The Methodology Of Developing
An International Cross-Cultural Diagnostic

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Abstract: The aim of this article in two parts is to synthesize the necessary methodological issues in international cross-cultural diagnosis. The global village of the millennium XXI cultural intermediary initiatives occurs everywhere, without producing a parallel reflection and clarification of its theoretical foundations. All over the world there is the possibility to experience cross-cultural training programs for mediators, as well as conventions for contracting so-called person liaison, "link-workers". These experiences, otherwise commendable by their formative and practical aspect, are often lacking a theoretical foundation, so knowledge of cross-cultural methodology appears as a sine qua non condition for the success of such an approach (which is the hypothesis of this article). International cross-cultural diagnosis is precisely positioning specific aspects of global culture in order to be valued. The specific knowledge of global cross-cultural relations lies in discovering and correcting the major problems of collaboration as well as the professional necessity to know and better treat members of other international communities. The main objectives of this paper are a comparative analysis of cultural dimensions and to present some methods according to a logical system of organization strategies. In this first part of the article a special focus is on cross-cultural diagnosis, the prerequisites for achieving a cross-cultural approach and methods and ways of cross-cultural research.

Keywords: culture; cross-cultural; methodology; diagnosis; organization

"Culture is not an island of clarity in a jungle of meanings, but the jungle itself"
(A. Albright)

The complexity and richness of world culture lies in its great diversity, this representing a unique advantage, and people have always been and must be prepared to interact with others who have different values, are guided by other rules of conduct and other forms of perception of proximity. Where people interacted with language, culture, and different organizational structure, there was

always a need for an understanding of each other, and this custom sale. Like it happened with the Greeks in Pontus Euxin meantime, the Spanish, the Portuguese and English in America, the Boers in South Africa etc. they tried, largely to mediate conflicts, disputes and even wars.

The *global village* of the millennium XXI cultural intermediary initiatives occurs everywhere, without producing a parallel reflection and clarification of its theoretical foundations. All over the world there is the possibility to experience cross-cultural training programs for mediators, as well as conventions for contracting so-called person liaison, *"link-workers"*. These experiences, otherwise commendable by their formative and practical aspect, are often lacking a theoretical foundation, so knowledge of cross-cultural methodology appears as a sine qua non condition for the success of such an approach (which is the *hypothesis* of this article).

Any person is marked by its cultural background; a good manager, because cross-cultural research activities should have access to systematized information, and developed in a methodological way concerning national differences. International cross-cultural diagnosis is precisely positioning specific aspects of global culture in order to be valued.

The purpose of this article in two parts is to synthesize the necessary methodological issues in international cross-cultural diagnosis.

Objectives are:

- study and literature retrieval of semantic, technical methodological elements etc.
- comparative analysis of cultural dimensions.
- organize these methods according to a logical system of organization strategies. It also takes into account the semantic distinction between value, standard and cultural dimension. The size for the economists and managers, provides value (shows what I like) and standard (which must be/ have) a specific element.

The specific knowledge of global cross-cultural relations lies in discovering and correcting the major problems of collaboration as well as the professional necessity to know and better treat members of other international communities.

Due to economic globalization, migration and tourism, new technologies, the explosion in telecommunications, the development of vehicles that have *minimized*

distances and other factors are becoming more frequent cross-cultural situations. This cultural difference should be seen in the largest sense contrasts including ethnic, racial, language, religion and nationality. In an international collaboration when some of these categories classifiers make their presence it is necessary to achieve a best performance, the knowledge of the other cultural background.

Even if the people of the same culture interact, ethnic, linguistic or religious community there are always differences. In an international organization, interacting social actors (individuals, groups, communities, etc.) achieve a significantly (sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously) differences to *the other*, in terms of lifestyle, language, symbolism, value chain, knowledge of a cultural diagnosis serving to provide more effective solutions to mutual cooperation.

Cross-cultural diagnosis: when expanded the scope of globalization, the major international organizations in need of specialists from different countries and cultures, such problems may occur and it is necessary to adapt them to the new operate environments. Complex cultural realities, different and highly sensitive diagnosis facilitated the development of cross- cultural diagnosis and "*imposition of its direct action at the start and theoretical and applied initiation.*" (Zaiţ D. 2002, p. 28)

When it comes to cross-cultural we always take in consideration *an approach*, without talking about a cross-cultural change. *Cross-cultural diagnosis is different from a diagnosis of enterprise, international diagnostics refers to countries, regions and at enterprise level is organizational diagnosis.*

The cross-cultural diagnosis is a fundamental reference for an international management organization (it helps us to build the organizational culture, to fix our objectives, to know your partner and to offer what it requires). The cross-cultural approach partners in other countries can be better understood and convinced and the employee of a multinational can usefully be made to work for the corporation. The organizational culture management always takes into account and adapts their national cultures.

Research must be done through a specific method or technique that allows observing the social, psychological, economic core processes. The diagnostic is intended to identify key strengths and weaknesses of the sector under investigation, and concludes with some recommendations aimed at eliminating the causes of weaknesses and implementation of leading to success.

Among the established definitions of diagnosis we want to mention:

"*The diagnosis can be defined as that method used in the management based on the establishment of a multidisciplinary team of managers and performers, whose main content is to identify strengths and weaknesses of the field that it generates evidence analyzed with completed corrective recommendations character or development.*"(Nicolescu and Verboncu, 2008, p 135)

"*Diagnosis, its essence is to investigate the organization as a system and components with specific instruments to detect strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the causes that cause and, on this basis, recommendations focused on causes of favorable and unfavorable points.*" (Moldoveanu G. 2005, p. 60)

T. Cummings defines diagnosis as being "*a process of collaboration between members of an organization and an organizational development consultant to gather relevant information, analyze them and draw conclusions for specific interventions.*"

According to studies by **Nicolescu** and **Verboncu** in the management of the organization, "*method of diagnosis fulfill the same role as medicine*". A good doctor is one that establishes an accurate diagnosis, the same thing and applying the different crisis situations worldwide.

An expert in international relations must be able to analyze correctly the lead, to have an adequate basis to establish and requires decisions that management functions.

Diagnosis can be approached from two points of concern. The first as a phase of work in exercising managerial control tasks, evaluating incumbent (individual character which is characterized by high efficiency). It often refers to elements of the current activity.

The second point of view refers to the use of diagnosis by a group of specialists, they aim to solve a problem as an independent method. (Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2008, p. 134)

Studies conducted in the work, "*Managerial Methodologies*", the same authors, analyze the main features of diagnosis, analysis and methods of used typology.

The main characteristics of a diagnosis:

1. The essence of its application is cause-effect analysis, and detection and analysis of strengths and weaknesses and to formulate a recommendation. The quality of

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diagnosis, including a cultural one, depending on the extent to which identified the causes of failures, but also positive aspects. Also quality is determined by correlating those causes' recommendations.

2. The successful participatory character diagnosis involving several shows and various specializations of employees must not deprive managers and contractors involved. *"Making diagnosis by properly designed and well-structured team is essential to gather all significant information and then to interpret them correctly, complex, multidisciplinary, according to their multidimensionality."* (Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2008, p. 134)

3. The third feature concerns the final recommendations. It is recommended corrective decisions on character development shortcomings and positive aspects. Any recommendation must then be submitted to the competent management department, following to be capitalized in decisional and operational ways.

Regarding typology diagnostic tests, Nicolescu and Verboncu admit the existence of a wide range of organizations. According to their opinion these divide according to *general* and *specialized* scope.

The general diagnosis will deal with all activities of international organizations (UN, UNESCO) and is made especially before the development or multi-annual plans, or when difficult issues arise, or when it is changed the management staff.

Specific diagnosis is required for a particular case, it refers to an issue, activity or department within a company. Its sphere of activity in the manufacturing fall the material and technical supplies, sales, assimilation of new products etc. Special diagnostics involves smaller collective, with a less heterogeneous structure, in shorter periods.

Another classification of the diagnosis can be made taking in consideration the phases and components of performance over time: direct (single phase) and multiple phases.

The diagnosis phase, the most widely used, examines only one problem (specialized diagnoses fall into this category). The departments' managers and their collaborators have this privilege in achieving it.

The multiple phases successively investigate at least two activities and the cause-effect relations between them. It is necessary to note the activities between the close interdependence within an enterprise. (e.g. the positive and negative aspects

of a firm will be identified by analyzing investments, human resources management, employment potential etc.).

As managerial method, the diagnosis has specific characteristics:

- has a *postoperative* character because it is associated with control function evaluation by comparing the results obtained with the predicted objectives.
- the *anticipatory* guidance is determined to complete a study that aims to enhance the economic viability and management firm.
- the *multidisciplinarity* resides from the effort of a team with competent persons inside or outside a company.
- the *complexity* shows multiple aspects of economic, managerial, social, human, technical, etc. approached in the study.
- the *participative dimension* of participating leaders and performers.
- the *causal approach* has strengths and weaknesses (Moldoveanu, 2005, p. 61).

The diagnosis used inside of an organization is applicable in various situations such as: management method, as approach for the reengineering stage management and as a support for strategy development and substantiation.

Table 1

Using the right time diagnosis	the best moment
Management method	- domain analysis resulted in the performance evaluation of the control function as a function of management - the sale of the organization or the change of the management team - financial year end and prepare the annual report - the business plans involving investment opportunity
Reengineering stage	- profound changes to be expected - the necessity for restructuring the organization
Support of grounding strategy	- the global strategy is required - the manager is expected to offer strategic steps of all or part

(adapted from Moldoveanu, 2005)

SWOT analysis can also be placed at the interface due to very important *diagnostic-strategy* suggestions to management.

Strategic diagnosis is different than the diagnostic analysis considering the following:

- it has a historical diligence, the other is the objective of identifying opportunities for business development.
- the diagnostic analysis is focused on the possibilities of internal diagnostics, while the strategic one aims the environment in which it is integrated.
- diagnostic analysis highlights changes from previous periods, while the strategic one provides the investigation of the opportunities in relation with the situation of the other competitors.

Prerequisites for achieving a cross-cultural approach: prior knowledge of the premises, explicitly favors a huge research project. The researcher premises reflect beliefs about the theory, methodology and background object under investigation.

Making a cross-cultural diagnosis involves, as already presented, a research plan, including steps, strategies and means of implementation. The algorithm proposed by research and research plan content is determined by their logical choices (rational scientific or heuristic-infralogic), epistemological option (emic, ethical or positivism, constructivism, interpretativism), and the methodology (inductive, deductive, quantitative, qualitative etc.).

For a rational approach the research algorithm and the strategy content will be designed strictly mandatory, precise and structured, and a heuristic approach will be flexible, adaptable given the new information that appears.

The cross-cultural approach is recommended to take into account the following assumptions:

• the background and basic concepts must be well defined (culture, international organization, etc.).

• the cross-cultural approach should be taken into account "the ideological focus" of each culture, the role of cultural stereotypes, the objectives of cultural adaptation.

• the objective treatment of the cultural specificity (no positive or negative aspects).

• the acceptance of cultural dynamism (a new anticipation of what may occur in the manifestation of evolving behaviors, attitudes for each culture).

• the resumption of synchronous and sequential approach to teaching culture at different times (the diachronic approach).

• the objective interpretation of current attitudes and behaviors and their explanation.

• the establishing of a plan for effective management decisions and actions.

• choosing or creating a strategy for intellectual research using the known steps (the matrix of cultural diversity, the cultural synergy, the values orientation etc.) or by making a specific approach. (Zaiț,.et alli 2009 p. 142).

Epistemological alternatives: in theory, the epistemological perspectives to make a cross-cultural diagnosis can be made by using the following paradigms: *positivism, constructivism, interpretantivism.*

The positivism still has the role of patriarch in the scientific research with a defined axiomatic system in terms of theory.

Positivism has a number of principles observed simultaneously:

1. the analysis of factors and events it is independent in relation to research (cannot be influenced by it).

2. the researcher is objective in terms of how to do research and regarding the results, too.

3. connections, the state of things, the developments are determined casual.

4. the approach is achieved by concepts, which allow the quantitative measure and the formal logic.

5. it takes into account a large number of necessary observations (time, events, facts) for theoretical generalization.

6. the call to reductionism (simplification, modeling) is possible to foster understanding and explanation.

The constructivism is based on the representative principle and provides the prerequisites for a pragmatic approach, trying to offer concrete solutions to specific problems.

As defined by the concrete reality is the result: "*representations of a world built on their own experiences*" (Le Moigne, cited Zaiț D. & Zaiț A. 2009 p. 905) the main features of constructivism are:

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1. the reality is the result of successive transformations and the knowledge we become aware of our possibilities.

2. there is a relation between researcher and the object of his research.

3. the understanding and the explanation can be obtained by argument, leading to convincing solutions.

4. action strategies are needed to obtain a convenient relation between a given situation and a specific project intervention.

The interpretativism is, in some ways, a version of constructivism, with the following feature: the researcher and the object of his research are two inseparable entities in the real world. Among interpretativism principles, we find, in a more or less obvious way, elements of constructivism (Weber, 2004, apud Zaiț & Zaiț, 2009 p. 905).

1. the reality is an intentional construction, the result of a series of successive experiences of life, and can only be known and researched drawing on these experiences.

2. the truth is the object of intentions to achieve and may result from matching the object of research and the life experience of the researcher.

3. the match between the object and experience is relative and subjective and the objectives are understanding and enforcement of what is meant.

The interpretativism is assimilated to a metaphysical ideal dominated by rhetoric and a bias towards life and on a methodological level by hermeneutic and phenomenology.

The epistemological positioning takes into account how the research object is approached, being necessary to distinguish between ethical approach and emic approach. (Zaiț & Zaiț, 2009, p. 907)

Through the ethical approach we obtain general and universal results, and the emic approach is focused mainly on private and individual approaches.

Methods, management and ways of cross-cultural research: as a result of globalization, people from different areas and cultures began to go elsewhere, thus renewing the vision of human relationships. This led to a mixture, to a mixing with other people from other countries, holders of different cultural and linguistic background.

The exposure to a new culture and new beliefs and customs of people, can lead to many differences and misunderstandings, making the business field a real and uncomfortable socio-economic *battleground*. To overcome this *status quo*, the need for cross-cultural initiations became essential.

An expert in cross-cultural management of international relations can be achieved with *a clear shot* on the objectivity of a specific culture or the customs of a country advising those who are trying to integrate themselves into other environment. We believe that a good knowledge of cross-cultural methodology is the way to achieve this goal fully, training specialists for the true litmus test: the direct contact with the new socio-economic and cultural realities.

Cross-cultural research methods are quite rare and often dominated by endogenous factors: the discipline "parent" of researchers - psychology, anthropology, the purpose of the report etc. This is expected because the international cross-cultural management with an inter-multi disciplinary character par excellence cannot be tackled only by "the vision" of multidisciplinary and multinational teams. The epistemology and other sciences currently offer to the cross-cultural management the field of study for the selected methodology. Using the methods for anticipating ways (building hypotheses, anticipating solutions etc.).

The word method, Greek in origin, can be translated as way of exposure representing "*the theoretical aspect of science, the most active core of the way for acquiring new knowledge*" (Dictionary of Philosophy, 1978, p 457).

"The method is in fact that know-how that can lead to achieving a certain goal, a goal of research in particular and in particular. It provides us with rules, norms, methods and techniques or practices by which we come to know, "how to do" and "how to apply" something that we know or have learned how to go through from a vague idea, from an hypothesis to a solution, a generalization or a scientific theory." (Zaiț,. et alli, 2002, p. 143)

Thinking method ensures *adequatio intellectus ad intellecti* (internal logical consistency) and *adequatio intellectus ad rei* (our mental image in correlation with the objective reality). (Chelcea, 2001, p. 46)

Another definition of the methodology we find in the dictionary of sociology of **Zamfir C.**: "The r*esearch methodology as the expression of the critical consciousness, self reflexive and constructive of a discipline. Sometimes research methodology is considered as a branch of philosophy of science, developing in*

relation to epistemology. In this position it is recognized that there would be a general methodology whose goals transcend those of any discipline to deal with problems common to all scientific research" (C. Zamfir, Vlăsceanu L., 1993, p.333).

According to etymology, the methodology means *science methods*, the methodology is literally *integrated science methods, and the method is the rational approach for discovering the truth or the spirit of solving a problem* (Claude, 1994, p. 4 apud Chelcea, 2001, p. 50).

Nothing should interfere, from an ethical point of view, between researcher and subject of his study. Knowledge of research methodology and the implementation of a competent diagnosis can bring faster recognition specialists. Methodological options for a researcher do not have a rigid model, although the methodology has a normative character. (Zaiţ, 2009, p. 902). A methodological choice involves a selection, in accordance with free will, of its own methods, techniques, rules and tools. The methodology enables us to establish a research strategy for the purpose and objectives for that conduct research. Methods can be classified according to several criteria, some of which are very useful for a cross-cultural research.

Table 2

Methods classification	- general characteristics of the methods
Cross-temporal criteria	- relations between socio-human phenomena and processes at a specific time. (observation, investigation, tests, etc.) - longitudinal methods-study the evolution of the phenomena over time (biography, case study)
Reactivity criteria	- the rate of intervention on the object of study. - experimental methods - sociological and psychological experiment - investigation, survey, social biography - methods of observation: social documents studies, observation
Number criteria	- refers to the number of units under study - static methods: investigating a large number of social units (socio-demographic surveys, statistical-mathematical analysis) - casuistry methods: integrated study of several socio-

	human units (case study etc.)
Place criteria	- the place in the empirical investigation - methods for gathering information of record static, field study, survey - information processing methods: quantitative, qualitative and mixed - data-interpretation methods: comparative, interpretative etc.

(adapted from S. Chelcea, *Sociological research methodology*, 2001)

For MI study research can be done by addressing one of the systems already methodological classic. In their work *Research in economics and management*, **D. Zaiț** and **A. Spalanzani** present five approaches from studies of **Churchman** and **Mitroff**.

Table 3

Methodological system	Specificities
Formal deductive system (Leibnitz)	- exploratory theoretical reflections - logical-mathematical construction - applicable to problems that lend themselves to structuring - the models descriptors are quantitative and measurable
The inductive consensual system (Locke)	- opinions on the basis of the specialists expertise - the approach is recommended for research problems and the nature of which was accepted by consensus
The synthetic representation system (Kant)	- involves construction and operation of two competing systems to be chosen the best
The dialectic-conflictual model (Hegel)	- demonstration and argumentation have a crucial role - the debates clarify the nature of the problem
The pragmatic-interdisciplinary model (Singer and Churchman)	- clarifying the basic assumptions based on synthetic constructions having an interdisciplinary and holistic character

(adapted from Zaiț & Spalanzani, 2006).

All the work mentioned above meet, as general type of approach, the methodological research type: holistic or individualistic, synchronic or diachronic, phenomenological, historical or experimental.

Table no. 4

Methodological approach	Features
Holism	- recourse to quantitative methods - objective data-gathering - transcends the subjectivity of the researcher
Individualism	- aimed at specific components of the system - wants to capture the diversity
Synchronic approach Diachronic approach	- analyzing facts that occur at a time - approach to the facts in their historical evolution
Phenomenological approach	- descriptive study phenomena, processes and cultural facts in their evolution in time and space
Reconstructive approach	- interpretation of the facts in the light of history that produced them
Experimental approach	- examines the differences between sets and variables by controlling and manipulating other variables

(adapted from Zaiț & Spalanzani, 2006)

Given the theoretical orientations of the reference field, the methodology can be: *positive* (experience and exploit econometric and mathematical models), *interpretive* (analyzing the various codes, symbols) and *critical* (aware of the contradictory aspects, negative or dysfunctional). In dealing with cross-cultural diagnosis the pragmatic-interdisciplinary model with individual and synchronous development offers the best possibilities, having a transdisciplinary and introspective nature, with the premise that all truth is merely a description of reality at a time. (Zaiț, 2002, p. 146)

Regarding the cross-cultural research **Gudikunst** and **Yunkin** find the following methodological combinations for the research approach. (Zaiț, 2002, p. 146)

The *analytical-reductionist-quantitative* methodological system aims abstraction of reality studied, detachment of separate elements and their combination after a while. It applies when assumptions can be derived from others of similar systems, all can be separated into components.

The *holistic-contextual-qualitative* methodological systems is recommended when there is a sequence of relations considered and take account of this hypothesis which can be derived from the application of general theoretical rules, and the investigator may have an objective opinion to the cultural system in question.

The *constructivist* methodological system analyzes the subjective processes from a cultural system, but not the observable patterns, the individual components becoming basic elements of the analysis. (Zaiț & Spalanzani, 2006, p. 130).

Regarding how to achieve, the methodological approach may be:

1. *adductive* (according to Aristotle, if a major premise is considered true, in the same way it is regarded a minor premise)

2. *deductive* (reasoning as that, starting from general ideas, to reach particular conclusions.)

3. *inductive* (basic form of reasoning, which made the passage from particular to general). (Zaiț & Zaiț, 2009, p. 906)

These methodological patterns do not have an absolute character, they combine the methods, tools and techniques taken from economics, mathematics, sociology, psychology etc.

The researched problem is actually a logical exposition of the situation, the status quo, the contradictions that are defined and exposed.

Research option must be taken as an average between the *rational* (scientific sense) and *heuristic* (infralogic). Scientific logic suggests a strictly rational development based on rules, principles and methodological requirements. Logical particularities of research should be considered as a theory for a rational approach in scientific research. On the other hand, but which is still somewhat complementary to rational logic, logical infrastructure (heuristic) is an approach that is based on a random trajectory unscheduled sequence of steps, time solutions, obstacles, etc..

If rational logic mechanism is identified with a particular methodology, research infrastructure is mainly determined by the logic of psychological elements that the researcher can treat subjectively the object of his research. While logic is used primarily by supporters of the quantitative system, of positivism, logical infrastructure remains the preference of those who take account of changing random influences, subjectivism and probability. (Zaiț & Zaiț, 2009, p. 904)

Rational logic is based on quantifiable analysis that can be replicated in other conditions by other researchers, while the heuristic's base represents the description of a certain event conditions, event or a small number of cases associated with each rational quantitative approach.

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