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Predicting Group Faultlines in Multicultural C2 Operations

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We have run laboratory experiments on the impact of multiculturalism and diversity on the initial phase of C2 team formation. Using the C3Fire experimental platform we have emulated the dynamics of a C2 center where a team of four works together to resolve conflicting goals and allocate limited resources. We have found dimensions of diversity that have the potential to split teams into subgroups and impede cohesion and cooperation. These dimensions are defined by the intersection of demographics, values, and culture and not by single attributes (e.g., nationality). The potential to split teams can be explained using the faultline model of group diversity. We illustrate the model with data from four diverse cultural groups. Using the model we can predict when, during the critical initial stage of team formation, multicultural C2 operations are likely to encounter barriers to collaborative decision making. This ability to predict as well as explain when conflicts may arise in multicultural settings has two pragmatic implications. First, it advises the design and integration of multicultural teams. Second, it has a clear application as a training tool. We argue that our empirical approach and the group faultline model should become a standard in the C2 research portfolio.