Global Project Management: The availability and applicability of international project

frameworks when traversing geography and culture

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze multiple variables involved in Global Project Management to determine the efficacy and suitability of international frameworks for projects involving multinational teams. Specifically, this presentation will explore how companies successfully manage multinational teams that must solve a common problem within constraints established by an organizational entity. A contrastive analysis of several project frameworks used at an international level illustrates the true suitability of these methods in contexts where different cultures, geographic locations, and languages converge.

A. Introduction

As the global community becomes increasingly integrated economically, the prospect of employees working alongside others of different cultures, languages, and mindsets is also rising. The ability of technology to connect people from all over the world has led to a rise of virtual teams and cross-organizational relationships, creating in essence an environment for truly global projects. Global Project Management has grown in popularity and effectiveness, but continues to add new complexities for teams, especially in regards to communication and collaboration. Adding to this complexity is the absence of a universal project management standard or strategic framework, bringing logistical issues to the field.

It is logical then to suggest that a truly universal framework of reliable project management theories, frameworks, and tools should be readily available for project managers so that those from different countries could discuss and collaborate on global projects without having to first investigate the different levels of knowledge and practices that have been brought to the meeting table. While unique organizations have unique ideas and resources, the existence of a basic, internationally accepted standard would immensely affect the success rate of projects involving multiple organizations, countries, and languages. In addition, a guide for project managers that addresses cultural differences within their team, strategies for communicating across language barriers, and the management of scheduling conflicts would be of immeasurable value for a global project manager.

The combination of a standard framework and an international focus would ultimately change the global project management field. However, even as literature on

the subject is emerging piece by piece, it has failed to truly capture the essence of the existing issues or to provide an effective solution. Without a universal standard or framework, global projects can be risky ventures for existing international companies, and even riskier to those who are new to conducting international business.

How, then, do companies manage multinational project teams while working within multiple constraints determined by outside forces? This essential question will be explored through a review of available international project frameworks and tools, followed by a comparative analysis of three different project handbooks developed by international organizations against a previously established project standard. A rationale for this research, including context of the subject and evidence for its continued importance within the global marketplace, will provide background for the comparative analysis. Finally, the results of the analysis will be discussed and possible outcomes will be evaluated.

B. Context for Research

1. Background

Global Project Management, in accord with the more general field of Project Management, has strong applicability in business, construction, engineering, health, and information technology. With slight modifications to existing frameworks and strategies, however, Project Management can be applied to virtually any discipline. With such variability in application and structure, the definition of Project Management – and even the understanding of projects – can differ from country to country, organization to organization, or person to person.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) is a leading source of project

management theory, instruction, and accreditation that is recognized globally for its role

in the advancement and development of the field, and membership in the organization is

internationally recognized (PMI, About Us). PMI defines a "project" as "temporary in

that it has a defined beginning and end in time, and therefore defined scope and

resources…[and] unique in that it is not a routine operation, but a specific set of

operations designed to accomplish a singular goal." Project management for the PMI is

"the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet

the project requirements" (PMI, What is Project Management?). These definitions will be

used throughout this discussion to examine the context of Global Project Management.

Historically, Project Management has always held a role in development, having

been used informally for hundreds of years and dating back to the construction of the

Pyramid of Giza in 2570 B.C., where records indicate that four managers were used to

oversee construction, one manager for each side (Haughey, 2010). Formal tools in the

field were introduced in 1917 with Henry Gantt's creation of the Gantt chart, which was

used in the creation of the Hoover Dam in 1931 (Haughey, 2010). From this point

forward, Project Management began a series of developments that led to its first formal

definition, use and structure in the 1960s, with the formation of the International Project

Management Association (IPMA) and the Project Management Institute (Haughey,

2010).

Since the 1960s, Project Management has been the object of intense research,

developments, and attention. Frameworks, tools, and strategies have been evaluated and

dispersed, with several frontrunners emerging as popular strategic choices for

organizational and governmental project programs. However, with the rise of a global

marketplace and increasing global interdependency, global projects have begun to

represent an increasingly larger share of total projects each year. The Y2K crisis of 1999

in particular was one of the first widespread global projects, initiating at the time a

discussion of GPM and its implications for the project management field. In 1999, the

realization that computer systems and technology infrastructure would register the year

2000 as the year 1900 resulted in global widespread panic. To remedy the situation,

computer scientists and technology specialists were needed to reprogram computer code

to understand the year 2000 differently from the year 1900 (Anbari et al., 2009). Due to

the immense scale of the problem, Anbari et al. (2009) note that "Countries and

organizations throughout the world recognized that while maintaining management of

their own Y2K projects, they would gain from sharing information on their project plans,

progress, problems, and successes" (p. 9). Hence, the beginnings of a truly "global"

project field took form.

  The Y2K crisis was resolved and in the aftermath, consumers, organizations, and

governments alike realized the potential for global projects. As the U.S. Department of

States remarked in 2001, "Y2K was fascinating in terms of how to get ones arms around

a subtle problem that crossed a wide sweep…the lessons learned from the exercise will

be invaluable in addressing other management issues" (as cited in Albari, et al, 2009).

With origins and potential for success solidified within the Y2K crisis, awareness of the

practicality of GPM spread to both private and public organizations, spurring widespread

interest.

2. Global Project Management: Newfound Importance

In today's globalized economy, nations have become increasingly reliant on each other's successes for their own growth and development. Private businesses and institutions alike have felt the effects of this phenomenon ripple into their own organizational structure and performance, forcing them to accommodate the new global order. Privately owned organizations need to adapt to the globalized marketplace and cannot progress without proper coordination and communication among different countries, cultures, time zones, and languages, which is at the base of GPM. Thus, the time is rife for developments within Project Management, and these, in turn, have led to increased widespread interest in the use of global project management.

Perhaps the most far-reaching implication of the new global economy is the exposure to new competition, which originates from areas across the world. As David Cleland states in the *Global Project Management Handbook* (1994), "Today, a truly domestic marketplace does not exist; enterprise managers the world over must face the unforgiving global marketplace…" (pg. xi). When Cleland wrote his handbook, the United States had just signed the North American Free Trade Agreement, the European Union had just been forged, and the dismantling of the former USSR promised a new era of global growth and interdependency (Cleland, 1994, p. 5). When considering the developments in the international economy that have taken place since 1994, it's clear that the world remains on a seemingly irreversible path towards further integration. Cleland's statements have held true, maintaining a perfect description of our modern world:

Yet the growing globalization of business makes borderless project management even more necessary. As nations work less independently and more cooperatively in ventures to attain common objectives and goals, the philosophy of borderless project management will increase in use, and, as a result, greater cooperation will be fostered among nations – more than has been known in the past. (Cleland, 1994, p. 6)

In essence, the removal of barriers between countries has created an environment for GPM to flourish. Concrete obstacles have been removed, such as trade agreements and barriers to trade; advancements in interpreting and translation have been made (Google Translate); and mindsets have evolved (the end of the Cold War, for example). With these barriers removed, there is boundless opportunity for cooperation and growth that crosses borders and corporations in order to further increase customer value and solve global issues (Cleland, 1994, Chapter 1). Forging organizational relationships, such as a partnership between Dunkin Donuts and Baskin Robbins, actually offers advantages to corporations in terms of expansion or idea generation. According to Aarseth, Anderson, & Rolstadas (2011) "…business trends for the 21st century [point] toward more widespread global alliances and collaborations, projects have taken on a much stronger global focus, for example, projects executed in global environments" (p. 327). These collaborations could even be necessary for success in the new globalized economy, signifying further need for GPM.

3. Basis for Traditional Projects

       Generally, both traditional and global forms of project management incorporate

several essential elements. For the purposes of this paper, the general values of project

management correlate with those established by the Project Management Institute (see

Table 1 below). Those marked with an asterisk (*) are the areas that are most important

when discussing global project design; thus they will be used as a basis for a comparative

analysis of the project management frameworks of several international organizations.

Before being able to properly compare project management strategies, a literature review

of the available standardized traditional and standardized global project management

frameworks must be completed to create a basis for analysis.

Table 1.
Project Management Knowledge Areas

1. Project Integration Management	2. Project Scope Management *
3. Project Time Management	4. Project Cost Management
5. Project Quality Management	6. Project Human Resource Management
7. Project Communications Management *	8. Project Risk Management
9. Project Procurement Management	10. Project Stakeholder Management *

Note. Knowledge Areas of Project Management, Project Management Institute (PMI).
Retrieved from http://www.pmi.org/About-Us/About-Us-What-is-Project-
Management.aspx. Copyright 2016 by Project Management Institute.

       The most common standardized approach to Project Management is produced by

the Project Management Institute (PMI), known as the PMBOK: the Project Management

Body of Knowledge. The PMBOK (translated into more than ten languages) is a standard

across the project management industry, defining common terms and concepts for

cooperation between project managers. Because project management is used in so many

industries, it would be impossible to consolidate industry specific terminology and processes within one standard. Thus, the PMBOK can be used as a starting point for constructing the bones of a strategy and for generally educating a corporation's project management department, but then would have to be built upon with more specifics (Stackpole Snyder, 2013, p. 1).

The processes that take place within each phase of the project life cycle are defined by the PMBOK and can be adapted to any industry. These processes are Project Management Process Groups, of which there are five: Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, and Closing. These process groups describe a series of activities that should be completed for successful project completion; for example, the Initiating process group "consists of those processes performed to define a new project or a new phase of an existing project by obtaining authorization to start the project or phase" (Stackhole Snyder, 2013, p. 13). The processes in the Initiating phase include: identifying sponsor roles, clarifying project manager roles, developing a project charter, and identifying key stakeholders. Variations of the process groups within the PMBOK appear in project management offices around the world.

The Project Cycle Management Theory is another popular standardized practice, used by many Project Management Offices (PMOs), but has its origins outside of PMBOK and the PMI. Project Cycle Management Theory, originating in the 1970s, is more of a tool than a framework and consists of a sequence of six phases that aim to create a structured process for project activities to undergo throughout the life cycle of a project and to maintain a clear focus on the problems and objectives (Landoni & Corti, 2011, p. 46). Thus, the theory is a life cycle of a project, and within each phase of this

cycle, the five process groups can be executed accordingly. As defined by Biggs and

Smith, "the project cycle consists of a number of progressive phases 'that lead from

identification of needs and objectives, through planning and implementation of activities

to address these needs and objectives, to assessment of the outcomes,'" (As cited in

Landoni & Corti, 2011, p. 46). The tool has since evolved, with variations appearing in

virtually every project management strategy across the world.

   Within the Project Cycle Management Theory, the Logical Framework (also

recognized as LF or logframe) is often used. Logframe is another tool that has evolved

from its origins in the late 1960s to become an almost-universally used tool in project

management. Separate from the origins of both the PMI and the Project Cycle

Management theory, the LF is a matrix that establishes project "goals, activities,

assumptions, indicators, and sources of verification in order to measure and report the

achievement of objectives (Landoni & Corti, 2011, p. 46). LF itself was created to assist

the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the completion of

their projects in the IT realm; the success was so great that USAID began to use logframe

in the strategy of every project within the agency. In fact, aid agencies from governments

throughout the world adopted the logframe tool, including Canada, and a more systematic

approach to the LF was developed in Germany (the ZOPP tool). Norway, Denmark,

Sweden, Asia, the United Nations, the European Commission, and Japan all created

variations of the Logical Framework matrix for their own use within project management

(Landoni & Corti, 2011, p. 46).

   Thus, the work of the PMI and their PMBOK approach, the Project Cycle

Management Theory, and the Logical Framework matrix are three widely used practices

within the traditional project management industry. These tools, which represent much of

the recent developments in standardized project management practices, are typically

present in a project management strategy of any kind, regardless of globality or industry.

However, the needs of a project may (and often do) change when the context becomes

global in nature. Project teams can no longer hold team meetings in person, share a

common language, work on the same schedule, and most certainly, assume a common

allegiance either nationally or organizationally. Therefore, project management efforts

have recently focused on creating a framework that is not only recognized globally, but

also addresses the complex nature of global projects.

 4. Basis for Global Projects

   Little progress has been made towards the creation of a globally recognized

project framework that is widely used, applicable, and effective. While several exist, few

have gained ground, and usage varies. Even fewer frameworks exist that provide for the

potential complexities of using multicultural teams.

   One of the more popular globally recognized frameworks was created by the

Global Alliance for Project Performance Standards (GAPPS), which is an organization

primarily focused on clarifying a common global standard of project management

practices. Their work has been completed primarily by comparing their own standards

against the most popular frameworks existing across the world; "GAPPS standards have

been developed drawing on what is common across all existing standards in order to

identify the common core covered by the majority of standards, provide a neutral basis

for comparison. The comparison shows how well each standard covers the core and also

identifies the extent to which each standard goes beyond the core," (GAPPS, Comparison

of PM Standards and Assessments). Their "maps" provide extensive coverage of the

frameworks available and the uniqueness of each one; however, GAPPS has yet to

succeed in providing a familiar and applicable framework of their own, which would be

necessary to achieve a globally recognized practice. Additionally, GAPPS does not

provide any solutions or provisions within their framework to bridge cultural differences

that are present in multicultural projects, and fails to even mention the possibility of

global projects in any capacity.

       PM4NGOs is another, more specialized, effort to create a global standard

framework that provides for additional complexities within a global project than the work

of GAPPS. PM4NGOs, or Project Management for Non-Governmental Organizations, is

an organization focused on "advancement in the Project Management skills of individuals

and organizations working in the development sector throughout the world… [the] aim is

to reach not just donor organizations and NGOs, but individuals on the ground who are

making the difference, often against the odds and with minimal resources," (PM4NGOs,

About Us). Much of their framework is focused on improving the skills of project

managers who may have been trained in hard skills – such as budget planning, logframe,

and cost-benefit analysis – but may not have developed soft skills, such as interpersonal

skills. In humanitarian aid efforts, interpersonal skills are often as important, if not more

so, than hard skills; aid projects typically involve not only more people and stakeholders,

but different kinds of people (including local villages, private donors, multiple

governments, etc.). However, PM4NGOs still falls short when it comes to considerations

for multicultural teams and lacks an approach that would simplify and improve team

relations.

In summation, while several efforts have been made to reconcile traditional strategies with a more standardized and globally-focused framework, none has yet become a complete success. The task is difficult, as it would require an extensive knowledge of project management strategies, such as those described in PMBOK, the Project Cycle Management Theory, and logframe, but also knowledge of the needs of multicultural teams and projects. As Golini and Landoni discuss in their article, "International development projects by non-governmental organizations" (2014), mixing various frameworks into a singular theory is gaining traction in the field. As they note, "…a promising area of development is the integration of the different contributions so as to develop a more effective and adequate…project management methodology, which is the key condition for…effective monitoring and appraisal" (Golini, 2014, p. 134). Combining these approaches into a singular strategy may come to fruition in the coming decades, but has of yet produced very little, if any, viable options.

C. The Impact of Culture on Virtual & Multicultural Teams

1. Role of Culture and Geography

Inherently, global project management teams are multicultural. Working across time zones and languages is commonplace in the GPM world and often, relying on technology to connect team members is the only option. The differences within teams, including cultural differences, organizational differences, and behavioral differences among others, can ultimately determine the success of the project. Thus, project managers must be equipped to deal with these differences and the conflicts that may emerge as a result.

Even beyond culture, difficulties can emerge from the fact that teams aren't located in the same area. Geography can impact projects by creating additional hardships for teams, especially in relation to establishing meeting times, communication styles, and deadlines. Nonetheless, the effects aren't always negative – according to Tsedal Neeley in an issue of the Harvard Business Review, multicultural teams can "offer the best functional expertise from around the world…they draw on benefits of international diversity, bringing together people from many cultures with varied work experiences and different perspectives on strategic and organizational challenges," (Neeley, 2015). To experience any of the benefits that a multi-national team can bring, however, the challenges must first be understood and addressed, and the project manager must have a solid idea of how to prevent and solve them.

A notable global project manager, Jean Binder, wrote an article called "The Global Project Framework: Communication, Collaboration, and Management Across Borders," which illustrates several problems encountered with multicultural and virtual teams. He asks, "…do you believe that English is the universal business language?...Can [teams] understand technical terms, measurement units, jargon, and slang? Are they able to have informal discussions [in their non-native tongue]...?" (Binder, 2009). These issues can arise from the very start of a project and can be addressed before the team is even composed; it's much better to address the potential difficulties associated with multicultural teams before they have the opportunity to become a problem.

Binder also highlights the reality of the "24-hour project schedule" that accompanies most global projects as a complicated issue (Binder, 2009). Put simply, teams spread across multiple time-zones are working at different times of the day and

night, putting pressure on the project manger to set appropriate (and accurate) deadlines to stay on schedule. An 8 AM deadline on March 1st is interpreted differently in New York City than in Brussels, for instance. Project Managers have to be aware of these complexities, planning ahead so that proper assignments are completed in time for the project to remain on schedule. Consider the following example: systematic maintenance on the software portion of a project completed by Colorado technicians could be scheduled for a 3-hour window on the 18th of November, which interferes with the time that a developer typically submits his data from his Dubai office. Because the software was under maintenance, he couldn't submit his data by the end of day, meaning that the content developer in Tokyo has a two-hour delay uploading his reports. Eventually, the entire project will run behind schedule, missing deadlines, and more importantly, costing the company thousands of dollars. On the other hand, when planned correctly, the 24-hour project schedule can be used to facilitate this sort of work, planning deadlines and schedules around a continuous and cyclical clock structure (Binder, 2009). Once again, the planning phase of a project has the capability to address these potential problems, and could even turn an obstacle into an advantage. However, without the awareness of common problems encountered on global teams, the project manager will forego the proper preparation that would simplify the project and ensure success.

Beyond the points highlighted by Binder, culture can ultimately determine the success or failure of a project by affecting team communication, team building, and other dynamics. Many cultural and project management researchers have attempted to explain the role of culture in project management, and, more specifically, the direct impact of culture on project success and execution. One such researcher is the aforementioned

Tsedal Neeley, who created the SPLIT framework to assess the potential impact culture

will have on a project. The SPLIT theory assumes that the single most important

challenge for project mangers is the amount of social distance within a team. Neeley

defines social distance as "the degree of emotional connection among team members,"

and states that team members working in close proximity have a low social distance;

when virtual teams come into play, the distance can only increase (Neeley, 2015). SPLIT

identifies five areas to explain the sources of this distance:

   1. Structure and the Perception of Power: Geographic location of team members and

the number of different locations within a team can alter the perception of power. Neeley

believes that having a majority of team members from one country, or in one location,

and a smaller number of members in various other sites can skew the power perception.

The majority may feel that they have more power, due to a common locale and culture,

and the minority may feel that the larger group may attempt to delegate work unfairly or

place blame where it doesn't belong. In addition, the location of the team leader has a

role; if the team leader is located with the majority, the leader is less likely to anticipate

the needs of the minority. This of course, will create a problem between the larger and

smaller groups.

   2. Process and Importance of Empathy: Neeley's framework accounts for the fact that

much of the relationship and trust building that occurs within a team happens informally.

He uses the example of talking around the "water-cooler" or lunchtime conversations.

Virtual teams lack the environment for informal dialogue, which can create weaker links

between team members, and ultimately create a weaker project;

3. Language and the Fluency Gap: Clearly, multicultural teams may experience interactions with non-native speakers of their language. This can impact the perception of power and affect the execution of a project. If the majority of team members are located in Australia, and thus English is chosen as the method to communicate in team meetings, conference calls, emails, etc., an environment may be created where English speakers feel they have more power. Non-native English speakers may feel slighted or at a disadvantage to express their disagreements or opinions. The imbalance of power may impact how team members can truly contribute to the project;

4. Identity and the Mismatch of Perceptions: Here, Neeley refers to basic cultural differences, such as social manners and politeness (i.e. direct eye contact, hand shaking, outward disagreement). Being unaware of cultural differences can lead to distrust and discomfort for all team members;

5. Technology and the Connection Challenge: Virtual teams rely on technology for communication, and in the 21st century, the choices are limitless. Thus, it should be unsurprising that the choice of virtual communication can impact the inter-team relations of a project team. Videoconferencing, or GotoMeeting, can increase collaboration and engagement, and lend to relationship building strategies. Email, while the most convenient and efficient, can leave too much uncertainty and make unfair assumptions (Neeley, 2015).

Echoing Neeley's train of thought, fellow researcher Erin Meyer states that "The closer the space we share and the more similar our cultural backgrounds, the stronger our reliance on unspoken cues," (2015). When different languages and cultures are in play,

textual modes of communication can be misleading because they lack non-verbal cues, which are responsible for a large part of successful communication strategies.

While SPLIT is the not the only framework for understanding cultural communication strategies, it ties together many different kinds of cultural conflicts and relates them to a potential impact on a global project. Although SPLIT is certainly not exhaustive, it provides a thorough background for understanding the importance of culture in GPM and why project managers should include cultural competency as an essential knowledge area in order to gain a deeper basis for understanding sources of conflict. This, in turn, raises questions about how culture is defined and how cultural competency skills are developed.

2. Basis for Understanding Culture

Culture is defined by Geert Hofstede as "the collective programming (thinking, feeling, and acting) of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another," (as cited in Van Lieshout & Steurenthaler, 2006). Culture has been researched in various forms for decades, but arguably the most complete and widely accepted work is that of Geert Hofstede, a researcher who formed his initial hypotheses based on surveys from IBM employees (Van Lieshout & Steurenthaler, 2006, p. 12). While several other researchers (including Edward Hall, Fons Trompenaars, and Hampden-Turner) have developed notable frameworks for understanding culture, Hofstede has remained one of the forefront experts in the field for decades. Ultimately, Hofstede created a framework based on five dimensions, each of which is a universal element of culture. The dimensions have been summarized in Table 2.

Table 2.
Hofstede's 5 Dimensions

1. Individualism vs. Collectivism:	Degree to which a society believes that an individual should only take care of himself or herself, or that a wider group of members look after everyone within that group.
2. Power Distance:	Degree to which those with less power accept the societal variations in inequality and power.
3. Uncertainty Avoidance:	Degree to which members of that society are comfortable with uncertainty and lack of clarity.
4. Masculinity vs. Femininity:	Degree to which the society is competitive or more concerned with the welfare of the majority.
5. Long Term Orientation:	Degree to which a society is focused on history and tradition versus focused on the future and development.

Note. Information retrieved from Van Lieshout, S. & Steurenthaler, J., (2006). "Effective multicultural project management: Bridging the gap between national cultures and conflict management styles." Undergraduate Thesis: University of Gävle.

Essentially, the work of Hofstede can be applied to cultural conflicts in project management teams in order to better understand the basis for differences in approach or opinion among team members. Table 3 (see below) is a visual representation of this concept: types of conflict are listed on the left side of the chart, and on the right side, the chart lists possible causes of the conflict corresponding to significant cultural frameworks and research developed by aforementioned notable researchers on the subject. It is essential for project managers to have a firm grasp of at least one method of understanding culture, in order to prevent and solve conflicts within their team. This concept is clarified further by cultural researchers Van Lieshout and Steurenthaler, who remark that "A multicultural team is exposed to many sources of conflict to an even greater degree than a mono-cultural team…Thus the multicultural project manager must

be comfortable with conflict management, and be able to handle the conflicts effectively

in order to improve the team's performance," (2006, p. 19).

Table 3.
Sources of Project Conflict and relating Cultural Dimensions

Source of Project Conflict	Cultural dimensions which may Increase Conflict
Scheduling: timing, sequencing, duration of tasks	Sequential time vs. synchronous time (Hall, Trompenaars) Inner direction vs. outer direction (Trompenaars)
Managerial and administrative procedures: reporting relationships, scope, et cetera	Power Distance (Hofstede) Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede) Universalism vs. Particularism (Hofstede)
Communication: poor communication flow between team members or other stakeholders	Affective vs. neutral (Trompenaars) Context (Hall)
Goal or priority definition: importance of certain goals over others on the project	Masculinity vs. Femininity (Hofstede) Long term vs. short term orientation (Hofstede) Individualism vs. Communitarianism (Hofstede, Trompenaars)
Resource allocation: competition for scarce resources	Individualism vs. Communitarianism (Hofstede, Trompenaars)
Reward structure/performance appraisal or measurement: inappropriate match between the project team approach and the appraisal system	Achieved vs. ascribed status (Trompenaars) Long term vs. short term orientation (Hofstede) Specificity vs. diffusion (Trompenaars)
Personality and interpersonal relations: ego-centred differences, or those caused by prejudice or stereotyping	Individualism vs. collectivism (Hofstede, Trompenaars) Specificity vs. diffusion (Trompenaars)
Costs: lack of cost control authority, or disagreements over allocation of funds	Power Distance (Hofstede)
Technical opinion: particularly on technology-oriented projects	Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede)
Politics: based on territorial power or hidden agendas	Power Distance (Hofstede)
Leadership: poor input or direction from senior management	Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede)
Ambiguous roles/structure: particularly in matrix organisations	Power Distance (Hofstede) Universalism vs. Particularism (Trompenaars)

Note. Reprinted from "Effective multicultural project management: Bridging the gap between national cultures and conflict management styles" by Van Lieshout, S. & Steurenthaler, J. (p. 19).

A modern approach to understanding culture is found in the work of Erin Meyer,

author and creator of the *Culture Map*. Her theory is established from years of work with

various cultures that she encountered on her career path, which ranged from time spent in

the Peace Corps to her current role as a director within the INSEAD organization (Meyer,

2014). The approach is simple: countries are plotted onto a set of eight scales, each of

which represents a universal element of culture. Once a country has been plotted on the

Culture Map, the user can better understand why members of a culture may respond, act,

think, etc. in certain ways. The eight scales are described below, in Table 4.

Table 4.
Dimensions of the Culture Map

1. Communication: Low Context – High Context	The communication scale plots culture in terms of clarity. In other words, low context cultures communicate with repetition and specifically maintain a clear understanding. High context cultures are interpretive and communicate with implied meanings and layered messages.
2. Evaluating: Direct Negative Feedback – Indirect Negative Feedback	The evaluating scale plots culture in terms of how negative feedback is communicated. Cultures with direct negative feedback offer feedback at face value, while cultures with indirect negative feedback give feedback more diplomatically.
3. Persuading: Principles First – Applications First	The persuading scale plots culture in terms of how to present arguments to be persuasive. Principles-first cultures are persuaded by deductive reasoning. Applications-first cultures are persuaded by the application of ideas first, which are then broken down into more basic principles.
4. Leading: Egalitarian – Hierarchical	The leading scale plots culture in terms of the respect offered to authority. Egalitarian cultures defer less to authority figures than hierarchical cultures often do.
5. Deciding: Consensual – Top-Down	The deciding scale plots culture in terms of how decisions are made. Consensual cultures tend to ensure that decisions are enforced and supported by the entire group, while top-down cultures often delegate decision making to a select few.
6. Trusting: Task Based – Relationship Based	The trusting scale plots culture in terms of trust building. Task-based cultures build trust with others through working and collaborating together (trust comes from the head: cognitive trust). Relationship-based cultures build trust best through the heart (affective trust) or through the building of intimate personal relationships.
7. Disagreeing: Confrontational – Avoids Confrontation	The disagreeing scale plots culture according to the degree of confrontation. Confrontational societies view disagreements as a necessary and helpful part of life. Cultures that avoid confrontation interpret arguments as particularly harmful and unnecessary.

8. Scheduling: Linear Time – Flexible Time	The scheduling scale plots culture in terms of how time is valued. Linear-time cultures value time immensely, while flexible-time cultures view time loosely and as open for interpretation.

Note. Data retrieved from "Navigating the Cultural Minefield," by Erin Meyer.

Table 5 (below) is a visual representation of the Culture Map, with Israel and Russia being compared on each scale. Israel is represented by the red path, and Russia by the blue path; if the two paths are close in proximity, the cultures are similar in that aspect. The farther the distance between two cultures, the more opposite the approach. When each aspect is plotted, it creates a "map" of cultural tendencies. It becomes easier, then, to visualize potential sources of animosity or harmony between two cultures.

Table 5.
Culture Map of Israel and Russia
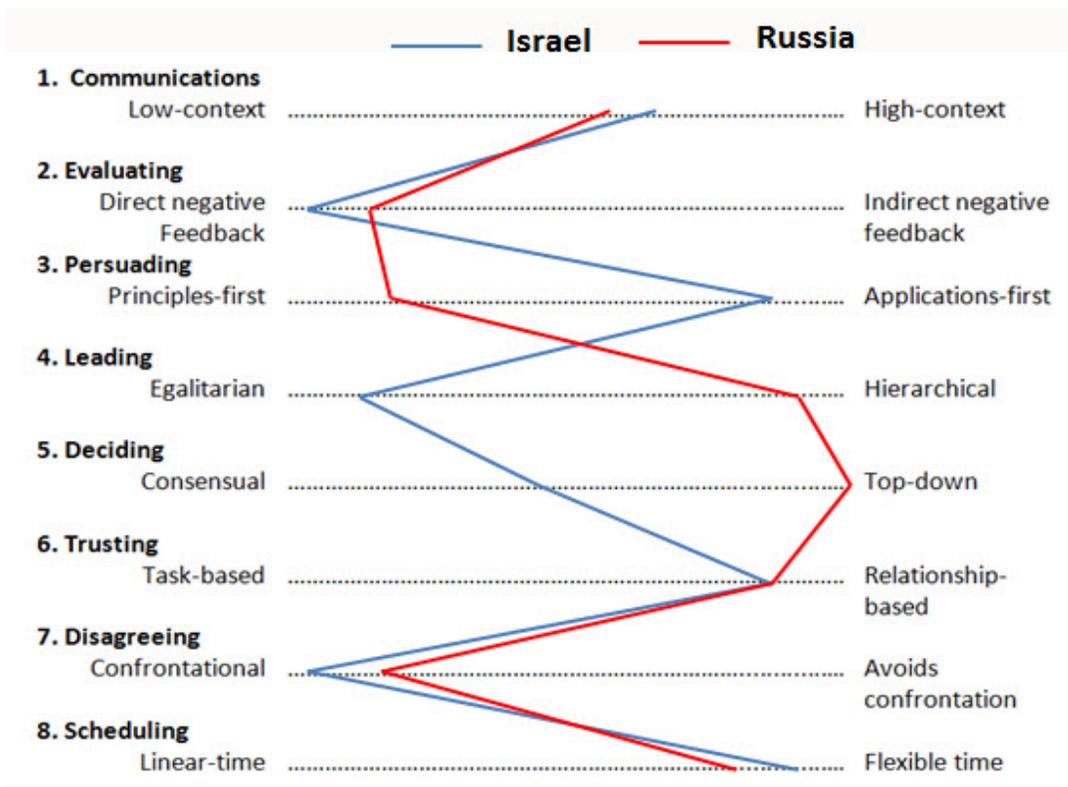
Note. Reprinted from *The Culture Map* by Erin Meyer.

The map is a revolutionary tool for global project managers, both for novices and experts. Because the map is simple to understand and create, it can be applied to virtually

any culture with very little time invested in research. It combines elements of Hofstede, Hall, and other notable cultural researches within its framework, and draws from numerous sources to create a fully dimensional set of scales that touch upon often-ignored aspects of culture; aspects that are often missed or disregarded by managers inexperienced with multicultural and visual teams.

The work of Neeley, Hofstede, and Meyer can be used to provide a basis for understanding cultural differences and impacts within global teams. Hofstede provides an overview of culture, defining it in quantifiable terms. Meyer takes it to the next step, revealing how to better understand cultures in relation to one another. Finally, Neeley places this knowledge in the context of project management, relating cultural differences to their impact on a specific project. Global project managers can use this information to draw the best results from each individual member to create the most productive and enjoyable environment for the entire team. Especially in regards to communication, feedback delivery, and decision-making, project managers can use this information to uniquely tailor their management techniques.

As mentioned above, geographic distance, too, can impact the outcome of a project if not accounted for in the planning process. The dedication of numerous researchers and global project managers to understanding culture and its impact on communication and relationships signifies its importance in the new globalized economy. Encountering cultural diversity has become a fixture in everyday life, and for project managers, it will certainly become an integral force in the project management field of the future. It would seem logical, then, to assume that international organizations and NGOs would provide cultural competence training for their employees and that

techniques for addressing the complexities of virtual teams would be given in project

manager handbooks. A thorough review of three different project handbooks of several

international organizations will test this assumption.

D. Investigation of Three Project Management Handbooks

1. Organizational Overview

The three organizations chosen for a comparative analysis include the Novartis

Foundation, the International Labour Organisation CoopAfrica Division, and the

International Federation of the Red Cross. All three organizations rely on a project

management division for the delivery of their services and initiatives and have made their

project management handbooks publicly accessible. Each of the handbooks will be

thoroughly investigated, leading to a comparative analysis of the project management

strategies they employ. Finally, the analysis will evaluate the level to which each

handbook addresses culture and virtual team management in the training of project

managers on an organizational level, as well as the level of similarity in project

techniques and strategies across organizations.

Table 6.
Breakdown of NF, ILO, & IFRC

Organization:	Novartis Foundation (NF)	International Labour Organisation (ILO): CoopAfrica	International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)
Headquarters:	Switzerland	CoopAfrica- Tanzania; ILO- Switzerland	IFRC- Switzerland, Regional- various
Organization Type:	Philanthropic foundation concerned with access to healthcare in low-mid income countries	Humanitarian organization dedicated to improving status of cooperatives in Africa	Humanitarian agency focused on emergency and disaster relief
Project type:	Healthcare access & improvement	Development projects	Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief
Project Locations:	Namibia, Tanzania, Mali, Cameroon, Philippines, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam	Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.	190 countries

Note. Data retrieved from Novartis Foundation, International Labour Organisation, and International Federation of the Red Cross.

1a. Novartis Foundation

The Novartis Foundation is one of several foundations formed by the Novartis

multinational corporation, a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Switzerland

(Novartis Foundation, About Us). The Novartis Foundation (NF) is part of the corporate

responsibility division of Novartis International AG, and while there are several

foundations within Novartis International, the NF is solely occupied with "ensuring

quality healthcare in low- and middle-income countries" (Novartis International AG,

Foundations). The Foundation has several partnerships, with partners ranging from the

International Labour Organisation, the Center for Global Health at Massachusetts

General Hospital, and the Netherlands Leprosy Relief organization, among many others

(Novartis Foundation, "Annual Report 2013-2014", p. 39-41).

The foundation has completed several successful projects, most notably toward the eradication of leprosy. The Novartis Foundation's partnership with the World Health Organization in 2000 has provided free treatments to leprosy patients, contributing to the cure of more than 5 million (Novartis International AG, Foundations). Current projects include a range of priorities: hypertension, leprosy, malaria, accelerating leprosy diagnosis, and improving quality of healthcare technology. From Table 6, it is clear that projects take place in a variety of Asian and African countries, miles from NF headquarters in Switzerland, solidifying the presence of global projects within the organization. A quote from Novartis Foundation also clarifies the approach to their projects: "We take a strategic approach to philanthropy, meaning we work hand-in-hand and on the ground with our global and local partners on projects addressing an unmet need in a particular locale." The presence of global project management within the Novartis Foundation is clear.

1b. International Labour Organization: CoopAfrica

The second organization chosen for critique is the International Labour Organization, and more specifically, their CoopAfrica initiative. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialized division of the United Nations (UN) working towards labor rights and development. Its mission states that the ILO is "devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights…the ILO's Decent Work agenda helps advance the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress," (ILO, Mission and Objectives).

The handbook for the CoopAfrica program will be investigated; the CoopAfrica program is a regional division of the ILO's Cooperative Programme. CoopAfrica is concerned with "mobilizing the cooperative self-help mechanism to improve their governance, efficiency and performance in order to strengthen their capacity to create jobs, access markets, [etc.]," (ILO, 2009, "About CoopAfrica"). Aimed at Eastern and Southern Africa with a specialized headquarters in Tanzania, the program is expected to have a farther reach as it develops into the future. The program regional headquarters in Tanzania reports to the ILO central headquarters in Switzerland; projects are currently scattered throughout several African countries. Global project management is especially prevalent in the ILO, as the sponsors of the CoopAfrica program range from organizations and governments of Finland, Sweden, the Arab Gulf, and the UK (ILO, 2008, Partners). In essence, projects are not only global in scope, but the stakeholders are also scattered across different cultures and geographic areas.
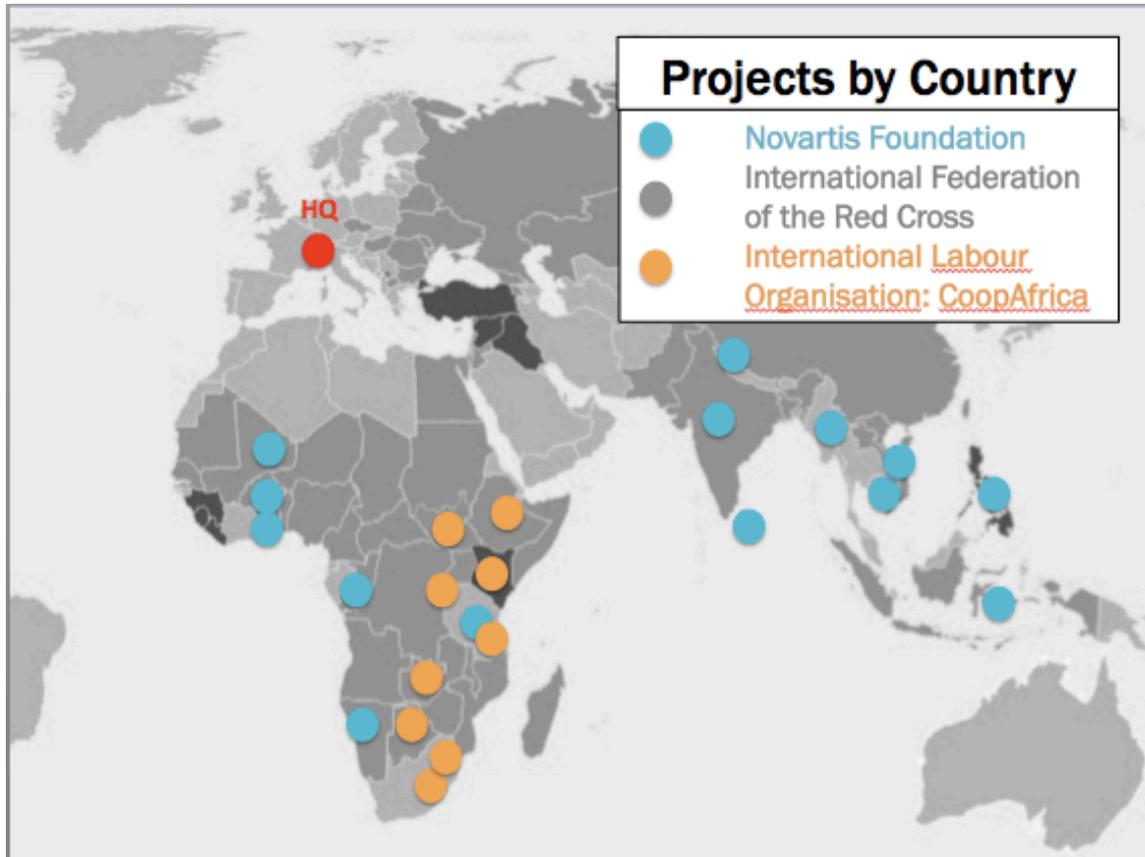
1c. International Federation of the Red Cross

The International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, operating in 190 countries around the globe. The organization focuses on "three key areas: 1) disaster response and recovery, 2) development and 3) promoting social inclusion and peace," (IFRC, What we do). The IFRC is organized through chapters (Red Crescent Societies), with nearly 100 million volunteers around the world.

The IFRC has recently held a notable presence in the Central African Republic, the countries affected by Ebola, and Ukraine, but the organization has projects spread across many other areas of the globe, as evidenced by Image 1 (below) (IFRC, 2014,

"Annual Report: 2014"). While headquarters for the IFRC are in Switzerland, regional

headquarters exist in 60 other locations. Projects are consistently changing and variable

in nature, ranging from local projects to large-scale regional projects. Global projects are

at the heart of the IFRC organization.

Image 1.
Map of Projects for NF, ILO, IFRC

Note. Data retrieved from Novartis Foundation, International Labour Organisation, and International
Federation of the Red Cross. Map found in "Annual Report 2014" of IFRC, (p.14).

2. Comparison of Project Management Strategies

A careful examination of the organizations' project handbooks reveals few

overlaps in tools and methodology. This signifies that there is no widely used standard

project framework across countries or organizations; instead, each organization more

likely uses a unique strategy created on its own. Because of the large and far reaching

nature of the three organizations selected, it is fair to assume that international

organizations have yet to develop a common strategy used across organizations. This

creates problems in international projects when team members possess different levels of

knowledge, follow different protocols, and utilize different methodologies.

Of the total 44 strategies examined, 14 strategies were found in common across

all three organizations, and 30 were found in only one or two handbooks. Roughly half of

the strategies found in all three organizations originate from the PMI's PMBOK, while

the other half have become common in the project management arena over time,

originating from various governments and organizations and eventually becoming

standard in the field. Notable examples include the LFA (Logical Framework Approach,

or Logframe), the PMC (Project Management Cycle), M&E activities (Monitoring and

Evaluation), and the Stakeholder Analysis portion in each handbook. While the LFA,

PMC, and Stakeholder Analysis portion originated from various organizations in the

1900s, M&E activities are found within the PMBOK. The complete comparative analysis

can found in Table 7 (below).

In addition, the examination revealed that none of the three analyzed

organizations possessed any preparation for culture or geography, or even an indication

that the projects were international. While all three organizations' projects are truly

"global," indicated by Image 1, they lack training or programming for employees to learn

how to successfully complete a global project. None of the three organizations mentioned

that their projects spanned boundaries and culture, and none indicated that there were

differences between global projects and standard projects. In summation, the comparative

analysis and examination of the handbooks of the Novartis Foundation, the ILO, and the

International Federation of the Red Cross revealed little preparation for the "global"

portion of global projects, and indicated that current attempts to standardize project

methodologies have not been widely used.

Table 7.

Comparative Analysis of the Novartis Foundation, the ILO, and the International Federation of the Red Cross.

FRAMEWORK/TOOL/STRATEGY	NOVARTIS FOUNDATION	INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION	INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS	3?	2?	1?
PMC: Project Management Cycle	X	X	X	X		
LFA: Logical Framework Approach/Logframe	X	X	X	X		
ZOPP: Goal Oriented Planning (German)	X					X
Problem Tree	X	X	X	X		
Network System Analysis	X					X
PPM: Project Planning Matrix	X					X
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	X	X	X	X		
SMART: Specific, Measureable, Achieveable, Realistic, Time-Bound	X	X	X	X		
RBM: Results Based Management		X	X		X	
Situation Analysis	X	X	X	X		
SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats		X	X		X	
Comparative Table			X			X
Objectives Analysis Table	X					X
Objective Tree	X	X	X	X		
Project Strategy: for project	X	X			X	
Feasibility Study	X					X
Alternative Analysis	X	X			X	
Assessment of Assumptions		X				X
Assumption Analysis	X	X	X	X		
Work Plan / Implementation Plan		X				X
Work Breakdown		X				X
Responsibility Matrix		X	X		X	
Gantt Chart / Activity Schedule / Calendar		X	X		X	
Resource Plan / Inputs Plan		X				X
Indicators	X	X	X	X		
Verification	X	X	X	X		
Objectively Verifiable Indicators	X	X			X	
Baseline	X	X	X	X		
Baseline Survey	X	X			X	
Strategic Planning: for organization		X	X		X	
Operational Planning			X			X
Stakeholder Analysis / Participation Analysis	X	X	X	X		
Stakeholder Mapping	X					X
Stakeholder Matrix		X				X
ECRIS Method	X					X
Participatory Rapid Appraisal	X					X
Terms of Reference	X	X	X	X		
Milestone Table	X					X
Consultancy Mission Report	X					X
Performance Based Funding Approach	X					X
Randomized Controlled Trial	X					X
Impact Assessment	X		X		X	
Target Group Analysis	X	X			X	

Note. Data retrieved from the handbooks of the Novartis Foundation, International Labour Organisation, and International Federation of the Red Cross.

E. Conclusion

While global projects have steadily become a larger piece of the project management field, the implication of this progression has yet to be seen. While the new global order continues to evolve, with more organizations and governments participating in the global economy, the future of global project management's role is certain – global projects are here to stay.

The project management field needs to adjust to this new economy, and make developments to ensure that global projects can succeed. After all, global projects are rife with challenges beyond those of a normal project, including increased likelihood for team conflict, increased complexity in schedule making and deadline setting, and differing types of project management training. While several project management frameworks that address this issue exist, they are not widely utilized. The PMI's PMBOK is used in many countries, but it has little to offer for global project managers. While the PMI does offer a "white paper" covering the essentials for global project managers, it fails to provide an adequate framework for managers to apply to their unique problems. Training project personnel to better handle these challenges will result in an increased likelihood for success, as well as lower costs for the organization. Without properly equipped project managers, projects suffer.

Especially in regards to culture and geography, global projects require additional attention and care. Often, global projects require team members from different cultures, organizations, and backgrounds; these cultural differences impact not only the team dynamics, but the structure of the project itself. The frameworks of Hofstede, Meyer, and Neeley can be used to train project teams to understand their cultural differences, as well

as inspire new methods to solve complicated team disagreements. Layering these methods would provide a clear, easily understood, and valuable cultural lesson for project managers. More specifically, the aforementioned frameworks have widespread applicability, and can aid project managers in risk management for their projects.

A comparative analysis of the Novartis Foundation, the ILO, and the International Federation of the Red Cross reveals the hypothesis of this study to be correct – often, international organizations have little information to offer their global project managers. While all three organizations used several common techniques, the majority of the information in each handbook was unique to the organization. From this, two conclusions can be drawn: a standardized project management framework is still lacking and the impact of culture and geography on global projects has yet to be considered for many international organizations, both large and small.

Ultimately, the project management field needs to update their current strategies and tools to satisfy the needs of global projects. As projects traverse geographic boundaries, global project managers need training to prepare for increased complexity in their teams and resources to resolve these complexities. Organizations must invest in their project management office by providing additional training programs in order to ensure the success of their projects. The return on investment will be found in projects that follow their original schedule while keeping costs low and maintaining more adaptable project teams. Put simply, the role of culture in global projects cannot be ignored. An organization that better prepares its project managers is an organization better suited to the global economy, of which culture is certainly an integral force.

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