

# Doing it in international networks - yes! But doing it right?

Some lessons from experience.

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# Background of experience

- ◆ Cranfield Network on European/Global Human Resource Management (Cranet-G)
  - comparative research on policies and practices in HRM
  - exists since 1989, 23 European and 12 non-European countries
  - More than 25.000 organisations with more than 200 employees in five major survey rounds
- ◆ GLOBE
  - global leadership survey

# Main challenges - noble and not so noble ones...

- ◆ Different scientific traditions in methodological and epistemological terms across countries
  - European vs. Anglo-Saxon tradition in terms of interpretative research
- ◆ Unclear about one's own epistemological and methodological position
- ◆ Different amount of methodological training of researchers
- ◆ Language problems
  - Example: An Austrian explaining a constructivist nuance to a Spanish colleague...
- ◆ Practical circumstances of doing research in each country
  - Example Cranet Greece: postal survey vs. oral structured interview

# Taking up the challenges - some noble and not so noble ways...

- ◆ Basic decision: universal standards or least common denominator, both with with more or less local adaptations
  - Pro's and con's for each position
- ◆ Develop a certain tolerance for ‚grey‘ approaches
- ◆ Keep the methodological discussion going within the research network
  - mutual learning processes develop
  - dark grey solutions improve to light grey
- ◆ Skillfully handle the trade-off balances between practical necessities and methodological rigorousness
- ◆ If your methodological super-ego is too strong, forget international research - unless you are content with bogus solutions

# Special problem: subjective-interpretative paradigm

- ◆ Focusing on text that is coded not in your ,own' language in a context and culture that is not your ,own'
- ◆ Text even less universal than numbers
- ◆ How do you interpret text in a language that is not your first language?
- ◆ What sort of meaning do you get if you interpret such a text in the light of a context and culture that you are not familiar with?
- ◆ How do you organise an interpretation process in which members of the research team with different language capabilities and contextual/cultural background take part?

**Do it  
internationally  
nevertheless!  
Many thanks for  
your attention!**