APPLIED PROJECT MANAGEMENT

for

Space Systems

Edited by

Julie Chesley • Wiley J. Larson

Marilyn McQuade • Robert J. Menrad

Space Technology Series

<div align="right">**Chapter 20**</div>

Managing Projects Across Cultures

Michael F. Tucker, Ph.D., CMC, *Tucker International, LLC*

The operational system versus the superstars: What's wrong with these guys?-Glenn Roberts was a new project manager (PM), on a large scale, long term space project. It involved two key teams, one from his organization and one from another, which had the lead science capability. Glenn had a military background, and was confident in his ability to organize and manage complex projects. He fit well into his organization, which emphasized planning, building, and implementing systems, policies, and procedures. Its projects were closely monitored, orderly, and predictable. Glenn was having difficulty working with the lead science organization because they had a different view of how to get things done. The right structure was less important to them. Dr. Chandra Jayaram, the other team leader, had actually said, "Let's organize and reorganize in whatever way it takes to get us there!" Their team included some outstanding scientists, who were critical to the project. They were highly regarded and received much deference.

When the two teams last met, Dr. Jayaram's group got bogged down in their world of ideas and over-analysis. Glenn said, "Look, we value what you bring to the project, but we have to move forward with my operational plan and stick to it." Dr. Jayaram replied, "We want to make sure we have the very best science on this project and are uncomfortable with anything that might inhibit our best efforts." Glenn was under great pressure to move forward, but didn't want to alienate Dr. Jayaram's people. How could he make them see that his approach was best?

Selecting a contractor in Spain-Alexis Kouros, an international project team leader for a space program, was on a project with a Spanish agency as a direct partner. Her counterpart, Ignacio Dominguez, had been in the US with his team several times and Alexis's team had been in Spain. Alexis had not spent much time with Ignacio in either country because of schedule and task priorities. Ignacio had invited her to dinner in Spain, but she had not been able to find the time.

The project had to select a Spanish sub-contractor for a critical project component. Alexis and two of her team went to Spain to work with Ignacio to select this sub-contractor. They brought their procedure for competitive selection of sub-contractors. But Ignacio had a different approach. He said, "I intend to use a company I have worked with for a long time. The company head is my cousin, and I know he will do a good job." Alexis explained why they needed to get the best sub-contractor at the lowest price. "Our competitive bid approach allows us to, look at several companies and pick the one that best meets our needs at the lowest cost." Ignacio said he already knew the other companies and his cousin's company was the best.

After several meetings, it was clear that Ignacio was not going to use the competitive bid process. Alexis's team returned to the US, feeling very uneasy about Ignacio and unwilling to use his cousin's company.

(Spain ranks 23rd out of 159 on the Transparency International Cormption Index, number 1 being the least corrupt and 159 the most. Spain's corruption index is 7.0 011a 10 point scale, with.10 being the least corrupt. The US ranks 17, with an index of 7.6.)

American-Japanese meetings and agreements-Lee Amadi headed a space project involving the Japanese. He had worked very hard on the project, and was now tired and irritable. "We can never seem to give the Japanese enough information and material, Every time we need to come to an agreement, they ask for more time and more information." Six of their team had just returned from Japan. They had tried to come to an agreement with the Japanese on a critical part of the project. He had arranged a series of brainstorming sessions with the Japanese team, headed by Yoshi Tamura. They got great participation from the American team, but very little from the Japanese. Yoshi said he would work with his team and schedule a trip to the US to present their approach. The project was now behirn;l schedule and over budget, and he didn't know what to expect from Yoshi. Mr. Amadi took the job very seriously, and needed to convince Yoshi of the importance of timely decisions and meeting project milestones. Yoshi had hosted the American team on one occasion, but it had not gone well. The Americans were presented with food that they couldn't identify and didn't want to eat, and then they were supposed to get up and sing!

Interpretation and discussion of the incidents-What cultural issues were involved in these incidents that interfered with project success? If the project managers had exhibited certain attributes, they could have been more successful. What are these attributes?

Mr. Roberts approached his project based on his organization's "control" type of culture [Schneider, 1994]. To him, project success depended heavily on order and predictability, a tight operational plan, and structure. Dr. Jayaram's group had

a "competence" type of culture emphasizing ideas, concepts, and technologies, where scientific thinking and theoretical pursuits held sway. Mr. Roberts probably should not try to change Dr. Jayaram's team culture, nor try to transform his group into a competence type. It would be better to create a "collaboration" culture, achieving synergy through full use of cross-organizational teams and partnering.

Mr. Roberts must also develop certain personal attributes to achieve this. These include

- **Open-mindedness** to another approach
- **Flexibility** in incorporating a different approach in a synergistic solution
- **Patience** in making this happen

In Ms. Kouros's case, the primary American-Spanish cultural difference was the American preference for objective competition coming up against the Spanish relationship-based style. To Ms. Kouros's way of thinking, a competitive bid would be impersonal and fair, with less chance of corruption. Mr. Dominguez, on the other)land, was offering his cousin's company, which was an extension of himself and carried his own reputation. These two styles arise from the individualism-collectivism dimension of cultural differences. This is "the degree to which action is taken in a particular culture for the benefit of the individual or the group." [Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005] The US ranked number 1 out of 74 countries in individualism, while Spain ranked 30th. Table 20-1 compares the two styles.

TABLE **20·1,** Group Versus Individual Styles. One culture emphasizes Individualism and another collectivism. These differences help explain preferences for working relationships, and members of a cross-cultural team should keep them In mind.

Group Style	Individual Style
"We" consciousness	**"I" consciousness**
Relatives and In-group take care of Individual In exchange for loyalty	Individual takes care of self and immediate family
Interests of the group prevail over Individual Interests	Self-interests come before those of the group
Preference for the "whole person" approach to work life	Personal life and professional life are separate
Cooperation and harmony	Competition between Individuals
Loyalty prevails over efficiency	Efficiency prevails over loyalty

Ms. Kouros needs fo manage this cultural difference between herself and Mr. Dominguez. She needs to exhibit certain personal attributes to reach a solution. These attributes [Tucker et al., 2004] are:

- **Open-mindedness** to another approach
- **Flexibility** in incorporating a different approach in a solution
- Social **adaptability** in building a relationship with Mr. Dominguez
- Building a sufficient level of trust in Mr. Dominguez
- Taking a **risk** to go with an approach that's beyond her comfort zone

We describe each of these attributes more fully later in this chapter.

So, what should Ms. Kouros do at this point? The culturally appropriate solution would be to try to operate within the Spanish system. She could spend some social time to build a trusting relationship with Mr. Dominguez. Then she could get to know Mr. Dominguez' cousin, and assess his company's abilities for herself. If the company was qualified, the project could use it as the sub-contractor. If it wasn't, Ms. Kouros would have to work something else out with Mr. Dominguez without having him lose "face".

In the third case, American-Japanese cultural differences had to do with decision-making and hierarchy. The Japanese, being a more collectivist culture (rank of 33-35 on the Hofstede individualism scale), have a consensual decision-making style that takes more time than the American style. The Japanese also have a high need to avoid uncertainty, leading to requirements for exhaustive information and detail (Japan ranks 11-13 on Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance scale, compared with the US rank of 62). Mr. Amadi's attempt at mixed level brainstorming d.idn't work because the Japanese feel uncomfortable freely expressing untested ideasin front of others, especially superiors. Mr. Amadi needs to understand these cultural differences and to exhibit:

- **Open-mindedness** to the Japanese approach
- **Flexibility** in working with the Japanese style
- **Social adaptability** in building a relationship with the Japanese
- Patience with the Japanese time required for decision-making and need for information and detail
- A sense of humor for engaging in karaoke.

Now, what should Mr. Amadi do to prepare for the upcoming Japanese visit and try to get the project on track? He ought to allow as much time as possible for the visit and arrange for some joint-team social activities. He should get to know Mr. Tamura .and build a trusting relationship with him. And finally, he shouldn't expect closure until some time after the Japanese return to Japan.

We come to the primary purposes of this chapter: to help project managers 1) carry a cultural theme into understanding and managing project teams, and 2) deal with the intercultural aspects of .international projects. International cultural management has become very significant in this age of globalization. Teamwork is now a preferred way to do things when operating across borders.

Culture provides consistency for an organization and its people, sets boundaries, ground rules, expectations, and priorities, and is fundamental to

productivity [Schneider, 1994]. Many organizations take great pains to prepare their managers for the technical, financial, strategic, and tactical aspects of their jobs. But they pay far less attention to the cultural aspects, which can make or break a project. We see this in the dismal h·ack record of international joint ventures, most of which fail in the first five years due to cultural differences.

Here are five questions that every PM should be able to answer. This chapter is organized according to these questions:

- What is culture and why is it important?
- What can I do to manage organizational culture?
- What are some differences in national cultures and how do I manage these differences?
- What skills and competencies do I need to be an effective intercultural project manager?
- How can I successfully manage my project across cultures?

20.1   Culture and Its Importance

Two simple but useful definitions of organizational or project team culture are:

> The way we do things around here in order to succeed [Schneider, 1994].

> A composite of **expected, accepted,** and **supported** or **rewarded** ways in which people in an organization or team perform their work and relate to each other as well as to the outside world [The author, as suggested by Shephen H. Rhinesmith, circa 1985]

For example, if a project culture values reliance on one another, then the team members know they're expected to go to great lengths to assist each other and strive for team solutions. The team readily accepts this behavior, and supports or **rewards** it both formally and informally. Organization culture is a subset of national culture. How we act in organizations depends on where we live, our upbringing, and the norms and values in our communities and country. So before discussing organization or project culture, we present a model of national culture.

20.1.1   National Culture

The culh1ral definitions above apply to national culture as well (although we provide more elegant definitions below). National cultures also do things in unique ways to succeed. Their members know what is expected of them, feel accepted when they meet expectations, and continue their culturally appropriate behavior when it is supported and rewarded. Individual competitiveness has worked well for the culture of the United States, while collective hru·mony has worked well for the Japanese culture. Definitions of national culture include the following:

> Culture is 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another [Hofstede, 1991].

This definition of culture suggests that humans aresupplied with pretty much the same make-up, but they become cultural beings through programming from parents, siblings, teachers, etc.

> Culture is an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life of a particular group of people. It includes eve1ything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes-its customs, language, material artifacts and shared systems of attih1des and feelings. Ctdhtre is learned and transmitted from generation to generation [Kohls, 1979].

This definition illustrates how pervasive culh1re is-it's difficult to identify what culture does not include. And the concept that culture islearned is similar to Hofstede's programming idea, suggesting that genetic inheritance has little if anything to do with culture. A Chinese infant adopted by Canadian parents will become a Canadian cultural being, not a Chinese one.

> Culture hides more than what it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants [Hall, 1959].

Hall's statement posits the significance of cultural relativism. Unless we meet up with another culture, it seems that "the way we do things around here" is nahua1 and expected of everyone. Only when we come in contact with very different beliefs, values, and behaviors does our own culture stand out in contrast.

Culture is manifest in the following ways:

- Values-the deepest expression of culture and the slowest to change

- Communication-verbal language and non-verbal behavior

- Patterns of thinking-major patterns include linear, circular, and interrupted. Linear thinking describes the pattern of Western countries, where getting from A to B in an efficient, low context way is preferred. Circular thinking describes Asian countries, where context isimportant and one only gets to the outcome "B" after many things are considered. Interrupted thinking describes Arab countries, where the train of thought is broken with interpersonal comment.

- Norms-the ways in which accepted rules of behavior are followed

- Roles-the major functions of a culhtre and how those functions are defined, e.g., father, mother, leader, administrator, chief engineer,etc.

A useful way to illustrate how national culture works is the analogy of an iceberg (adapted from Berger and Luckmann [1966]), which appears in Figure 20-1.
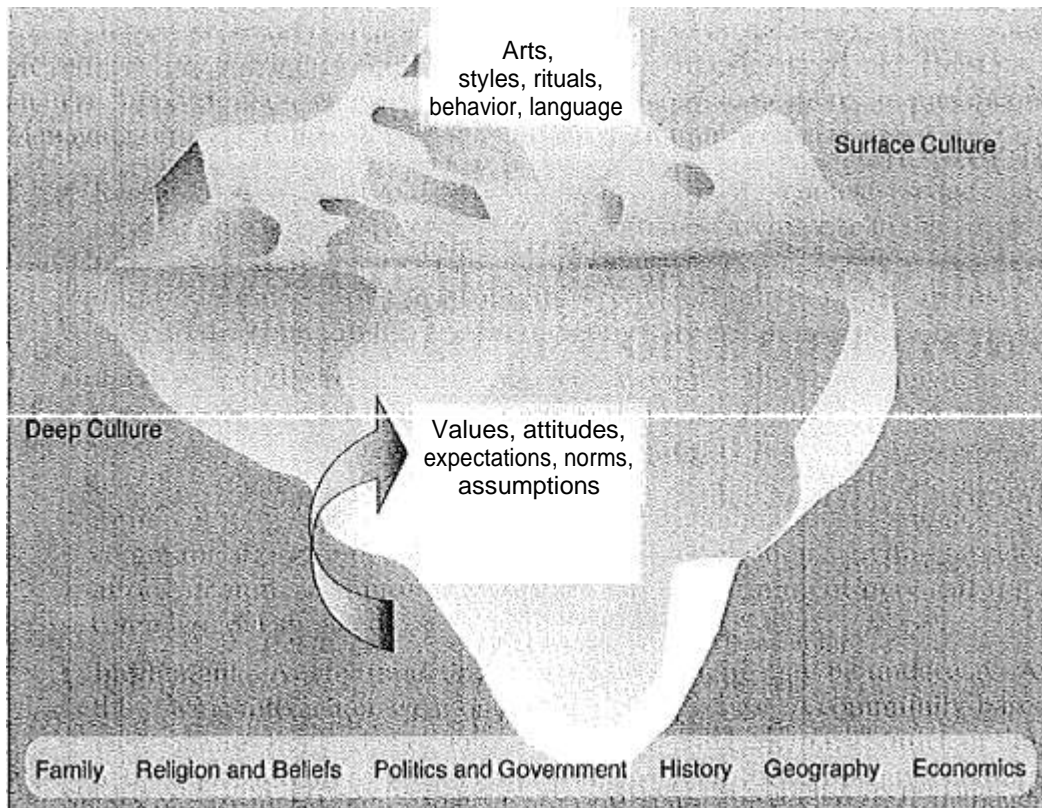

FIGURE **20·1.** The Iceberg Model of National Culture. We can use this model of culture to understand the national cultures of project team members and to anticipate their behavior.

Only about 11% of the mass of an iceberg appearn above the water, while the rest remains below the surface. Applying this to culture, we refer to things that are observable, or that occur on the conscious level, as surface culture. What is not observable, or is subconscious, is deep culture.

A nation's deep culture rests on its foundations of history, geography, etc. These foundations give rise to shared values, attitudes, expectations, norms, and assumptions, which in turn drive everyday life in the surface culture. For example, the geology and history of the United States Jed to a governmental system supporting individual freedom, which in turn gave rise to individual initiative and competition. We see this every day in the US, where the unit of identity is the individual, not the family, tribe, or (generally) religious groups. In contrast, Arabic nations have been shaped by religion and beliefs. Islam is the most dominant feature of many Arabic nations, such that a person's identity is defined   by his or

her relationship with Allah, with values set by the family, tribe, and religious sect. In some Arabic countries, the Sharia, based on the Koran, is the law of the land.

20.1.2   Organization or Team Culture

Figure 20-2 illustrates how we can adapt the iceberg model to an organization or team.
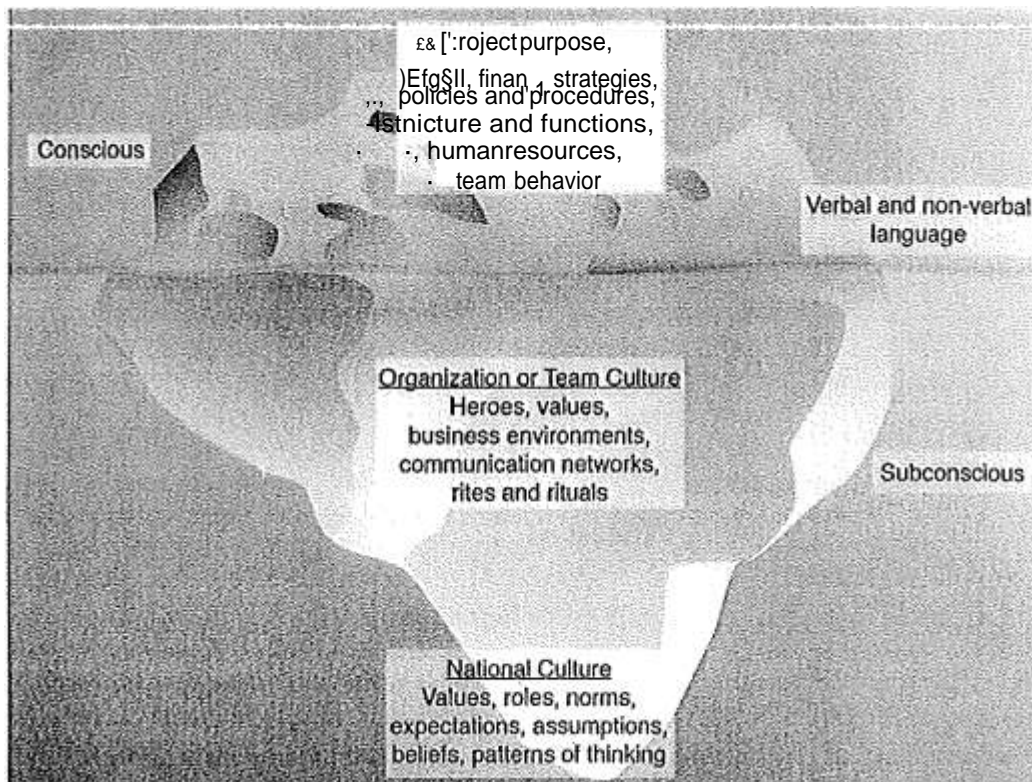
FIGURE 20-2.   The Iceberg Model of Organization or Team Culture. We expand the Iceberg model to Include both national culture and organization, or team culture. We can use it to help understand the behavior of diverse team members and to forge a more culturally synergistic team.

This model suggests that the conscious, observable aspects of an organization or team grow out of the subconscious aspects of its hidden culture. Furthermore, an organization or team culture is shaped by the country in which it operates. For example, teams working in the Russian Space Agency have a more collective or group style than Americans. The Russian term *sobornost,* meaning communal spirit or togetherness, contrasts with the American notion of self-actualization. In fact, the name of the first Russian space station was Mir, referring to the Russian agricultural village commune.   .

Organizational culture is manifest in ways similar to national culture, through values, norms, expectations, stories, communication patterns, etc. The founders and leaders have significant influence. A project manager can use this model to better understand her or his home culture and to lay out the cultures of other organizations involved in a project. If we do this early in project planning, we can avoid the "collision" illustrated in Figure 20-3.

The figure shows what can happen when two organization or team cultures on a long-term project collide, or when organizations merge, a common occurrence in the space industrial base. The teams spend most of their time and effort on the conscious level, but the collision occurs at the subconscious level, where ways of doing things are different.   ·
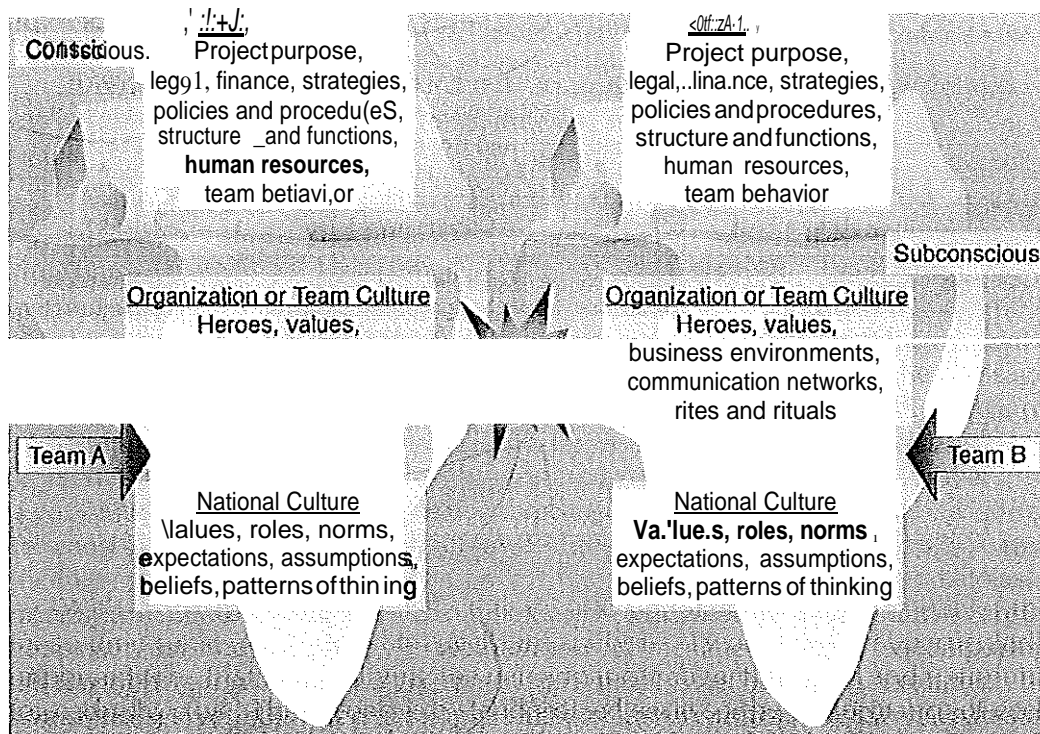

FIGURE 20-3. When Two Cultures Collide. When two teams are having difficulty working together, we can best manage the situation by focusing on the organization and national culture levels Instead of only the conscious, task level.

One example is when Team A is composed of Russians working with Americans at NASA (Team B) on an international cooperation project. The teams must take into account the factors below the surface of the iceberg. The Russian collective style needs to be balanced against the American individualist style for the teams to function together effectively.

20.2   Manage the Organization Culture

When people work together, a culture naturally forms, which holds them together and defines the norms of work behavior. The team leader, or PM, has the opportunity to ,shape and manage this culture, and should consider this top priority. The culture will form itself-the PM should be the architect (Chapter 4 goes into greater detail on project organization). When team members on a space project are all from the same organization, this task is relatively straightfo1ward. We just need to bring the st ongest aspects of organization culture to a conscious level and use its values and norms to guide the project. But when a project involves different organizations, the task becomes much more complicated. Table 20-2 shows four major types of organization culture [Schneider, 1994].

TABLE 20-2.   FourTypes of Organization Culture. This table shows lour characteristics of culture and ways In which these types of culture differ.

	Definition of Success	Way to Succeed	Approach with Customers and Constituents	Socialization Base
Control	• Dominance • The biggest	Get and keep control	• Controlling • Only game In town	Military organizations
Competence	• Superiority • The best	Pursuit of excellence	Offer the best value • Nothing else compares • One of a kind • State of the art	Educational **organizations**
Cultivation	Fuller realization of potential growth	Growth and development of people	• Realize possibility and potential more fully Fulfillment • Uplift and enrich	Religious organization
Collaboration	Synergy	Full use of teams	• Partnering • We did It together	The family

It's clear from the table that the collaboration type of culture is most appropriate for a space project involving people from different organizations. *A* PM can achieve this type of culture by taking the following steps:

- Understand where we and our team members are coming from-the home organization cultures
- Identify the largest gaps between home and desired collaboration culture
- Break blockages and stop doing things the old way. Create new norms of work style that support free-flowing multicultural teamwork.

For Mr. Roberts to transition from a control culture to collaboration, he must:

- Give up being dominant

- Value people as much as systems, functions, and strnctures
- Place confidence in the strength of teams, not in command and control

Likewise, for Dr. Walter to transition from competence to collaboration, he must:

- Give up being the best in favor of solutions that work for all partners
- Value the strength of teams, not individual stars

This sotmds straightforward and easy to implement, but in fact it's quite challenging. Simply being aware of cultural differences and their impact is an important first step. Next we must model the expected behavior. The team looks to the PM to set the norms and expectations. We must take the time to understand the cultural differences and change our own behavior first.

20.2.1   Improving Team Cultures

If our project culture is not what it should be, we can improve it in several ways (abbreviated from Cleland and Ireland [2002]):

- Keep the team members Informed on the project's status, including both good and bad news. We should do this at the regular review of the project team's work.
- Promote the sharing of Ideas, problems, opportunities, and interests among team members, particularly with those new to the project. Give new members a sense of belonging as soon as possible.
- Have social activities for the team such as informal lunches, coffee breaks, dinners, and trips to contractors' plants or to ccmpelitive projects. Don't overdo this and don't Interfere with the team members' personal off-duty time.
- Advise, ccach, mentor, prompt, and facilitate as much as possible a team environment, in which we provide people with support, encouragement, rewards, challenging work, and social Interactions.
- Keep the team info.rmed on what ccmpelilors are doing and what their c6rripetitive threat could mean to the project team.
- Lei the team kriow that the project and Its work are vital and urgent. Make the most of senior executives' visits and have the team members brief them on their work.
- Reduce the formality among team members.

The PM should maintain a balance within the team culture that produces winning results, keeps people motivated and reasonably happy, and allows them to reach their own aspirations and goals as well as those of the project.

20.2.2   Managing Conflict

We must also address the matter of **conflict** early and often (see Chapter 17). The following discussion is adapted from Cleland and Ireland [2002]:

> When people work together, circumstances are ripe for controversy, disagreement, position struggles, and Intellectual contention as team members carry out their roles on the team. How we deal with this conflict affects the project and organizational culture.
>
> Conflict Is Inevitable In any organizational effort, especially on a project team composed of people with different special skills. Disagreements over functional Input to the project occur. Functional specialists have problems communicating with other functional specialists. Different prejudices, ethics, morals, value systems, and the like can be bases for ongoing conflict.
>
> Inherent conflict In managing the p.roject team can work to an advantage through a subtle forcing of discussion and debate in resolving the disagreements. One benefit of conflict Is a team culture whose members are motivated to seek consensus In resolving conflict and In managing the project resources. Another benefit is a better understanding of the roles of the project team and other stakeholders. Resolving conflict also helps people acclimate to the dynamic nature of the project and the sometimes contrary demands that stakeholders place on it.
>
> When forming the project team, we should bring up this crucial issue: How will we deal with and resolve conflicts on this team? Getting members of the team to talk about how they would deal with conflict gives us a greater chance of managing and resolving conflicts properly. It's best to resolve conflicts at the lowest possible level. Senior management Involvement should be rare, partly because they aren't as familiar with the details. Only when the team can't resolve the conflict or it has higher Implications In the organization should senior management step In.

20.3   Manage the National Culture Differences

We can compare and contrast national cultures in many ways, and a considerable body of research and literature has emerged. (See *The Inlernatio11a/ Journal of Intercultural Research,* (IJIR); and the *Intercultural Press).* This section discusses five concepts pertaining to national cultural differences in international space project management.

20.3.1   Group Versus Individual Style

The first concept is that of self-identity being rooted either in one's reference group or in the individual. For an international project manager, this concept is fundamental to understanding and dealing with project team members. Hofstede [1991] defines this dimension as follows:

> The degree to which action is taken in a particular culture for the benefit of the individual or the group. An individualistic society is

a culture of the "self" where individuals aresupposed to take care of themselves and have a flexible-independent relationship with social groups. A group society gives preference to belonging to the "we," where individuals contribute to the wealth of their parents, clan, or organization in exchange for support.

The individual **versus'gro les tfi:a** merge from this definition appeared earlier in Table 20-1.

Hofstede discovered that the US was the most individualistic culture in his studies, followed by Great Britain and its former colonies and Northern Europe. The five most group-style countries were all in Latin America. Asian, African, and Arab countries were also group-style countries. Table 20-3 shows the implications for international PMs in working with these differences.

TABLE 20-3. Working With Group Versus individual Styles. This table compares group style cultures with the Individual style. We can use it to help manage those in the opposite group from oneself.

Group Style	Individual Style
Employees have extensive andImportant relationship and obligation networks or extended family and friends on and off the job,	Relationships and obligations are primarily to the immediate family, Sacrifices must be made for the Job, career, and company.
Need to save face	Need to tell the truth quickly
Well-developed people skills and sensitive to verbal and non-verbal **communication**	Task orientation and focus on objective content of communication
Preference for the whole vs. segmented person approach to employee life	Uncomfortable with the whole person approach
Difficult alignment with the organization- more natural to align oneself with position In the network of family and friends	More natural alignment of personal values and goals to those of the organization

20.3.2   Power Distance

The concept of power distance is a useful way to gauge the degree of separation that people feel from those in power. An international PM can use it to adapt his or her leadership style and expectations of team members, depending on the nationality mix in the international team. Table 20-4 depicts these cultural differences and the two styles of management.

Hofstede [1991] defines power distance as:

The degree to which inequality or distance between those in charge and the less powerful (subordinates) is accepted in a

culture. A society with an autocratic style (large Power Distance) leans toward a tight hierarchical structure where individuals know their place and the limit of their roles. A society with a participative style (small Power Distance) seeks status equality and interdependence between different layers of power.

TABLE 20-4. Participative Versus Hierarchical Styles. This table compares aspects of cultures that differ according to degrees of distance between those with power and those with less power.

Small Power Distance Participative Style	Large Power Distance Hierarchical Style
Participative, consultative approach	Hierarchical, or '1op-down" approach
Informality	Formality (reserve)
All should have equal rights	Power-holders are entitled to privileges
Pragmatic organization centered on tasks	Pyramidal structure
Independence, Initiative	Dependency, obedience

Countries with participative, low power distance indexes were in Northern Europe, the US, and Israel. The most hierarchical, large power distance counh'y was Malaysia, followed by Latin and Arab countries. Table 20-5 presents implications for working with differences in power distance.

TABLE 20-5.   Working With Hierarchical Versus Participative Styles. Here are some ways that cultures differing with respect to power distance can work with each other.

Large Power Distance Hierarchical Style)	Small Power Distance Participative Style
Reliance on the management hierarchy	Expect individual action and accountability
Focus on the Individual Job, not the organization	Concern for the organization
Limited Individual responsibility	Widely shared organizational responsibility

20.3.3   Uncertainty Avoidance

An international PM must deal with how much uncertainty team members from different countries can accept. These differ in the amount and frequency of information provided, and levels of acceptable risk. Table 20-6 presents these differences.

Hofstede [1991] defines uncertainty avoidance as:

> The extent to which people of different cultures are made anxious
> by situations they perceive to be unstructured, risky, ambiguous,
> or unpredictable. Societies that avoid uncertainty are structure-
> oriented and have a preference for rigid codes of behavior and
> management and tolerate less deviation from them. Societies that
> can deal with uncertainty are risk-oriented and encourage the
> taking of initiatives and risks.

TABLE 20·6. Tolerance for Uncertainty Versus Avoidance of Uncertainty. This table compares
cultures according to their ability to deal with uncertainty.

Tolerance for Uncertainty	Uncertainty Avoidance
Risks should be taken to get ahead and achieve rewards	Only a limited amount of risk should be taken according to level of responsibility
Blame for mistakes Is good and shows maturity and a willingness to take risks	Blame for mistakes should be avoided to save face and status

Countries with low uncertainty avoidance are Canada, the US, and Great
Britain. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance are Greece, Japan, Peru, and
France. Table 20-7 presents implications for working with this dimension.

TABLE 20·7. Working With the Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension. This table suggests ways
that cultures can work with each other when they differ on to how they deal with
uncertainty.

Tolerance for Uncertainty	**Uncertainty Avoidance**
Expect Implicit understanding and compliance with rules and procedures	Need explicit directions; reasons for rules and procedures; and an understanding of the downside of non-compliance
Expect appropriate risk and change to achieve outcomes	Only comfortable with small Increments of risk and change

20.3.4   Monochronic Versus Polychronic Cultures

These terms come from the work of Edward Hall [1959] and refer to a culture's
treatment of time-monochronicmeaning one view and useof timeand polychronic
meaning many uses and time interpretations. Table 20-8 illustrates the differences.

Polychronic cultures are relationship-based; a highly developed set of social
interpersonal competencies is necessary to work effectively with them (see
Figure 20-4). Monochronic cultures are more task-centered. People in these
cultures like to get to the point quickly and not waste time on much small talk or
relationship-building.

TABLE 20-8. Monochronic Versus Polychronic Cultures. This table contrasts cultures in how they deal with time. We can use It to anticipate the behavior of team members from each of the two major styles.

Monochronlc cultures	Polychronlc cultures
Take time commitments seriously	Time commitments are an objective to aim for
Adhere religiously to plans	Change plans often and easily
Emphasize promptness	Base promptness on the relationship
Short-term relationships	Lifetime relationships
Do one thing at a time	Do many things at once
Value privacy	Value people and relationships
Respect for private property; seldom borrow or lend	Reciprocal obligations; borrow and lend often and easily

Another difference between monochronic and polychronic cultures is communication style. Monochronic cultures are low context/high content. The spoken or written words take precedence over how things are said, to whom (in the hierarchy), and in what circumstances or context. The other approach (high context/low content) is characteristic of polychronic cultures. Figure 20-4 illustrates these contextual styles and also suggests that low context culture communication begins with specifics and then expands to generalization, while high context cultures communicate in general terms and get to specifics in a round-about way. Countries and regions with low context communication include: North America, Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. Regions and countries with high context communication include: Latin America, France, Taiwan, the Middle East, the Philippines, Italy, Malaysia, North Africa, Japan, Spain, China, Korea, Greece, and Mexico.

The following guidelines are useful for "monos" to work effectively with "polys."

- Learn the attitude toward time, its management, and communication style in the polychronic culture of interest [Morrison et al., 1995]
- Be creative in influencing polychronic partners to understand the importance of critical timeframes-communicate the downside of non-compliance
- Take time to build relationships. Polys live and work in a complicated relationship network. They are more likely to do something for a trusted friend than to comply with a project plan.
- Don't get upset if the polychronic partner seems distracted and is doing several things at once-"polys" are good at it and will pay attention if a relationship is built and maintained
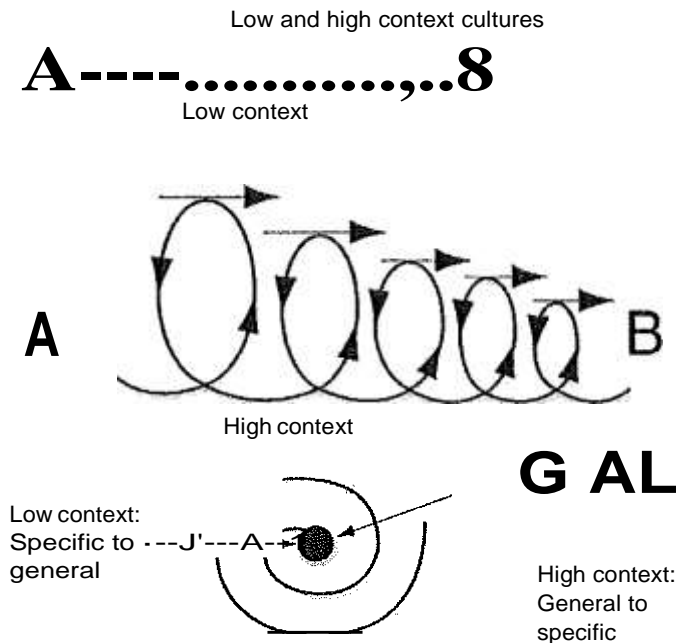
Low and high context cultures

A----..............,..8

Low context

A   B

High context

G AL

Low context:
Specific to ---J'---A-->
general

High context:
General to
specific

FIGURE 20-4. Communication Styles of Monochronlc and Polychronlc Cultures. We can apply
this to Improve communication among team members from the two types of cultures.
(Suggested by Kenneth R. Gordon, ca. 2007)

- Be ve1y careful about what is said, how it is communicated, and to whom.
High context listeners pay more attention to how things are said than do
low context people.

20.4   The Effective Intercultural Project Manager

Given the foregoing discussions of national and organizational cultures, we
may ask, "How can I be a more effective project manager in dealing with these
cultural issues?" Figure 20-5 presents a model for intercultural management
effectiveness.

These four overlapping areas of skill and competencies lead to successful
management. Most PMs are selected to manage a team because of their technical
knowledge and skills. They are quite surprised to learn from this model that they
may have only 25% of what they need for intercultural effectiveness. This section
focuses on the other 75% of the model.

20.4.1   Intercultural Competencies

On a personal level, a project manager can be more effective with a
management style that incorporates a special set of attitudes and attributes, or
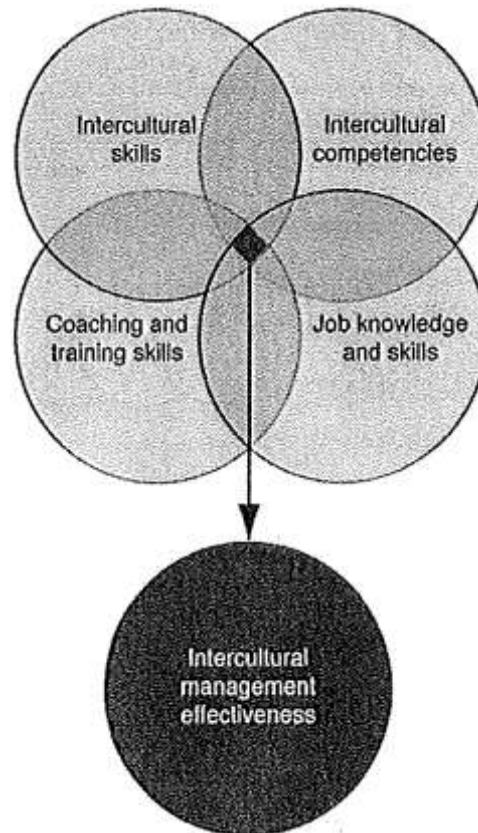competencies. Intercultural adjustment to the country of assignment accounts for

FIGURE 20-5.   Cultural Management Effectiveness Model. This Is a model of four overlapping areas of skills and competencies that characterize an effective Intercuilural PM.

some 45% of the variance in expatriate managers' job performance. That adjustment in turn correlates highly with the competencies of social interpersonal style, trust in people, interpersonal interest, and social adaptability [Tucker et al., 2004]. These competencies can also help a PM working across organizational cultures. Figure 20-6 presents a description of these competencies,

Social and interpersonal style-This set of competencies deals with building effective relationships with people of other cultures, and the ability to engage in the social occasions that are so much a part of life and work in many parts of the world. The set includes trust in people, interpersonal interest, and social adaptability.

Trust in people-An attitude of trust in other people is essential to forming meaningful relationships with members of a different culture. If we expect others to let us down, we convey an attitude of suspicion and distrust. This could slow or prevent interaction with people and acquisition of knowledge about their country and culture. Even if we feel that trust is something that must be earned, we must incorporate some level of risk-taking and faith in others into our dealings   with
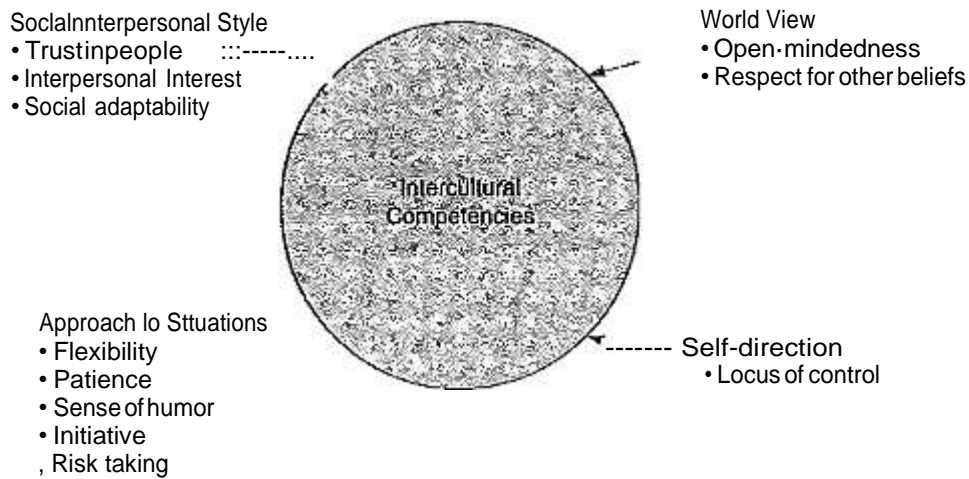
Soclalnnterpersonal Style
• Trustinpeople   :::-----....
• Interpersonal Interest
• Social adaptability

World View
• Open·mindedness
• Respect for other beliefs

Intercultural Competencies

Approach lo Sttuations
• Flexibility
• Patience
• Sense of humor
• Initiative
, Risk taking

Self-direction
• Locus of control

FIGURE **20-6.**   Interpersonal Competencies. This figure lays out four sets of competencies that facilitate working across cultures.

people from a new cultme. By becoming sensitive to the value of trust, the PM can enhance the positive aspects of the culture.

The following discussion on trust is adapted from Cleland and Ireland [2002]:

> A key challenge to the project leader is to manage the team members and the other project stakeholders so that one of the main characteristics in the team's culture Is trust-a security that one feels concerning the integrity, ability, and character of people associated with the project. To trust is to have confidence In the abilities and personalities of the team. To trust the team is to feel that team members wlll be responsive and responsible In making and Implementing decisions affecting the team, the project, and the other stakeholders. Trust must exist between the team and higher management, and these managers must have a vision of how the project fits into the larger goals and objectives of the enterprise.
>
> Trust is a condition In a relationship that takes years to develop, and then a single act of Imprudence can damage or destroy It. Trust Is easy to violate; it demands that members of the project team open up to each other and let each other know where they stand. Trust is particularly challenging to develop and maintain on a project team, where people from different disclpfines have to pull together for the common project goals. The essence of trust is that a person's word Is his or her bond. High-performance teams consciously develop a strong foundation of professional trust. They:
>
>   Count on each other
>   Rely on constant top-quality commitment
>   Promise only what they can deliver

Interpersonal interest-Interest and enjoyment in being with other people is critical to forming meaningful relationships. The support of friends, colleagues, and acquaintances can contribute significantly to a successful intercultural experience. Some people prefer to work and relax alone, which is workable in

some circumstances. But those who are extremely selective about the people they associate with, and interact little with other people or cultures, have a harder time coping than those who enjoy being with others. Contact with other people can facilitate learning the language, understanding the culture, and making meaningful professional and personal friendships.

Social adaptability-Being comfortable in unfamiliar social settings can be vital in managing across cultures. Entertaining clients, prospects, or colleagues is often part of the job. We have to feel comfortable dealing with new people, even those from another background, language, or culture. First meetings may be tense, but they are often crucial. Success requires taking the time to understand the guest's or host's expectations and the rules of reciprocity and gift giving. It entails getting to know and understand people, interacting with them, and establishing friendships. It means not avoiding but enjoying differences. People who are socially comfortable have more interactions on all levels and greater knowledge about other cultures and countries.

The three social interpersonal competencies are especially imperative when a project manager from a monochronic culture works with those from polychronic cultures. (See Table 20-8 above.)

World view-The world view competencies are open-mindedness and respect for other beliefs. Those with a world view can see and value others' ways of thinking and feeling without prejudice.

Open-mindedness-How strongly people feel about their own country's values, ideas, products, and ways of doing things, and how receptive and nonjudgmental they are to the ideas and ways of other counti'ies, cultures, and ethnic groups, are important in their intercultural management. Open-mindedness is crucial to intercultural effectiveness. Every culture has unique customs, practices, and beliefs, and we need to accept and respect them as valid for that culture. Open-minded individuals can accept lifestyles and beliefs that differ from their own, and don't feel that their country's ways of doing things are inherently superior. They don't make overt unfavorable comparisons to the home country. Rather they interact with people of other cultures on a meaningful level, value knowledge of the culture and customs, and seek mutual a'ccept'an'ce.

In contrast, those who feel their own valuesind'i.deas are better than others are likely to feel threatened by a new culture. They may show disdain for it, and find it difficult to form meaningful relationships or acquire valuable knowledge about the culture. This attitude is not effective for dealing with cross-cultural differences. Though we don't have to compromise our values, an open-minded attitude is essential for successful intercultural management.

Respect for other beliefs-Respect for the political and religious views of people from other cultures is vital to meaningful intercultural relationships. In many cultures, debating such issues is inappropriate, particularly by someone from outside. Even well-intentioned debates can be destructive to relationships with people of other cultures, and insome countries may even be dangerous. We should refrain from these discussions until we know the individuals we're talking with, or until we understand the culture well enough to be tactful. Even then, sometimes

it's best to be silent. Attempting to convince others that one's political or religious views are right may antagonize people who feel strongly about their own religion or politics. The ability to respect other beliefs, even while holding strong personal views, is an asset when interacting with people of other cultures.

Approach to situations-An effective approach to intercultural situations includes the competencies of flexibility, patience, a sense of humor, initiative, and risk taking. Applying these competencies to different or ambiguous intercultural situations yields a more positive and less stressful outcome.

Flexibility-The willingness to consider viewpoints and action plans different from those we would normally adopt is vital to intercultural management. Accepting new ideas and ways of approaching and solving a problem makes it easier to work with people whose ideas are different from our own. When we work across cultures, conventional cultural cues may not be available to us, and finding new solutions or ways of thinking about a problem may be difficult. Routines can change quickly, so we must be flexible in looking at problems or tasks to stay effective.

Patience-Patience in the face of unanticipated delays or frustrating situations is crucial for people who work across cultures. We must understand how various cultures differ in their notions of time and timeliness. Some cultures quantify and measure time, depending heavily on clocks and calendars. Others have a more fluid and relaxed attitude toward time, and do not subscribe to the axiom that "time is money". Expectations about punctuality or how quickly and exactly to meet deadlines and schedules can conflict with others' attitudes and values. We must try to understand the contexts in which we work, and adjust expectations about time and pace as much as practical.

Sense of lwmor-Using humor to cope with difficult, tense, or confusing situations, and to face challenges with spontaneity and ease, is a valuable skill for people who manage across cultures. Taking mistakes in stride, learning from them, and not taking them too much to heart, reduces a person's stress level and helps ease tensions. Disparaging humor is never appropriate, but a healthy sense of humor, including being able to laugh at oneself, enhances anyone's performance.

Initiative-A willingness to take charge of new and challenging situations, and take the lead in doing necessary tasks is a valuable characteristic for intercultural PMs. Successful people take charge when circumstances call for it, without being insensitive to the culture and the people they deal with. They avoid being too aggressive or embarrassing others. People with high initiative tend to acquire in-depth knowledge about other countries and people, and interact closely with them.

Risk taking-Accepting challenges, taking chances, and coping with change are essential to cross-cultural success. Such people can step outside their comfort zone, even when outcomes are uncertain. Extreme risk taking is usually unwise, but people rarely enjoy or understand a new culture when they avoid   the unknown elements of life around them.

Self direction-locus of control-The belief that our actions and abilities play a direct role in the outcome of the events in our life is critical to managing across cultures. We may feel that luck or external forces play a strong role, or that other

people's demands determine the larger part of what we do. Particularly during the initial stages of cross-cultural management, we are likely to encounter difficult problems or circumstances. Believing that we can take charge of the situation and move it toward a resolution is vital. By being self-directed, and acknowledging that some things are in fact beyond our control, we can meet challenges and opportunities in a positive way. People with a strong sense of personal control communicate and interact well with people across cultures.

Assessment of competencies-We assess these competencies using the Overseas Assignment Inventory (OAI) [Tucker, n.d.]. Some 17,000 OAJ assessments have been done, including 250 NASA international project managers. Figure 20-7 presents an OAI profile, with the NASA means plotted against the database. The band represents the mean score on each dimension, plus or minus one-half standard deviation. It's a good idea to complete an OAI assessment as well as assessments for the entire team. This also includes a development guide, so we can recognize our strengths and improve in weak areas. Project teams that do this have a much smoother cultural ride through their assignments.
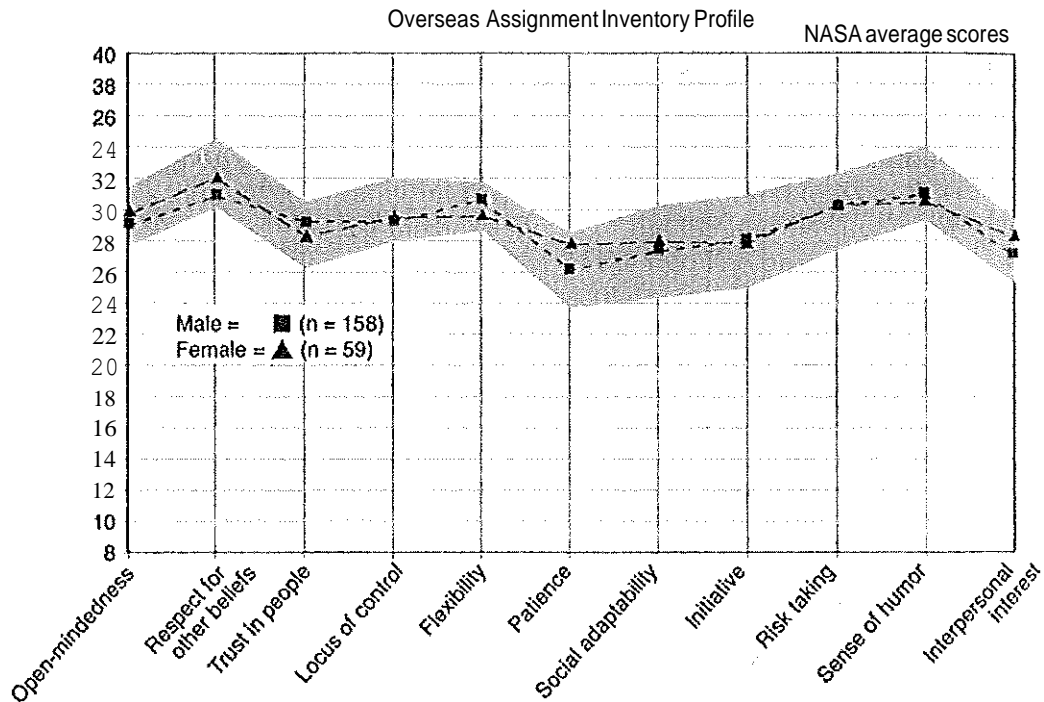

FIGURE 20-7. Assessment of Intercultural Competencies. This figure presents the OAI profile, with a NASA sample compared to a large database. *(Permission by Tucker International)*

20.4.2   Intercultural Skills

Once we have assessed and developed the above competencies, we still have to apply them to our management style. We first need to study and analyze the deep national and organizational cultures of interest. This provides a framework for anticipating and adapting to different cultural styles. We describe below some of the skills required to do this.

We can make major mistakes when we attribute the behavior of people from other cultures to a deep interpretation from our culture. We must withhold judgment until we can link the true basis for behavior to the deep culture of others, For example, an important aspect of trust for an American manager is to "tell the truth quickly," especially with a problem or bad news. Someone from another culture may not do this because of hierarchy, face-saving, and relationship values. The American might interpret this as not being trustworthy, when in fact the other person is trying to save face and maintain a relationship.

Speaking another language is an obvious intercultural skill, but non-verbal dimensions of communication are not so obvious. Nonverbal signals convey a great deal of meaning. In some cultures, the total context of a message carries more meaning that the words themselves. At a business meeting in Japan, for example, who is present, where they sit, their facial expressions, tone of voice, body posture, and subtleties of protocol communicate the substantive message. The words are ritualistic and may be rather vague in content. In all cultures, when words and nonverbal interactions contradict each other, people tend to believe the nonverbal messages. In entering a new culture, we must understand the complex messages sent nonverbally, to read the cultural signals, and to understand the signals the other person is sending through his or her native nonverbal code. Some of these non-verbal dimensions are listed below.

Physical Distance and Touch

- How far apart do people normally stand?
- How does this distance vary in different situations and relationships?
- What meaning may be attached to different body postures?
- Is eye contact maintained, intermittent, or missing? Does this differ in subordinate/ superior, peer, male/ female or parent/ child situations?
- Is dress more or less formal?

Gestures and Body Motion

- How do hands and arms express ideas and feelings? (Pointing, showing respect, etc.)
- Are any gestures that foreigners inadvertently make considered offensive?
- Are there any tmfamiliar gestures that foreigners should be able to recognize?

Facial Expressions

- Is it usuaHy easy to tell how people are feeling by the expressions on their faces?
- Are some facial expressions not immediately intelligible to persons new to the culture?

Just as important as non-verbal dimensions of communication are social dimensions. Certain behavior patterns-often referred to as protocol-communicate vital messages; these patterns arelearned at anearly age and are rarely misunderstood in the context of one's own culture. But following our own culture's patterns may communicate an unintended message in a new culture. The following social dimensions are important things for an international PM to keep in mind:

Meeting People

- Where are good places to meet people socially? For business purposes?
- How important are proper introductions? How are they conducted?
- What are appropriate topics of conversation when one has just met someone? Do they differ by gender?
- What kinds of invitations are appropriate to get to know someone better?
- How important is it to take the initiative in meeting people? What behavior might be seen as too aggressive? How does it differ between genders?

Entertaining

- What time should one arrive at different types of functions? What does arriving too early or late communicate?
- How does one know when to leave a function? What are the signals?
- When is an RSVP necessary?
- What should'one bring for the host or hostess at different types of functions?
- What attire is appropriate for various occasions?
- Should one assume an invitation includes other members of the family?
- Is there any particular seating protocol that should be followed?
- Is it necessary to send a thank you note after attending a dinner party?
- What is the best way to turn down an invitation when necessary?
- Should entertainment be reciprocated? How and within what time frame? Does it depend on whether the invitation was social or business related?

Gift Exchange

- When are gifts exchanged in business or social situations?
- What is appropriate behavior for receiving a gift?
- Should a gift always be wrapped?

- If I receive a gift, am I expected to reciprocate? Should my reciprocal gift be of the same value as the one I received?
- What should I do if I receive a very expensive gift that I feel is inappropriate for some reason or makes me feel uncomfortable?
- How will I know if someone has appreciated my gift? How do I show that I have appreciated a gift?
- What do I do if my company has strict rules about gift exchanging?
- What gifts are appropriate or inappropriate for various occasions?

Courtesy and Respect

- What are proper greetings and leave takings in different situations? Are there gender differences? Any physical contact?
- How can we show appreciation in different contexts? What words and gestures are appropriate? Are such words such as "please" and "thank you" used more or less often or in different ways?
- How are compliments given and received?
- Is queuing (standing in line) practiced?
- Is there a courteous way to refuse food or drink?
- What is the protocol for removing one's hat or shoes?
- What mannerisms with respect to the body might be offensive (nose-blowing, teeth-picking, scratching, putting hands in pockets, etc.)

20.4.3   Coaching and Training Skills

A truly effective project manager is in many ways a coach and a trainer. Team members look to the manager for direction and guidance. On international projects, this often means striking the difficult balance between exhibiting technical knowledge and firm style while being personable and empathetic. This is particularly true when managing people from polychronic culhues, where the "whole person" approach is customary. Leaders in these cultures are supposed to know their people well and deal with them beyond the boundaries of the workplace.

We don't intend here to provide a discourse on coaching. Instead we refer the reader to Kilburg [2000]. However, the following points apply to coaching across cultures. An international PM acting as coach or trainer to people from another culhue must take into account the culture's influence on the teaching and learning process. The Western style of participative, experiential learning contrasts with a more traditional, didactic style in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa that emphasizes rote learning. A Western coach must be very careful with written material, because students will memorize it as presented. They will likewise take spoken messages without much challenge, comment, or discussion. The coach that expects coaching sessions to be lively, interactive, and creative will be disappointed. Encouraging

participants to take a more active role as learners entails spending more time on the coaching or teaching process itself.

Coaching across cultures should also take into account high vs. low context, and individualism vs. collectivism. A Western coach represents a low context, individualist culture, which focuses on what is said and expects people to take responsibility for their own actions. In coaching a person from a high context, collectivist culture, it is essential to give negative feedback in ways where face is not lost, and the person maintains pride, honor, and self-esteem in front of others.

20.5   Intercultural Synergy in Project Management

A project manager that can develop all four of the skills-competency areas is more likely to be successful in managing across both international and organizational cultures. This section presents an approach to intercultural project management that has proven successful. It's called intercultural synergy, and Figure 20-8 contrasts it with two other approaches. Model I, culture dominance, is very common in space projects. The lead organization (which is either putting up the most money or has the required technology), brings its management and organizational style with it, disregarding suggestions from partners. This model assumes that all people are pretty much the same and discounts cultural diversity with all its complexities. It leads to partners feeling they're being treated as inferior, and doesn't allow for solutions that may be more difficult to come by, but superior in the long rnn. The second model brings the organizations closer together. Major areas of tension and difficulty are avoided or resolved. The third model[Adler,1991]:

> ...is an approach to managing the impact of cultural diversity, involves a process in which managers form organizational polices, strategies, structures, and practices based on, but not limited to, the cultural patterns of Individual organization members and clients. Culturally synergistic organizations create new forms of management and organizations that transcend the individual cultures of their members. This approach recognizes both the similarities and differences among the nationalities that compose a multicultural organization and suggests that we neither ignore nor minimize cultural diversity but rather that we view it as a resource in designing and developing organizations.

An example of a synergistic approach comes from experiences of American managers at NASA working with their counterparts in Russia. The NASA approach in this project was "component build and test", which meant testing each component before assembly, and then testing the entire system. The Russians used the "assembly test" approach. They did not have the resources to allow the component test approach. The two groups working together developed an approach that was a combination of both-some but not all components were tested before assembly, resulting in a successful project in less time.
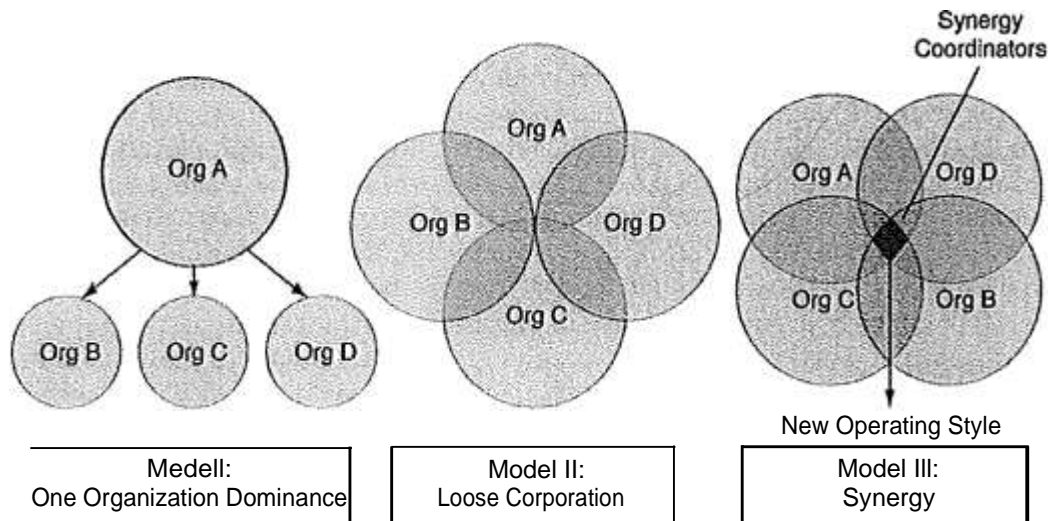
FIGURE 20-8.   Intercultural Synergy In Project Management (Suggested by Adler [19911). This figure contrasts three different styles of project culture.

Project teams that implement a synergistic approach report high quality in their intercultural business relationships. Listed below are nine characteristics of this quality. We can use these characteristics as goals for a new project, or as a "check-up" list for on-going projects. Achieving this high quality requires attention to the process of intercultural management as well as the financial, logistical, and technical aspects. We must allocate time to spend with international partners to discuss these issues.

20.5.1   Characteristics that Add Up to lntercultural Synergy

High-quality   intercultural   relationships   exhibit   the   following   nine characteristics:

- Non-domination by any parties
- Strong effort for deep understanding
- Learning from each other
- Taking time to focus on process and communication
- Showing respect for each other
- Parties committed to win/win and outcome
- Stereotypes of each other overcome
- Trust developed among parties
- Withholding judgment of others' approach

Summary

This chapter addresses five key questions to managing the cultural aspects of space projects. It defines and discusses national and team cultures, and introduces _models to guide PMs in understanding and dealing with cultural issues in their teams and with partners. It suggests ways to deal with team culture and communication challenges across cultmes. It presents an intercultmal management effectiveness model, which incorporates four overlapping sets of competencies and skills. Finally, it proposes an intercultural synergy model for space projects.

The chapter argues for the significance of cultural aspects in project management. This is somewhat daunting, since many cultural aspects are generally invisible. Adler [1991] put it this way: Do managers see culture? *No; neither managers nor academics generally see culture as affecting day-to-day operations of organizations. Very often good managers see themselves as beyond passport, and good organizations as beyond nationality.*

Cultures emerge whenever groups of people come together to work [Deal and Kennedy, 1982]. They can either remain unconscious and invisible, perhaps operating to the detriment of the project, or they can be made conscious and visible and become a powerful force for success.

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