experiences of this unique, instrumental case. The theory also provided guidance for my role as the qualitative researcher, facilitating the reflection and reconstruction of the interculturality sensitive team’s experience. Finally, social constructionism guided the study outcomes reflecting a shared

agreement between myself and the participants as to what was experienced. Comparatively, a positivist study would have expected this unique case to develop a more generalizable theory of MCTs and my role as participating without impacting the group. A critical theory approach would have expected me as the researcher to take an activist approach in challenging the MCT members' own understanding of their experience, and based on my own experience sought to reveal an understanding of the team members' actions that they themselves were not aware. Given the intent of this study was to explore areas of shared norm development and early team formation, where there is limited existing research, a study design based on social constructionism brought to the fore the team's description of their unique experience in developing team norms and provided the most accurate and rich description of this activity.

**Norm formation model.** Though research on norm formation is limited, a seminal study on norm formation provided some guidance on the formation of norms in groups. Bettenhausen and Murnighan's (1985) research evaluated the behavior of 19 groups faced with a decision-making situation in which both cooperation and competition were required. The study found that norms emerge in teams through a process involving group interactions meaning making, and cognitive scripts. Bettenhausen and Murnighan created a four-box matrix to illustrate the four types of interactions between team members that can generate shared norms. The matrix is described in detail in chapter three.

Bettenhausen and Murnighan's study found that team members typically generate an understanding or meaning of a situation by matching the situation to a cognitive script; the cognitive script, in turn, is based on past experiences. The study identified four potential

types of interactions between team members. If the definitions and the cognitive scripts of the team members are similar, then a shared norm can be established tacitly and comfortably. Typically in diverse teams, however, definitions and cognitive scripts are different, requiring the team to negotiate the development of team norms. Bettenhausen and Murnighan's study identified three additional potential routes to norm formation; these are described further in chapter three.

The Bettenhausen and Murnighan norm formation four-box model developed from the research suggested six common norm processes: “1) members of ad hoc groups initially base their actions and their understanding of others' actions on the norms they held as members of different groups in similar situations; 2) norms form early, often before a group's members adequately understand their task; 3) as group members interact, their shared experiences form the basis for expectations about future interactions; 4) challenges to the group's evolving pattern of behavior can reveal the members' subjective interpretations of their interaction; 5) groups that resolve major challenges become more immune to subsequent threats; and 6) after major challenges have been resolved, further attempts to alter the behavior the norm controls will either be ignored or met with sanctions” (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 20).

Predating Bettenhausen and Murnighan's model of members' interpretations of their new team, the research from Schütz (1944) describes the actions of new entrants to teams as having the “need to check step-by-step the subjective likelihood of what is objectively given for in-group members” (p. 506). Team members attempt to establish norms based on previous experiences, or cognitively adapt their approach to a new model developed within

the team. “Cognitive adjustment is important because it is the prerequisite for feeling comfortable, for developing social contacts, and for being able to contribute to the team” (Brandl & Neyer, 2009, p. 342).

Fundamentally, research by Schneider and Shiffrin (1977) provides an important description of cognitive adjustment, or ‘controlled processing’ as they describe the action. Their studies present two primary modes of information processing: automatic and controlled. These two processes govern a person’s response to new situations. The *automatic process* relies heavily on a person’s ability to recognize a familiar context, and is “activated automatically without the necessity of active control or attention by the subject” (p. 2). The researchers also found that “once learned, an automatic process is difficult to suppress, to modify, or to ignore” (p. 2). The *controlled process* “is a temporary sequence of nodes activated under control of, and through attention by, the subject” (p. 2). Of note, the researchers state controlled processes are ‘capacity-limited’ as they require significant attention and effort on the part of the individual. Using a controlled approach for processing information is applied only when the individual determines the “benefits deriving from the ease with which such processes may be set up, altered, and applied in novel situations for which automatic sequences have never been learned” (p. 3).

With this basis we can understand Schütz’s (1944) “general theory of interpretation for the typical situation in which a stranger finds himself in his attempt to interpret the cultural pattern of a social group, which he approaches, and to orient himself within it” (p. 499). From the first meeting, MCT members must assess, interpret and orient themselves within the social construct of their team. Their ability to adapt, both effectively and

willingly, in order to form shared and integrative norms is essential to the MCT formation, and the ability of the team to leverage divergent thinking during performance. Brandl and Neyer (2009) state that “cognitive adjustment theory provides insight on this approach to cultural adaptability” in the development of global work team members, not by training participants on specific cultures, but that “team members are practically able to ‘understand’ each other. They are able to take another’s perspective and to make workable predictions about what others do” (p. 342).

Brandl and Neyer (2009), building on phenomenology and sense-making theory, argue that “training needs to develop global virtual team members’ capabilities in dealing with the unknown rather than providing ready-made concepts of cultures.” If MCTs simply rely on stereotypes, or ignore cultural differences altogether, they miss out on the value of divergent thinking. In order to assess the interculturally sensitive MCT in its ability to create shared norms that will support divergent thinking, a conceptual framework has been designed to differentiate team member actions based on whether the actions reflect ‘thinking as usual’ (dominant culture, ethnocentric model) or ‘letting-go and taking-on’ (shared, ethnorelative model).

Cognitive adjustment theory is not the only theory claiming to explain the actions of MCT members. Rink and Ellemers (2007) believe social identity theory explains norm formation, suggesting that ‘norm-congruency’ resolves differences among team members, and “task-related differences can go hand in hand with feelings of organizational identification, and can in fact even form the basis for it, provided that these differences reflect shared expectations and group norms” (p. S18). Flynn and Chatman (2002) propose

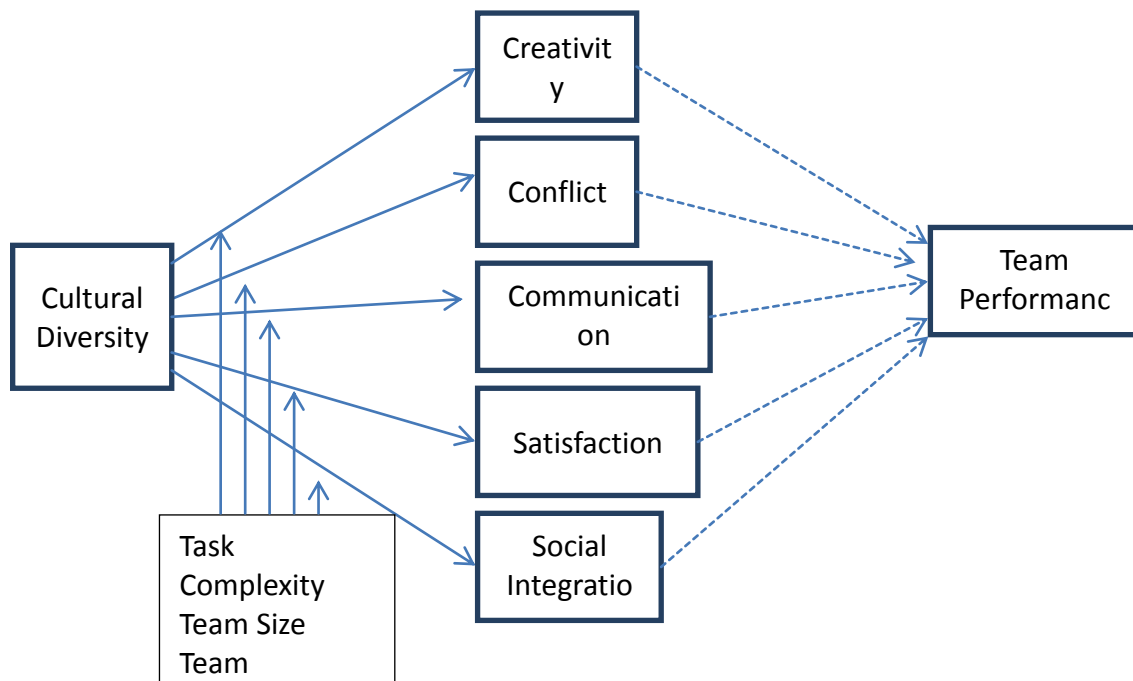
that social categorization processes influence norm formation. In addition to alternative theories to norm formation, several researchers challenge the stability and existence of shared norm formation. Langfield-Smith (1992) suggests that “it is not necessary for members of a group to have a complete set of shared beliefs in order to function as a decision-making group” ... “collective cognitions are described as merely transitory phenomena, changing in response to circumstances.” (p. 349). Additionally, Klimoski and Mohammed (1994) question whether the shared norm and team mental model is truly a construct, or merely a metaphor to describe incomplete conceptual work. Additional research is needed to describe the process of shared norm formation effectively.

**Norm formation in MCTs.** Research support for Bettenhausen and Murnighan’s results as they relate to MCTs are reflected in citations of their research in more recent studies exploring the strength and manner of sanctions against norm challenging (Coleman, 1990); the value of norms for validating individual attitudes in conditions of uncertainty and conflict (Friedkin, 1990); the impact of effective communication on improving results of culturally diverse teams (Maznevski, 1994); team demographic heterogeneity and the early team social categorization processes that influence norm formation (Flynn & Chatman, 2002); the motivating factor of quick agreement on norms in high performing teams (Ericksen & Dyer, 2004); the manner in which members’ actions are transmitted and interpreted (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005); the importance of dissent within the group during formation (Curseu, Schruijer & Boros, 2007); the inhibiting factor of a focus on process rather than outcomes (Woolley, 2009); and on hybrid cultures that are more likely to form in teams whose members value multiculturalism (Adair & Ganai, 2013).

One particular study of interest developed from the Bettenhausen and Murnighan model is an empirical analysis of cultural intelligence and cultural heterogeneity on team shared values (Adair, Hideg & Spence, 2013). Similar to this paper's study, the Adair, Hideg and Spence study sought to describe the impact of cultural intelligence in MCTs. Their focus, however, was on the development of shared values, not shared norms. The clear distinction between these approaches is reflected in Tuckman's original description of team development. Within each stage of team development are two distinct models: one related to the development of shared values for effective interpersonal communication, the other addressing the process of completing the task using shared norms. "Team values are distinct from team norms in that values are deep-seeded, shared beliefs about a team's guiding principles, whereas team norms reflect an understanding of procedures and appropriate behaviors" (Adair, Hideg & Spence, 2013 citing Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). Nevertheless, the positive impact of shared values in MCTs found in this study, and the focus on these values developing "when teams first form" (Adair, Hideg & Spence, 2013, 944), provides additional support for the theoretical basis of this study.

As stated in chapter one, there is limited direct research on shared norm development in MCTs. Stahl, Maznevski, Voight and Jonsen's meta-analysis of research on MCTs provides some guidance on understanding MCT norm formation and the results of the team members' cognitive adjustment process (figure 4). Stahl et al.'s (2010) analysis of previous research found that in culturally diverse teams, time seemed to allow a shift in the group's focus from 'surface level' characteristics that are used for instant categorization and stereotyping to a deeper understanding and appreciation of group members' underlying

psychological characteristics (Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Dependent variables included performance, creativity, conflict management, communication effectiveness, satisfaction and social integration. Moderators included task complexity, team size, team dispersion, and team tenure. The outcomes of the study found that “cultural diversity increases task conflict and reduces social integration among team members” (Stahl et al., 2010, p. 700).



*Figure 4.* Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, & Jonsen meta-analysis of MCTs

My initial literature review of team and norm development was prompted by a conflict between the research of Watson et al. (1993) and Harrison et al. (1998), which found that the negative effects of cultural diversity decreased over time as the members adjusted their perspectives, and Stahl et al.’s results. The Stahl et al. (2010) research results did



primarily support other theories on heterogeneous and homogenous teams, and the significance of the moderating factor of team tenure. The results of Stahl et al.'s analysis, however, identify a fundamental problem related to team tenure, suggesting that "cultural diversity is associated with higher levels of conflict and less effective communication in teams that have spent more time together compared with teams with less tenure" (p. 702). While initially appearing to present a challenge to research on MCTs, the analysis supports similar research results on MCT conflict and communication effectiveness (Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003), and provides the following conceptual direction for the design of this study. The research presented suggests that MCTs facing time and performance pressures may avoid investing time in addressing their cultural differences and the development of shared norms. Instead, the team will often accept a dominant approach to guide their team norms, which may ultimately have a negative impact on the team's cognitive diversity.

### **Intercultural Sensitivity**

Bettenhausen and Murnighan's four-box model of norm formation and the cognitive adjustment theory (CAT) provide valuable insights into conceptualizing a model for understanding how teams develop norms. In order to maximize the potential contribution of this model, however, the MCT needs to pursue shared norm development, and not fall victim to time and performance pressures that encourage a dominant culture approach. This study attempted to control for dominant culture influences in the selected MCT by identifying members who were intercultural sensitivity. Unfortunately, intercultural sensitivity, while important to shared norm development, on its own was insufficient to overcome the

dominant influences in this MCT. This section will describe research on intercultural sensitivity, and the intended application in this study.

For years there was a misperception that the learning of language skills and an understanding of unique cultural stereotypes of specific countries was the key to understanding and managing cultural differences. Chris Earley, in the development of his cultural intelligence theory (CQ), encourages a shift from improving our recognition of stereotypical behavior of groups to developing the ability to distinguish unique perspectives of individuals.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined by Earley and Mosakowski (2004) as “an outsider's seemingly natural ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that a person's compatriots would” (p.140). The issue of cultural intelligence impact on team formation is not one that has been tested significantly. Some research has shown that team members coming from large, homogeneous countries often struggle with an ethnocentric perspective that limits their ability to effectively engage in a shared team orientation (Earley & Gibson, 2002). The primary challenge of MCTs providing additional value rests in their formation of shared norms and ability to overcome inherent challenges faced in working across cultures (Keane, 2009). Katz's (1982) research provides additional insight into the importance of this process taking place during early team formation, recognizing that both homogeneous and heterogeneous teams seek to form standard practices and behaviors. This inherent drive by teams to define standard processes places increased pressure during the early phase of team development to ensure the diverse perspectives of team members are incorporated and leveraged at the outset.

Milton Bennett also encourages an individualistic approach in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), a theoretical framework for understanding intercultural sensitivity. Presented in chapter one, the DMIS was developed as an “explanation of how people construe cultural difference” (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 423). As with Bettenhausen and Murnighan’s research, Bennett’s emphasis is on how individual members interpret their situation. Members with strong intercultural sensitivity are able to experience cultural differences in a complex manner that allows for the drawing of fine distinctions. Conversely, “individuals who have received largely monocultural socialization normally have access only to their own cultural worldview” (p. 423).

The intercultural sensitivity of MCT members is being considered in this study as a factor in norm formation, proposing that a MCT composed entirely of interculturally sensitive members will overcome time and performance pressures to develop shared norms. The next section will describe the rival hypothesis also supported by research, stating that short tenure MCTs will not seek shared norms but rather accept a dominant model to increase efficiency and likelihood of achieving project time and performance goals.

**Dominant culture.** Sonn, Bishop and Humphries and the research of Trickett, Watts and Birman are important links between the research on intercultural sensitivity and research on diversity in dominant cultures. “Although cultural insensitivity (modern racism) is not as overt and behaviorally based as other forms of racial prejudice, the interpretations and meanings that this form of racism has for the groups subjected to it can be just as damaging” (Sonn, Bishop & Humphries, 2000, p. 16). In this manner, dominant culture prejudices may

have similar impacts on the cultural education of young people, creating an often subconscious inability to value and respect culturally unique values and behaviors. "The dominant group exhibits its own set of majority values, many of which have percolated into the overarching framework." (Smolicz, 1984, p. 11) Without significant challenges to our norms and values, we develop an ethnocentric perspective and begin to perceive many of our frameworks as being common in a worldview.

The perception that a member of a dominant culture may lack the necessary intercultural sensitivity to quickly form shared norms with students from other cultures led to this study controlling for intercultural sensitivity in the target MCT. While research on the topic of MCT norm development is limited, there is considerable research on norm differences between cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Hoppe, 2007; Trompenaars, 1993) and "cultural-value-related effects on team performance" (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005, p. 35). Taras, Steel and Kirkman (2011) found that "cultural values can predict employee outcomes with similar or even more strength than more traditional factors such as demographics, personality traits, and cognitive ability" (p. 195). The importance and impact of a team member's cultural preferences, many of which are likely to conflict with one or more team members, can have a significant impact on the team if there is no effort made to adapt or develop a shared model.

The challenge of dominant culture prejudices and the need to intentionally develop culturally diverse frameworks should be of particular concern to governments of large countries, whose environments allow young people to learn with little to no encounters with culturally diverse norms and values. While further research in this area is needed, Sandy

Scarr as President of the Society for Research in Child Development (SCRD) addressed the challenge facing certain regions: “within dominant cultures in modern Western and Asian societies most individual differences in development are not due to differences in environmental opportunities” (1993, p. 1334). Defending her theories, she emphasizes the challenges faced in these dominant cultures to create environments that provide opportunities for culturally diverse development. “Given equal access to cultural knowledge and to other environmental opportunities for experience, genetic individual variation determines the many aspects of individual differences that are manifested in what is learned, when, and by whom” and “Given limited access to cultural knowledge and to essential opportunities for experience, individual differences may reflect those differences in opportunities to learn” (1993, p. 1336). Recognition and understanding of the implications of this theory should support and value the importance of study abroad for students in dominant cultures.

### **Study Abroad**

This final section of the literature review provides a description of efforts made by national governments to overcome the dominant culture limitations of their educational systems, primarily through funding support for study abroad programs. This material is important to the study as it reflects a growing recognition that there is a problem facing the U.S. and other large countries due to dominant culture behaviors, yet the policy actions are inconsistent and insufficient to address the problem.

A 2002 study conducted by the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) of more than 17,000 alumni from 50 years of study abroad programs questioned their impressions of the experience on lasting intercultural development. Recognizing the

limitations of this self-report survey, there is qualitative value in the experiential responses from 98 percent of the respondents who said that “study abroad helped them to better understand their own cultural values and biases, and 82 percent replied that study abroad contributed to their developing a more sophisticated way of looking at the world.” (Dwyer & Peter, 2004, p.56) Numerous other self-report studies (some including pre-/post-experience assessments) have been conducted focused specifically on the aspect of ‘Openness to Diversity’ and the intercultural development of participants resulting from study abroad experiences (Cabrera, Nora, Bernal, Terenzini, & Pascarella , 1998; Herman, 1996; Lathrop, 1999; Laubscher, 1994; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Pike, 2002; Russell & Morris, 2008; Wortman, 2002). The common conclusion of these studies is the recognition that the study abroad experience beneficially impacts student intercultural awareness. Does this translate into an improved capability to adapt to other culturally diverse situations?

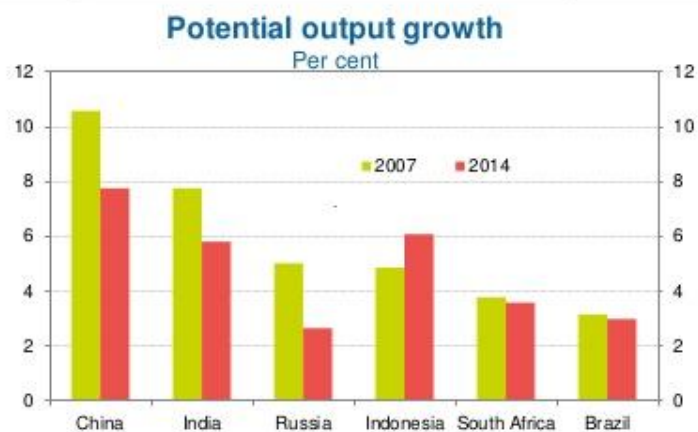
As previously cited, Brandl and Neyer (2009) state that “cognitive adjustment theory provides insight on this approach to cultural adaptability” in the development of global work team members, not by training participants on specific cultures, but that “team members are practically able to ‘understand’ each other because they are able to take another’s perspective and to make workable predictions about what others do. Cognitive adjustment is important because it is the prerequisite for feeling comfortable, for developing social contacts, and for being able to contribute to the team”(p. 342). The experiences of study abroad, based on this theory, should improve dominant culture students preparation for culturally diverse work

environments. The recognition of this value in a dominant culture like the United States, however, has not been reflected in a national effort to improve intercultural education.

This study suggests the need for increased investment by large countries in study abroad programs, based on dominant culture prejudices and a resulting non-competitive position in the global talent market relative to students from smaller countries. One theory holds that large countries of a certain size must invest in culture diversity education, such as study abroad programs, of their young people to overcome inherent culture prejudices simply based on a lack of cultural diversity in the educational environment (Scarr, 1993), though this theory requires further research.

**Diminishing U.S. economic dominance.** The dynamics of global economic power is projecting a shift in U.S. global dominance in recognition of the growing influence of BRICS countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides the following data on global economic changes (Gurria & Tamaki, 2014). Figure 5 shows that BRIICS countries (OECD includes Indonesia in the list) with the exception of Indonesia are growing at a slower rate than they were in 2007.

A faster pace of structural reform is needed in the BRIICS also, given the slowdown in potential growth



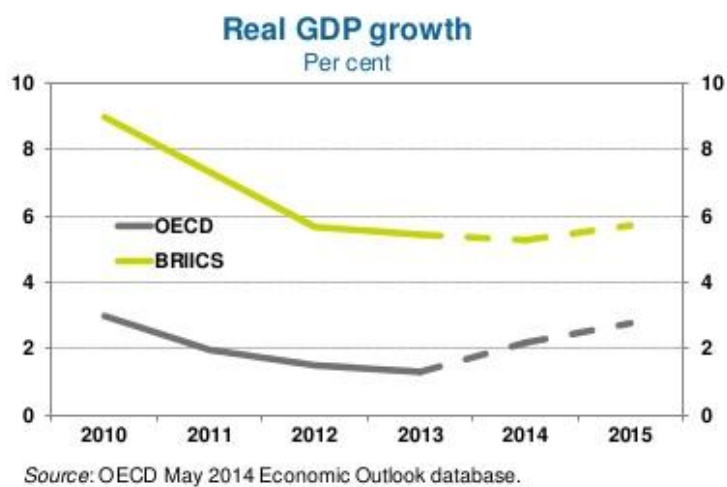
Source: OECD May 2014 Economic Outlook database.

*Figure 5.* Changes in BRIICS economic growth. Chart shows a slowing of output in BRIICS countries from the pace in 2007. Presented by Gurria and Tamaki at the OECD Forum 2014, p. 16.

Figure 6, however, shows that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in these countries is projected to start growing again.



## Growth in advanced economies is rebounding...



*Figure 6.* Real GDP growth in BRICS countries. Chart projects BRICS countries will be rebounding again after several years of declining Real GDP growth. Presented by Gurria and Tamaki at the OECD Forum 2014, p. 2.

Figure 7 also shows that the average pace of GDP growth has been and is expected to continue to significantly outpace U.S. growth.

... driving a strengthening of global growth

**Real GDP growth**  
Per cent

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>World<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>OECD<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>BRIICS<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>
United States	1.8	2.8	1.9	2.6	3.5
Euro area	1.6	-0.6	-0.4	1.2	1.7
Japan	-0.5	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.2
China	9.3	7.7	7.7	7.4	7.3

1. Moving nominal GDP weights, using purchasing power parities.

2. Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa.

Source: OECD May 2014 Economic Outlook database.

*Figure 7.* Real GDP growth for world economies. Chart compares BRIICS countries' Real GDP growth with Real GDP growth for the World, OECD countries, and individual countries of U.S., China, and Japan. Presented by Gurria and Tamaki at the OECD Forum 2014, p. 3.

While there are experts arguing both sides as to whether the United States' economic dominance in the world will continue, it is clear there are a number of growing economies that the U.S. must begin to deal with as true competitors and potential equals.

Naim's (2013) book *The End of Power* discusses the impact of what he believes is the decline of traditional power bases (large governments, major corporations, churches, journalists to name a few) in the face of mobile, technically advanced minorities able to wield great power and influence. Naim reflects on a world that has moved away from what

he references as Max Weber's appreciation for the value bureaucracy and regulation can offer, to one where power is being reorganized and barriers are easier to circumvent; "when people are more numerous and living lives, they become more difficult to regiment and control" (p. 58). Naim's point is not that the evolution of freedom and personal control is a detrimental outcome; rather that it requires a new approach to influencing change on a broad scale. The coercive manner in which the U.S. has been described, rightly or wrongly, as influencing political, economic, and social norms around the globe will be less effective in a world of power parity, and there are possible indicators this decline is already being reflected in today's market (ineffectiveness in the Middle East and East European conflicts, on-going economic problems amongst world powers, expanding separation between the poor and rich, etc).

**Implications for U.S. educational policies.** U.S. policymakers are not blind to the need for increased cultural competence in U.S. students. In 2000 there was a major push, led by President Bill Clinton, to encourage study abroad programs. "To continue to compete successfully in a global economy and to maintain our role as a world leader, the United States needs to ensure that its citizens develop a broad understanding of the world, proficiency in other languages, and knowledge of other cultures" (Clinton, 2000b, p. 1). The Abraham Lincoln Commission, a bipartisan panel of government appointed experts in education led by the late Senator Paul Simon, was formed and in 2005 stated in their final report titled *Global Competence & National Needs* (2005), "What nations don't know can hurt them. The stakes involved in study abroad are that simple, that straightforward, and that important. For their own future and that of the nation, college graduates today must be

internationally competent” (p. iii). The President at the time of the report, George W. Bush, also recognized this need, “We must ...reaffirm our commitment to promote educational opportunities that enable American students to study abroad, and to encourage international students to take part in our educational system” (p. 3).

The Lincoln Commission’s vision was to send one million U.S. students abroad annually by the 2016-2017 academic year. Funding for this initiative was never committed, despite congressional efforts to do so in 2007, 2009 and most recently in 2012. Some incremental gains have occurred in the past decade due to heightened internationalization efforts by the executive branch and within schools themselves. In 2009, President Obama announced the first of two ‘100,000 Strong’ initiatives, providing funding for study abroad efforts. Initially connecting U.S. and Chinese students with study abroad exchanges, the program has now expanded to ‘100,000 Strong in the Americas’ supporting similar study abroad efforts within the Western Hemisphere. The objective of these study abroad programs is to improve the cultural intelligence training and preparation of U.S. students as ‘global citizens’ by pushing the students outside of their comfort zones in domestic classrooms. The number of students impacted, however falls well short of the one million students abroad goal.

**Competitive gap.** The need for a change in educational policies, to develop intercultural awareness and combat dominant culture prejudices that develop in the absence of diverse cultural experiences is not just a U.S. concern but one faced by other large countries like those represented in the BRICS’ consortium (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Unfortunately, the delayed investment by the U.S. has meant the U.S.

educational system has fallen well behind several of these other large countries in the preparation of students for adapting to a globally complex environment. Table 1 provides a listing of countries with large populations, a list that primarily reflects Western and Asian countries. These countries represent large domestic markets that permit young people to learn and develop with little to no encounters with culturally diverse norms and values. Some of the economically disadvantaged countries in Table 1 would find it difficult to justify federal study abroad funding on a comparable level with wealthy countries of similar population. The differences in funding among the more wealthy leaders, however, are harder to rationalize.

Table 1

*Population of Countries over 100 Million*

1	China	1,343,239,923
2	India	1,205,073,612
3	United States	313,847,465
4	Indonesia	248,645,008
5	Brazil	199,321,413
6	Pakistan	190,291,129
7	Nigeria	170,123,740
8	Bangladesh	161,083,804
9	Russia	142,517,670
10	Japan	127,368,088
11	Mexico	114,975,406
12	Philippines	103,775,002

*Note.* 2012 global population statistics were retrieved from *CIA World Factbook* (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>)

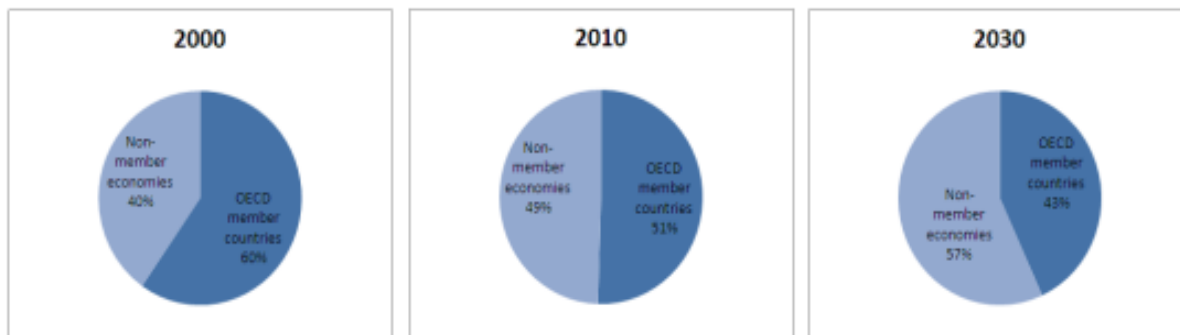
A comparison could be made between China, India, and the United States, the three largest

countries each of whom have significant student populations and the economic power to choose to invest in study abroad. The 2012 Open Doors report from the Institute of International Education indicated that approximately 274,000 U.S. students participated in study abroad to any nation in the 2010-11 academic year. This was compared to approximately 194,000 Chinese students and 100,000 Indian students who came to the U.S. alone that same year. The 2002 Open Doors report (Gillespie & Slawson, 2003) only noted 59,000 and 54,000 Study Abroad students from China and India (respectively) in the U.S. 10 years earlier, representing increases of 228.8% and 85.2% over the decade (respectively). While this data suggests both China and India are supporting substantial growth in study abroad, one limitation of this data is that it only includes Chinese and Indian students coming to the U.S., therefore does not represent changes in Chinese and Indian students going to other countries over that time. Without this additional data, it is unclear if the growth is the result of more students choosing to study in the U.S. over other countries (and possibly less significant overall growth), or truly an increase in all study abroad programs in China and India. Despite this limitation, the comparison to the U.S. remains positive. The U.S. study abroad participants to all countries over the same 10-year period increased 70.2% (from 161,000), but most of this growth (50.3%) took place before 2007. From 2007 to 2012, U.S. students studying abroad only grew 13.2% (Open Doors, 2012).

Monetarily, we can identify a substantial national effort in China to increase overseas study. A 2004 Chinese study by Li Xiaoxuan from the Chinese Academy of Sciences of more than 1,000 Chinese study abroad participants indicated that 46.3% were funded by the Chinese government, though “64.9% indicated the funding was below what was needed for

their living standard” (pp. 65-70). In October 2012 the Chinese government announced 18,000 students would receive funding through the China Scholarship Council, an increase of 2,000 from the previous year and more than double the number from 2006. (Chen, 2012) There are clear signals the Chinese government recognizes the need for culturally intelligent leaders as a national priority.

**Heterogeneity vs. homogeneity.** Historically large economies have benefited from low levels of ethnic diversity. Easterly and Levine (1997), based on research in Africa, demonstrated that ethnic diversity has a direct negative effect on economic growth, often driven by public policy decisions in education and financial systems. Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005) global study recognized various additional benefits that have resulted from ethnic homogeneity, citing countries with greater homogeneity benefited from reduced ethnic conflicts and more stable and quality governments, higher levels of investment, and less government consumption relative to GDP. This benefit of homogeneity, however, may become a weakness in the preparation of global leaders as globalization drives future economic growth outside of the traditional markets, in particular to developing countries and emerging economies (Figure 8).



*Figure 8.* Share of the global economy in purchasing power parity terms.

While further research in this area is needed, Scarr (1993) addressed the challenge facing these large countries: “environments should be seen as opportunities for experiences that are constructed by persons in developmentally changing and individually different ways” and “within dominant cultures in modern Western and Asian societies most individual differences in development are not due to differences in environmental opportunities” (1993, p. 1334). Scarr’s theory is that these dominant cultures must create environments that provide opportunities for culturally diverse development. U.S. educational policies should recognize that the domestic context, generally, provides a limited context for cross-cultural learning, and specific efforts within educational settings and through study abroad are critical to counteracting this inadequacy.

U.S managers reflect this deficiency as they are often described as projecting an “imposed culture that conveys an aura of corporate colonialism” (Begley & Boyd, 2003, p. 357). This has been masked as creating a consistent corporate culture globally, one that reflects and supports an internal culture but ignoring local national cultures. As U.S. economic power declines, however, there may be increasing challenges to this approach.



And if U.S. students continue to perpetuate an image as culturally ignorant and insensitive in communicating with citizens from other nations, the U.S. educational system runs the risk of producing a new generation of leaders ill-equipped to address the shifting global economic landscape and to work effectively in the increasingly common business structure of cross-cultural work teams.

Study abroad programs are perceived as preferential to training interventions in addressing this challenge. Research on intercultural development indicates it is a multi-year development process, not a short-term training activity (Bennett, 1986; Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). A ten year study by Sundstrom, DeMuse, and Futrell (1990) also found mixed results from leadership development interventions in this area. Their interpretation of intervention failures was similar to their research on team development: too much focus on internal team processes without recognizing the importance of external influences. Developing the sensitivity and effectiveness for working in multicultural settings, particularly for those from a homogenous cultural environment, will require a long-term, deliberate educational effort.

### **Chapter Summary**

We can now begin to understand the complex and challenging nature of shared norm formation within the development of multicultural teams. The first MCT meeting, which Gersick (1988) has suggested will define much of the first half of the available work time for the team, may require less focus on performance goals and instead attempt to deal with the team members' cultural differences. How teams deal with these differences will be determined significantly by their individual past experiences, the pressure they sense from

external forces, and their willingness (often a subconscious decision) to take the time to understand the differences. The outcome of this initial meeting is likely to establish team norms that will impact team behavior and task outcomes throughout their tenure.

Morgan, Salas, and Glickman's (1993) assertion that teams can re-cycle in their process may be particularly relevant to MCTs, who should define their task goals and team processes after establishing shared norms. Without doing the norm formation work first, the goals and processes are likely to reflect the team members' previously experienced team norms in different contexts. If this re-cycling does not take place early in the process, Gersick's model would suggest the team will not accomplish this task until halfway through their performance period (or at all), wasting a significant amount of the available time.

The formation of shared norms during early MCT formation should be considered a critical factor in team success, both in the shared norms' ability to provide foundation and structure to team behavior as well as the support divergent thinking. Chapter three will describe the methodology created for this study to observe and describe norm development in an interculturally sensitive MCT.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

As described in chapter one, this study was designed to understand how shared norms are developed during the early team formation phase of a MCT. A case study research approach was undertaken to understand the shared norm development process as reflected by the interpretations and actions of a team composed of interculturally sensitive MCT's members. While the study team developed team norms in alignment with a dominant team member, the failure of the team to form shared norms does not diminish the study's ability to contribute valuable insights to the MCT norm development process.

This chapter provides specific information regarding: (a) the research design and description of the case study protocol created for this study; (b) the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in design of the study and analysis of the data; (c) the participant selection process; (d) data collection and analysis; and (e) the research validity and reliability. The chapter is organized following Yin's (2014) protocol guidelines. The expectation is that anyone interested in conducting this study will be able to follow the same approach, and compare their findings with the findings presented in chapter four.

#### **Research Design – Case Study**

Yin (2014) describes case study research as investigating “a contemporary phenomenon [the ‘case’] in its real world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 2). In presenting an effective approach to execution of a case study, Yin describes his model as “a linear but iterative process” (p. 1). For this reason the design of the study provided guidance to the researcher, but at any stage in the process I was prepared to reflect on previous stages and improve

processes as necessary to gather sufficient data to provide a thick, rich description of MCT norm formation.

The process of MCT norm formation in this particular case study was a “critical case” (Yin, 2014, p. 51), by selecting a team of students with high intercultural sensitivity to attempt to overcome the challenges faced by short-tenure MCTs. The case may even be an “instrumental case” (Stake, 1995, p. 3), providing a valuable understanding of the unique experience of a high interculturally sensitive team. By bounding the study around the specific experience of a high interculturally sensitive team going through team formation, yet leaving the questions broad and the data gathering extensive, the study explored a potentially new area of MCT research through a complex and rich description of the MCT’s norm development.

A second approach to the study was considered but discarded; this was an ethnographic study. While the phenomenon of MCT formation could be considered the creation of a team ‘culture’ and shared norms studied from an ethnographic perspective, it is the differences and conflicts between cultures that is the focus of the study making this a potentially confusing approach. Also, as with the case study approach, an ethnographic study of the team would include observation during their formation stage, but a proper ethnographic study should extend the time period and contexts in which the team is observed to create a strong description of the team culture. Witnessing the team members’ interactions in class, socially and in other settings to gather data on their various interactions would provide greater richness to the description. This level of involvement by a single researcher,

however, would not have been possible and an attempt to do so may have negatively impacted the team's ability to form naturally.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the design, a case study protocol was created. This research protocol is a slightly modified version of Yin's (2014) suggested protocol for case study research (see Appendix A). The protocol guiding this study has four sections; each are described below in terms of content and purpose (Yin, 2014). For the purposes of this research proposal, this chapter is organized by the first three protocol headings. The fourth component of the protocol addresses study findings and implications, which are presented in chapters four and five. The remaining sections of this chapter are:

1. *Introduction to the Case Study*: This section contains the overview of the case study, including the research question, the theoretical and conceptual framework, and value of the protocol for the researcher.
2. *Data collection procedures*: This section contains a list of all of the activities involved in collecting data and any preparation required prior to collection events. This includes the participant selection process, the data collection process and expected timeline, the interview guide and protocol, and the maintenance of data and participant privacy.
3. *Data analysis procedures*: This section describes the processes for analyzing the data in a structured manner, including both open and a-priori coding of the data. Also included is a statement regarding the research validity and reliability. This protocol creates a clear approach for the researcher to maintain alignment with research question the analysis procedure is seeking to answer.

4. *Reporting the research outcomes:* In general, the findings that answer the research question are reported in chapter four and include rich descriptions of the experiences and interactions of each team member, patterns and themes that emerged from open-coding and the results of the a-priori coding in comparison to the conceptual framework model. Chapter five relates the findings to extant literature, include the implications of the findings from an analytical generalization perspective, and identifies possible opportunities for theory building and further qualitative and quantitative studies. See appendix A for the complete case study protocol guiding this study.

### **Case Study Protocol: Introduction to the Study**

**Research question.** The initial research question of this study was: how are shared norms developed in a MCT with interculturally sensitive members during early team formation? The study explored the actions of the interculturally sensitive MCT during early team formation, and collected rich data to understand the various influences and processes impacting shared norm development. A rival hypothesis this study sought to overcome, however, was ultimately reflected in the study findings. The pressures to perform in a short-term project environment, despite high intercultural sensitivity, created the opportunity and positive support for hegemonic (dominant culture) team member behavior. As a result, the research question was altered in response to this MCT behavior: how are team norms developed in a MCT with interculturally sensitive members during early team formation?

**Theoretical framework.** The primary theoretical foundation of the study was social constructionism, defined by Schneider and Sidney (2009) as “shared understandings among

people give rise to rules, norms, identities, concepts, and institutions” (p. 106). As team members work to understand and value their differences, their construction of shared norms requires common agreement on effective processes for managing team challenges and opportunities.

The process of norm formation begins through the social construction of meaning (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). Team members engage in direct discussions, and through their interactions attempt to understand each other and form norms upon which guide future interactions. Gergen (1985) describes social constructionist inquiry as “principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live.” (p. 266) The elements necessary for social construction of shared norms in MCTs are reflected in Gergen’s four assumptions of social constructionism:

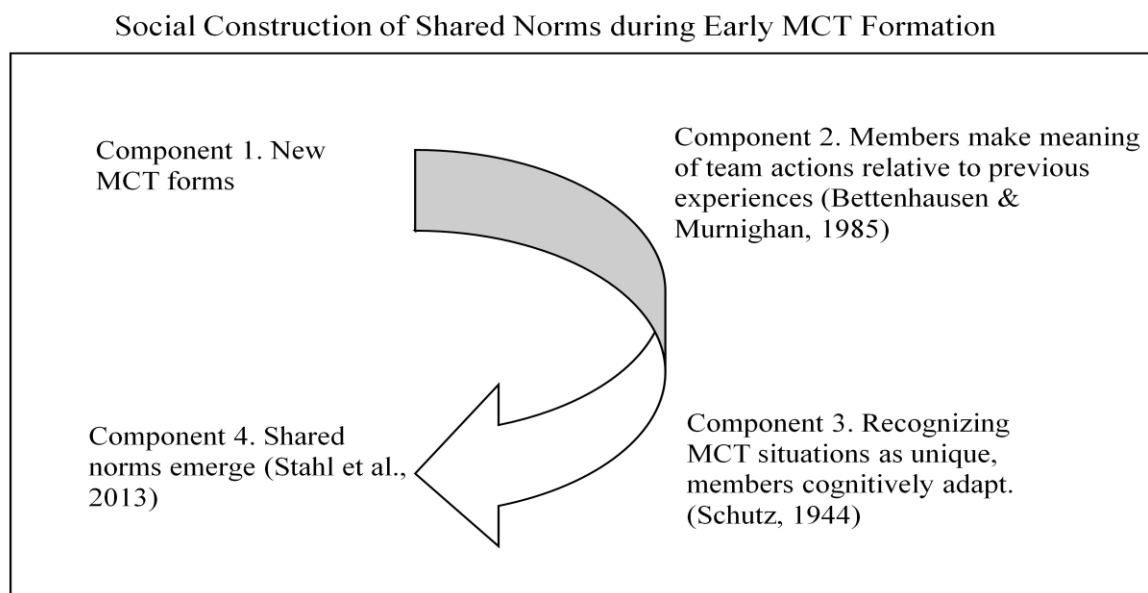
1. What we take to be experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood.
2. The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people. From the constructionist position the process of understanding is ...the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship.
3. The degree to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependent on the empirical validity of the perspective in question, but on the vicissitudes of social processes (e.g., communication, negotiation, conflict, rhetoric).

4. Forms of negotiated understanding are of critical significance in social life, as they are integrally connected with many other activities in which people engage.

In order to understand the process by which MCT members socially construct shared norms, a model was needed to guide our ability to analyze team members' interactions and efforts to make meaning of their situation in each phase of norm development. The conceptual framework presented here provided guidance for the description and analysis of this social construction process.

**Conceptual framework.** The purpose of a conceptual framework is to enable the researcher to collect and analyze data in a theoretically informed way. Without a conceptual framework, a researcher would likely be overwhelmed by the multitude of data available. For this study, as described earlier, the conceptual framework combined two well-accepted models that together guided the data collection and analysis processes of this study. Please see figure 9 below.





*Figure 9.* Conceptual framework of the study for data analysis purposes

The conceptual framework for this study was created by combining the four-box matrix of meaning making in norm formation (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985) with Schütz's (1944) cognitive adjustment theory. The former guided the data collection and analysis focused on how team members made meaning of their team experiences; and the latter on how team members cognitively adjusted or changed their practices to meet the expectations of shared norms in the MCT. The conceptual framework suggests that these two actions (meaning making and cognitive adjustment) represent the two practices combined to generate shared norms.

In order to discern the different types of norms that were emerging in the study team, the conceptual framework was guided by the findings of the Stahl et al. (2010) meta-analysis. Stahl et al. identified the types of shared norms that have been shown to contribute to MCT

effectiveness. Below is a description of each of the four components of the conceptual framework:

***Component 1.*** The study team was formed with a culturally diverse set of four participants with high intercultural sensitivity scores.

***Component 2.*** Bettenhausen and Murnighan's (1985) research provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the efforts by MCT members to make meaning of their situation. A four-box matrix, presented below in figure 10, illustrates "four possible ways members can interpret the situation in a new group" (p. 354). According to this view, and aligned with Feldman (1984), "...the meanings attached to action are necessarily based on the members' prior experiences in what they believe are similar situations" (p. 354). This framework consequently distinguishes the initial definition or meaning a team member makes from the previous experience or script that supports the definition/meaning. This distinction is important for a study on multicultural teams because it enabled the researcher to identify two important elements of team interactions—agreement or lack of agreement on meaning, as well as the causes that generate the agreement or lack of agreement (e.g., the script running in the background of the team member's mind that generates meaning).

		Group Members' Scripts	
		Similar to each other's	Different from each other's
Member's definition of the new situation	Similar to each other's	<p>I</p> <p>Interactions confirm each member's interpretation and are not problematic</p>	<p>III</p> <p>Initial interactions proceed smoothly but latent disagreement may require subsequent development of a group-based understanding</p>
	Different from each other's	<p>II</p> <p>Initial interactions trigger the development of a group-based understanding of the situation; members must work toward a common definition of the current situation</p>	<p>IV</p> <p>Initial interactions either frustrate the group or trigger the development of a group-based understanding of the situation; elaborate discussions are necessary</p>

Figure 10. Bettenhausen and Murnighan's four-box matrix

The first case, cell I, identifies “interactions (that) confirm each member's interpretation and are not problematic” (p. 355). In this case, a team could proceed easily and norm development should be quick and lasting because team members share the same meanings of important team tasks as well as the same script that generated the meanings.

The second case, cell II, reflects team member differences in definition or meaning that are based on similar scripts. In other words, new team members share background experiences or contexts but do not interpret the current team task or issue in the same way. In

this case, “initial interactions trigger the development of a group-based understanding of the situation; members must work toward a common definition of the current situation” (p. 355). This type of team could quickly resolve differences through effective group discussion based on a common script.

The third case, cell III, reflects a situation when team members share meaning, but they are basing these initial impressions on different scripts or contextual experiences. This type suggests that “initial interactions proceed smoothly but latent disagreement may require subsequent development of a group-based understanding” (p. 355). Further, “early interactions can proceed rapidly because everyone perceives the current situation similarly. But when disagreement surfaces, resolving differences based on different scripts, which are more deeply rooted than definitions of a novel situation may be particularly problematic.” (p. 355).

Finally, the fourth case (cell IV) reflects team interactions where definitions/meaning *and* scripts are different. These teams quickly experience disagreement, and may struggle to resolve their differences quickly. The “initial interactions either frustrate the group or trigger the development of a group-based understanding of the situation; elaborate discussions are necessary” (p. 355). This last group either is mired in perpetual disagreement or finds ways to expend considerable time and group effort in order to overcome their differences.

These four different types of team member interactions guided the data collection and analysis for each of the two types of data:

1. Observations. The four-box matrix organized the types of team interactions observed during the data collection phase of the study. Specifically, I looked for

non-verbal and verbal cues signaling agreement or disagreement between team members. See the Case Study Protocol (appendix A) and the Observation Guide (appendix E) for the types of cues that were anticipated and the process for noting the cues.

2. Interviews. The team member interpretations (e.g., meanings) were explored in greater depth during the interviews. The interviews with team members attempted to draw out member scripts that generated the meanings during this initial stage of meaning making by asking them to reflect on their early thoughts and experiences. See the Case Study Protocol (appendix A) and Interview Guide (appendix F) for the process I followed to connect the observations to the interview questions.

**Component 3.** To be able to analyze how team members adjusted their ideas or scripts generated by interacting with their teammates, the study needed to identify a recognized theory or model that illuminates the adjustments. Schutz's (1944) work on cognitive adjustment provided this foundation. Cognitive adjustment is a function "of an individual's ability to manage his or her anxiety and uncertainty in an uncertain environment" (Brandl & Neyer, 2009, p. 341). As described by Schütz (1944), cognitive adjustment is a process of interpretation (of others' culture/behavior) and orientation (of self to others). Schütz found that human beings routinely respond to situations using familiar behavior rather than develop new ways of thinking or acting. He found that in most standard situations, people will employ a "thinking as usual" approach. While not effective for creating shared norms, this approach is considered appropriate for four conditions: former

experiences are expected to be sufficient for mastering future situations; the member can rely on information and guidance provided by authorities; it is sufficient to know something about the general type of events one may encounter; and the approach is a recognized acceptable response with the member's peers (Schütz, 1944). In situations absent these interpretations or that challenge member's confidence, Schütz believes a 'crisis' ensues during which the individual puts into question her understanding of the situation. The 'thinking as usual' strategy and the 'letting-go and taking-on' strategy were explored during team observations and team member interviews. Team members who act in a 'thinking as usual' approach argue for norms that reflect past experiences and reflect norms as either consistent with or diverging from preferred approaches. A 'letting-go and taking-on' approach would demonstrate efforts to include other perspectives and describe norms as reflecting a shared development process.

**Component 4.** To know what types of norms to look for during the norm formation process, the study needed to be guided by the types of norms that have been shown to benefit MCTs. Consequently, the study needed to identify evidence-based MCT norms. The seminal meta-analysis of research on MCTs conducted by Stahl, Maznevski, Voight, & Jonsen (2010) identified the types of norms a MCT needs to develop to be optimally effective. Stahl et al. tested variables related to MCT norms, identifying five types of shared norms important to MCT effectiveness: creativity, conflict, communication effectiveness, satisfaction, social integration. The Stahl et al. model provided guidance for development of the observation approach and interview guide, emphasizing member actions focused on the development of these five norms.

### **Case Study Protocol: Data Collection Procedures**

**Participant selection and informed consent.** Participant selection in this study was critical, and involved four phases. After a brief description of the population from which the participants were selected, each of the four phases is described below.

*Population description.* The population of potential participants was the 2014-15 class of masters' students in a joint degree program between a U.S. university and European university. Students represented many nationalities, but those chosen for this study were American, Chinese, French and Indian.

As part of the masters program, the 20 to 30 students in the program are placed in culturally diverse teams of three to four students each at the beginning of the spring semester and assigned to a corporate project. Companies provide personnel and financial support for these project opportunities, as a way to learn of creative solutions to internal challenges as well as get to know potential recruits. The project requires the entire semester to complete, demands as much as 50% of the students' overall program time and constitutes a significant portion of the students' grades. The teams meet with their project sponsors on three occasions, the final being a formal presentation of the results of the study. The project represents a strong team challenge that will require the formation of team norms in order to be effective.

In order to select a culturally diverse project team for this study, with the highest potential for shared norm formation, participants were reviewed based on a four-phase selection process. (The ability to complete each phase benefited from the cooperation and support of the Director of the program.)

*Phase 1.* The first phase of participant selection was identification of students with high intercultural sensitivity. In order to assess intercultural sensitivity levels, all students in the class completed the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) survey during the last month of the fall semester. The assessment process is part of their normal class requirements, and the data is used by the Director of the Program to guide student self-reflection and awareness of their strengths and challenges working in multicultural teams.

The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) evaluates whether an individual will be effective working with people whose cultural background differs from their own. The IES measures three aspects of intercultural sensitivity: how people learn about another culture and the accuracy of that learning (self-awareness and exploration, defined as ‘Continuous Learning’), how people develop and manage relationships with people from other cultures (global knowledge and relationship approach, defined as ‘Interpersonal Engagement’) and how people manage the challenges and stress involved in interacting with people who are different from themselves (positive regard for others and emotional resilience, defined as ‘Hardiness’). The instrument was validated using a study of 2,308 subjects, refining a set of 115 items to a core set of 52 items organized as six facets of intercultural sensitivity: Self-Awareness (.76), Exploration (.82), Global Mindset (.84), Relationship Interest (.80), Positive Regard (.79), and Emotional Resilience (.81). Each of the facets is presented above with their respective coefficient alpha reliabilities.

Mendenhall, Osland, Bird, Oddou, Maznevski, Stevens and Stahl (2013) reviewed the IES and 11 other popular assessment tools of intercultural and global leadership. The authors assessed each tool for reliability, validity (content, predictive, convergent, face and



differential bias), social desirability, cost, usability, qualification requirements, target audience, time requirements, delivery method and language options. The IES outperformed the other tests on almost every scale, with high reliability, high content validity, moderate predictive validity, high convergent validity, high face validity, a low cost at \$12 per instrument and simple to use requiring on average only 15 minutes of time to complete. The tool does not require certification to use and is available in 6 languages, including Chinese, English and French.

The results of the IES assessment placed students' scores on a continuum, falling into Low (1 or 2), Medium (3 or 4) and High (5 or 6) ranges for each aspect. Strong interculturally sensitive students do not need to score in the High range on all three areas. In order to ensure the highest potential for success, however, the students selected for this study were required to have an overall score in the High range and no individual aspect score below the Medium range. This purposeful selection of a high-scoring team on the IES assessment provided an instrumental sample for this study. As previously discussed, the selection of a high interculturally sensitive team was intended to maximize the possibility that the study team would be able to develop shared norms and leverage divergent thinking under time and performance pressures.

***Phase 2.*** The second phase of participant selection focused on the high-scoring students and, with the assistance of the Director of the Program, identified the high-scoring students who have already worked together on previous teams. The Director was able to provide a list of teams from the fall 2014 semester, listing each teams' members. The purpose of this phase was to ensure that the team selected for this study was composed of

students who have not worked together previously. Two or more students on the identified team who have previously developed team norms would be likely to push for the use of those previous norms in the new team (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). The outcome of this phase was an understanding of who had worked with whom, and creation of several team composition options based on IES outcomes and no previous team experiences.

***Phase 3.*** The third phase of participant selection focused on the cultural background of the high-scoring students. The purpose of this phase was to ensure that the team represented maximum cultural diversity, selecting students raised in different regions of the world. The outcome of this phase was an understanding of the cultural background of the high-scoring students, and selection of participants for the target team from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Once the first three phases were completed, the Director and I created the ‘best’ team for this proposed study based on the criteria of: 1) high score; 2) no previous collaborative experiences; and 3) cultural diversity. Applying these criteria meant that some of the highest scoring students were not selected for the ‘best’ team because she had already worked with a person selected for the team or he had the same cultural background as another selected student.

***Phase 4.*** The fourth and final phase was to obtain the informed consent of the proposed interculturally sensitive team members. Before the beginning of the semester, the entire class was contacted via email about the proposed study. (See appendix C, sample email communication). The informed consent form (appendix D) was presented to the students describing the observation and interviewing activities that would take place during the initial

four weeks of their project work. The consent form detailed the purpose of the study and process of data collection that would be necessary, but also the protection of their privacy that would be provided, which will be described next. A signed consent form was required and was collected prior to students' being assigned to the study team.

Students who did not wish to participate in the study were able to decline with no impact on their class evaluation. Contingency selections were identified if one or more of the target students chose not to participate. The same four-phase selection process defined alternative team compositions. This process continued until a four-person team composed of culturally-diverse and interculturally sensitive members who had not worked together before agreed to participate in the study.

#### **Data collection and participant protections.**

*Data collection.* The data collection was bounded around this team's formation process during the first few weeks of project work; a holistic data gathering and analysis of the team's formation experience. Observation data from the team's meetings was collected to obtain rich data describing the team interactions and shared norm development during early team formation. Every team meeting during the first two weeks of the program was observed by the researcher. All meeting locations, time and structure were at the discretion of the student team. Observation notes provided a chain of evidence by capturing the date, team members' comments, context within which the statement was made and perceptions of how the comments impacted the other team members. Researcher notes also described contextual elements of the meetings, including member attendance, environment of the meetings, location of the meetings, nonverbal communication between team members and other

influential elements of the meetings on shared norm development. The collection of observation data sought to describe emic participant actions and comments (including the CAT actions) as well as etic data that contextually influenced the shared norm development (including the project requirements, time and performance pressures, and other elements outside of team perceptual control). While a full analysis occurred after data was fully gathered, I assessed after each meeting if the observation process was identifying meaning making efforts (component 2), and if members had cognitively adjusted or changed their practices to meet their perceptions of the emerging norms in the MCT (component 3).

Two types of verbal/narrative data were collected through audio recordings. Six team meetings were recorded with the permission of the team, and the team was advised that the recording could be terminated if it was impacting the team interaction. Interviews were conducted individually with each team member after the final observed team meeting. The Interview Guide acted as a framework for the discussion, though questions in each interview were modified based on the nature and flow of the discussion. Since the objective was to have the student describe his or her perceptions of the project team formation experience, the interview process adjusted to expand on that person's unique experiences and reflections. Each of the questions was designed in an open-ended manner, again to encourage the participant to find their own words to describe their experiences. The skill and experience of the researcher was important in this process. A pilot study had been conducted during the previous semester with a different, but similar program to both test the protocol and data collection process, as well as improve the researcher's interview technique. The pilot study

enhanced the trustworthiness of this study by validating the frameworks, procedures, potential research challenges and possible improvements.

Interviews were conducted on campus as a convenience, but away from the location of classes so as to provide some confidence for the participant that the interview would not be overheard. The selected location was a private meeting room in the student lounge. Contextual elements of the location were noted, particularly those deemed influential to the discussion (ie. temperature of the room, significant noise during the interview, etc). In order to create a positive atmosphere of a dialogue, no significant notes were taken during the interview process. The interviews were audio recorded on a tape recorder and an iPhone. Two tools were utilized in case one failed. The tone was conversational, encouraging the participants to express themselves in their own words. The interviews lasted between 50-60 minutes.

All four interviews took place within a 24-hour period so that it captured the perspectives of the students at roughly the same point in the norm development process. Each student was interviewed individually, so as not to be swayed by the opinions of other team members. The interview process benefited from a structured approach (appendix F), but each interview focused on observed experiences of each individual during the team meetings. By selecting seemingly significant moments, the interview drew out members attempts to interpret their situation, make meaning based on previous experience, and act either by 'thinking as usual' or 'letting-go and taking-on'.

After the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed using an external service requested the following day, and the original recording erased once the transcription was completed.

***Participant protections.*** While select personal information (for example, nationality and previous work experience) related to each participant was important to disclose for the study, study methods and procedures were developed to ensure that the participant's identities could not be discerned. For example, only the researcher and Director of the Program knew what team was selected for the study. Fictional names were used in the transcriptions and the all subsequent reports. At the dissertation defense, the use of participant nationalities was discussed by committee members. As a result of the discussion, and to ensure IRB compliance, a review of the informed consent form by a NC State IRB staff and my dissertation chair was conducted. This additional review determined that the commitment made to the students who participated, ie. to protect their anonymity in the analysis and final report, was followed diligently and readers of this dissertation could not trace back any specific comments to any single participant.

In addition, the study executed standard practices for IRB compliance. The researcher maintained the confidentiality of the participants by securing all data in a case study database on an external hard drive locked at the researcher's home. All other notes and data collection devices were erased upon transcription to the hard drive. Participant names were coded so that actual names would not show up in stored documents or reports. The codes did not reflect any aspect of the participants' names, nationalities, genders, or any other

distinguishing characteristic. The coding system was A1, B2, C3 and D4 and based on the order in which each participant spoke at the first meeting.

### **Case Study Protocol: Data Analysis Procedures**

Transcripts of the audio recordings (interviews and team meetings) and the researcher observation notes comprised the research data for the study. The data was used to analyze the interactions of team members using the frameworks previously discussed as well as an open coding process. For both types of coding, I used pattern matching to make sense of the data. Yin (2014) describes pattern matching as a multi-step process of identifying themes, constructs and patterns based on an initial hypothesis.

Details of the coding and analysis procedures follow. While the following paragraphs are presented in necessarily linear form, the actual process I followed was not linear. For example, a holistic analysis may have generated understandings leading to a line-by-line analysis. Alternatively, a line-by-line analysis may have generated another holistic review. The data analysis process was iterative and messy but is described below in a way to effectively communicate the various mental processes I used to understand the data. This section concludes with a description of the logical processes (e.g., pattern matching and analytic generalization) I followed to make meaning of the emerging findings and to link the study findings to existing research and theory.

**Open coding.** Open coding is a process by which the analysis of statements allows themes to emerge directly from the data rather than from a pre-conceived framework or model. The open coding process begins during data collection, and helped me go “back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new,

often better, data” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 70). This approach to coding during the early phase of data collection was useful in the re-design of the subsequent interview guide, and it guided observational data of specific actions and statements of the team members during their meetings. After collecting data, Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) suggest the data analysis is also a “continuous, iterative enterprise” (p. 14). The entire process of data coding, data display and data grouping is not meant to be linear but rather inform each other through iterative stages.

For this study, the team meetings and individual interviews were open coded following van Manen’s (1944) recommendations. To enhance trustworthiness, I shared the coding model and process with peers who provided valuable suggestions for improving the code descriptions. This was useful later in the process, as themes evolved much clearer as a result of concise, clear code descriptions. Van Manen provides an interesting analytical process for conducting open-coding analysis called “phenomenological reflection” (1944, p. 60). Van Manen’s phenomenological reflection process is a three-stage analysis considering a broad ‘holistic’ analysis, ‘highlighting’ of significant statements and a ‘line-by-line’ analysis of each statement.

***Holistic.*** The holistic analysis is described as a general sense from the researcher of the participants’ experience. “Holistic coding is often a preparatory approach to a unit of data before a more detailed coding or categorization process” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 77). The holistic analysis provided the initial understanding of team member experiences and description of their contributions to the team norm development. I focused on trying to develop this general perception of the team members from their IES scores and



comments during team meetings. The initial holistic analysis provided a rich description of each participant's unique perspective on the team and their team formation experience. With these descriptions in hand, I was able to refer back to this general sense of the participants to help interpret and code specific statements and actions during the next two stages.

Ultimately, the holistic analysis provided the basis for the participant's biographies presented in chapter four.

**Highlighting.** For highlighting analysis, the researcher "listens to or reads a text several times and asks, 'What statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the experience being described?'" (van Manen, 1944, p. 61). The highlighting analysis focused on team member experiences at a finer grain than the holistic analysis. During this analysis, I identified significant statements made during both team meetings and individual interviews that seemed to emerge as especially meaningful. I also started to notice statements that either reinforced or contradicted the holistic analysis of the data. These statements provided guidance for the eventual development of themes and constructs.

Following van Manen (1944), the highlighting generated broad categories that shared similar attributes. For example, one early broad category was 'unhelpful to shared norm development.' This early category emerged so strongly at the beginning that the fundamental purpose of the study changed from understanding *shared norms* to understanding *team norms*. These early categories morphed and changed over time as analysis moved forward but they always informed subsequent analysis and meaning-making. The categories were eventually given codes for easy reference.

***Line-by-line.*** The line-by-line analysis of the data provided the finest grained open-coding analysis. For line-by-line analysis, the researcher “looks at every single sentence and ask(s), ‘What does this sentence or statement reveal about the experience being described?’” (van Manen, 1944, p. 61). The highlighting analysis created an initial set of codes, which was expanded on during line-by-line coding. During the line-by-line analysis I reviewed each team member’s comments from the six meeting transcripts, my notes from the meetings, and the four interview transcripts. I was trying to understand the impacts, positive or negative, on team norm development. The results of these separate analyses were thematically summarized, identifying an initial set of common themes among the descriptions and actions of the members that influenced norm development.

***Open coding summary.*** A valuable aspect of van Manen’s approach is the emphasis on “analyzing the data for themes, using different approaches to examine the information, and considering the guides for reflection should yield an explicit structure of the meaning of the lived experience” (Creswell, 2012, p. 195). I like the phenomenological reflection process as I find it illuminates elements of the data that a typical thematic process might miss. The holistic and line-by-line analysis allows the researcher to consider more than simply what is said. The researcher can also consider a broad interpretation of the data, as well as expand beyond the elements of the interview that relate to the subject being research. Line-by-line analysis, for example, can capture the comments that do not relate, but provide information to the researcher. For these reasons van Manen’s approach was used for open coding analysis.

**A-priori coding.** This section describes the a-priori coding of the data using the conceptual framework to assess member definitions, scripts, evidence of cognitive adjustment, and Stahl et al.'s five MCT norms. The a-priori analysis began with coding observed member behavior and interview comments to describe their efforts at meaning-making and adaptation. Data was coded using the Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) meaning-making model as well as the CAT cognitive adaptation processes described in chapters two and three.

**Meaning making.** Data was coded based on one of the four types of team member interactions (figure 10). Each indication of meaning making made by a team member, resulting from the comparison of their definitions of their current team and scripts from previous experiences, was then coded as linked to the interpretation of the situation. The initial interview data codes reflected participant scripts related to working with other multicultural team members: interpretations of actions, definitions of team members, reflections on personal behavior, preferred team practices, and other influences on team norms. Efforts by members to make meaning of the team's situation changed over time, from a comparison of their definitions of the current team and applicable scripts from previous experiences, to their ability to adapt to the dominant model.

**Adaptation.** The second layer of analysis considered the efforts by members to adapt, based on CAT's two types of member responses, 'thinking as usual' or 'letting-go and taking-on', in response to their meaning making. Coding of the data initially reflected these two types of member responses, but became further nuanced as the efforts to adapt also reflected members who accepted the dominant model, but only temporarily. These members

described their willingness to ‘let-go’ of their preferences during early team formation, but they refused to adapt to the dominant model and would return to ‘thinking as usual’ preferences later in the project. The additional a-priori codes related to this looped process of adaptation were added to the CAT framework as a result of the particular experience of this MCT.

**Logical processes.** I used basically two types of logic to make meaning of the data. First, I followed the practice of pattern matching, in order to conceptually understand the MCT experience. Second, I followed the practice of analytic generalization in order to link the study findings to existing data. Both of these practices are described below.

***Pattern matching.*** Patterns from the a-priori codes emerged that illustrated common aspects of member actions and meaning making. Basically, two categories of patterns emerged: patterns relating to time, and patterns relating to team member actions and reactions. I grouped common codes when I recognized patterns within the team during specific time periods. The temporal sequence of norm development, presented later in chapter four as figure 12, is an example of these patterns. In the temporal sequence, the team members’ descriptions of specific, influential moments in their team experience were identified and clustered together in like groupings. The patterns revealed four key moments—what I call inflection points—of norm development. These inflection points are described further in chapter four. Patterns also emerged in member actions during the later stages of the study, as members described their efforts to adapt to team norms during the period defined as Time 3.

In addition to a temporal pattern, patterns emerged in scripts (e.g., three types of meaning making influences) and in actions/reactions (e.g., seven types of actions). These patterns provided additional insight on the influences of scripts on the norm development process. For example, when describing their interpretations of team member preferred practices, each of the members would use cultural stereotypes and draw from their previous experience with that culture to describe their script selection. Similarly, competencies and personality influences on scripts emerged as patterns relating to script selection. Initially, the recognition of these three types of influences on scripts was not identified as a relevant finding. However, in discussion with my chair, we realized the identification of three categories of influences on script selection provides an important insight into MCT norm development, as well as a valuable area for further study. These findings are described in more detail in chapter four.

Patterns were also identified in the open coded data. The coded material from the three-stage open coding process illuminated themes and patterns to help me understand how norms were formed in the study team. Like many doctoral students, I was aided by a series of dialogues with my dissertation chair that helped me develop a clearer understanding of the patterns I was seeing in the data. For example, after developing the initial themes, my chair and I reviewed the themes for patterns and identified seven participant actions throughout the norm development process. Together, we deliberated the meaning of the open-coded data and ultimately I enhanced the study's finding of a norm development model with the seven types of actions that influenced the temporal sequence of this MCT.

*Analytical generalizations.* The findings developed in the pattern matching process were compared with research on norm development. Of particular interest in the analysis of the norm development in this MCT was the relationship between the members' chosen scripts and CAT actions to adapt to different scripts. The comparison of the findings with extant literature helped inform the development of analytical generalizations.

In qualitative research, findings contribute enhancements to existing theories and practitioner models through analytical generalizations. Yin (2013) states “a generalization can take the form of a lesson learned, working hypothesis, or other principle believed to be applicable to other situations (not just to ‘other like case).” (p. 68) To create analytic generalizations, I compared the two findings with research on team and norm formation. For example, the norm development model of this MCT was compared to established research models, already presented in chapter two, for team and norm development. A theoretical model of MCT norm development emerged for the purpose of guiding future studies. Also, the categories of member influences were compared with other categorical models, and both the process and value of developing a taxonomy of categories for MCT norm development was described.

In chapter five, the analytic generalizations generated from this study offer guidance for researchers in further studies of MCTs, issues to consider for practitioners in the management of MCTs, and a challenge to U.S. policymakers to consider the risks facing American graduates lacking in intercultural competence.

**Research credibility and trustworthiness.** The previous section discussed coding and analysis procedures to ensure internal and external validity of the study. Efforts to conduct a credible study included rich, thick description of the case, negative case analysis, member checking, peer review, researcher bias clarification and attending to significant criticisms of case study research (Eisenhardt, 1989).

**Thick description.** The value of thick description of a case study is suggested by Creswell (2012) as supporting the readers' ability to transfer learning from the study to similar situations. Stake (1995) suggests it provides a "vicarious experience" (p. 109) for the readers. While both may be true for this study, the primary purpose of rich, thick description in this critical case was to provide sufficient detail of the participants' description of their experience and the actions of the team. Providing a detailed account of an interculturally sensitive MCT was intended to help fill the gap in the literature regarding norm formation in MCTs. This is an important foundation to theory development and further exploration of practices and policies to improve MCT performance in today's challenging global market.

**Negative case analysis.** Negative case analysis is based on data that supports the rival hypothesis. For this study, the negative case analysis focuses on actions and statements by MCT members that reflect a dominant culture, or ethnocentric perspective. Negative case analysis also considers data that provides neither positive nor negative support for the research question. Creswell (2012) finds reporting negative analysis provides a "realistic assessment of the phenomenon" as "in real life, not all evidence is either positive or negative".

**Member checking.** Member checking is a valuable tool for the researcher to confirm the accuracy and interpretations of findings (Creswell, 2012). As Creswell suggests, my preferred approach was not to “take back to participants my transcripts or the raw data, but take them my preliminary analyses consisting of descriptions or themes” (p. 252). During the interview process, I shared with the participants my interpretations of what I observed, and asked them to confirm or offer a different interpretation of what took place during the team meetings. After the interviews, I shared with the participants themes developed from the analysis and asked them for their own interpretations.

**Researcher subjectivity.** A researcher subjectivity statement is included in the study to help the reader understand the researcher’s personal experiences with MCTs and the biases or prejudices that may have resulted from the experiences. Researcher prior experience is also a benefit to the study, because without the experiences that produced specific biases the researcher would not be as effective in conducting an interview of cultural experiences. The researcher had an insider perspective, which can be beneficial because “the etic (outsider) theory brought to bear on an inquiry by an investigator (or the hypotheses proposed to be tested) may have little or no meaning within the emic (insider) view of studies individuals, groups, societies, or cultures” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 106).

**Addressing case study critique.** As discussed in chapter two, Eisenhardt (1989) challenges the use of case study research in theory-building. She specifically cited Gersick’s 1988 study as well as Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985). Her concern is that authors may have “converted theory-testing research to theory-building research by taking advantage of serendipitous findings” (p. 536). Eisenhardt (1989) provides guidance as to the use of case



study research for theory-building. Many of her requirements are reflected in the design of the study, data collection, data analysis and theory development process including: 1) an initial research question, which changed during the study to reflect early data analysis; 2) use of constructs from literature in the design; 3) theory developed from the analysis, not predetermined from literature and tested; 4) multiple data sources; 5) overlapping data analysis and data collection; 6) use of detailed field notes; 7) analysis and presentation of within-case analysis; 8) an iterative process of comparing the emerging theory with data from the case; and 9) comparison of the theory with extant literature.

Each of these issues is addressed in the study, but let me provide some detail on several. First, Eisenhardt stated the importance of multiple data sources is a key concern in Gersick's 1988 study, citing a lack of triangulation in her observation-only study. In this study the combination of observation, interviews, member-checking, and negative analysis (focusing on the rival hypothesis) allowed the model to develop reflective of multiple data sources. Second, to address the importance of overlapping data collection with data analysis, including the use of good field notes, field notes were used extensively to separate the researcher's impressions from the data itself, and allow an adaptation of the research question to follow the direction of the team. Third, the iterative process of sharpening of the connection between the data and the theory. My chair was very helpful with this, suggesting methods for bringing data and the developing theory closer, like the use of the gerunds to express the team member actions more effectively than the initial themes. Finally, a comparison of the proposed theory with existing theory is presented in chapter five. This model supports and extends much of what already exists from norm and team development

theory. These and other procedures in the study address Eisenhardt's concerns regarding case study research leading to theory-building.

One final element of this paper that supports Eisenhardt's suggestions is the presentation of detailed analysis procedures. Eisenhardt recognizes that in many studies little space is allocated to this iterative process, and "a huge chasm often separates data from conclusions" (1989, p. 539) making it difficult for readers to follow the researcher's process. To address this concern, the previous section on 'Data Analysis Procedures' provides a detailed discussion of this study's steps from initial data to the findings that emerged.

### **Chapter Summary**

This section provided a detailed protocol describing how the study was designed, including the necessity of changing the research question during the early data collection process, and interviews adapted from observation data to develop reflective insights from the selected students in the masters program. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks guided the design of the study and the research question, supporting a structure for data analysis and suggesting analytic generalizations from the findings. The selection of participants, design of data collection and analysis, and impact of the researcher's own subjectivity were all considered important to this study and relevant to the narrative description of the MCT norm formation with a team of interculturally sensitive students.

The case study sought to understand shared norm formation in an MCT composed of interculturally sensitive team members during early team formation. Unfortunately the study's intention of documenting a MCT developing shared norms despite the time and performance constraints was not fully realized as the MCT's norms were significantly

influenced by a dominant model. The study does, however, accomplish the research goal of providing a rich description of the norm formation process of the MCT. The data analysis identified two primary findings: 1) a set of categories describing the thinking and actions of team members as related to cultural, competency or personality influences; and 2) and a MCT norm development model. These findings are presented and described in chapter four.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This study followed a multicultural project team through the early phase of team formation to answer the research question: how does a MCT develop team norms during the early phase of team formation? By selecting a team composed of interculturally sensitive members, facing the pressures of time and performance goals many project teams face, the study sought to describe the *shared* norm development process. Despite the MCT's failure to develop shared norms, the findings of the study provide a rich description of the team norm formation process for the benefit of future research on MCT norm development.

The conceptual framework used for this study, based on the research of Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) and cognitive adjustment theory (CAT), revealed actions on the part of the participants consistent with existing theory. As predicted by Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), data analysis suggested that team members did interpret and use scripts based on previous experiences. When these scripts failed to align with their teammate's scripts, the data revealed that team members made attempts to adapt their norm preferences to create team norms, in line with the CAT model.

Ultimately, however, new *shared* norms—those types of norms collectively developed and agreed to by all team members-- did not seem to emerge during the study timeline. Data analysis suggests that the influence of a single team member prevented the social construction of shared norms, and instead the team seemed to acquiesce to a dominant norm model in order to meet the shorter termed purpose of efficient team management and development of team chemistry. A dominant model in MCTs has been shown to emerge from project pressure (Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003).

Ultimately the team members in this study made the all too common choice of efficiency over taking the time to debate and discuss cultural differences required to develop shared norms. While this outcome may somewhat limit the study's insights into the process for creating shared, socially constructed norms, the data analysis revealed interesting and meaningful insights into the challenges that multicultural teams can face during early team formation. As a reminder and clarification of the difference between team norms and shared norms: team norms in this study represent a dominant norm model and efforts by the non-dominant members to adapt to that model; shared norms represent socially constructed norms resulting from the equal input and agreement of all the members, which ultimately did not happen in this study.

As a qualitative study of a single MCT, the research presented here is meant to explore in great depth the experience of this team. All of the data was collected during an intensive 13-day period, during which the team met six times and each member was interviewed individually within 48 hours of the sixth meeting. To present the research in a manner that would be useful to readers, the 'findings' are an analysis of the interpretations and experiences of the team members during their meetings, presented and supported with their own words. For this reason, after providing a brief answer to the research question, the chapter begins with background information on the members to allow the readers a better understanding of the member's backgrounds and previous experiences. I believe this background information is critical for readers to understand how each team member understood her/his experience in the team. Following the background information the chapter presents themes and findings more closely aligned with typical qualitative research study

reports. Specifically, the chapter is organized in the following manner: 1) an overview of the key findings of the study with the answer to the research question on how norms developed in this MCT; 2) a deep background description of the team members and their interrelationships; 3) the presentation of the intercultural sensitivity assessment data and interpretation of how the data provides further insights on the team members; 4) the first significant finding, describing the three categories of scripts influencing norm development; and 5) the second significant finding, a presentation of the norm development model that emerged from the data analysis.

### **Overview of Study Findings**

Data analysis revealed an unexpected answer to the research question, and a valuable model for describing norm development. This study generated two findings. First, the study found that the team norms ultimately adopted by the team were influenced by three categories of internal cognitive scripts (cultural, competency, and personality). The three categories emerged during a-priori analysis as described in chapter three. Second, the potentially most impactful finding of the study emerged from integrating elements of the a-priori and open coding analyses (see chapter three). This finding is a MCT norm development model that combines a linear, temporal sequence of meaning-making with an iterative process of member actions and reactions:

- A temporal sequence emerged from the a-priori data analysis, which was guided by the conceptual framework. This sub-finding illustrates the sequence of team member definitions, scripts, and efforts to adapt their approaches.

- An iterative process of team member actions and reactions emerged from the open coding analysis of the data. This sub-finding illuminates seven patterns of member actions and reactions: 1) information seeking; 2) reflecting; 3) observing vs. participating; 4) learning; 5) adapting vs. rejecting; 6) deferring; and 7) supporting vs. betraying.

The MCT norm development model, the key finding of the study, is presented in figure 11, with specific inflection points and phases of norm development, as well as the patterns of member actions and reactions. The MCT norm development model answers the research question “How does a MCT develop team norms during the early phase of team formation?” This study found that the MCT team developed team norms through an iterative process of actions and reactions occurring over time, and the team went through a specific temporal sequence of shared experiences.

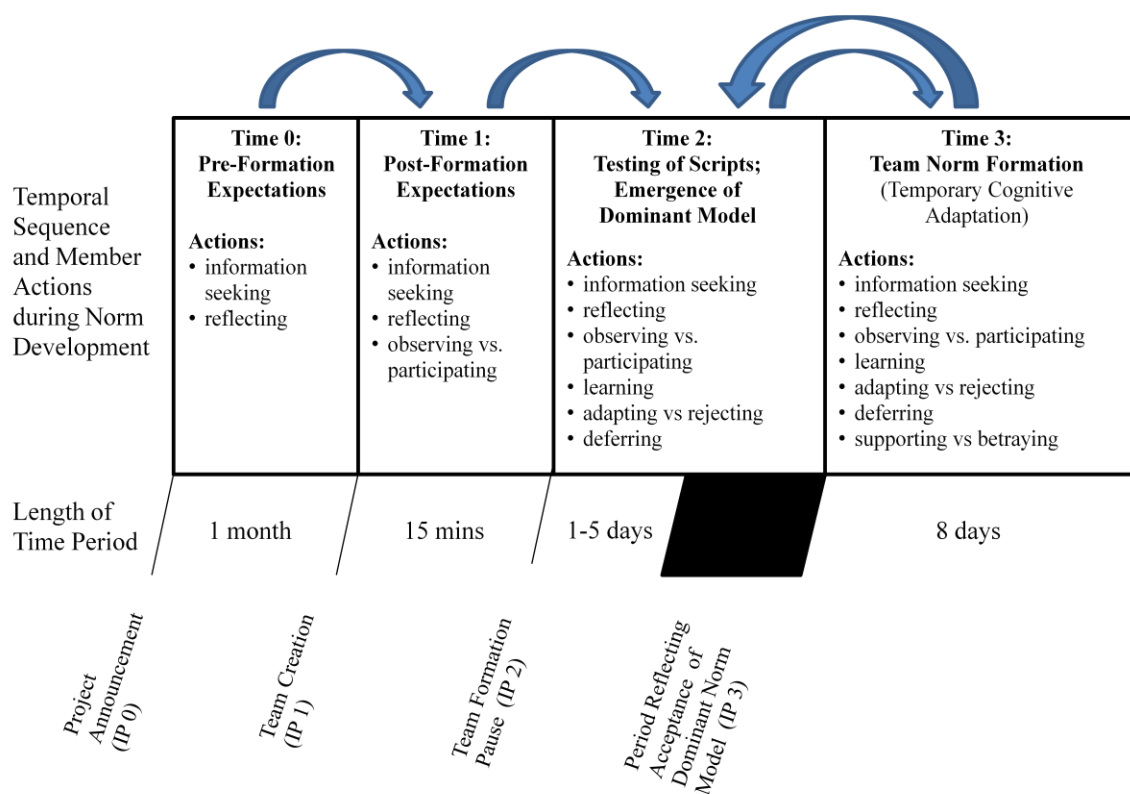


Figure 11. MCT norm development model

The temporal sequence, developed from the a-priori (e.g., based on the conceptual framework guiding the study) analysis of the data, suggests that this MCT went through specific phases and experienced critical incidents or inflection points in their norm development process. To present an overview to the reader, a description of each inflection point and phase is offered here:

1. Inflection Point 0 (IP0) reflects the announcement to the class at the end of the first semester that there would be a second semester project.
2. Time 0 is the period of time at the end of the semester and during the holiday break after IP0 and before IP1.



3. Inflection Point 1 (IP1) is the team creation at the beginning of the second semester when the project team members are announced and are assigned a project company.
4. Time 1 was a brief period of time, approximately 15 minutes, between Inflection Point 1 (IP1) and Inflection Point 2 (IP2).
5. Inflection Point 2 (IP2) occurred when the team met for the first time, and paused their team development.
6. Time 2 immediately followed the pause and lasted while members tested their preferred scripts on the team members.
7. Inflection Point 3 (IP3) represents a period of time, not defined by a single moment, when the process of testing scripts ended and all the team members recognized that their individual approaches were not similar and they had to create a common norm.
8. Time 3 was the period of member adaptation and team norm creation, focusing on critical team issues, including: 1) language and communication; 2) decision-making; 3) idea generation; 4) enjoyment of the project and 5) team engagement. This process illuminates the norm development during early team formation of this MCT.

The seven patterns of member actions and reactions that describe member behavior during these phases are further described later in the chapter. Before presenting the data that went into construction of this model, however, background information on the MCT members will be valuable in understanding how the data reflects their preferences. As described earlier, I

believe this background information is important for readers, so that when the data is presented and the findings suggested, these are grounded in an understanding of the contextual dynamics (individual member cultures and preferences, and intercultural sensitivity assessment outcomes) of this MCT.

### **The Team**

Norm development in the team happened quickly; some norms seemed to be formed in the instant the team members met each other, as they leaned on their past experiences to guide their actions in their new team. As described by Bettenhausen and Murnighan's model, norm development reflects the interplay of similar and dissimilar definitions and scripts used by team members to develop team norms. Consequently, in order to understand the interpretations and actions of this team and provide the reader with the ability to experience the team's norm development process, it is important to understand the background of the team's members and their relationships with each other. The first section contains descriptions of each member's background. The second section provides their intercultural sensitivity assessments.

**Team biographies.** The following short biographies of the four team members are intended to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of each person.

***Indra.*** Identified as A1 in the research process and given the pseudonym 'Indra', her coding is first and the background information is presented here first only because she spoke first at the initial meeting. A confident and professionally-trained woman from India, Indra spent several years raising children with her husband in the U.S. before joining the masters

program. She sees the program and this team project as an opportunity to reestablish her career and certify her capabilities as an effective IT project leader.

Born and educated in India, Indra was married and moved to the U.S. with her husband in 2007. She had difficulty finding work due to her 'dependent' status, so she decided it was a good time to start a family. After five years of raising a son, she felt the urge to re-start her career. Unfortunately, she now had the added challenge on her resume of a large time-gap in her work experience. She did not feel the excuse of child-rearing would sit well with recruiters. Instead of starting over, she explored the idea of a master's program that would bridge her undergraduate degree in computer science engineering with her interest in the field of management. Her brief work experience in India had focused on project management of software development, and the market demand for this field appeared strong with the right credentials. Already living in the U.S., Indra considered one-year master programs at several different schools. She was accepted to three programs but choose the current program based on its emphasis of global travel and innovation management. The program meant a real change in her life, as she puts it, "When I looked at my dream from a distance, all I could see were obstacles. But I knew deep down inside me, if I set my mind to it, I will find a way to go around, on the sides, under or even above those obstacles."

Indra's selection to the team was based on both her IES results as well as a personal recommendation of the Director of the Program, who felt based on her work in the first semester, she would be a good participant in a MCT seeking shared norm development.

**Tong.** B2 or 'Tong' spoke second. He shared during the interviews that he was never one to jump into a discussion without considering his words carefully, but at the

beginning of the project he sought to present himself in a positive light and he had a strong need to ask questions to understand the project and team expectations.

Tong grew up in China, his studies focusing on International Economics and Trade. He also studied languages, French primarily as well as some English in middle school, though as he states “in China we always learn English just for the exams; it’s not for speaking”. His French studies led him to a combined Chinese/French program for three years in China, then a final year in France. Tong decided to return to France for graduate school, completing his master’s degree with a final exam entirely in French.

Tong described his concerns about his English skills. “Yeah, maybe when I speak English, maybe with a Chinese accent. Can you understand?” Indra’s description of Tong’s concerns with his English also conveyed an understanding of his abilities and commitment to achieving his goals.

“So he didn’t have that opportunity to speak in English {growing up}, so when we first met him his English was like very bad, but we were so surprised. He was supposed to take his TOEFL. So we helped him - we have got lots of friends - helped him to prepare for his TOEFL - and I think he got like 72 in his TOEFL. He has to get 80 to apply for the visa; he got 72. In a month he improved ten points; he got 82 in a month. Yes, so it showed his commitment and his hard work. So when I got him as a team member, the two things that I knew about him was he would definitely be committed to his work and definitely he would be a hard worker, and those are the two things I wanted from him.”

The masters program was interesting for Tong as he would have the opportunity to study in the U.S., where he could expand his language and business skills. So far he has said the experience has been enjoyable, with the exception of the food. He began his studies in France the previous year, and thought this masters program sounded “amazing”. He believed the program in two locations, plus the possibility to go to China or India afterward, would be an excellent experience. He also was interested in expanding his skills in the program’s core topic of innovation management.

*Jim.* Jim was an American male who his teammates described as having many of the traits stereotyped in American businessmen, and reflecting both positive and negative influences on team development. Jim shared that he personally saw his role on the team as a leader, guiding his teammates to overcome the challenges the team would face. But he was faced with an immediate disappointment, both in the assigned project and anticipated challenges working with the project team members. A description of the influence these disappointments had on him during the initial team formation will be presented below.

Jim grew up initially in upstate New York, moving to North Carolina when he was around ten years old. He graduated in 2010 with an undergraduate degree in business administration with a concentration in supply chain management. After graduation, the job market wasn't as strong in his field as he expected. He spent four years working for a document destruction company he had previously worked for during his college summers. His roles at the document destruction company included route driver, accounts receivables, route coordinator, fleet manager, and project manager for business optimization. Many of these were lateral moves as there was not a lot of opportunity to progress upward in the small

company. He also felt there was not a lot of room for innovation or creativity after process optimization, so he perceived the company might be stifling his career growth. The masters program was perceived as a career reset.

The first semester in Europe was Jim's first overseas experience. "Everyone was from a different background. At my previous university I had some projects where maybe one person was from some other place but nothing as multicultural as that." Without prior experience with MCTs, Jim found his early teams a challenge. "Last semester at the beginning it was a little difficult to feel people out. It's the first time that I had met any of these people and obviously every country has its own little stereotype on how workers work. I tried to go there with an open mind. Just because I'm from America doesn't mean I take on all of the characteristics as stereotypical Americans."

*Delphine.* The last to speak was D4, 'Delphine'. Based on interview data, Delphine was perceived by her team members to be the most knowledgeable industry expert on the team. They were generally concerned, however, regarding her lack of confidence and willingness to play a strong role in the MCT. In Delphine's interview, she acknowledged that her knowledge of the industry would be valuable to the team, but did prefer to allow others lead and she could play a strong support role.

Originally from France (about 20 miles north of Paris), Delphine began her studies in a scientific high school. She graduated from college with a degree in science, but she was more attracted by the "international aspects of the business world". She completed a two-year technical degree in business, during which there was also a major project to complete.

The project was to organize a business gala, including a reception and dinner event. “I liked it a lot.”

Part of the business program involved a study abroad in Scotland. She realized she liked it also, but was not spending enough time out meeting people. “I was watching movies and TV shows, it was not that easy to meet people who were speaking French.” She also decided she missed her scientific work. She felt torn between the two worlds. She returned to school to complete a PharmD degree, and then decided to join the masters program. She feels the program “combines perfectly my business background and my scientific background, and can combine also my desire to travel and to work in English, improve my English, and to study about futures. So, I learned that it was the best program for me and my interests.”

Delphine joined the program without significant work experience (similar to Tong). Her job experiences were primarily in retail (McDonald’s and clothing stores) and an internship in a pharmacy filling prescriptions. She did take on a marketing internship with the Dow Chemical company, but quickly realized “it was too structured for me”. Her last brief position was with an agency of medicine in France, in the communication department. She wrote press releases, worked with journalists, coordinated with French associations and helped manage conferences. “That is what I like to do.”

The first semester of the program was in her home country of France, which made for a comfortable setting for Delphine. She regularly hosted parties for the students at her home and enjoyed the team projects at the heart of the program. “I like to work in groups. Thanks to the project of the first semester, and thanks to the beginning of this project, I know that

I'm very more into, like, operational things, very more into operations marketing, coordination, this kind of thing, or communication. It's the part I think is the most exciting." She expressed that she was looking forward to the team working together.

**Biography summary.** The team member biographies provided above help illuminate their definitions, scripts, and preferred norms. One result of the analysis of the findings was the recognition that the scripts for participants of this MCT reflected one of three types: cultural, competency and personality. These categories of script types is used to present each member's preferred scripts, and will be used throughout chapter four to present the members' definitions, scripts and influences on norm development.

**Intercultural sensitivity assessment insights.** Another aspect of team members' backgrounds is their intercultural sensitivity, determining their potential ability to succeed in a MCT. Using the Intercultural Effectiveness Survey (IES), the class was assessed for their ability to be effective in diverse or intercultural environments and scored from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest). Table 2 presented below represents the scores of the selected team members for this MCT, as well as the average scores of the 2015 class and the scores of the Director of the Program, as points of comparison. The class is composed of participants interested in an international management program, therefore on the whole it should be expected their average scores will be higher than a population average. The team members clearly scored high on their IES assessments and stand out as strong interculturalists even relative to the average class member.



Table 2.

*IES Results of the 2015 Masters Class*

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Continuous Learning</b>	<b>Interpersonal Engagement</b>	<b>Hardiness</b>
<b>Indra</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Tong</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Jim</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Delphine</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2015 Masters Class Average</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>3.87</b>
<b>2015 Masters Class Std Dev</b>	<b>1.62</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>1.69</b>
<b>Program Director</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>

*Note.* IES results range from the lowest score of 1 to the highest score of 6: ranges of demonstrated level of effectiveness are Low (1-2), Moderate (3-4) and High (5-6).

The data in the table provides insights on not only why the four students were included in the selection process (all had an overall score in the high range of 6 or 5, and individual category scores in the mid or high ranges), but also areas where they may be considered weaker than their peers and potentially struggle in intercultural situations. Exploring the individual sections deeper, Continuous Learning first represents the effort these participants make to learn and understand their environment and behavior of others. The score is a summary of two sub-scores, Self-Awareness (awareness of your own values, strengths, weaknesses, preferred styles, and behavioral tendencies, and how these may impact others) and Exploration (openness to ideas, values, norms, situations and behaviors that are different from your own). Indra, Tong and Jim all had 6s in Continuous Learning and in each of the sub-scores. Delphine had a Continuous Learning score of 3, with a 3 in

Self-Awareness and 4 in Exploration. The expectation based on these scores is that Delphine would be less open to the different approaches of her teammates and have less awareness of the impact of her preferences on them than would the other teammates.

In the category of Interpersonal Engagement, all of the participants scored in the mid-range with a 4. Interpersonal Engagement reflects a person's passion for developing relationships with people from other cultures. As each of the participants scored in the mid-range it might be expected that they would have only mild interest in building stronger relationships with each other during the project. Delving deeper, the score is a summary of two sub-scores, related to Global Mindset (interest in other cultures and people who live in them) and Relationship Interest (interest in and ability to form relationships with people from other cultures, enjoyment in engaging others and willingness to learn a foreign language). Indra and Tong scored in the mid-range (3 and 4, respectively) on Global Mindset, but both scored a 6 on Relationship Interest. Jim and Delphine, conversely, were strong on Global Mindset with 5s, but in the mid-range of Relationship Interest with 4s. As will be illustrated later in the chapter, these sub-score differences help us understand contrasting actions on the part of the members. The scores suggest Jim and Delphine represented stronger backgrounds and understanding of cultural differences, while Indra and Tong had more interest in getting to know and building relationships with their fellow teammates.

Finally, the Hardiness scores were the most consistently strong, with only Tong scoring in the mid-range with a 4. Hardiness reflects a person's ability to manage their thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations. The score is a summary of two sub-scores, Positive Regard (the degree to which a person think positively about those from other

cultures and avoids negative stereotypes) and Emotional Resilience (a person's ability to manage emotional stress and ability to recover from stressful situations). Tong scored a 3 on Positive Regard and 4 on Emotional Resilience, possibly reflecting his concern, more than his teammates, regarding working with team mates from other cultures, as well as his difficulty dealing with conflicts on the team and remaining stress from his previous semester's team experience. Delphine, Jim, and Indra had all high sub-scores and Hardiness was an area of strength for them in the team's interactions, and may be an important element in the team's efforts to form shared norms later in team development (not addressed in this study).

In summary, the IES assessment was effective in selecting four interculturality sensitive team members for the MCT. The individual members, however, represent specific strengths and areas where they might be weaker, which will influence the team's ability to develop effective working relationships.

*Assessment summary.* The participant biographies and intercultural sensitivity assessments provide a rich description of the influences on their interpretations of the new project situation. As the members sought to understand each other and make meaning out of the new team interactions, their expectations of the likely challenges the team would face reflect both stereotypes and the limited data gathered from their initial meetings, and scripts formed in their past experiences and cultural backgrounds.

The next three sections reflect the findings of the study. The first finding is based on how the insufficient and inaccurate data impacted member expectations, and influenced their script selection and norm development during early team formation. The scripts reflect

members' past experiences, which they anticipate will be effective on this team. These scripts represent aspects of cultural, competency and personal preferences, both as a self-assessments and their interpretation of their peers. The second and third sections present the two sub-findings of the second finding; a norm development model for this MCT including both a temporal sequence and patterns of member actions.

### **Finding #1: Three Categories of Scripts Influencing Norm Development**

Scripts are defined as the meanings individuals have applied to their previous experiences which they then apply to situations that are perceived similar (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Feldman, 1984). In this MCT, the three categories of scripts were: cultural, competency, and personality. These three categories of scripts emerged from the a-priori data analysis. This was the initial and perceived significant finding of the study. Previous research had not illuminated the types of influences on script selection, and the implication of this finding will be further discussed in chapter five. The next section describes these three influences in more detail, including data from the session observations and participant interviews.

**Cultural scripts.** In a MCT, team members bring diverse backgrounds and experiences to the team. The members rely on their previous understandings of cultural differences—e.g., their cultural scripts, to make sense of their current experience. Table 3 presents the scripts the data suggests the members of this MCT relied on, and used to manage their cultural differences. In the table, row one represents Indra's perception of her own cultural scripts (box 'Indra/Indra') as well as her perceptions of her peers' cultural scripts (boxes 'Indra/Tong', 'Indra/Jim' and 'Indra/Delphine').

Table 3.

*Cultural Scripts of the MCT Members*

<b>Cultural Scripts</b>		<i>Scripts Related to Perception of Self/Peer's Cultural Issues</i>				
<i>Team Member</i>		Indra	Tong	Jim	Delphine	
		Indra	(Self Script) Be an observer; Get used to their vocabulary; Will overcome challenges if patient	Will need to provide support; Accent difficult to understand	Directive; 'American' leadership style	No specific script; Accent difficult to understand
		Tong	Management style similar to U.S. preferences; Possible religious influence	(Self Script) Think many times before speaking; English language important, but weak; Limited experience working with other cultures	"Typical American guy"; Independent with strong ideas; He has valuable English language skills	"Typical French girl"; Nice and can communicate in French;
		Jim	Perceives herself as having U.S. approaches, but does not understand U.S. business culture	Does not take initiative, leader-follower cultural issue	(Self Script) Not a stereotypical American; Limited experience in MCTs; Must speak in simpler English to make communication effective	Likes to do research; keep asking questions; very French style to teamwork
		Delphine	No cultural comments	No cultural comments	English skills will be important to the team	(Self Script) French are more culturally sensitive than others; blames herself for challenges communicating in English

The cultural scripts presented here rely on different definitions of the team members' self-perception and perception of their peers. Indra's cultural scripts relate to her desire to "get used to their way of speaking" and "vocabulary". Her scripts related to her peers also reflected this focus, as she sought to overcome language and style differences on the team. For Indra, even though she described Jim's directive style as typically American, she did not believe all Americans were directive. She described her experience in a previous team with four Americans as "I did not see the stereotype with them".

Tong's self-script reflects his lack of confidence working in MCTs, and he relayed that in "China we always work with Chinese students, not that much experience in diversity". His scripts for the others team members relied heavily on stereotypes, possibly a result of what he stated were limited interactions with Jim and Delphine in the first semester.

To understand his team members, Jim's statements indicated an effort to compare his definitions of them with the cultural stereotype typically associated with that person. He even did that for himself, stating "I'm not a stereotypical American". For his relationship with Tong, Jim's script anticipated a culture-defined leader-follower mentality, requiring him to provide lots of "hand-holding".

Delphine, uniquely, did not have many comments regarding cultural scripts of the team members. However, she did make a self-reflective comment that the "French are more culturally sensitive than anyone." Delphine did not say this as a positive trait, rather that people in her culture were overly sensitive to cultural issues.

**Competency scripts.** The second category of team scripts evident in the data relates to member knowledge and understanding of the project sponsors' organization and industry.

For the project they were assigned, the team members believed that they would need to quickly develop a comfort with and understanding of unique industry jargon, industry dynamics, skills required to manage the project, as well as learn to effectively present the outcomes of their work to the company sponsor. Each of the members mentioned the importance of this knowledge, both recognizing the skills of the others and the need to find their own expertise niche in the project. Table 4 presents the scripts this MCT described regarding team competencies.

Table 4.

*Competency Scripts of the MCT Members*

<b>Competency Scripts</b>		<i>Scripts Related to Perception of Self/Peer's Competency Issues</i>			
		Indra	Tong	Jim	Delphine
<i>Team Member</i>	Indra	(Self Script) Strong IT engineer; project manager; SEO optimization expert	Medical industry experience; Knowledge of China should be valuable to team	Most experienced business person on the team	Medical background; "Will be happy working on medical project"
	Tong	Leadership skills to manage the team; Business experience;	(Self Script) Medical device experience; China expert for team	Business experience; Lead idea development for the team	Medical industry expert for team
	Jim	Limited work experience in business settings; good organization skills; software engineer	Limited work experience in business settings; Chinese market knowledge	(Self Script) As the only business person, responsibility to guide the others; team leadership experience	Limited work experience in business settings; Pharmaceutical industry knowledge
	Delphine	Will keep team organized; blogging and social media knowledge	Chinese market expertise	Will research the tooling business; Effective team leader; business experience;	(Self Script) Will be medical industry expert for team; Enjoys scientific work ,marketing/ Communication and powerpoint design

The competency scripts of the MCT members varied less than the cultural scripts, as the expectation of each member's contribution to the team was based on their perceived knowledge of the project industry and business model, general business experience and specialized capabilities important to the project (e.g. social media, China). All members described the need for collective effort to accomplish the project, and the competency scripts reflected their expected unique contributions to the team. The team members all agreed that



Delphine had the strongest knowledge of the project industry (e.g. the medical device industry) and would be the primary industry expert. Interestingly, Tong's recent experience working with a medical device company was not known to all members. This likely reflects his admitted reluctance to sharing his subject matter expertise.

The other members also demonstrated mostly consistent self and other-perceived competencies: Indra's knowledge of social media and project management; Jim's general business experience; Tong's knowledge of the Chinese market. Despite these complementary capabilities, one of Jim's competency scripts was a concern about the rest of the team's lack of business experience in the execution of a significant project like this one.

**Personality scripts.** The third category of scripts that emerged from the data was personality scripts. The team members relied on these personal preferences and their expectations of their team mates based on information they were able to collect in person and through other sources. As illustrated below, table 5 illuminates the personality scripts guiding the actions of the team members during the early phase of norm formation.

Table 5.

*Personality Scripts of the MCT Members*

<b>Personality Scripts</b>	<i>Scripts Related to Perception of Self/Peer's Personality Issues</i>				
	Indra	Tong	Jim	Delphine	
<i>Team Member</i>	Indra	(Self Script) Must take time to listen; Don't create tension in team; everyone treated equally	Hard worker and committed to team; personal friend	Takes good initiative and is bold; good communicator; pulls in others as needed	Likes to give parties, have fun
	Tong	Relies on Indra to push him, guide the team; personal friend	(Self Script) Have more courage; be more outspoken with ideas	He likes to work independently	She likes to work in groups
	Jim	Needs to be part of the decisions	Expects to have to provide Tong lots of support	(Self Script) Commitment to efficient team practices; don't speak until understand situation; avoid cultural conflicts	Expects her to tell him if unhappy; personal friend
	Delphine	Must be patient, she likes to ask lots of questions; Responsible for pushing Tong	Not fully engaged with team	Too directive, moves too fast; But can listen, not close-minded; personal friend	(Self Script) Likes to be busy, but not rushed; wants to improve English skills; Relaxed, team-based work process

The personality scripts relate to definitions of their own and each other's practices and preferences. Even in cases where the personality definitions are similar, the members use different scripts based on aspects of personality most important to the project. For example, each of the members mentioned Jim's strong leadership style. The team was mixed on how this leadership style would impact the team. For some this was seen as a positive factor on the team; for others it represented a significant challenge and potential risk to the project.

For team members, Indra's personality scripts tended to relate to member roles in building team cohesion. Tong's scripts focused on the style of working together. Jim's scripts related to his perception of the other member's impact on his leadership role. Delphine's scripts related to challenges she anticipated she would face in building relationships with the others.

Of the three types of scripts, the personality script represents the greatest variation between the members. As stated in Bettenhausen and Murnighan's model (1985), a cell IV level of variation in scripts and definitions can increase the challenge of developing shared norms, avoiding conflict, and building the team effectiveness.

**Finding #1 summary.** The participant biographies and intercultural sensitivity assessments provide a rich description of the influences on how members may define various situations and rely on scripts when responding to project team interactions. Their expectations of the likely challenges the team would face reflect both stereotypes and the limited data gathered from their initial meetings. Despite insufficient and at times inaccurate data, how they understood their teammates influenced their scripts during early team formation. These scripts were identified in the data as comprising three categories: cultural, competency and personality.

With this understanding of the team members and the scripts guiding their actions, I can present the experience of this MCT during early team formation in a format that will allow the reader to understand this MCT's norm development process as a temporal sequence over time. While not generalizable in a typical sense, this temporal sequence can arguably contribute to future studies on multicultural team norm formation.

**Finding #2: Norm Development Model for this MCT**

Finding #2 is a process model of norm development that combines a temporal sequence with an iterative process to illustrate how norms developed in this MCT. As will be described shortly, this model adds to the existing literature by combining the idea of team development (a sequence) with the idea of iterative or recursive interpersonal behavior (repeated actions).

Finding #2 suggests that the MCT members experienced a 4-phase temporal sequence of norm development during the early team formation stage, and an iterative process of seven patterns of member actions and reactions influencing the types of norms being developed. This finding is presented in two sections, or sub-findings. The first sub-finding describes the temporal sequence of norm development. In order to present the temporal process, this section is presented by describing each inflection point and time phase in detail based on the participants' actions (observer's notes) and interpretations (interviews) of the experience, which emerged during the a-priori analysis of the data. The second sub-finding presents the seven patterns of member actions and reactions that emerged from an open analysis of the data. Combined, the temporal sequence and iterative patterns of member actions and reactions form an integrated model illuminating this MCT's norm development (figure 11).

**Sub-finding 1: Temporal sequence of norm development.** In this study, a 4-phase norm development process emerged from the data analysis. I will present a brief description of the four phases of the process and then present the detailed data that generated the model, illustrated in figure 12.

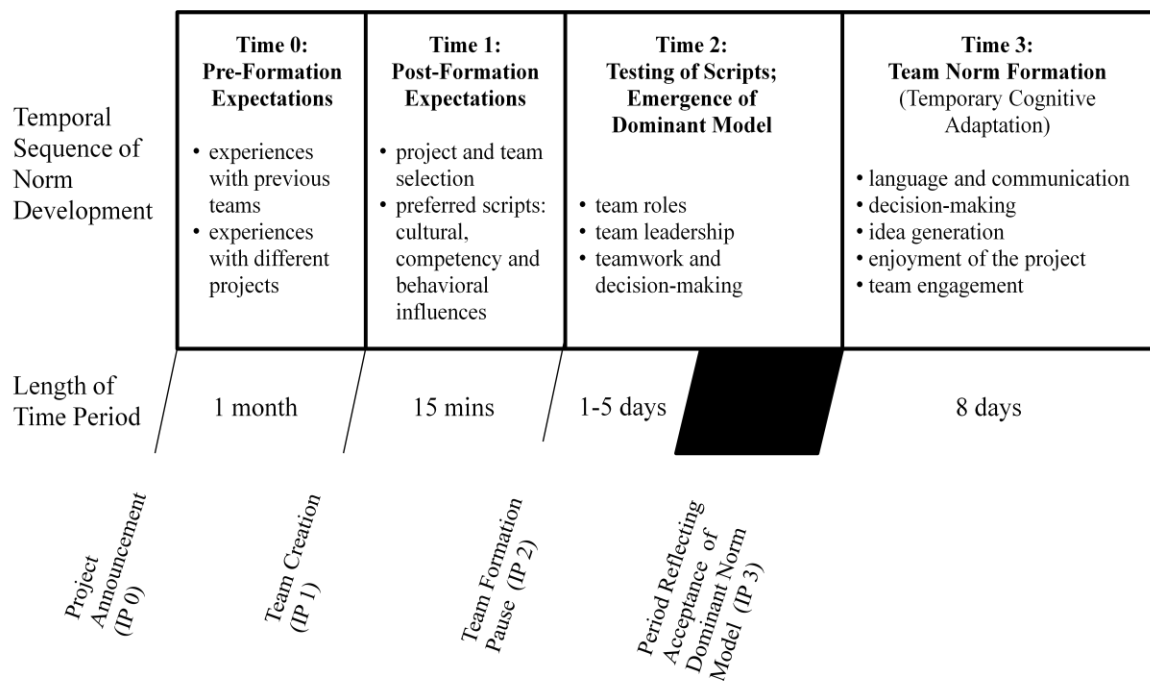


Figure 12. Norm development temporal sequence for this MCT.

The temporal sequence reflects a similar sequential format to the team formation process described by Tuckman (1965) and Gersick (1988), and offers a detailed description of the process. In the sections that follow, each stage of the temporal sequence is described in detail, including phases of time in which norms developed and inflection points defined shifts in the process, as well as how norm development emerged through the stages. The temporal sequence describes interactions between members that took place during early team formation, and expands into greater detail the first phase of Tuckman's model: forming. In this study, data analysis revealed that the forming process was much more nuanced and granular than typically understood, and that important scripts that eventually influenced norm development were emerging before the team was even formed. Below the story of the norm

development process for this MCT is described in detail, combining participant quotes, researcher observations, description, and analysis.

***Inflection Point 0 and Time 0 – Awareness a new team will be formed.*** Team members' pre-team understandings and expectations exerted a very strong influence on the process of norm development that eventually unfolded in this MCT. The data analysis identified that the influences on shared norm development began prior to the creation of the team. In this study, the Time 0 phase began at IPO when the team members learned they would be placed in new project teams the following semester. From that moment until the first day of the second semester, the team members speculated on whom they would be matched up with and what type of project they would be assigned. In general, this phase illustrates a period of uncertainty and speculation, and the data illuminates these tensions and concerns.

During the interviews, members disclosed that during this phase they were drawing on what they knew of their classmates and what they had heard about their peers' first semester team experiences, the challenges they personally had experienced working in MCTs, and expectations regarding the type of projects that might be offered in the U.S. Following the model presented by Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), the a-priori analysis found that team members were bringing with them different scripts based on two types individual experiences: 1) experiences with previous teams, both successful and unsuccessful; and 2) experiences with different project companies, including their evaluation of the value and quality of those projects and the likelihood that they would have the expertise to be successful in the new project. Each of these experiences is described below:

*Experiences with previous teams.* Each of the team members expressed having had a challenging team experience the previous semester, which was their first significant MCT experience. In addition to influencing their perceptions of working in MCTs, this first experience also highlighted for each member both cultural and interpersonal aspects of working in MCTs they found most challenging.

For example, Tong described going into this semester being weighed down by the challenge of cultural differences he remembered having at the beginning with the team in his first semester. “The challenges as before, at the beginning we cannot - how do you say - we cannot work together.” His first semester team eventually overcame their differences, but he never fully enjoyed the experience. Tong believed overcoming language differences is the biggest challenge for MCTs. Indra described similar difficulties in her first semester team, struggling to overcome their cultural differences and communication challenges during the early formation period. While the challenges left her with a negative impression of the team, she described the great insight she gained for working in MCTs when the team realized they were actually saying the same thing, just in a different way.

We used to like quarrel, ‘Oh, no, you’re wrong, you’re right, no, no, no’, and later we realized that, ‘Oh my God, you’re talking about the same thing’. It’s telling it in a different perspective.

Delphine had been challenged by a strong team leader the previous semester that she felt did not listen to her ideas. She worked hard to keep a positive attitude and spirit on the previous team, but confessed “it was really difficult”. Analysis of her interview data suggests that in addition to making sure she was heard in the next team, Delphine was

primarily concerned with how the team would work together, and her desire to enjoy the times they were together.

Alone among the members, Jim perceived the challenges he faced as relatively insignificant to the experiences of his peers. He described hearing about the challenges other teams faced and conflicts among the members and stated “we were luckily one of the teams that didn't necessarily have a big problem.” He expressed his concern, though, that a different team composition, in particular one without the same commitment to efficient team practices, would create a significant challenge for him.

*Experiences with previous project companies.* Regarding the project itself, team members were concerned about the type of project they would be working on, the value it would offer and the competencies they would need to contribute to the project. For example, Jim relayed that he was concerned about what project options might be available to him and how they might advance his career.

I wanted to come over here after working in France for an incubator accelerator that hadn't even broken ground yet... I wanted to come over here and work for a company with a big name.

Likewise, Indra was looking for projects in the technology space,

Initially, before they had Lenovo from the previous year and they had Red Hat from the previous year, so I was hoping that I would get into a similar kind of field from my background. So when {the Director} said that they choose the projects I was like a little bit not happy because I wanted to take more of technological projects.



Tong's competency concerns were more general, as he would be coming to the U.S. for the first time. In addition to his perceived English language limitations, he felt the U.S. business environment would be a challenge for him to understand and offer useful insights. He stated he should force himself to be more courageous about sharing his ideas, but also "I think now I'm in America, not in China".

The data suggests that a reason for the team members' anxiety about the type of project that would be assigned was the perceived importance of having an expertise to offer the team. They expressed that industry expertise was critical to being a strong team contributor. Jim, in particular, felt that in order to be satisfied with his experience he would need to have a deep understanding, "until I get a full grasp on the industry, completely understand it as much as I'm going to in four months, I can't necessarily say I'm excited".

*Summary, Inflection Point 0 and Time 0.* Data analysis clearly identified that the team members were bringing with them different expectations about the potential challenges they would face with team interactions (cultural and personality differences) and projects (competencies). Knowing that a team was about to be assigned but left with a gap in information regarding who the team members would be and what project would be assigned, they struggled to make sense of the impending team assignments. Evidence suggests that the team members drew heavily on the experiences of the first semester to develop a set of expectations for their upcoming team assignments.

This pre-formation phase of Time 0 highlights two aspects of project challenges that went into the early development of shared norms; prior team experiences and project/competency expectations. The pre-formation expectations are distinct from Time 1

expectations, however, as they reflect perceptions formed by members without knowledge of the composition of the team or the team project. Despite not knowing these important facts, data suggests that these pre-formation understandings would eventually influence how team members interpreted team interactions, the scripts guiding team member actions and team norms. The connections between this pre-formation stage and these important outcomes will be described in chapter five and reflect a valuable new perspective on team and norm development.

***Inflection Point 1 and Time 1 – Team creation.*** When the participants were informed who they were teamed with and the project they would be working on (Inflection Point 1), new ways of making meaning (e.g., forming definitions of the team composition) and new scripts were activated based on expanded but still limited knowledge. Further, data suggests that members at times fell back on stereotypical perceptions of their teammates. Time 1 emerged as a short but critical phase during data analysis, and represents the team members' assessment of their new team. Time 1 was entirely an internal process, before the first team meeting, as the members assessed each other and their project. This phase, like Time 0, does not contain any actual member to member interactions or exchanges. The actual length of real time reflected by Time 1 was approximately 15 minutes, and occurred during the brief period between learning about their team and having their first team meeting. Team member concerns during this phase primarily focused on communication/language, team member competency and engagement with the project. The scripts they anticipated applying to the team norms, based on these definitions, reflect cultural, competency and personality influences. In this phase, expectations and scripts emerged as key factors.

*Time 1 expectations.* Bettenhausen and Murnighan's research again guides the understanding of team members' expectations once they learned about their team and project. "Arriving at the first session and observing the behaviors of the other group members provides any single group member with considerable information. The situation is now concrete rather than abstract, and the selection of an appropriate schema or script can now be based on a stronger foundation of information." (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 353)

Now that they knew who would be on their team, cultural stereotypes and limited knowledge from the first semester guided their expectations. The initial reactions of the members during Time 1, primarily described in terms of their disappointments, are reflected in their response to the team creation announcement. My own notes during this session documented how the team reacted to the announcement of their selection as a team and the project sponsor company they had been assigned.

(Observer's notes) The entire class had convened for their first class session of the second semester on Thursday at 1:30pm. The yet-to-be-announced team members were sitting in different parts of the room, with their personal groups of friends. On this the first full day of class in the second semester, after some introductory remarks about the semester, the Director of the Program presented a slide at the front of the class that listed all seven projects and the class members assigned to each. Instantly there was a great deal of commotion; lots of laughing, high-fives, a few concerned and disappointed looks, but generally positive engagement throughout the class. As I watched the four classmates I knew were learning for the first time about their team and project, I was surprised by how little they reacted in any noticeable way. They

did not look at each other, express either positive or negative emotions at the announcement and had very little communication with anyone around them. Each team member remembered this moment and would describe it during their personal interviews. Having developed expectations about possible client sponsors and team mates, the announcement created mixed to negative expectations.

Primarily, Time 1 expectations were an expansion of the Time 0 expectations regarding project and team member selection. For example, Jim knew coming in to the semester that they were being assigned teams and a project, a reverse of the first semester when they had the opportunity to select their project. Knowing that the project could be a steppingstone to a job offer, he was hoping for a project that would highlight his skills. “After reading a little bit of the Deutsche Bank project I was just like, that is what I want to be on.” Being assigned to a medical device project was an immediate disappointment to him.

Delphine was the one team member that was initially excited about the project, as it was a medical company and fit with her expertise and interests. Yet even she came to the first meeting with misgivings, because of her sense of Jim’s disappointment. “I knew that Jim was not excited about the project, because he wanted to be with Deutsche Bank... So I was, like, I’m sorry you don’t want to be with us.” Indra also was upset by the project, but less so as none of the options were appealing. “I was hoping that I would get into a similar kind of field from my background. When I saw the other projects, I was like, ‘Oh my God, nothing is like on technology’.” Tong was the one member not affected by the assignment. “I just said, ‘who is Medivice?’ I had no idea.” (Medivice is a fictional name for the project company.)

In addition to the type of project, the team members had an instant reaction to who would be on the team. None of the members had worked together on a team before, but the program was only 24 students so they knew some information about each other. Jim did not think he would get along well with his new teammates. “I was a little frustrated and also I had some friends from the program that worked with some of my teammates so I heard some stories about their work ethic.” Jim assumed his teammates had heard about him as well, and was considering their likely reactions, “I’m sure they all have heard stories about me from last semester and I understand that my personality sometimes can be a little aggressive and I understand that. I can’t really change it at this point. I don’t really care to change it.” Jim also was concerned about working on a team with his friend, Delphine. Delphine had a similar response, “My first reaction to see that to see that I was with Jim...I did not want to be with him {Jim}”. She knew from their friendship that he could be directive. Delphine was also unsure about how well she would work with Indra and Tong; “sometimes she {Indra} needs to ask a lot of questions to understand, and Tong quite a bit (made a sound and gesture, suggesting ‘not engaged’) sometimes. {Based on} Feedback from last semester, and from the other groups.” Each of the members noted that language would clearly be a challenge as they were aware that English would have to be the common language, but both Delphine and Tong had strong accents. Indra was determined to maintain a positive outlook toward her new team, and explained how she prepared for the announcement, “Even if I’m going to get a crappy team I’m going to work with them and put things together.”

While each of the team members described in detail why the team announcement was in general a disappointment and raised specific concerns, Jim was the most clear about the

impact his disappointment of the project selection and potential limitations of his team members had going into the initial team meeting.

“I was like I'll probably just have to stay with this biomedical. They're not going to change now so okay, I need to think about this and also from what I heard about the previous semester I wasn't necessarily looking forward to having to hold somebody's hand for a project, especially this size. So kind of a lot of things were going through my mind.”

*Time 1 scripts.* In addition to expanding their expectations, during Time 1 the team members also began to identify scripts they believe were appropriate for their new team. As a reminder to the reader-- team members make meaning of a new situation by matching the new experience to a script that represents a previous experience. Bettenhausen and Murnighan call this process one of defining (the experience) and selecting (a script). For this MCT, before their first meeting and based on partial information, the definitions reflect cultural, competency and personality influences on the scripts they use to make meaning of the new experiences.

1. Cultural influences. Cultural stereotypes were influential in the scripts the team members anticipated would be applicable to this new team. For example Jim, in his own words and actions, described himself as the stereotype of an American leader and his desire for a script that would drive efficient team behavior. “I guess it might be a little American to say okay, got a problem, let's start trying to solve it.” Jim recognized he has this tendency, but did not express any concern that his teammates would have a challenge with it. Like Jim, Tong also felt his

script preferences reflected his national culture, preferring not to push their ideas too quickly, “For the Chinese guys maybe if I have an idea I should think about it”... “for the Chinese guys maybe always think many times before I speak.”

In addition to recognizing their own preferences, the members prepared for likely script conflicts based on stereotypes of cultural preferences. Jim said, “Having dealt with someone from an Asian culture last semester, I kind of had a little bit of an idea of what I was going to be doing this semester in terms of helping them along.” Tong also allowed stereotypes to impact the expectation of scripts his team members would prefer. “...our team members come from different countries, and for me for the French I think they prefer to like work in the group, and for the American guys maybe they prefer individual and have a very strong sense, like independent and have their strong ideas.” “And for the Indian maybe there were big impacts from American culture. Maybe they are more and more motivated like the American guy. But maybe there is some influence of their religion.” Indra felt the cultural differences could specifically cause an issue between her and Jim. “Because we have a difference in communication skills - he was raised in the US and I was raised in India, and all of us - so using the same tongue and same language sometimes can interpret different meanings in different cultures.”

Jim admitted that he expected his limited experience working interculturally would be a challenge for him. “Last semester at the beginning it was a little difficult to feel people out. It's the first time that I had met any of these people and

obviously every country has its own little stereotype on how workers work. I tried to go there with an open mind. Just because I'm from America doesn't mean I take on all of the characteristics as stereotypical Americans.”

2. Competency influences. The importance of the project and ability of the team to work together to achieve a successful result was also a strong influence on preferred scripts. In his first semester MCT, Jim felt the business backgrounds of his team mates allowed them to work together effectively. Jim was concerned about the contribution he could expect from his new teammates in terms of cogent ideas and effective decision making regarding project deliverables. “I'm the one with the business background. Indra is a software engineer...Delphine who has a pharmaceutical background...Tong, he was one that I heard about last semester that, I don't want to say that it was lacking but you kind of needed to hold his hand in order to get him on the right track.” He expected this team would require, “strong guidance”. And while the team members would later express concerns with Jim's approach, at this stage of team formation and project development they valued his business background and direction. Indra stated, “He's the most experienced person who has industry experience when compared to the rest of us”.

In addition to business knowledge, Delphine and Tong also interpreted, as an American, Jim's language competence would be valuable, and expected the team to benefit from his leadership role in situations requiring strong language skills. Delphine said “He's American, so for the English, there is no doubt about it. He is



better.” Tong said another team during the first semester had expressed what not having an American on the team had meant; “If they need someone to write some report maybe there will be problems with writing, with grammar.”

3. Personality influences. While the cultural and competency influences were top-of-mind for the team members, there were also perceptions of the likely personalities of their peers influencing the scripts they anticipated would be required. One of Indra’s scripts, which she said was required of “an elite team”, was defined as each member taking the time to listen to each other, to slowly give each member the time to express themselves. “Okay, so one thing is that we have to listen. Don’t jump into arguments or conclusions before listening.” “{It is} one quality that I gained in that team, that I thought would help in this team.”

For Delphine, a concern regarding Jim’s likely influence on the team caused her to struggle to define the script she would prefer in the team. Based on their personal relationship during the first semester, Delphine was concerned how Jim would impact the team’s creative and decision making processes. “I know he’s very directive.” But at this initial stage in the project team she was more concerned about his impression of her, “Because it’s my personality. I don’t like to disappoint, so I don’t want him to be disappointed in me, by my way of working.” This internal conflict would later impact Delphine’s actions (and inaction) regarding norm development in the team.

*Summary, Inflection Point 1 and Time 1.* Time 1 norm development reflected the participants’ internal definitions and analysis of likely norms based on secondary knowledge

and stereotypical perceptions of their teammates. Data analysis indicated prior to their first meeting, the members' concerns about the project and each other, even before validating any of their definitions, influenced the scripts they expected would be preferred by themselves and their team mates. Going into the meeting, the members were distracted by their concerns regarding the cultural differences on the team, competency requirements and personality differences as well as disappointments from unmet Time 0 expectations. The comments by the MCT members during their interviews described not only the influence of their definitions prior to the first meeting on preferred scripts, but also the impact these had on their initial formation experience; in other words, how these definitions affected their ability to engage and establish good team chemistry. The influence of these perspectives on norm development during early team formation has not been sufficiently explored in previous research, and will be expanded on in chapter five.

***Inflection Point 2 and Time 2 - Team formation pause and dominant influence.***

Inflection Point 2 is the moment at which the process changed from introspection to dialogue and team member interactions. Time 2 could have been a period when the MCT members addressed their different definitions and preferred scripts for team norms, and developed socially-constructed shared team norms. Instead, the project pressures and other influences to be discussed later in this chapter allowed a dominant influence within the team to focus their efforts, but also limited the scope of the team's activities to emphasizing the norm development for completion of project tasks. In this study, Time 2 represents the phase of norm development where the team members tested their scripts, and ended when the non-

dominant team members deferred their autonomy and acquiesced to the dominant model (e.g., conforming to time and performance pressures).

This section describes the first team meeting (where inflection point 2 occurred) and the initial influence of a dominant model on norm development. The sections that follow describe: 1) the team formation pause (IP2); 2) the influence of one member's dominant approach; and 3) the emphasis on the project tasks of team roles, team leadership and teamwork and decision making processes.

*Team formation pause (IP2).* Bettenhausen and Murnighan's model describes the relationship between team member definitions and the selection of preferred scripts based on previous experiences. IP2, the moment when the members would begin testing their preferred scripts, occurred when the team members accepted they were now a team and needed to determine how they would work together. But instead of each one jumping in with preferred scripts, the team paused. IP2, the team formation pause, occurred during the early part of Meeting 1.

(Observer's notes) After leaving the chaotic main classroom for the quiet of the MBA Lounge, the team members did not seem to have a specific plan for engaging each other or even knew how to sit together, reflecting uncertainty even in their motions as they entered the room. Indra and Delphine sat on one side of the rectangular table, by the windows, Tong and Jim sat on the other. I sat at the far end of the table. Indra placed a single laptop at the other end of the table for all to see. At this point the team paused, uncertain how to proceed. They were quiet for maybe 20-30 seconds, not knowing how to engage each other, or how to proceed with the project. Jim

described it simply, “We were just sitting there silent for a little bit.” Each member should have had their preferred norms for beginning the team project, but they were holding back. As I saw them struggling to decide what to do, I had to bite my tongue, tempted to help and provide some guidance. But this appeared to be a moment when the team needed to define how they would work together.

Unfortunately, the team did not have clear guidance on what steps to take at that moment. The pause was felt by the entire team, and later analysis of their descriptions of the pause reflected one consistent perception: they were unsure how to proceed due to the uncertainties resulting from the three categories of team scripts described previously: cultural, competency, and personality.

1. Cultural. The team described being aware that there would be cultural differences to address, having just experienced this in their previous semester’s MCT. Each had possible scripts that could have been used in this team based on that experience, including Indra and Tong whose teams early on worked openly to address these differences. But instead of attempting to use one of these scripts, Jim and the others said the pause reflected a preference to take a moment before speaking to consider the unique perspectives of their team mates. “I like to take everything in before I start to speak on it if I don’t have any prior experience.” Jim’s description of his pause confirms his strength as an interculturally sensitive leader, seeking information about his peers and the situation before acting. Indra also stated that in that moment she preferred to be an observer, to take some time to learn about her peers and “understand the language and each other’s

personalities” before suggesting how the team should work. She did not feel the same approach from the previous semester was necessarily the correct approach, “I cannot expect this team to follow the same systematic approach”.

2. Competency. Indra said at the moment of the pause she was also thinking about the project demands and whether she would have an expertise for the project. “Yes, because my background is in IT, computer science and my previous project were still like in touch with that, and biomedical industry is completely out of my knowledge. And all my friends and everybody is into computer science...” Tong said he was thinking about his previous experience working with a medical device organization and what he could take from that brief activity to define how he would contribute to this project, “Yeah, because it was a medical device so that’s why I just remembered it. Maybe they have some technological contribution that can help me on the project.” Delphine was also considering her background in medicine and potential contribution, “... okay, so ... you’re going to be the pharmacist”. But neither Tong nor Delphine felt confident that their backgrounds would be a perfect fit with the needs of this company. Jim was also considering his competency for a medical device project, which was limited, and also his continued disappointment not to be on a project that could better leverage his skills. “So this biomedical thing and again I was still kind of upset about not being on the Deutsche Bank {project}.”
3. Personality. In addition to pausing to consider the cultural and competency issues facing the team, the members were also dealing with personal uncertainties about

their preferences and limitations at that moment. Tong was concerned about his language skills and ability to express himself effectively. Indra was applying her script of listening before jumping in with her ideas. Delphine was anticipating Jim would take a leadership role, and preferred to follow his lead. Jim was also uncertain what the appropriate action to take in the moment was. “Sometimes I like to sit silently and kind of reflect on the situation before I say anything that may not be thought out”.

The team formation pause that occurred at IP2 provided the members a chance to consider each other, their similarities and differences, before testing their preferred scripts on their new team. All four members were thinking about the potential project challenges and how they might contribute, based on the experiences they had in previous situations. They also expressed a hesitation, given their lack of knowledge about each other, and seeking to learn more about their team mates before deciding on what the best approach for the team would be. But instead of taking time to learn about each other, the team pushed forward with research on the project.

At IP2, Jim described his efforts in a manner reflecting a team member being sensitive to his team mates. During Time 2, though, he would chose to influence the team toward his preferred norms, reflecting his desire to move the project forward and confidence in his own abilities to help them address any challenges. This dominant approach also illuminates his lack of experience with MCTs and a lack of confidence in his team mates’ experience, which will be detailed later in the chapter.

*Influence of the dominant approach.* During this period, the initial few team meetings, the members were (briefly) testing out their preferred scripts. From the beginning of the phase, though, a dominant voice amongst the team stepped in and pushed for a single model, and that model significantly influenced the initial project tasks.

In research presented by Kelly and McGrath (1985) and Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung (2003), a leader driving a single model, to increase the efficiency of the team in addressing project requirements, can lead to a quick acceptance of a single approach to team norms. Often the norms will reflect the preferences of the dominant leader. In this MCT Jim took a leadership position and his preferences did take precedence, though there was the expressed belief among the non-dominant members that acceptance of Jim's approaches were temporary. They simply did not wish to push back significantly at this early stage of team formation.

(Observer's notes) Recognizing that the pause was slowing the team down, Jim took a leadership position and offered the team a starting place. "So let's look at the presentation {provided by the client} and see what we can derive from that."

Delphine joined in, "It seems to be a fusion between the different processes of the drug companies, to be able to focus on other things, and find good information."

From this point on, the team would focus their Meeting 1 discussion on learning about the client's organization and industry, and completing team tasks set out by the program: the tasks related to assigning team roles, team decision making and team leadership hierarchy.

The uncertainty felt by the non-dominant members and desire to avoid any tension during early team formation encouraged the non-dominant team members to defer the discussion of shared norm development until a later point in the project timeline. Time 2's process of testing scripts was limited to defining the team tasks mentioned in the previous paragraph: team roles, team leadership and teamwork and decision-making processes.

*Team roles.* In this team, how the roles were assigned and tasks defined appeared to reflect team member preferences from their past experiences. As noted by Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), though, team members do not always use the same scripts for similar definitions, since they will have formed their scripts in different settings. As an example, Indra offered to take on the role of project coordinator during Meeting 2. This was welcomed by all the team members, recognizing both the importance of the role and their perceptions of her fit with the role, but the meaning of this role and her selection varied among the different members. This difference in perception and how the role assignment varied based on their different scripts was highlighted a week later during the Meeting 5 when Jim made a comment referring to Indra as the 'project manager'. Indra immediately responded by saying "No, I'm project coordinator. This team doesn't have a manager". When asked during her interview why this distinction was so important, Indra said:

...it's like all of us are the same. It's just that to say there is a manager, he is like a kind of superior person than the rest."... "When he {a previous team mate} would say he's a project manager because he is a superior, so when you're working in a team culture, when like five of us are working together we don't want to treat somebody



superior or the other person like a level below them. I don't want to have that kind of feeling. A coordinator is like I'm one among you all.

For Indra, the script of the coordinator was limited to someone who helped manage team activities. Also for her, the eventual development of team norms should be the result of a socially-constructed shared development process, not defined by someone perceived to be a superior.

When asked about Indra's comment, the other team members had different interpretations, both of the reason for her comment and their scripts for the role of the coordinator. Delphine thought Indra's comment was to limit her commitment in addition to any perceived influence over the team. "I think it was to protect us and say, 'Oh, no, don't say that. Because it's a responsibility to be the project manager. It means a lot, and I think it was more defensive, like, no, I'm just the project coordinator.'" Tong felt it related to a perceived influence over the team, but also believed it reflected deference to Jim's role as leader. "I think the manager in the meetings is like the leader on this team, but I think Indra is taking into account the feelings of Jim, so that's why she said, 'I'm not a manager, I'm just a coordinator'." Delphine and Tong's definitions and scripts for Indra's choice as coordinator, and reason for not wanting the title of 'manager', reflect their own scripts.

With Indra as project coordinator and Jim later nominating himself as managing communications with the client, Tong and Delphine were left to self-define their own team roles. Tong found a piece of the project that related to China, and felt he could offer that expertise. "At that time I was so excited because they held their manufacturing in China, so maybe I was thinking about, what about Shenzhen, what was the situation?" Delphine had

the highest level of industry knowledge, but was uncertain as to whether she wanted to be a subject matter expert for each of the project activities. “I have things to say, but I know that don’t want to stand up and go to the board and write something and say, “Okay, so and so,” because for me, it’s not valuable.” Delphine felt her experience with developing presentations would help the team more, “I think I know how to make a medical presentation, a beautiful powerpoint that is very easy to understand”.

Jim stated the initial role assignments provided a good structure for the team. “I think the team right now, I think it's pretty balanced, at least from what I heard of other people's work habits from last project and what I've seen up until this point.” Jim felt one of the strengths of this team would be the acceptance by the members of their roles, as his previous semester team had done. “Towards the end of the semester we all kind of had, I want to say roles. Yeah, this is our roles. We have a driver. We have people that would add on, devil’s advocate. We have the researchers. We had the producers. I think that we all recognized where each other's strengths were so we tried to design all the work and presentations to kind of mold to that.” But Jim also felt it was his role to be a team leader, to make sure any work not completed by the other roles would get done and make sure the project was successful, “I know that it's going to be a decent project because I'm not going to let it (not be).”

*Team leadership.* The team members had different definitions and scripts of who the team leader was and what was expected of this person, and these would impact how norms for leadership would be developed. Jim said, “I'm also very decisive so I like to think of myself as kind of like a team leader, a team driver, make sure that everybody is involved but at the same time I'm not letting us try to get too off track or idealize.” Jim felt the impact of

his leadership effectiveness extended to the contributions of his teammates, and how effective he was in providing them direction.

... so I've learned like you can't necessarily tell somebody you need to do this, you need to do this. You kind of have to lead them to water. You suggest things and then ask so they think that they have a say in the matter when really, in my mind, the decision has already been made for them but if they're uncomfortable doing the work that I suggested then they say no, so okay, then we'll figure something else out but it they're okay with the work that I suggested to them then we just go with it..

Indra had a different impression of team leadership, preferring the leader who is guiding the team to be someone who is outside the team and can provide support when needed. Team members who try to represent themselves as leaders are simply trying to take a controlling position.

In India, the culture, it's like when you get into a public enrollment, one day if you prove yourself you can go up careers, so everybody is like trying to be more competitive and trying to show that each person ... like show the way. So when I work in a team it feels like so many people will try to get control and show like, 'Okay, I'm more superior than you and I have more chances of going to a level up before you'.

She also felt defining a single leader within the team would change the team culture away from one of shared leadership. "The people in the team should think like all of us are equal." Her impression was that Jim was not allowing everyone to have an equal voice, but he was

making an effort to “bring the team together” so she would continue to let him drive much of the team decisions and give him a few weeks to improve his leadership approach.

Delphine’s previous experience with team leaders was also not positive. During the first semester, a strong team leader “wanted to control everything, and in the same time, he was not doing good for me, he was not listening to me.” But Delphine was very clear that she felt Jim was the team’s leader and supported him in that role. “I think there is a manager. It’s Jim.” She did not want the role. “Because, I mean, I’ve been a leader, and it’s a lot responsibility. I don’t like it, it takes time, now I know that’s – I do my job. I like to do it good. But after all I have my life.” She accepted Jim as the team leader but saw some potential conflicts between Jim and Indra over the leadership of the team. “But, I was up there yesterday. They are talking a lot, in school and making some progress, so no, so far, I think, well, it can be fun. We can have fun – if everybody takes it not personally and relaxed, I think it can be very, very good.” Her script was for a leadership model, provided by someone else, that allowed the team to interact peacefully together.

Tong felt the leadership of the team was effectively balanced between Jim and Indra. “I think we have different leaders. The first is, our idea leader is Jim, and then team leader is Indra.” Tong said he relied on Indra to make sure the team was managed effectively and Jim did not influence too much of the process. Each of the members had a different script for leadership of the team, which could lead to conflicts during stressful points in the project if they did not resolve the differences and create a shared norm.

Interestingly, Jim described one of his leadership scripts for the new team was his ability as a leader to help manage any cultural differences. Knowing the team would face

conflicts, he said it was up to him to “make sure everybody is comfortable with what they're doing but at the same time trying to lead without authority.” That Jim assumed the role to make sure everybody is comfortable suggests he had already started to develop a script as leader/caregiver. As will be seen shortly, this script played a large role in the eventual team norm development.

*Teamwork and decision-making.* Indra, Delphine and Tong's previous semester experiences led to concerns about their ideas being heard, and saw this as a norm the team needed to establish for an effective working relationship. Indra said, “I have to listen to them speaking without interrupting them, without stopping them from speaking or like pushing down their ideas.” Tong agreed that how ideas would be developed in the team was a major issue. “So I think it is a bit challenging how to persuade the others to accept your ideas because everyone has a different idea. Maybe they are totally different.” Indra's script and preferred norm for idea generation and decision making required team members to let go of their ownership of the idea. “When you share with the team and everybody starts to work on it, it becomes the team idea.”

For Delphine, a significant norm she wanted to see in the team was the social interaction during project activities, many of which she preferred to complete together as a group. “In a perfect world, for me, it would be that. Like, being in a room and, with a board, all together. And so everything is on the same flow, we do it at the same time.” Jim's preferred work process norm, however, was looking for the most efficient process, and he expressed this in a manner that suggested a likely conflict with Delphine's preferred approach. Jim stated, “I guarantee it's {team work} not going to be as a group; maybe when

we're putting a presentation together that way but I think that proper delegation is probably the best, most efficient way to get work done. You've heard the phrase too many cooks in the kitchen.” “If everybody is trying to add in or give their two cents, as long as we're on the same page I think that two people are going to produce the same thing that four people would have.”

Jim felt that his approach to delegated work would still result in team-based decisions. “I think that no important decision will be made without the consultation of everyone but as for individual research and things like that I'm pretty sure people are making decisions on their own.” But Jim did recognize the value of group decision-making during final task production.

“Well, I think that so far our main stuff there is going to be collaborative so each person will have a piece to research but I think the little things that everybody just does and everybody else just sign off but in terms of presentation, we'll each have our own research that we're contributing to the presentation but I think as a team we'll decide what are the words on the slides, how do we want it to flow, who's doing what slide, what are the three main points? What is the slide show supposed to do? So all that will be done as a team.”

In addition to team efficiency, Jim sees the delegation norm for project work as providing clear insight on the contribution of each member and where he would need to step in to provide support. “I think the research is going to give me a good idea on how that will have to go.”

The different team work and decision-making norms posed potential conflicts for the team. Team members were concerned about how idea generation and decisions would be made, and how the team would interact in group work. During Time 2, though, the norm preference were not openly debated or significantly discussed.

*Summary, Inflection Point 2 and Time 2.* Bettenhausen and Murnighan describe the team formation pause in IP2 as the dismay new team members feel when faced with a new situation and unable to select an applicable script. The MCT members described their dismay in terms of cultural, competency and personality uncertainties. In response, if “any group member has chosen a script and his or her role as an actor within it, that person may act in accord with the script selected. Even if the situation does not conform to all the facets of the script” (p. 354). Jim determined that for the project team to be successful, he need at that point to take a leadership role. His influence on team norms during Time 2 would reflect this decision to act according to his preferred script.

Time 2 reflected the initial process of testing scripts and searching for common team norms. The team members’ discussions focused on project tasks related to team role definitions, team leadership and teamwork and decision-making processes. A negative analysis of my own notes, written following the initial team meetings, noted missed opportunities to address cultural differences that were apparent to an outside observer. There was no discussion of script differences or personal concerns during Time 2. The team seemed comfortable with each other, laughing several times. And they appeared to have some sense of each other’s personalities based on impressions created during their first semester in France. But this being their first project working together it was surprising no

one wanted to discuss *how* they would work together. They all had unique experiences during the first semester and seemingly would have wanted to share what worked well and how they would like to proceed. Also, some team chartering work would have been expected, to define what each person hoped to learn and achieve from working together on the project. But these issues did not come up. Chapter five will address how Time 2 may result in more significant shared norm development in teams with different team member capabilities.

***Inflection Point 3 and Time 3 – (Temporary) Team norm formation.*** After testing out various scripts, the team members eventually realized they needed to adapt their approaches to develop norms the entire team would accept. Unfortunately, Jim felt for the good of the project goals the team norms should be processes reflected by more traditional U.S. approaches. Despite recognizing his own monocultural approach to team work, “I’m pretty American when it comes to how I say things or my opinion of things ...”, Jim felt his business experience was more extensive than his peers and it was important for him to define the project team norms. The other team members temporarily accepted this approach in order to move the project forward, but each stated that they believed these temporary norms would have to change in the future. For now, they would try to adapt their own approaches to Jim’s preferences, though found specific aspects difficult to accept even during the early formation period.

Inflection Point 3 (IP3) was the moment in this MCT when the team members each accepted that the dominant model would be the preferred approach during early team formation. This moment was not obvious nor was it likely a single temporal event. The non-



dominant members, as the team activities progressed, recognized Jim's push for his preferred norms was simpler to adapt to them attempt to push back on. Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) recognized this transition period as well; "Our conceptualization of norm development focuses on the individual's acceptance of the group's norms". (p. 370)

Cognitive adaptation theory describes the process of adapting to new norms as generally split between two approaches: 1) 'thinking as usual' in which the member fails to adapt by holding onto existing scripts; and 2) 'letting-go and taking-on' of new shared norms.

Jim adherence to his personal norms reflected a 'thinking as usual' approach. The non-dominant members did not, however, fully 'let-go and take-on' Jim's preferences. Their adaptation was a temporary acceptance of his preferences to avoid conflict and defer an open discussion of norms to a period after early team formation. Research by Tuckman and Gersick predicts this decision will delay their ability to work effectively as a team and likely lead to 'storming' at a later, possibly more critical stage of their project work.

Indra's IP3 likely occurred or at least began almost immediately as she was forced to 'attempt to adapt' to one of the team norms on decision-making. A technology portion of the project was of interest to her but Jim decided it would be outside the scope of the project. Initially, Jim tried to remove the search engine optimization (SEO) and social media research request by the client from the project, saying "Well, I think that's something they would outsource and probably isn't going to be a big part of this project." Indra displayed clear, non-verbal concern during the meeting about his opinion, but did not speak up, accepting the norm they had established of Jim deciding when a topic was resolved. Indra did later state in

the meeting, “I have my background in computer science and this is definitely my area of interest, where I want to pursue my career”, but Jim did not pick up on this as an issue with his decision. Indra saw an opportunity to change Jim’s opinion of this aspect of the project when the project sponsor spoke strongly about the importance of SEO. “He wanted lead generation. If you want lead generation you have to go through SE optimization or social media.” If the sponsor had not pushed for SEO, Indra said she would have brought the topic up again. She also saw this situation as defining her general approach to adaptation, accepting his preferences initially to avoid conflict or misunderstandings but waiting for Jim to be more open to other approaches at a later time. “Initially, I wanted to give it some time, maybe I would wait for another instance when he {Jim} is going to be the same way, but I felt like I’d give him three chances. So if the same thing is going to happen three times, three chances, then I’m going to speak up” She was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, for now, and temporarily put her interests aside for the good of the team development.

Despite her patience with Jim and his approach, Indra knew the team would fail to adapt fully to Jim’s preferences and need to develop shared norms eventually. Her commitment to a shared approach was evident even in her willingness to delay the shared norm development process and find a unique approach to creating a shared approach that was right for this team. She rejected a ‘thinking as usual’ approach despite valuing her previous semester’s experience; “we had a very systematic approach of working together so I cannot expect this team to follow the same systematic approach; so I’m trying to understand what is the approach that we are going to have.” For Indra, there was no pressure to push a discussion of and establish shared norms during early team formation. “Because in the

previous team the initial one {month} was very tough but once we understood each other it was very easy to work with each of them.” When asked when she expected this process of developing shared norms should take place, Indra responded, “Within a couple of weeks, more we work together, because still we didn’t have any kind of ... do real work together.”

Delphine’s own IP3 also occurred very early as she sought to impress Jim and not be perceived as having a lack of capability in the project. She accepted almost all of Jim’s preferences and generally was supportive of these in the team discussions. The one area where she struggled accepting the new team norms, and chose to temporarily adapt, focused on the work schedule and the atmosphere in which the team work would take place.

“I mean, we are not yet comfortable that we are well at ease with each other, especially to express, like yesterday, when we were in the meeting, and they said, ‘Okay, so let’s say that for Friday night, we have to give our slides.’ And I told him {Jim}, and took me like five minutes to be able to say, “I don’t feel like Friday night’s useful. Let’s do Saturday night, because it give us, it gives each of us more time to be able to work well and for a long time, and less pressure.”

Delphine recognized that it was going to be challenging to get Jim to adapt to this approach later on, but felt it would happen. “I think he can listen. He’s not like close minded or, so, and I think, especially if one day he realizes that he was wrong, or something like that, he will may be less dominating”. She shared one example of how she hoped norms would change in the future, “Because Jim has spoken about the possibly new markets, Europe and Asia, so that’s a good point. But the problem is maybe he has done it a lot already, but maybe next time we will do it together.”

As with Delphine and Indra, Tong's IP3 likely occurred during the early couple meetings, as he lacked the confidence to push back on Jim's preferences. For Tong, though, it was not a matter of simply 'letting-go and taking-on' Jim's preference. He was not overtly fighting adaptation, but nor had he even temporarily adapted to Jim's preferences. Tong said he was waiting for the right opportunity to challenge Jim's approach and for the team to develop their shared norms. "This team hasn't said, 'This is how we should work'? Actually personally, I think we need to." "Personally I think maybe we can have some short meeting like we discuss differences and figure out other ... some of the methods how to do it efficiently." When asked if he thought the style of his previous team is the same as how this team should work, he said no, this team is "I think a little bit different."

Jim was not unaware of the team members' different norm preferences. While emphasizing a 'thinking as usual' approach, he also felt as the team leader it would be his responsibility to bring the team together and leverage the cognitive diversity. He believed he could manage this process within his norm structure, drawing out the value of the team members' differences when it was valuable for the team but making sure the differences didn't distract from the project goals.

"I'm pretty American when it comes to how I say things or my opinion of things or it's how I come at things whereas the French and the Chinese do not come at it the same way. And I think Indra probably understands a little bit but she's also a software engineer and not a business person so culturally I think everyone is very different but I also think that some good things we're going to be bringing to our perspectives, on ideas that are also have different backgrounds which is going to help out a lot those.

But true cultural clashes at this point I don't think there are any but then again we'll see when crunch time comes what arises.”

For Jim, the importance of the project success outweighed adaptation of the norms, and he did not have confidence his team had the project experience necessary to influence team norms. Even project task materials would go through him before inclusion: “So I'll try and look at what they found and does that relate, then kind of put that inside.”

*Summary of IP3.* Inflection Point 3 could have been the moment when all the team members recognized their different preferences and decided to have an open discussion of developing shared norms for the team. For this MCT, the acceptance of a dominant model allowed them to move forward to work efficiently on their project tasks and delay the discussion of shared norms until a later time. As a result, the team norms developed during Time 3 primarily reflected the dominant model, now presented, though as discussed this was never fully accepted by the team.

**Time 3.** This phase represents the formation of team norms based on the default to a dominant model. While the norms developed were not socially constructed by the members as shared norms, they did reflect efforts by the non-dominant members to adapt to the dominant model, even if the norms were meant to be temporary. Of the five areas of team norms, four were significantly influenced by the dominant model. Only ‘enjoyment of the project’ was not. The following section presents the MCT team norms: 1) dominant norm for languages/communication; 2) dominant norm for idea generation; 3) dominant norm for decision-making; 4) team norm for enjoyment of the project; and 5) dominant norm for team engagement.

*Dominant norm for languages/communication.* Jim's preference and the team's initial norm for dealing with language and communication challenges was to limit the amount of time and work that required directly interacting, and relied on the members own willingness to be outspoken if there were issues with a delegated model for team work. Jim described his experience in the first semester involving one student from another culture who forced him to a "kind of understanding how cultures are different in terms of communication". The impact on the team, though, he felt was wasted time as "she would talk a lot without saying anything". He did not want this communication style to affect this semester's team:

I have other tasks to do as well so I can't spend all my time huddled in this meeting room with you. I need to do this work. I'm on schedule. So being able to get it properly delegated but also have good communication, not waiting until the next group meeting to bring something up. That's why there's email, cell phones, or you walk over to the person's desk and talk to them.

In this MCT, English was the common language, though two of the members (Delphine and Tong) were more comfortable speaking in French. Jim and Indra did not speak French, so Delphine and Tong did their best to communicate in English and adapt their speech to be effective in the team. The team members recognized that communication issues would be a challenge for them and mentioned that all of them would need to adapt their speech, to find a common level of understanding. Jim mentioned that while in France he had to adapt by speaking "a plainer, simpler English", and the expectation was the same adaptation would take place in the U.S.

Jim's own adaptation to this team norm required dealing with a personal challenge of using American slang in his normal speech. Despite knowing this was an issue, Jim attempts to adapt failed on several occasions when he made intercultural communication errors during the initial meetings. One failure occurred during the initial team formation meeting. After learning their project would be in medical devices, Jim turned to Delphine and commented, "This is right up your alley". She responded, confused, "What?" Jim repeated the same phrase, speaking loudly over the commotion of the full classroom, "right up your alley!". Delphine was still confused, having trouble with the American idiom, "sorry, what?". Jim repeated it a third time, "right up your alley... Something you are interested in." She finally understood, and said loudly, "yes!".

Jim felt the team members would approach him if there were any problems, and he was confident in his ability to identify these problems as well. Rather than seeing Jim's approach as a problem, Delphine and Tong saw the norm and its effectiveness as an important reason to have Jim as a leader of the team. Regarding her own language skills, Delphine said "I think, yes, it's challenging for me, because yes, sometimes I don't understand the way of saying things, and even with other people, but I'm not proud. So I will ask until I understand... But I'm saying to myself, Delphine you should understand." She found the issue of language a challenge in working with the project sponsor, and thought Jim's lead on that relationship would be important as a result. "Jim is very, like, motivated, he knows a lot of things, and is American, so I think during the meeting, with {sponsor} he was very comfortable then everyone else, and especially {sponsor} has a very strong accent..."

While Indra also was concerned about the communication issues, commenting on Delphine and Tong's accents, she did not necessarily agree with avoiding this challenge, as she felt she had the experience from the previous semester to help the team work through their differences.

So initially the people found it difficult to convey something in English because they knew what it meant in their own language but they had difficulty like, 'Okay, I want to say something but I find it difficult to find the right word'. This is not something new. I already faced this challenge and the only thing I learnt is I have to get used to their way of speaking. For me to get used to it I have to listen to them speaking without interrupting them, without stopping them from speaking or like pushing down their ideas. I want to let them speak so I get used to their vocabulary.

Indra felt the current team norm and practices did not reflect this patience and listening to each other, but was willing to be patient with Jim and see if his approach improved as the project progressed and their activities required more direct communication. She adapted to the team norm of reduced direct communications during early team formation.

Tong temporarily adapted to the team norm, but resisted fully adapting. He saw the language differences as the most critical issue for the team to overcome, but felt if the team could overcome this challenge it would result in a team strength, and a great experience for him personally. "I think it's {team's greatest challenge} the language because in our team we have totally different country backgrounds, so maybe I think they are having some problems with the English accent. Then I think we can combine the different backgrounds, maybe it will be an advantage for us." Tong also believed improving his language skills was an



important part of the team work. “Language is pretty important and there I think I can get some innovative ideas that will be helpful or useful in my career, maybe in my job after. And then I can learn the different cultures.”

The adaptation to the team norm by the non-dominant team members could be seen in the later meetings of early team formation during which there was significantly less communication during the meetings. Team members would work on their computers, stopping at times to ask questions of each other related to project activities, then returning to their personal work. The team did not meet or even interact in structured on-line meetings outside of the formal team meetings. They would use Google docs and Moodle to organize and integrate their independent activities into a single team result. Any changes could be made by each member on-line at a time when they were available. While increasing the team’s efficiency, the project activities often reflected only the one person’s perspective who was given the task. The non-dominant members expressed concern about this approach, but stated they did not think the delegated approach would be an issue until more significant project activities later in the semester.

*Languages/communication summary.* For this MCT, the challenges faced with language and communication influenced support for Jim’s preferred norm. During early team formation, Delphine, Tong and Indra adapted their approaches to limit direct communication to only a few team meetings. Indra reflected the other members concerns, though, that this would need to change later in the project process, and she might need to challenge the norm if after a period of time the reduced interaction time became an issue for the team.

*Dominant norm for idea generation.* Creativity is the primary value of a MCT and results from the cognitive diversity achieved through drawing on the team members' diverse backgrounds and experiences. Developing a team norm that encourages team members to share their ideas is therefore critical to the MCT's success. Jim's norm for idea generation was to pose a topic that the team needed to discuss, and open the floor for the other members' ideas. He would often discuss the ideas as a dialogue with the member suggesting an idea, only rarely having the other members participate. Tong described this process, and his perception of Indra's contribution to the process:

Maybe first of all Jim will give some ideas, who should do it and then we should add something, add some ideas. And another situation maybe Indra tells us now it's time to do this task and let's do it together and we should give some ideas and we come back together. I think there are two types {for gaining ideas}. The first way is Jim gives us the main idea, as I would put it to you, and another type is Indra is organized together to put some ideas together.

Jim recognized the diverse perspectives on the team were an important aspect of this norm, and the potential value they could contribute in idea generation. "I think everyone is very different but I also think that some good things we're going to be bringing to our perspectives, on ideas, that also we have different backgrounds which are going to help out a lot..." Despite this perspective, Jim was concerned that if he did not manage the process effectively, the team could waste a lot of time on ideas that were not useful.

I think that sometimes they have these ideas but they aren't thinking about it from a pragmatic or the business approach so I think one of the conflicts will be kind of reign

them in a little bit in terms of you have to think inside a certain box if you're looking at something from a business perspective. I know we're all out innovation and things like that. I won't say they don't get the material but they're looking at material from a slightly different angle than maybe they should be ...sometimes their input has already been given and maybe they're not listening or maybe they're not understanding exactly what we're trying to cover. So really just making sure that people understand things and are looking at it from the right angle would probably be our biggest issue.

Tong believed that support for encouraging the sharing of ideas was the team's biggest challenge. He accepted that Jim would take the lead in this process, and accepted this norm, as long as the various team members' ideas were encouraged and addressed. Tong felt he was not comfortable with the norm yet, but blamed his own limitations for this and his need to work to adapt. "Maybe I should be more courageous to do it {give ideas}." But his efforts to adapt were countered by his reluctance to push too hard in an environment he was not comfortable in. "And then maybe I think I should express more my ideas, maybe; yeah, but I think now I'm in America, not in China."

Delphine thought that each team member had a unique aspect of the project where they would contribute ideas, and allowing this specialization might improve their norm. "So, Jim definitely likes the tooling stuff, and how to improve, and not technical but tooling. Indra for me was like, blog, social media things. Tong, I don't know. Maybe the Chinese part, looking at implementation in China and China market. And for me it would more like,

advertising, communication, events they could collaborate to show themselves and to create a network.”

Indra also supported Jim’s leadership in the process and his norm for idea generation, though eventually believed that the team norm would need to adapt to separate the ideas from the individual team member who suggested it, so that the ideas could be evaluated objectively:

So when I talk about it I say, ‘Our idea’. Even when it’s going to be from me I say like, ‘Hey, I have an idea’ but once I put it out, I talked like, ‘Okay, what about this idea? What about our idea?’ So the language makes them understand that no more that it’s ... the individual idea is gone; it’s going to be a team idea. Because if you’ve still have that idea in yourself it might not develop; it might not have a chance to develop, so only when you let that idea go and it becomes a team idea, when you have like different people’s perspectives, like put into it, it evolves into a better idea. Indra believed her approach was a positive one, but recognized it was not without potential challenges. She knew that team members would be graded individually, and therefore some recognition of their individual contributions was important. Interestingly, this potential contradiction in the norm process did not bother her. “That was one thing that made me very happy because like you have to be credited somewhere. You have to be credited for your efforts and for your ideas.”

As with managing their language differences, the team members believed Jim’s process was fine for now. But Indra was concerned they would face a challenge later in the project, as she had seen before.

I had the same experience with my previous team when everything was like fun in the beginning. Though we had like troubles, but still it didn't bother us much, but towards the big presentation that's when it struck. Everybody was stressed, like the presentation that we have to prove to our sponsor that they have done a good job all these two months, so that's when everybody got stressed and everybody was like trying to push their ideas in too, so I can see that. I already experienced that in my last team.

Indra stated that Jim's process was fine for now, but when the team began 'real work', she expected Jim to be more open to other approaches.

*Idea generation summary.* In this team there were several failures with effective idea generation during early team formation, including a moment when Jim drove the team charter creation as a personal rather than team effort. These were not seen as sufficiently disruptive by the non-dominant members to require pushing back on the norm process during early team formation. They accepted the norm and worked to adapt.

*Dominant norm for decision-making.* Very early in the team formation process, Jim took a leadership role in determining the norm for how and when the team had reached a decision on a topic, allowing them to quickly move to a new topic. As previously described by Tong, Jim would introduce a topic, open the topic up for discussion, debate ideas and question other team members to expand the team's knowledge and decide when to conclude by summarizing their statements to confirm there was agreement. He would reach out if he believed someone was not contributing to the discussion, or had something important to

contribute but was being timid. Based on these efforts and the team's desire to complete their activities efficiently, they accepted his norm for their decision process.

Even when Jim was not there, they relied on his support for decisions. During Meeting 6, Jim stepped away from the meeting for a phone call. While the team continued the discussion about an upcoming presentation, they did not talk about any other topics, but rather waited for him to return. When Jim returned, they summarized their discussion for him, the team agreed on the approach that would be taken and he moved the team on to a new topic.

Jim's norm for decision-making, he believed, was inclusive of the other members' opinions since most decisions were made in the team meetings and everyone had a chance to voice their opinions. Once tasks were delegated in the meeting, everyone took on their own individual decision-making. "Whenever everybody's spread out, nobody is calling somebody else to say should I research this. They're expected to have their own initiative on that." He felt the process was working well, but that he would continue to monitor its effectiveness.

Right now I think everyone's involved so far. I think that no important decision will be made without the consultation of everyone but as for individual research and things like that I'm pretty sure people are making decisions on their own. What companies to follow up on how deep to go into each company so I'm okay with that at the beginning until we see where someone might be lacking or someone might be going too deep into things.

Jim was confident that based on his background he also should take a strong leadership role to sometimes direct the group toward the 'right' decision. "You suggest things and then ask

so they think that they have a say in the matter when really, in my mind, the decision has already been made for them.”

Indra believed Jim was “very good at decision making”. His four years of working in companies gave him credibility among the team members. For this reason she hesitated to challenge his processes and worked to adapt to this norm. “The first few meetings of the team, I don’t want to bring any kind of tension into the team even before we become comfortable within ourselves.” But eventually she knew she could not accept a process that did not provide everyone an equal voice. “Definitely it’s not going to be an elite team.” She felt Jim, despite his efforts, was not engaging all the team members effectively. “So if I think that somebody is like lagging behind maybe I would try to like pull them in, because right now I think that Tong is a little bit lagging behind.” Tong, though, felt that for now the process was working. “We should ask the different opinions about this idea. If we all agree this idea then we will do it.”

Delphine also struggled attempting to adapt to the decision-making norm, which she saw as a potential conflict that the team would have to face. “I think that the decision process and the guidelines {are the team’s biggest challenge}.” “Because, yes, for me, it was the going too fast, but, too much, oh, okay (snaps her fingers several times, describing pressure to move quickly)”. “He {Jim} always wants to know, okay, let’s move on with this...and just like, okay, I need more time.”

*Decision-making summary.* At this stage of early team formation, the MCT was willing to let Jim lead the decision-making process. The team held out the possibility that

this might change later on if Jim did not allow each of the team members participate equally and comfortably in the process.

*Team norm for enjoyment of the project.* Team satisfaction is both described in individual terms, based on expectations of the benefits, as well as in team terms regarding the ability to work well together and expectations of success. During the individual interviews, the MCT members stated it was difficult to assess their project enjoyment so early in the team process. Each member also had their own way of describing what the norm for enjoyment would be. As mentioned earlier, how a team measures its satisfaction with their process is a part of team chartering that this team did not address during early team formation. As a result, this MCT focused on their individual measures of satisfaction.

For Indra, enjoyment came from working with people with diverse backgrounds. But she knew their comfort interacting with each other would take time to develop. “We all know each other but not like as a team working together, because being friends is different from working in a team. To be like friends working in a team is very difficult if you are... So I will wait for some time, I will build in that - how do you say, the chemistry?” While she was familiar with Jim’s norms, perceived as typically American and similar to her experiences in the U.S., she felt it was just a matter of time for Delphine and Tong to adapt somewhat to Jim’s model and find comfort as a team. “That can be one of the reasons {time} that they are still struggling to get into the U.S. mode of working. Yes, I would say it could take a month.”

Jim was satisfied with the current state of the team and the project. Part of this had to do with the sponsor’s comment about a job opportunity at the company. “I’m also satisfied



with the fact that he even said that he's going to be looking to hire someone right under him, as a next step so that is something where I want to be able to position myself that even if he doesn't want to hire me that he'd be willing to give me a recommendation.”

Tong's enjoyment came from being able to share ideas with his team members, but he was not concerned by the limited activity as it was early in the process. He also recognized they were not comfortable with each other yet, and the team members were not making an effort to fully engage. He thought maybe they were still burnt-out from the previous semester's project. He also believed the program leaders could help improve team member satisfaction by offering an additional incentive for working well in teams. “Maybe I think we can give something, an award?” “Yeah, some award. For example, last year in Europe we had not so many projects; we just have five teams, five projects and just one team can get the award, some present, some little present from their company and the for rest of the team nothing.”

Delphine agreed that she did not perceive the team members were fully satisfied, but having fun anyway. She had stated her own initial satisfaction was impacted by her uncertainty of working with Jim and his disappointment at the start of the project. “I think it was – for me, at first I was very excited, I think because it was about medical. And I think my excitement began to decrease.” “But I think we will have to find new ideas, and then excitement will {come}...”

*Enjoyment summary.* Satisfaction with the team and project at this stage was tempered, as the members focused on their steep learning curve about the company and project. Each of them saw potential opportunities to benefit from working on and being

successful in their project for Medivice. They delayed specific definition of project success and satisfaction, but they were all aligned on achieving a successful project outcome.

*Dominant norm for team engagement.* If creating a team norm for satisfaction with the project could be temporarily delayed, the norm for engagement between the team members could not. Developing norms on how and when they would work together was critical to each member feeling engaged. Unfortunately, this is one area where there were strong differences, as discussed under Time 2 – Teamwork and Decision-Making.

Jim had defined the norm for the team's social integration as trying to limit the time invested in meetings to the most efficient process. He also was not intending to have any social time with the team, "I try to keep them a little different because I don't like my work to interfere with my social life." Jim believed his norm agreed with effective business practices, and that the other member's lack of experience might limit their understanding of this, as he himself had experienced prior to his work experiences.

As an undergrad, I don't think you really know what the best way to do stuff is. We'd get together and work as a team and there would be a lot of wasted time when you're all together, whether you're just kind of BS or whatever. Then you're getting into the work world, small business, it's kind of like okay, we're this group and we're working on a project but I have other tasks to do as well so I can't spend all my time huddled in this meeting room with you. I need to do this work. I'm on schedule.

Indra was in agreement with much of this perspective as a working mother. She agreed that, "We don't want to like do our work on the weekends", but she also recognized some social activity would be important to team development. "Maybe I would say go for an

outing.” She realized they had not done anything of this nature so far. “Not yet, so I think we do a team fun activity and then maybe build that relationship.”

Tong was not adapting to this norm as he wanted to see the personal relationships on the team grow.

I think maybe we can - how do you say - create the very good team mentorship of each other because maybe we have - how do you say? If the other, every teammate, we have a very good relationship, like friends, we can talk where we have - how do you say - we can talk whatever I want. I think it’s maybe can have a party, some small party, it’s not a very formal party, we can drink together, eat together, just take a very short time to discuss outside, out of the project. Just to talk about their daily lives.

Delphine was not as interested in building deep relationships but did want a more casual engagement between the team members, to create a relaxed team setting for their work. “That’s hard for me, being together in a room; maybe with some music, putting things on the board, and let’s do the Five Forces together. It would be better.” But Delphine had adapted to and accepted Jim’s norm during early team formation as she was unsure if the project required significant teamwork at this stage. “This kind of project, for me, it’s very different, as everybody’s working in his own side, and after sharing, but it’s not really shared. It’s not the same sharing that you have in a concrete project, when you have a deadline and you have to provide something.” And she realized from her time traveling with Jim that his approach would be in conflict with an unstructured interaction process, and she did not want to challenge him.

While Jim wanted to limit the personal engagement, he did recognize that managing team relationships was a leadership responsibility. His previous work helping manage a college baseball team was an appropriate analogy, he believed, to managing the team. “It was my job to understand what people did well on the baseball field, how their mentalities worked in certain situations and then put them in those situations or certain situations in order to succeed whether it was the batting order or places in the field. And I think the same thing is translated over into project work.”

*Team engagement summary.* The different norms for engagement in the team were one area where there was already conflict and a lack of resolution. The non-dominant team members had accepted the reduced team meeting time, but still believed the time when they were together should be more interactive and the team should make an effort to meet socially to improve their dynamic. As a result of this lack of agreement on the norm, social engagement was the most likely norm of the five to be effectively resolved through social construction and a team created shared norm developed soon after early team formation.

*Summary of Time 3.* IP3 represented the period of time during which the non-dominant team members realized they would need to adapt their norm preferences to develop team norms more in line with the dominant model. During Time 3, the members attempted to adapt to the dominant model, though their adaptation was not fully described as ‘letting-go and taking-on’ of the dominant model as the non-dominant members stated they were simply deferring the discussion of shared norms until a later stage in the project. Their efforts and success adapting to the dominant norm varied based on the individual importance of their preferred norm. Also, the non-dominant members’ commitment to the team norms was

limited, waiting until a later time when shared norms could be developed. The team was moving forward, but the analysis highlighted team norms that lacked stability and certainty, and member concerns about how well the team would work together.

*Summary of the temporal sequence of norm development.* The temporal sequence offers a representation of the MCT norm development during early team formation. The temporal sequence emerged from the analysis of the MCT member's experience using the conceptual framework. Beginning with their pre-formation expectations that began last semester when the new project process was described to them, each of the members went through unique adaptations to arrive at the current team norms.

Inflection Points (IP) describe specific moments when the norm development process took a significant new direction. IP 0 occurred when the team members learned about the project, and began the member's definition of the possible team and project without knowing who or what to expect. IP1 represented the moment when the team members and project was announced at the beginning of the semester. IP 2 occurred when the team members met for the first time and paused, not knowing how to proceed. IP 3 occurred when the team members recognized their preferred norms differed and they needed to adapt. IP3 was not a distinct moment for this team, as different members came to this realization at different times, and the team never had a specific discussion about adapting their norms.

The Time Periods of norm development included: 1) Time 0, expectations of the challenges that would likely be faced based on broad knowledge of the team and possible project opportunities; 2) Time 1, an internal process of developing definitions and selecting scripts based on stereotypes and limited information regarding the team members and project

company; 3) Time 2, an external process of seeking additional information about team members and the project, using different models for assessing each other's definitions and scripts; 4) Time 3, efforts by the non-dominant team members to adapt to the dominant model in order to create (temporary) team norms.

Since this team failed to develop shared norms during early team formation, the a-priori analysis focused on the process the MCT went through and experiences of the team members within the dominant model. Several members expressed what they anticipated the future shared norm development process would require, but insisted that patience at this stage was more effective than conflict with the dominant approach.

Thematic analysis of the data from the meetings and interviews will now be presented in the second sub-finding, to provide a more complete contextual understanding of the team members' actions and personal experiences with the norm development process.

**Sub-finding 2: Iterative patterns of member actions and reactions.** In addition to an a-priori structured analysis of the data using the conceptual framework, I conducted an open analysis using van Manen's phenomenological reflection process. The process included a three-stage analysis to identify key themes of influences on norm development in the data: 1) a broad 'holistic' analysis; 2) 'highlighting' of significant statements; and 3) 'line-by-line' analysis of each statement as it supports or conflicts with the study hypothesis. As with any qualitative analysis, phenomenological reflection relies on a "continuous, iterative enterprise" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.14) of coding the data, and repeating the process several times as the coding evolves. Details of this process are included in chapter three.

Seven patterns of member actions and reactions emerged from the analysis. The seven patterns were: 1) information seeking; 2) reflecting; 3) observing vs. participating; 4) learning; 5) adapting vs. rejecting; 6) deferring; and 7) supporting vs. betraying. Figure 13 illustrates the member actions and reactions, including the single loop learning process that Argyris (1976) described as the detection and correction of errors.

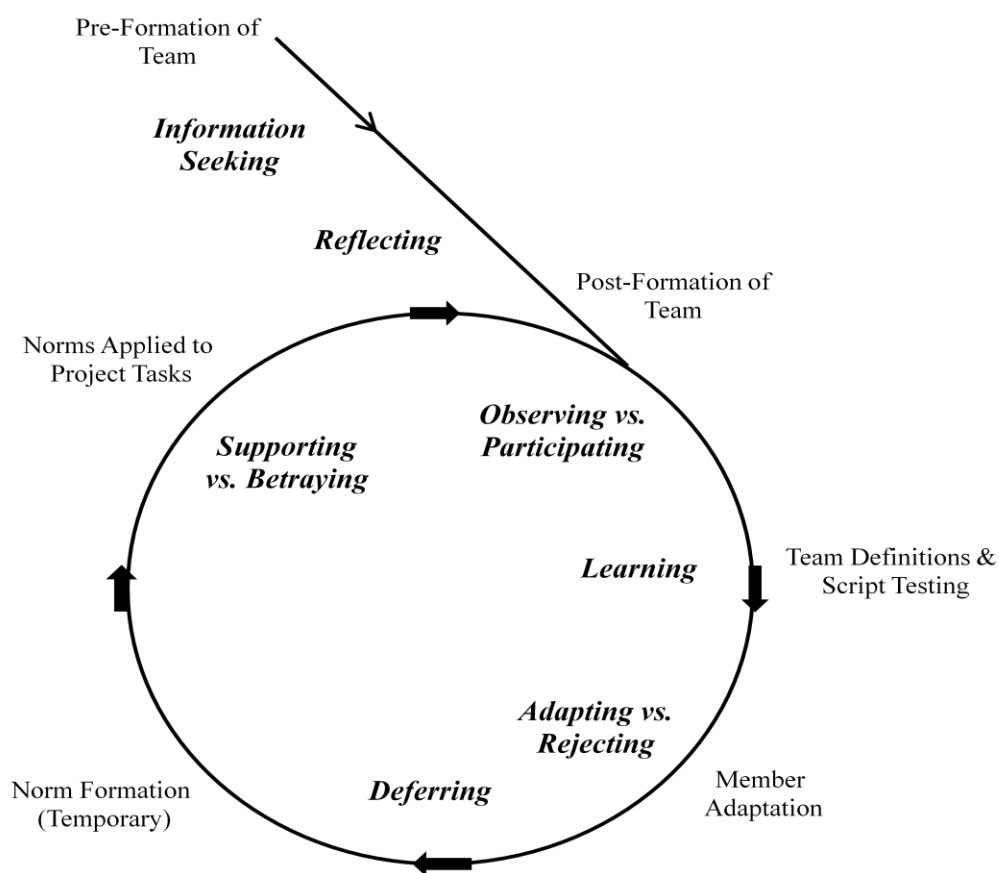


Figure 13. MCT member actions and reactions

Each of the actions and reactions is presented at the point in the norm development process when the action/reaction was first observed or retrospectively described in an

interview statement. For this MCT, once each action began, the action continued throughout each stage of norm development. For example, the initial action of each team members was information seeking and reflection on their previous experiences to make meaning of their situation. Information seeking and reflection actions were observed/described throughout the study.

After the team formed, team members took new and different actions. The members used observation and/or participation in the team to enhance their understanding of each other. They then tested their scripts, based on a definition of the situation, and sought to learn about each others' preferences. In this MCT, at the point of script testing, the team accepted a dominant model, rather than continuing to pursue their preferences, and sought to learn their team practices from the dominant member. At that point, the non-dominant members chose to adapt or reject the team norms in development. In cases where they found adapting to the team norm difficult and chose to reject the team norm, the non-dominant members deferred openly challenging the team norm until a later time in the project so that team chemistry would not be negatively impacted. As the members experienced the outcomes of choosing to adapt or defer, they found the norms in some cases supportive, in other cases betraying their interests. In situations where they felt betrayed, members stated they would challenge the team norm, based on their preferred scripts. This would cycle the single-loop process back to script testing.

Fiol and Lyles (1985) discuss the importance of double-loop, or higher-level learning, in the development of complex rules, including norms. In this MCT, though, the team members did not engage in an open discussion of norms, nor did they indicate when team



norms were reviewed at a later stage of the project that this would include an open review of the original expectations and interpretations that went into the initial script selection (a requirement of double-loop learning). The description of how norms would be developed at a later stage was similar to Bettenhausen and Murnighan's (1985) negotiation of preferred scripts in creating team norms, not a co-created shared norm process. For this reason, the later norm development process is reflected as a single loop returning to the testing of preferred scripts.

The remainder of this section provides descriptions of each action/reaction, using data from the observations and interviews.

***Action 1: Information seeking.*** One common action emerging from the observations and interviews was the efforts made by participants to gather available data to help guide their definitions of the situation. This is a process that influenced the norm formation throughout the early team formation stage, though diminished in importance later in the stage. After a norm was defined, members spent less time gathering information on each other, and more on adapting to the team norms and pursuit of the project goals.

Information seeking in the new MCT took the form of direct dialogues with each other, secondary sources, previously learned first-hand data, demographic stereotypes, internet searches and even the members own definitions based on limited data. Each of these provided some guidance to the team for their definitions, script selection and assessment of team norms.

The MCT members expressed having conducted information seeking actions even prior to the study period. Jim knew coming in to the semester that they were being assigned

teams and a project, a reverse of the first semester when they had the opportunity to select their project. He was hoping for a project that would highlight his skills. But since the program would not provide the information on the project or team members until the second semester, Jim sought information from other sources, “I was lucky to have what I call inside information”. He and Indra both sought out information regarding previous second semester sponsors, as well as any information they could learn about the committed sponsors for this year’s semester in the U.S.

Not all information seeking was through direct communication. Members also drew on information from other sources, such as information on each other learned from former team mates and personal friends, as well as information they interpreted from cultural stereotypes. Indra thought she already knew what to expect of Jim as one of her apartment roommates had been on his team the first semester. Tong and Indra saw Delphine as the party host during their time in France, as she regularly had the class over to her house. Jim’s perception of Tong was based both on information he had heard from his first semester team, as well as a stereotype of Asian participants as having a “leader/follower mentality”. He fully expected another semester of hand-holding. “Having dealt with someone from an Asian culture last semester, I kind of had a little bit of an idea of what I was going to be doing this semester in terms of helping them along.”

After learning their project would be with Medivice, all the members knew they would need to gather information about the company. Delphine and Tong had some background in the medical industry, but knew if they were going to be subject matter experts for the team they would need to learn more. Indra was concerned that in addition to her own

lack of industry knowledge, “I don’t even have friends who I can go talk and gather some information about the field”. Jim also felt the need to learn as much as he could, but he knew it would take time, “until I get a full grasp on the industry, completely understand it as much as I’m going to in four months, I can’t necessarily say I’m excited”.

A fourth type of information seeking activity was the members’ efforts to create information in order to make a decision or fulfill a request. As an example, during Meeting 1 Jim pushed Tong on his knowledge of Shenzhen. Though he had never been there before, Tong gave Jim an answer based on his general sense of Shenzhen and the typical make-up of similar cities in China. He wanted to establish a contribution to the team based on his expert knowledge of China, but admitted during the interviews he had never been to Shenzhen, “You’re right. I just know there is lots of high technology is just doing there, but I don’t know this specific city.”

Information seeking actions of the MCT members reflected both periods of limited information, direct information gathering during team meetings, project knowledge development alone or in pairs, and information creation to meet team needs. Much of the information seeking process was dependent on a second phase, when the members would reflect on the applicability of the information to their current situation.

***Action 2: Reflecting.*** The process of reflection requires the time and space for mentally reviewing and re-evaluating information, actions and decisions. In a complex project like the one facing this team, finding time and space for reflection is a challenge. For this team, however, there were times that the members’ reflections were useful in re-

considering expectations of the project, peers and themselves, and development of improved insight on their preferred scripts.

Jim's own assessment of himself benefited from reflection during the interview. He initially stated, "Just because I'm from America doesn't mean I take on all of the characteristics as stereotypical Americans". As we discussed in the interview his preferred norms, though, he said in relation to his push toward project tasks: "I guess it might be a little American to say okay, got a problem, let's start trying to solve it". Jim's ability to gather this insight reinforces Delphine's believe that he would recognize conflicts between the member's norm preferences and adapt later in the project.

Indra and Jim's satisfaction with the project also benefited from reflection early in the process. Both were initially disappointed by the assignment to the Medivice project, which was outside of their competence areas and did not appear to offer them the same career advancement opportunities. After reflecting on the initial meeting with the sponsor, however, both were very happy. Indra was thrilled to be working with a Chief Marketing Officer of a corporation, who valued her social media expertise. She also, upon reflection, was "happy that somebody pushed me out of my zone and asked me to work in a completely new field". Jim was also pleased, having heard the sponsor would be looking for someone to fill a position working for him at the end of the semester.

One situation where reflection failed was in regards to an odd moment in Meeting 5. The team had divided into two groups to complete two tasks; the team charter and a team weekly project report. Tong was to work with Jim on the charter, and India and Delphine on the report. Tong decided to not work with Jim, but rather joined Indra and Delphine on what

was a simpler task. When asked about this, Indra said she thought maybe Tong just felt more comfortable working with them, instead of Jim, at that stage. When he was asked directly, though, Tong failed to gather any insights and simply explained his odd decision as “yes, it was very interesting but I never think about it.”

This team was challenged by a complex project, a new MCT, a new environment, multiple other classes and possibly the added pressure of working under the scrutiny of this research study. Time and space for reflection was scarce, but necessary given the information demands and unique situations they were facing almost daily. Given the demands on their time and ability to gather insight from limited information, the next section’s description of their reluctance to actively engage may not be a surprise.

*Action 3: Observing vs. participating.* As norm development began in this MCT during Time 2, many of the members chose to step back and let one member lead this process. For different reasons, Indra, Delphine and Tong were each willing to let Jim set the framework and initial norm model for the team during the early formation stage. Each had different norm preferences, but decided to ‘observe’ norm development at this stage.

For Indra, taking an observing position in the team was a script she was comfortable with when working in new situations. First, she wanted to become comfortable with the language of her team mates, so that she was confident she properly understood their statements. Since for three of the members English was a second language, herself included, she wanted to be cautious about “understanding too quickly”. Second, she wanted to give herself time to learn the industry and business model. Third, she wanted to avoid reacting

too quickly into conflicts or differences of opinion, rather give her team mates additional “chances” to adapt closer to her preference.

Observing was a natural role for Tong, who stated that “Chinese guys maybe always think many times” before acting. Despite this natural tendency, Tong recognized that he should be “more courageous”. But he also thought that in addition to language deficiencies, working in America caused him to face cultural and competency uncertainties. Despite having several concerns about the norms developing, Tong was reluctant to be the person to step forward. He believed Indra had both the personality and position on the team to play this role.

Delphine’s preference for observing was more active than Indra or Tong’s. Her observation process was to understand Jim’s preferences and be supportive of these. This was in part a general preference to support his leadership of the team, but also reflected her desire to take some time to understand the situation better. She stated, “I need more meetings” before playing a more participative role.

The team members’ preference for holding back was quickly read by Jim, and he responded as the sole member participating in setting norm models and driving the norm development process. He had experienced a similar challenge in the previous semester, struggling to understand the cultural differences and as a leader “how do I really enhance the participation of someone who doesn't necessarily come from the same culture where we're used to having people kind of butt in or continue our sentences or take our ideas and run”. Jim did say he also has an observing tendency when in a situation without strong competence, “sometimes I like to sit silently and kind of reflect on the situation before I say

anything”. But when he saw the team drift, he felt it was his role to take the lead and drive the team.

In addition to the team formation pause at IP2, the members reflected similar tendencies to observe first during other stages of early team formation. As the non-dominant members described, only after they felt more confident in their roles on the team would they take a strong participative position. Until then, they were willing to let Jim provide the guidance. This approach will be discussed further under the action ‘deferring’.

**Action 4: Learning.** For this MCT, learning took on several components: knowledge of Medivice’s industry and business; understanding their team mates’ preferences and interests, including the dominant norm model; understanding the sponsor’s expectations of the project; and awareness of their own expectations and potential benefits from the project.

Jim’s early disappointment with the Medivice assignment became an exciting opportunity once he learned there was a potential job opportunity involved. This excitement came with added pressure to learn about the organization, and be cautious about what the team would present, “This is an actual company so again I don't want to say or do or present anything without double, triple checking all my work.” Delphine and Tong had similar perspectives, believing that the medical industry was a likely future. Tong believed that if he could learn “clearly the medical industry in America, then I can know what the potential market for the medical industry in China”. In addition to the industry knowledge, Tong also saw the project as providing an experience that would improve his English skills and understanding of U.S. business culture.

The non-dominant members (Indra, Tong and Delphine) also expressed their excitement of working on this project with Jim, who each felt they could learn from. Jim's business knowledge, understanding of how to engage the sponsor and experience of managing a business project were all valuable insights to the other members. Indra even stated that Jim's norm model could be effective, and believing "he's very good with his approach to work so I'm learning more from him".

As any educational program, the masters program was inherently a learning process. Often times a significant project process can overwhelm that focus on personal learning, but the members of this team were recognizing the opportunity to internalize new knowledge and skills that could be used later seeking and performing in new roles.

***Reaction 5: Adapting vs. rejecting.*** The cognitive adaptation theory (CAT) describes the expected process team members would follow during norm development to adapt to different norms. For this MCT, CAT reflected many of the members' actions, but the team also faced alternative emotional pressures related to project enjoyment, competency concerns and cultural conflict fears. As a result, the actions by the members to adapt or reject the norms reflected both CAT analytical processes and emotional influences.

Once Jim had described his norm preferences for the team, each of the non-dominant members attempted to adapt to this approach. As previously described, they allowed Jim to define the norms during the early formation stage rather than create conflict from alternative personal preferences. As Delphine stated, the team had "very low conflicts because each of our personalities, we are not angry or act like a child". This emotional maturity on the team



both supported the adaptation process and its effectiveness. The non-dominant members did not push back when there were norm conflicts, instead deferring any conflict to a later time.

One example of adaptation related to Indra and Delphine's preference for an open discussion of ideas and team development of projects activities. Jim's model, conversely, preferred to frame the initial response to a topic, then "he was asking us to review it, to see if it's right". Surprisingly, Indra was willing to adapt to this approach early in the team formation. Ultimately, she was confident that the team would reject the approach, fearing they would not become "an elite team". Delphine also supported Jim's approach, but felt later on the team would do more group work. Tong had a similar perspective on Jim's approach, but also recognized its value at this stage, "if he {Jim} did the one job individually, it's more efficient".

Tong and Indra had experienced during their first semester teams a CAT process of norm development through direct discussion of team member differences. Tong believed this new team also needed to discuss "how to work" and establish shared norms. Jim recognized this was a possibility, and even was improving on his own self-recognized issues regarding alternative models, "being able to be respectful and kind of listen was something I was trying to work hard on and having patience". Delphine felt he could change, and would once he recognized the different interests on the team. But Jim said "I can't really change it at this point. I don't really care to change it". He rejected adaptation to other models in favor of the focus on project goals, and his perception that the current model was the most effective.

The members' efforts to adapt to Jim's model began immediately during Meeting 1 and continued throughout the early formation stage. At points the members struggled to adapt, and rejected pieces of the model, but in general accepted the approach as effective during early team formation. Additionally, they stated the dominant model norms would not be maintained throughout the project, stating if Jim did not adapt later to different norms they would push back on the model. This decision reflected their willingness to defer their autonomy in the early team formation stage.

**Action 6: Deferring.** This MCT's members preferred to accept Jim's norm model during early team formation, and deferred discussion of the diverse team scripts until a later stage in the process when agreement on norms was more important for the project work. The non-dominant members believed that early team formation required a peaceful time to establish comfort with each other, and by deferring the discussion they could focus on the early project demands.

The predicted length of time that the discussion would be deferred varied by the member. Delphine felt that it could take place in the next couple weeks or even a month, since the team was involved in "only research" at this stage. Indra felt a month or more deferral would not be a concern. The topics would come up once they were doing "real work". Tong thought the discussion would happen sooner than the others, but was not willing to lead a challenge to dominant norms.

Delphine and Indra believed team chemistry and efforts made to "gel" and become comfortable with each other were more important than debating shared norms. Indra said, "I

don't want to bring any kind of tension into the team even before we become comfortable within ourselves”.

The conscious choice by the non-dominant members to defer discussion of their norm preferences to a later project stage reflected their lack of appreciation or understanding of the difficulty in changing established norms (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985). By deferring this process, they opened themselves to team norms that would betray their interests.

***Reaction 7: Supporting vs. betraying.*** At various stages in the norm development process, team members would defer their preferences and attempt to adapt to the dominant model. The expectation was that these decisions would create better team chemistry, and they would be able to change the norms at a later date. When this occurred, the members decided they had made the right choice. When it did not, they expressed betrayal and disappointment.

The first example of betrayal occurred early in the process, when Jim made a quick decision to eliminate social media from the team's goals. This was an area of importance to Indra, not only based on her expertise but also her future career aspirations. As with earlier conflicts with the initial norms, Indra said nothing but her non-verbal expression was of great disappointment. When asked about this during the interview, Indra said “I wanted to give it some time, maybe I would wait for another instance when he {Jim} is going to be the same way, but I felt like I'd give him three chances.” Not only did she want to wait to see if Jim's approach improved, but she also was uncertain if she understood him clearly and would wait to discuss it further at a later date.

Delphine also experienced betrayal, when Jim pursued some research in an area of interest to her. She also did not say anything, “the problem is maybe he has done it a lot already, but maybe next time we will do it together”. She was confident that Jim would realize “he was wrong” in pressing so much toward a delegated norm for team work, and would change his approach.

Jim wasn't the only person the team members felt let down by. Jim and Indra also expressed disappointment in the program leadership, for changing the approach to project selection. In the first semester they choose three preferred projects, and the program leadership would select one. In the second semester, the seven projects were assigned in advance with no input from the participants. Both Jim and Indra had conducted some pre-selection information gathering, and had expectations of the type of project they would be assigned. When Medivice was announced, they believed their interests and opportunities for success were betrayed by being placed in a project in which they had limited competence.

Not every result of the members' decisions to defer was a negative one, however. Delphine said for some project tasks “it's difficult to do it all together”, and there were pieces of the project she did not want to spend time working on. Also, Indra stated Jim recognized her social media expertise, eventually, and credited her with valuable ideas on the project. She found the team work process effective for several tasks, “when you work in two's it's easier than working four” and Jim's efforts to engage each of them at times when their knowledge would be valuable “was like bringing the team together”.

The non-dominant members' deferral of autonomy and Jim accepting this leadership responsibility created a challenging task. The members would more than likely find conflicts

with Jim's dominant model, requiring him to manage his relationship with each member delicately. Whether the members felt supported or betrayed by his approaches would define his effectiveness as a leader.

*Summary of iterative patterns of member actions and reactions.* The phenomenological reflection process suggested by van Manen provided an open analysis approach to analyze the observations and interviews of this MCT. The holistic approach provided an initial perception of each member based on assessment outcomes and general contributions during team meetings. The highlighting process selected specific statements during meetings and interviews to reinforce or challenge the holistic stage, and provide an initial set of codes for a line-by-line analysis. The final stage, going line-by-line to develop patterns regarding the actions of the team members, created a set of seven actions/reactions describing the team's norm development.

The patterns of member actions and reactions will be explored further in chapter five, applying their contribution to further research on norm development. The patterns are not temporally sequenced, like phases model, as they reflect actions that members take at various stages in norm development. From this perspective, norm development is a series of cycling activities by the participants. As both sequential and cyclical processes for describing norm development are presented in this chapter, this study offers a MCT norm development model of greater complexity than most team and norm development models, which will be explored further in the next chapter.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a rich description of the answer to the research question: how do team norms develop in an intercultural sensitive MCT during early team formation? The team did not develop shared norms, as the original research question sought to describe, but their experience did provide valuable insights on early MCT formation and norm development. The study generated two findings.

First, the study presented data on how the unique backgrounds and experiences of the team members influenced norm development. This study found three relevant influences on norm development: cultural, competency and personality preferences. The description of these influences was complemented with background information on the team members (biographies and intercultural sensitivity assessment results) to illuminate the members' unique perspectives.

Second, the study suggests a model for understanding the team member definitions, scripts, efforts to adapt their approaches and the norms that were developed. The result, at a very early stage of team formation, is the creation of team norms that will guide or in some cases inhibit the activities of the team. The analysis of the MCT presented here described; specific inflection points and periods of norm development that provides a rich description of their experience; and seven patterns of member actions and reactions during the norm formation process that described member behavior during the process.

In chapter five, I will discuss the contributions to theory and research of these findings, and the implications for researchers, advice for practitioners and concerns to be considered by policymakers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study explored the actions of a multicultural team (MCT) during early team formation. The original design of the study was intended to provide a rich description of how a MCT developed shared norms during early team formation. The purpose was to observe and describe the members' efforts to develop shared norms, as interculturally sensitive team members adapted their preferred norms in order to establish socially-constructed shared norms during early team formation.

As described in chapter four, this MCT did not develop the type of shared norms (identified by Stahl et al.) that have been demonstrated to foster high MCT performance. Rather, the rival hypothesis predicted by research on project team pressures (Begley & Boyd, 2003; Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003; Smolicz, 1984) was realized as this MCT followed the path of many other project teams and chose to allow a dominant model dictate the team norms in order to immediately focus the team efforts on the project tasks (Earley, 2002; Smolicz, 1984). This was certainly a disappointment and limited the study's ability to describe shared norm formation, but the result did not limit the value of the study's description of the norm development process in this MCT. Answering the revised research question: 'how do team norms develop during early team formation of an interculturally sensitive MCT?', the study both describes the norm development process as well as generates several insights as guidance for MCT researchers and practitioners.

This chapter is organized in the following manner: 1) Summary of the findings; 2) Contribution #1: Three categories of influential scripts; 3) Contribution #2: MCT norm

development model; 4) Implications for researchers, practitioners and policymakers; 5) Limitations/Delimitations; 6) Future research; and 7) Conclusion.

### **Summary of the Findings**

In response to the question: ‘how does an interculturally sensitive MCT develop team norms during early team formation?’, this study generated two distinct findings from the data presented in chapter four: 1) Data analysis revealed three categories of scripts influencing norm development: cultural, competency and personality scripts; and 2) Data analysis generated a norm development model containing these elements:

- Temporally sequenced process phases and inflection points
- Seven types of actions and reactions

Together, these findings provide a rich description of this MCT’s norm development during early team formation.

### **Contribution #1: Three Categories of Influential Scripts**

The first finding was a set of categories that described each of the MCT members’ definitions and scripts as cultural, competency-related or personality-based. Bennett (2013) describes these as ‘etic’ categories, which generate culture-general comparative distinctions. Bennett’s description of etic categories states they are the result of “our experience of events” that we then use “to organize our perception of phenomena”. (p.19) For this study, the three etic categories influenced the selection of scripts, based on past experiences, and the participants’ understanding of their team.



As the MCT members interact, they “co-create’ {their} experience through our corporal, linguistic and emotional interaction with natural and human environments” (p. 46). Bennett notes that as their skills in intercultural adaptation and cognitive complexity grow, “individuals are able to organize their perceptions of events into more differentiated categories” making “finer discriminations among phenomena” (p. 19). For this MCT, the three categories identified in the data analysis effectively described their definitions and scripts.

Based on this finding, I envision three potential applications for research and practice enhancement: developing new assessment techniques using the categories, practical training designed based on the categories; and further research to develop a taxonomy of categories. These applications will be presented in detail later in the chapter.

### **Contribution #2: MCT Norm Development Model**

The second finding generated was a model (figure 11) that describes in rich detail the temporal sequence of norm development (figure 12), and the actions and reactions of members during the process (figure 13). Reflecting a similar sequential orientation as team development models of Tuckman (1965) and Gersick (1988), the temporal sequence portion of the model illustrated the phases and inflection points of norm development. Integrated within the temporal sequence are seven types of actions and reactions during the norm development process.

As a single case study, this contribution is not presented or intended to be generalizable to all MCTs. A researcher’s ability to generate analytical generalizations, however, does provide this chapter’s purpose of offering enhancements to existing theories

and models for further research. Yin (2013) describes analytical generalization to “consist of a carefully posed theoretical statement, theory, or theoretical proposition. The generalization can take the form of a lesson learned, working hypothesis, or other principle believed to be applicable to other situations (not just to ‘other like case).” (p. 68) This section carefully presents a model for MCT norm development, which will then be applied to existing theories and research.

The process that emerged from data analysis illustrates four distinct time periods, each immediately preceded by a point of inflection in the norm development process. In a manner similar to Tuckman’s model for team development, the temporal sequence illustrates a linear development of norms in MCTs based on the progression of team member definitions, application of scripts and adaptation to a common norm model.

In addition to the temporal sequence, the findings related to norm development highlighted the MCT members’ experience, detailing the various actions and reactions during early team formation. The seven types of actions described in chapter four were: information seeking, reflecting, observing vs. participating, learning, adapting vs. rejecting, deferring and supporting vs. betraying. As the key finding of the study, the MCT norm development model is presented here for further study. Comparison of the model with existing theoretical models and empirical research should provide further support.

**Comparison of the MCT model to existing theory and research.** The purpose of this section is to provide theoretical comparison and possible enhancements to existing theory based on the MCT norm development model. No portion of this section should be considered to provide direct evidence or generalization of the conclusions to the likely

actions of other MCTs. However, the study findings illuminate provocative and important questions regarding current theories related to norm and team development.

An important consideration of both norm and team development theories is whether development is a sequential process or is best described by processes that cycle or occur at various times in the development process. As discussed in chapter two, team development theories by Tuckman and Gersick remain strong in both researcher and practitioner settings. Both represent sequential team development models. The TEAM model (Morgan, Salas, & Glickman, 1993) suggests that a cycling is possible in teams, allowing members to begin the team process at different stages and re-visit stages that were incomplete. Norm development theory suggested by Hackman is sequential, but the research by Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), Feldman (1984) and Taggar and Ellis (2007) resist a temporal approach to describing norm development. For this study, the proposed model is presented as an integrated approach by presenting the findings as a temporal sequence as well as patterns of member actions and reactions that occur throughout and cycle based on the stability of team norms.

*Temporal sequence.* The four-stage temporal sequence is presented in chapter four, and there are immediate parallels with other norm and team development models, including Tuckman's (1965) seminal model, 'Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing (and Adjourning)'. Similar to Tuckman, Gersick's 1988 'punctuated equilibrium' model is also a sequential process.

For norm development, however, the temporal sequence illuminated in this study occurs much faster than team development models, often described by researchers as occurring during Tuckman's first phase, 'Forming', or during Gersick's model's initial team

meeting (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Feldman, 1984; Gersick, 1988; Tuckman, 1965). For a MCT, this process during the early team formation stage requires the development of team norms through interactions and common agreement on team activities associated with team chartering, team composition, and team processes. (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001, p.20)

Twenty years after Gersick's research on team development, Taggar and Ellis (2007) created a multilevel model of norm formation, and empirically studied the role of leaders on shaping norm creation and changing the expectations of the team. As research on norm development is limited, and the few studies available resist a temporal sequence approach (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Feldman, 1984), Taggar and Ellis represent the sole norm development study for comparison with this study's MCT norm development model. The findings of this study align with three of Taggar and Ellis' conclusions: 1) the importance of members being active in the norm development process; 2) the impact of member expectations on eventual team norms; and 3) a similar set of team norm types as those defined for MCTs (Stahl et al., 2010). The fourth conclusion of Taggar and Ellis, the opportunity for a leader to influence shared norm development, is discussed in this study in reference to the team formation pause, and will be explored further in the section 'Implications for Practitioners'.

***Patterns of member actions and reactions.*** The seven patterns of actions and reactions, presented in chapter four as emerging from the open coding analysis, reflect and offer possible enhancements to norm and team development theories. While these patterns of norm development may appear presented in terms of actions of the team similar to Tuckman's team development model (Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing-Adjourning),

they are not intended to be sequential in application. As illustrated in figure 11, the patterns reflect actions that members of this MCT re-visited during different phases of the early team development stage. Of the seven patterns, three are presented here in relation to their enhancements to current research:

1. Information seeking. The impact of expectations and early script selection, prior to the first team interaction, is not well represented in current norm formation research. Bettenhausen and Murnighan's (1985) research recognizes the early influence on meaning making, but does not include them in the model. Of the six common workgroup norm processes Bettenhausen and Murnighan suggest, the first two are "members of ad hoc groups initially base their actions and their understanding of others' actions on the norms they held as members of different groups in similar situations" and "norms form early, often before a group's members adequately understand their task". Since each of the members had limited MCT experience, the accuracy of their definitions and selection of scripts based on information seeking activities during Time 0 and Time 1 varied widely.
2. Observing vs. participating. The study noted that each of the participants were hesitant to act at the team formation pause, (IP2). Berger and Luckmann (1966) in their development of social constructionism describe norm development to being a product of many voices discussing and debating. Without open conversation, the members' voice in the team norm development is lost. Bettenhausen and Murnighan, in the third example of common workgroup norm processes, also noted that "as group members interact, their shared experiences

form the basis for expectations about future interactions” (1985, p. 20) By failing to participate, members were withholding valuable information needed by their peers in order to develop effective team norms. This is particularly true of shared norms, which to be effective, the members of the team must feel they were part of the construction. (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Taggar & Ellis, 2007)

3. Deferring. In this MCT, the non-dominant members chose to adapt to a dominant model, rather than challenge that model and develop shared norms. The three members each described their preference to defer the discussion in favor of developing positive team chemistry, and their assumption that shared norms could be developed at a later project stage. This perspective aligns with Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) statement that “As the members interact they either tacitly revise their beliefs about appropriate action, implicitly agreeing with the direction being taken by the group, or overtly attempt to pull the group toward their own interpretation through challenges to the implied norm.” The non-dominant members’ deferral was an implicit agreement to the implied norm. The rejection of applicable scripts that supported socially-constructed norms by two of the non-dominant members, however, is in conflict with the Bettenhausen and Murnighan prediction that members’ will pursue applicable scripts when available. The tension between these two influences, adaptation to the dominant model and preferred scripts, illuminates a more complex understanding of member actions during early team formation.

**Section summary.** The primary finding of the study, a MCT norm development model, represents two components: a temporal sequence and patterns of member actions and reactions of the team members. The components of the model are compared with team and norm development theories to support analytical generalizations. Yin (2013) states that analytical generalizations “can take the form of a lesson learned, working hypothesis, or other principle believed to be applicable to other situations (not just to ‘other like case).” (p. 68). The generalizations will now be presented as implications for researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

### **Implications for Researchers**

Our understanding of norm development has for decades been limited by a lack of empirical studies. Calls for additional research (Feldman, 1984; Hackman, 1965; Taggar & Ellis, 2007) have not resulted in significant attention to this topic. This study was meant to provide additional insights and support further research in the field by improving the understanding of *how* norms develop in MCTs. In addition to describing this process and suggesting a model for future study, this section presents theoretical support for the model and suggestions for researchers seeking to study norm development in MCTs.

**Implications for team development /norm development research.** As has been noted already, there are several overlaps between team development and norm development research. Taggar and Ellis (2007) recognized this overlap and suggested their research of leaders’ influence on norms should be considered an aspect of team development. The authors suggested that “our model of leaders actively shaping team development could be integrated with Gersick’s (1991) work on inertial revolution in teams” (Taggar & Ellis, 2007,

p. 117). Figure 14 is intended to illustrate several prominent theories in team and norm development, and includes the findings of this study.

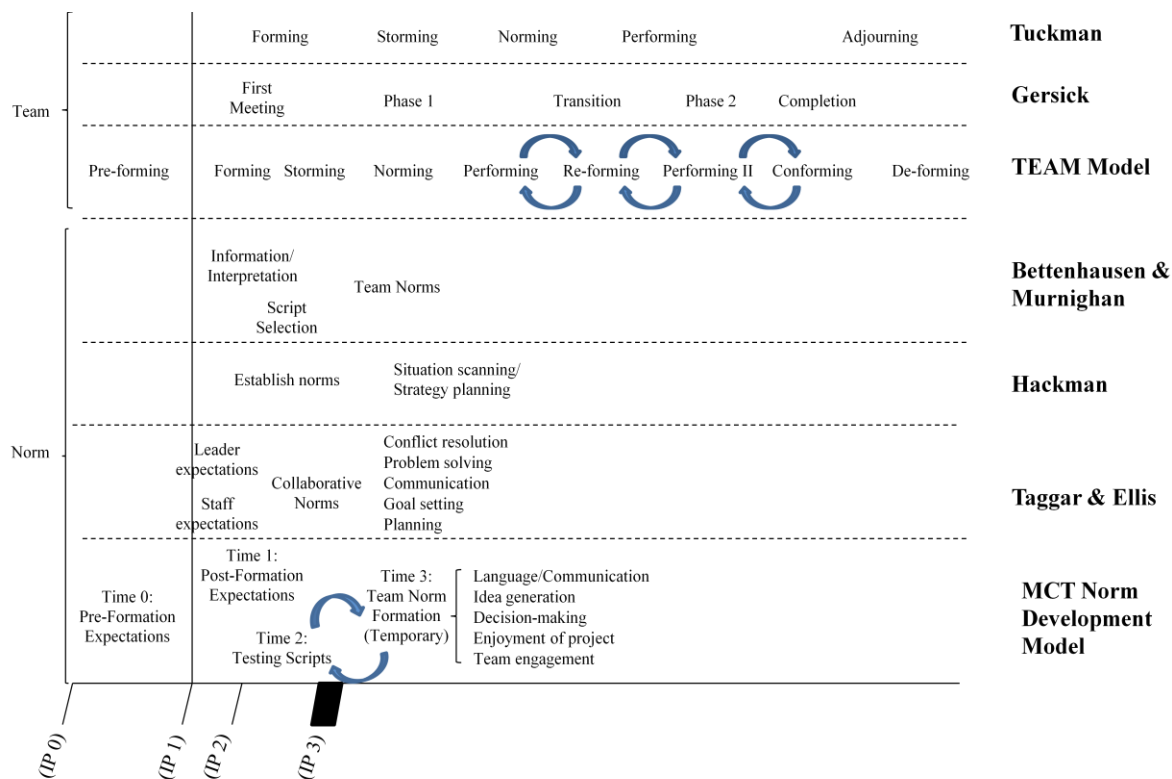


Figure 14. Team and norm development models

The purpose of presenting team and norm development models in this manner is intended to graphically recognize overlaps and relationships between the theories.

One important model supporting the integration of team and norm research is Tuckman’s model of team development. The sequential process of Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning includes two distinct processes: one addressing team values development, the other team norm development.



The second team development model presented is Gersick's enhancement to Tuckman's model. Of particular value to this study was Gersick's recognition that external influences must be considered in the study of team development. This point is expanded on by Sundstrom, DeMuse, and Futrell (1990) in a study of the ecological influences on team development. Sundstrom et al.'s ecological framework considers "work team effectiveness as dynamically interrelated with organizational context, boundaries, and team development" (p. 121). Both Gersick and Sundstrom et al.'s recognition of external influences suggest the value of including research on norm development as a factor in the team development, particularly given the findings of this study related to pre-formation influences.

The third example presented is Morgan, Salas, and Glickman's (1993) TEAM model, which integrates Tuckman and Gersick's temporal sequence models, but also states that teams can re-cycle in their process to re-visit incomplete stages. As Morgan et al.'s model suggests an alternative 'developmental cycling process' to Tuckman and Gersick's sequential models, the non-dominant MCT members in this study also described their intention to re-visit shared norm formation at a later stage in their project. As a result, norm development in this MCT and team development in the TEAM model are presented as looped learning models (Argyis, 1976).

The norm development models included in figure 13 have each been presented extensively in this document. Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), Hackman (1976) and Taggar and Ellis (2007) each represent descriptions of norm development models. Taggar and Ellis, as with the Gersick and Sundstrom et al. studies mentioned above, explored the impacts of external influences and pre-formation expectations on norm development. The

outcomes of Taggar and Ellis's (2007) study found that the expectations leaders and staff bring to newly formed teams play a role in determining team norms.

This study is the first effort to describe the norm development process in MCTs. Another recent research study, however, used a similar approach to consider the development of MCT shared values. Adair, Hideg and Spence's (2013) research on shared value development, also theoretically constructed using the Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) norm formation model, was an empirical analysis of the impact of cultural intelligence and cultural diversity on the creation of team shared values. The Adair et al. study considered the impact on shared team values of cultural intelligence (CQ). One outcome in common with norm development was the finding that shared values develop "when teams first form" (p. 944).

This study did not conduct a full meta-analysis of team and norm research, but does suggest there are several overlaps that warrant further study. Norm development research, a field with limited empirical foundation, would benefit if it could be shown that empirical team research could contribute theoretical models for norm testing.

**Implications for conceptual and theoretical advancement.** The primary purpose of this study was to provide foundational support for further research of shared norm development in MCTs by describing the norm development process in rich detail. Emerging from the data analysis were two interesting findings; 1) three categories of scripts used by MCT members during early team formation; and 2) a MCT norm development model. The categories of scripts illustrates a possible way of understanding MCT member behavior during early team formation, which if expanded could provide a taxonomy of categories to

guide research design and analysis of MCT member actions. The norm development model emerged from the data analysis, supported by a conceptual framework that should be helpful for future studies.

***Taxonomy of script categories.*** Using the three script categories in this study as a basis, additional studies could identify other categories, as well as sub-categories that are finer discriminations. Similar to Sundstrom and Altman's (1989) taxonomy of ecological influences on workgroups, which provides a more complex, dynamic understanding of workgroups, a taxonomy of categories influencing norm development would provide a valuable basis for further research. Bennett (2013) also noted that categories can be grouped to form culture-general frameworks that provide specific areas of contrast across cultures. The construction of a norm framework, potentially leveraging Stahl, et al's (2010) MCT norm structure, would add another layer of analysis for MCTs with culturally-specific contrasts.

***Conceptual framework design.*** This study created a conceptual framework for use in analyzing *how* norms develop in MCTs. The conceptual framework was constructed based on several theories related to norm development as an existing model for describing how norms develop in MCTs does not exist. Research on norm development is limited, particularly as it relates to the process of norm development during early team formation and in MCTs. The conceptual framework was created based on the research of Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), cognitive adaptation theory (CAT) and the meta-analysis of Stahl et al. (2010). This study benefited from this framework, and the findings suggest enhancements to the embedded theories as it relates to norm development in MCTs.

*Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985)*. This study adds to the Bettenhausen and Murnighan research in providing detailed descriptions of the types of member scripts (cultural, competency and personality), similarly grouped influences on the members' definitions of the situation, and rationales why these members did not attempt to apply appropriate scripts when available. In their model, Bettenhausen and Murnighan also note that the model created from their study focuses only on observable actions of the team. The identification of influences and behaviors not consistent with their model emerged from qualitative discussion (interviews) with members, which Bettenhausen and Murnighan would describe as 'non-active'.

Bettenhausen and Murnighan's model evaluates the members' definitions and scripts based on their consistency across the team. The identification in this study of a categorization of definitions and scripts into cultural, competency and personality categories may enhance a researchers' ability to use the model for testing. Recognizing where definitions and scripts may originate and how this will influence script selection would likely improve the model's application to MCT norm development.

Secondly, influences on definitions and scripts are described beginning in the study's Time 0. Bettenhausen and Murnighan state that "people may have used the introductory material about the task to identify a script that would help them make sense of this upcoming experience" (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 353). Given the members' description of the impact of these early expectations on later definitions and script selection, inclusion of these early expectations may improve the application of the model for studying and understanding norm development.

Influences identified during Time 1 and Inflection Point 2 are also recognized in Bettenhausen and Murnighan's 1985 study though not reflected in the model. Time 1 team member actions influenced the definitions based on stereotypes and the limited information the members' had available regarding their project and each other. Inflection Point 2 describes the influence of the team formation pause on the members, resulting from their lack of confidence in their definitions and scripts. "Although scripts are often chosen even when their elements do not match the elements of the new situation well, the dismay communicated by many group members prior to their first interaction suggests that, for many, no script was readily available" (1985, p. 353). This team expressed dismay at their situation and inability to select scripts, and paused their team development process in an attempt to identify scripts that might be useful.

The third enhancement to the Bettenhausen and Murnighan model relates to the situations in which members may not chose to apply scripts from previous experience. Citing Abelson (1976), Bettenhausen and Murnighan's research also describes the failures by Indra and Tong to leverage their previous semester's scripts for developing shared norms: "Even if someone is equipped with a cognitive script, they still may not know how to behave" (p. 353). The more significant influences of cultural, competency and personality limitations perceived by Indra and Tong impacted their desire to apply applicable scripts during the early team formation period.

These three elements of this study's findings highlight and enhance Bettenhausen and Murnighan's model, several with support from their study itself.

*Cognitive Adaptation Theory.* This study considered the cognitive adaptation theory (CAT) as a likely model for describing the adaptation efforts of the MCT members. In alignment with the psychological processing research of Schneider and Shiffrin (1977), CAT predicts members will respond in one of two ways to norm conflicts: 1) ‘thinking as usual’, or automatic processing; or 2) ‘letting-go and taking-on’, or controlled processing, of new norms. In the case of this MCT, the dominant member reflected a ‘thinking as usual’ approach and the non-dominant members took action to adapt towards that dominant norm model. The CAT description of how adaptation would occur was accurately described by the participants own explanation of their efforts to work within the dominant model. An important question for further study remains: why did the non-dominant team members defer their autonomy and seek to adjust to the dominant model?

Brandl and Neyer (2009) state “cognitive adjustment is important because it is the prerequisite for feeling comfortable, for developing social contacts, and for being able to contribute to the team.” (p. 342) Interestingly, the team in this study chose to establish temporary norms during early team formation. Rather than pursue shared norms and potentially create conflict within the team, the members chose to defer their autonomy and influence over the norm model to a later stage. Yet, despite this deferral, the members appeared comfortable with their decision and were able to contribute, though possibly to a limited degree, to the team.

The reason the non-dominant members were willing to make this trade-off during Time 3 is reflected by Indra’s statement that she needed to “understand the language and each other’s personalities”. She stated she needed this awareness before knowing how to

proceed in suggesting team norms, a practice that is described in CAT's two primary principles; "to learn how to interpret and express themselves in the others' language" (Brandl & Neyer, 2009, p. 344). CAT is described as a process that requires time for participants to find cognitive understanding of different scripts within their own cultural perceptions, and translates these in order to accept them within their own models (Schütz, 1944). If an existing script is not available to understand this approach, the member must follow the controlled processing described by Schneider and Shiffrin (1977) in which a new understanding is created. With limited experience working in MCTs and limited exposure to working with leaders from different cultures, the non-dominant members needed to develop a way of understanding the dominant model before attempting to push their own preferences and seek a set of shared norms. They consciously decided to delay the social construction process to a later stage when they had a stronger understanding of the dominant model.

*Stahl et al. (2010)*. The last piece of the conceptual framework is the description of the type of norms that are formed in MCTs. This study described five similar norms developed by the team to those identified in the 2010 meta-analysis conducted by Stahl et al.: language and communication, idea generation (creativity), decision-making (conflict management, enjoyment of the project (satisfaction) and team engagement (social integration). While there might be slight differences in the terms, there appeared a strong similarity between what the participants described as the team norms and the Stahl et al. study.

Stahl et al.'s five MCT norms were accurately portrayed in the norms most critical to the team members in this study. The team focused on four of the predicted areas:

communication, creativity, conflict management and social integration. The fifth area, satisfaction, was of importance to all the members, but never addressed as requiring adaptation to a team norm.

One enhancement to Stahl et al.'s research is several additional moderators for studying shared norm development in MCTs. Stahl et al. cites numerous research studies that highlight the lack of empirical evidence regarding moderators' influence on diversity in team processes. Their meta-analysis does provide evidence suggesting 'task complexity' moderates conflict in culturally diverse teams: "cultural diversity is positively associated with conflict when task complexity is high, and unrelated to conflict when task complexity is low" (Stahl et al., 2010, p. 702). This study of MCTs also noted the impact of task complexity on shared norm development, and this will be explored further under 'Implications for Practitioners'. This study also suggests four additional possible moderators of MCT shared norm development for further study: team member MCT experience, member project expertise, team leadership, and team training. These will not be addressed in this paper.

**Researchers summary.** The conceptual framework provided a useful model for guiding the study of norm development in this MCT. The four stages of the framework included MCT formation, definitions and scripts guiding norm testing (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985), adaptation by the team members to a common set of norms (CAT) and the type of norms that this MCT formed (Stahl et al., 2010). While the framework appears to have been useful in guiding the study, some aspects of the findings extend beyond the



framework, to also provide theoretical applications to norm and team development theories that may be of value to future research.

### **Implications for Practitioners**

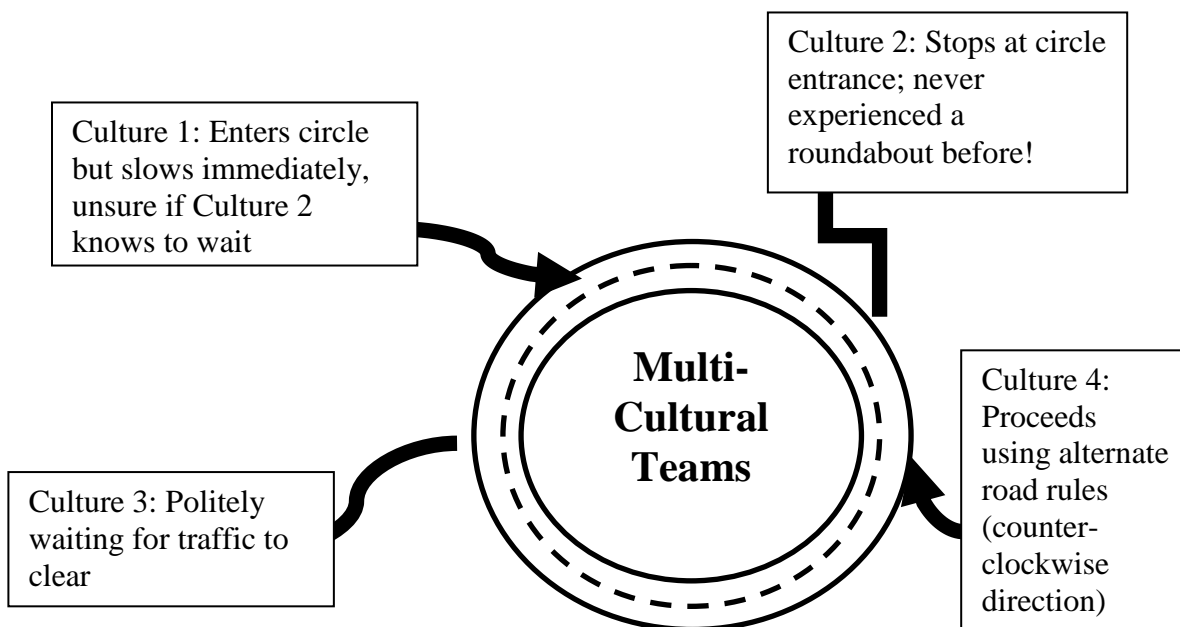
This study was introduced by describing the value of MCTs (cognitive diversity) and the challenges they must face (cultural differences). One of the underlying aspects, from a practitioners perspective, was the ability to enhance our understanding of the shared norm development process during early team formation, in order to study possible methods to improve the speed and effectiveness of MCTs to leverage cognitive diversity. The failure of the team to develop shared norms limited the study's ability to describe this process and provide a rich description of the process for practitioners facing MCT challenges.

Despite this limitation, the study does provide several insights for practitioners. In my experience working with practitioners, however, there appears to exist a growing perception that the concern of MCT challenges has been greatly diminished in today's U.S. corporate environment. Reasons for this have included: organizational training on cross-cultural management; systems set up to support managers and leaders in multicultural environments; broader cultural experience of leaders; and greater acceptance of U.S. business practices globally. In order to counter this perception, a clear description of the challenge is needed prior to offering suggestions for practitioners.

**Understanding the Challenge.** To understand why the challenge of MCTs persists in organizations today, I'd like to start with an analogy that can help visualize both the importance of and difficulties that continue to face MCTs. The analogy describes another situation where the lack of shared norms causes problems, as we follow the sympathetic

experience of a young driver (presented as Culture 2) approaching for the first time a traffic roundabout (see figure 15).

The roundabout is a model for traffic flow improvement, reducing inefficiencies of waiting at traffic lights and congestion created by a sequential approach to traffic flow (Fouladvand, Sadjadi, & Shaebani, 2004). Unfortunately, the improved efficiency is dependent on a common understanding amongst drivers about the rules of entering and exiting the roundabout. Drivers unfamiliar with this model may not be aware they are to give way to cars already in the circle, or some may know the rules but decide they will be courteous to someone waiting to enter the circle, or the drivers may lack the confidence that everyone in the process knows the rules and will act appropriately to this uncertainty by delaying or changing their action from the one dictated by the established process. Also, drivers from different regions have different training. For example, drivers trained in the UK and former British colonies (ex. Hong Kong) instinctively seek to enter the circle moving to their left while drivers trained in most North American cultures will enter moving to their right. Without a single set of common rules being known to all parties, and all parties confident that there is agreement on these rules, the roundabout's value will be reduced or destroyed.



*Figure 15.* Traffic roundabout analogy depicting the challenge of MCTs

A MCT that does not form shared norms early in the process is likely to face similar challenges in communication, decision-making, conflict management, satisfaction, or social integration or simply become susceptible to norms defined by a dominant team member. As with this study, research has shown that MCTs will often allow a dominant team member to establish the team norms in order to meet performance and time goals, to the detriment of the team's creativity and satisfaction with the experience (Kelly & McGrath, 1985, Massey, Montoya-Weiss & Hung, 2003). The MCT, as with the roundabout, does not achieve its maximum effectiveness unless all parties accept and believe in a common set of norms when they arrive at the moment of engagement.

Extending the analogy, the new driver approaching the roundabout with no prior training will be uncertain as to how to proceed. This is one way to interpret the team formation pause discussed earlier in the chapter. The team members, lacking confidence and/or scripts on how to proceed, paused. A manager aware this pause is likely to occur and present at that moment has the opportunity to significantly influence shared norm development in the team. Specific suggestions for managers at this moment are offered below.

Reflecting on the original perception that MCT challenges are less present in today's teams, the dependence of MCTs on developing shared norms does not dissipate without direct effort during team formation. Without specific training on shared norm development and recognition of its importance to the team, the cognitive diversity and effectiveness of the MCT is likely to be limited.

**Managers' Guidance.** The pause described in the analogy of the roundabout is an indication of the traffic enhancement breaking down. The team formation pause, on the other hand, can be seen as a positive indication of intercultural sensitivity, and the desire on the part of the participants to proceed appropriately in the development of the MCT. An effective leader, either inside the team or as a coach sitting outside the team, can leverage the pause to suggest shared norm development activities during early team formation. Other guidance for managers includes: 1) the requirement of project complexity to warrant shared norm development in MCTs; 2) team training to prepare teams for the challenges of MCTs; and 3) team selection processes that may increase the likelihood of success.

*Project complexity.* Readers of this study may believe that there is an unstated assumption that shared norm development to create cognitive diversity is sacrosanct to all MCT projects. This is not in fact the case. Research has shown that homogeneous teams are more successful in short term projects (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Cognitive diversity requires an investment in team diversity discussions, for which individuals are ‘capacity-limited’ (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977) due to the temporal and emotional investment required. To overcome team differences, the team must slow down the project execution and have the capability to overcome their differences.

While it may be culturally sensitive to recognize and value diversity in all teams, only projects that benefit from cognitive diversity are likely to reap the benefits of a significant investment in cognitive integration. “A group must have considerable opportunity and motivation to interact and become acquainted.” (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000, p. 29). In order for the team to determine an investment in shared norms is valuable, there must first be a determination that the project tasks warrant development of shared norms. Earley and Mosakowski (2000) found that in cases of high task complexity, conflict among the members is likely to be higher and requires an investment of time in overcoming cultural differences. In cases of low task complexity, there was not evidence of conflict. The lack of conflict, suggested by this study and research by Kelly and McGrath (1985) and Massey, Montoya-Weiss and Hung (2003), may be the result of the team’s decision that the project does not require cognitive diversity and proceeds without pursuing social construction of shared norms.

*Team training.* Brandl and Neyer (2009) suggest that cross-cultural training can provide a valuable benefit to MCTs by reducing the anxiety and uncertainty experienced by the members causing them to pause (Woolley, 2009), and improve their ability to adapt to new norms. They note two main cross-cultural training approaches; cultural orientation programs and cultural awareness training as useful. Cultural orientation programs “enhances the newcomer’s comfort and reduces uncertainty and anxiety when interacting with people” (Brandl & Neyer, 2009, p. 346) Brandl and Neyer recognize, however, that cultural orientation programs tend to be focused on country-specific knowledge and are insufficient in training leaders on the necessary skills to interpret another’s cultural patterns. Similarly, cultural awareness programs train participants on how to adapt to new cultural settings, but are limited in comparison to the set of complex skills that Earley and Ang (2003) suggest are required today to deal with cultural ambiguous situations. Training may improve the team members’ capabilities, but even a team staffed with high culturally intelligent leaders may not have the opportunity to influence shared norm development. On its own, cultural training is insufficient.

Training specifically designed to encourage shared norm development may be more effective. Morgan, Salas and Glickman’s (1993) research, in their analysis of effective team development models, state that training specifically on teamwork objectives may achieve more effective outcomes. As mentioned earlier, however, Woolley’s research found that teams cannot work on both taskwork and teamwork at the same time. So an investment in teamwork comes with an acknowledged delay in taskwork.

A third contribution of this study to practical training is the use of the three categories, and potentially the taxonomy of categories, in the development of more effective training sessions. From this study, cultural, competency and personality categories provide a broader understanding and more context-specific process of determining training requirements for new project team members. Using both an assessment tool (introduced in the next section) and the taxonomy, training sessions can be crafted to both the specific requirements of the project as well as the unique needs of the members.

*Team selection.* Ericksen and Dyer (2004) suggest three areas to increase the likelihood of project success, what they describe as ‘stacking the deck’: “ample time, suitable talent, and clear and compelling tasks in the form of complete performance strategies” (p. 466). Time may be outside of the manager’s control, but this study has already noted the influence of time on MCT members’ ability to invest in shared norms and overcome their differences. Performance strategies are defined by Ericksen and Dyer (2004) as easily digestible descriptions of the project tasks, which they present as ‘scripts’ for the initial meeting, citing Bettenhausen and Murnighan.

Of particular note in the comments of this MCT was the third area described by Ericksen and Dyer: suitable talent. Talent refers to a team member’s knowledge of the required project tasks. Each of the members of this MCT mentioned their urgency to proceed with team tasks was influenced by a lack of confidence in their knowledge of the industry and a lack of experience working in MCTs. The team had two members with some industry knowledge, but neither of the members felt confident they could or wished to be the expert throughout the project. The members with no industry background knew they would need to

invest significant time in developing their industry acumen, as well as define an aspect of the project that related to an area of existing expertise. All the members recognized their lack of experience in MCTs, and stated this was a conscious concern.

One tool that would be useful in selecting effective MCT members is an assessment process to identify competencies relative to the project need. In this study, the IES assessment was used to select members with strong intercultural sensitivity. The failure of the team to develop shared norms was not due to a lack of intercultural sensitivity, but the failure to test for other important factors for this MCT project (e.g. MCT experience, project expertise). An effective assessment tool could improve the project team selection process. A broad scope assessment tool covering a variety of categories (based on the taxonomy of categories) could be fine-tuned to meet the needs of a specific project's requirements. Potential members would be assessed on their current capabilities, for example in terms of cultural, competency and personality scripts that would match well with the project.

Specifically for cultural intelligence, a tool assessing a member's ability to make fine distinctions between phenomena may be a subtle approach to assessing intercultural adaptation. A term Bennett (2013) prefers over intercultural competence, intercultural adaptation "implies two-way cultural adaptation, where it is jointly the responsibility of... the dominant and non-dominant culture members" (p. 106). An assessment tool providing insight on an individual's ability to culturally adapt would be very useful for managers seeking the best MCT candidates.

**Practitioners summary.** The implications of this study for practitioners relates to the on-going need to manage MCT development, rather than expect it to occur naturally. First,



there must be recognition of which projects will benefit from MCT's cognitive diversity and warrant the investment required in cognitive integration. For the right projects, managers should play an active role, particularly during the early formation phase, until such a time as all MCTs are composed of culturally intelligent members with strong experience in MCTs, competence in their projects and the recognized importance of and knowledge of how to develop shared norms.

### **Implications for U.S. Educational Policymakers**

The research question of this study, 'how do shared norms develop in MCTs?', should concern policymakers as much or more so than researchers and practitioners. Educational systems that provided limited exposure to or development of intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence in students fail to prepare these students to succeed in MCTs. Of particular note are large, homogenous countries whose educational environments have limited cultural diversity (Scarr, 1993). Research shows that homogeneous country members often struggle with an ethnocentric perspective that limits their ability to effectively engage in a shared team orientation. (Earley & Gibson, 2002)

Three of the team members in this study were raised in large, homogenous countries: China, India and the U.S. While each scored high on the IES assessment of intercultural sensitivity, their experience working in MCTs was extremely limited. Each stated this lack of experience hurt them during the first semester MCT. This study suggests that intercultural sensitivity forms the basis for development of cultural intelligence working in MCTs, but is not sufficient on its own to prepare participants to be successful in MCTs.

Shared norm development in MCTs is a challenge for global organizations who have developed business practices (ie. MCTs) that stretch the capabilities of their leaders. Leaders without the experience or training to work in MCTs pose a risk to the effectiveness of MCTs. As described in this study, a dominant team member can limit the cognitive diversity of the team when the other members defer their autonomy or fail to challenge the dominant model during early team formation.

**Shifting power dynamics.** In chapter two, data from OECD was presented indicating the U.S. global economic dominance may be waning. The economic growth of BRIICS (Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa) countries is on pace to challenge and potentially pass the U.S. in Real GDP. As the gap between these countries and the U.S. decreases, the ability for U.S. companies and leaders to dictate team norms and practices may also diminish. Jim both recognized the current advantage for American leaders, as well as understood it was a culturally unique to native English speakers. “I fully understand how lucky I am to be a native speaker of English and go over to France and have all the classes in English, all the French students speak English, and have a large international presence at the school which they all speak English. I think it's a pretty American thing to go to another country and culture and not have to speak their language and still get by just fine.” This assumption of a stable norm related to English language use may limit American leaders’ ability to respond if this adaptation by other countries and their leaders diminishes. “For many decades now, non-western countries have been trying to understand the west; however westerners have only begun recently to learn about non-western societies. Hence there will be a lot of catching up to do.” (Tung, 1998, p.25)

Research has shown that ‘catching up’ is not a simple training activity. The monoculture perspective developed over years of limited exposure to cultural diversity limits the ability of leaders to properly define and have scripts available to succeed in MCTs; “individuals who have received largely monocultural socialization normally have access only to their own cultural worldview” (Bennett, 1986, p. 423). The impact of this limited worldview may be a leader’s hegemonic behavior, potentially resulting in a lack of team chemistry and an approach that can limit team creativity (Earley & Gibson, 2002). Brandl and Neyer (2007) state that cross-cultural training can improve leader capabilities, by providing cultural orientation and cultural awareness skills, to improve the leaders ability to ‘see’ situations from another perspective. Bennett’s model of intercultural sensitivity would describe this enhanced capability as ‘Acceptance’ of other perspectives, the lowest form of ethnorelative sensitivity. Beyond this level are more extensive capabilities of ‘Adaptation’ to other perspectives and ‘Integration’ of multiple cultures in one’s own viewpoint. Members with the higher levels of intercultural sensitivity are able to distinguish cultural differences in a more complex manner, and important skill working in MCTs.

Earley and Ang’s (2003) research on cultural intelligence states that effectiveness in settings such as MCTs requires complex capabilities to deal with culturally ambiguous situations. The experience of this MCT and Bettenhausen and Murnighan’s (1985) model of norm development are reflected in Earley and Ang’s recognition of the challenge facing MCTs: “In a new cultural setting, familiar cues are largely or entirely absent (or present but misguided), so a common attributional and perceptual frame cannot be relied on.” (p. 61) The development of cultural intelligence should improve the leader’s ability to “develop a

common frame of understanding from available information, even though he or she may not have an adequate understanding of local practices and norms.” (p. 61) This level of capability, however, requires extensive training, and relies initially on a high level of intercultural sensitivity.

If the data on a waning of U.S. economic dominance is accurate, U.S. leaders without sufficient capabilities to work in MCTs and adapt to non-U.S.-centric team norms may be at a disadvantage. Policymakers willing to accept this possibility also must explore the significant investment that must be made immediately if a change in U.S. cultural intelligence capabilities can be achieved in the coming decade. In addition to overcoming a capability gap compared to other cultures, U.S. leaders may also need to overcome a perceptual gap after years of “imposed culture that conveys an aura of corporate colonialism” (Begley & Boyd, 2003, p. 357).

**Importance of study abroad experiences.** One established practice of improving intercultural sensitivity and providing cultural experiences that can build cultural scripts is university-sponsored study abroad programs. Each of the past three presidents, extending back 22 years, has recognized the importance of study abroad to help the U.S. become more competitive globally. The objective of these study abroad programs is to improve the cultural intelligence training and preparation of U.S. students as ‘global citizens’ by pushing the students outside of their comfort zones in domestic environments that are largely culturally homogeneous. Details on U.S. efforts in this area are presented in chapter two.

**Intercultural competency.** The objective of improvements to the educational system is the general student skill development of intercultural competency. Bennett (2009)

interpreted intercultural competence as a matter of awareness raising: recognizing one's subjective cultural context and learning how to communicate effectively and sensitively in other cultural contexts. Another approach presented earlier in this study focuses on the value of intercultural competency in addressing anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) in cultural situations (Gudykunst, 1998). Gudykunst (1998) states that in dealing with AUM, a person manages their anxiety through 'mindfulness', described as being aware of the sources of the anxiety itself which can range from self-conception, responding to the local culture, and coping with any number of stress-inducing situations.

**Policymakers summary.** The findings and conclusion of this study raises awareness of the impact on MCTs of limited cultural intelligence and experience working in MCTs. If U.S. students are to be prepared for an increasingly likely global marketplace that demands these skills, educational policymakers must begin to invest in early education through college programs that support cross-cultural skills. Or we can simply hope the world will continue to support our limited MCT skills and dependence on team models that allow a dominant cultural model.

### **Limitations**

As a single case study, the description of the study was limited to the unique experience of this interculturally sensitive team. The ability to generalize the findings to a wider population was not the intent of this type of research. I acknowledge that readers seeking the ability to generalize this study may feel my approach was a missed opportunity. The focus of my study, and single case studies like this one, was to better understand the elements of a critical case in order to more deeply understand human and social interactions

(Yin, 2014). This deeper understanding can “represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building by confirming, challenging, or extending” (Yin, 2014, p. 51) the currently held theories. In this study, the focus was on describing the development of shared norms in a single team.

One significant limitation was the failure of the team to develop shared norms. This was not completely unexpected as the team’s decisions fell perfectly in line with the rival hypothesis. Nonetheless, the dissertation could have generated more impactful findings if the process of developing shared norms in a MCT could have been documented. Despite this setback, the findings did provide a number of valuable insights regarding MCT norm development. The rich description of this MCT’s norm development during early team formation should provide support for further research into the enormous gap and opportunity for understanding MCT team behavior.

Another limitation of the study is level of detail I was able to gather in the limited time of the study as a single researcher. A more extensive process of tracking student activity, even outside of the team meetings, and additional interviews during the process may have resulted in additional insights. The study is dependent on the honesty and reflective capabilities of the students in sharing their experience.

Finally, the analysis of the findings is limited to my ability to recognize patterns and themes from an extensive amount of data. As a qualitative researcher I am trained to conduct this analysis thoroughly, cautiously and with a commitment to letting the data lead the way. The challenge facing qualitative researchers is the recognition that it is a nearly impossible

task to keep our own subjectivity from impacting the analysis. I hope I have as accurately as possible represented the experience of this team.

**Delimitations.** In addition to the uncontrollable limitations of the study, there were three delimitations that were intentionally created. First, the selection of a student MCT for the study may limit the applicability to corporate teams. Second, since the student MCT worked together in a single location, it did not have to deal with virtual team challenges that most multicultural teams face. This population was chosen so that additional variables related to working virtually did not impact the study.

A third delimitation was the creation of an interculturally sensitive team using the IES assessment tool. This was perceived valuable to avoiding or reducing dominant culture influences. The selection process, however, limits the extent to which the study outcomes are reflective of MCT teams in general.

### **Future Research**

In addition to the guidance provided in the 'Implications for Researchers', I would offer several specific suggestions to others interested in this area of research. My own goal is to eventually design and execute quantitative studies that will offer comparisons of MCT results to the performance of average work teams, and test several moderators of MCT performance. For instance, the design of this study could be extended to multiple teams with different levels of intercultural sensitivity, to assess whether and to what extent intercultural sensitivity is a moderating factor of MCT shared norm development. The study mentioned several other possible moderators that can be controlled or managed to assess the impact of these variables on shared norm development.

The importance of further study lies in continuing to expand our understanding of MCT's norm development, and identify influences that improve the capability of MCTs to achieve their optimal contributions despite project time and performance pressures. Qualitative researchers seeking to follow a similar process would benefit from new technologies, and the willingness of subjects to use tools that would unobtrusively gather data of team interactions beyond what the researcher is able to document first hand. Also, a more extensive background data gathering and analysis of the subjects may improve the understanding of their scripts and definitions.

Finally, I would encourage future researchers to consider involving their subjects in the entire research process. The objective of describing shared norm development in a MCT is not diminished if the team members are aware of this objective and involved in accurately and deeply describing the process. The team will still face project pressures to perform, and balance the study's objective with their other commitments, so their awareness should neither corrupt nor limit the value of the findings. For you the researcher, hopefully this will improve your chances of documenting shared norm development.

## **Conclusion**

The contributions of this study provided valuable insights on MCT norm development despite the failure of the team to develop shared norms. The actions of this MCT also provide two further insights to consider that may enhance the understanding of MCT norm development. First, what are the implications for norm development of the team members consciously choosing to adapt to a dominant model, but only temporarily? Second, is it possible for a dominant leader to effectively leverage cognitive diversity in the team?



Beyond the scope of this study or the research question is the interesting reaction by the non-dominant team members during early team formation. When faced with the pressure to adapt to a dominant model, and despite having scripts that would guide shared norm development, the non-dominant members choose to defer their autonomy and the discussion of shared norm development until a later phase of the project. The members' rationale for this decision has been discussed, but it may also open up an additional area for study regarding norm stability.

The use of norms in guiding team behavior is dependent on the team members' agreement and commitment to a common set of norms. (Berger & Luckman, 1966, Schneider & Sidney, 2009; Shaw, 1976; Taggar & Ellis, 2007) As in this study, if the members' commitment is temporary or insincere, the norm development will likely require additional development at a later stage. The question of norm stability has not been studied extensively (Bettenhausen, 1988; Kolstad 2007), but if other MCTs reflect similar norm instability it raises additional questions regarding norm change, power in MCT relationships, leader roles in later stage processes, and other aspects of MCT norm development.

The second consideration reflects the on-going challenge of time and performance pressures on teams. If the investment of time to overcome team diversity challenges and form shared norms negatively impacts team performance, MCTs will continue to struggle with shared norm development during early team formation. Research studies seeking to improve the process, like this one, should continue to search for greater insight. As a rival field of study, though, the development of guidance and training for project team leaders on drawing out divergent thinking in the team may be valuable.

The tension between project task goals and development of shared norms will likely continue as long as there is cultural diversity and insufficient cultural intelligence to effectively manage the differences. Quantitative studies comparing the performance of MCT project teams pursuing shared norms during early team formation vs. dominant norm teams with a culturally intelligent leader may provide increased support for one of these two fields. There is significant research, much of which is included in this study, that would indicate a short tenure project team's creativity and satisfaction would be greater in the team with shared norms. Conversely, communication, conflict management and social integration would likely be stronger in the dominant led team (Stahl et al., 2010). For this reason, the type of project that warrants a MCT is dependent on the effectiveness of which of these norms is more valuable. But if studies found that a culturally trained dominant leader could achieve similar creativity and satisfaction results, the role of norm development might change.

The contributions and suggested research areas of this study provide guidance for further study of MCTs and norm development. The growth of MCT use in organizations, increasing pressure on MCTs to perform in short project periods and the slow pace of educational policy shifts provide strong support for expanding this field to improve our understanding of shared norms during early team formation. The challenges MCTs face will likely be with us for many more years. Considering it has been more than 80 years since the phenomenon of norm formation was first identified, it is surprising that our understanding continues to be limited and the importance of norm formation less prominent in team development research.

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**APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A: Case Study Protocol**

1. Case study design
  - a. Introduction
    - i. Research question
    - ii. Theoretical and conceptual framework
      1. Social constructionism
      2. Bettenhausen and Murnighan's Norm Formation Model
      3. Cognitive Adjustment Theory
      4. Stahl et al.'s meta-analysis of MCTs
    - iii. Methodology
      1. Case study with in-vivo and a-priori coding
  - b. Study design
    - i. Written study proposal for committee review
    - ii. Institutional Review Board – amendment of pilot study protocol
    - iii. Committee and IRB approval to proceed with study
  - c. Material design
    - i. Design observation methodology and interview guide
2. Participant recruitment and selection (during fall semester)
  - a. Class description
  - b. Director of masters program
    - i. Support for study
    - ii. Role in guiding selection process



- c. Intercultural sensitivity instrument description & justification
  - i. IES selection and validity
  - ii. IES assessment of students (during fall semester)
- d. List of previous team compositions (during fall semester)
- e. National culture of the students (from student biographies)
- f. Gain informed consent form from selected students (prior to spring semester)
- g. Contingency plans for alternative team compositions if a target participant does not agree to participate

### 3. Data Collection

- a. Implement study protocol and review initial data gathered
  - i. Observe initial 4-6 team meetings (expected timeline: weeks 1 & 2)
    - 1. Meet with teams whenever they schedule a team meeting
    - 2. Observation guide: Document meeting environmental context, member non-verbal actions, and other factors impacting the team interactions:
      - a. Context cues
      - b. Non-verbal cues
      - c. Verbal cues
      - d. Member definitions and scripts
      - e. Member actions with regard to norm development
    - 3. Transcribe results after each meeting

- a. Identify participants as INDRA, TONG, JIM, DELPHINE; fictitious names will be given later
  4. Securely store data (external hard drive) and delete original recordings
  5. Update observation methodology based on improvements identified during each team meeting
- ii. Interview team members (expected timeline: week 3)
1. Conduct 30-50 minute qualitative interviews with participants individually
    - a. Schedule interviews within a 24-hour time period
    - b. Meet in a convenient and private location
    - c. Use interview guide as general process, with a focus on discussing interesting observed actions identified during team meetings:
      - i. Similar definitions/scripts between members
      - ii. Different definitions/scripts by members
      - iii. Conflicts between team members
      - iv. Efforts made to adjust norms
      - v. Interpretations of shared norms developed
  2. Transcribe results after each interview
    - a. Identify participants as INDRA, TONG, JIM, DELPHINE; fictitious names will be given later

3. Securely store data (external hard drive) and delete original recordings
  4. Update interview guide when improvements are identified in each interview
4. Data analysis procedures (during and after data collection: complete by mid-February 2015)
- a. Open coding of data
    - i. Code and analyze observations and interviews for patterns and themes
      1. Holistic analysis of member comments and contextual information
      2. Highlighting and line-by-line analysis based on member definitions, experiences, and efforts to develop shared norms
    - ii. Review analysis in relation to research question
  - b. A-priori coding of data
    - i. Code and analyze data in relation to:
      1. Bettenhausen and Murnighan four-box matrix model (1985)
      2. Schütz's Cognitive Adjustment Theory (1944)
    - ii. Review analysis in relation to research question
  - c. Rival hypothesis
    - i. Code and analyze the data in relation to MCT challenges
      1. Dominant culture influences
      2. Project pressures

- d. Summarize patterns and develop conclusions
  - e. Describe validity and reliability of analysis
  - f. Describe ethical considerations and limitations
  - g. Describe the role of the researcher and subjectivity
5. Reporting the research outcomes (complete prior to March 27, 2015)
- a. Draft final chapters of paper
    - i. Chapter four
      - 1. Rich descriptions of each team member
      - 2. Describe patterns and themes that emerged from the data
      - 3. Present a comparison of a-prior results to conceptual framework
      - 4. Answer to Research Question: Narrative description of shared norm development in the interculturally sensitive MCT
      - 5. Present the study's conclusions
    - ii. Chapter five
      - 1. Identify connections between study findings and extant literature
      - 2. Present Analytical generalization of findings
      - 3. Discuss opportunities for theory building
        - a. Suggestions for further qualitative studies on MCTs
        - b. Suggestions for quantitative studies on intercultural sensitivity in MCTs

4. Discuss Implications for practice
  - iii. Review draft paper with committee chair
- b. Submit final dissertation to committee for review (prior to May 2015)
- c. Present dissertation (prior to end of May 2015)
- d. Complete final edits and submit for publication

**APPENDIX B: Amended IRB Request for Exemption**

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN  
RESEARCH  
SUBMISSION FOR NEW STUDIES**

**Protocol Number 4134**

**Project Title**

Multicultural teams' formation experience

**IRB File Number:**

4134

**Original Approval Date:**

07/22/2014

**Approval Period**

-

**Source of funding (if externally funded, enter PINS or RADAR number of funding proposal via 'Add New Sponsored Project Record' button below):**

Personal funding

**NCSU Faculty point of contact for this protocol:**

Chapman, Diane: Leadership, Policy, and Adult and Higher Education

**Does any investigator associated with this project have a significant financial interest in, or other conflict of interest involving, the sponsor of this project? (Answer No if this project is not sponsored)**

No

**Is this conflict managed with a written management plan, and is the management plan being properly followed?**

No

**Preliminary Review Determination**

2

**Category:**

Exempt b.2

**Provide a brief synopsis of the study (limit text to 1500 characters)**

The growth of multicultural teams in both educational and organizational settings has resulted in a growing field of research on the unique nature of these teams and their challenges. While research has shown the value of these teams, how they require time to overcome their differences and specific ways they are different than homogeneous teams, there has not been significant research on the specific actions during the critical early formation stage of multicultural teams (MCTs). If we were to better understand how they form and the factors that lead to creation of shared norms and ability to leverage divergent thinking, organizers could be more effective at selecting, guiding, supporting and managing multicultural teams.

This dissertation case study will explore the interactions of a unique MCT. First, a team composed of participants with strong intercultural sensitivity will be created to overcome pressures against shared norm creation. The intercultural sensitivity of the team members is expected to allow them to overcome their differences more quickly, and not allow the pressures of time and performance to limit their ability to leverage their differences. Once created, the team will be observed and interviewed to learn how they deal with their cultural differences during early team formation and develop shared norms (or the rival hypothesis that they are unable to overcome the project pressures).

Briefly describe in lay language the purpose of the proposed research and why it is important.

Research on multicultural teams (MCTs) has shown that teams require significant time to overcome cultural differences, but often the influences of time and team performance push aside efforts to overcome their differences. This study should provide support for improving the success of MCTs, both in dealing with pressures on the team and guide further research on reducing the time required to overcome their differences.

**The study should also provide support for the need for educational policies that support intercultural sensitivity, particularly in countries where there is a strong dominant culture and less intercultural awareness (ex. U.S., China, Russia).**

**Is this research being conducted by a student?**

Yes

**Is this research for a thesis?**

No

**Is this research for a dissertation?**



Yes

**Is this independent research?**

Yes

**Is this research for a course?**

No

**Do you currently intend to use the data for any purpose beyond the fulfillment of the class assignment?**

No

**Please explain**

**If so, please explain**

**If you anticipate additional NCSU-affiliated investigators (other than those listed on the Title tab) may be involved in this research, list them here indicating their name and department.**

N/A

**Will the investigators be collaborating with researchers at any institutions or organizations outside of NC State?**

No

**List collaborating institutions and describe the nature of the collaboration**

**What is NCSU's role in this research?**

**Describe funding flow, if any (e.g. subcontractors)**

**Is this international research?**

Yes

**Identify the countries involved in this research**

The study is being conducted with the support of both universities involved in the delivery of the masters degree program. The participants in the study will include students from different parts of the world. The research study itself will be conducted entirely at the southeastern U.S. university.

**An IRB equivalent review for local and cultural context may be necessary for this study. Can you recommend consultants with cultural expertise who may be willing to provide this review?**

Dr. Brad Kirkman.

**Adults 18 - 64 in the general population?**

Yes

**NCSU students, faculty or staff?**

Yes

**Adults age 65 and older?**

No

**Minors (under age 18--be sure to include provision for parental consent and/or child assent)?**

No

**List ages or age range:**

**Could any of the children be "Wards of the State" (a child whose welfare is the responsibility of the state or other agency, institution, or entity)?**

No

**Please explain:**

**Prisoners (any individual involuntarily confined or detained in a penal institution -- can be detained pending arraignment, trial or sentencing)?**

No

**Pregnant women?**

No

**Are pregnant women the primary population or focus for this research?**

No

**Provide rationale for why they are the focus population and describe the risks associated with their involvement as participants**

**Fetuses?**

No

**Students?**

Yes

**Does the research involve normal educational practices?**

Yes

**Is the research being conducted in an accepted educational setting?**

Yes

**Are participants in a class taught by the principal investigator?**

No

**Are the research activities part of the required course requirements?**

Yes

**Will course credit be offered to participants?**

No

**Amount of credit?**

No

**If class credit will be given, list the amount and alternative ways to earn the same amount of credit. Note: the time it takes to gain the same amount of credit by the alternate means should be commensurate with the study task(s)**

**How will permission to conduct research be obtained from the school or district?**

Permission for the Director of the program received. Permission of the students will be gained through an Informed Consent form.

**Will you utilize private academic records?**

No

**Explain the procedures and document permission for accessing these records.**

**Employees?**

No

**Describe where (in the workplace, out of the workplace) activities will be conducted.**

**From whom and how will permission to conduct research on the employees be obtained?**

**How will potential participants be approached and informed about the research so as to reduce any perceived coercion to participate?**

**Is the employer involved in the research activities in any way?**

No

**Please explain:**

**Will the employer receive any results from the research activities (i.e. reports, recommendations, etc.)?**

No

**Please explain. How will employee identities be protected in reports provided to employers?**

**Impaired decision making capacity/Legally incompetent?**

No

**How will competency be assessed and from whom will you obtain consent?**

**Mental/emotional/developmental/psychiatric challenges?**

No

**Identify the challenge and explain the unique risks for this population. Describe any special provisions necessary for consent and other study activities (e.g., legal guardian for those unable to consent).**

**People with physical challenges?**

No

**Identify the challenge and explain the unique risks for this population.**

**Describe any special provisions necessary for working with this population (e.g., witnesses for the visually impaired).**

**Economically or educationally disadvantaged?**

No

**Racial, ethnic, religious and/or other minorities?**

No

**Non-English speakers?**

No

**Describe the procedures used to overcome any language barrier.**

All students in the program are strong English speakers, a requirement of the program which is taught in English in all sections.

**Will a translator be used?**

No

**Provide information about the translator (who they are, relation to the community, why you have selected them for use, confidentiality measures being utilized).**

**Explain the necessity for the use of the vulnerable populations listed.**

The students represent a useful population for studying actions of multicultural teams.

**State how, where, when, and by whom consent will be obtained from each participant group. Identify the type of consent (e.g., written, verbal, electronic, etc.). Label and submit all consent forms.**

Participants will be recruited from the masters degree program, specifically a team of 4 students. The students will be selected in the fall, and provided with the Informed Consent form prior to the beginning of the spring semester. Each of the students will be e-mailed the Informed Consent form, asked to review the form and contact myself or the Director of the program if there are any questions, and if in agreement to participate, sign and return the form to me or the Director. The students will be notified that participation in the study is not

a course requirement and their participation, or lack thereof, will not affect their class standing or grades.

**If any student chooses not to participate, there are optional students that can be selected without impacting the study.**

**If any participants are minors, describe the process for obtaining parental consent and minor's assent (minor's agreement to participate).**

N/A

**Are you applying for a waiver of the requirement for consent (no consent information of any kind provided to participants) for any participant group(s) in your study?**

No

**Describe the procedures and/or participant group for which you are applying for a waiver, and justify why this waiver is needed and consent is not feasible.**

**Are you applying for an alteration (exclusion of one or more of the specific required elements) of consent for any participant group(s) in your study?**

No

**Identify which required elements of consent you are altering, describe the participant group(s) for which this waiver will apply, and justify why this waiver is needed.**

**Are you applying for a waiver of signed consent (consent information is provided, but participant signatures are not collected)? A waiver of signed consent may be granted only if: the research involves no more than minimal risk. The research involves no procedures for which consent is normally required outside of the research context.**

No

**Would a signed consent document be the only document or record linking the participant to the research?**

No

**Is there any deception of the human subjects involved in this study?**

No

**Describe why deception is necessary and describe the debriefing procedures. Does the deception require a waiver or alteration of informed consent information?**

**Describe debriefing and/or disclosure procedures and submit materials for review. Are participants given the option to destroy their data if they do not want to be a part the study after disclosure?**

**For each participant group please indicate how many individuals from that group will be involved in the research. Estimates or ranges of the numbers of participants are acceptable. Please be aware that participant numbers may affect study risk. If your participation totals differ by 10% from what was originally approved, notify the IRB.**

The population of the program is 24 students. Four members of this group will be selected to work together on a project team during the spring semester of 2015. Their ages typically range from 25-40.

**How will potential participants be found and selected for inclusion in the study?**

The team of 4 students will be created with at least 1 participant from at least three different countries. The participants of these different countries are expected to reflect significant differences in how they approach team projects and expectations for teamwork, and we would expect a sample selection of participants placed on a project team together will have to



address their cultural differences. Many of the students in the program come from different countries as the 2 partner universities have their offices in the U.S., France and China, so most students will be in teams with this type of cultural composition.

All students in the program will complete the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) assessment. After completing the assessment, students will be placed in teams to work on project activities. A team with high interculturally sensitive participants will be selected for the study. They will be informed that the study is being conducted both for the purpose of studying teams in this program (program improvement) and for research on multicultural work teams (general research).

The IES assessment is completed on-line, individual data is secure, and the results of the assessment are provided directly to the participants. The data will not be provided to the program leaders, unless the participant chooses to do so. The students will have the opportunity to share their results with peers in a de-briefing activity mid-semester, but they will choose how much of their data they wish to share. This data is not part of the study, rather will be used simply to select a team of four students for study.

**For each participant group, how will potential participants be approached about the research and invited to participate?**

The selected four participants will be contacted by e-mail regarding the study, and presented with the informed consent form to review, respond to if there are questions, and complete if they chose to participate.

**Describe any inclusion and exclusion criteria for your participants and describe why those criteria are necessary (If your study concentrates on a particular population, you do not need to repeat your description of that population here.)**

At the beginning of the semester, students will complete the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) instrument. The IES evaluates whether an individual will be effective working with people whose cultural background differs from their own.

The IES measures three aspects of intercultural competency: how we learn about another culture and the accuracy of that learning, how we develop and manage relationships with people from other cultures and how we manage the challenges and stress involved in interacting with people who are different from us. The results of the assessment place students' scores on a continuum, falling into Low, Medium and High ranges. Students scoring in the high range as an overall score and at least 2 of the 3 categories will be considered for the team to be studied. This purposeful selection of a high-scoring team on the IES assessment will provide an instrumental sample for this study, to counter the pressures on MCT teams and improve the ability to study shared norm development.

**Is there any relationship between researcher and participants - such as teacher/student; employer/employee?**

No

**What is the justification for using this participant group instead of an unrelated participant group?**

**Describe any risks associated with conducting your research with a related participant group.**

**Describe how this relationship will be managed to reduce risk during the research.**

**How will risks to confidentiality be managed?**

**Address any concerns regarding data quality (e.g. non-candid responses) that could result from this relationship.**

**In the following questions describe in lay terms all study procedures that will be experienced by each group of participants in this study. For each group of participants in your study, provide a step-by-step description of what they will experience from beginning to end of the study activities.**

At the beginning of the semester, students will complete the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) instrument. The IES evaluates whether an individual will be effective working with people whose cultural background differs from their own.

The IES measures three aspects of intercultural competency: how we learn about another culture and the accuracy of that learning, how we develop and manage relationships with people from other cultures and how we manage the challenges and stress involved in interacting with people who are different from us. The results of the assessment place students' scores on a continuum, falling into Low, Medium and High ranges. Students scoring in the high range as an overall score and at least 2 of the 3 categories will be considered for the team to be studied. This purposeful selection of a high-scoring team on the IES assessment will provide an instrumental sample for this study. The assessment is completed on-line, individual data is secure, and the results of the assessment are provided directly to the participants. This provides participants with insights on where they are strong and where they can improve in order to work in multicultural teams. They will have the

opportunity to share their results with peers in a de-briefing activity mid-semester, but they will choose how much of their data they wish to share.

The results of the IES data will be used to create a single high scoring interculturally sensitive team for the study. The primary researcher will work together with the Director of the program in creation of the team.

The unit of analysis for this study is a single, high interculturally sensitive, multicultural student project team. The study is bounded around this team's formation process during the first few weeks of project work from January to early-February 2015; a holistic data gathering and analysis of the team's formation experience.

The first type of data collection will be observations of team meetings during the first 2-3 weeks of the program. Observation data will be collected to identify and document team member interpretations of their situation and actions. These notes will provide a chain of evidence by capturing the date, team member(s) commenting, context within which the statement was made and perceptions of how the comments impacted the other team members. The team meetings will be recorded with the permission of the team, though recording will be terminated if the researcher believes it is impacting the team behavior. Meeting locations, time and structure will be at the discretion of the student team. All observation data will be coded and original notes destroyed within one week of meetings.

The second type of data collection will be interviews with members of this single, high interculturally sensitive multicultural team. Using an interview guide created to gather reflections and insights from MCT member experiences based on five norm categories: communication, creativity, decision-making/conflict, satisfaction, and social integration

(based on Stahl et al. meta-analysis of MCTs, 2010). Each student will be interviewed individually, so as not to be swayed by the opinions of other team members. The interviews will be taped for later transcription. Personal information related to each participant will not be retained, and disguised names will be used in the presentation of any individually specific information.

Interviews will be conducted on campus as a convenience, but away from the location of classes so as to provide some confidence for the participant that the interview is not overheard. The selected location is a conference room across the street from the College.

Contextual elements of the location will be noted, particularly any deemed influential to the discussion (ie. temperature of the room, significant noise during the interview, etc).

Interviews will be conducted in private, with a clear instruction that the participant do not need to share any personal information, or anything they are uncomfortable with. In order to create a positive atmosphere of a dialogue, no other notes will be taken during the interview process. The interviews should last 30-50 minutes. Interview data will be recorded on an iPhone. Shortly (within 2 days) of recording the data, it will be transcribed using Dragon software into a Word document. The iPhone recording will be deleted once this is completed. The interviews will be scheduled during the third or fourth week of the program. This timing should be toward the end of the team formation phase, and provide sufficient time for the team to have had several meetings. All four interviews will take place within 1-2 days so that it captures the perspectives of the students at the same point in the team formation process. The interview guide will act as a framework for the discussion, though questions may be changed, added or not used based on the nature of the discussion. Since the objective is to

have the student describe his or her project team formation experience, the interview process will adjust to expand on that person's unique experiences and reflections. The skill and experience of the researcher will be important in this process.

I also wish to offer that conducting this qualitative study, including an interview process that will adapt slightly with each team participant so as to understand their experiences, my 20 years of work in developing and delivering custom executive education programs will be useful. Each executive education custom program begins with a client interview, using a standard approach but adaptive to each unique situation so as to understand their unique needs. I have conducted well over 500 of these interviews in my career.

**Describe how, where, when, and by whom data will be collected.**

As the primary researcher, I will collect all data related to the study. There will be 2 types of data collection: interviews and observation.

The interviews will be conducted with each member of the team individually during the first 3-4 weeks of the program.

Interviews will be conducted on campus as a convenience, but away from the location of classes so as to provide some confidence for the participant that the interview is not overheard. The selected location is a conference across the street from the College.

The interviews will be recorded on an iPhone for later transcription. Personal information related to each participant will not be retained, and disguised names will be used in the presentation of any individually specific information. If any of the information could be used to identify a specific participant it will not be used. Participant data will be coded as Participant INDRA, TONG, JIM, DELPHINE. All observation data will be coded and

original notes destroyed within one week of meetings. The coded reference table will only exist on the secured case study database.

Observations of team meetings will take place during the first 2-3 weeks of the program. The team meetings will be recorded with the permission of the team, though recording will be terminated if the researcher believes it is impacting the team behavior. Meeting locations, time and structure will be at the discretion of the student team. All observation data will be coded and original notes destroyed within one week of meetings.

The data collection will maintain privacy of the participants by securing all data in a case study database on an external hard drive locked at the researcher's home. All other notes and data collection devices will be erased upon transcription to the hard drive. Participant names will be coded so that actual names will not show up in stored documents or the eventual paper.

**Social?**

No

**Psychological?**

No

**Financial/Employability?**

No

**Legal?**

No

**Physical?**

No

**Academic?**

No

**Employment?**

No

**Financial?**

No

**Medical?**

No

**Private Behavior?**

No

**Economic Status?**

No

**Sexual Issues?**

No

**Religious Issues/Beliefs?**

No

**Describe the nature and degree of risk that this study poses for each item marked**

**"Yes" above. Describe the steps taken to minimize these risks**

N/A

**If you are accessing private records, describe how you are gaining access to these records, what information you need from the records, and how you will receive/record data.**



N/A

**Are you asking participants to disclose information about other individuals (e.g., friends, family, co-workers, etc.)?**

No

**Describe the data you will collect and discuss how you will protect confidentiality and the privacy of these third-party individuals.**

**If you are collecting information that participants might consider personal or sensitive or that if revealed might cause embarrassment, harm to reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, what measures will you take to protect participants from those risks?**

The IES data provides feedback on participants effectiveness in intercultural teams. The data will only be made available to the students directly and it will be their decision when and if to share the data.

**If any of the study procedures could be considered risky in and of themselves (e.g. study procedures involving upsetting questions, stressful situations, physical risks, etc.) what measures will you take to protect participants from those risks?**

N/A

**Describe the anticipated direct benefits to be gained by each group of participants in this study (compensation is not a direct benefit).**

All participants in the program are expected to benefit from the experience (the IES assessment outcomes and in class de-brief of intercultural sensitivity). No other direct

benefits are to be provided, though they will be told the research may contribute to the improvement of the program.

**If no direct benefit is expected for participants describe any indirect benefits that may be expected, such as to the scientific community or to society.**

N/A

**Will you be receiving already existing data without identifiers for this study?**

No

**Will you be receiving already existing data which includes identifiers for this study?**

Yes

**Describe how the benefits balance out the risks of this study.**

There are minimal risks (survey data), but the value of learning where their strengths and weaknesses in intercultural settings should be valuable.

**Will data be collected anonymously (meaning that you do not ever collect data in a way that would allow you to link any identifying information to a participant)?**

No

**Will identifiers be recorded with the data?**

No

**Will you use a master list, crosswalk, or other means of linking a participant's identity to the data?**

No

**Will it be possible to identify a participant indirectly from the data collected (i.e. indirect identification from demographic information)?**

No

**Audio recordings?**

Yes

**Video recordings?**

No

**Images?**

No

**Digital/electronic files?**

Yes

**Paper documents (including notes and journals)?**

Yes

**Physiological Responses?**

No

**Online survey?**

Yes

**Restricted Computer?**

Yes

**Password Protected files?**

Yes

**Firewall System?**

No

**Locked Private Office?**

Yes

**Locked Filing Cabinets?**

Yes

**Encrypted Files?**

No

**Describe all participant identifiers that will be collected (whether they will be retained or not) and explain why they are necessary.**

For selection of the team, it is important that the participants have not worked as a team previously. For this reason, a list of participants and their fall teams was obtained. This data is not considered sensitive information.

**If any links between data and participants are to be retained, how will you protect the confidentiality of the data?**

All original recordings will be deleted once transcribed, within one week of the recording date. Individuals will be coded so that no comment can be linked to a specific individual.

**If you are collecting data electronically, what (if any) identifiable information will be collected by the host site (such as email and/or IP address) and will this information be reported to you?**

N/A

**Describe any ways that participants could be identified indirectly from the data collected and describe measures taken to protect identities.**

This is a small program, and a small sample team. In order to protect their comments, no description of their comments will be shared with their teammates or the class.

**For all recordings of any type: Describe the type of recording(s) to be made Describe the safe storage of recordings Who will have access to the recordings? Will recordings be used in publications or data reporting? Will images be altered to de-identify? Will recordings be transcribed and by whom?**

Audio recordings of the team meetings and interviews will be transcribed by the researcher within one week of the recording. The original recording will then be deleted. No one besides the researcher will have access to the recordings. Reporting of any comments in the paper will be disguised so as not to reveal the individual who made the comment.

The data collection will maintain privacy of the participants by securing all data in a case study database on an external hard drive locked at the researcher's home. All other notes and data collection devices will be erased upon transcription to the hard drive.

**Describe how data will be reported (aggregate, individual responses, use of direct quotes) and describe how identities will be protected in study reports.**

Participant names will be coded so that actual names will not show up in stored documents or the eventual paper. The codes will not reflect any aspect of the participants' names, nationalities, genders, or any other distinguishing characteristic. The coding system will be INDRA, TONG, JIM and DELPHINE and be based on the order in which each participant speaks at the first meeting.

**Will anyone besides the PI or the research team have access to the data (including completed surveys) from the moment they are collected until they are destroyed?**

Only I will have access to data collected during the study. The data will be secured in a case study database on an external hard drive locked at my home. All other notes and data collection devices will be erased upon transcription to the hard drive.

**Describe any compensation that participants will be eligible to receive, including what the compensation is, any eligibility requirements, and how it will be delivered.**

Participants will not receive any compensation for participating in the study.

**Explain compensation provisions if the participant withdraws prior to completion of the study.** N/A

**APPENDIX C: Participant E-mail Script**

Dear [Student INDRA],

My name is Dan McGurrin. I am a researcher who will be working with the Program Director during your time next semester.

During the program's Spring semester you will be asked to work in teams on a semester-long project. If you are willing, I would like to observe several of your team meetings at the beginning of the semester, and ask you to participate in a short interview around the end of January. I plan to use this research for my PhD dissertation, but will not attribute any specific comments made by you or disclose your name in any of my writing. This information will be kept confidential.

Attached is a form explaining the study, what commitments you would be asked to make, and hopefully any concerns you may have. If you have any remaining questions, however, please contact me ([dpmcgurr@ncsu.edu](mailto:dpmcgurr@ncsu.edu)) or the Program Director).

In order to confirm your willingness to participate, please sign the attached form and return it to me.

Thank you, and I look forward to meeting you in January!

Regards,

Dan McGurrin

## APPENDIX D: Participant Informed Consent

### North Carolina State University INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study

Multicultural team experience

Principal Investigator

Daniel P. McGurrin

Faculty Sponsor (if applicable)

Dr. Diane Chapman

#### **What are some general things you should know about research studies?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue, in this case the experience of working in a multicultural project team. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

#### **What is the purpose of this study?**

The growth of multicultural teams (MCTs) in both educational and organizational settings has resulted in a growing field of research on the unique nature of these teams. While research has shown the value of these teams, there has not been significant research on how they work together. If we were to better understand how they work together we could be more effective at selecting, guiding, supporting and managing multicultural teams.

This is a dissertation research study in the same area. It will be conducted as a case study of a single multicultural team. A case study is a detailed description of the demands and experiences of those involved in a specific experience, in this case a multicultural team working on a project. The expectation is that the case study will help researchers understand more deeply what and how the participants in the study felt, acted, and interpreted their experiences.

#### **What will happen if you take part in the study?**

If you agree to participate in this study, the research will focus on activities during your work in project teams during the early part of your team experience in January 2015. The first type of research activity will be observations of team meetings during the first 2-3 weeks of the program, between January 5-23, 2015. The team meetings will be recorded with the



permission of the team, though recording will be terminated if it is distracting to the team. Meeting locations, time and structure will be at the discretion of the team. No individual comments from these observations will be identified with individual participants and shared outside of the team.

The second activity will be interviews with members of this multicultural team. Each student will be interviewed individually. The interviews will be taped for later transcription. Personal information related to each participant will not be retained, and disguised names will be used in the presentation of any individually specific information.

Interviews will be conducted on campus as a convenience, but away from the location of classes. The selected location is a conference room across the street from the College. Interviews will be conducted in private, and participants do not need to share any personal information or anything you are uncomfortable with. The interviews should last 30-50 minutes. Interview data will be recorded on an iPhone and a tape recorder. Both recordings will be deleted once the interviews are transcribed into a Word document and stored in a secure location. The interviews will be scheduled during the first 3-4 weeks of the program, between January 19-30, 2015.

### **Risks**

Interviews may raise questions regarding personal experiences that are sensitive, information regarding your interpretations of the behavior of peer team members. No information that is shared will be published with the names of who made the statement, nor will any individual comments that can be traced back to a specific participant be used. You are not expected to share any information you are not comfortable sharing.

### **Benefits**

All participants in the program are expected to benefit from the experience (the assessment outcomes and in class de-brief of intercultural sensitivity). No other direct benefits are to be provided, though you will be contributing to the improvement of the program and research on multicultural teams.

### **Confidentiality**

The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely on an external drive that will be stored at the researcher's home in a secure location. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

### **Compensation**

You will not receive any direct compensation for participating in the study.

**What if you are a NCSU student?-**

Participation in this study is not a course requirement and your participation or lack thereof, will not affect your class standing or grades.

**What if you have questions about this study?**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Daniel P. McGurrin, at 2806 Hillsborough Street, dpmcgurr@ncsu.edu, or at 919-452-6215.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

**Consent To Participate**

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

**Subject's signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Investigator's signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E: Observation Guide

The Observation Guide helps the researcher organize notes of their observations, thoughts about those observations in the moments they occur, and guidance for personal actions during the observation period (moments of direct interaction with the team) (Creswell, 2012). Detailed below are the general topic areas and expected actions I plan to experience during the team meetings, using a format suggested by Creswell (2012, p. 169)

Multicultural Team Research Study (Researcher: Daniel McGurrian)	
January XX, 2015	
Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
First meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce yourself and briefly explain purpose of the study</li> <li>- Remind team of timing and activities involved</li> <li>- Request permission to record meeting, explaining control over data and how recording will and will not be used</li> <li>- Remind each participant that at any moment if they wish I will stop the recording</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did I notice any reaction by the members to this information that might indicate any discomfort or concern?</li> </ul>
1. Context cues (examples) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Selection of meeting location</li> <li>b. Punctual arrival of team members</li> <li>c. Comfort of members in the meeting space</li> <li>d. Timing of meeting in comparison to each member's availability and preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did the late arrival of one participant appear to weigh on one of the other participants throughout the session?</li> </ul>
2. Non-verbal cues for observation process (examples) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Attention during the meeting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Computer and cellphone use</li> <li>ii. Eye contact</li> <li>iii. Subgroup conversations</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Body language               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Folded arms</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did everyone's computer being open appear to create a barrier to their communication?</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Facing away from group</li> <li>iii. Leaning back in chair</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Verbal cues for observation process (examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Communication style changes based on different team members</li> <li>b. Team member laughter and expressions of enjoyment</li> <li>c. Team member contributions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. All members participate in meetings</li> <li>ii. Vocal members encourage non-vocal participation</li> <li>iii. Non-vocal members find opportunities to contribute</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>- Will participant INDRA, clearly an extrovert, be the only person drawing out TONG, or will they all try to encourage TONG to be more involved</p>
<p>4. Member definitions and scripts (examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Individual members push for specific approaches</li> <li>b. When two members scripts are similar, push to establish team norm</li> <li>c. When there is recognition of different scripts, members discuss options for a shared norm</li> <li>d. Process for assigning project tasks</li> <li>e. Recognition of cultural differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Efforts to adapt or accommodate differences</li> <li>ii. Efforts to leverage differences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>- JIM got their way on the preferred task. I'll need to watch if the team accepts this in the future, or challenges this decision.</p>

## **APPENDIX F: Interview Guide**

### **Project Teams Interview Guide**

My name is Dan McGurrin, and I am a doctoral student at NC State studying the practices of work teams. I am pursuing a research study on the interactions of graduate project teams to understand both how they are successful and how they overcome any challenges initially faced in working as a team. This research will provide insight on how to make the experience of teams more effective. Today I am conducting an interview to learn more about your particular experiences in your project team. There may be some personal questions about your experience, and you are free to stop participating without penalty at any time. Feel free to disclose whatever you are comfortable disclosing. If there is anything you don't want me to record, I can stop the recording at any moment. But I hope this will be a valuable exercise for you as well, to help you process your experience and reflect on it some more. So again, we can stop at any time. And again, this is part of my dissertation research at NC State. This information will not be used beyond that context, and your name will never be shared. Are you comfortable with participating in the study?

1. Please describe the project your team undertook for the class project?
2. How would you describe your team? What makes this team special?
3. What barriers/challenges did you face that impeded success early on?
4. During the team meeting, I noticed a cultural conflict...
  - a. How would you describe this difference between team members? Do you think everyone recognized this issue?

- b. How did you see this cultural difference impact the team? How do you see this continuing to affect the team in the future?
- c. Was this a new experience for you, working with cultural differences? If not, how were previous experiences similar or different?
- d. How did you respond to this difference?

### **Communication**

- 5. During the X meeting, a communication issue appeared to impact the team.
  - a. How would you describe this communication issue?
  - b. Have you dealt with different communication styles in teams before? If so, how did you manage those?
  - c. Has the team subsequently had similar or other communication challenges?
  - d. How has the team managed the communication challenges?

### **Decision-Making**

- 6. The team reached a decision regarding ...
  - a. How did the team decide on how the decision would be made?
  - b. Have you used this approach to reaching a team decision before? How did that team decide on that approach?
  - c. What more recent decisions has the team faced? Was the same approach used?
  - d. How do you see this approach to decision making impacting the team in the future?

- e. Has anyone suggested taking a different approach to decision making? What was suggested? How did the team respond?

### **Conflict**

7. I sensed there was some conflict regarding...
  - a. How did this conflict arise?
  - b. Have you faced a similar conflict in a team before? How did that team manage the conflict?
  - c. How do you see the team dealing with future conflicts?
  - d. What more recent conflicts has the team dealt with? Was the same approach used?
  - e. Has anyone tried to manage the conflict in a different way? What was suggested? How did the team respond?
  - f. How well did you feel the team handled the conflict?

### **Creativity**

8. During meeting X there were several ideas discussed regarding ...
  - a. How well did you feel the team did in getting everyone's ideas into consideration?
  - b. Can you describe an experience working in another team where creativity was important? How did that team approach the challenge of encouraging different opinions, while still meeting team goals?

- c. Can you describe a more recent opportunity for the team to work together to find a creative solution? How would you describe the process?

### **Satisfaction**

9. The team appeared to be enjoying the experience during...
  - a. Why do you think each person felt this way?
  - b. Can you describe a previous team when you had a similar level of satisfaction? How did that team create a satisfied team experience?
  - c. How do you think this satisfaction will change in the future: grow, diminish, or stay similar?
  - d. Can you describe any threats to team satisfaction? How did the team respond?

### **Social Integration/Trust**

10. During meeting X the team action Y indicated there was developing a strong sense of trust amongst the members.
  - a. How did each of the team members participate in creating this bond?
  - b. Can you describe a similar type of interaction and trust in a previous team?  
How was that created?
  - c. How do you think this team's interactions will change in the future?
  - d. Can you describe any interaction or trust concerns in the team? How has the team responded?



Thank you for your time and openness to sharing your experiences for this study!