The Specificity of Intercultural
Management during the Contemporary Period

Dănuț Modest Boiciuc, PhD in progress
Ovidius University of Constanța, Romania
modestboiciuc@yahoo.com

Abstract: The intercultural management appears on the track of the economic history in the second half of the twentieth century, David Granick being the one who published the first pioneering work of this discipline. His books deal with the management of enterprises in the Soviet Union after World War II. The beginning of this discipline is a natural consequence of the realities resulting from globalization, technological explosion competition between the growing numbers of international corporations to which is added free movement of persons, goods and capital. At the first level, the empirical one, this article will attempt a presentation of the current theoretical framework and of the multicultural realities that occurred in recent decades, when it was put more emphasis on the need to identify the cultural specificities. It aims to show how the cultural specificity leaves his mark on the industrial organizations, of economic relations in a globalized business.

Keywords: intercultural management; globalization; cultural dimensions

Internationalization and Globalization

The internationalization can be defined as a process of crossing national boundaries in affairs, especially the financial markets, but also through the international extension of production and trade. Through globalization we understand global integration of production and consumption. In other studies also appear other meanings of IM:

Managing the cultural differences;
Highlighting the differences and similarities between different cultures involved in the business;
Supporting the formulation of general laws in social sciences;
The substantiations of decisions by strengthening the links between business and environment, between culture and strategy;
The reconciliation between cosmopolitanism and particularism;

Identifying and inventorying the diversities expectations and customer tastes;
Valuing cultural diversity through organizational apprenticeship.

The internationalization and globalization lead to the need to identify the local cultural specificity and hence the development of IM. (Zait, 2006, p. 4)

The interaction between the states and the large trusts inevitably leads to competition. So it is required as an imperative "sine qua non" to find solutions for the preservation of the national positions and the growth of the "conquistador" spirit to new markets. If in the past the migrations of the Turanic people, the crusades route or the Iberians Saga in the New World have created the first bridge of international economic exchanges, today's so-called modern migration offers the epicenter that supports the appearance of international management anddevelops the international trades.

So appears international areas in which hybrid languages (eg. Quink language – a mixture between English, French and native dialects of Canada) proves the emergence of new components completely different from those encountered in the regions of origin. The cultural interaction occurs also in Western Europe so canonical and intolerant in the past. Islamic and Eastern European communities in France, England, Spain and Belgium are a clear example of foreign cultural influences.

Beyond the particularity of the management style (Euro-management, American, Japanese, Nordic) it is clearly noted a globalization of the management legislation, political development, legal or administrative regulations.

Through the interest in cultural synergy, IM aims to find out the most optimal solution to increase the effectiveness of an enterprise in the current global system (both at unicultural level (mono-cultural) and at the intercultural one itself).

The compared management that according to **Raghu Natalso** has a cultural component, it can handle by covering the area between unicultural and intercultural with IM. *Such studies allows: a more complete understanding between individuals / nationsbelonging to different histories (culture, religion, language, etc.); a better understanding of the value of "other" that can also help to alleviate the gap between East and West.* (Raghu, 2001)

For a better understanding of IM is necessary to make some distinction between IM and other disciplines that, due to similarities, are likely to be confused.

Cross-Cultural Management is the name under which it was launched IM in the Anglo-Saxon space; currently is preferred the name of Intercultural Management.

The Compared Management very close to IM provides an analysis of different styles of management, among which the differences are given not only by cultural elements.

International Management was created to generalize the management practices of the organizational structures and the effective actions of worldwide management (sometimes international management is considered a part of the intercultural management).

Intercultural Marketing appeared simultaneously with IM and proposes to implement a simultaneous marketing in several regions of the world being a key part to the overall strategy of an enterprise.

Global Marketing demonstrates how the marketing tries to adapt to the context of globalization to support them;

International Marketing emphasizes the international character of business, respectively of the markets, the corporations with activities in several countries and directs the production to consumers around the world to get a higher profit;

Ethnical Market or community market addresses to target groups with ethnic homogeneity (black, Hispanics, etc) or behavioral (gay, hippy);

Tribal – Market is more a theory which claims that postmodern society is a mixture of micro-groups in which the subjects hold a common subculture. (Zait, 2006, pp. 15-19)

The Cultural Specificity in Management

On the national or country level we find a considerable influence of the concept of organizational culture, a culture that is structured only over time, a several decades of existence of a company, this particular culture conditioning the business success.

There are "over 160 definitions of the cultural concept" says **Robert Mockler**. This author considers culture to be "that complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs and any skills and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Mocler, 2001)". According to Mockler, *the culture is acquired in time by a person*; it is not inherited at birth, but is learned as rules and patterns of behavior.

Samuel Huntington outlines new political economical and last but not least cultural realities of the global economy after the Cold War. In his book, *The Clash*

of Civilization he tries to anticipate the major directions towards where is heading the states and civilizations that are in a global competition. In the world after the Cold War, what we call "culture" matters and cultural identities constitutes a concept of great significance for most people. (Huntington, 1997)

The central theme of this book is the fact that "*cultural identity and the culture which, at the most common level are civilization identities, shapes the cohesion trends, disintegration and conflict after the Cold War*".

To define a culture it seems always that the subjectivity can overcome the research approach. You can also say that, "*culture is what gives intelligence the capacity to fructify*" (Henry Marrou Irenee, cited Zait, 2006, p. 42).

The interaction between cultures is as complex as the one between human beings based primarily on a strong mutual relationship. To study the relations between cultures we particularly call on three specific approaches: **cross-cultural, intra-cultural**and **intercultural**. The importance of the prefixes in these concepts is analyzed by many experts. The "*intra*" prefix refers to the relations that emerges and develop within the same cultures. The "*inter*" prefix analyzes the cultural specificity of at least two different groups and "*cross*" refers to the relations between different national cultures. Cross-cultural addresses the relations strictly between cultures and intercultural surprises the interrelation between them. By *pluricultural* and *multicultural* is made quantitative distinctions as opposed to *unicultural* and *monocultural*.

Necessary Boundaries of the IM

The most obvious feature of the IM is interdisciplinary and may be close as origins and fundamental concerns to the intercultural psychology and organizational behavior; as an epistemological and interpretive support is approaching to the history and philosophy of culture; and through research methods depends on Anthropology, Psychology, Management, etc. "*With its record as a theoretical and methodological and also its utilities destinations, the intercultural management is a complex subject, difficult to set as a field, object, method or tool*" (Zait, 2002, p. 43)

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Report on the Current State of Knowledge in the IM Field

Among the leaders of the appearance of international management we mention: **Geert Hofstede, Shalom Schwartz, Robert House (GLOBE dimensions), Edward T. Hall, Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck, Ch. Hampten – Turner and Fons Trompenaars**.

Hofstede is the first established specialists who treat *culture* as a collective mental programming, programming through which the members of a group are different form another group components. In his view, the individual / group culture is at the way of thinking, feeling and acting for individuals, organizations and countries. Therefore, the differences in management practices and the economical success of the companies and countries *are mainly explained* by the cultural differences of groups within organizations (business or otherwise).

Addressed as a collective mental programming of thinking, the culture comes from the social environment of the person and not from his genes; so, we must distinguish – says **Hofstede** – between *human nature*, which is inherited through genetic information, for the very notion of culture, as well as the *individual personality*, which is partly inherited and partly formed bye learning.

Hofstede has identified four bipolar cultural dimensions (power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity vs. masculinity), to these introducing together with Professor Bond the fifth dimension also called "*Confucian dynamism*", "Confucian dynamism or short-term orientation from long-term orientation". Hofstede's research has had a remarkable effect on both the academic and practical area.

Power distance form low to high refers to the eternal phenomenon of inequality between human beings. The big distance from the power is rendered by the responses "distance is large and highly desirable to have", the opposite being voiced bye the opinions: "inequality should be avoided as much as possible".

Collectivism vs. individualism refers to interpersonal relationships within a company. The individualism is governed by the phrase "each for himself", and the collectivism, not to be confused with communism, is the principle of "belonging, attachment to a group a lifetime".

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the anxieties that can occur in the case of an unknown future. The anxiety and fear are the characteristics of a high level of fighting uncertainty, while in countries where the uncertainty avoidance is low people give the impression that are calm and quiet. Most countries with a high degree of control of uncertainty presents also a great power distance and vice versa.

Masculinity vs. Femininity. In male societies the values are subordination, obtaining money and indifference, and social roles based on sex must be fully differentiated. Feminine societies emphasize on cooperation among peers, the preservation of life, and social roles must be overlapped.

Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation refers to the position adopted by the individual against time. Long-term orientation emphasizes perseverance and thrift, and the opposite emphasizes immediate perspective, stability, etc.

Fons Trompenars has earned a solid reputation in the IM, the most representative works of him are: *Riding the Waves of Culture, Seven Cultures of Capitalism, Building Cross-Cultural Competence, 21 Leaders for the 21st Century and Innovating in a Global Crises*.

Dutch by birth, familiar with English and French, was able to experience the cultural differences working for Shell in nine countries. Together with Charles Hampden Turner has developed a cultural model based on the idea that all people involved in business are facing the same problems, but the answers that they form

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are very different (Bibu, 2000, p. 16). The model proposed by Trompenaars and Turner has seven cultural dimensions.

Characteristic	Universalistic culture	Particularistic culture
The focal point	The emphasis is more on rules	The emphasis is on relationships
Legal agreement	Is unconditionally respected	Has little value, it can be changed
Trusted person	Always honors the contract or given word	Honors the exchange of mutual benefits
Attitude towards the truth	Truth is immutable	Truth is relative, has many facets
Business relationship	Is strong and contractual, formalized in writing	May be subject to changes

Source: Apud Bibu, (2000, p. 27)

GLOBE (The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) is a multiphase and multi-methodic research project of Intercultural Management in which are examined the cultural and social relations, the organizational culture and leadership of the organization. Approximately 160 professionals and students in Management from 61 countries representing all geographical regions of the Earth have committed themselves in this long-term marathon cultural project. Following studies have identified nine cultural dimensions, some of which are already known (uncertainty avoidance, future orientation, power distance), while others were given another form (eg. The collectivism which appears in two forms, as a group and institutional) and one is new – performance orientation. The novelty of the research was in delimiting the values (as it should be) of the practice (as it is).

Power distance measures the member's opinion of a company regarding the power concentration at higher levels. In countries where the distance is large (Morocco, Nigeria) the society is divided in two social classes, the hierarchical ascent is limited, whereas where scores are low (Netherlands, Denmark) resources are available for almost everyone, the information are available, anyone can advance.

The institutional collectivism shows how collective distribution of resources is rewarded in the organization. The countries with high institutional collectivism (Sweden, South Korea, Japan) sustains the reliance on society, loyalty to the group,

maximizing the collective interests, the decisions are taken in groups, the opposite being placed in countries like Hungary an Greece.

The group collectivism shows pride, the attachment which one has for the organization, family. High collectivism makes a clear distinction between group members and outsiders; the focus is on the link with the group, the responsibilities and duties determine the social behavior, while the low group collectivism the personal needs and their own attitudes are responsible for the social behavior.

The gender equality shows how the society focuses on the role differences between men and women, encouraging the equality between them. Where equality is high we meet women in leadership positions, the education is similar, making them having a decisional role in society.

Avoiding uncertainty where uncertainty avoidance index is up is looking to reduce the impact of unpredictable events that may affect the lifestyle. Low avoidance means informality, assuming high risks and moderate resistance to changes.

Aggression is the way within the organization for looking for confrontation. A high aggressiveness emphasize on competition, success, environmental control, the opposite being the countries where trust is built on predictability and where the subordinates are expected to be loyal.

Future orientation focuses on how the companies direct its strategies for the future. A high orientation shows a keen interest in the future, it emphasizes he things that can be successful later, and the spiritual and material success forms a whole.

Performance orientation shows how the group members are encouraged for the excellence. High performance orientation involves an emphasis on training and development, capitalizes the competition, and values more what the individual does and not what he is. Low performance orientation emphasizes social and family values, harmony with the environment valuing more the individual as an identity.

Human orientation refers to how an organization encourages the correct and altruistic behavior. A high human orientation shows respect for other's interests, sensitivity to any form of racial discrimination, and members of the society are responsible for promoting the welfare of others. Opposite a low orientation presents disregard for the need of others.

Anthropologists **FlorenceKlcukhohn** and **FredStrodtbeck**, on the study of small communities have identified the following guidance values: *orientations in relations with human nature, orientation in relation to the environment, orientation in relation with time, orientation in relation to work, orientation in relation between people.*

Inevitably any analysis of cultural dimensions betrays the subjectivity of which has approached it. Yet we have to observe and appreciate the efforts of the researchers to identify new cultural dimensions.

Conclusions

The internalization and globalization leads to the need to identify le local cultural specificity and hence the development of the IM. Beyond the particularity if the management style (Euro-management, American, Japanese, Nordic) it is clearly noted a globalization of the legislation management, political development, legal and administrative regulations.

Through the interest in cultural synergy, IM aims to find out the most optimal solution to increase the effectiveness of an enterprise in the current global system (both at unicultural level (mono-cultural) and at the intercultural one itself). The interaction between cultures is as complex as the one between human beings based primarily on a strong mutual relationship. To study the relations between cultures we particularly call on three specific approaches: cross-cultural, intra-cultural and intercultural.

Everyone is marked by cultural background and the regional differences knowledge can be harnessed also in increasing the efficiency of international economical exchanges. According to the *social determinism* (it claims that there is a causal relationship between socio-historical-geo-physical factors and the characteristics of a nation), regional values of individuals marks the way they interact in the business environment.

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