

A Study of Conflict Management

# **The Intercultural Mediation Project:**

in an Intercultural Context.

# **The Bléré Experience.**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Intercultural Mediation Project was a collaborative research project led by the Berghof Center, a German research organization, and included the Conflict and Change Center of the University of Minnesota and the University of Paris, Dauphine. To study this question of intercultural mediation the three partners brought together ten mediators from each country to a series of three research seminars. The second seminar at Bléré, France, with which this research paper is concerned, was in part designed to answer the question *Does national culture have an impact on the perception of strategy use for conflict management?* To answer that question, three more specific questions were developed. *Do patterns of conflict management exist within the three national cultures represented? If yes, what are those patterns? What if any effect did the process of the eight day seminar experience have on the participants perceptions of the use of conflict strategies?*

To answer these three questions, an adapted version of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument was used. The purpose of the questionnaire was to analyze respondent's perceptions of the use of five strategies of conflict: accommodating, avoiding, competing, compromising, and co-promoting in the three national cultures. A statistical analysis was undertaken to determine where significant differences existed regarding the perceptions of use held by the group as a whole and the three national sub-groups.

The statistical analysis indicated that significant differences did exist for several variables. These significant differences demonstrated potential patterns identified from the pre- to post-test with respect to the perceptions of use of the competing, co-promoting, and avoiding strategies among people in the three national cultures. In addition, a significant change was demonstrated in the results of the pre/post comparison for the competing and accommodating strategies. With

respect to the competing strategy, the perception of use associated with the national cultures significantly decreased over the course of the seminar. As for the accommodating strategy, perceptions significantly increased over the eight days at Bléré.

These results lead to several implications regarding intercultural mediation. First is the need for awareness that potential cultural differences do exist in the perceptions of handling conflict. Second, as a result of potential differences of perceptions, the need for flexibility with respect to controlling the process of communication is needed so as to have the ability to work towards reaching solutions with the greatest degree of satisfaction. Third, the results of this seminar warrant comparison to the first and third seminars where stronger conclusions about the use of specific conflict strategies between national cultures could be more appropriately made. To strengthen those conclusions, future research should conduct a separate study of this adapted version of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument to determine its reliability and validity. Fourth, using the process of the seminar as a substitute for the process of mediation, the degree of flexibility shown by the participants with respect to their perception of people within the three national cultures' concern for their own self interests and that of the other, shows promise for the use of mediation as one possible arena for dealing with intercultural conflict.

# **1 Background**

## **1.1 Intercultural Mediation Project**

The Intercultural Mediation Project came into being as a result of a project entitled *Conflict Cultures and Intercultural Mediation* begun at the Berghof Research Center in Berlin, Germany. The intent of the project was to study intercultural mediation in an intercultural context. To this end Petra Haumersen and Frank Liebe of the Berghof Center initiated a collaborative effort with Dr. Thomas Fiutak of the Conflict and Change Center, University of Minnesota and Prof. Jacques Salzer of the University of Paris, Dauphine. To study this question of intercultural mediation the three partners brought together thirty mediators, ten from each country, to a series of three research seminars.

The researchers understand mediation as a process-based procedure for managing conflict, in which a neutral party attempts to restore communication between the disputants following its impairment by the conflict, with a view of finding a solution that brings the greatest degree of satisfaction possible to all those involved. When examining intercultural mediation several factors needed to be included. As a communicative procedure that lends structure to negotiating processes it is difficult to reduce mediation to formal, technical aspects, independent of the context brought to the mediation. Different people in different contexts (such as individuals, members of groups, organizations, or systems) have developed different ways of dealing with negotiation processes and of conducting themselves within them.

The 'art' of the mediator is to be able to make formal features appear flexible, or shape them in a flexible manner so that those involved feel their needs are acknowledged. When parties to a conflict come from different national cultures, culture provides another context for how individuals deal with conflict. Formation of

an individual's identity is related to a process of socialization within particular forms of cultural life. It is bound with collective identities established within a cultural network made up of various experiential and living contexts.

The dilemma within intercultural mediation is in attempting to understand whether there are indeed different obstacles to effective communication or are different strategies used when negotiating with the other parties. The assumption is that methods and procedures used in the original context, or national culture, in which they were created contain presuppositions that often enjoy general unconscious assent, or at least general familiarity within the original context, or national culture. Therefore, by way of example, a mediation process created in France may contain procedures that seem commonplace to French persons, but that may seem unusual to people from other national cultures and effect their ability or ease of communication. As a result, the task ultimately was to examine the procedures and methods used in an intercultural mediation to determine how best to develop a process of communication that could account for potential cultural differences and help those involved work towards reaching solutions that bring the greatest degree of satisfaction to all.

### ***Seminar One: Chorin, Germany (September, 1995)***

The purpose of the first seminar was to formulate hypotheses about the possible relevance of cultural differences in processes of conflict management as currently used in intercultural conflicts. The findings from this seminar were used to develop the methodology and agendas for the following two seminars. In addition, the first seminar, within an intercultural context, attempted to develop the description, analysis, and conceptualization of the role of the neutral party. The program included identifying national group identities and conducting mostly interpersonal conflict role play scenarios within language groups<sup>1</sup>.

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1. For a full analysis of the Chorin seminar, see Frank Liebe, *Intercultural Mediation: A Difficult Brokerage* (1996).

### ***Seminar Two: Bléré, France (November, 1996)***

During the Chorin seminar the only prerequisite for the participants was experience as a mediator. In the second seminar, participants were expected to be either bi- or tri-lingual with respect to the English, French and German languages. This seminar was divided into two blocks. Block one consisted of a systematic study of intercultural mediation conducted in an intercultural role play setting. Role play scenarios moved systematically through permutations of participants of the three national groups based on each participant playing the role of *Observer*, *Party* and *Mediator*. Each role play session included an introductory plenary session, the role play itself, small group and larger group debriefings, individual journal writing, trio discussions of one American, French, and German participant, and a closing ‘fishbowl’ plenary discussion.

Block two examined the relationship between the mediator as individual and the mediator as a part of a national group, as this related to the question “*What has made me the mediator I am today?*”. Sessions in Block two analyzed the individual’s history of mediation on personal, small group, and national sub-group level. Block two ended with each national sub-group scripting a role play specific to their perceived national culture, and then role playing the original scenarios developed in national groups. This Block utilized individual journal writing, double-trio grouping of two American, French, and German participants, as well as national group meetings and plenary discussions.

### ***Seminar Three: Santa Fe (April, 1997)***

The third seminar continued where the second seminar concluded, which was with the study of role play scenarios developed by one national group and role played by one of the other two national groups. The main purpose of the third seminar was to examine the following two questions. First, *in an intercultural context is it possible to develop a communication strategy where there are equal power configurations in communication between different cultures?*

This examined whether mediation's defining characteristic of focusing on the interests of the disputing parties can be maintained if the interests form an inherent part of the cultural identity as well as part of the background for the conflict. Can communication strategies be developed to give equal balance to these interests? *Second, is there a process for observing intercultural mediation which will allow critical analysis of the mediation including the ability to form standards (measurements) of effective communication in constructive conflict management?*

## **1.2 Bléré Experience**

The purpose of this paper is to focus on the second seminar at Bléré. The intent of this portion of the project research is to examine if national culture has an impact on the perception of strategy use for conflict management. The larger study of the whole project experience will examine if this impact is consistent within three national group cultures across seminars. For example, if a conflict management pattern exists for the German group of participants, is it consistent from the first seminar in Chorin to the second Seminar in Bléré? And is it consistent despite the fact that these were two different groups of participants? In order to answer this question, the question of whether or not a conflict management pattern existed at Bléré must first be answered. If the answer to this question is yes, then what exactly was the pattern.

To answer the two questions: *Do patterns of conflict management exist within the national group cultures represented at Bléré? and What are those patterns?* seminar participants responded to two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was the Thomas-Kilmann instrument as adapted. This questionnaire was designed to identify an individual respondent's perceptions of the three national cultures' characteristic approach or style of managing conflict. A third question, which the Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire as adapted was used to answer, was *"What if any effect did the process of the eight day seminar experience have on the participants perceptions of*

*the use of conflict strategies?”* The second questionnaire was the Individualism-Collectivism questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to analyze respondents’ identification with either an individualist worldview or a collectivist worldview. Statistical analysis of participant responses to these two questionnaires was used to answer the three questions posed. This paper will detail the methodology of the two questionnaires, and undertake an analysis of the first questionnaire, the Thomas-Kilmann instrument as adapted.

## **2 Method**

### **2.1 Participants at Bléré**

There were a total of thirty participants in the Intercultural Mediation Project at Bléré. Of these thirty, ten were representatives of each of the three participating countries: France, Germany and the United States. The group included seventeen females and thirteen males. The ages, economic status, and places of work varied among the participants. The qualifications for the participants included the ability to speak one or both of the other two languages and that they had conducted at least five mediations<sup>2</sup>. In addition to these qualities, the researchers were looking for a representative sample of the different geographical regions within each country.

### **2.2 Questionnaires**

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2. Several of the participants were only able to speak their own language, or had limited ability in a second language.

Two questionnaires were used to gather data for the Intercultural Mediation Project. The first questionnaire was the Individualism-Collectivism (INDCOL) questionnaire. INDCOL was designed to analyze a respondent's identification with either an individualist worldview or a collectivist worldview. The second questionnaire was the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument as adapted by Dr. Thomas Fiutak of the University of Minnesota. The Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire as adapted was designed to analyze a respondent's perception of behavior associated with the five strategies of conflict: accommodating; avoiding; competing, compromising, co-promoting by people in the three national cultures. The analysis of these two questionnaires from the data gathered at Bléré was intended to shed light on the process of intercultural mediation.

### **2.3 Individualism-Collectivism Questionnaires**

Use of the INDCOL questionnaire was based on the work of C. Harry Hui<sup>3</sup> and Harry C. Triandis<sup>4</sup>. Their work developed from the question "Is the understanding of individualism culture bound, or can it be taken as a general and universal concept for the categorization of cultures and people." (1986, p. 225) The authors determined through questionnaires sent to researchers around the world that the concepts of individualism and collectivism were specific to a set of sub-scales determined by the intimacy of relationship. The sub-scales used included: spouse; parent; kin; neighbor; friend and co-worker. The definition for the two terms, individualism and collectivism, are quite elaborate.

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3. C. Harry Hui is Professor of Psychology at the University of Hong Kong.

4. Harry C. Triandis is Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois.

### **2.3.1 Individualist Construct**

The definition of individualism is based on the work of A.S. Waterman (1984) who states that individualism embodies four psychological qualities:

1. *A sense of personal identity*, which is the knowledge of who one is and what one's own goals and values are. This is related to the philosophical concept of the 'true self', which specifies "what an individual deems personally expressive and therefore what is to be actualized."
2. Maslow's *self-actualization*, which is striving to be one's true self.
3. Rotter's (1966) *internal locus of control*, which reflects one's willingness to accept personal responsibility for life's happiness and sorrows.
4. Kohlberg's (1969) *principled moral reasoning*, which is an individual holding moral principles that are universalized and acting in accordance with what is right.

The individualist construct is linked to the idea of self-orientation which is the permissibility of an actor pursuing any interest 'private' to himself or herself or to a small group (a sub-collective).

### **2.3.2 Collectivist Construct**

The collectivist construct on the other hand, is viewed as a cluster of a wide variety of beliefs and behaviors which come under one of the following seven categories (Hui and Triandis, 1986):

1. *Consideration of implications (costs and benefits) of one's own decisions and/or actions for other people.*
2. *Sharing of material resources*, which signifies a network of relationships and often maintenance of a social network of reciprocation.

3. *Sharing of nonmaterial resources*, which follows the idea of a system for the reciprocation of resources such as time and affection.
4. *Susceptibility to social influence*, whether based on informal or normative social influence, is based on the idea of conformity.
5. *Self-presentation and facework*, which ties closely to gaining group approval or avoiding group shaming and the notion of facesaving.
6. *Sharing of outcomes*, which is based on the value of interdependence, one person's success or failure is inextricably linked to that of the collective.
7. *Feeling of involvement in others' lives*, which stems from the belief that one person's life experience could have direct or indirect impact on the life experiences of other's in the group.

The collectivist construct is bound to the notion of collective-orientation. Collective-orientation refers to the actor's obligation to "pursue the common interest of the collective".

The tool for measurement was a sixty-three item questionnaire. The compendium below gives the breakdown of each question correlated with the six different individualist and collectivist sub-scales used in the questionnaire<sup>5</sup>. The respondents were instructed to answer each question based on a 6 point scale which ranged from *strongly disagree/false* (1) to *strongly agree/true* (6). The questions were categorized into the six sub-scales, as denoted by Triandis and Hui, and further defined by a collectivist or individualist identification. INDCOL is used to measure the degree of identification with the either the collectivist or individualist constructs (i.e. the higher the response to a collectivist denoted question the stronger the identification with the collectivist construct, and the higher the response to an individualist denoted question the stronger the identification with the individualist construct).

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5. For the full questionnaire, please see Appendix B.

Sub-scale Variable	Question
Individualist Spouse	#’s 25, 52, 56, 60
Collectivist Spouse	#’s 18, 35, 43, 46
Individualist Parent	#’s 1, 7, 11, 13, 21, 23, 26, 38, 42, 47, 57
Collectivist Parent	#’s 2, 15, 29, 51, 61
Individualist Kin	#’s 8, 17, 28, 31
Collectivist Kin	#’s 30, 36, 49, 53
Individualist Neighbor	#’s 3, 5, 14, 48, 59, 62
Collectivist Neighbor	#’s 4, 20, 33, 37
Individualist Friend	#’s 9, 45, 50, 55, 58
Collectivist Friend	#’s 34, 39, 40, 41, 63
Individualist Coworker	#’s 6, 12, 16, 22, 24, 27, 44
Collectivist Coworker	#’s 10, 19, 32, 54

*(See Appendix B)*

#### **2.4 Thomas-Kilmann Questionnaire as Adapted**

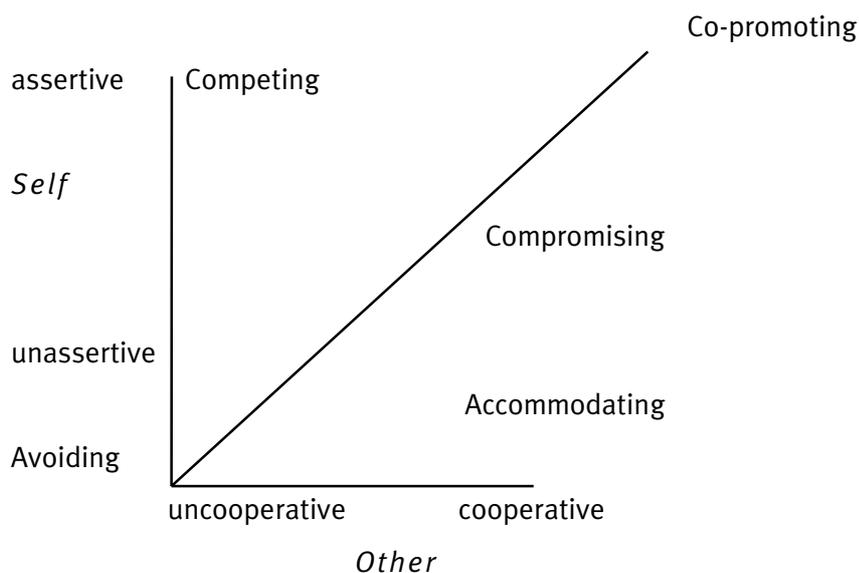
The Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire as adapted was based on the work Kenneth W. Thomas<sup>6</sup> and Ralph H. Kilmann<sup>7</sup>. The original Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE

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6. Kenneth W. Thomas is Professor of Administrative Science at the University of California at Los Angeles.

7. Ralph H. Kilmann is Professor of Business Administration and director of the Program in Corporate Culture, Katz School of Business, University of Pittsburgh.

(Management-of-Differences Exercise) Instrument was designed to assist individuals in becoming more aware of their characteristic approach or style in managing conflict. The MODE is based on the two-dimensional model of conflict behavior developed by Blake and Mouton (1964). Thomas and Kilmann's revised model separates two analytically independent dimensions of behavior in conflict situations: (1) *assertiveness*, defined as a party's attempt to satisfy their own concerns, and (2) *cooperativeness*, defined as attempts to satisfy the concerns of the other person. These two dimensions are used to identify five conflict-handling modes (strategies): *competing* (assertive, uncooperative), *avoiding* (unassertive, uncooperative), *accommodating* (unassertive, cooperative), *collaborating (co-promoting)* (assertive, cooperative), and *compromising* (intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness)



**Fig. 2.1. Thomas-Kilmann: Two-dimensional model of conflict behavior**

Respondents to the questionnaire are cautioned that there are no universal right answers. All five strategies are useful in some situations; each represent a set of useful social skills (Thomas and Kilmann, 1974). However, the co-promotion strategy

has been recommended by proponents of the two-dimensional model as an approach to conflict which transcends zero-sum assumptions. This strategy is an attempt to work with the other person to find solutions which result in high degrees of satisfaction for all parties (Ruble and Thomas, 1976).

#### **2.4.1 Conflict Strategies**

Avoidance is defined as behavior where the individual is not immediately pursuing their own needs and wants or those of the other person. The person does not address the conflict at that moment in time. An example of one of the avoiding statements used in the questionnaire is “They try to do what is necessary to sidestep stressing issues”. Accommodating as a conflict strategy is characterized by individuals shifting the focus from their own needs and wants to satisfying the needs and wants of the other individual. At its extreme accommodation leads to a lose/win solution, where an individual sacrifices their own needs to meet all the needs of the other person. An example of an accommodating statement is “They sometimes sacrifice their own wishes for the wishes of the other person”. The strategy of competing is defined as the individual pursuing their own needs and wants at the other person’s expense. At its extreme, competition leads to a win/lose solution, where the individual meets all their own needs while meeting none of the needs of the other. An example of a competing strategy statement is “They are usually firm in pushing their own goals”. The objective of the compromising strategy is to find some expedient mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties. The compromise strategy leads to win/lose, win/lose solution. Here both parties meet some of their own needs but not all. An example of a compromising strategy statement is “They try to find a solution between their position and the other person’s position”. The co-promoting strategy involves an attempt to work with the other individual to find a solution which satisfies the needs and wants of all persons involved. The co-promoting strategy leads to a win/win or gain/gain solution, where all parties meet their most important needs. Finally, an example of a statement

demonstrating the co-promoting strategy is “They attempt to deal with all the concerns the other person and they may have”.

The tool for measurement was a thirty statement questionnaire. The statements were written so as to reflect one of the five conflict strategies. The compendium below gives the breakdown of the six statements correlated with each conflict strategy used in the questionnaire<sup>8</sup>. The questionnaire used a 7 point scale asking each respondent to what degree did they agree with each statement. The scale ranged from (1) *not at all* to (7) *to a very great degree*. The respondents were instructed to give an answer for the degree to which each statement represented their image of the behavior of people who live in France, Germany, and the United States. By using the phrase ‘people who live in’ perceptions were not isolated to people born French, German or US citizens, but was opened up to any persons living in the respective countries.

Conflict Strategy	Questions
Accommodating	#’s 2, 6, 7, 20, 21, 25
Avoiding	#’s 1, 9, 10, 12, 14, 22
Competing	#’s 5, 11, 15, 18, 27, 29
Compromising	#’s 3, 13, 16, 17, 24, 28
Co-promoting	#’s 4, 8, 19, 23, 26, 30

(See Appendix A)

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8. For the full questionnaire, please see Appendix A.

#### **2.4.2 Adaptations to the Thomas-Kilmann Questionnaire**

Three modifications of the original Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire were introduced for this project. First, the thirty statements used in the project's questionnaire were taken from a larger questionnaire of sixty statements. In the original questionnaire there were thirty paired statements yielding a total of sixty individual statements. There were 12 statements for each of the five conflict strategies yielding a total of 12 x 5 or 60 individual statements combined into 30 paired statement/questions. In the questionnaire used for the project, there were 6 statements for each of the five conflict strategies yielding a total of 6 x 5 or 30 individual statements/questions. The paired statement format was taken out and the remaining thirty statements were used as individual statements in the questionnaire.

Second, all words containing gender were taken out of the questionnaire. Words such as **male** and **female**, and **his** and **her** were replaced by **they** and **their** respectively. The result was a set of thirty gender neutral statements.

Third, the original questionnaire used an ipsative measure, which was a forced response between one of the two paired statements where strategy scores were dependent on the choice made. Therefore an increase in one strategy scores must be offset by a decrease in one of the other strategies. The original questionnaire was intended as a self-reflective piece. The questionnaire for the project used a Likert scaled response where it is possible to score equally high or low on all strategies because responses to each question were independent of each other. The adapted questionnaire was intended to identify individual respondent's perceptions of the three national cultures (France Germany and the United States) characteristic approach or style in managing conflict. This involved the perception of use in the respondent's own national culture, but also their perception of use in the other two national cultures.

### **2.4.3 Reliability and Validity Studies of the Thomas-Kilmann Instrument**

Critique of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument has produced inconclusive results as to the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The only consistent theme regarding this questionnaire was that further studies needed to be undertaken. Studies of the MODE instrument have examined internal reliability, test-retest reliability, structural validity, and predictive validity. In addition articles have been written with general critiques of the questionnaire.

Internal reliability and test-retest reliability fall under what Thomas and Kilmann refer to as substantive validity. Substantive validity is testing the internal consistency of the items identified with each dimension, and how consistently individuals prefer each of the five conflict strategies. Cronbach's (1951) alpha was used as the measure of internal reliability. A study conducted by Thomas and Kilmann (1978) reported all coefficients for the five strategies to be in the moderate range of acceptability with the exception of the accommodating strategy. The scores ranged from a low of .43 for the accommodating strategy to a high of .71 for the competing strategy with a mean score for the five strategies of .60<sup>9</sup>. However, in a study conducted by Womack (1988), using a more conservative measure developed by J.C. Nunnally (1978), which considers scores of .80 as adequate for basic research and scores of .90 as 'minimum' for use in applied settings like organizational training, the scores recorded by Thomas and Kilmann (1978) were considered low.

With respect to test-retest reliability, which reflects the stability of scores measured for the same population at different times (Womack, 1988) the study by Thomas and Kilmann (1978) reported moderately high and consistent scores across the strategies. Scores ranged from a low of .61 for the competing strategy to a high of .68 for the avoiding strategy. The mean score was .64. However, again when using the more conservative measures of Nunnally, the scores failed to reach the acceptable level for either basic or applied research (Womack, 1988).

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9. .60 demonstrates a score of moderate reliability. Scores in the mid .6's demonstrates moderately high reliability (Thomas and Kilmann, 1978).

Structural validity refers to assuring that the format of the instrument and the calculation of individual scores are consistent with the intended definition of the concept being assessed (Thomas and Kilmann, 1978). It is the ability to measure the two independent underlying dimensions, assertiveness and cooperativeness, and the five different strategies which are plotted on these dimensions (Womack, 1988). Several studies (Thomas and Ruble, 1976; Thomas and Kilmann, 1978; Womack, 1988) found the two-dimensions of conflict-handling behavior to have independent meanings and further confirmed the expected two-dimensional structure of the MODE scale. Two exceptions included the co-promoting strategy having a lower correlation rating with the cooperativeness dimension than expected and having the compromising strategy being correlated with the cooperative dimension when no correlation was expected. Ruble and Thomas (1976) conclude that compromising is seen as a cooperative gesture and may be more dichotomous than continuous when applied to conflict situations. In addition, results indicated possible inter-correlation among the five conflict strategies (Womack, 1988).

Predictive validity is generally one of the more rigorous and demanding tests of the usefulness of an instrument in empirical research. It refers to the instrument's ability to predict before, during, or after an individual's conflict-handling behavior (Womack, 1988). The results of various studies regarding predictive validity were again mixed. Womack cites several studies which raise doubts as to the predictive validity of the MODE. A study by Goering, Rudick, and Faulkner (1986) drew the conclusion that few strong links between self-reported styles and coded behavior styles were found. In another study, Kabanoff (1987) reported no significant correlation between MODE scores (respondents recorded preferences) and MODE rating (behavior/observed use).

Studies inclined to give support to the predictive validity of the instrument include Thomas and Kilmann (1978) who found early results to be consistent with theory of conflict-handling behavior, but who also noted that far too few studies had been completed at that time to draw any strong conclusions. However, in a more recent study, Volkema and Bergmann (1995) reported to find a significant relationship for both assertiveness and cooperativeness with the last response

indicated in a conflict scenario indicating that individuals were inclined to conclude with behaviors consistent with their Thomas-Kilmann MODE preferences.

Finally, while broader more general criticism of the Thomas-Kilmann instrument is also mixed, there is support for its use in an experimental setting such as was created in Bléré. In a more critical article, Knapp, Putnam and Davis (1988) drew three general criticisms. One was the static two-dimensional model that forms the basis for selecting conflict styles cannot capture the goal complexity in most conflicts. Second was the strategies limit communication to verbal behaviors, especially ones that are rational and uncomplicated, mutually exclusive across different strategies, and static and unchanging. Third was that this instrument fails to provide any over time or developmental understanding of both communication and conflict.

From a more supportive perspective and one that has direct application to the current project are the observations of the study conducted by Womack (1988). She begins by noting that the MODE is the instrument most widely used in empirical studies of conflict styles, and is often used in an exploratory manner. One area where the MODE has been applied is to assess the effectiveness of a variety of training programs through the use of pre- and post-testing. In the handful of studies she reviewed, all reported that MODE scores indicated training had been effective, and this was supported by the participants' own impressions. Therefore, the instrument appears useful in measuring the outcomes of conflict training programs. Womack further concluded that trainers feel the content is substantial and thought-provoking and that the instrument is flexible enough to be used in a variety of training purposes, such as assessing one's own conflict style, *increasing awareness of styles used by others* (italics mine) and team building.

These studies have several important implications for this current research project. First, the mixed review of the reliability and validity of the MODE instrument means that conclusions drawn from this study need to be explained as coming out of an exploratory use of the instrument and that they should err on the side of more conservative conclusions. Second, while there seemed to be broader support of the fundamental foundation of the two-dimensional assertiveness/cooperativeness approach of the MODE to studying conflict-handling, where criticism arose was in

making strong conclusions between the five strategies. However, in this project one of the main areas of focus was to examine how each strategy *individually* was perceived by the three different national sub-groups.

Third, with respect to the criticism of the static nature and limit to verbal communication, one of the purposes of this project was to examine how static or fluid the conflict styles were. In addition, while the questions were stated in such a way that emphasis may be placed on verbal communication, they by no means exclude the use of non-verbal communication. It is up to the individual respondent to decide where to draw conclusions when answering each statement.

Fourth, with respect to the 'failure' of the MODE to provide any 'over-time' or developmental understanding, this criticism was addressed in the pre- and post-test manner in which this instrument was being conducted within the seminar. Furthermore, the MODE instrument was used in all three seminars that took place over a two year span.

Three additional limitations/questions of the use of this instrument in this particular setting need to be addressed. One, is the fact that the participants at this seminar were there because they have content knowledge of conflict management, and in fact several may have taken the Thomas-Kilmann MODE questionnaire before. This raises the possibility that these participants could link the statement in the questionnaire to its appropriate strategy giving them the ability to manufacture any score they want. Two, this questionnaire was delivered in three different languages, therefore to the degree that direct translation was not possible, there could have been slight differences in how the same question was read in each of the three languages. The latter limitation was accounted for to the greatest degree possible by having professional translators in each country review the accuracy of the translations. The former can only be noted and was outside the ability of anyone to address as it was impossible to know what the individual respondent was thinking when answering the questionnaire.

The third limitation is the question of the 'generalizability' of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE questionnaire to other cultures. Although no direct study of the cultural application of the questionnaire has yet been undertaken, the questionnaire has been put into practice in several other countries such as Australia, Indonesia,

and China. In these studies the authors did not recognize any cultural limitations with respect to the questionnaire. However, this project used the questionnaire in an intercultural setting, while these other studies were conducted in mono-cultural settings. But, if the manner in which the pre- and post-tests were conducted was any indication of the potential cultural limits of this questionnaire, then they appeared negligible. There were little to no questions from the respondents as to the meaning of the statements, all the questionnaires were correctly filled out, and when a questionnaire was not filled out it was due to a personal objection to having to make perceptions about other cultures, not a cultural misperception of what was being asked.

To conclude, it must be restated that the questionnaire used in this project was an adapted version of the original Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument. It is beyond the scope of this research to resolve the debate of whether the measure used by Thomas and Kilmann or Womack was a better judge of internal reliability, or which study to base conclusions on regarding predictive validity. However, what is important is that awareness of these issues are raised, and that this awareness is reflected in the caution used in the analysis of the results of this questionnaire. Nevertheless, it should also be recognized that the changes made to the questionnaire lend support to its credibility. The most significant shift, the change from the ipsative to the more traditional Likert scale, is one such example. On conflict instruments composed of Likert-like items it is possible to score equally high or low on all strategies. Such flexibility may be more reflective of individuals' true preference for style use (Womack, 1988). Therefore, while this research cannot answer several of the questions raised regarding the questionnaire, it can be aware of them in its analysis, and can recommend that future research address these very questions with respect to this particular adapted version of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE.

#### **2.4.4 Statistical Analysis**

The analysis of the data used the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS). It began with the coding of the thirty participants present at the seminar. Each participant was given a discrete code which reflected nationality, gender, language access, an ordinal letter, and language of origin. The first four characters of the discrete code were determined prior to the seminar, and the final character, language of origin, was determined at the seminar site. During the course of the eight day seminar, the Thomas-Kilmann as adapted and INDCOL questionnaires were distributed in pre-test and post-test fashion. The pre-test was administered during the first evening session, and the post-test during the final afternoon session. Upon returning from the seminar, the responses to the questionnaires were entered into a data set.

Two analyses were run on the data. The first was an aggregate mean sum of scores comparison. The second was a scaled mean sum of scores comparison. Both analyses required the transformation of the variables to allow for comparison. The first transformation was aggregating the individual scores for each questionnaire. In the Thomas-Kilmann as adapted this required aggregating the scores for each of the three perceptions (France, Germany and the United States) of the five conflict strategies (accommodating; avoiding; competing; compromising; and co-promoting). This resulted in the creation of  $3 \times 5$ , or fifteen new variables. For INDCOL this required aggregating the scores for each collectivist and individualist response to each of the six sub-scales (spouse, parent, kin, neighbor, friend and co-worker). This resulted in the creation of  $2 \times 6$ , or twelve new variables.

The second transformation was conducted to determine the sum of the valid responses for each of the respondents<sup>10</sup>. This was conducted through the use of the count function in SPSS. This again required creating 15 new variables for the Thomas-Kilmann as adapted questionnaire and 12 new variables for INDCOL. These new variables followed the same pattern as the previous transformation.

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10. Invalid responses were either outside the scale used (such as a 0 response) or blank answers when individual questions were skipped.

The third transformation was calculating the weighted average for each response based on the results of the previous two transformations. The weighted average was calculated by simply dividing the aggregate score by the number of valid responses. Again, 27 new variables were created between the two questionnaires following the same pattern as the previous two transformations.

The analysis was conducted using three statistical tools. The first was the use of the descriptive function in SPSS. This was used to generate means, standard deviations, minimums and maximums for scrutinizing results and building tables. The second statistical tool was the paired sample t-test. With this test the means of two variables were compared. The paired comparison t was used to test if the means of the two measures differed. The paired sample t-test was run at a 95% confidence level. The third statistical tool was the ONE-WAY ANOVA: one-way analysis of variance. This test compared the variation among the sample means with the variation within the samples. The ONE-WAY ANOVA was run using the Levene test to determine if any differences existed among the means for different groups of variables. The least significant difference test was used for factors with a range greater than two.

The analysis was broken down into studies by the group as a whole and nationality. The first analysis was to perform the descriptives on paired sample t-test on the group as a whole. The second analysis was to run descriptives and paired sample t-test based on selected cases for the American, French and German national sub-groups. Finally, the ANOVA was run using the conflict strategies and INDCOL sub-scales as the dependent variables factored by the three national groups.

#### **2.4.5 Null Hypotheses for Thomas-Kilmann as Adapted**

To answer the three larger questions posed in the research: Do patterns of conflict management exist within the national group cultures represented at Bléré?; What are those patterns?; and, What if any effect did the process of the eight day seminar experience have on the participants perceptions of the use of the conflict strategies? a series of more specific questions needed to be developed. In order to explore the question of whether or not patterns existed, statistical differences in initial and closing seminar perceptions of the group and sub-groups about the use of conflict strategies in these three cultural settings were analyzed. The second question of isolating what the patterns were, was derived from describing what if any differences did exist in the initial and closing conditions. In order to answer the third question, the analysis focused on how perceptions changed in a pre/post comparison. The analyses of the initial and closing conditions, and the comparison between the two was conducted with the use of a series of null hypotheses. The range of analysis was undertaken was focused at the group and national sub-group levels.

##### ***Group Perceptions: Pre and Post***

To examine the group perceptions in the pre-test and post-test, two questions were posed. The first question was whether the group held different perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies in the initial pre-test, and in the closing post-test. Second, if different perceptions were identified between the pre-test and the post-test, how were they different. To answer these questions, the following null hypotheses were tested:

1. The group perception in the pre-test of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary among the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Pre}}{G}_{\text{US}} = \overset{\text{Pre}}{G}_{\text{Ger}} = \overset{\text{Pre}}{G}_{\text{Fr}} \quad \text{Test: Paired Sample T-Test (pre-test)}$$

2. The group perception in the post-test of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary among the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Post}}{G}_{\text{US}} = \overset{\text{Post}}{G}_{\text{Ger}} = \overset{\text{Post}}{G}_{\text{Fr}} \quad \text{Test: Paired Sample T-Test (post-test)}$$

### ***National Sub-Group Perceptions Pre and Post***

To examine the national sub-group perceptions in the pre-test and post-test, the same two questions were again posed. One, did the sub-groups hold different perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures in the initial pre-test, and in the closing post-test? Two, if different perceptions were identified between the pre-test and the post-test, how did they differ? In addition, the question was posed, do the national sub-groups hold different perceptions of use of the five conflict strategies within each of the three national cultures on the pre and post-tests? To answer these questions, the following null hypotheses were tested:

3. The sub-group perception, by nationality, in the pre-test of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary *among* the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Pre}}{\text{SG}}_{i/\text{US}} = \overset{\text{Pre}}{\text{SG}}_{i/\text{Ger}} = \overset{\text{Pre}}{\text{SG}}_{i/\text{Fr}} \quad \text{Test: Paired Sample T-Test (pre-test)}$$

4. The sub-group's perceptions, by nationality, in the pre-test of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary *within* each of the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Pre/US}}{\text{SG}}_{\text{Am}} = \overset{\text{Pre/US}}{\text{SG}}_{\text{Ger}} = \overset{\text{Pre/US}}{\text{SG}}_{\text{Fr}} \quad \text{Test: ONE-WAY ANOVA}$$

5. The sub-group perception, by nationality, in the post-test of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary *among* the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Post}}{\text{SG}}_{i/\text{US}} = \overset{\text{Post}}{\text{SG}}_{i/\text{Ger}} = \overset{\text{Post}}{\text{SG}}_{i/\text{Fr}} \quad \text{Test: Paired Sample T-Test (post-test)}$$

6. The sub-group's perceptions, by nationality, in the post-test of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary *within* each of the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Post/US}}{\text{SG}}_{\text{Am}} = \overset{\text{Post/US}}{\text{SG}}_{\text{Ger}} = \overset{\text{Post/US}}{\text{SG}}_{\text{Fr}} \quad \text{Test: ONE-WAY ANOVA}$$

### *Group and National Sub-Group Perceptions of Process*

To analyze if the process of the eight day intensive seminar had any effect on the perceptions of the participants, two questions were again posed. Were there changes in the perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies from the pre-test to the post-test at the group and national sub-group levels? Two, if changes in perceptions were identified, how had they changed? To answer these two questions, the following two null hypotheses were tested:

7. The group perception of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary from the pre-test to the post-test among the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Pre}}{G_i} = \overset{\text{Post}}{G_i} \quad \text{Test: Paired Sample T-Test (pre/post comparison)}$$

8. The sub-group perception, by nationality, of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary from the pre-test to the post-test among the three national cultures.

$$\text{Ho: } \overset{\text{Pre}}{SG_i} = \overset{\text{Post}}{SG_i} \quad \text{Test: Paired Sample T-Test (pre/post comparison)}$$

Compendium	
Term	Definition
Ho	Null hypothesis
G	Group
SG	Sub-group
Pre	Pre-test
Post	Post-test
Fr	National culture of France
Ger	National culture of Germany
US	National culture of the United States
i	Sub-groups by Nationality = American, French, German

### 3 Results

The discussion of results for the Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire as adapted will follow a pattern of analysis laid out in the explanation of the null hypotheses. Thus, results will be examined at the group, and national sub-group levels. Perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies will then be discussed for the pre-test, post-test, and finally for the pre/post comparison.

To begin framing the results of the questionnaire responses, the continuum used on the questionnaire is presented.



**Table 3.1: Group Pre-test Perceptions of the Use of the Five Conflict Strategies**

	France	Germany	United States	Group Mean
Competing	5.17	5.45	5.49	5.37
Compromising	4.24 <sup>a</sup>	4.12 <sup>b</sup>	4.57 <sup>ab</sup>	4.31
Avoiding	4.33	4.21	4.15	4.23
Accommodating	3.93	3.83	4.11	3.96
Co-promoting	3.42 <sup>a</sup>	3.56 <sup>b</sup>	3.95 <sup>ab</sup>	3.64

\* Superscripts statistically significant at .05 level

The second condition tested was the group’s closing post-test perception of the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures. The null hypothesis used to test this condition was:

*2. The group post-test perception of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary among the three national cultures.*

Under this condition, the null hypothesis was not rejected for the *competing*, *compromising*, and *avoiding* strategies. Again in each of these three strategies there was no significant difference in the group’s perception among the three national cultures. The null hypothesis was rejected in the case of the *accommodating* and *co-promoting* strategies. The result of the group perception of the use of the *accommodating* strategy was that it was significantly greater in the culture of the United States than in Germany. As for the *Co-promoting* strategy, the group perception was significantly lower in the culture of France as compared to both the cultures of Germany and the United States (see Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2: Group Post-test Perceptions of the Use of the Five Conflict Strategies**

	France	Germany	United States	Group Mean
Competing	4.71	5.06	5.10	4.96
Compromising	4.26	4.29	4.53	4.36
Accommodating	4.13	3.87 <sup>a</sup>	4.56 <sup>a</sup>	4.19
Avoiding	4.08	4.18	4.14	4.13
Co-promoting	3.71 <sup>ab</sup>	3.90 <sup>a</sup>	4.26 <sup>b</sup>	3.96

\* Superscripts statistically significant at .05 level

The third condition tested was what if any effect the process of the eight day intensive seminar had on the group’s perception of the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures. The null hypothesis used to test this condition was:

3. *The group perception of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary from the pre-test to the post-test among the three national cultures.*

Under this condition the group perception failed to reject the null hypothesis for the *avoiding*, *compromising*, and *co-promoting* strategies. As for the *accommodating* strategy, the group perception of the use of this strategy increased from pre-test to post-test in the culture of the United States. With regard to the *competing* strategy, the group perception was significantly lower from pre-test to post-test within all three national cultures (see Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3: Group Pre/Post Comparison of Perceptions of the Use of the Five Conflict Strategies**

	France		Germany		United States	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Accommodating	3.93	4.13	3.83	3.87	4.11 <sup>a</sup>	4.56 <sup>a</sup>
Avoiding	4.33	4.08	4.21	4.18	4.15	4.14
Competing	5.17 <sup>a</sup>	4.71 <sup>a</sup>	5.45 <sup>b</sup>	5.06 <sup>b</sup>	5.49 <sup>c</sup>	5.10 <sup>c</sup>
Compromising	4.24	4.26	4.12	4.29	4.57	4.53
Co-promoting	3.42	3.71	3.56	3.90	3.95	4.26

\* Superscripts statistically significant at .05 level

### 3.2 Sub-Group Perceptions

The fourth condition tested was each national sub-group’s initial pre-test perception of the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures. The null hypothesis tested for this condition was:

4. *The sub-group pre-test perception, by each nationality, of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary among the three national cultures.*

The first national sub-group analyzed was the French. Under this condition, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all but the *co-promoting* strategy. For the *co-promoting* strategy the French group’s perception was of greater use in the United States than in Germany.

The Germans were the second national sub-group analyzed. The test for the German sub-group failed to reject the null for all but the *compromising* strategy. The perception of the German sub-group was that the *compromising* strategy was used to a lesser degree in Germany than in either France or the United States.

The third national sub-group was the Americans. Under the condition laid out above, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all five conflict strategies. The American sub-group's perception revealed no significant difference in the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures (see Table 3.4).

The fifth condition tested was each national sub-group's initial perception of the use of the five conflict strategies within each of the three national cultures. The null hypothesis tested was:

*5. The sub-groups perceptions, by nationality, in the pre-test of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary within each of the three national cultures.*

Within each of the three national cultures, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all but the *competing* strategy. Within the national culture of France, the perception of the use of the *competing* strategy was significantly greater for the American national sub-group than either the French or German national sub-groups. Within the national culture of Germany, the perception of use of the *competing* strategy again was significantly greater for the American national sub-group than the French national sub-group. Finally, within the national culture of the United States, the American national sub-group perception of use of the *competing* strategy was significantly greater than that of the German national sub-group (see Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4: National Sub-Group Pre-test Perceptions of the Use of the Five Conflict Strategies**

		France	Germany	United States	Group Mean
Competing	<i>American</i>	5.92 <sub>1,2</sub>	5.83 <sub>3</sub>	5.88 <sub>4</sub>	5.88
	<i>German</i>	4.87 <sub>1</sub>	5.45	5.15 <sub>4</sub>	5.16
	<i>French</i>	4.69 <sub>2</sub>	4.96 <sub>3</sub>	5.44	5.03
Compromising	<i>American</i>	4.37	4.25	4.98	4.53
	<i>German</i>	4.33 <sup>c</sup>	3.97 <sup>cd</sup>	4.52 <sup>d</sup>	4.27
	<i>French</i>	4.00	4.15	4.13	4.09
Avoiding	<i>German</i>	4.50	4.37	4.46	4.44
	<i>American</i>	4.12	4.18	4.08	4.13
	<i>French</i>	4.39	4.06	3.85	4.10
Accommodating	<i>American</i>	4.00	3.93	4.35	4.09
	<i>German</i>	3.98	3.82	3.98	3.93
	<i>French</i>	3.80	3.73	3.96	3.83
Co-promoting	<i>American</i>	3.63	3.72	4.08	3.81
	<i>French</i>	3.36	3.55 <sup>c</sup>	4.18 <sup>c</sup>	3.70
	<i>German</i>	3.27	3.40	3.63	3.43

\* Superscripts statistically significant at .05 level. Letters demonstrate significant differences horizontally, number vertically.

The sixth condition tested was each national sub-group's closing post-test perception of the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures. The null hypothesis used to test this condition was:

*6. The sub-group post-test perception, by each nationality, of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary among the three national cultures.*

The results of the perceptions of the French national sub-group were that the null hypothesis was not rejected for all five conflict strategies. The post-test perceptions of the French group demonstrated no significant difference in the use of the five strategies among the three national cultures.

With regard to the German sub-group, the null was not rejected for the, *compromising*, *avoiding* and *co-promoting* strategies. As for the *competing* strategy, the German group's perception was significantly greater in the United States than in France. Regarding the *accommodating* strategy, the German perception was of significantly lower use of this strategy in their own country as compared to in France or the United States.

Finally, the American sub-group's perception failed to reject the null hypothesis for the *competing*, *accommodating* and *avoiding* strategies. The results of the *compromising* strategy were the same. The analysis of the American group again revealed a perception of greater use of this strategy in Germany than in France. For the *co-promoting* strategy there was a significantly greater perception of the use in Germany compared with France (see Table 3.5).

The seventh condition tested was each national sub-group's closing perception of the use of the five conflict strategies within each of the three national cultures. The null hypothesis tested was:

*7. The sub-groups perceptions, by nationality, in the post-test of the use of the five conflict strategies will not vary within each of the three national cultures.*

Within the national cultures of Germany and the United States, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all of the five conflict strategies. Within the national culture of France, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all but the *competing* strategy. As was the case in the pre-test, the perception of use of the *competing* strategy within the national culture of France was significantly greater in the American national sub-group than in either the French or German national sub-groups (see Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5: National Sub-Group Post-test Perceptions of the Use of the Five Conflict Strategies**

		France	Germany	United States	Group Mean
Competing	<i>American</i>	5.46 <sub>1 2</sub>	5.27	5.33	5.35
	<i>German</i>	4.50 <sup>a</sup> <sub>1</sub>	5.19	5.17 <sup>a</sup>	4.95
	<i>French</i>	3.87 <sub>2</sub>	4.33	4.46	4.22
Compromising	<i>German</i>	4.43	4.29	4.69	4.47
	<i>American</i>	4.13 <sup>a</sup>	4.35 <sup>a</sup>	4.60	4.36
	<i>French</i>	4.17	4.17	4.04	4.13
Accommodating	<i>American</i>	3.77	4.17	4.73	4.22
	<i>German</i>	4.29 <sup>b</sup>	3.61 <sup>bc</sup>	4.60 <sup>c</sup>	4.17
	<i>French</i>	4.40	3.88	4.13	4.14
Avoiding	<i>American</i>	4.12	4.31	4.50	4.31
	<i>German</i>	4.26	4.20	3.96	4.14
	<i>French</i>	3.70	3.88	3.83	3.80
Co-promoting	<i>French</i>	4.07	4.17	4.88	4.37
	<i>American</i>	3.56 <sup>c</sup>	4.00 <sup>c</sup>	4.27	3.94
	<i>German</i>	3.65	3.68	3.99	3.77

\* Superscripts statistically significant at .05 level. Letters demonstrate significant differences horizontally, number vertically.

The eighth condition tested was what if any effect the eight day process had on the three national sub-group perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies among the three national cultures. The null hypothesis used for this test was:

*8. The sub-group perception, by each nationality, of the use of each of the five conflict strategies will not vary from the pre-test to the post-test among the three national cultures.*

The results of the perceptions of the French group revealed a failure to reject the null for the *avoiding*, *compromising*, and *co-promoting* strategies. As for the *accommodating* strategy, the French perception of the use of the strategy in their own national culture significantly increased from the pre-test to post-test. Regarding the *competing* strategy, the French group perceived significantly lower use of this strategy from the pre to post-test within their own national culture and that of the United States.

For the German national group, the null was not rejected for all five of the conflict strategies. The German group revealed no significant change in perception from the pre-test to post-test in any of the three national cultures.

Relative to the American sub-group, the analysis failed to reject the null for all but the *competing* strategy. With regard to the *competing* strategy, the American group's perception of the use significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test for their own national culture and that of Germany (see Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6: National Sub-Group Pre/Post Comparison of Perceptions of the Use of the Five Conflict Strategies**

		France		Germany		United States	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Accommodating	<i>French</i>	3.80 <sup>b</sup>	4.40 <sup>b</sup>	3.73	3.88	3.96	4.13
	<i>German</i>	3.98	4.29	3.82	3.61	3.98	4.60
	<i>American</i>	4.00	3.77	3.93	4.17	4.35	4.73
Avoiding	<i>French</i>	4.39	3.70	4.06	3.88	3.85	3.83
	<i>German</i>	4.50	4.26	4.37	4.20	4.46	3.96
	<i>American</i>	4.12	4.12	4.18	4.31	4.08	4.50
Competing	<i>French</i>	4.69 <sup>d</sup>	3.87 <sup>d</sup>	4.96	4.33	5.44 <sup>e</sup>	4.46 <sup>e</sup>
	<i>German</i>	4.87	4.50	5.45	5.19	5.15	5.17
	<i>American</i>	5.92	5.46	5.83 <sup>f</sup>	5.27 <sup>f</sup>	5.88 <sup>g</sup>	5.33 <sup>g</sup>
Compromising	<i>French</i>	4.00	4.17	4.15	4.17	4.13	4.04
	<i>German</i>	4.33	4.43	3.97	4.29	4.52	4.69
	<i>American</i>	4.37	4.13	4.25	4.35	4.98	4.60
Co-promoting	<i>French</i>	3.36	4.07	3.55	4.17	4.18	4.88
	<i>German</i>	3.27	3.65	3.40	3.68	3.63	3.99
	<i>American</i>	3.63	3.56	3.72	4.00	4.08	4.27

\* Superscripts statistically significant at .05 level

## 4 Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of this research examined each of the five conflict strategies separately. The analysis looked specifically at how each of the national sub-groups perceived their own use of each of the five conflict strategies, as well as how they perceived each strategy to be used in the other two national cultures. The focus of the analysis was to use the pre/post-test comparison as a measure of what effect if any the eight day seminar had on the perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies. The analysis will begin by describing the initial perceptions of the participants as they were revealed by the pre-test.

One foundation for the basis of this analysis was the observations made in my role as one of three observers for the Bléré Seminar. The level of observation from which I was working was to examine the interaction between participants, between the Lead Team<sup>11</sup>, and between the participants and the Lead Team. There were four distinct arenas in which participants developed or enhanced their perceptions of the three national cultures present. In Block I, participants were able to observe and interact extensively with the other two national groups in the setting of the five mediation role-plays, and reflect on their perception of the other. In Block II there was extensive work in the national group setting where participants could observe the interaction within their own national group, and reflect on the perception of self. The final two settings were the participant interaction with the Lead Team, and the interaction of the group as a whole in the informal setting outside of the working sessions (i.e., meals, breaks, free-time) In each of these settings the participants could reflect on both their perceptions of the self and other.

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11. The Lead Team at Bléré consisted of one American, French, and German co-leaders. The Germans had been working as a two person team, however, one became ill just prior to the seminar and was unable to attend until the final session.

#### **4.1 Initial Condition**

The initial perceptions, which were measured by the pre-test, constituted each participant's own inclinations regarding the use of each strategy within their own country and the other two countries represented by the other 20 mediators present at the seminar. These perceptions were unbiased by events relative to the seminar, which had only just begun, and by any prior knowledge between participants. Participants came from different regions within each country and had no prior relationships. At the start of the seminar, each participant represented a perception independent of the other 29 mediators.

Coming into the seminar at Bléré, when these initial inclinations were taken, this group of thirty mediators demonstrated no significant difference in their perception of the degree to which the three national cultures used the competing strategy. This perception held not only at the group level, but at all three national sub-group levels. Therefore, by way of example, the German national sub-group held the perception that the competing strategy was used to relatively the same degree in Germany as it was used in the United States and France.

The initial inclination of the group regarding the co-promoting strategy was that it was used to a greater degree in the United States than in either France or Germany. However, this perception was only reflected within the French national sub-group with respect to greater use in the United States compared to Germany. Relative to the American and the German national sub-groups, neither of these two sub-groups perceived a significant difference in the degree to which the co-promoting strategy was used within each of the three national cultures.

The initial perception of the compromising strategy at the group level was of significantly greater use in the United States than in either France or Germany. The initial perception of the German group was that compromise was used to a lesser degree in their own country than in either France or the United States. Both the American and French national sub-group perceived no significant difference in the use of the compromising strategy within any of the three national cultures.

The initial perceptions of the avoiding and accommodating strategies provides an example where there were no significant differences in perceptions of the degree of use of these strategies at any level across all three national cultures.

## **4.2 Pre/Post Comparison of Change**

### **4.2.1 *Competing Strategy***

The competing strategy is again characterized by assertiveness and uncooperativeness in an effort to satisfy the individuals self-interests. As a result of the process of the eight day intensive seminar, the group as a whole, as well as the American and French national sub-groups lowered their perceptions of the degree to which all three national cultures used the competing strategy. With respect to the French national sub-group, they not only perceived the use of the strategy to be lower within their own national culture, but also that of the United States. With respect to the American national sub-group, the change in perception of lower use of the competing strategy was reflected in both their own national culture and that of Germany. Only the German national group did not perceive a significant change with respect to their perception of people in the three national cultures over the course of the eight day seminar (see table below).

**Table 4.1: Group and National Sub-Group Pre/Post Comparisons of Perceptions of Competing Strategy**

		France		Germany		United States	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Nationality	<i>Group Mean</i>	5.17 <sup>a</sup>	4.71 <sup>a</sup>	5.45 <sup>b</sup>	5.06 <sup>b</sup>	5.49 <sup>c</sup>	5.10 <sup>c</sup>
	<i>French</i>	4.69 <sup>d</sup>	3.87 <sup>d</sup>	4.96	4.33	5.44 <sup>e</sup>	4.46 <sup>e</sup>
	<i>German</i>	4.87	4.50	5.45	5.19	5.15	5.17
	<i>American</i>	5.92	5.46	5.38 <sup>f</sup>	5.27 <sup>f</sup>	5.88 <sup>g</sup>	5.33 <sup>g</sup>

\* Boldface denotes national group self-perception

One of the reasons for this change could simply be the fact that these thirty individuals spent a great deal of time with each other over the course of the eight days and began to get to know each other on a more personal level. During the first couple days of the Seminar, participants stayed more closely to their national groups, spending free time with others in their own national group. Then, as the Seminar moved along, interaction between the national groups increased. Events such as a concert in Tours, a traditional French chestnut roasting celebration, and a group birthday dinner in Tours brought all the participants together in one setting where they could enjoy each others company.

A second explanation stems from the fact that the participants role played eight different mediations. The mediation role-play was an environment where conflict strategies such as competition were highly visible. For example, in one role play three French and three Germans were trying to solve a logic's question. Their strategy was to brainstorm as many possible answers, and potential answers came from all members of the group. There was not the attempt of one individual to push his or her solution on the group. Another role play scenario consisted of two French and an American, with observers from all three national groups. The context was a

business bargaining scenario. In this situation the French and the American “parties” demonstrated flexibility with their own interests, and both seemed to make a concerted effort to help the mediator help them reach a solution.

The issue of language access was a third possible explanation for why perceptions of competition changed. Early in the seminar, several Americans spoke out in the plenary session that they felt there was too much English being spoken and that the Americans themselves were speaking too often. This was a very public act which likely influenced the American perception of their own national culture and quite possibly the French and German perceptions of the of how the Americans may indeed be less competitive. Instead of trying to dominate the discussion with their own ideas, this was a gesture to make the discussion more inclusive of the ideas of all the national groups.

A final interpretation of the competitive strategy, and one which may account for the lack of a significant change in the German perception, especially with respect to the American national culture, occurred when participants challenged the methodology and premise of the German research project. During one of the plenary sessions, the German co-leader had to field a ‘barrage’ of questions attacking the soundness of the research. Many of the questions were being directed by the American participants. The questions started coming so fast and furious that one of the German participants stepped in to moderate the discussion and control the flow of questions being directed at the German co-leader. In a national group discussion, several Germans raised concern about what had just happened in that plenary discussion and were upset with the manner in which they felt their colleague had been treated. This could account for the fact that of the twelve perceptions examined, the German perception of the American use of the competing strategy was the only one that was not lower.

### 4.2.2 Co-promoting Strategy

Again, the co-promoting strategy is that of being both assertive and cooperative, and having a willingness to work with others to achieve the greatest satisfaction for all parties. At the close of the seminar, although almost all the raw scores increased as a result of the eight days at Bléré, none of the changes at any level demonstrated a significant increase. Therefore, neither the group as a whole, or any of the three national sub-groups perceived the use of the co-promoting strategy to be significantly different at the end of the seminar than it was in the beginning (see table below).

**Table 4.2: Group and National Sub-Group Pre/Post Comparisons of Perceptions of Co-promoting Strategy**

		France		Germany		United States	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
<b>Nationality</b>	<i>Group Mean</i>	3.42	3.71	3.56	3.90	3.95	4.26
	<i>French</i>	3.36	4.07	3.55	4.17	4.18	4.88
	<i>German</i>	3.27	3.65	3.40	3.68	3.63	3.99
	<i>American</i>	3.63	3.56	3.72	4.00	4.08	4.27

\* Boldface denotes national group self-perception

Two examples that may help explain this both stem from the issue of language access. The first example comes from the fact that throughout the eight day seminar the question of whether to use simultaneous or consecutive translation was raised

again and again<sup>12</sup>. While feedback from the participants was continuously gathered regarding this subject and temporary solutions found, never was the group able to work together to find a solution which satisfied the needs and wants of everyone. Participants both asserted their reasoning for one preference or the other, and cooperated by listening to the concerns raised by others as to their preference. Perhaps due to the time constraints of the schedule of the seminar they were never able to reach a solution that satisfied the needs of all the participants. Instead it had to come down to a vote. Therefore, this could have demonstrated many of the behaviors associated with the co-promoting strategy, without being able to realize the ultimate goal of co-promotion, a solution that satisfies the needs of all parties.

The second example is closely related to the example where the Americans raised the concern of the dominance of the English language, however, this time it came from a German. In this example, a German participant asked his colleague to repeat a statement she had just made in English in her mother tongue of German because he felt it would be much clearer in her mother tongue. He then strongly encouraged all participants to speak in the language they were most comfortable speaking. This demonstrated not only his own concern to be able to speak his own language, understand others, and himself be understood, but also his concern that others have the same opportunity. This was one of the key moments in the Seminar, and after that English was spoken less, and people spoke more often in their mother tongue.

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12. Simultaneous translation is translating into the other languages as the person speaks. Consecutive translation is translating into the other languages one at a time after the speaker has completed a thought.

### 4.2.3 Compromising Strategy

Once again the compromise strategy is used to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies the interests of all parties. By the close of the seminar, there was no significant change in perceptions at any level when looking at the result of the eight day process in a pre/post comparison. Therefore, the perceptions at all levels, group and sub-groups, were that the compromising strategy was used in relatively the same degree within each of the three national cultures in the beginning of the eight day seminar as in the end (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Group and National Sub-Group Pre/Post Comparisons of Perceptions of Compromising Strategy**

		France		Germany		United States	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Nationality	<i>Group Mean</i>	4.24	4.26	4.12	4.29	4.57	4.53
	<i>French</i>	4.00	4.17	4.15	4.17	4.13	4.04
	<i>German</i>	4.33	4.43	3.97	4.29	4.52	4.69
	<i>American</i>	4.37	4.13	4.25	4.35	4.98	4.60

\* Boldface denotes national group self-perception

Few of the events of record for the seminar lend themselves to an explanation of the use of the compromise strategy. However, one clear instance of the use of the compromise strategy occurred with the debate surrounding the use of translation. According to Thomas and Kilmann (1974, p.14) two uses of the compromise strategy are “to achieve temporary settlements to complex issues” and “to arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure”. This was clearly demonstrated by the use of the vote to determine whether the seminar would use simultaneous or consecutive translation. There was not enough time to devote to a lengthy

discussion on the issue, and the Lead Team was willing to come to a vote again, demonstrating the temporary nature of the solution. However, while this was one clear use of the compromise strategy, it was one of the only clear uses. And because this seemed to be at least an acceptable, while perhaps not ideal, solution to all the participants this could impart explain why there was little change in the perception of its use.

As an independent conflict strategy in use during the actual process of the seminar, compromise did not seem to play a prominent role. However, the compromising strategy can also be seen as an intermediary strategy between competing, accommodating, and co-promoting, and the balancing of self-interests as opposed to the interests of the other. Thus in part the explanation for the decrease in the perception of use of the competing strategy and increase in the accommodating strategy could be due to balanced use of the compromising strategy.

#### ***4.2.4 Avoiding Strategy***

The avoiding strategy is again characterized as unassertive and uncooperative. The initial perception of no significant difference with respect to use of the avoiding strategy carried over to the closing participant perceptions and was reflected in almost identical scores registered for the pre and post-test comparison. This consistently occurred irrespective of whether the three national sub-groups were taken or the group as a whole (see table below).

**Table 4.4: Group and National Sub-Group Pre/Post Comparisons of Perceptions of Avoiding Strategy**

		France		Germany		United States	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Nationality	<i>Group Mean</i>	4.33	4.08	4.21	4.18	4.15	4.14
	<i>French</i>	4.39	3.70	4.06	3.88	3.85	3.83
	<i>German</i>	4.50	4.26	4.37	4.20	4.46	3.96
	<i>American</i>	4.12	4.12	4.18	4.31	4.08	4.50

\* Boldface denotes national group self-perception

One particular use of the avoiding strategy may shed light on the perceptions of avoidance held by the mediators at the seminar. During the Block I role-play sessions, two of the scenarios dealt with disputes between people with close relationships. One was a husband/wife combination, the other two life-long friends. In both of these mediations, after spending some time defining issues and gaining perspective on interests, the solution reached was to allow the two individuals to work out the matter in private. Both times, however, the true nature of the dispute was revealed, even though it was of a personal nature. In one of the role plays, the French mediator commented how normally he would never have mediated such a personal dispute, and that he was happy that once the personal nature of the dispute was revealed the two parties could carry on the discussion in private. At one level, the mediator overcame his inclination to avoid the matter, by carrying through the discussion until the personal problem was revealed. On another level, he continued the avoidance strategy by letting the parties carry on the discussion of any potential solution to the dispute in private. In both of these role plays the actors were French and German and the observers made up all three nationalities.

This leads to another potential interpretation as to why there was no significant change in the perception of the use of the avoiding strategy and that is the structure of Block I may not have been conducive to use of this strategy. In Block I,

participants were assigned the role of mediator, party or observer. Parties were given background information, and mediators were simply instructed to conduct a mediation. As a result, because they were part of a research project, participants may have felt more inclined to go through the mediation even if it was a context they may not normally feel comfortable mediating. The only example where the parties chose not to use a mediator was in the mediation of the logic question, which may not have been considered a realistic context for mediation, or a traditional context the participants might normally find themselves in.

A final interpretation which may help explain the slight increase in the American self-perception of use of the avoiding strategy occurred in the American national group exercises. One task given to the each national group was to discuss what characteristics they felt were most important to being a mediator, and then to combine their individual impressions into the character of another mythical member of their national group. Two of the American participants refused to give their own impressions because they didn't agree with the task of trying to find the 'perfect' mediator in each of the three cultures. However, at the same time, when Americans felt there was a problem with the integrity of the research, they felt compelled to raise the issue before the whole group, and not simply leave their concern unacknowledged.

#### ***4.2.5 Accommodating Strategy***

Last, the accommodating strategy is marked by unassertive and cooperative characteristics and the concern for the interests of the other. The result of the eight day seminar revealed a change in the group perception of increased use of the accommodating strategy within the national culture of the United States. This change was further reflected in the French national group's changed perception of increased use of this strategy within their own national culture. Also of particular interest was the German group's self perception that the accommodating strategy was used to a lesser degree (see Table below).

**Table 4.5: Group and National Sub-Group Pre/Post Comparisons of Perceptions of Accommodating Strategy**

		France		Germany		United States	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Nationality	<i>Group Mean</i>	3.93	4.13	3.83	3.87	4.11 <sup>a</sup>	4.56 <sup>a</sup>
	<i>French</i>	3.80 <sup>b</sup>	4.40 <sup>b</sup>	3.73	3.88	3.96	4.13
	<i>German</i>	3.98	4.29	3.82	3.61	3.98	4.60
	<i>American</i>	4.00	3.77	3.93	4.17	4.35	4.73

\* Boldface denotes national group self-perception

Several observations could help to explain the French perception of increased use of the accommodating strategy. First, the Seminar was taking place in France, and therefore it was up to the French national group to play the role of host. Examples of this included holding seats for the entire group at a sold out organ concert at the cathedral in Tours, also several French participants took it upon themselves to select the meal menu as they felt the first few meals were inadequate (They were also key in selecting which restaurant to attend for the birthday dinner), and at the end of the seminar the French participants gave gifts to all their ‘guests’.

A second instance of use of the accommodating strategy occurred during the relentless questioning of the German co-leader. At one point in time, the French co-leader attempted to step in and start answering some of the questions, taking the ‘heat’ off of the German co-leader. This was again an act done in the plenary session before the group as a whole.

A final example was with one of the more active and visible French participants. In one of the role-plays and double-trio exercises, he attempted to help the others in the group work through problems the group was having. In the example of the double trio exercise, an American and German participants were in a very emotional discussion of different opinions, and the French participant stepped in to try to help the two better understand each other. It was as if he were conducting an

informal mediation. He also demonstrated this behavior through the use of his excellent command of the English language by acting as a translator for some of the French participants who did not understand English.

Several instances of use of the accommodating strategy by American participants help account for the group perception of increased use of this strategy. The first example goes back to the earlier discussion of language. Here again, the act of the Americans raising the concern in plenary of fearing the dominance of the English language and the Americans in the discussion could be interpreted by all the participants as demonstrating concern for the others in the seminar.

A second example and related to the first was with the Americans willingness to help during the simultaneous translations segments of the seminar. During instances where the group decided to use simultaneous translation, there were too many people who required translations for the two hired translators to accommodate. The vacuum was often filled by Americans, of whom all were either bilingual or tri-lingual. Most of the time, when participants were required to help with the translating in plenary and small groups, it was the Americans who took on that role.

A third and interesting example of the accommodating strategy was when a couple American participants arranged to get flowers for one of the German co-leaders who had become ill and was forced to go to the hospital. This was a very simple yet clear act of concern for the other, and one which was recognized by the whole group in one of the plenary discussions.

The most interesting explanation which on one hand helps explain of the perception of the American use of the accommodating strategy, but also the lower perception of use in the German self-perception comes out of a discussion regarding styles of feedback used in role play debriefing. Some German participants noted how the Americans carefully phrased their feedback in a positive light, while Germans simply gave very direct responses. The German participants said that they were less worried about how the individual will respond to the feedback than about making sure to communicate all the major observations they noticed. One participant described with surprise how some of the Americans seemed to take the feedback so personally. On the other hand, they felt the Americans were very concerned about

not hurting the feelings of the other, so they made sure either the last comments made were positive, or that there were more positive than negative comments.

#### **4.2.6 General Observations**

With regard to the overall effect of the process of the eight day intensive seminar, it appeared to have the least effect on the German national group. There were no measurable differences in any of their scores for any of the five conflict strategies when compared from the pre to post-test. This was even the case for the competing strategy where there were measurable differences in the group perception from pre to post-test for each of the competing strategies, and also to a lesser extent in the accommodating strategies, of the three national cultures and within the American and French national sub-groups.

Largely as a result of the changes measured it appears as if the eight day process had a similar effect on the group as a whole and both the American and French national sub-groups. But again, this effect was most dramatic with respect to perceptions of the competing strategy. Also, the perceptions of the use of the co-promoting, compromising, and avoiding strategies remained the most constant over the duration of the eight day seminar, especially for the latter two.

What this means with respect to the use of the five conflict strategies in the context of inter-cultural mediation setting, is that this was a demonstration of flexibility regarding the perceptions of the use of strategies. There was a significant change in perception that the use of the competing strategy declined, and also that use of the accommodating strategy increased over the course of the eight day experience. In addition, although not to a significant degree, the raw score for the co-promoting strategy also increased, and this is a promising sign. These are the three key strategies with respect toward making progress toward reaching a satisfactory solution in mediation.

In order to move toward use of the co-promoting strategy most closely associated with reaching satisfactory solutions, there needs to be a demonstration of both assertiveness and cooperativeness, or concern for one's own interests and

that of the other. At Bléré this was demonstrated with the lowered perception of use of what was the primary strategy for all three national groups, the competing strategy (concern for self), and the increase in perception of use of the accommodating strategy (concern for other). Increase in the perception of use of the accommodating strategy was not only demonstrated by significant scores in the pre/post comparison, but also by the switch of accommodating and avoiding in rank order from pre-test to post-test.

## **5 Conclusion**

### **5.1 Patterns of Perceptions of Strategy Use and Change**

The intent of this research project was to answer three questions. The first question was “Do patterns of conflict management exist within the national group cultures represented at Bléré?” The second question was “If patterns do exist, what are those patterns?” The third question was “What effect if any did the process of the eight day seminar experience have on the participants perceptions of the use of the five conflict strategies?” The Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire as adapted was the instrument used to answer these three questions.

With regard to the first two questions posed, several results were found. For the competing strategy two patterns were established. Perception of use of this strategy as the primary conflict strategy was the first pattern established from the pre- to post-test. The second pattern was the consistent perception of the three national cultures of the use of the competing strategy within the French national groups. From pre- to post-test, the American national group perceived greater use of

the competing strategy within the French national culture than either the French or the German national groups

Patterns of perception of use were also found with respect to the co-promoting strategy. The first was that this strategy was consistently perceived to be used to the least degree of all five conflict strategies. The second consistent pattern from the pre to post-testing was the group perception that the co-promoting strategy was used to a greater degree in the United States than in France.

The third pattern of use was identified with respect to the perception of use of the avoiding strategy. The consistent pattern here was that at all levels for both the pre and post-test, there was no perception that the avoiding strategy was used to a greater or lesser degree across any of the three national cultures. The perception was that this strategy was used to approximately the same degree regardless of which culture was being examined. As for the compromising and accommodating strategies, no consistent patterns were identified through the analysis of the pre- and post-test scores of the questionnaire.

With respect to the third question, several intriguing results were found. There was a significant change at the group and national sub-group level in the perception that the use of the competing strategy declined, and also that use of the accommodating strategy increased over the course of the eight day experience. In addition, although not to a significant degree, the scores for the co-promoting strategy also increased in all but one of the twelve different perceptions. From the results and analysis of these findings, several conclusions can be drawn.

## **5.2 Implications**

The first conclusion is in fact a warning of the need to have awareness. What the results of this research indicates are that there are indeed perceptions of differences between the use of conflict strategies among the three national cultures represented at the Bléré Seminar. As stated earlier by researcher Edward Hall (1960, p. 131):

The Germans, the Americans, and the French share significant portions of each other's cultures, but at many points their cultures clash. Consequently, the misunderstandings that arise are all the more serious because sophisticated Americans and Europeans take pride in correctly interpreting each other's behavior. Cultural differences which are out of awareness are, as a consequence, usually chalked up to ineptness, boorishness, or lack of interest on the part of the other person.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these results, is that in the context of this eight day seminar, differences of perception did exist between the three national groups. What is beyond the scope of this research project is to draw hard conclusions such as the Americans use the co-promoting strategy to a greater degree than the French. The purpose of this research is to note that these perceptions do exist, and that they should be compared against the results of the first seminar in Chorin and the third seminar in Santa Fe. If patterns are determined to exist across the three seminars, stronger conclusions regarding the actual use of strategies could more appropriately be made. For now, with respect to this project, only the broader conclusion that differences do exist can be made.

The relevance of this to the field of intercultural mediation is again the need for mediators to be aware that the potential for differences between cultures do indeed exist. This leads to the second conclusion that it is important for mediators when they are attempting to create an arena for intercultural mediation to be aware of the need to identify potential cultural differences. Where this takes place depends on what model of mediation is being used. In one model, the raising of this awareness would occur in pre-mediation discussions between the mediator and the parties involved. Through these discussions the mediator would begin to become aware of potential differences between the different cultures. In the 'Circle' model of

Dr. Thomas Fiutak, the awareness of differences would be discovered in the first phase of mediation, where the mediator learns the reality of the conflict as perceived by the different parties. In establishing the reality of the conflict the mediator would become aware of potential cultural differences. It is only through becoming aware of these potential cultural differences that the mediator can control and adjust the process of the mediation so as to best facilitate communication and work towards reaching a mutually satisfactory and durable solution.

The third conclusion relates to the first and goes back to the issue of examining the reliability of the instrument used for this project. The results of the second seminar at Bléré are intriguing enough that they warrant comparison to the first and third seminars. As mentioned before, while it is beyond the scope of this research to make hard conclusions about the use of specific strategies between the three national cultures, it would be appropriate if evidence of consistent patterns were found across all three seminars. However, to make those conclusions even stronger, future research should test the reliability and validity of this instrument used for the larger research project. It must be remembered, that this project used an adapted version of the Thomas-Kilmann MODE instrument, and as a result a separate study should be conducted to determine this adapted versions reliability and validity.

The fourth conclusion stems from the evidence of flexibility in the perception of use of the conflict strategies by people within the three national culture as demonstrated by the results of the pre/post comparison. Using the process of the seminar at Bléré as a surrogate for the process of mediation itself, the results based on the analysis of the Thomas-Kilmann questionnaire as adapted shows promise for the role of mediation in the intercultural arena. As in mediation, the seminar process was asking the participants to engage in a dialogue with the assistance of a facilitating party. At Bléré the Lead Team of researchers guided the process as would the mediator. As in a mediation, the process of the seminar asked the participants to reflect on what the important aspects of their own personal experience were and to communicate them. The process then asked the participants to listen to others describe what their own personal experience. Finally, the process asked them to enter into a discussion of what these different experiences mean for all present in

the discussion. This discussion was to help all present move to a deeper understanding of the issues they were discussing and how ones own interest relates to the interests of the others. This last aspect would be the crucial piece in mediation to moving parties toward constructing a solution that meets the interests of all parties in a satisfactory manner.

The relevance of these findings to the larger realm of public affairs is its application not only to communities in Germany, for which this original research was intended, but also for communities in France, here in the United States, and elsewhere. For example, communities in Germany are having to deal with intercultural conflicts stemming from large immigrant population, such as Turks and other Eastern Europeans. Many of these people came to Germany at the request of the German government in the 1970's as guestworkers during periods of economic growth. Now there is growing unemployment and hostilities between some German groups and these immigrant populations, of whom many are now legal German citizens, are increasing.

In France, communities have to deal with conflicts which involve French North Africans, and large East Asian populations. This has been a growing topic of discussion in the French political debate. Even here in the communities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, local and State government officials are having to deal with conflicts involving growing Hmong and Hispanic populations, as well as conflicts involving Native Americans.

What this research has hopefully helped to demonstrate is first, that when dealing with representatives of different cultures, mediators, (politicians or service providers) need to be aware that potential differences could exist, and that an attempt should be made to identify them and then adjust the process of dialogue accordingly so as not to allow cultural differences to become obstacles in the communication process or the process of coming to a satisfactory solution. What may not be possible is the application of traditional processes in an inflexible manner.

Second, that the process of mediation itself shows promise as a means for intercultural conflict to be handled. This research demonstrated evidence that those involved in the process showed flexibility with respect to their own dominant self-

interest through use of the competing strategy, showed an increase in the concern of the interests of the other through use of the accommodating strategy, and showed the promise of increased use of the co-promoting strategy which incorporates a concern for one's own interests as well as those of the other necessary when attempting to reach a solution which has the highest degree of satisfaction for all parties. Thus, while this research is only a first glimpse, and additional research is necessary, it does suggest that policy makers both locally, nationally, and internationally take a closer look at mediation as one possible arena which shows promise in dealing with intercultural conflict.

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## Appendices

### **Appendix A Thomas Kilmann Questionnaire as Adapted**

Intercultural Mediation Project

Bléré 1996

Bléré 1

Code \_\_\_\_\_

*Instructions:* Place a number from 1 to 7 in the blank next to the words France, Germany and U.S., according to the following scales:

“To what degree do the following statements represent your image of the behavior of People who live in France, Germany and the United States?”	
Not at all	To a very great degree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

1. There are times when they let others take responsibility for solving the problem.

France \_\_\_\_\_      Germany \_\_\_\_\_      United States \_\_\_\_\_

2. Rather than negotiate the things on which they disagree, they stress those upon which they both agree.

France \_\_\_\_\_      Germany \_\_\_\_\_      United States \_\_\_\_\_

3. They try to find a solution that's between their position and the other person's position.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

4. They attempt to deal with all the concerns the other person and they may have.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

5. They are usually firm in pursuing their goals.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

6. They might try to smooth the other's feelings and preserve their relationship.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

7. They sometimes sacrifice their own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

8. They consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

9. They try to do what is necessary to sidestep stressing situations.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

10. They try to refrain from creating unpleasantness for themselves.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

11. They try to win their position.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

12. They try to postpone the issue until they have some time to think it over.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

13. They give up some points in exchange for others.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

14. They feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

15. They make some effort to get their way.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

16. They will let the other person have some positions if the other person lets them have some of theirs.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

17. They propose a middle ground.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

18. They press to get their points made.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

19. They tell the other person their ideas and ask that the other person do the same.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

20. They try not to hurt the other's feelings.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

21. If it makes the other person happy, they let the other person maintain views they do not agree with.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

22. They try to postpone the issue until they feel prepared to approach the issue.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

23. They attempt to initiate working through their differences.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

24. They try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of them.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

25. In approaching negotiations, they try to be considerate of the person's wishes.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

26. In approaching negotiations, they work hard trying to understand the other person's wishes.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

27. They assert their wishes.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

28. They try to get the other person to settle for a compromise.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

29. They try to show the other person the logic and benefits of their position.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

30. They always share the problem with the other person so that they can all work it out.

France \_\_\_\_\_ Germany \_\_\_\_\_ United States \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B Individualism – Collectivism Questionnaire

Intercultural Mediation Project

Bléré 1996

Bléré 2

Code \_\_\_\_\_

*Instructions:* Respond to each statement by placing a number in the blank before each sentence that corresponds to your personal beliefs.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
False							True

- 1. When making important decisions, I seldom consider the positive and negative effects my decisions have on my father.
- 2. It is reasonable for a son to continue his father's business.
- 3. I am not interested in knowing what my neighbors are really like.
- 4. My neighbors always tell me interesting stories that have happened around them.

- 5. I do not really know how to befriend my neighbors.
- 6. It is inappropriate for a supervisor to ask subordinates about their personal life (such as where one plans to go for the next vacation).
- 7. I have never told my parents the number of sons I want to have.
- 8. Each family has its own problems unique to itself. It does not help to tell relatives about one's problems.
- 9. I would rather struggle through a personal problem by myself than discuss it with my friends.
- 10. Classmate's assistance is indispensable to getting good grade in school.
- 11. The number of sons my parents would like me to have differs by (0/1/2/-3/4/or more /don't know) from the number I personally would like to have.
- 12. We ought to develop the character of independence among students, so that they do not rely upon other student's to help in their schoolwork.
- 13. I would not share my ideas and newly acquired knowledge with my parents.
- 14. I have never chatted with my neighbors about the political future of this state.
- 15. Young people should take into consideration their parents' advice when making education/career plans.

- 16. When I am among my colleagues/classmates, I do my own thing without minding about them.
- 17. When deciding what kind of education to have, I would pay absolutely no attention to my uncles' advice.
- 18. Married people should have some time to be alone from each other every-day, undisturbed by their spouse.
- 19. I would help if a colleague at work told me that he/she needed money to pay utility bills.
- 20. I am often influenced by the moods of my neighbors.
- 21. Even if the child won the Nobel prize, the parents should not feel honored in any way.
- 22. I have never loaned my camera/coat to any colleagues/classmates.
- 23. The bigger a family, the more family problems there are.
- 24. Do you agree with the proverb "Too many cooks spoil the broth"?
- 25. If one is interested in a job about which the spouse is not enthusiastic, one should apply for it anyway.
- 26. In these days, parents are too stringent with their kids, stunting the development of initiative.

- 27. A group of people at their workplace were discussing where to eat. A popular choice was a restaurant which had recently opened. However, someone in the group had discovered that the food was unpalatable. Yet the group disregarded this person's objection, and insisted on trying it out. There were only two alternatives for the person who objected: either to go out or not to go out with the others. In this situation, not going with the others is a better choice.
  
- 28. I would not let my cousin use my car (if I had one).
  
- 29. Teenagers should listen to their parents' advice on dating.
  
- 30. I can count on my relatives for help if I find myself in any kind of trouble.
  
- 31. Whether one spends an income extravagantly or stingily is of not concern to one's relatives (cousins, uncles).
  
- 32. One needs to return a favor if a colleague lends a helping hand.
  
- 33. I feel uneasy when my neighbors do not greet me when we come across each other.
  
- 34. I like to live close to my good friends.
  
- 35. A marriage becomes a model for us when the husband loves what the wife loves, and he hates what the wife hates.
  
- 36. If I met a person whose last name was the same as mine, I would start wondering whether we were, at least remotely, related by blood.

- 37. I enjoy meeting and talking to my neighbors everyday.
- 38. Children should not feel honored even if the father were highly praised and given an award by a government official for his contribution and service to the community.
- 39. If possible, I would like co-owning a car with my close friends, so it would not be necessary for them to spend much money to buy their own cars.
- 40. The motto “sharing in both blessing and calamity” is still applicable even if one friend is clumsy, dumb, and causes lots of trouble.
- 41. There are approximately (0/1/2/3/4/more than 4) of my friends who know how much my family as a whole earns each month.
- 42. My musical interests are extremely different from my parents’.
- 43. If a husband is a sports fan, a wife should also cultivate an interest in sports. If the husband is a stock broker, the wife should also be aware of the current market situation.
- 44. In most cases, to cooperate with someone whose ability is lower than one’s own is not as desirable as doing the thing alone.
- 45. It is a personal matter whether I worship money or not. Therefore it is not necessary for my friends to give me counsel.
- 46. The decision of where one is to work should be jointly made with one’s spouse, if one is married.

- 47. I would not let my needy mother use the money that I have saved by living a less than luxurious life.
- 48. One needs to be cautious in talking with neighbors, otherwise others may think you are nosy.
- 49. When deciding what kind of work to do, I would definitely pay attention to the views of relatives of my generation.
- 50. I would pay absolutely no attention to my close friends' views when deciding what kind of work to do.
- 51. Success and failure in my academic work and career are closely tied to the nurture provided by my parents.
- 52. It is better for a husband and wife to have their own accounts rather than to have a joint account.
- 53. I would help, within my means, if a relative told me that he/she is in financial difficulty.
- 54. There is everything to gain and nothing to lose for classmates to group themselves for study and discussion.
- 55. On the average, my friends' ideal number of children differs from my own ideal by (0/1/2/3/4 or more / I don't know my friends' ideal).
- 56. Even if my spouse were of a different religion, there would not be any

interpersonal conflict between us.

- 57. I would not let my parents use my car (if I had one) whether they are good drivers or not.
- 58. To go on a trip with friends makes one less free and mobile. As a result, there is less fun.
- 59. One need not worry about what the neighbors say about whom one should marry.
- 60. It is desirable that a husband and a wife have their own set of friends instead of having a common set of friends.
- 61. I practice the religion of my parents.
- 62. In the past, my neighbors have never borrowed anything from me or my family.
- 63. My good friends and I agree on the best places to shop.