A Dynamic, Multi-Level Model of Culture: From the Micro Level of the Individual to the Macro Level of a Global Culture

Miriam Erez* and Efrat Gati

Technion—Israel Institute of Technology, Israel

Cet article propose un modèle de la culture à plusieurs niveaux, composé de caractéristiques dynamiques et structurelles qui rendent compte de l'inter-action entre les différents niveaux de culture. On commence par présenter un résumé des modèles existants de la culture, puis on poursuit en proposant le modèle de la culture à plusieurs nivaeux. La dimension structurelle représente la construction emboîtée de la culture depuis le niveau le plus extensif d'une culture globale jusqu'à la représentation de la culture au niveau individuel en passant par les cultures nationale, organisationnelle et de groupe. La nature dynamique de la culture évoque les processus descendants et ascendants quand l'un des niveaux culturels entraîne des changements à d'autres niveaux. Plus particulièrement, le modèle soutient que le niveau le plus global de la culture affecte, par l'internédiaire de processus descendants, les changements comportementaux des gens relevant de différentes cultures. Inversement, des changements comportementaux au niveau individuel deviennent, grâce aux processus ascendants, des valeurs et des normes comportementales partagées, modifiant la macroculture. L'article demande que l'om passe de la culture conçue comme une entité stable à la culture perçue comme étant une entité dynamique, et que l'on accorde davantage d'intérêt aux interactions entre les différents niveaux de culture.

This paper proposes a multi-level model of culture, consisting of structural and dynamic characteristics that explain the interplay between various levels of culture. The paper begins with a summary of existing models of culture and continues with the proposed multi-level model of culture. The structural dimension represents the nested structure of culture from the most macro level of a global culture, through national, organisational and team cultures, and down to the representation of culture at the individual level. The dynamic nature of culture conveys the top-down–bottom-up processes where one cultural level affects changes in other levels of culture. Specifically, the model proposes that globalisation, as the macro level of culture, affects, through top-down processes, behavioral changes of members in various cultures.

* Address for correspondence: Miriam Erez, Mendes France Professor of Management and Economics, The William Davidson Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management, Technion—Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa 32000, Israel. Email: merez@ie.technion.ac.il

Reciprocally, behavioral changes at the individual level, through bottom-up processes, become shared behavioral norms and values, modifying the culture of a macro level entity. The paper calls for a shift in the research focus on culture as stable, to culture as a dynamic entity and for a greater focus on the interplay between different levels of culture.

INTRODUCTION

Since the seminal book by Geert Hofstede on culture's consequences (Hofstede, 1980), most of the research on culture has focused on identifying the core cultural values that differentiate cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1999) and their implications for work behavior. For example, Project GLOBE examined the effect of culture on desired leadership characteristics (House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman, Javidan, Dickson, Gupta, & GLOBE, 1999); other studies focused on cultural differences in cognitive attributes (Morris & Peng, 1994), in negotiation styles (Gelfand & Dyer, 2000), in motivation (Erez, 1997), and in human resource management practices (Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, & Kurshid, 2000). The fit between cultural characteristics and management practices was considered to be an important factor in the successful implementation of management practices (Aycan et al., 2000; Erez & Earley, 1993; Veiga, Lubatkin, Calori, & Very, 2000). However, very few studies have examined the effect of culture on change (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996), or recognised that culture itself changes over time. Models that portray the antecedents of culture are mostly ecological, asserting that ecological and sociopolitical contexts affect cultural adaptation (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992).

Culture can also change by coming into contact with another culture, through international trade, migration, and invasion. Whether acculturation occurs or not depends on the extent to which people are attracted to the other culture, and on how deeply they strive to maintain their own cultural identity (Berry, 1980).

While the ecological model is anchored in social psychology and anthropology, we specifically focus on work behavior. To further understand the complexity of culture within this context we adopt the multi-level approach, where lower levels of cultures are nested within higher levels, and where changes originating in one level shape changes in other levels. In this model we consider the global culture to be the most macro level of culture. In the following sections we review models of culture and dynamic models of culture as the framework for our proposed dynamic multi-level model of culture.

MODELS OF CULTURE

Culture shapes the core values and norms of its members. These values are shared and transmitted from one generation to another through social

learning processes of modeling and observation, as well as through the effects of individual actions (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, culture is defined as what a group learns over a period of time as that group solves its problems of survival in an external environment and its problems of internal integration (Schein, 1992).

Schein (1992) proposed an additional dimension of culture, which reflects the level of its visibility, ranging from the most visible to the least visible elements of culture. The most external level is the visible and audible behavioral patterns, and the constructed physical and social environment. A deeper level is that of values reflecting convictions about the nature of reality, and what ought to be done to successfully deal with reality. The deepest and invisible level is that of basic assumptions and beliefs about human nature, and relationship to the environment.

Drawing on Schein's model, theories of culture differ in their focus on the various "layers" of culture. Most theories focus on values, the middle level on the continuum between visible and invisible elements of culture (Chinese cultural connection, 1987; Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 1999; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Ronen & Shenkar, 1986; Schwartz, 1992). Fewer theories focus on the visible and external layer of behaviors and practices (House et al., 1999; Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002; Trompenaars, 1994). Very few models focus on the invisible and internal level of basic assumptions.

Theories focused on the mid-level values. The values in Schwartz's (1992) theory *represent three universal requirements of human existence to which all individuals and societies must be responsive: biological needs, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups.* The importance of each one of these needs-based values is evaluated. Ronen and Shenkar's (1986) clustering of nations was based on measurements of work values, and Inglehart and Baker (2000) studied the relationship between economic development and change in work values.

Hofstede's (1980, 2001) five cultural dimensions is the dominant typology of cultural values in the context of organisational behavior. Yet, items that construct his dimensions appear in slightly different item format, and they address both values (i.e. "how important is it to you to work with people who cooperate well with one another?"), and behaviors (i.e. "how frequently, in your experience, do the following problems occur?").

Theories focused on the external layer of behaviors and practices. Project GLOBE (House et al., 1999) assessed culture both at the value level by focusing on culture as it is reflected in the aspired values of "should be", and at the external and visible level as it is reflected in actual behaviors and organisational practices ("as is") (House et al., 1999). Trompenaars (1994) assessed cultural differences in behaviors driven by values. Smith, Peterson, and Schwartz (2002) studied differences in behavioral norms with respect to the source of guidance middle managers use to handle

eight work events, for instance: formal rules, specialists outside the department, etc.

Theories focused on the deepest level of basic assumptions. Very few models uncover the deepest level of basic assumptions and beliefs. Recent research by Leung, Bond, Reimel de Carrasquel, Muñoz, Hernández, Murakami, Yamaguchi, Bierbrauer, and Singelis (2002) identified five pan-cultural factors of social axioms: social cynicism, social flexibility, reward for application, spiritual consequence, and fate control. These axioms are taken for granted and are not subject to empirical validation.

Yet, shared experiences, values, and basic assumptions that were adaptive in the past may not be adaptive at present, or in the future because of contextual changes (Triandis, 1994). Nevertheless, very few models address the dynamic and changing nature of culture. Triandis (1972) introduced to his model of subjective culture distal antecedents consisting of the physical environment and historical events that shape proximal antecedents, including language, religion, social situations, and occupations. Building upon Triandis' (1972) ecological approach, Berry and colleagues (Berry et al., 1992) view cultures as evolving adaptations to ecological and sociopolitical influences, and view individual psychological characteristics in a population as adaptive to their cultural context, as well as to the broader ecological and sociopolitical influences. Inglehart and Baker (2000) examined the link between economic development and changes in basic values and found significant cultural change, but not necessarily in the direction of convergence.

The sociopolitical context promotes contact among cultures, so that individuals have to adapt to more than one context. The type of acculturation depends on two factors—the level of attraction to the new culture, and the importance of preserving one's own values, leading to four types of acculturation—integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation (Berry, 1980). This eco-cultural model pertains to acculturation as a process of cultural change and adaptation, both at the societal level and at the individual level.

Kitayama (2002) proposed a *system view* for understanding the dynamic nature of culture, as opposed to the *entity view* that sees culture as a static entity. The *system view* suggests that each person's psychological processes are organised through the active effort to coordinate one's behaviors with the pertinent cultural systems of practices and public meanings. Hence they are likely to be configured in different ways across different socio-cultural groups.

Drawing on the field of anthropology, Hannerz (1992) emphasised the reciprocal relationship between culture and the people that compose the culture: "Culture is the meaning which people create, and which creates people, as members of societies" (p. 3).

The above models all stem from socio-psychological and anthropological frameworks. They emphasise contextual effects on culture, they show

awareness of culture as a multi-level construct, and of the reciprocal relationship between the various levels. However, they do not clearly state how the various levels of cultures are formed, and how they affect each other.

This paper examines the dynamic nature of culture within the framework of the work context, taking a multi-level approach. Each cultural level serves as the context of the cultural levels below it. Reciprocally, processes that reside in the nested levels shape the macro-level cultural entity. In the context of work behavior today we are witnessing the emergence of a global culture as a new (top) layer of culture that affects the nested levels of culture below, and is reciprocally affected by them. Given that the contacts among cultures are inherent to the process of globalisation, we propose:

> *Proposition 1*: Dynamic, rather than stable, models of culture should serve for understanding the changing work environment in response to globalisation.

THE MULTI-LEVEL MODEL OF CULTURE

We propose a multi-level model of culture characterised by structural and dynamic dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 1. The structural dimension pertains to the hierarchy of levels nested within one another where the most internal level is that of cultural representation at the individual level nested within groups, organisations, nations, and the global culture. Culture as a shared meaning system can be formed at each one of these levels. The dynamic dimension pertains to the interrelationships among the various levels of culture and the way they impact each other. Through top-down processes of socialisation individuals internalise the shared meaning system of the society to which they belong, and its values are represented in the individual self. Then, through bottom-up processes of aggregation and shared values, higher-level entities of culture are formed, at the group, organisational, and national levels.

In the next section we discuss the structural and dynamic dimensions of the multi-level model of culture.

The Structural Dimension of the Multi-Level Model of Culture

Cross-cultural research has mostly focused on the national level, equating a cultural group with a nation-state (Boyacigiller, Kleinberg, Phillips, & Sackmann, 1996), and examining cross-cultural differences in national values (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1992); in organisational practices and behaviors (Trompenaars, 1994); differences in event management (Smith et al., 2002); in effective leadership characteristics (House et al., 1999); in basic axioms (Leung et al., 2002), and in implicit theories of social
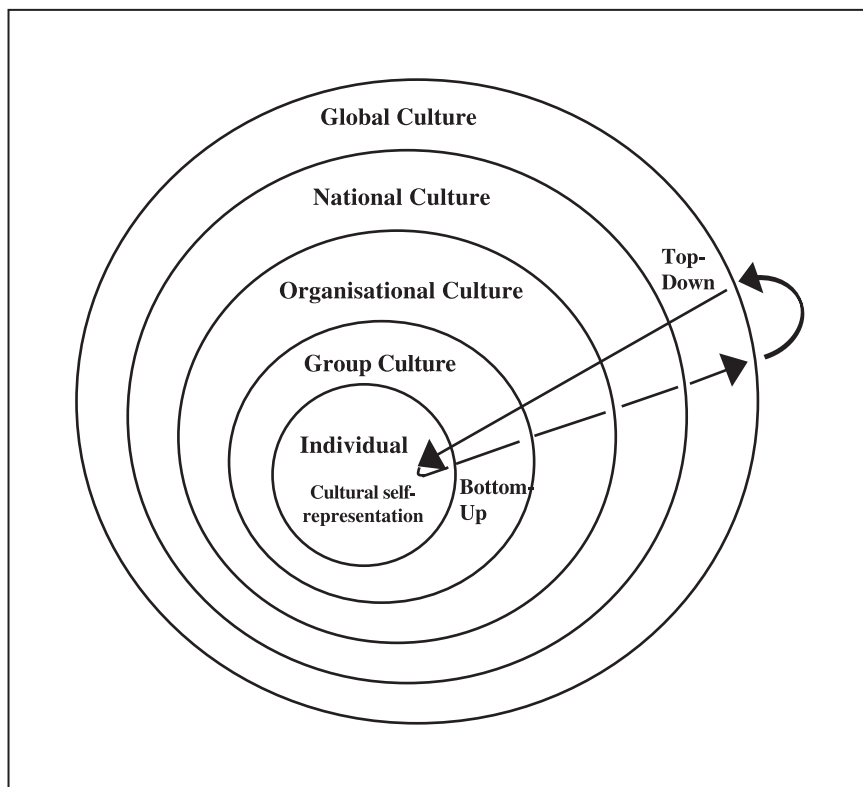
FIGURE 1.   The dynamic of top-down–bottom-up processes across levels of culture.

behavior (Morris & Peng, 1994). The boundaries of the collective at the national level are partly determined by the shared agreement on the desired values, or the existing values in the society.

Nested within the national culture is the level of organisational culture, often defined as a set of beliefs and values shared by members of the same organisation, which influence their behaviors (Schein, 1992). Dominant dimensions of organisational culture are: innovation, attention to details, outcome orientation, risk-taking, and team focus (Miron, Erez, & Naveh, 2003; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991; Rousseau, 1990). The strength of an organisational culture depends on the level of homogeneity in members' perceptions and beliefs. A strong culture is one with high levels of homogeneity (Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002).

At the team level, shared values by team members reflect a group culture. Such team-level values are: shared learning orientation, team psychological

safety to express one's doubt, interpersonal trust, and support (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003; Edmondson, 2002).

Conceptualisation of culture at the individual level reflects the cultural values as they are represented in the self. For example, collectivistic values are represented in the interdependent self, whereas individualistic values are represented in the independent self (Earley, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Very few studies examined culture at multiple levels. An exception is Project GLOBE (House et al., 1999), which studied charismatic leadership at three levels nested within each other—organisational, industry type, and national.

In addition to the above within-level research, there is also cross-level research. The fit model serves for interpreting cross-level research proposing that a misfit between culture at the macro-national level and management practices at the meso-organisational level results in poor performance (Erez & Earley, 1993). Thus, we propose:

> *Proposition 2*: A multi-level structure of culture consists of a hierarchy of cultural levels nested within each other. Each cultural level represents a different unit of analysis. Cross-level research examines the congruence between two or more levels.

Cross-level models identify sources of tension and misfit between levels, but they do not explain the dynamics of culture, where inconsistency between two levels instigates change and cultural adaptation. The following section focuses on the dynamic aspect of culture.

The Dynamic Dimension of the Multi-Level Model of Culture

Most dynamic models of culture are anchored in an ecological framework (Berry et al., 1992; Triandis, 1972), which explains the process of cultural change and adaptation in response to ecological and sociopolitical contexts (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992), as well as in response to new contacts between people from different cultures. These models focused mainly on top-down effects of the context on lower levels of culture. Yet, they did not examine bottom-up effects demonstrating how changes at the individual level emerge to become a cultural change at the macro level. Other models recognised the reciprocal relationships between the cultural and individual levels (Hannerz, 1992; Kitayama, 2002), but did not use a multi-level framework for further understanding the reciprocal top-down, bottom-up effects. Chao (2000) introduced a multi-level perspective suggesting that perceptions and reactions at lower levels are likely to be influenced by higher-level knowledge bases. Nonetheless, the mechanisms that transmit the effects of higher levels to lower levels, and vice versa, were not clearly stated.

We adopted the multi-level model (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000) for explaining the dynamic nature of culture. This model introduces top-down and bottom-up processes for explaining the reciprocal influences of constructs at one level on other levels. Top-down processes explain the effects of higher-level constructs on nested levels. Bottom-up processes explain how lower-level processes of shared meanings emerge into a higher-level entity. Drawing upon Klein and Kozlowski (2000), we propose that reciprocal top-down, bottom-up processes across different levels of culture could serve for explaining the dynamic dimension of culture.

The macro level of the global environment influences the national culture through top-down processes, and that level further affects the meso level of organisations and groups, which in turn affects individual identity and cultural self-representation. Reciprocally, as presented in Figure 1, bottom-up processes also take place. These emerge from the individual level and permeate the group and organisational levels once most members of the organisation share the new cultural norms, whereby the modified organisational culture becomes a meso-level construct. When the new culture is further shared by all organisations in a region, it becomes a national-level culture.

Top-down processes convey the influence of higher-level contextual factors on phenomena at lower levels of the system (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). Ecology, historical events, and cultural diffusion through globalisation, migration, and technological advances shape culture by top-down processes. The reality of the group is not determined by its individual elements but, rather, by the composition of these elements, which creates a new reality at the societal level.

Schein's (1992) model suggests that top-down processes may first affect the most external layer of behaviors and practices. When members of the same unit share these behaviors they become shared norms, and then turn into values and basic assumptions. The most effective way to change mental programs is by first changing individual behaviors (Hofstede, 1980).

Bottom-up processes describe phenomena that have their origins at a lower level but they emerge to become a higher-level property (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). They originate in cognition, affect, behavior, or other characteristics of individuals, and through interactions with others, transform into a higher-level, collective phenomenon. For example, team mental models (cognition), team performance (behavior), and team diversity (personal characteristics) all represent emergent group properties that have their origins in the individual elements that compose the team, and through interactions among team members, they emerge into a group property. Interactions among members are constrained by the structure that defines unit boundaries. Individuals in the same structural unit tend to interact with each other more than with others outside their unit. Individuals who are linked by the workflow tend to interact more with each other than with

individuals who are only linked indirectly (Brass, 1995). Over time dynamic interactions gain stable properties. Hence, stable structures emerge from a dynamic process. Because emergent phenomena are based on patterns of interaction, even small changes in individual behavior or dyadic interactions can yield significant changes in the emergent phenomenon. Collective phenomena may emerge in different ways under different contextual constraints and patterns of interactions (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000).

Based on the above discussion, we propose:

> *Proposition 3a*: The dynamic property of the multi-level model of culture consists of top-down and bottom-up processes. Top-down processes stimulate a process of adaptation and change in lower levels of culture. Reciprocally, behavioral changes at the individual level, through bottom-up processes of interaction and sharing, emerge into behavioral norms and cultural characteristics of the higher-level entity.
> *Proposition 3b*: The interplay between the structural and dynamic dimensions of the multi-level model of culture determines the boundaries in which bottom-up processes can emerge into a higher-level construct.

The reciprocal relationship between the top-down–bottom-up processes implies that the macro level of culture—the global culture—affects the micro level of the individual self-concept and identity. The next section introduces globalisation as a macro-cultural level, and examines its effect on individual identity.

THE GLOBAL CULTURE AND ITS INTERPLAY WITH NESTED LEVELS OF CULTURE IN THE WORK CONTEXT

Globalisation is the most significant change taking place in today's work environment (Arnett, 2002). It connotes the economic interdependence among countries that develops through cross-national flows of goods and services, capital, know-how (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2004), and people.

From an ecological perspective globalisation may be considered as a contextual factor that influences culture. We theorise that globalisation forms the most macro level of culture in the multi-level model. This level affects nested levels of cultures, and reciprocally, nested levels affect the macro level of the global culture.

Western societies dominate the global environment, and they account for 57 per cent of the world's GDP (Thurow, 2003). Therefore, the global culture reflects the core values of Western societies, including freedom of choice, free market, and individual rights (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2004). The global work environment is highly competitive (Thurow, 2003). Therefore, the major challenge of organisations today is to organise for

innovation and to adapt to the changes by restructuring and reshaping their cultures to be more flexible and adaptable (Kilduff & Dougherty, 2000; McKinley & Scherer, 2000). The best-performing firms are consistently those that introduce change in their industries. By doing so these companies become the frame of reference and the environment to which other companies respond (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998), allowing these companies to have greater control and to shape the global environment. The global work environment is highly diverse as it crosses cultural borders. Therefore, one of the challenges of global organisations is to develop awareness of cultural variations, and to respect cultural diversity. Tolerance of diversity enables companies to effectively operate across cultural borders (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2004), and to motivate employees from different cultures to join forces for strengthening the competitive sustainable advantage of their global corporation.

The increasing complexity of the workplace and the need to coordinate and mobilise resources within and across geographical borders increase the level of interdependence and multinational work teams. Therefore, the formation of highly interdependent teams enables companies to bridge geographical and cultural gaps, and to assure smooth communication and coordination across multiple subsidiaries. Indeed, connectedness and interdependence are highly emphasised in CEO speeches and in the Annual Reports of MNCs (Berson, Erez, & Adler, 2004).

Following the above review of the global work environment we propose:

> *Proposition 4*: The core values of the global culture are: Freedom of Choice; Free Markets; Individualism; Innovation and Tolerance of Change; Tolerance of Diversity; and Interdependence/Connectedness.

Globalisation enhances cross-cultural alliances, knowledge sharing, and technology transfer. Cross-cultural alliances are formed at all levels: intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), multinational corporations, and multinational teams. These global networks facilitate adherence to common procedures and rules. They affect national and organisational cultures via top-down processes, and reciprocally, are being shaped by the nested levels of culture through bottom-up processes. For example, adoption of new work methods occurs via bilateral relationships between companies that become connected through international mergers and acquisitions (IM&As). IM&As facilitate bilateral knowledge transfer (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2004). Knowledge acquisition changes the mindset, the behaviors, and consequently, the values of the acquired companies, and to some degree, of the acquiring company in IM&As. For example, quality assurance rules and procedures implemented in acquired companies caused a progressive change in work methods, and consequently, in the adoption of quality-oriented values (Erez-Rein, Erez, & Maital, 2004).

Global interconnectedness also takes place among governments that regulate economic activities, which positively affect bilateral trade, reducing transaction costs, and promoting the adoption of international standards that support international trade (Ingram, Robinson, & Busch, 2002). Increase in GNP in the countries involved in international trade correlates with a high level of individualism (Hofstede, 1980), demonstrating the reciprocal relationships between global effects and national values.

Connections between governments depend on geographical proximity and on similarity of political systems, meaning that national cultures influence successful international agreements. Being part of a network of intergovernmental organisations may also shape national and organisational cultures through lateral processes of value transfer.

Following the reciprocal relationship between globalisation, national and organisational cultures we propose:

> *Proposition 5*: The global culture through top-down processes affects nested levels of national and organisational cultures. Reciprocally, behaviors and norms at the lower nested levels of culture, when shared by all members, emerge through bottom-up processes to become a characteristic of the global culture, and strengthen its homogeneity.

Effects of Globalisation on Identity

The newly developed global forms of organisations may create tension between the local ("tribalism") and global ("universalism") cultures (Naisbitt, 1994). At the individual level, one major psychological consequence of globalisation is the transformation in identity, as reflected in how people think of themselves in relation to the social environment (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The global environment creates a new collective and impersonal entity to which a person belongs, and which influences his/her identity. A global identity means that people develop a sense of belongingness to a worldwide culture, by adopting practices, styles, and information that are part of the global culture (Arnett, 2002). Nevertheless, in parallel, people continue to hold their local identity as well, based on their socialisation to their local culture, thus holding a bi-cultural identity (Arnett, 2002). The ability to simultaneously maintain these two types of identity depends on the similarity between the global and local culture. A good fit between the local and the global cultures facilitates the integration of global and local identity. We, therefore, propose:

> *Proposition 6*: Exposure to the global work environment shapes a global identity. A fit between the global and local identity enables effective adaptation to both environments.

THE CULTURAL FACTOR IN ADAPTATION TO CHANGE

Cultures differ greatly in how much they have been affected by globalisation (Arnett, 2002). Difference in openness to globalisation may be explained by cultural values at the national level. Harzing and Hofstede (1996) proposed that the values of power distance, collectivism, and high uncertainty-avoidance increase resistance to change, while individualism, low power distance, and low uncertainty-avoidance increase the openness to the global world. Collective societies foster a collective mindset. Deviation from the norm is at risk of punishment. In contrast, in individualistic societies, individuals believe in their free will and dominance over their environment and, therefore, change is perceived as possible and natural (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996). In high power distance cultures people are more resistant to change because their dependence on superiors who control their behavior makes them less experienced in taking personal initiative to adapt to changes. In uncertainty-averse cultures people are inherently more anxious about the unpredictability of the future than people in other cultures, and they perceive change as dangerous (Steensma, Marino, & Dickson, 2000).

The level of tightness–looseness is also related to the dynamic nature of culture. Tight cultures are less tolerant of deviant behaviors, and therefore, are less likely to change, whereas loose cultures are more tolerant of deviant behaviors, and therefore, are more likely to change. These differences affect the pace of adaptation to the global work environment and the openness to higher- and lower-level influences on the national culture. Therefore,

Proposition 7: National cultures of high individualism, low power distance, and low uncertainty-avoidance will adapt to the global work environment more than their counterparts.

DISCUSSION

Our proposed multi-level model addresses the dynamic and changing nature of culture. Its contribution over and above existing models of culture is in integrating four main features into one model: First, the model identified the global culture as a new climatic level characterising the global business environment. The global culture seems to be dominated by the following global values: Freedom of choice; Free markets; Individualism; Innovation and change; Tolerance to diversity; and Interdependence/Connectedness. Second, the model presents the structural dimension of culture as multi level, with lower levels nested within higher levels. Third, the model portrays the dynamic nature of culture consisting of top-down processes that transmit the effects of culture from higher to lower levels of culture, and bottom-up processes through which adaptive behaviors at the individual level, when

shared by all members of a social unit, emerge into a macro-level culture that reflects adaptation to the cultural change. The interplay between the *structural* and *dynamic* dimensions of the multi-level model of culture determines the boundaries in which bottom-up processes can emerge into higher-level constructs. The boundaries from a top-down perspective depend on the scope of influence of changes in higher levels of culture on lower levels. From a bottom-up perspective it depends on the shared meaning and shared behavioral norms. Individuals who do not share the same meaning do not belong to the same culture. Fourth, culture, at each level, consists of an external and visible level of behaviors and artifacts, an internal and invisible level of basic assumptions, and a mid level of values. Our model asserts that top-down processes will first affect the most external level of behaviors, and through bottom-up processes of shared behaviors, they will become shared norms, shared values, and finally, shared basic assumptions.

The effect of the global culture on nested levels of culture can be facilitated or hindered by the particular characteristics of the national culture. National cultures of high individualism, low power distance, and low uncertainty-avoidance will adapt to the global work environment more than their counterparts.

Finally, the effect of the global culture on individuals and their identity is not only through the mediating effects of national cultures, but there is also a direct effect through employees' exposure to the global work environment. Employees working for multinational companies are socialised into the macro level of global culture, and adopt a global mindset that enables them to adapt to their global work environment and to behave according to its core values. Yet, at the same time, they are also part of their local national culture, thus maintaining a bi-cultural identity.

A question that still has not been answered is whether in the long run the global local identities merge into one "glocal" identity, or remain as independent of each other. Examining such alternative theories of identity formation will further increase our understanding of the impact of the global culture on identity formation and on cultural change.

Another issue that needs further research pertains to the global culture. We propose a set of values that characterise the global culture. Future research should empirically identify the global values and their interplay with the local values of different nations. Finally, this paper proposes a conceptual framework that opens up research avenues for exciting future research on the dynamic nature of culture. We hope that future research findings will offer empirical evidence for the present model.

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