

Cross Relevance Diamond method (C-RD)

Field guide

Cross-Relevance Diamond method (C-RD): Field guide

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In collaboration with:









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1. Introduction

Thank you so much for downloading the field guide for the Cross-Relevance Diamond method.

In the following pages, you (and your team if that is the case) will be guided in how to work with each of the different 6 proposed moments in the method. This guide will focus on exemplify how you can organize two different sessions based on the method's moments, and how the use of certain tools can help you to reach useful insights for your cross cultural activity on each session.

For more information about the method or contact the developers you can access the following address: cross-relevance.com



1.1. Glossary of terms

In both the website and this field guide, you will come across different terms that will refer to certain ideas. In this page you will find the definition of said terms, so everybody will understand the same.

- Common/ ordinary event: An experience, that can occur in an everyday context. It can be recognized as such due to its constant presence in the context. For example, having a coffee every morning, or talking to colleagues at work.

- Context: The context comprises the environment, objects and phenomena that occur in a specific time and/or space. The idea of saying a context is linked to the idea of the people that exist in said environment, interacting with artefacts, dealing with phenomena or performing rituals. It is important to remark that the context can also involve feelings and thoughts that are shared across people. For example, think about "dutch context", or "gym context".

- Cultural element: A cultural element can be either an expression or a person that is part of a certain community, society or group. The major characteristic of these is that the community attribute an especial meaning towards them. As examples, you can think of "Italian food desserts" or "Indian dances".

- Current/ Local (context or element): Refers to the here and now. Normally we think of local as the geographical area that shared to a community or a society. However, due to phenomena like globalization and telecommunications, the idea of current/local not only considers the geographical but also how people understand expressions, technology or rituals that are common in our contemporary times. For example, many people now know how to use a smartphone, or understand how to order a coffee, no matter their country.

- Developer team (or Team): Refers to us, the team that will be using the methodological framework and will go through the moments. The developer team can be diverse as possible: Exhibition designers, archeologists, curators, anthropologists, etc. as long they are involved and participate in the exhibition development that we want to do. The developer team can include people from the source/ foreign context. Check the definition of "Source community" for more information.

- Experience: Every object, system, people we meet, the emotions we feel, are related to experiences. Experiences in that sense, are a collection of the different interactions between said elements in a context. These experiences, depending on their frequency and the effort required by people living them, will be categorized into two: Extraordinary events or ordinary events. Think about the experience of riding a bike, or learning a new recipe... which elements are involved that comprise said experiences?

- Expression: An expression tangible or intangible. Tangible expressions can be traditional craftsmanship, artefacts, objects, buildings, places/ landscapes or monuments. Intangible expressions can be Performing arts, oral tradition, social practices, rituals or festivities, knowledge or practices concerning nature or universe. For practical reasons, artefacts, activities or scenarios will be addressed as expressions.

- Extraordinary event: An experience that can occur in a context, but not with an everyday frequency. Due that is not common, it can have a greater impact on the user than common events. For example, while cycling to work can be a common/ ordinary event, having an accident while cycling is an extraordinary event.

- Mirror (Element): A mirror element consists on the element(s) from the current/local context that is involved in the same topic or theme as the element(s) from the source/foreign context. Of coursem the topic can have some differences among human groups. This is because each human group develops their own socio/cultural/economical/ political context. The mirror element doesn't have to be the same type as the original element. For example, while in the source context an artefact is linked to the idea of love, in the current context activity is the one linked to love.

- Moment: During the Cross-Relevance Diamond, there are 6 major steps to do. These are known as moments. The moments are a collection of questions that help the developer team to understand the elements involved in a cross-cultural exhibition experience.

- Relevance: Is a state that occurs when people interact with certain experiences prior to attribute a meaning to them. This is know as a the mattering process. The mattering process consists in 4 stages: First, to understand the elements in an experience; second, to interact with them; third, the experience and elements will be addressed as relevant; and fourth, people in the experience will develop a meaning towards the experience, becoming important.

- Shared topic/ theme (universal): Also known as Universal theme is a topic that repeats in different societies, communities and cultures. These topics are present no matter time or space. Examples of topics can be found in literature, arts, mythos or new media.

- Source/Foreign (context or element): Refers to the context from where the elements that we want to exhibit are originally coming from. Opposite to the idea of a current/local context, the source/ foreign can be labeled not necessarilly share the same technologies or rituals that are common nowadays. For example, think about how the French context is today and how was the French context 500 years ago. Even that we are pointing to the same location, the time factor changes the environment, artefacts, activities and roles that people will be interacting with.

- Source Community: A Source Community are the people who are related to the source/ foreign context or the elements. This relatedness is important to understand, because the source community will be represented not only through the exhibited elements, but also through the exhibition (especially in cross-cultural exhibitions). Is highly recommended to collaborate with the source community that is going to be represented, in order to avoid misinformation or misunderstandings of the elements and the exhibition concept.

- Visitors (local visitors): Visitors are the people from our current/ local context that will interact with the exhibition concept that we will propose. As mentioned, these visitors are not necessarily from the same geographical area where the source/ foreign elements are being exhibited, but their knowledge about contemporary contextual elements.

2. About the Method

The Cross-Relevance Diamond has as objective the understanding and discovering the possibilities of connecting either expressions or people from a certain context with our local/contemporary context. To achieve this, the method relies on two ideas: the common/shared topics or themes that exist across societies, and the conceptualization of meaningful (relevant) experiences to people. But how we can tackle these two ideas?

This method tries to answer that question by focusing on two perspectives: The external (or foreign) context where the exhibition's content is coming from and the current (or local) context where visitors are coming from. A connection between these two contexts can be established by the shared themes between them, aligned with the exhibition. To reinforce said connection, the method considers the conceptualization of experiences that understand, involve and combine characteristics of each context (foreign and local). Finally, the method considers how visitors will perceive the exhibition and its content, triggering the idea of relevance on them.

To guide this process, the method is divided into six different moments. Each one of these moments has a specific focus: Either understand what (or who) we are going to present and how could it be connected to our contemporary context; or understand which type of visitor would be more inclined to experience what we are envisioning as a relevant, meaningful, experience.

Once you get used to the proposed order, we encourage you to appropriate the method and its order: Sometimes you will want to focus on a specific moment or go through a different order. The C-RD method is designed to be rearranged according to your goals, requirements or curiosity.



3. About the Sessions

As mentioned, this method is divided into 6 moments. However, to ensure an organic flow between the activities and the collaboration between participants, it was decided to split the methods into two sessions.

There is no fixed amount of people than can be involved during the sessions. However, to have a coherent discussion among members, the recommended number during each session could be between 5 and 8.

The #1 to #3 moments comprises the first session, while #4 to #6 comprises the second sessions. This division is also based on the goal of each moment and their relation with the goals of the moments before and after. These two sessions can be conducted on different days. Coordinate with the people who will participate in each session about the best time to do it. Each session could take around one hour to two hours, depending in different factors like how acquainted and experienced are participants towards the method, or the knowledge they have about the content, or how familiar they are with design approaches.

3.1. What are the sessions' objectives?

As each moment has its own objective, each session has its own as well.

The first session focus on making meaningful connections, by 1) analysing the source element -expression or people-(moment #1), 2) abstracting or distilling possible (universally human) meanings from the foreign expressions or persons (moment #2) and 3) by finding local 'mirror' expressions or persons that share this universally human meaning with the chosen foreign expressions or persons (moment #3) (we call them "mirrored" element).

Moments 4-6 focus on creating experiences around those meaningful connections, so that unravelling these meaningful connections not only becomes a purely educational experience, but also an intrinsically engaging experience that ideally, people will want to go through. This is structured through a process of 1) analysing experience characteristics of activities in which the foreign expressions or persons play a role, and similarly of such activities in the local culture (moment 4); 2) understanding motivations people may have for visiting such an exhibition or engaging with such an experience, and selecting which motivations to tailor the design to (moment 5); and 3) envisioning how identified experience characteristics from both cultures, combined with the meaningful connections (moments 1-3) can be turned into a single conceptual exhibit or experience design that will appeal to the identified visitors (moment 6).

In this process, is highly recommended to identify and contact the source community. As mentioned previously, they are going to be represented directly or indirectly through the exhibited elements and the exhibition itself. The resultant collaboration between the developer team and the source communities can enrich significantly the outcomes of our conceptualization process.



1st Session: Making meaningful connections

4. First Session: From Moment #1 to Moment #3

4.1. Defining our objectives based on the moments

The three moments as mentioned, are designed to establish a connection between what the visitors will discover with they already know. Nevertheless, each moment during this first session has its own objectives. That being said, you can go back and forth moments. During the session, you might need to go back to a question from a previous moment.

The objective of moment #1 is to understand why the elements exist in the source/ foreign context. In case we are talking about a person, we are referring how is that his/ her role exists in the source/ foreign context.

This analysis will lead to the objective of moment#2: Reaching a shared topic or theme. During this moment, we want to know how people from the source context felt and think towards the element(s) on the previous moment. With this we can ask ourselves "is any of these feelings or thoughts also present in other cultures/ societies/ communities? Why? and how different". If we concluded that this is true, then we can formulate a shared topic or theme.

Finally, during moment #3, we ask ourselves for the elements that are related to the shared topic or theme. With this, we can find a "mirror element". This mirror element will also serve to be aware of the differences and similarities that each context has, as well as how each human group deals with the shared topic or theme.

4.2. Which tools can we use during the session?

A prepared team is more efficient. During the first session, we will be answering the questions at each moment. It could be useful to have some notebooks where we can write useful information that we can recall at any time. We can also record the session in case we missed any useful information for later.



4.3. Moment #1

https://www.cross-relevance.com/moment-1

Recommended time: around 25 minutes. With more experience, you will do it faster.

The first moment starts everything. Here it would be nice to have all the available information about the source element(s) and its context.

Pictures, books, videos, etc. Anything related to the source can be helpful. For this reason, the presence of people representing the source community is recommended. They can provide not only with the mentioned elements but also they can tell us stories and memories related to these element(s).

Some tips for this moment:

1. We need to define what do we want to present: An expression or a person (or group of persons). This is important at the moment of acknowledging the role, purpose and characteristic of the source element. Remember, in this entire process it is necessary to treat the source elements with respect and the respective dignity. The element(s) is representing people from the past and present.

2. Recognize that the source context will be different than our own in few or many aspects. Therefore, the elements in it don't necessarily are going to be easy to understand. This is not a bad thing. On the contrary, by recognizing its differents we are starting to address it with respect.

3. Every interesting aspect of the source element or context can be registered and used for later. Use sticky notes, notebooks or your mobile devices to keep track of them. In some cases, you can encourage people from the source community to bring other elements that are related to the context that can help us to understand it.

4. Consider that there is the possibility that in some cases we are going to deal with topics that can be sensible to talk about. This could be either for the source community or the developer team. In case this happens, we need to act with the required respect and professionalism.

5. This moment has to be done as a conversation among people sharing ideas (and a coffee if possible). Everyone can speak and collaborate during this moment (and during the other moments as well). Try to encourage the participation of all the members, but don't push it or force it.

6. By following the questions at the website you will be able to deep dive in the understanding of why the expression existed or why a person has a specific role or meaning in the source context. Of course, you can complement the questions on the site with your own.

Recommended time: around 30-40 minutes. With more experience, you will do it faster.

After a break (if desired), we continue with the second moment. Here we are going to undergo into a more abstract process. That is why this moment has more time during the first session. Of course, with practice, the time will be shorter and the process more organic.

During the last moment, we reached a point where not only describing physical, practical or functional characteristics of the source element but also we were started talking about its purpose of existence (in case of expression) or role (in case of a person).

Some tips for this moment:

1. The questions during this moment address the feeling, ideas and thoughts of the people from the source context towards the source element. The source community alongside the developer team need to be able to keep track of all the opinions said during the moment.

2. This moment has the highest number of questions across the methodology. Take your time while answering, there is no rush. At the same time, you can jump back to the previous moment to recall facts, stories and insights collected. The relation between the moments at this session allows this possibility.

3. It is important to acknowledge that while discovering the topic that is shared across different cultures around the world and during different eras, the are going to be some distortions about the topics. This is normal because each human group develops their own socio/cultural/historical/economical context.

4. The idea of reaching a universal theme will showcase how each member of the team reflects towards the source element and the source context. The same will going to happen with people from the source community. Encourage each member to elaborate on what are they saying.

5. Use the list provided on the website to formulate the shared topic. Think the topic more like a statement instead of just a word or two. By doing this, we can visualize how the topic is being addressed in the local context. The list is available at https://www.cross-relevance.com/resourcesmoment-2

6. Same as the previous moment, consider that there is the possibility that in some cases we are going to deal with topics that can be sensible to talk about. This could be either for the source community or the developer team. In case this happens, we need to act with the required respect and professionalism. Embrace the seriousness that the topics demand.

4.5. Moment #3

https://www.cross-relevance.com/moment-3

Recommended time: around 20 minutes. With more experience, you will do it faster.

Once we finished the previous moment, we can have another break to recharge. Take your time, especially if is the first time with the framework.

Now we are going to have another perspective during this session: We are going to talk about here and now. The goal of this approach is to understand what happens with the people in our local/ current context and their relationship with the topic from the previous moment. This moment is a little bit tricky: While the moment's objective is to find mirror elements in the local context, in reality, what we want to achieve is to understand why and how the topic is being understood by the local people.

Again, it is necessary to acknowledge that each context, people, and elements are different and that is a good thing. Diversity is an asset, and while we keep that in mind at the same time we are making connections, we don't lose the importance that the source element is bringing up to the table.

Some tips for this moment:

1. Check the definitions about Current/ local contexts, elements and local visitors.

2. When we talk about contemporary elements, we can also be describing how local people know things about their history. For example, some Japanese families can be aware of their ancestors and what they did. In this example, the local people (Japanese families) have in their memory the deeds of their relatives (from a different time). In this case, it is good to ask ourselves if this is normal among local people.

3. You can make parallelism between the source context and the local context. These parallelisms should not be aimed to describe, justify or claim the "superiority" of one context over the other, but to point out the differences.

4. You can elaborate different relations around the idea of "Source context/ element - Topic - Current context/ element". At this point, you can go back and propose different perspectives to the previous moments.

5. Same as the first moment, this moment has to be done as a conversation among people sharing ideas (and a coffee if possible). Everyone can speak and collaborate during this moment (and during the other moments as well). Try to encourage the participation of all the members, but don't push it or force it.

4.6. Wrapping up the session

As mentioned, the goal of the first session was to establish connections between the source element/ context and the local/ current context through elements from both sides. We were able to understand how the elements were part of each context (as an artefact, scenario, activity or person with a role). In this process, we discovered why the elements exist, their purposes and what the people from each context were/are thinking about them.

Keep in mind that these connections are not mean to be used as equalizers. As mentioned in some of the moments, it is important to be aware of the differences that each context has. However, because now we understand each context through the elements, we can start to see parallelisms between contexts and ask ourselves what are their differences and similarities.

With more experience and more acquaintance towards the method, you will be able to perform this session faster and even you can elaborate your own questions to have more clarity during each moment.

4.7. Insights collection for the next session

Keep all the notes, images, recordings available for the participants after the session, we are not done with those. The information collected will be recalled often during the next session.

You can go to the next session after a break. However, we recommend having this session on another day. With this, each participant will be able to process all the information that was presented during the first session. Remember that you can go back and check the questions on each on the website.

In case if necessary, you can have another meeting to check and go back to some of the moments.



2nd Session: Designing experiences around meaningful connections

5. Second Session: From Moment #4 to Moment #6

5.1. Defining our objectives based on the moments

The following three moments are designed to start to think and develop an exhibition concept based on the findings from the previous session. It is important to remark the following: We are going to focus on the concept, rather than how we can actually make it. This session will highlight what the characteristics of the exhibition should be. It is up to the developer team to decide about how the concept can be implemented in real life while considering variables like budget, technology available or available space for the exhibition. That being said, if during the conceptualization, an idea about how the concept can be done in real life can be presented, don't hesitate in doing it.

Moment number #4 has the goal of analysis and mapping of the activity, role or scenario that the elements were describing or involved. This moment is aimed towards the practical, functional and tangible characteristics of the activities, roles or scenarios.

Moments number #5 and number #6 are special. They can be done in parallel. The reason for this is related to their objectives. Moment #5 focus on the understanding motivations that people may have for visiting possible exhibitions about the source element(s)/context. Moment #6 on the other hand, use the characteristics mapped during #4 and align them with the connections on moment #2. In parallel, moment #6 aims to use said alignments with the visitor's motivations identified during moment #5.

5.2. Which tools can we use during the session?

We need the outcomes from the previous session, as well as elements that can help us to take notes and record during this session. Moreover, having complementary media, like images and references can be helpful to get us to inspire while proposing concepts.



5.3. Moment #4

https://www.cross-relevance.com/moment-4

Recommended time: around 35 minutes. With more experience, you will do it faster.

The fourth moment and the start of the second session. Here we will map the tangible, practical and functional characteristics of the activities/scenarios or roles that involve the elements on each context and the people around them.

The information from moments #1 and #3 is essential here. In addition to pictures, books, videos, etc. Anything related to the source and local elements and contexts can be helpful.

Some tips for this moment:

1. We have to think about ourselves not only as part of the developer team but also as people who are part of the current/ local context. If we know the element for our own context and interact with it previously, we can start providing with more insights.

2. A good strategy to deal with the questions during this moment is to jump from perspectives across each context. What is happening around the people who are using the artefact? What is happening to the people who are watching the scene?

3. Although we talk about the practical, functional and tangible aspects, you can link to the thoughts, opinions and feelings that we were collecting during the previous session. Use different techniques to explain the characteristics. Roleplaying, videos, etc. Anything that can help you to present the characteristics is welcome. With this, the links between the tangible characteristics can link with the intangible (thoughts, opinions and feelings).

4. You can check some concepts that are going to ask during this moment in the recommendations section during this moment (on the website).

5.4. Moment #5

https://www.cross-relevance.com/moment-5

Recommended time: around 15 minutes. With more experience, you will do it faster. Consider that this will be done back and forth with the following moment. The 15 minutes mark is just a reference.

After a break (if desired), we continue with the fifth moment. This is a more relaxed moment in comparison to the previous one.

The information that we collected in the previous moment can be put aside temporarily during this moment. Of course, we can use it to elaborate on our talks during this moment. Here we are going to focus on the visitors, the people that we are envisioning to interact with the experience that we will conceptualize.

To do this we are going to based on their motivations. This is a more empathic approach than just using demographics. We acknowledge their individuality while at the same time we are categorizing based on the motivational profiles. You can check the profiles here: https://www.cross-relevance.com/resourcesmoment-5.

Some tips for this moment:

1. The motivations are not static, the people can change their profile before, during and after the experience. Consider this while also thinking during the next moment.

2. The visitors have initial motivations to attend and interact with an exhibition. In this process, you can think about the effects. The effects are characteristics that a meaningful experience can be triggered to the people. The currently identified effects are: Accessible, memorable, emotional, authentic, unexpected, personal, impactful and participatory. These effects are going to be used during the next moment as well.

3. Although a specific type of visitor will resonate more with the exhibition concept, please don't put aside the other profiles. As we said, these are not static, so you can explore how you can convert or nudge these profiles through the effects to develop their own meaning.

4. We talk about meaning in the previous point. The meaning of something is the result of a process. we can think about all the factors that are involved in an exhibition experience, but we need to consider the following: If the visitors are not able to understand the relevance of an exhibition, they are not going to develop a meaning towards it. The meaning attribution is something exclusive from the visitors.

5.5. Moment #6

https://www.cross-relevance.com/moment-6

Recommended time: around 25 minutes. With more experience, you will do it faster. Consider that this will be done back and forth with the following moment. The 25 minutes mark is just a reference.

This one is more dependant to the previous points than vice-versa. This is because this moment is focused on the development of a concept that could involve the characteristics mapped during moment #4 and aligned with the visitors' profiles on #5. At the same time, these two will be retroactive with the development of the exhibition concept.

During this moment we will use all the information that we have gathered and processed during the previous moments. From the elements, the contexts, the shared topic, the characteristics of the scenarios in which the elements were involved and the visitors' motivations.

Remember, the focus of this moment is to elaborate on an exhibition concept, not a full plan to develop a real-life exhibition. We started this so the developer team can be creative in how the concept can be delivered into real life. That being said, if any participant during this moment feel that is necessary to think about how that can be done in real-life, or want to propose the use of certain techniques or technologies, please do it.

Some tips for this moment:

1. Consider that the concept will realize on the merging of certain characteristics from each context. This has to be done while treating the source elements with the respect they deserve. Remember, the element will be representing a context and the people who were or are part of it.

2. Following the previous point, the idea of merging is to ensure that visitors can understand the new (the source elements and context) by using some features of what they know (the mirror element from the local context). This merging, of course, doesn't have to be explicit if the effort that is required by the visitors to understand the new is not so much. The use of the merging in this moment, alongside the connections made during the first session, will be useful for us to see how much effort the visitors will need to do to understand what we want to present.

3. Remember to understand the differences between elements and contexts. Diversity is an asset, and at this moment, don't try to cover the different socio-cultural-economical-political differences that exist between contexts. Of course, while doing this, don't consider that our current system is "superior", "better" or vice-versa. Is just different.

4. At this point don't be afraid to go back to the previous moments if you want to revise your process. We encourage you to own this method, and one good step towards it is to feel free to go back to any moment.

5.6. Wrapping up the session

By the end of this session, you were should have one or different concepts that were a product of an analysis based on two contexts: the source and the local. You identified the activities' characteristics that were involving the elements from each context, and use them to reinforce the existent connection from the previous session.

In this session, you also identified the types of visitor that will be more aligned to what you want to present. This alignment is based on their motives, rather than just demographics. This is an empathic approach because we become aware of their individual motives without losing the idea of a group.

5.7. After the session

First of all, congratulate yourselves for finishing the two sessions. For the C-RD developers, it is a success if you were able to understand and debate between participants about the different contexts and elements. In that line, you were also able to understand in a deeper level why the elements existed among different contexts, and how these forming the views and way of living of the different human groups that were part of them.

You were also able to propose a concept for an exhibition. As we mentioned, the concept can be brought to realization in different ways with the help of technology, using different available resources, etc. We want to encourage you to explore how the exhibition concept that we were able to ideate together can be done in different ways. Remember that the most important aspect that this method is looking for is the ability to be relevant to the visitors, so they can elaborate a meaning towards it.

In case if needed, go back to the method as many times as you desire. We want you to use the method as part of an iterative process. In this process you can review, reanalysis, reorganize and redo different aspects of each moment.

6. Final considerations

The C-RD method, as you may notice, is excellent for early stages on the development of an exhibition. This is because is bringing to the table two important questions: Why we want to present something towards an audience? and Why this could be meaningful to the audience? This last question brings an important idea to think about: We, as the source community or the development team, are already aware of the importance of the element. However, the audience in many cases, they will not necessarily share the same awareness with us, and that is normal. Why? Because they never experience what we want to present to them the same way as we did.

We can elaborate different ways to present elements from different cultures, we can invest high amounts of money in the process, but if the people are not able to elaborate a meaning towards the experience, the importance that we want them to discover will not happen.

The C-RD is not perfect. There are many different aspects that the method does not necessarily tackle. In that sense, you can complement the method with your own views. With this, you will be able to adequate this methodological framework to your requirements and the institution that you are part of.

This led to the final thought: Please, appropriate of this method. Make it your own. We hope that there is going to be a point that you won't need the proposed order or this guide to using it. The C-RD can be mastered through practice, up to the point that you can re-organize as you the way is easier or practical for you. Maybe you can start from the local/current elements and find the mirror in the source/foreign; maybe you want to start on a specific type of visitors and look for the elements that will resonate stronger with them; maybe you want to use the method for exploring future cultures, or even to use the universal/shared topic as a way to recategorize a collection in your institutions. The option is only limited to what you can see. And if you found how the method can help you in ways that you never thought possible, please let us know.

Thank you so much for your interest in the C-RD!

7. Recommended lectures

The method was able to come to light thanks to the diverse research across different fields. Here you can find some of the lectures that the team used for the development and refinement of C-RD. Hope you enjoy the lectures.

-Buchanan, R., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991). Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. Design Issues, 8(1), 80.

-Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. New York: Harper & Row.

-Du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Madsen, A. K., Mackay, H., & Negus, K. (2013). Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman. (Sage. Chapter 1)

-Falk, J. H. (2006). An identity-centred approach to understanding museum learning. Curator: The museum journal, 49(2), 151-166.

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