Companies and other kinds of organisations are becoming more "glocal" on a daily basis. The word "glocalisation" means global plus local. It was coined by the British sociologist Roland Robertson to reflect the complex cultural dynamics – produced by the interaction between global and local phenomena – that are typical of contemporary society. The theory of glocalisation may explain, for example, why the Toyota Production System was born in Japan and not in the USA.

The theory of glocalisation is also useful for explaining the evolution of contemporary organisations. On the one hand, private companies and non-profit organisations need to operate on a global scale when coping with global processes; when finding new strategies, organisational configurations and managerial practices; and when hiring managers and employees with an international background. On the other hand, contemporary organisations also have to cope with local dynamics and cultures, recruiting local workforces and adopting local strategies and practices.

Moreover, it is impossible to ignore that migration and international mobility have been increasing, due to the effects of globalisation and because of military, political and economic crises. Societies are progressively becoming more multicultural and, as a consequence, organisations are too.

The progressive glocalisation of contemporary organisations involves both cultural differences and cultural encounters. To understand the role that cultural diversity plays in organisations, we may refer to a theorem of cybernetics, the Law of Requisite Variety, introduced by Ross Ashby. This theorem postulates that the internal diversity rate of a system must be at least equal to the level of variety of the environment in which the system operates. So, if we apply Ashby’s Law to organisational systems, we could say that the greater the variance of the environment in which the organisation operates – in terms not only of geography, market, technology and institutional fields but also of cultural diversity – the higher the rate of internal diversity within the organisation should be.

Cultural diversity is only one side of the coin. Intercultural encounters, which may assume the form of intercultural interaction, exchange and conflict, are enhanced by glocal processes. Intercultural processes are a breeding ground for cultural hybridisation and for the emergence of new cultural traits. Intercultural encounters may also facilitate organisational innovation and creativity. For these reasons, cross-cultural and inter-cultural research are daily becoming more critical, and not only for businesses.

Cross-cultural research, in simple terms, focuses on the study of the influence of cultural differences on managerial and organisational behaviours and on the management and design of contemporary
organisations. Cultural differences, in fact, may have an impact on individual values, attitudes and behaviours, organisational strategies, governance, marketing, communication, human resources management, change management processes, training and education, organisational learning and knowledge management, and so on. Moreover, leadership styles, decision making processes, team dynamics, negotiation approaches, interpersonal communication, creativity and the like may also be influenced by cultural and linguistic differences.

Cultural mapping (i.e. the comparison of values, attitudes and behaviours among national and ethnic groups) is one of the more popular areas of research in cross-cultural management. Geert Hofstede and Shalom Schwartz are probably the most renowned scholars that have contributed to the advancement of research in this area of studies. In any case, cultural diversity should not be considered as a single, fixed entity, but instead should be analysed in a dynamic fashion, considering the conjoint effects produced by different types of diversity (inter-sectional analysis). Hence, cross-cultural research is devoted to the study of cultural differences within and outside the organisational context, and to finding new ways to effectively handle these differences.

Intercultural research, in contrast, is focused more on the study of the consequences of intercultural interaction, and to finding new strategies, approaches and practices to improve the quality of intercultural communication, relations, collaboration, knowledge sharing, etc. One of the emerging fields in intercultural management research is cultural inclusion.

The distinction between cross-cultural and intercultural research – at least in management and organisation studies – is more theoretical than practical. It is not easy to establish how cross-cultural or intercultural any particular study or model may be.

In consideration of the rising relevance of cross-cultural and intercultural research in management and organisation studies, the International Association of Cross-Cultural Management and Competence (IACCM) decided to found a scholarly journal, the European Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management (EJCCM), published by Inderscience. The journal is supported by an international board composed of management and intercultural studies scholars from all over the world. EJCCM aims to widen and deepen discussions on issues regarding the influence of cultural differences and diversity on the management of organisations of all kinds. Its scope promotes scientific debate and the socialisation of research concerning the relation between cultural differences and management and how to handle them, in order to improve performance, foster innovation, improve people’s wellbeing and make organisations better places to work for and live in, for everybody, no matter their ethnic, linguistic and personal identity. EJCCM is also active in the field of intercultural education. Research on new tools and methodologies helps organisations in managing their complexity, and also in preparing managers to work in multicultural or diverse context. Aiding such development is a further objective of the journal, which is published in cooperation with SIETAR Austria and SIETAR Europa.