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How Employees with Different National Identities Experience a Geocentric Organizational Culture of a Global Corporation: A Phenomenological Study

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HOW EMPLOYEES WITH DIFFERENT NATIONAL IDENTITIES EXPERIENCE A

GEOCENTRIC ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF A GLOBAL CORPORATION: A

PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

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by

Maria S. Plakhotnik

2010

To: Interim Dean Delia C. Garcia
    College of Education

This dissertation, written by Maria S. Plakhotnik, and entitled How Employees with Different National Identities Experience a Geocentric Organizational Culture of a Global Corporation: A Phenomenological Study, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: November 9, 2010

The dissertation of Maria S. Plakhotnik is approved.

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Interim Dean Delia C. Garcia
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Interim Dean Kevin O'Shea
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2010

DEDICATION

To my mother, Elena Anatoljevna Plakhotnik, and my father, Sergey Mikhajlovich

Plakhotnik, for their love, support, and belief in me. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor Tonette S. Rocco, Major Professor

A global corporation values both profitability and social acceptance; its units

mutually negotiate governance and represent a highly interdependent network where

centers of excellence and high-potential employees are identified regardless of

geographic locations. These companies try to build geocentric, or "world oriented"

(Marquardt, 1999, p. 20), organizational cultures. Such culture "transcends cultural

differences and establishes 'beacons' – values and attitudes – that are comprehensive and

compelling" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 299) for all employees, regardless

of their national origins. Creating a geocentric organizational culture involves

transforming each employee's mindset, beliefs, and behaviors so that he/she can become

"a world citizen in spite of having a national identity" (Marquardt, 1999, p. 47).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how employees with

different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global

corporation. Phenomenological research aims to understand "how people experience

some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it,

make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Twelve participants were selected using criteria, convenience, and snow-ball sampling strategies. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data. Data were analyzed inductively, using Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data.

The participants in this study experienced a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation as on in which they felt connected, valued, and growing personally and professionally. The participants felt connected to the companies via business goals and social responsibility. The participants felt valued by the company because their creativity was welcomed and they could contribute to the corporation certain unique knowledge of the culture and language of their native countries. The participants felt growing personally and professionally due to the professional development opportunities, cross-cultural awareness, and perspective consciousness. Based on the findings from this study, a model of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation: An employee perspective is proposed. Implications for research and practice conclude this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*Transnational processes and identities will be among the major social,
political, and economic phenomena of the twenty-first century.*
(Gossen, 1999, p. vii)

*Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and
organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we
don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victim to them.*
(Schein, 2004, p. 3)

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how employees with

different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global

corporation. This chapter begins with the background to the study, problem statement,

purpose of the study, and research questions, followed by the conceptual framework.

Next, definition of terms and the significance and organization of the study are discussed.

Background to the Study

The role of multinational corporations (MNCs) in globalization is undeniable

(Morley & Collings, 2004). MNCs are responsible for 40% of world manufacturing,

including 85% of cars, 70% of computers, and 35% of toothpaste (Bartlett & Ghoshal,

2000). The 500 largest MNCs are responsible for half of the world's trade (Rugman,

2000). Economies of the top 50 MNCs are larger than those of 130 nation-states (Cohen,

1998, p. 2). While the top 200 MNCs employ only 1% of the global workforce, their

revenues account for almost one third of world economic activity (Anderson &

Cavanagh, 2000). During the past decade, the number of MNCs almost doubled and the

number of their foreign affiliates has quadrupled (Kuper, 2004). As a result, they have

accumulated power to change the global economic, political, and cultural landscapes.

MNCs and National Culture: A Challenge

The headquarters of the 430 largest MNCs are located in the U.S., European Union, and Japan (Rugman, 2000). Their operations can be located in several dozen countries, each with different national cultures. Many MNCs have been approaching cultural differences as barriers to fast company growth (Warner & Joynt, 2002) and, hence, have been choosing to replicate their organizational practices in host countries' subsidiaries (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000). This home country-oriented approach, or ethnocentric orientation, leads to a global convergence of business practices and culture toward Anglo or American business models (Gupta & Wang, 2004) and "conveys [an] aura of corporate colonialism" (Begley & Boyd, 2003, p. 357).

Negativity towards the ethnocentric orientation and anti-globalization feelings have made corporations address the question: "Can enterprise, which is a leading part of the *problematique* (political, economic, social and ecological), be also a leading part of the *pragmatique*, the set of practical constructive interventions that reduces future societal disorder?" (Perlmutter, 1985, p. 273).

MNCs and National Culture: A Solution

Some MNCs have recognized the shortcomings of the ethnocentric orientation and have moved toward a global company with a geocentric orientation (Perlmutter, 1985). Global companies attempt to take "a more constructive role in society" (Perlmutter, 1985, p. 280) by employing both profitability and public acceptance as criteria to measure their effectiveness and by establishing reciprocal relationships with other societal entities. They also seek new balances for their independence and interdependence with others that would lead to win-win cooperation and to the creation

of a more pluralistic global civilization. These characteristics of global companies have roots in the Western capitalism because these companies' headquarters are located in U.S., European Union, and Japan (Rugman, 2000).

Geographic boundaries are "not barriers to potential products, business opportunities, and manufacturing locations" (Marquardt, 1999, p. 20). Geographic boundaries are also irrelevant for global companies' organizational culture. These companies try to build geocentric, or "world oriented" (Marquardt, 1999, p. 20), organizational cultures. A geocentric organizational culture "transcends cultural differences and establishes 'beacons' – values and attitudes – that are comprehensive and compelling" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 299) for all employees, regardless of their national origins, ethnic backgrounds, or professional experiences. Some of these companies distance themselves from any cultural or national origins to have "*no* national identity" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 298). A global company formerly known as *British Petroleum* has reduced its name to simply *BP*, which stands for *Beyond Petroleum* in one of its recent ads.

<div align="center">Problem Statement and Purpose</div>

Jacoby (1970) predicted that "geocentric companies [will] become numerous…and ethnocentric companies exceptional" (p. 54). A recent examination of human resource management practices in 11 major American-based MNCs showed a growth among geocentric and a decline of ethnocentric organizations (Washington, 2001). Yet, very little is known about geocentric organizations. Most business literature on geocentric organizations focuses on quantitative measures, such as global production, sales, consumption, or investment (Jones, 2005). Research on social and internal changes

in organizational practices of these corporations and, particularly, in organizational culture, is limited (Jones, 2005).

Global corporations employ individuals from many different national backgrounds. To unite these employees, global organizations strive to create a geocentric organizational culture. Creating a geocentric organizational culture involves transforming each employee's mindsets, beliefs, and behaviors so that he/she can become a part of a global organization or "a world citizen in spite of having a national identity" (Marquardt, 1999, p. 47). National identity refers to one's "self-location in a group and … *affect* towards others in the group…[such as] feelings of closeness to and pride in one's country and its symbols" (Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2001, p. 74). National identity fosters a love for one's homeland and its people, creates a sense of uniqueness and distinctiveness and feeling of belonging, and willingness to act in the interests of the group (Kelman, 2001). National identity cannot simply dissolve or be dropped (Citrin et al., 2001; Dahles & Hees, 2004). However, how employees with different national identities experience this geocentric organizational culture remains unknown. A lack of this knowledge is regretful because this knowledge can assist organizations in building geocentric organizational cultures. So, how do employees with Irish, Brazilian-American, Lithuanian, or transnational identities experience a geocentric organizational culture? The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation.

Research Questions

The primary research question was as follows: How do employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation? The subsidiary questions included the following:

1. What are employees' experiences with a geocentric organizational culture?

2. What are employees' experiences with their national identities in the context of a geocentric organizational culture?

Conceptual Framework

Corporate organizational culture refers to "the underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization's management system as well as the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles" (Denison, 1990, p. 2). Such organizational culture fosters organization-wide consensus and cohesion (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Martin, 2002). Organizational culture serves as a tool to increase employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

According to the Global Success Model (Marquardt, 1999) corporate culture of a global corporation fosters organizational cohesion across five dimensions: global vision, global mindset, global values, global activities, and "globe-able heroes" (p. 148). Global vision is "borderless and multicultural" (Marquardt, Berger, & Loan, 2005, p. 148) and refers to a company's goals and direction. Global mindset is the ability to view across and beyond nation or culture, division or function and to balance local and global. Global values "provide purpose and meaning for what one does" (Marquardt et al., 2005, p. 148) and include such values as global thinking, cultural sensitivity, empowered global people,

among others. Global activities refer to activities and events that help fostering global vision, global mindset, and global values. Globe-able heroes are members of organizations whose qualities are respected by others; organizations also implement activities, such as mentoring, training, and development, to develop future globe-able heroes.

In the context of globalization, distance between cultures decreases and differences seem to blur; the blurring of differences increases people's level of conscientiousness about their cultural identities (Friedman, 1994). In organizations that undergo globalization, national identity becomes particularly relevant to employees' social reality. National identity is one of many social identities of an individual. Social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). These cognitive (i.e., knowledge of one's membership) and affective (i.e., value and significance of membership) aspects of a social identity reside within an individual; however, they emerge within a specific social context (Citrin et al., 2001). This context, including "socio-cultural discourses, national myths, and intergroup relations", is socially constructed and constantly changing (Jussim, Ashmore, & Wilder, 2001, p. 6). The context shapes and reinforces ideas about a group's beliefs, values, and uniqueness. Conversely, in a particular context an individual reevaluates the significance of his/her group membership or the importance of a particular identity (Nkomo & Stewart, 2006; Sen, 2006).

In the context of global corporations, national identity might constitute "an especially powerful and compelling symbolic resource for conveying boundaries and expressing communality within them" (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003, p. 1090). Employees mobilize their national identities to express their uniqueness and reinforce their sense of belonging and to find alliances with others and to use their national identity as a strategy to achieve goals.

Definition of Terms

Corporate organizational culture is "the underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization's management system as well as the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles" (Denison, 1990, p. 2).

Ethnocentric organizational culture is the organizational culture of the company's headquarters or home-country that is replicated across the company's subsidiaries regardless of their national or regional cultures (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000).

Geocentric organizational culture is organizational culture that "transcends cultural differences and establishes 'beacons' – values and attitudes – that are comprehensive and compelling" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 299) for all employees, regardless of their national origins or professional experiences. To build such a culture, global companies use policies and practices that aim at "engendering cultural commonalities across the organization" (Jones, 2005, p. 190).

Global corporation is the fourth and the last phase, known today, in a for-profit company's global status evolution, which is preceded by domestic, international, and multinational phases. A global corporation is free of geographic boundaries and may

choose not to have a particular national identity (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002).

It values both profitability and social acceptance; its units mutually negotiate governance

and represent a highly interdependent network where centers of excellence and high

potential employees are identified regardless of geographic locations.

Globalization is a process that has "leveled" or "flattened…the global competitive

field" (Friedman, 2005, p. 8). "What the flattening of the world means is that we are now

connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network,

which…could usher in an amazing era of prosperity and innovation" (Friedman, 2005, p.

8). People around the world are connected and can compete and collaborate together,

becoming the new dynamic force of globalization.

Human resource development (HRD) is "any process or activity that, either

initially or over the long-term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based

knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team

gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or, ultimately, the whole

humanity" (McLean & McLean, 2001, 44-1).

Multinational corporation (MNC) is a company that has a "substantial direct

investment in foreign countries and actively manage[s] those operations and regard[s]

those operations as [an] integral part of the company both strategically and

organizationally" (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000, p. 2). In simple terms, an MNC is a

company with headquarters and production lines located in two or more countries

(Anderson, 1990).

National identity refers to one's "self-location in a group and … *affect* towards others in the group…[such as] feelings of closeness to and pride in one's country and its symbols" (Citrin et al., 2001, p. 74).

Social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).

Significance of the Study

"HRD professionals have a responsibility to step in and take the leadership role to ensure that globalization has a human face with long-term benefits for all of humanity" (Marquardt et al., 2005, p. 136). However, HRD has fallen behind many other disciplines in the discussion of globalization and organizational processes (Bates & Phelan, 2002, 14-2). This study advances this discussion and makes both conceptual and practical contributions to the field of HRD. Most discussion on organizational culture focuses on tools and strategies that enable management to achieve organizational goals (Alvesson, 2002). This research enriches this discussion by providing employees' insights into the links between individual-level dynamics (i.e., national identity) and organizational context (i.e., a geocentric organizational culture). These insights can inform the existing, and quite limited, conceptual knowledge of geocentric organizational cultures of global corporations. Understanding how individuals with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture can also help HRD professionals foster a connection between individuals and organization and, hence, build organizational culture. This study also provides directions for further research.

Delimitations

This study focused on individuals' national identity. Other social identities were discussed in the study if the participants related other identities to their national identity. This study was delimited to organizational culture of four global corporations. This study offers a place to start research around employees' national identities and a geocentric organizational culture. The researcher did not generalize the results to all employees of global organizations. Instead, it is hoped that the results of the study might be useful for researchers and practitioners in HRD and other fields. Therefore, the researcher provides "extrapolations [that] are modest speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions…pointing out potential applications to future efforts" (Patton, 2002, p. 584).

Summary

The study contains five chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature; chapter 3 describes the phenomenological framework and methods of data collection, analysis, and management. Chapter 4 presents findings on how employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation. Chapter 5 contains responses to the research questions and implications for research and practice.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a review of the literature relevant to the exploration of how employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation is presented. The chapter is divided into three sections: (a) organizational culture, (b) global organization, and (c) identity, and concludes with a summary.

Organizational Culture

This section opens with a discussion of the roots of organizational culture research, including Pettigrew's (1979), Ouchi (1981), Peters and Waterman (1982), and Deal and Kennedy (1982). Next, the conceptual scope of organizational culture research is provided, followed by an overview of organizational culture and HRD.

The Roots of Organizational Culture Research

The study of organizations can be traced to ideas of Socrates and Aristotle in 400 BC and is comprised of various lines of research on organizational function, structure, and processes. Within this research, the concept of organizational culture has been around for only 40 years but became propagated only in the past 25 years (Martin, 2002). According to Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Sanders (1990), the concept of organizational culture was first introduced to the U.S. management literature in *Managerial Grid* by Blake and Mouton (1964) and later adopted by researchers in other countries. In the 1960s, managers were balancing concerns for people, production, and hierarchy. In the introduction, Blake and Mouton (1964) set the direction of the book by suggesting a new meaning of the manager's task – "developing and maintaining a *culture*

that promotes work" (p. ix). Culture was defined as customs, standards, and procedures that comprise the basis of the organization. Culture became viewed as one of the core aspects of an organization, along with purpose, people, and hierarchy. Managing culture, instead of managing employees, took the manager's responsibilities to a new different and more complex level –organizational development. Culture could be examined and changed through cultural interventions and other educational methods that help understand, explain, and keep organizational traditions and practices. Blake and Mouton laid the foundation for subsequent research by defining and linking culture to organization-wide processes, behavior change, and education.

Pettigrew's (1979) work is considered the first publication on organizational culture in the U.S. academic literature (Hofstede et al., 1990). Pettigrew examined the birth and evolution of organizational culture of a boarding school using social dramas as his research design. The purpose of his study was to explore "how purpose, commitment, and order are generated in an organization both through the feelings and actions of its founder and through the amalgam of beliefs, ideology, language, ritual and myth we collapse into the label of organizational culture" (p. 572). For Pettigrew, organizational culture embraces such concepts as symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual, and myth. Organizational culture relates to organizational functioning (e.g., leadership, control, norms, and purpose) and provides a system of meanings that gives people a sense of reality and direction for actions.

In 1980s, the phenomenal success of Japanese businesses and the decrease in U.S. production moved researchers to re-examine knowledge on organizational management. Combined with a growing interest in organizational culture, this re-examination resulted

in three bestsellers (Barley, Meyer, & Gash, 1988). In the first bestseller, Ouchi (1981) studied the Japanese approach to business and its applicability to the U.S. business. Ouchi defined organizational culture as a "set of symbols, ceremonies, and myths that communicate underlying values and beliefs of that organization to its employees" (p. 41). Organizations develop their unique sets of these symbols and practices, or cultures, over time, similar to the way people develop their personalities. The development starts with top managers who identify and exhibit the desirable organizational values and patterns of behavior, inspire their employees to follow their example, and, eventually, create a tradition that is passed to new employees. Successful companies build organizational culture that considers employees as the dominant value of the organization. Such culture of "humanized working conditions" (Ouchi, 1981, p. 196) increases employees' self-esteem, provides supportive environment, and helps increase the overall success of the organization.

In the second bestseller, Peters and Waterman (1982) researched 62 U.S. businesses to identify characteristics of the best companies. Organizational culture is discussed in two ways: (a) a company itself as a whole and (b) values that are conveyed in stories, slogans, legends, and myths. They discovered that "in Japan organization and people…are synonymous" (p. 39) and suggested that organizations should treat people, instead of tools or investments, as the key resource. Companies that focus solely on profits and ignore their employees could have strong organizational cultures but "dysfunctional ones" (p. 76).

In the third bestseller, Deal and Kennedy (1982) popularized the term corporate culture. Because culture affects all aspects of an organization, successful corporations

carefully "build and nourish" their cultures (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 5) that includes their business environment, values, heroes, rites and rituals, and cultural network. A strong corporate culture represents a potent force for guiding employee behavior by providing clear rules and creating a sense of belonging and pride that stimulate hard work.

The Conceptual Scope of Organizational Culture Research

As these three works turned into bestsellers, organizational culture became a frequent headline in popular business literature (e.g., "Can John Young Redesign Hewlett-Packard", 1982) and a tool for businesses to increase their competitiveness in the global market (Denison, 1990). Organizational culture became praised for the successes of Black & Decker, Johnson & Johnson, and Apple and for the downfalls of Sears, Bank of America, and General Motors (O'Reilly, 1989). Organizational culture was also blamed for failures of international mergers and acquisitions, for instance, of the German-American DaimlerChrysler in late 1998 (Kets De Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002). Organizational culture has become to be viewed as the solution to all problems and "a fad" (Hofstede et al., 1990, p. 286) or "a seductive promise for managers" (Martin, 2002, p. 8).

"Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victim to them" (Schein, 2004, p. 3). Little understanding of how organizational culture works in practice (Alvesson, 2002) and a need for theory development to eliminate the existing "conceptual jungle" (Sackmann, 1991, p. 24) stimulated further research in management, organizational studies,

education, and other social and behavioral sciences. To capture this diversity in a meaningful and concise manner, three frameworks are used to examine the conceptual scope of organizational culture research: variable/metaphor (Smircich, 1983), research interest (Alvesson, 2002), and manageability (Martin, 2002; see Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of Smircich's (1983), Alvesson's (2002), and Martin's (2002) Approaches

Approach	Author (year)	Key concepts
Variable/Metaphor	Smircich (1983)	Critical variable- organization culture as one of the entities that an organization *has*
		Root metaphor- organization *itself as* culture
Research interest	Alvesson (2002)	Technical - casual relationships
		Practical - hermeneutic- meanings, symbolism and ideas
		Emancipatory - power relations
Manageability	Martin (2002)	Integration - organization-wide consensus
		Differentiation- subcultural consensus
		Fragmentation - lack of consensus

Variable/Metaphor Approach

Smircich (1983) argues that in organization studies culture has been treated in two ways: "as a critical variable and as a root metaphor" (p. 439). When culture is treated as a critical variable, researchers come from the traditional objectivist view and consider culture as a variable, or one of the entities that an organization *has* and that consists of several attributes, such as values, norms, rituals, or behaviors. As a variable,

organizational culture is built, can be strong and unique, and can influence and be influenced by other entities within the organization. Therefore, research primarily focuses on how culture change can increase organizational effectiveness. Most research in cross-cultural/comparative management and corporate culture assumes this view of culture. Cross-cultural/comparative management research treats culture as an independent variable that originates in national culture and affects the organization through individuals' values and behaviors; corporate culture research considers culture as an internal variable, created within the organization, "as a by-product" (Smircich, 1983, p. 344) of the production of goods and services and is manifested in rituals, ceremonies, and artifacts.

When culture is treated as a root metaphor, the organization *itself* is viewed as culture: "Organizations are understood and analyzed not mainly in economic or material terms, but in terms of their expressive, ideational, and symbolic aspects" (Smircich, 1983, p. 347). Such research of organizational culture comes from hermeneutical or phenomenological paradigms and explores social construction of organizations and their symbols and meanings (Alvesson, 2002). Three fields of research utilize this view on culture: organizational cognition, organizational symbolism, and structural and psychodynamic perspective. Studies in organizational cognition treat culture as "a system of knowledge and beliefs" (Smircich, 1983, p. 348) and investigate how people create shared knowledge and what guides their actions. Organizational symbolism explores how individuals make meaning of their experiences and how they articulate this meaning through symbols. The third, structural and psychodynamic perspective, considers culture as "the expression of unconscious psychological processes" (Smircich, 1983, p. 351).

Research Interests Approach

Alvesson (2002) differentiates among three interests of organizational culture research: technical, practical-hermeneutic, and emancipatory. The technical interest examines casual relationships between organizational culture and organizational performance, for instance, how change in organizational norms can increase productivity. Researchers with practical-hermeneutic interest seek for "understanding of the meanings, symbolism and ideas of the community being studied" (p. 10). While technical and practical-hermeneutic interests correspond to Smircich's (1983) variable and root metaphor categories, emancipatory interest adds other opportunities in research of organizational culture. This interest guides researchers to uncover power relations and to liberate from domination, oppression, and bias within organizations.

Manageability Approach

Martin (1985) approaches this discussion from the perspective of manageability of organizational culture. Researchers' position on this issue puts them somewhere on a continuum between cultural pragmatists and cultural purists. Cultural pragmatists believe that culture can and should be managed to increase profitability and organizational effectiveness. Cultural purists argue that "it is naïve and perhaps unethical to speak of managing culture" (p. 95) because culture is an expression of people's meaning-making and interpretations of experiences. Building on this distinction, Martin (2002) further proposes a three-perspective framework: integration, differentiation, and fragmentation. The three perspectives differ in regards to the orientation to consensus, the relationships among cultural manifestations, and treatment of ambiguity (see Table 2).

Table 2

Martin's (2002) Three Theoretical Perspectives

Perspectives	Integration	Differentiation	Fragmentation
Orientation to consensus	Organization-wide consensus	Subcultural consensus	Lack of consensus
Relation among manifestations	Consistency	Inconsistency	Not clear or inconsistent
Orientation to ambiguity	Exclude it	Channel it outside subcultures	Acknowledge it

From *Organizational culture: Mapping the terrain*, by J. Martin, 2002, p. 95.

The integration perspective. Organizational culture is characterized by organization-wide consensus, rejects ambiguity, and views interpretations of cultural manifestations as consistent. Definitions of culture stress "cohesion" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 4), "typical …accepted and expected behaviors" (Drennan, 1992, p. 4) and shared assumptions (Schein, 2004) and values and beliefs (Denison, 1990). Because culture can be clearly broken down into elements, culture can also be assessed, predicted, changed, controlled, and managed. Organizational culture can also be used to control and manage. Organizational culture is often times linked to or used as a tool to increase organizational effectiveness and performance. For example, Denison (1990) argues that "*effectiveness …is a function of the values and beliefs held by the members of an organization*" (p. 5).

The differentiation perspective. Researchers who adopt the differentiation perspective focus on sub-cultures and their dynamics within an organization. Consensus exists only within the subcultures; relationships between subcultures are inconsistent.

"Differences [are]…inescapable and desirable, both descriptively and normatively. Dissenting voices are not silenced or ignored" (Martin, 2002, p. 102). Organizations do not have a monolith culture built and led by a strong leader; rather organizations are shells for multiple sub-cultures. Organizations reflect the social diversity of the society where people belong to different social groups. "Societies, and many organizations, can more correctly be viewed in terms of multiple, cross-cutting cultural contexts changing through time, rather than stable, bounded, and homogenous cultures" (Gregory, 1983, p. 365). Sub-cultures are affected by many internal and external forces. For example, Liu (2003) explored the emergence of two sub-cultures in state-owned enterprises in China: generations of pre and post economic reforms in the 1980s. Although employees shared the same cultural background, these generations had different perceptions of Chinese cultural practices at work. Barley et al. (1988) researched how two sub-cultures, practitioners and academics, within the field of organizational culture influence each other. One of the findings suggests that despite their agreement on the importance of organizational culture, practitioners influenced academics, and not vise versa.

The fragmentation perspective. From the fragmentation perspective, culture is full of ambiguity, which is "a normal, salient, and inescapable part of organizational functioning" (Martin, 2002, p. 105). While employees can share a common orientation and purpose, they, as a collective, may lack consensus on different interpretations of organization's actions or policies, and individual employees may have different, ambiguous beliefs about one problem (Meyerson, 1991). Contrary to the integration and differentiation perspectives, organizations reflect society that is "constantly evolving over time, misleading on the surface, and generated by unobservable and enduring structures"

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(Tunissen, 1996, p. 24). Boundaries between subcultures are shifting and ambiguous. For example, one person can be a peer and a manager, a new team member and an expert in technologies at the same time (Ybema, 1996). Organizations themselves are not leader-driven but evolving through negotiation of differences, inconsistencies, tensions, and conflicts, which represent forces of meaning-making (Koot, Sabelis, & Ybema, 1996). From this perspective, organizational culture is "a framework of meaning, a system of reference that can generate both shared understandings and the working misunderstandings that enable social life to go on" (Batteau, 2001, p. 726).

Organizational Culture Research and HRD

HRD professionals are responsible for enhancement of organizational culture by providing "*organizational development* that results in both optimal utilization of human potential and improved human performance" (Gilley, Eggland, & Gilley, 2002, p. 13). HRD professionals create and implement system-wide organizational interventions to increase correspondence between organizational culture and other components, such as structure, process, practices, and mission, that helps increase organizational effectiveness (Gilley et al., 2002). Organizational culture can also serve HRD as a tool to create consensus among employees about organization's strategy, goals and means of accomplishing them, criteria for performance evaluation, system of rewards and punishment, issues of power and status, and peer relationships (Schein, 1984). Therefore, employees share a common frame of reference that enables them to better interpret organizational activities, understand their supervisors' and peers' expectations, respond appropriately in new situations, deal with disagreements, or resolve conflicts (Desimone, Werner, & Harris, 2002; O'Reilly, 1989). As a result, employees can better utilize their

skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform their jobs, which increase their work effectiveness and the organization's long term economic performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

HRD professionals are also responsible for creating interventions that support organizational culture change (Schein, 1998, 1999). Culture change is a long process that requires a shift in employees' attitudes and behaviors. HRD professionals facilitate this shift by creating activities and interventions that help clarify and integrate new organizational values, goals, and expectations. At the same time, organizational culture determines the importance and role of HRD within an organization (Desimone et al., 2002). For example, when organizational culture capitalizes on innovation, HRD is responsible for building an environment that enhances all employees' potential, skills, talents, creativity, and intellectual capital (Gilley, Boughton, & Maycunich, 1999).

Research on organizational culture within the field of HRD has been limited. A review of 1994-2005 proceedings of the Academy of Human Resource Development, a leading scholarly HRD organization, revealed only 31 (2%) of the publications focused on organizational culture (Plakhotnik & Rocco, 2006). Most HRD researchers search for links between organizational culture and other variables, such as knowledge management (Bennett, 2005), training effectiveness (Bunch, 2001), employee selection (Bowman & Harada, 2003), or information sharing (Powell, 1997). Few have explored the nature of sub-cultures (Hansen & Kahnweiler, 1994), organizational culture change process (ARL INQUIRY, 1996), and meaning of organizational culture to employees (Alfred, 1999; Bierema, 1994). HRD researchers should conduct studies on organizational culture for at least two reasons. First, organizational culture remains a vital and sometimes

controversial topic among scholars and practitioners in many fields, sometimes resulting in corporate sponsorship of scholarly research around the topic. Second, organization theory/behavior constitutes a core curriculum content area of 55% of graduate HRD programs in the U.S. (Kuchinke, 2001). The dissonance between what is taught and what is researched might reflect the novelty of the concept of organizational culture or skepticism about its value for HRD.

<div align="center">Global Organization</div>

This section opens with a discussion of the roots of global organization research (Perlmutter; 1969, 1985), followed by an overview of research on global organization (e.g., Heenan, 1972; Jacoby, 1970; Washington, 2001) and geocentric organizational culture (e.g., Kets De Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002; Marquardt, 1999, 2005).

<div align="center">*The Roots of Global Organization Research*</div>

More than 30 years ago, Perlmutter (1969) observed a set of political, economic, social, and ecological problems that governmental structures alone could not handle, that involved enterprise, or MNC, and that seemed to lead to "some kind of new civilization whose outlines can only be dimly seen" (p. 271). The unstable global political climate, stagnation of many nations' economies, uncontrollable inflation, and rising concerns about nations' security put a burden on enterprises that were producers of goods, providers of services, and appliers of science but lacked a leadership position in the global political arena. To survive internationally, many enterprises seemed to seek the same route- same market niches and opportunities to provide low-cost products, leading to a possibility of a growth in unemployment. Nations did not have a capacity to meet rising social demands for equal opportunities for employment, food, healthcare,

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education, and other aspects of people's well-being. Enterprises also seemed to lack such capacity. Labor-saving technologies were becoming popular but hardly an answer to solve unemployment issues. Perlmutter argued that if enterprises continued employing labor-saving technologies or other business strategies to cut down the number of employees to stay efficient, social uproar could be inevitable. Development and utilization of high technologies had unknown but most likely devastating impact on people's health and overall ecological balance. These observations led Perlmutter to examine the "*mental model* or *paradigm*" (p. 274) of enterprise that is comprised of its social architecture, such as mission, governance, strategy, organizational character, and organizational structure. He distinguished three types of paradigms each of which could play different roles in the society: Type A, industrial, Type B, anti-industrial, and Type C, symbiotic (see Table 3).

Type A, Industrial

This type of mental model is shared by the largest and the most successful businesses in mining, manufacturing, agriculture, and service industries regardless whether they are operating in the western capitalist countries, Eastern Europe, or the former USSR (Perlmutter, 1969). The mission of the industrial enterprise is to maximize its profitability through the use of resources, which are considered unlimited, and high technology, even though it might leave many unemployed. The industrial enterprise is driven by beliefs that growth is always good and necessary, consumers' needs are mostly materialistic and can be met, national and international competition is natural for the survival of the enterprise, and the benefits of the enterprise in more economically advantaged countries would eventually reach the less advantaged ones. Along with its

Table 3

Parameters of Type A, B, and C Organizations

Parameter	Type A/Industrial	Type C/Symbiotic	Type B/Anti-indust.
Mission	Profitability	Profitability and public acceptance	Public acceptance
Role	Economic and political	Economic, social, political, ecological	Social, ecological
Values	Materialistic	Quality and quantity, human progress	Anti-materialistic
Market strategy	Dominance	Niches in societal development	Self-reliance
Governance	Hierarchical, top-down (from Head Quarters to subsidiaries)	Negotiated at all levels of organization and between units	Bottom-up (each subsidiary decides on objectives)
Organizational structure	Hierarchical, vertical	A network of organizations	Hierarchical within divisions with autonomous national units
Culture	Home country, ethnocentric	Global, geocentric	Host country, polycentric

Note: Adapted from "Building the Symbiotic Societal Enterprise: A Social Architecture for the Future," by H. V. Perlmutter, 1985, *World Futures, 19*(3-4), p. 276.

focus on business profit and market dominance, the industrial enterprise is characterized by an ethnocentric orientation towards internationality. Enterprises that employ ethnocentric orientation manage all operations and practices based on the parent company's philosophy. Other characteristics of organizational character of the industrial enterprise include employment of authoritative management style and hierarchical and centralized communication, rewarding material status, and evaluating performance of individual employers and departments exclusively based on their performance.

This dominating mental model guided entrepreneurs and small and large businesses for centuries; its success and effectiveness was not questioned until recently. The industrial enterprise became criticized for its limited social benefits. Particularly, the main criticism includes its assumption of unlimited natural resources, which could lead to environmental degradation, and emphasis on materialism and consumption, which could result in spiritual degradation of human kind.

Type B, Anti-Industrial

A polar opposite mental paradigm underlines Type B, anti-industrial enterprise (Perlmutter, 1969). Specifically, this enterprise views profit as immoral, materialistic, and destructive for society, prioritizes social development over economic and small over large and mass produced, strives for preservation of natural resources, and utilizes cooperative business strategies, which have more meaning and value for humanity than competition. Along with its socio-ecological roles and emphasis on public acceptance, the anti-industrial enterprise promotes self-reliance, low-level technology, renewable resources, self-sufficient agriculture, and paths for economic development alternative to Western industrial models. This enterprise is characterized by bottom-up governance where each

subsidiary makes decisions about the objectives. The organizational structure of this enterprise is hierarchical within divisions with autonomous national units. This enterprise incorporates a polycentric orientation towards internationality; in other words, it invests in the development of its subsidiaries and employs culturally relevant management strategies but fully controls their operations and decisions. Organizational character of this enterprise is also democratic: rewards are based on social value and evaluation – on contribution to social acceptance. According to Perlmutter (1969), this mental model underlines many non-profit international (e.g., UN, WHO, and the World Council of Churches) and national (e.g., academic, women's, and environmental groups) organizations.

Type C, Symbiotic

The proposed symbiotic or geocentric enterprise can be placed somewhere in between Type A and Type B enterprises: its mission is to be both profitable and socially accepted. Perlmutter (1969) borrowed the term symbiosis from biology where it "connotes reciprocal relations between organisms which live in close proximity, of similar and different species. The relationships are mutually advantageous, and essential to survival" (p. 280). Therefore, the symbiotic enterprise seeks to establish a new, win-win, form of relationships with other entities. The underlying premise of this paradigm is a possibility of finding a balance between making profit and being socially responsible, a niche and cooperation between small and large businesses, and a cautious use of non-renewable and development of renewable resources. Interests of individuals, communities, and nations can be established based on parity, and entrepreneurial innovation from economically disadvantaged nations can counterbalance centralized

bureaucratic structures. The symbiotic enterprise is characterized by a geocentric orientation towards internationality: management decisions are based on strategic priorities; key employees are selected from a worldwide pool; best practices are sought globally and integrated throughout the organization. Management is synarchic (i.e., based on networks and systems) and values both quality and quantity and both efficiency and people. This enterprise utilizes wide range of technologies. Rewards and evaluation are given based on mission (i.e., profit and social value).

Overview of Research on Global Organization

Jacoby (1970) traces the development of the multinational corporation (MNC), with a focus on the U.S. multinational, throughout the 20th century, concluding that it has become "a powerful agent of a world social and economic change,…a private 'government', often richer in assets and more populous in stockholders and employees that are some of the nation states,…and simultaneously a 'citizen' of several nation-states" (p. 37). Some view the MNC as an agency that can unite the world to serve the common good for all; others--as a tool of global imperialism. The latter accuses the MNC of problems around six issues: (a) exploitation of local resources, (b) creation of conflicts between the U.S. and other nations' policies, (c) exclusive incorporation of U.S. management styles and strategies, (d) location of all research and development tasks in the U.S., (e) ignorance towards other cultures, and (d) destabilization of host nations' economies. Jacoby argues that the MNC would not survive if its business practices continue to generate hostility towards them in foreign countries. Instead, it should strive to unite people by serving a common purpose -world peace and prosperity. Therefore, Jacoby argued that Perlmutter's (1969) model of a geocentric enterprise should be

adopted by the MNCs and suggested that in the future the number of ethnocentric companies would decrease and the number of geocentric would increase.

The empirical works around Perlmutter's (1969, 1985) are limited. Heenan (1972) examined internationality of human resource management practices of three U.S.-based MNCs by conducting a survey among their managers and executives. He found low levels of internationality: 38% were ethnocentric, 34%- polycentric, 8%-regiocentric (i.e., integrate management practices throughout the region and hire locals from the region to fill the key positions), and 20% geocentric.

A work by Washington (2001) on the degree of internationality of human resource management practices in 11 major American-based MNCs collected data from a larger pool of managers and executives. The study showed 25.75% ethnocentric responses, 24.58% - polycentric, 22.46% - regiocentric, and 27.2% - geocentric. Therefore, the study did not support the Jacoby's (1970) prediction about the dominance of the geocentric paradigm but showed growth among geocentric organizations and a decline of ethnocentric.

Taggart (1998) discusses several other approaches to assessment of organizational internationality that have emerged in the last couple of decades. He argues that each of the approaches (e.g., Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1986; Porter, 1986; White & Poynter, 1984) can be useful in different ways; however, Perlmutter's approach is the most useful when a corporation operates in many countries. The approach can "act as a lubricant at the various strategy and control interfaces within the MNC…by increasing corporate management's sensitivity to critical aspects of national and company culture…[and

identifying] many location-specific problems…[that can be] more easily identified and minimized" (Taggart, 1998, p. 584).

Jones (2005) criticizes other approaches to assessment of organizational internationality for their mere focus on the "quantifiable measures of the outcomes of business activity" (p. 179), such as a number of marketing places, acquisitions, or investments around the world (For example, see Rugman (2003) who approaches organizational internationalization in terms of the global/international scope of its sales). Jones argues that MNCs operate within the environment of globalization that has redefined social and spatial relations, which should be the key points in the assessment of organizational internationality. The focus of the assessment, then, should be on how organizational practices have changed to reflect the global tendencies in social and spatial relations. Such assessment should include at least five dimensions: (a) Organizational restructuring--a formation of "a coherent single unit across the globe, rather than being divided into smaller geographically-divided sub-units" (p. 183). Units are organized around functional, rather than geographic, interests. (b) Financial restructuring that requires a removal, or minimization, of a territorially-based system of compensation and incentives (which adjusts employee salaries to account for economic differences among the countries) and an introduction to a functionally-based system so that, for example, managers with similar qualifications and experiences receive similar salary regardless of the location of their unit. (c) Transformation of the workforce and working practices, such as increasing numbers of foreign expatriate workers, widening employee recruitment base, and encouraging global mobility of professional employees at all levels. (d) The use of information and communication technologies "for organizational

coherence planet-wide" (p. 189); therefore, databases and information systems are not created or duplicated at each particular location but integrated to document and accumulate information, analyze it into best practices, and make it accessible for all company's constituencies world-wide. (e) "Global acculturization" – "a common global culture, so that 'everyone pulls together at the same time" (p. 189). Companies use policies and practices that aim at "engendering cultural commonalities across the organization" (p. 190; e.g., new employee orientation is provided to all at the same time in different places in different countries). Jones argues that corporate culture represents one of the major difficulties for global corporations and has not been given much attention from researchers. Such global culture might be better seen as "an ideal goal rather than an achievable reality" (p. 195) but should not be ignored. Although Jones does not refer to Perlmutter's (1969, 1985) works, his criteria of assessment of internationality of an organization, and specifically the organizational culture component, goes along Perlmutter's model of a symbiotic or global enterprise.

Global organizations are a rather new phenomenon. Companies started moving towards becoming global organizations only in the 1980s (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002). The number of these companies is "small but growing" (Marquardt, 1999, p. 25). These organizations represent different industries, including home-appliance (e.g., Whirlpool), energy (e.g., General Electric, BP, and Exxon), food and beverage (e.g., Coca-Cola, Burger King, and McDonalds), and computer and communication technologies (e.g., IBM and Hewlett-Packard).

Geocentric Organizational Culture

Marquardt (1999) developed a Global Success Model for HRD professionals to assist organizations to move towards global status. The model incorporates six components: global corporate culture, global people, global strategies, global operations, global structures, and global learning. Global corporate culture integrates five dimensions: global vision, global mindset, global values, global activities, and globe-able heroes. Global vision is "borderless and multicultural" (Marquardt et al., 2005, p. 148) and refers to a company's goals and direction. Global mindset is the ability to view across and beyond nation or culture, division or function and to balance local and global. Global values "provide purpose and meaning for what one does" (Marquardt et al., 2005, p. 148) and include such values as global thinking, cultural sensitivity, empowered global people, among others. Global activities refer to activities and events that help fostering global vision, global mindset, and global values. Globe-able heroes refer to members of global organizations whose qualities are respected by others; organizations also implement activities, such as mentoring, training, and development, to develop future globe-able heroes.

Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy (2002) collected data from professional consultations, action research projects, and interviews with over 500 executives to identify how leaders create global organizational culture. The results of the study suggest that these leaders understand that all people share a "basic motivational need system" (p. 300) that ensures people's survival. At an organizational level, two of these needs, attachment/affiliation and exploratory/assertive, become highly relevant. Attachment/affiliation refers to people's need of feeling connected or belonging to a

group or a community. Exploratory/assertive refers to people's need to be useful, find meaning, be creative, and experience pleasure. To meet these needs, leaders of global companies try to instill three meta-values: (a) community; the leaders encourage "good-citizenship behavior" (p. 300) by nurturing such behaviors in their employees as support, commitment, and collaboration; (b) pleasure; companies try to create work atmosphere where the employees enjoy working; (c) meaning; companies send a message to the employees that by working for the company they improve the quality of life of others; therefore, their work has societal value.

Tolbert, McLean, and Myers (2002) proposed a Global Learning Organization model to guide U.S.-based organizations in creating a globally inclusive organizational culture and move towards a geocentric worldview. This globally inclusive organizational culture is characterized by four components: (a) executives responsible for creating the organizational climate; (b) systems and procedures that increase "diversity, creativity, and global thinking" (p. 465); (c) employee promotion and development processes that are consistent with the organization's global approach; and (d) prioritization and maintenance of cultural awareness.

Mourdoukoutas (1999) discusses such characteristics of a global corporation as vision, competitive strategy, coordination mechanisms, communication channels, and incentive strategies. When discussing a vision of the global organization, he suggests, "the global corporation must develop a system of values that is a common denominator of ethics practiced by its stakeholders, stockholders, managers, workers, and the international and local communities" (p. 49). The author argues for using Aristotelian ethics and values (i.e., wisdom, courage, self-control, and justice) for developing the

visions and common values. He argues that Aristotelian ethics have never been a part of any religion and aim at fostering harmony between an individual and his or her social environment. These values will help global corporations to achieve their ultimate goals: global harmony (openness through equal distribution of the benefits of globalization and building democracies) and eudaimonia (material and spiritual well-being of a community). Although Mourdoukoutas (1999) makes an interesting point for using Aristotelian ethics and values to build a geocentric culture, such approach can be considered Eurocentric and inappropriate for a global company.

Stehr (2009) suggested that a geocentric culture helps create "an integrating overview" (p. 943) on the business outcomes of the corporation. This overview allows the corporation "to observe the sum of the success in all the countries/markets as one" (p. 943). In other words, a geocentric culture stimulates employees to seek maximum success in every country of operations.

In his research around strategy of global companies and compensation, Engle (1997) argued that a geocentric culture "is characterized by tightly integrated cadres of flexible global managers" (para 9). These managers are carefully selected and knowledgeable of compensation strategies through their training, career development activities, and on-the-job experiences. Engle concludes that a geocentric culture, and HR managers, becomes the central form of coordination and control over the compensation strategies, followed by organizational structures related to compensation.

Konečná (2006) suggests that a geocentric culture can also be viewed as "synergic" (p. 59) where certain attributes of different national countries are fused into one organizational culture. Therefore, a geocentric culture "represents a purposeful

interconnection of all regional parts" of the global company (p. 59). Konečná also suggests that to create a geocentric culture, corporations employ individuals with strong intercultural competence, or knowledge and skills that allow employees effectively perform their jobs in international teams.

<div align="center">Identity</div>

This section opens with a discussion of the roots of social identity research (e.g., Mead, 1934; Tajfel, 1981, 1982), followed by an overview of research on social identity and organization. Next, the concept of national identity (e.g., Byrne, 2007; Citrin et al., 2001; Huddy & Khatib, 2007) and research on national identity and global organizational context (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003; Jack & Lorbiecki, 2007; Marrewijk, 2004) are discussed. The section concludes with an overview of the concept of transnationalism (e.g., Appadurai, 1996; Goldin, 1999).

<div align="center">*The Roots of Social Identity Research*</div>

Research on social identity, or social construction of identity, started in the 1930s (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003). Identity was conceptualized as a dynamic and socially defined process (e.g., Mead, 1934; Thomas, 1937). The process of communication and interpretation that occurs among people and within each individual facilitates understanding of one's relationship to a social group. For example, in *Mind, Self, and Society*, Mead (1934), a major American social philosopher and a co-founder of pragmatism, suggests that people learn first about their existence in the society and only then develop individual consciousness. Children start understanding norms, rules, and relationships of the social world through play and games. As their experiences with different social settings grow, they develop "the generalized other" (p. 51), or a prototype

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of social norms and behaviors in a particular community or situation. Mead differentiates between "me" and "I". While "me" represents the accumulated knowledge of the generalized other, "I" refers to one's individuality. Therefore, one's individual consciousness stems from and is shaped through one's social experience.

Contemporary research on social identity within psychology, sociology, and organization studies is based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1978). Social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). This group identification process consists of three components: cognitive, evaluative, and emotional. The cognitive component involves one's recognition of the group membership. The evaluative component refers to some value one decides to attach to this recognition. The emotional component refers to "an emotional investment" (Tajfel, 1982, p. 2) in the recognition and evaluation. These three components are necessary for a group to exist. Also, a group has to be in some way recognized by other groups to engage in intergroup behavior. The three components make the multidimensionality of the concept of social identity (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004).

In a recent overview of conceptual and empirical works related to social identity theory, Ashmore et al. (2004) extended the emotional component to several other elements: importance, attachment, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, and content and meaning. Importance refers to the degree, high or low, to which an individual, explicitly or implicitly, considers membership to a group important to his/her

self-concept. Attachment and sense of interdependence refer to "the degree to which the fate of the group is perceived as overlapping with one's personal fate" (p. 90). Social embeddedness refers to the degree to which an individual's social relationships and contacts reinforce his/her particular social identity. Behavioral involvement is the extent to which an individual acts to express or implicate a particular identity. Content and meaning include self-attributed characteristics (e.g., self-stereotyping), ideology (i.e., beliefs about group's position, power, or prestige in the society), and narrative (i.e., one's personal story about the group and self as a group member).

Social identity should be differentiated from personal identity, which refers to "characteristics of the self that one believes, in isolation or combination, to be unique to the self" (Ashmore et al., 2004, p. 82). Social identity refers to characteristics one shares with a group, while personal identity refers to characteristics that differentiate one from others. Social identity underpins group situations, conflicts, or processes; personal identity contributes to interpersonal ones (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social identification with a group should also be differentiated from internalization (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). The former refers to understanding of the self in terms of social categories (I am); the latter refers to incorporation of groups' values and beliefs as one's core guiding principles (I believe). People might define themselves as members of a particular group but do not necessarily accept all values and attitudes of the group. For example, individuals can define themselves as members of a certain university but disagree with the system of authority or values underlying dominant policies and procedures.

Social groups can be open, where membership is constantly changing, or closed, where membership remains mostly unchanged (Ziller, 1965). Most social groups are open (e.g., professional organizations, housing communities, or sports clubs); their members are free to stay or leave, bringing or removing resources (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). Relatively few social groups are closed with almost no opportunity for members to leave (e.g., submarine or space shuttle crews). Members of open groups view their membership as temporary while members of closed groups are inextricably tied to their groups for a period of time (Ziller, 1965). Open groups are more sensitive to instability and easily disrupted by outside forces; closed groups return to their previous state once outside forces are eliminated faster than open groups. Open groups are exposed to more opportunities, ideologies, beliefs, and other social phenomena; closed groups have limited frames of reference.

Some social identities are optional; an individual chooses to identify with a group that he/she perceives to be psychologically meaningful (e.g., profession or hobby; Citrin et al., p. 73). Some identities are forced; an individual is categorized as a member of a group by existing societal, political, or economic structures (e.g., race or sex). Therefore, some social identities are fairly easy to change while others are almost impossible.

Each individual belongs to many social groups (e.g., gender, age, profession, race, or familial status) and, hence, has "multiple *potential* social identities" (Citrin et al., 2001, p. 73). These identities coexist simultaneously and might overlap or compete; they are fluid and have different significance depending on the situation (Nkomo & Stewart, 2006; Sen, 2006).

Ingroup Processes

Individuals maintain their group memberships because "their [personal] welfare becomes intertwined with the welfare of the group" (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004, p. 586) and not merely due to expected personal benefits and rewards. Members continue their memberships. To improve their group's welfare, people are willing to participate in activities that involve sacrifice, instead of leaving the group to pursue better personal outcomes. Such sacrifice for the betterment of the group indicates members' group loyalty. Group loyalty manifests in such behaviors as mutual cooperation and interdependence. Cognitively, group loyalty manifests in trust that is not personalized but rather extended to any and all members of the group. Group loyalty represents the nature of people's group identification: when identification is high, people define themselves primarily as group members; when identification is weak, people view themselves mainly as separate distinctive individuals.

Group membership brings many positive and negative outcomes, or feelings and behaviors, to an individual (Ashmore et al., 2004). Ultimately, belonging to a social group provides an individual with safety and security through a set of rules and norms that reduce uncertainty by validating one's behavior, guiding one's interactions with others within and outside the group, and predicting others' behaviors (Hogg, 2007). Group membership positively influences one's physical and psychological well-being, academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, organizational commitment, and civic and social engagement (Ashmore et al., 2004). Other positive outcomes include increased self-worth, positive attitudes toward the group, and empathy towards and concern for the well-being of the group (Brewer, 2001).

Group membership involves individuals' willingness to rely on others for information and resources and, in return, to share these with others to survive (Brewer, 2001). However, not all members may make these contributions and engage in selfish behaviors that threaten the welfare of the group (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). To preserve the group, members establish systems and procedures to identify and punish those who do not contribute, ask them, individually or collectively, to leave the group, or appoint leaders to make autocratic decisions (Fehr & Rockenbach, 2003; Kerr, 1999). These individuals might exit the group, temporarily or permanently, to join another group or manage on their own (Levine, Moreland, & Ryan, 1998; Yamagishi, 1988).

Outgroup Processes

These positive outcomes relate to the group members and do not extend to outgroups, or other groups and their members. People tend to reserve positive feelings towards their group and withhold them from outgroupers (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Feelings of one group towards another may be "at best, characterized by indifference" (Brewer, 2001, p. 23). Members of one group might also feel empathetic and supportive of a particular member of another group but not of that group as a whole, demonstrating a basic form of discrimination (Brewer, 1996). Members of one group are less likely to help members of other groups in unfamiliar situations (e.g., Frey & Gaertner, 1986). They are less likely to be patient and loyal to outgroupers' negative behaviors (e.g., Weber, 1994) and more likely to perceive outgroupers as aggressive (e.g., Roger & Prentice-Dunn, 1981). One of the core negative processes is ethnocentrism (Tajfel, 1982), a high level of hostility among a group's members towards other groups and "the self-centered scaling of all values in terms of the ingroup folkways" (LeVine & Campbell,

1972, p. 8). People consider their group superior to others and exhibit ingroup favoritism or bias (Brown, 2000). Group members often stress ingroup-outgroup differences by creating "we" versus "they" stereotypes. "Whereas 'we' are trustworthy, peaceful, moral, loyal, and reliable, 'they' are clannish, excusive, and protentially treacherous" (Brewer, 2001, p. 30). Other main negative processes are intergroup conflict and competition related to access to resources, status, or prestige (Tajfel, 1982).

Social Identity and Organization

Today's organizations represent a kaleidoscope of identities. Organizations are composed of groups that are formed around professions, geographic locations, functional divisions, and employee age, experience, gender, or religion, among many others (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Blader et al., 2007; Pratt & Corley, 2007). How individuals identify themselves within an organization represents an important component of their work life (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and affects their behaviors, attitudes, and feelings (Blader, et al., 2007; Knippenberg, Dick, & Tavares, 2007). At the same time, organizations themselves are forced to re-define their business strategies and establish their unique identities that differentiate them from their competitors and help succeed on the global market (Blader et al., 2007; Glynn & Abzug, 1998). The complexity and interplay of these many identities are fundamental components of an organization's purpose, processes, and functioning.

Organizational identification is a form of group identification that "may provide one answer to the question, Who am I?" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 22). Organizational identification can also be understood as an extent to which employees think of themselves as members of an organization (Knippenberg, van Dick, & Tavares, 2007).

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An organizational identity is "self-definitional" (Knippenberg et al., 2007, p. 461); employees choose how to define their membership with the organization. Organizational identification includes one's identification with organization-specific values and goals, perception of common path and future with the organization, willingness to sacrifice career goals for the welfare of the organization, and a deep feeling of loss when leaving the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

One's organizational identification is increased by the perceived group distinctiveness and prestige, notable presents of outgroup(s), and group formation factors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Group distinctiveness refers to values and practices that separate the group from other groups and creates a perception of uniqueness. Group prestige, or a perceived higher status among similar groups, indicates the group's winning or champion status or popularity that appeal to its members. The existence of outgroup(s) reinforces people's belonging to their group and awareness about the boundaries between their group and outgroup(s). Group formation factors that affect organizational identification include common goals, history, or threats, and interpersonal relationships, among others. As a result of organizational identification, members tend to engage in activities that are harmonious with the organizational identity, positively evaluate and provide support to the organization, and even stereotype themselves as members of the organization. "The more people identify with a group or organization, the more the group's or organization's interests are incorporated in the self-concept, and the more likely the individual is to act with the organization's best interest in mind" (Knippenberg et al., 2007, p. 461).

Organizations that have a clear structure, identity, purpose, and a set of shared values and beliefs can function as a mechanism to reduce uncertainty among their employees and, hence, increase their organizational identification (Hogg, 2007). A strong organizational identification has been related to employees' willingness to contribute to a public good, improved job performance, and readiness to perform tasks that go beyond the job description (Knippenberg et al., 2007).

When organizations do not have a clear structure, identity, purpose, and a set of shared values and beliefs, employees' organizational identification weakens (Hogg, 2007). They might turn to other social groups and "invest their selves more strongly in professional or occupational identities" (Hogg, 2007, p. 44). This process often leads to conflict among different groups within the organizations, which results in personnel turnovers and decreased productivity (Pratt & Corley, 2007).

National Identity

National identity involves "feelings of closeness to and pride in one's country and its symbols" (Citrin et al., 2001, p. 74), "ways of being and sense of place and belonging" (Byrne, 2007, p. 509). National identity is constructed through lived experiences, everyday practices, and stories and myths. National identity is more symbolic than related to a nation's political ideology (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Political ideology does not affect people's deep and all-encompassing love for their country. Regardless of political changes, people maintain their deep attachment to their homeland. People with strong national identity confirm to group norms to enhance their country's present and future. For example, they pay more attention to politics, stay abreast of current national news, and are more likely to vote.

National identity is closely connected to two concepts: patriotism and nationalism. Patriotism refers to love for one's homeland and people, loyalty to its symbols, pride, and feeling of civic responsibility (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Patriotism can be blind, where people do not accept any criticism of the nation, and constructive criticism, where people are willing to question and criticize their country to bring positive changes. Nationalism refers to feelings of superiority of one's country over others and arrogance, aggression, and dislike towards other countries (Citrin et al., 2001).

"National identity does not merely imply the embodiment of a cognitively constraining cultural outlook, as cross-cultural writers suggest, but is itself a flexible cultural creation into which people impute variable and fluctuating meanings" (Ailon-Souday, & Kunda, 2003, p. 1075). The meaning and significance of national identity, like other social identities, depends on the context. National identity is not dominant to most people in every day lives; however, certain circumstances bring sharp awareness to national identity and its complexity and ambiguity.

National Identity and Global Organizational Context

Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) conducted a 1 year ethnographic study to understand the significance of national identity during a merger of an Israeli company Isrocom and an American company Amerotech. Employees of Isrocom employed their national identity for two symbolic struggles to: (a) differentiate themselves from their American counterparts and (b) establish their superiority in the merger.

In the first struggle, the national identity helped establish a boundary between them and their American partners in two ways. First, they used the impersonal label "Americans" to mark their partners as "specimens of a wide, general type" (Ailon-

Souday & Kunda, 2003, p. 1080), often with humorous or sarcastic remarks, mocking American ways of speech and behavior. Second, they emphasized cultural elements related to their Israeli identity, for example, by speaking Hebrew.

In the second struggle, they used their "national identity as organizational merit" (Ailon-Souday & Kunda, 2003, p. 1084). First, employees of Isrocom stereotyped their national identity to show their higher commitment to and deeper involvement with the organization, better fit with the organizational goals, or willingness to take more responsibilities than the Americans. Second, they used their "national identity as collective marginality" (p. 1087). Globally, everything American is often presented as superior. Nevertheless, in this merger, it was the Israeli company that acquired the American company, creating an Israeli sense of pride and worth: "they have defeated the undefeated, conquered the conquerors" (p. 1088). The authors concluded that "national identity constitutes a symbolic resource that is actively mobilized by members for the social goal of resistance" (p. 1074). Although Israeli employees embraced their national identity to distance themselves from Americans, they also thought that it was their national identity that made them more committed (than the Americans) to the globalizing organization.

Marrewijk (2004) studied the role of national culture in an international strategic alliance of a Dutch telecom company and its two partners in former Dutch colonies, the Netherlands Antilles and Indonesia. An international strategic alliance is a partnership or collaboration between international companies to achieve some shared objectives, for example, to spread the costs and risks of innovation, to increase market power over the competitors, and to acquire technical skills or capabilities (Mowery, Oxley, & Silverman,

1996). The role of culture was conceptualized as "ethnicization [or] the process of social construction of an organizational identity based upon a notion of shared national identity and shared cultural values" (p. 304). The partners in the former Dutch colonies used ethnicization as a strategic response to ethnocentric strategies employed by the dominating Dutch company. The Netherlands Antilles partner perceived the Dutch telecom as a powerful force, equipped with money and state-of-the-art technologies, that was not sensitive to the local culture and ways of doing business and could threaten the partner's existing status in the country and create even deeper unequal business relationships in the future. During the negotiation of the strategic alliance, the Netherlands Antilles partner used several cultural strategies of resistance, including stressing national cultural values and Antillean national identity, inventing new cultural traditions, speaking local language, pointing to Dutch colonial history, flattering Dutch managers to make them lose focus, and using personal networks of important people to influence decisions.

After 2 years of negotiation, the Dutch company withdrew. The Indonesian partner used the Dutch colonial past as one of the main strategies to weaken the Dutch power in business negotiations. Other strategies included pointing to small (geographic) territory of the Netherlands, spreading gossip and negative image of the Dutch, emphasizing the Muslim religion and Indonesian cultural identity, delegating difficult decisions to the Dutch, and excluding Dutch managers from personal networks. Taking into account their failure in the Netherlands Antilles and facing an even stronger resistance in Indonesia, the Dutch telecom had to "change its ethnocentric strategy into a

polycentric strategy in which the balance was in favor of local culture (Marrewijk, 2004, p. 312).

Jack and Lorbiecki (2007) examined relationships between national identity and corporate identity at three British organizations "with global ambitions" (p. 84) by conducting in-depth interviews and document analysis. These three organizations "have very publicly distanced themselves from their associations with British national identity by, *inter alia*, revamping their corporate imagery" (p. 79). For example, one introduced a new logo on its product; another abbreviated its name to erase the word "British." The results of the study were complex and contradictory. For example, some employees felt comfortable with the new corporate identity because they felt it reflects the organizations' attempt to be global. Yet, others were concerned that new corporate identities were ambiguous and could create feelings of the organizations' "rootlessness, disloyalty, and of not belonging amongst some of its customers and employees" (p. 85). Some foreign affiliates who valued their long-term connection to British political system did not like to work for an "anonymous" (p. 86) company. Similarly, some British expatriates preferred the old corporate identity because working for a "British" company meant working at "home" and having a sense of security when working oversees. The authors concluded that relationships between national and corporate identities also intersected many other phenomena, including citizenship, politics, and gender, and need further research.

Transnationalism and Identity

Recently, research on international migration has started developing a concept of transnationalism. Transnationalism refers to "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of

origin and settlement…[thereby] build[ing] social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994, p. 8). These immigrants live, work, make decisions, and develop identities within networks that simultaneously connect them to more than one country (Goldin, 1999). Due to the ties to more than one country, people have increased self-awareness (Nowicka, 2006) and are constantly re-constructing and renegotiating their national identities (Goldin, 1999; Yeoh, Willis, & Fakhri, 2003). Their national identities are fluid and flexible. Their loyalty to two countries might be conditional, depending, for example, on their satisfaction with economic opportunities or social acceptance in their new countries (Smith, 2007).

How these people chose to identify themselves also depends on many circumstances. For example, in a study of individuals who were children of a Polish and a non-Polish parent, Nowicka (2006) identified such circumstances as physical difference from the majority of the population, the number of years spent in both countries, relationships with both parents' extended families, parents' attitudes toward their spouses' cultural backgrounds, and stereotypes about and prestige of parents' countries. Some of the participants denied their Polish identities; some denied their non-Polish identities; some adopted a dual identity, and some denied any national identification. Those who adopted a dual identity indicated that dual identity can be useful to manipulate certain situations, for example, it might be more beneficial or prestigious to identify as a Pole in one social circle and as Italian in another. These participants also considered their cultural competence of two countries and linguistic competence in two languages beneficial for their educational and professional careers.

The concept of transnationalism challenges the traditional research on national identity, which argues that one person can have strong ties to only one country. However, traveling, working, or living in many countries might be understood as transnational lifestyle but do not automatically result in people's identification with more than one country. For example, due to strong connections to their home countries and availability of mass media images produced in their home countries, some immigrants might not be able to develop a sense of loyalty to their new countries (Appadurai, 1996).

Summary

In this chapter, empirical and conceptual works around the roots of research on organizational culture, global organizations, and social and national identities were provided. In the next chapter, the research method, design, and sampling and data collection, analysis, and management procedures are discussed. Findings are presented in chapter 4, and responses to the research questions and implications are discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter opens with the purpose of the study and research questions presented in chapter 1. The phenomenological framework is discussed followed by the researcher's autobiography and assumptions. Sampling strategies and data collection, analysis, and management procedures are provided. The chapter concludes with a description of integrity measures and limitations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation.

Research Questions

The primary research question was as follows: How do employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation? The subsidiary questions included the following:

1. What are employees' experiences with a geocentric organizational culture?

2. What are employees' experiences with their national identities in the context of a geocentric organizational culture?

The Phenomenological Framework

Phenomenology can be understood as a research method framework (Moustakas, 1994), a major strategy of qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003), "*theory of the unique*" (van Manen, 1990, p. 7), or a school of philosophical thought that underlies qualitative research (Merriam, 1998, p. 15). Phenomenological research aims at knowing the world

in which we live and questioning the way we experience the world (van Manen, 1990). This type of research helps further understanding of the very nature of the world and, hence, brings us closer to and makes us more inseparable from the world. Phenomenological research helps us become intimate with the world (van Manen, 1990). Phenomenologists believe that the meaning of people's experiences constitutes reality (Greene, 1978). Therefore, the goal of phenomenological research is to understand "how people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Individual descriptions of these experiences represent the raw data that is systematically analyzed to reveal underlying structures (Giorgi, 1995) and help derive "general or universal meanings" of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13).

The word phenomenon comes from Greek and means "to flare up, to show itself, to appear" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). A phenomenon can be any "object of one's conscious life" (Stanage, 1987, p. 47). A phenomenon can be any process, feeling, hopes, relationships, ideas, organization, or culture that people encounter in their everyday lives (Patton, 2002; Stanage, 1987). A phenomenological framework was used because this study explored the phenomenon of a geocentric organizational culture of employees with different national identities who work for global corporations.

<center>Researcher: Autobiography and Assumptions</center>

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main tool for data gathering and analysis (Patton, 2002). To understand the essence of a phenomenon, researchers start with *epoché* that requires revisiting the phenomenon "freshly, naively, in a wide open sense" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Researchers put aside their judgments and biases and

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withdraw from the familiar ways of looking at the phenomenon. Phenomenologists also put aside their assumptions that they know what the phenomenon means to their participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In this subsection, I provide my autobiography and assumptions that reveal the roots of my interest in and my potential biases towards the phenomenon of national identity.

Autobiography

I was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, one of the two major political, economic, and cultural centers in the country. Both of my parents hold bachelor's degrees in engineering and share a love for reading, history, arts, and music. My father spent the 1960s, the first 10 years of his professional life, working as a mechanic for Soviet international cruise liners. This unique opportunity to see other countries and compare and contrast them with the Soviet Union shaped many of his values and beliefs, to which I was later exposed. One of the ways in which those 10 years of traveling around the world impacted my father was his belief in a better future for me. My father and my mother were convinced that I, their only child, would have a better future if I received an education that would give me, in one way or another, opportunities to travel, live, and/or work in countries outside the Soviet Union and experience the world. Consequently, my parents enrolled me in an after school English program when I was eight.

I also belong to the unique generation of Russians who lived before, during, and after *Perestroyka*. I was born, raised, and schooled in the system of values and beliefs of the Soviet Union. Although I was young, I absorbed this system through movies, cultural events, school rituals and dress code, and other social phenomena. To illustrate, I have known the phrase "religion is a poison for working men" from Karl Marx' *Communist*

Manifesto for as long as I can remember. As every first grader, I became an *Oktjabrenok*, a member of a national organization that prepared children in elementary school to learn and live according to the rules of the Communist Party. In the third grade, I was honored to be one of the first students in my class to become a member of the Pioneer Organization, a national organization for middle school children that also taught Communist values and beliefs. Because of my great academic standing and involvement in extracurricular activities, my school director sent me to a rather prestigious winter school that aimed at developing leadership skills among children with high-potential for serving the Communist Party as adults.

At 14, in the late 1980s, I started preparing to join another national organization for teenagers; however, almost over one night the organization was denounced as the nation marched into the *Perestroyka* era. *Perestroyka* forced me to make new sense of my life and of the changes in my nation. This period in my nation's history questioned all that I, and all Soviets, knew about the country. The West that we had known as the enemy became a desired friend. The government and the Communist Party that we had been taught to worship became the enemy. The country, and the world, we knew turned out to be the country, and the world, we did not know. What was good, what to believe in, and how to build life became unclear. This was also a time when my parents started reading alternative presses and when my father shared with me his experiences with the West and thoughts about the Soviet regime. The family started voting as democrats, anti-Communists, and pro-Westerners.

When I was finishing the fourth year of my bachelor's degree program, I was offered a part-time position as a university English instructor and the following year,

upon graduation, I became a full-time instructor. That same year, I became one of 15 people who won a university-wide competition to study in the U.S. for one semester. The following year, I was offered an opportunity to return to the U.S. to complete a master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Therefore, in my mid-20s, I was closer to my parents' vision of my future and experienced the opportunities that post-*Perestroyka* Russia offered.

My before, during, and after *Perestroyka* experiences set me on a journey of questioning what my country is and what my country means to me. Ten years of experience as an international student in the U.S. have yet brought another layer of complexity to this journey. Certain events, words, relationships, and even mass media representations of Russia remind me of my national identity, trigger my Russianness, and force me to question what my national identity means to me. Sometimes, my national identity serves as a source of pride and a sense of home; sometimes this identity brings shame and pain. I have also been involved in two Russian communities in the U.S. and amazed at a strong presence of Russian identity among their members. These and other experiences and observations have made me curious about people's experiences with their national identities while working for global companies that employ people from all around the world and build geocentric organizational cultures.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions related to national identity, expression of one's experiences, global companies, and a geocentric organizational culture:

1. The importance of national identity to a person depends on the context or situation.

2. In the context of a global organization, national identity becomes salient.

3. National identity manifests in people's relationships, activities, and feelings or attitudes towards people and events.

4. Some people might be sensitive about sharing their experiences with their national identities and their manifestations.

5. Some people might not be able to readily express their experiences with their national identities and their manifestations.

6. Global corporations strive to build a geocentric organizational culture that is inclusive and compelling for all employees, regardless of their national origins.

Sampling

This section includes the description of the (a) sampling strategies, (b) sampling process, and (c) participants.

Sampling Strategies

Participants were selected using convenience, criteria, and snow-ball sampling strategies. Convenience sampling refers to "selecting individuals or groups that happen to be available or are willing to participate at the time" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 114). Selecting individuals who worked for corporations that were located in South Florida, where the researcher resided, and had been identified as global in the literature facilitated face-to-face interviews. Criteria sampling refers to selection of individuals that meet a predetermined set of characteristics (Patton, 2002). Participants in this study had

to meet the following criteria: (a) work for a global corporation for at least 3 years and (b) come from different national backgrounds. These criteria helped select "information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002, p. 230) to study and understand the phenomenon.

Sampling Process

At first, the researcher thought that it would be easier to find participants within one global company. Therefore, I searched and found that several corporations that had been identified in literature as global were located in South Florida. To get access to these companies, I searched for key informants (Patton, 2002) who worked for those corporations. To find these key informants, I attended meetings of the Miami chapter of the American Society of Training and Development, searched FIU faculty research interests, browsed local newspapers and the FIU website, talked to FIU students and faculty, and sent emails to several members of the Fort Lauderdale chapter of the American Society of Training and Development and the Organizational Development Network. One of the people I talked to connected me to an upper level manager in her company. I sent the manager a two-page letter with brief description of my research. The manager said they would be able to help me with my research. However, when I contacted this manager when my proposal was defended and approved by the FIU Graduate School, I received a response that the organization could not assist me with my research.

I re-started my search. Two other key informants at two other global companies connected me to their upper-level management. I sent those managers a two-page letter with a brief description of my research. Both managers responded that they could not assist me with my research. Per the suggestion of my dissertation Chair, I decided to

change my approach to search for participants and to add the snow-ball sampling strategy (Patton, 2002). I emailed all my key informants and asked them if they would personally participate in my study. Four of them agreed; one had left the company, and another one had a busy schedule but agreed to talk to her colleagues. After I interviewed each key informant, I asked each of them to refer me to at least one colleague.

"There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (Patton, 2002, p. 244). To allow for an in-depth and detailed exploration of the essence of people's experiences with a phenomenon, phenomenological studies usually use a small sample size, such as 6-10 (Morse, 2000) or 6 to 12 participants (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). For example, Guest et al. suggest that a sample of 12 is sufficient if a study aims to "describe a shared perception, belief, or behavior …among a relatively homogenous group of people" (p. 76). If the goal is to compare experiences of people from two or more groups, then data should be collected from 12 individuals in each group; if the goal is to identify "high-level, overarching themes" (Guest et al., 2006, p. 78), interviews conducted with 6 people should provide sufficient data for such analysis. To account for possible participant drop out, malfunction of a digital voice-recorder, or other circumstances and to increase the likelihood that I had transcripts of at least 12 participants for data analysis, I aimed at interviewing 15 people. After interviewing 12 participants, redundancy, or repetition, was achieved, so I finished my data collection.

Participants

The 12 participants in the study included nine men and three women. Their age ranged from under 30 to over 60. Two participants had one bachelor's degree; seven had one master's degree; two participants had two master's degrees, and one participant held

a doctorate. Most of the participants (11) had managerial positions. Their years of employment at their global companies ranged from 3 to 21. Table 4 provides a summary of the participants' profiles in the order they were interviewed. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.

Table 4

Participants' Gender, Age, Education, Position, and Years of Employment in the Corporation

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education	Position	Years
Bob	M	50-59	1 Bachelor's	Regional Director of HR	10
Brian	M	40-49	1 Bachelor's	Customer Service Manager	15
Bennie	M	40-49	1 Master's	IT Services Manager	15
Eva	F	30-39	1 Master's	Sales Manager	5
Erica	F	40-49	1 Master's	Senior Training Manager	12
Jose	M	50-59	1 Master's	VP of Communications	12
Miguel	M	40-49	1 Master's	Regional Sales Manager	4.5
Haans	M	40-49	2 Master's	Regional Sales Manager	21
Marie	F	20-29	1 Master's	Marketing and Sales Support	3
Amir	M	40-49	1 Master's	Telecommunications Manager	11
Edward	M	40-49	2 Master's	Sales & Marketing Manager	3
Nick	M	60-69	1 Doctorate	Performance Technologist	12

The participants were born in different countries and regions, including North America (4), the Caribbean (2), Central and South America (3), Europe (2), and Asia (1).

Eleven of the twelve participants attached their national identity to one or more country (See Table 5). Nine participants attached their national identity to their country of birth;

Table 5

Participants' Country of Birth, National Identity, and the Country of the Corporate Headquarters

Pseudonym	Country of Birth	National Identity	Headquarters
Bob	U.S	U.S./American	Germany
Brian	U.S.	U.S./American	U.S.
Bennie	Dominican Republic	Dominican & U.S.	U.S.
Eva	Brazil	Brazilian	U.S.
Erica	Cuba	Cuban	France
Jose	Mexico	Mexican	France
Miguel	Columbia	Columbian	France
Haans	Holland	Dutch	France
Marie	France	French	France
Amir	Pakistan	U.S./Asian American	France
Edward	Chile	No particular country	Japan & Sweden
Nick	U.S.	U.S./American	France

one participant attached his national identity to his country of birth, the Dominican Republic, and to the country of residence and work, U.S.; one participant did not attach his national identity to his country of birth, Pakistan, and described himself in terms of the country of residence and work, U.S., and also as Asian American. One participant

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said that he did not identify himself with any one particular country. Seven participants

worked for a company with headquarters located in France; three participants worked for

a company with headquarters located in the U.S.; one participant worked for a company

with headquarters located in Germany, and one participant worked for a company with

headquarters located in both Japan and Sweden.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

This section includes data collection procedures: interview guide construction,

interview administration, and journaling.

Interview Guide Construction

"An interview is a purposeful conversation" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 94).

Interviews allow researchers to gather other people's perspectives on a phenomenon in

their own words (Patton, 2002). To gather people's perspectives on the experiences with

national identity in this study, a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A) was

used. Such an interview guide usually serves as a framework that outlines questions to

ask and issues to discuss with each interviewee (Patton, 2002). At the same time, the

interview guide allows researcher flexibility to ask additional questions and probe when

necessary. The interview guide included main questions and probes. Main questions

identified and solicited responses on topics of inquiry. Probes were the follow-up

questions that helped to gather more details and ask interviewees to elaborate, clarify, or

contrast an issue (Patton, 2002).

This interview guide had been reviewed by a peer reviewer and approved by my

dissertation committee. Such a review helps enhance question-topic fit and clarity, depth,

and detail of the questions (Glesne, 1999; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Based on the feedback,

the guide was revised. For example, questions that started with "what is" or "how were" were turned into "tell me what" or "tell me how." After I interviewed the first three participants, some minor revisions were made. For example, after interviews with the first three participants, I realized that it was easier to transition from demographic questions, some of which were related to the participants' work in their companies, to the questions about the culture of the companies. Therefore, the questions about the participants' national identities were asked after the questions about the culture of the companies.

Interview Administration

Once the participants agreed to participate in the study, they were contacted by email to set a mutually convenient time and place for the interview. Participants were asked to allocate 1 hour for the interview and informed that the interview could take longer. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in quiet, comfortable, and private locations (Glesne, 1999). Interviews lasted between 45 and 80 minutes. Each interviewee was provided a copy of the Introductory Letter that explained the research purpose and procedures (see Appendix B). A digital voice-recorder was used to record the interviews. The recording system was tested at the beginning of each interview to enhance the quality of the recording (Patton, 2002). Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Each transcript was typed in Microsoft Word; the length of each single-spaced transcript ranged from 8 to 17 pages. The researcher checked each transcript for accuracy by listening to the recording while reading the transcript (Merriam, 1998). Spelling and punctuation errors were corrected. The researcher read each transcript a second time while listening to the recording to check for accuracy.

Journaling

I kept a journal where I recorded my thoughts and feelings and reflected on my experiences during this study. This journal served to help me acknowledge, reveal, and capture my other assumptions and biases. Exploring my assumptions should help others to judge integrity of the study (Gallagher, 2006). During each interview, I took notes in the journal that could help formulate additional questions and probes and record issues that could facilitate data analysis (Patton, 2002). After each interview, I recorded my observations, emotions, and thoughts about the interview and ideas about emerging themes and patterns and relationships among them in the journal. These journal notes were considered data and analyzed as such.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis can be compared to metamorphosis "from caterpillar-like beginnings into the splendor of the mature butterfly" (Patton, 2002, p. 432). In this study, data were analyzed inductively, using Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. This method consists of two phases: individual and composite.

During the first phase, each individual transcript was analyzed following these steps: (a) each statement was considered in terms of its significance for description of the phenomenon; (b) all relevant statements were identified and recorded; (c) all overlapping and/or repetitive statements were excluded (i.e., when participants struggled to find the right word and kept repeating a word in search for the right one; for example, "when I, when I, when I…"); (d) the remaining statements were considered "meaning units of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122); (e) these meaning units of experience were

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related and clustered into themes; (f) the meaning units of experience and themes were synthesized into a *textural description*, or *what* was experienced (e.g., thoughts, feelings, struggles, or consequences) and illustrated with verbatim excerpts from the transcript. For example, in the meaning units where the participants talked about the companies' drive to achieve results, those meaning units were named "drive." After identifying and naming the meaning units, I read the transcripts several times to make sure there is a consistency among the names of the meaning units. Later these meaning units were clustered into sub-themes. For example, the meaning unit "drive" was closeted into sub-theme "achieving higher profits" that, in tern, was clustered under theme "business goals."

During the second phase, based on the textural descriptions of the transcripts of all participants, a *composite textural description* was developed and illustrated with verbatim excerpts from the transcripts. This composite textural description documented what participants experienced as a whole. These analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word.

<div align="center">Data Management</div>

Data management refers to procedures for storage, retrieval, and retention of research data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These data management procedures followed the guidelines of the *Florida International University Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual* (2007). All data for this study, including audio recordings, the journal, transcripts, and data analysis materials, were organized and stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. All electronic files were organized and stored on researcher's password-protected computer hard drive at the home office. These electronic files were also saved on a USB flash drive as a back up; the flash drive

was stored in the locked cabinet. Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity, to store and retrieve their transcripts and files, and to report findings. All data will be kept for 3 years from the study completion.

Integrity Measures

Integrity measures represent a set of criteria that helps enhance rigor of qualitative research. This research promotes rigor by using such integrity measures as member-checking, clarification of the researcher's bias, and peer debriefing (Creswell, 2003).

Member-checking was used to increase accuracy of the study's findings (Creswell, 2003). Participants were sent transcripts of their interviews via email and asked to check the transcripts for accuracy and any additions if necessary. No additions were suggested by the participants. Clarification of researcher's bias fosters open discourse with the readers (Creswell, 2003). My bias was clarified through autobiography and assumptions provided in this chapter and was recorded in a journal throughout the study. The journal helped me note my observations, thoughts, and feelings about each interview as well as record some questions and possible codes and emerging themes that were later used for data analysis and discussion. Peer debriefing refers to external reflection and review of the study to make sure the researcher maintains his/her neutrality (Newman & Benz, 1998; Patton, 2002). One doctoral candidate from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development program at FIU helped with peer debriefing by reviewing textual description of the first three individual transcripts to increase accuracy of the analysis process.

Limitations to the Study

National identity is a sensitive topic. The participants' responses could be influenced by their biases and emotions or by current political and cultural events. They could also be influenced by the participants' positions within the corporations. Different people experience an organizational culture and their national identities in different ways. This study collected data from employees of four global corporations, so the findings may not be extended to every employee of global organizations.

Summary

In this chapter, the phenomenological framework was explained followed by a description of the researcher's autobiography and assumptions. Criteria, convenience, and snow-ball sampling strategies to select participants were presented. Data collection procedures, such as interview guide construction, interview administration, and journaling, were described. Steps of Moustakas' (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data were explained followed by procedures for data management and integrity. Chapter 4 presents the findings, and chapter 5 includes responses to the research questions and implications for further research and practice.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the phenomenological study on how

employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational

culture of a global corporation. Geocentric, or "world oriented" (Marquardt, 1999, p. 20),

organizational culture, "transcends cultural differences and establishes 'beacons' – values

and attitudes – that are comprehensive and compelling" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy,

2002, p. 299) for all employees, regardless of their national origins. An exploration of

how employees with different national identities experience this organizational culture

could be beneficial for global corporations. Data were analyzed inductively, using

Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of

Phenomenological Data. Three themes emerged from this data analysis: (a) business

goals, (b) social responsibility, and (c) knowledge.

Each of these themes and their sub-themes are presented in this chapter with

quotes from participants' interview transcripts to support the findings. When quotes are

provided, the participant's pseudonym and line number(s) from his or her transcript are

cited (e.g., Bob, lines 112-114). In these quotes, the actual names of the corporations are

changed to their pseudonyms.

Business Goals

Goals express reasons for why the system is built (Loucopoulos & Karakostas,

1995). Goals answer the question: What are we trying to achieve? Business goals can be

understood as targets that an organization sets to solve a business problem or satisfy a

business solution. The emergence of business goals as a theme can be attributed to the

fact that most global companies have headquarters in the U.S., the European Union, and Japan (Rugman, 2000) and operate from the Western capitalist paradigm. All participants discussed how business goals "drive things" (Haans, line 317) in their corporations. Haans suggested that the company business goals represent "the elements that we agree upon" (line 311). He explained that his company is comprised of many companies that have representation in almost every country in the world and might look quite different from one another, but they agree on the same elements -"The objectives of the company; you know, it's a mixture of different cultures together, but from the top, I mean, they are trying to drive things: these are our goals" (lines 315-317). Participants discussed these business goals in terms of (a) achieving high profits and (b) attracting more customers.

Achieving High Profits

A profit refers to "total revenue (the actual form of the sales variable) minus total cost" (Ciscel & Carroll, 1980, p. 8). In other words, a profit is a financial gain of a business operation. Amir, Bennie, Bob, Brian, Edward, Eva, Haans, Jose, Miguel, and Nick discussed business goals in terms of achieving high profits. As Bob put it, "The company's value is certainly profits and making money; obviously, we are in the business of making money" (line 246-247). To Jose, "the pursuit of a certain number in terms of sales…[is] much of a driving force of what we do" (lines 391-393). Brian, Amir, Nick, and Edward noted that the goal of achieving high profits is partially due to the competitive market. As Brian said, one of the "drives" (line 55) in the company is the "fight against the competitors" (line 56).

Nick feels that achieving high profits is important for the company regardless of its location on the world map. He said, "The company doesn't feel [an] obligation to any

one country or anyone center; it's an obligation to excel wherever the work gets done – it will get done" (line 149-151). Eva observed that this message drives the way employees behave in different parts of the world. She said, "We have this thing, you see behaviors, like, salesman from Brazil who behaves the same as a salesman from China or Russia: everyone needs to reach your numbers, so you gonna be aggressive to get your numbers" (lines 287-290). Brian recalled his first year with the company when he traveled to many countries, including South Africa, Ireland, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Arab Emirates. Brian was amazed at how the drive for high profits connected him to his colleagues in those countries:

> I met people who worked for Corporation B and we had that commonality, so even if we didn't speak the same original language, you could talk to somebody about "Hey what's going on here?" "Where are you selling products?", or "What products are people buying?" …I remember having a conversation with a guy in Dubai, and he is in those white robes and in the traditional dress that they have, and a few days later I was talking to this guy in India, and we are having the exact same conversation, few days apart, in different places in the world. And that to me was amazing. Everyplace I go, it would seem like "Oh, no, I was going to a different place, but …" [laughs] and the more I travel, the more I know exactly what these guys are doing: they are doing the same thing but in a different spot. So they're having a whole different life… but they are dong a lot of the same common things, and they have the same common objectives: they want to increase our market share; they want to know how they can sell more product in their particular area. (lines 241-254)

To Bennie, making profits for the corporation means that every employee works to achieve results. As he summarized it in one phrase: "number one in [the company]… it's about your results" (line 15). Amir explained:

> Right now, I mean, the expectation is for everybody "Do more!" and this is kinda a global message; meaning again, you know, "Let's make sure we do well in this quarter financially", that's kinda the common theme; if there is one, that's one of the common theme… "Lets' do more, let's try to work as best as we can bringing as much money as possible." (lines 268-275)

As a manger, Amir said he does not care when the members of his team work as long as they get the results. He summarized his approach to managing his team in the following words: "This is what you are supposed to do and you do it, you know, from midnight to 6 am or you do it during normal office hours, I don't care as long as it gets done, I don't care" (lines 161-163). Amir added with humor, "as long as they don't walk in shorts and sandals" (line 163-164).

Haans explained that making a profit means working hard long hours, odd hours, in the office and on the road:

> You have an objective, you know, I need to bring so much money. I don't close any deals in an office: there is no customer in the office. This morning I went to the office, I went there at 10 o'clock. That's great, but it does not mean that I actually worked. Yes, I might have worked, closed the deal but people in the office don't really work there, I mean you may think "Oh, he is coming at 10 o'clock" and guess what, he is leaving at 11, talking to you right now. .. I do need to bring the business, and that's what I do. (lines 527-533)

Bennie also feels that the need to achieve results drive when and where he works:

> I think also we are very results-oriented. I used to work for other companies and then you go 8 to 5. Here it does not matter: at the end of the day, here is what you need to accomplish. How you do it, when you do it, well, when you do it matters but when meaning if you do at 8 o'clock at night because it's the best time for you to work, that's appreciated too because then it's about result, it's not about how you get to those results. (lines 332-337)

Edward explained that he works on projects that involve people who work for the company in other locations around the world and in different time zones. Those peers also need to achieve results, so working long and odd hours is the only way to achieve those results. Edward gave an example:

> [It's morning] here in Latin America, afternoon in Europe, and China [is] one day ahead already, so if you postpone something, you've lost a day. If you want to schedule a meeting next week, you need to take into account that it's Thursday here but it's Friday in China. (lines 128-132)

Edward concluded that the only way to have a meeting is to disregard the time of the day. Edward added that it is typical that when the team meets, "Some people are having breakfast, for some people it's dinner, and some are sitting in their office" (lines 132-135).

Because all Erica's clients are in other countries and in different time zones, she has to be able to do her job any time, so she has been working from home for the past 6-7 years. As she put it, "My clients are in Europe and Asia, so I could be on the phone at 4 o'clock in the morning or on the phone at 11" (lines 105-106). The regional headquarters of the corporation are located only a few miles from Erica's home, but she never goes there. She knows only one person who works in the headquarters.

Miguel compared his experiences working for Corporation A with his prior job at IBM. He said, "I was working for IBM for almost 10 years. When you were on a vacation, you were on a vacation, you were out" (lines 324- 325). Now working for Corporation A Miguel works during his vacation. He said, "I was on vacation in the end of July, I was with my laptop all the time" (lines 322-323). Miguel explained that he has to work early in the morning, late at night, or at 3 am in the morning because nobody else would do his work and bring the results, so he "can't afford" (line 326) not to work long odd hours. "That's life!" he laughed (line 323).

To reach the client and close the deal, Haans has to travel to the customer all the time. He describes a typical weekend:

> I think I came home on Friday afternoon at 11 o'clock; I was back in the office on Saturday morning at 7 am, and I came back on Sunday, I think, at 4 o'clock and went to the printer to pick up some copies on Sunday at 10, together with my luggage, to get to the plane at 3 o'clock. I mean if you work in the office 8 to 5, you don't see me, nobody sees me working weekends, on Sundays, you work 48

hours with maybe 2 hours of sleep. Yep, it's freedom but at the same time you
have to be very focused, focused to close the deal, you need to close the deal,
keep busy and close the deal. (lines 536-542)

Attracting More Customers

A customer refers to an entity, an individual or an organization that purchases the

product of a company (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000). Synonyms include a client or a buyer.

Amir, Bennie, Bob, Brian, Edward, Erica, Eva, Miguel, and Nick discussed business

goals in terms of attracting more customers. As Brian simply put it, "Customers, first of

all, the first chance that they have to buy something better or something that's equal,

they'll do it" (lines 327-328). Edward, Erica, Nick, Brian, and Eva talked about the drive

to attract the customer by creating affordable products. When talking about what makes

the company culture global, Nick said "I think meeting the customer needs, I don't know

how to characterize it, [maybe] as a value, customer-driven? market-driven? We all have

that in common, you know … keeping the cost down" (lines 141-143). Creating an

affordable product goes hand in hand with the need to compete with other companies for

the customer. As Brian put it:

> There is a sense within the company [that] there is people that use different
> competing products, you know… I think what we are trying to do is we are trying
> to compete for those customers; we are trying to push technologies to be the best
> that they can be to provide reasonably low-cost alternatives to technology choices
> out there. (lines 139-144)

Erica and Edward suggested that making the product more affordable for the customer

also means taking into consideration consumer spending abilities across the globe. As

Edward explained, "Salaries in Europe are higher than salaries in Latin America, so

therefore a person who lives in Europe can spend more money than a person in Latin

America" (lines 142-144).

Edward, Bennie, Erica, Nick, Brian, and Eva discussed the drive to attract the customer in terms of creating products that are useful or new for the customer. As Erica explained, "We are [a] high tech company, so the whole concept of being able to take the concepts that we are doing and being able to apply them and develop different applications for our customers is really pushing the organizational culture" (lines 238-241). Nick talked about the drive in his company to create "cutting-edge" products because "it's for our customers' wants and needs" (line 244-245). Brian, who works for a corporation that creates computer applications talked about creating a product that goes:

> Beyond just using it for your work. And [it will] also capture all your pictures, your family, your grand mother's cookies recipe, all of the movies, and pictures that are very special to you. How can you keep all those things together and not just have them on your computer but also share them within your home and send them to your relatives and, you know, those types of things. (lines 108-112)

In Bennie's experience, creating a new product or different new applications of the product also requires thinking about the specifics of customer needs and preferences in each country or region. Otherwise, as Bennie said, "You might create a product that does not adapt to that country or that environment" (line 247).

Bob and Brian discussed the drive to attract the customer in terms of creating a high quality product. Bob, for example, told a story about how the company was willing to lose money in favor of producing a product that had a higher quality than its competitor's but had a smaller range of potential applications:

> We value highly a well-built product, and my first time that I joined the company it was kinda interesting. …I was amazed because we were actually losing sales …We were building a system of telecommunications …and they [corporate] would not allow us to go and advertise this product. Let's just make it up: our product can go 1 mile, but our competitor's product could go 3 miles. And we knew that our competitor could knock 3 miles with this signal. And we did probing and thinking trying to figure out what's going on. From our perspective,

the product has to be able to deliver that signal 100% of the time; our competitors would say, "If it goes 3 miles 75% of the time, that's fine." So, we were 100% accurate at 1 mile. Yes, we can deliver it probably at a higher percent than 3 miles, but we stuck with that 1 mile, even though it cost us sales because it helped us deliver a solid product. …Back to the value system, if you ask me what are those things that we value, I'd say … high integrity product. (lines 249-265)

For Brian, a high quality product means a product that is easy to operate for the customer:

The reality is they [customers] don't want to talk to us. They don't want any problems. They want all of the problems to be engineered out of the product. They want it to be so easy to use that they don't want to spend, you now, 2 weeks of their life to read the book, to train themselves to how to do stuff. It needs to be simple; somebody wants intuitively [to] know how it works. You know, you buy a television, you put it together; there is an owner's manual, but once you plug it in, anyone can kind of operate a TV. (lines 331-336)

In Brian's experience, creating a product that is easy to operate for the customer makes the product more competitive in the market.

<div align="center">Social Responsibility</div>

Social responsibility refers to an organization's responsibility for the outcomes of its actions at individual, process, organization, community, society, an environment levels (Hatcher, 2000). Social responsibility includes the organization's actions "that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law" (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006). The participants discussed social responsibility of their companies in terms of what the company practice is for how employees should or should not behave. As Jose said "we have …a certain ethical behavior that we need to adhere to or abide" (line 231). Jose later added that this social responsibility is defined by a set of parameters: "Company have [*sic*] a set of parameters how we need to behave, you know, that's our principles" (lines 265-266). Bennie talked about seeing "the effort to do the right thing" (line 743). When describing the culture of

her corporation, Erica said that there is "a feeling…to make sure that whatever you are supporting, not only has value but it's the right thing" (lines 228-229). Erica believes that this feeling of making sure employees are doing the right thing is very strongly communicated from the company CEO. She says that this message is communicated directly from the CEO: "He does it by webinars; he does it in our internet; he has a blog; he has a wiki; he had a management meeting a month ago and it was basically blogged" (lines 345-347). All participants discussed social responsibility, and some perceived social responsibility of their companies in terms of how the company treats (a) customers, (b) employees, and (c) community.

Customers

Customers are individuals or organizations that purchase the product of a company (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000). Bennie, Miguel, Brian, Amir, Erica, Haans, and Jose shared their experiences with how their companies do the right thing for their customers. To Bennie, his corporation requires employees to do their jobs while "being aware what things are not approved here" (lines 364-365). For example, Bennie and Haans discussed how bribery is not approved by their corporations even at the cost of losing a customer or a deal. As Haans put it:

> Whether you are in China or South America, we don't do that. Sometimes you lose business because of your competitors – let it be, because we don't do that. That is the thing that is above the local culture. If it's OK to do it in the local culture, the corporate culture is very strict and won't allow it. (lines 321-325)

Bennie's experiences are very similar:

> Do the right thing; it does not matter in what country you are sitting… So I know that in few countries it's OK to bribe but we as a company, we say: "That's one of the values we have, of doing the right thing, and even if that's a practice in some countries or if that might put us in a disadvantage with other competitors or

…[result in] losing a deal because somebody is doing something that is not appropriate". I think that also unifies the company. (lines 346-352)

Therefore, to Bennie, doing the right thing for the customer regardless of the traditions of the local culture of any country unifies the company employees. Erica and Miguel felt that their corporations held every employee responsible for doing their jobs and treating their customers in an ethical way. Miguel explained:

> We have to do business in a very ethical way and in case you do something wrong, you are directly responsible. You can say, "I work on behalf of this company" "No sir, you are doing this, at the end of the day you are supported by somebody in the company, but the primary responsibility is on yourself". (lines 400-404)

He explained that some time in the past, the corporation did not hold each employee accountable for his or her unethical behavior with customers. He added that the corporation might take a legal action against its employees due to an unethical conduct: "if something happens, they are gonna sue you, ourselves. Even though, again, we are a part of the company, and we are just following directions, you are also responsible for what you are doing" (lines 407-410).

To Haans "to be good with a customer" means to "be honest" (line 363). Even when facing a problem, Haans says he tells the truth and does not omit information that might upset the client. He explained, "Lets say, the front deck is gonna be delayed. I'm not gonna lie about it. I will let you know" (lines 366-367). He adds that honesty with a customer also means clarity and transparency:

> Also the price has to be very clear; try to make it right from the very beginning and sell, and there are no hidden fees anywhere. It's very clear that this is what you pay, this is what's included, this is what's not included. You know, that there are no tricks or something. (lines 367-371)

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To Haans, an ethical way to conduct business is also tied to the business goals: "You want to have a repetitive business" (line 372).

Employees

Employees, or workers, are people who are hired to do a job for an organization. Employees perform a "set of task elements grouped together under one job title" for their organizations (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992, p. 173). Bob, Eva, and Amir shared their experiences with how their companies do the right thing for their employees. Bob has observed how management "go[es] out of their way" (line 352) to do the right thing for its employees [and] to help out its employees. He gave an example of how the company opened the facility right after the hurricane to provide the employees food and water even though this decision resulted in a considerable financial loss for the corporation:

> We had a hurricane here several years back. There was a decision of what to do with the opening of the facility; they were costing a lot of money… by not opening the facility and by continuing to pay… And it came to the point where it was like "Pay or no pay", and they say "Pay". It came to the point where we can open the facility but, and they say "No, continue to keep the facility closed because the conditions are still dangerous; in fact change that: I want you to open up the cafeteria, I want you to have hot meals cooked, and I want that employees had hot meals" because we had electricity. (lines 354-362)

Eva described her corporation as "a fair company" (line 74) because of the fair treatment of its employees. In her experience, promotions are not based on whether or not employees are friends with their managers or VPs. She explained:

> You really have real evaluation of your performance, of your group performance, of the way that you conduct business not only with customers but also with … internal customers. …Every one here has the rights to say, to raise the hand and say "Hey, this person is this and that" or praise the person or, you know, say something that is constructive, so this culture always provides feedback and it's not because you're friends with somebody in the company that you necessarily will get a promotion; you gotta do your job and you better be good at what you do. Otherwise you work at the same level as everyone else. (lines 75-83)

Eva added that other policies, for example observance of religious holidays and equal benefits for same-sex partners, also make the company fair. In Eva's opinion the corporation improves its ethical practices depending on the needs of its employees: "I think the company also adapts itself for the needs [of] the employees" (line 155).

Community

Community refers a network of various organizations and entities that transcends national, political, religious, and other societal boundaries in order to address common, transorganizational concerns (Trist, 1983). Bennie, Bob, and Jose shared their experiences with how their companies do the right thing for the community. Bob described how the corporation tries to find its "place in the community" (line 264). In Bob's experience, place in the community is one of the two things, next to creating a high quality product, that the corporation values. He elaborated "no matter if you are in the U.S. or you are in Europe, the company ...likes to be in a kind of contributor to the community" (lines 240-241) in the form of educational scholarships or sponsorships of outreach programs and the Special Olympics.

Bennie also described how the corporation encourages and supports employees to do the right thing for the community. As Bennie put it, the corporation provides "a lot of benefits that allow you to multiply your willingness to help others" (lines 388-389). He explained that the company encourages employees to donate their time and/or money to various non-profit organizations and the company provides 100% match:

> So let's say you go to the Red Cross in the Dominican Republic …, so if I go there and I spend 3 hours, I can submit a request that for those 3 hours, Red Cross gets 51 dollars because of my time. (lines 423-426)

Bennie added that among other companies he worked for in his life, this corporation is "the most giving" (line 435). He also said that doing the right thing for the community is being communicated often to the employees at meetings and directly from VPs. He gave an example of how 2 weeks prior to this interview, he and a group of his colleagues, including one of their VPs, volunteered to provide computer training in the Dominican Republic for Children International, a non-profit organization. They took some pictures and videos of the training. A week later at a meeting in the U.S., the same VP shared the pictures and videos with approximately 3000 employees and said "You know, when we talk about people, we talk about our people, but we also talk about community, our community where we came from" (lines 539-540).

<div align="center">Knowledge</div>

Knowledge is a "dynamic human process of justifying personal beliefs as part of an aspiration for the 'truth'" (Nonaka, 1994, p. 15). Knowledge can be also understood as awareness, expertise, or skills about a subject that are gained though experience or education (Oxford English Dictionary, 2008). Knowledge also "includes notions of 'know-how', 'knowing how to live', 'how to listen'" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 18). Participants discussed knowledge in terms of (a) creativity, (b) professional development, (c) employee contribution, and (d) learning.

Creativity

Creativity refers to one's "ability to produce work that is both novel …and appropriate" (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999, p. 3). Novelty in one's work can be understood as producing something original and unexpected; appropriateness in one's work can be understood as producing something useful and mindful of the existing constrains.

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Participants discussed creativity in terms of how creativity is (a) welcomed and (b) shared in their corporations.

Welcomed. Participants discussed how their corporations welcome creativity from employees. Nick talked about creativity in terms of "expertise, the knowledge, the products" (line 240) that he feels that his corporation welcomes from employees all around the world. Nick said,

> We want the expertise, the knowledge, the products, in my case, the documentation and training from wherever it is developed because we need the best in class and none has the market in that. It could be coming from India, it could be coming from Germany, it could be coming from China, you know, as a global company. (lines 240-243).

Nick also talked about his company being "totally open to anything I suggest" (line 424). He said that he usually goes to one conference a year to find a new idea to implement in his company, or as he put it to "bring something for the team" (line 445). He added that recently he took the lead on an instructor certification process in the company and brought some certification ideas from a conference. Next year Nick is planning to explore Lean Sigma, which as he explained, is a quality initiative usually used in manufacturing settings; therefore, he would like to explore its applications for his company, which is a non-manufacturing setting. "I am free often to do such things", he added (line 447).

Erica talked about her participation in a new project on the support of innovation within her corporate university. She mentioned some ideas and new processes that she suggested and how relatively easy it was to pitch those ideas: "there wasn't really many roadblocks, you know, like there often are in a very large company" (lines 384-385).

Haans talked about how he recently suggested a way to make a $560 million sale, instead of a $50 million one that he usually works on. Haans got all the support that he

needed from the company: a team of people to put together a proposal and top

management involvement. He explained:

> And I got a lot of support from the top management, from CEO level, I mean.
> Because the customer wanted to meet the CEO in 3 weeks, we had a meeting in 3
> weeks; the CEO went down there to meet with the customer. We are still working
> on this deal. You know these big sales don't get signed that easily, but they got
> these fantastic people, about 50 people participating in the development of the
> proposal. (lines 96-101)

Because similar situations are typical in the company, Haans feels that he works "with

[*sic*] [an] environment with intelligent or smart people" (line 76). Nick compared this

environment with a university: "It's wonderful! It's like being at the university where you

meet smart people, interesting people" (lines 407-408). Bennie also feels that he works

with "smart people" (line 328) who can discuss any topic and always "come up with

something and you are like, 'Wow, that's interesting!'" (line 330). He suggested that the

first thing anyone would notice about this company is smart people and they would say:

"Wow, their people are very technical... they are very smart" (line 307). Bennie added

that "it is a kind of an expectation" (line 328) in his corporation that people suggest

interesting, innovative ideas, "because we tend to hire smart people", he said (line 308).

And at the end of the interview he concluded, "We just value talent" (line 722). Amir

mentioned that it was a "high level of knowledge" in his company (line 74) that attracted

him. Amir recalled that when he came to the company, the company employed 11 or 12

Nobel Laureates. Erica also felt that not only hard work but also intellect is welcomed in

her company and helped people in their careers. She said, "Regardless of who you are,

you have an opportunity here, you have an opportunity as long as you [are] brilliant and

good at what you do you know, you have a chance, you have an opportunity to get ahead" (lines 336-338).

Haans talked about another idea that he felt free to suggest and that was supported by the top management. Haans is Dutch and he always wanted to include the Dutch islands in the Caribbean in his work load; however, those islands belonged to another regional center. Because those islands are small compared to other countries in the world, the company did not expect to close big deals in those islands. Haans felt that he could do a better job doing business with those islands because he had the knowledge of the culture. After a reorganization the islands were re-assigned to his region, Haans went to his boss to suggest that he should take over the islands:

> I immediately jumped into that one, and I went to my boss and I said "This is what I want to do. I want to take care of those islands," so he said, "Whatever you wanna do." I always had a little freedom …[I added] "but I don't want to just do these islands, I want to do much more." And that's where I end up, you know, Central America, all the Caribbean, including Bermuda. (lines 496-502)

Haans added that situations like this are common and his management always welcomes his ideas.

Shared. Participants also talked about creativity in terms of how creativity is shared in their corporations. Nick said that his team always engages in a discussion of ideas until everyone comes to an agreement. Nick said that the only time his team cannot discuss or negotiate an issue is when it is mandated from the corporate but it happens "every once in a while" (line 340). Therefore most of the time, he said, "We have room to wiggle; we have room to influence each other" (line 352-353). To Nick exchange of ideas and consensus building in the team helps get the job done. He explained "when we are in agreement on what the goal is upfront, what our scope is, we do a much better job so that

we don't attach our egos individually or, I don't think people do it, nationally" (lines 365-367).

Brian talked about similar experiences with the exchange of ideas and consensus building in his team:

> The approach is, "Ok, we'll need to get together and work on those things together." Sometimes in the short term it makes things go a little bit slower; decisions are longer to make …but from what I've seen here, in the long run it really helps because everyone is in the same page. If you are agreeing, then you don't later have to go back and explain what you've done and redo it if it's wrong, so it's interesting. (lines 201-206)

Brian added that working in such environment is exciting for him, even though reaching consensus is not always easy:

> You can get into some tough discussions and some arguments and disagreements and the challenge is how can you work through those things and work with people that don't agree with you, but at the end of the day …[that is] what I like about working here. (lines 124-128)

To Bob exchange of ideas and coming to consensus is "a general rule" in his corporation. He explained, "they like to have things discussed, socialized, and agreed on and you know, there is very much a culture 'I need to get everyone to buy what I am doing' here" (lines 388-390).

Marie talked about how the office space arrangement in her company helps employees communicate and exchange ideas. The regional headquarters of the corporation where Marie works does not have a practice of assigning cubicles or desks to employees. Everybody, including managers, can work at any desk when they come to the office. She giggled and said, "That's very good for me. I am very happy with that" (line 238). Marie has been only 1 year at this location and such an office space arrangement helps her to meet different people and talk about different subjects:

> I've been here only for a year and, when I arrived, I knew nobody and the fact that being every day in a new place next to a new neighbor puts you in a situation in which you gonna know and meet more people more frequent. (line 243-246)

Marie added that instead of a brief "Hi, how are you" exchange with other colleagues in the hallways, she gets to work an entire day long with a new person who can answer her questions or whom she can help.

Bob has worked for his company for 10 years and has developed "that network of individuals to talk to" globally (line 185). He explained, "I was on the phone yesterday; this is terribly far from home; I'm on the phone talking to a guy from Canada and I'm saying 'How do you guys approach it? OK, it makes sense'" (line 185-187). Bob added that he can make similar calls to his colleagues in Germany, Austria, or Switzerland and take their solutions or parts of their solutions to solve his problems.

Edward feels that exchanging ideas with colleagues from around the world is enjoyable:

> To me it's fun to see that you can [have] something to give to the company even though that person is on the other side of the world, and when somebody calls you from the other side, you know, "How can I fix this?" and "How can I fix that?" (lines 322-324)

To Eva, the opportunities to share ideas with people from different backgrounds "is amazing" (line 169). She described it as "a feast of people speaking all sorts of languages, and all sorts of looks" (line 168-169). She added that working collaboratively results in a creation of new products or new ways to sell the products, in new business models or processes. To Eva the opportunities to share ideas and work collaboratively with a diverse group of people "keeps people motivated to work for that company" (line 185).

To Bennie, sharing ideas and working collaboratively with a diverse group of people also results in a "diversity of thought" (line 251). This diversity of thought comes from "diversity of cultures and diversity of experiences" (line 251-252) that employees bring with them. Bennie concluded that sharing ideas with different colleagues results in better decisions. He said the more diverse the team is, "the richer decisions you make and more grounded decisions you make" (lines 252-253).

Professional Development

Professional development refers to "efforts to provide ongoing learning or development opportunities to employees" (Desimone et al., 2002, p. 671). Participants discussed how their corporations provide opportunities for their professional development. Bob feels like "the company has had an approach to employees that once you join the company, you pretty much have a job for life" (line 270-271). In Bob's opinion "it's practical" for the corporation to retain employees (line 277). Therefore, Bob thinks that to keep employees in the company his corporation re-trains employees and offers them opportunities in different divisions across the globe. For Bob opportunities to travel globally and to be involved in many different large business sectors represent "an appeal for a lot of employees who work here" (line 51). In Jose's experience, providing professional development opportunities for employees is one of the company's priorities. To Jose, providing professional development opportunities is also one of the best attributes of the company:

> I am not sure that I can say that this is one of the things that is in the top of the list of the priorities in this company, but it is high up there, and to me personally that's a great thing to do. I think … that's something that makes this company a good thing to work, providing good professional development opportunities. (line 311-315)

Jose talked about a recent restructuring in his corporation that left a part of a marketing

function without supervision. The president of the company in this region offered Jose to

take over that part of the function. And Jose thought it was a good idea for professional

development:

> I thought it was a good opportunity and I took it as a career development
> opportunity. That's why I decided "OK I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna start by
> doing the function, I'm gonna start by learning, connect to other people, learning
> something different, see what they are doing and growing professionally." (lines
> 374-377)

Jose added that professional development opportunities keep him in the company. He

explained:

> Those new things, new challenges, new opportunities to me are very stimulating.
> It stimulates me and makes me feel that I have a chance to grow. So I can say
> "Yes, I can help with marketing" and do as minimal work as I can and just have
> check it, "OK I did it" or I can really spend time and energy and engage myself in
> a way that I will grow by learning more and by exposing myself to other people,
> other activities, other areas of the business. (lines 380-385)

Amir has been in the corporation for 11 years, and he still thinks that there are plenty of

opportunities for professional development:

> So it still has a lot of opportunities for growth in different areas, like learning
> different things. For example, from engineering I can shift to the business side
> and right now I am in the middle of the two, and also I feel like going into
> research and development, there are a lot of opportunities there too. (line 87-90)

> To Edward, his corporation "lets you grow very fast to senior positions" (line

223). Edward has been working for this corporation for only 3 years and has been offered

four different opportunities for professional development. He did not take any of them

because he did not feel ready at the time. Edward added that he would stay in the

company as long as he is offered opportunities for growth: "I feel committed to the

company as long as the company gives me opportunities to grow and develop… if there

is nothing .., then you say 'There is nothing in here for me" (lines 263-267). He later

added, "if the company is willing to give me opportunities and challenges, I'd stay in the

company" (347-348). Edward concluded that in his opinion many of his peers would also

stay in the company due to professional development opportunities, even if they could get

bigger salaries in other companies.

Nick also thinks that the opportunities to develop professionally keep him at his

company. When asked if he would like to continue working for this corporation, Nick

said:

> I would love to! Honestly, there is no more monetary incentive because they froze
> our pensions, but because I have a comfort level and I continue to see new
> opportunities to grow and develop the business and grow and develop myself, I
> would like to. (lines 413-416)

To Nick, an important part of how his company treats his professional

development is the degree of freedom that he has. He said that the corporation gave him

"huge latitude to go off in directions and define my role, huge, it's an unbelievable

experience" (line 395-396). Nick explained, "I write my own performance appraisals, I

set my own goals, I report to my managers. I am amazed by the degrees of freedom that I

have, to develop my role" (lines 399-400).

Haans, who has worked for the corporation for 21 years, has experienced

"enormous varieties, enormous possibilities" (line 76) for professional development to

"go around and travel and constantly do new stuff and different things" (lines 73-74). In

his career at Corporation A, he has moved from one division to another; he started in

quality control at a factory and now he is in regional sales. He also had opportunities to

work in different parts of the world:

I started in Phillips in Holland, moved to corporation X in the middle of the Netherlands, stayed there, came to work to the United States, moved over to Ukraine, went to, while I was in Ukraine I often had to go to St Petersburg [Russia] and then I helped Saudi, and after Saudi I worked in Germany, Ireland, Paris. (lines 67-70)

And after Paris, he was offered an opportunity to work in the United States. "That's what I like" (line 76), he added, "It keeps it interesting" (line 77).

Bennie also spoke about "a variety of opportunities" (line 66) for professional development that have been offered to him by his company. Bennie believes that these professional opportunities are one of the main reasons that he has been working for the same company for almost 15 years. These opportunities allow Bennie do different things and try different roles:

I started as an account manager, which was interacting with customers and providing technical support … Then after that I moved to the headquarters and there I was a global corporate manager and I did implementation of applications all over the world, China, Japan, Australia. Then after that I moved to my native country, in the Dominican Republic where they were opening an office. There I was a pre-sale technical lead and it was basically showing customers who have not have [*sic*] the product yet to understand the capabilities of the product. Then after that I moved to Florida where I was regional IT manager and I was overseeing operations of IT in several countries. And now my latest position which is the satisfaction program lead. (lines 13-23)

When opportunities are offered, Bennie thinks, "You know I've been doing that for a while, let me do something different" (line 66).

Employee Contribution

Contribution is an act of providing, supplying, or giving something towards an end or a result (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). A contribution usually involves direct and/or indirect benefits received by the individual who contributes and a gain or gains by the receiving party (Amos, 1982). Participants feel that they can contribute to their

corporations, particularly because of their cultural backgrounds and their knowledge of different cultures, countries, and languages. Eva thinks that as a Brazilian, she has a great ability to work with others. Because working with others is expected in her corporation, Eva thinks being Brazilian gives her an advantage. She said as "Brazilians, I think that we have a very friendly approach to doing business, friendliness work together, [in a] team, etc., which is natural. This is required in the culture of the company but it is natural for Brazilians" (lines 134-136). Eva also thinks that as Brazilian, she has an "'everything is good' attitude" (line 286). She thinks she brings this attitude to the company and this attitude helps her to adapt to any changes and challenges at work.

Nick observed that in his area of training and performance technology, most people in his company do not have education related to the area. Nick, who is American, thinks that the US, along with very few other countries "value this stuff" (line 261), such as formal education in the area of training and performance technology. Because Nick has an advanced degree in the area, he thinks he brings this "rare" (line 274) knowledge to his organization: "I bring that to our training organization and work with the global teams because we don't have people who have that background" (line 261-263).

Amir, who was born and lived in Pakistan, thinks that knowledge of the Asian culture "in terms of possibilities, it does offer something" (line 402). In his opinion, "there are a lot of similarities between Asian culture and Latin American culture; there are things I can relate to and understand when I go to Mexico or Guatemala" (lines 402-404). Amir thinks those who lived all their lives in one country do not have this advantage. He concluded, "I think one thing my type of background [promotes] is adaptability. I guess, I am more open or I've seen, I guess, [a] broader range of cultural

characteristics, you know, things that come with knowing different languages, for example" (lines 405-409).

Marie thinks that the fact that she is French and worked for her corporation in France prior to coming to work in the U.S. helps her and her team a lot. She gave an example of a recent project that also involved "the central team that is located in France and it turned out that I knew the key people in this central team in France, so I was able to contact them in France" (line 343-345). Haans also thinks that his professional network in the Netherlands is something useful for the company. He said, "I might bring something; I am from the Netherlands, I mean, I left long time ago, but I still have connections there" (line 384-385).

Miguel, who is Columbian, feels that his knowledge about his country and other countries in the region helps him to do his job better, for example, to attract customers. He said this knowledge helps him be "like a chameleon" (line 108). He explained, "you have to behave yourself depending on where you are right now working" (line 109). Miguel is responsible for eight counties, including Panama. He told a story about how he has to be a chameleon when talking to potential customers in Panama. Miguel knows that Panamanians do not like to be considered Central American, but Miguel's business card said that he represents the Central American region of Corporation A. Miguel has to politely apologize for that to potential customers and assure them that he knows Panama does not belong to Central America:

> If you talk to a Panamanian, [he/she says] "No, we are not Central American." [Miguel responds] "Well, can I give you my business card?" and it says "Central America and Caribbean" And they say "Central America and Caribbean, and where is Panama? We are not Central America; we are different." So you have to be very careful, "I am sorry, I mean, it's a misunderstanding, everybody says that

you are a part of Central America; I know you are not a part of Central America. Sorry about that. It's industry standards, they have to put it in my business card." (line 128-143)

Miguel added that knowledge of the region gives him "an advantage" (line 143) because he knows how to sell to different customers and, hence, he feels in his "comfort zone" (line 142).

Haans, who is Dutch, also thinks that his knowledge of the Dutch islands gives him an advantage. He gave an example. One of the potential customers in one of the Dutch islands did business with a company in the Netherlands for 25 years. Haans' corporation wanted to take this customer from their Dutch competitor. However, the client did not want to do business either with the U.S. or Latin America. He explained, "They fear that people from the Unites States would come in, and the United States are so big and the island is so small and there is no understanding" (line 447-449). The client refused three times and then Haans stepped in:

> I showed up and I introduced myself and I said I live in the United States; they didn't want to do business with the United States. "I am from the United States, and it's a part of the South American region". They didn't want to do business in the South America, "Let's speak Dutch, I am originally from Holland." And they loved that. And we agreed that I'd take a special care of this island, that people are treated well, and they get what they pay for and that everyone understands them. (line 439-444)

Erica feels that being Cuban and having lived in the U.S is also "an advantage" (line 299). She explained that she is able to relate better to other people. In Erica's experience, many Europeans have parents from different national backgrounds:

> What I found, Europeans as a whole, there is much more of a mess. For example, their parents can be from different parts of the world, so they could live in France for x number of years, but one of their parents is Italian, the other one is Spanish and they speak 3 languages. (line 283-286)

So, Erica feels "there is commonality there and there is more discussion points" (line 293). She added, "there is more camaraderie. I think it breaks down some walls where if I was just an American, speaking only one language [it would have been different]" (line 294-296). Erica also thinks that her background gives her "flexibility, versatility" (line 457) and helps other people "feel more comfortable" (line 305). Therefore, she has the "ability to be able to bring people together, to a solution, an agreement, a compromise" (line 463-464).

Haans said that because of his national background, he is a better listener than people from other countries. He explained that his country, Netherlands, is small so being respectful to other countries and cultures is embedded in the Dutch culture: "The Netherlands, it's very small country …it's only Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and a little bit of Everglades but that's a country" (lines 150-151). He added, "If we walk around like 'Oh, we know everything better' and 'The best way is the Dutch way', I mean, we'd be gone" (lines 158-160). Haans concluded, "Because we are so small, [we] at least show respect for any other culture, and don't judge or feel that we are more important, so I think we listen better to others" (lines 153-154). He also said that this respect for others helps him understand people from other countries. He described it as "You feel really in the middle, you understand both" (line 244-245).

Amir, who was born and raised in Pakistan, said that he does not use Hindu in the Latin American Headquarters, but he spoke Hindu a lot when he worked on a project in India. Edward says that he uses different dialects of the Spanish language to talk to his peers at work, depending on what dialect of Spanish those peers speak: "In the office

there is such a mix of people from different areas, you don't use some words in your

language because they don't understand" (lines 112-114).

Learning

Learning refers to a process of acquisition of knowledge, skills, or behaviors.

Learning "is a product of the individual interacting with the content" and is affected by

cultural, social, political and other factors (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000, p. 55).

Participants discussed learning in terms of (a) cross-cultural awareness and (b)

perspective consciousness.

Cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness refers "awareness of the

diversity of ideas and practices to be found in human societies around the world, of how

such ideas and practices compare, and including some limited recognition of how the

ideas and ways of one's own society might be viewed from other vantage points"

(Hanvey, 1976, p. 89). Participants discussed how working on a daily basis with

colleagues and customers from different cultures leads to their increased awareness about

different cultures and business practices. As Amir explained, "the culture of any given

country has a strong local influence on the corporate culture" of the company in that

country (line 263-264). Amir said

> I think each of the legal entity of this company, like Company A in China for
> example, would look very different from Company A in the U.S., and the reason
> is that the one in China, it sort of adapted to the Chinese culture, to the Chinese
> business environment, to the Chinese way of doing business and in the U.S. it's
> the same thing too. (lines 241-245)

Therefore, Nick said that in his job, he is often "figuring out … how things get done in a

local country; that's why local sales team, local leadership, local management, stuff that's

so important" (lines 112-113).

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Edward said that to do the job well, he needs to know how people from different cultures do business: "You learn to understand how people are to understand their request" (line 405). Haans also said that he has to adjust his style of doing business to the local customs: "that is a very important element, you know, constantly adjust your style" (line 358). He explained:

> If I go to the Bahamas and I want to do business, I will need to adjust to Bahamian style of business. And things in the Bahamas are very slow; it's an island, very nice, beautiful weather, very nice beaches. But if you go there with Dutch or American or "let's do business", you know, "move on" and "push, push, push", forget about it, they will not close anything. (line 351-355)

So Haans tries to be "very careful" (line 357) how he communicates to his potential and current clients.

Nick realized that working in a team of people whose first language is not English requires some changes in the way he approaches the work as a supervisor. Nick said that he learned to provide his peers documents necessary for a meeting, which is usually a conference call, prior to the meeting so that his teammates had time to read, think, and "process" them (line 300). Nick has also realized that native speakers of English often dominate discussions, so he added, "I have to be very careful about saying to Yin-Yang from Shang-Hi, China, 'What do you think about it, Yin?' to make sure I draw her in" (line 302-304). Nick also changed the way he follows up on decisions after meetings:

> I often make sure that we don't just make spur of the moment decisions because people haven't processed fast enough. I'll summarize or put these actions in writing and let people react. Again, they need time to do that. So it slows the process; however, if I don't do that, I could be several steps ahead of the group, thinking we are all together here, and then the objections, the questions, the resistance comes, and we end up back at the beginning anyway. It's not because people are slow or not well informed; I really believe it's primarily [due to] language. (lines 304-310)

Haans learned that he needed to speak up at meetings. He explained that in his

country, the Netherlands, it is not common to say, "I wanna do this and I wanna do that"

(line 169). In his culture, it is common to wait to be asked or invited to participate in

discussions. At the same time, he also realized that due to his Dutch way of speaking,

people often perceive him as direct and impolite, so he has to explain himself. Haans

said,

> Dutch people are very direct… [English] its not our first language, … if you don't
> know all the soft words or how to say it more politely, you can come over "My
> goodness, these guys, I don't know, man." So in order to avoid that, I always try
> to apologize "I am from the Netherlands; we are very direct; I don't know all the
> right words, but this is the message, bum, bum, bum" and then you can do that,
> you know, because you explain where you are coming from. So I still do that.
> (lines 187-194)

> Bob observed that people from different countries write emails in different ways.

Bob had to learn to respond to them in a similar manner. He gave an example,

> Like with guy from Italy. He starts this email "Dear Bob, I hope everything is
> well with you, dadadada." There is a cultural aspect that says that you need to
> start your emails with "Hello, How are you?" I found it in the US, we are much
> more blunt in our conversations and we know right away what we want or need or
> what we are trying to communicate. And I kinda have to stop and re-adjust once
> in a while. (lines 197-202)

And Bob starts his email back to this colleague from Italy in a similar way, "How are

you, how's the family, dadadada" (line 202). Marie who is French and working in the

U.S. experienced similar issues with emails and had to learn to adjust her style. She said,

"Some people make comments about your French style of sending emails, you know, and

you take that into consideration" (lines 400-401). Edward noticed that the way people

communicate with each other face-to-face in the office is influenced by the local culture.

To Edward, in the Miami office of his corporation,

Jokes, for example, are much more limited than if you go to Panama, when you go to Panama, it's super friendly and you are touching each other and kissing each other. You know, I say hello to the guys, I give them a slap on the back. (lines 192-195)

Nick has to learn that people in different countries approach written documentation differently. For example, in Nick's opinion, Europeans are "more bureaucratic" (line 521). He observed that usually more people are involved in a project and the documentation that they require or produce is lengthier. He explained,

They may have 5 people doing what 1 person in the US is doing nowadays, and if we object [to] the waste of paper or a lengthy document that could be broken down to essentials, they think that we are non theoretical, too procedural, too much "get the job done". We think they are too academic, way too theoretical. (line 515-518)

Bob also observed the difference in how documents are produced in the U.S. and Europe. To Bob, in the U.S. culture, speed matters more than integrity, while in Europe it is vice versa. Bob gave a recent example,

Like I am working with spreadsheets; here in the U.S. we only want "what's the number". I have to send this sheet to Germany, you know... he said "Your spread sheet doesn't have integrity." It makes me mad, so I am like "What do you mean, it doesn't have integrity?" "It does not have backup". "OK, why didn't you say that?"… For me it was "deliver the spreadsheet quickly with the answer"; his was "we want the right answer but we also need a backup how you derived to your conclusion." (lines 206-213)

Brian commented that the way subordinates approach their superiors is different in the Latin American culture than in the North American culture. As he put it, "There is much more focus on stature and a person's position rather than what they contribute… I've seen in groups people kinda view their boss even though their boss, you know, isn't the smartest person in the team" (lines 423-426).

Brian, who was born in the United States, said that because he works in the Latin

American headquarters of his company, he learns Latin American culture, which he

enjoys. As he put it, "the challenge and the richness of what I do is that I get to work in a

completely different culture and understand how the Latino view point is different from

traditional American view point" (lines 415-417).

Perspective consciousness. Perspective consciousness refers to

> the recognition or awareness on the part of the individual that he or she has a view
> of the world that is not universally shared, that this view of the world has been
> and continues to be shaped by influences that often escape conscious detection,
> and that others have views of the world that are profoundly different from one's
> own. (Hanvey, 1976, p. 85)

Participants discussed how working for a global company resulted in them becoming

more aware about themselves in relation to people from other cultures. Eva said that

working for her corporation raised her "awareness of how Brazilians behave" (line 309).

She explained that she used to have an attitude like other Brazilians: "Brazil is big

enough, so we don't need to look at anybody else" (lines 300-301). She said when she

lived in Brazil she wanted to do business only with Brazilians and only for Brazilians,

"without asking 'Why?', 'Why can't you look outside?'" (lines 320-321). Now when she

meets people with similar attitudes, she thinks, "Oh my goodness, I was exactly like that

before" (lines 313-314).

Jose said that working for his corporation made him better understand himself. He

said "[I became] more aware of who I am and more conscious of who I am" (line 437).

He added that "some of the things that [I do] I believe come from my Mexican

background, but I don't think I would have this perspective if I did not have a chance to

put myself in some other's shoes" (lines 419-420). Working for the global company gives

him a "better reference point" (line 439). He added

> It has to do with the fact that this is a global company, so on any given day I am on a phone call or interactions with people that don't speak English as a first language, people from Europe, South America, Asia, India, other parts. So that's interesting. (lines 444-446)

When Nick started working for his corporation, "Everything was U.S.-driven; we

[Americans] were taking the lead on everything; I think it was an American company; we

are no longer" (lines 191-192). Working for a corporation that is no longer American

made Nick realize that he does not have "any type of authority or the edge or more

influence than anybody else" (line 197). He added, "it's been a wake up call, it's been

very, very healthy" (line 198). Nick said he can now see "arrogance" (line 199) in others.

Bob also realized that he was not the only one with the right answer. He said, "I have to

kinda readjust my thinking as I engage other countries, and say [to myself] 'my method

may not be the best method'" (lines 176-178).

Brian also feels that due to working for his corporation, he has come to realize

that he does not always know the right answer. He said, "Oh you don't know everything,

you need to be a lifelong learner to kind of become better" (lines 532-533). Brian added

that this experience made him less arrogant: "The more I work here, the more I learn that

I don't know; so there is a [*sic*] humbleness about that, humility" (lines 531-532).

Bob, who was born in the U.S., said that working with people from all around the

world on a daily basis and traveling to other countries made him re-think some of the

values, such as freedom and entrepreneurship that he had thought were unique to his

country. He said, "It's been a long process to come to this conclusion that we are not the

only free people in the world, that we are not the only entrepreneurs in the world by any means" (lines 137-139).

Marie said working for the company helped build "a lot of tolerance" (line 376). She explained that she grew up in a small French town, "I come from very narrow minded background, my family never traveled," she said (line 376-377). She also added,

> I think it opens my mind a lot. My curiosity too. From a professional point of view, I think I've learned to deal with cultural differences better. I've experienced cross-cultural management, so I am more likely to deal with cultural differences now than 2 years ago. (lines 382-385)

Miguel, who comes from a small town in Columbia, feels that working for Company A helped him become "a global guy" (line 460). He added "You open your mind more. Now I feel more a global person. ..Now you feel really open minded and of course a part of that is that now I am a part of a global organization" (line 462-465). Erica said that she tries "to be less opinionated…; otherwise people won't understand" (lines 486-487).

Brian said that traveling in other countries helped him better appreciate his country, the U.S. As he put it, "[I] appreciate feeling safe, general security in the systems that we have to take care of ourselves, economic system, the transportation systems, you know, just getting your daily life done" (lines 482-484). At the same time he also realized that he and his colleagues have the same thing in common: They are far from home and their relatives and trying to do the best for their families. He explained:

> That's the thing about this office is that everyone is an outsider … everyone is in the same boat. They didn't grow up in Seattle, but they might grow up in Bogotá, and they are missing their families, just like I am, and essentially it's roughly the same travel time to go home there. Even there are differences in terms of where they grew up, there is that common thing: we are working here, we are away from

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our families, we are trying to make the best of it …but it's not the same with how we grew up. (lines 568-574)

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study on how employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation. Data analysis was done inductively, using Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. Analysis of data revealed three themes: (a) business goals, (b) social responsibility, and (c) knowledge. The next chapter provides discussion of the findings and their implications for research and practice.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents responses to the research questions. The second section discusses a model of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation that is proposed in this study; this discussion is followed by implications of the model for research and practice. A summary of the study section concludes this chapter.

Responses to the Research Questions

Responses to the research questions are presented in this section. The primary research question was as follows: How do employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation? The subsidiary questions included the following:

1. What are employees' experiences with a geocentric organizational culture?

2. What are employees' experiences with their national identities in the context of a geocentric organizational culture?

The responses to the subsidiary research questions are provided first, followed by the responses to the primary research question.

Response to Subsidiary Question 1: What are Employees' Experiences with a Geocentric Organizational Culture?

An organizational culture is often referred to *how we do things around here* (Fullan, 2001). In the experiences of the 12 participants in this study, how they do things in their corporations is driven by the business goals. Goals answer the question: What are we trying to achieve? (Loucopoulos & Karakostas, 1995). To the participants in this

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study, the goals of achieving high profits and attracting more customers set the direction

for individual employees and the company overall. The participants experienced these

goals as driving how things are done in their companies in different geographic locations.

Whether the participants work in cross-cultural teams face-to-face or virtually, their

conversations and decisions are built around the business goals. Therefore, they

experienced a geocentric culture as a goal-driven culture. Developing consensus on goals

among employees is "the learned response" (Schein, 1988, p. 10) of an organization's

culture to the external environment and a key to ensure organizational adaptation and

survival in that environment (Schein, 1983). Developing consensus on goals is an

element of an organizational culture that helps create an organization-wide cohesion and

consistency and decrease uncertainty and anxiety (Martin, 2002; Schein, 1984). Over

time, this cohesion and consistency "come to mean a great deal to the people" (Deal &

Kennedy, 1982, p. 4). As a result, cohesion and consistency among people, processes,

and decisions across the company increase organizational effectiveness and performance

(Denison, 1990).

In the experiences of the 12 participants in this study, how they do things in their

corporations is also framed or guided by their companies' social responsibility. Social

responsibility includes the organization's actions "that appear to further some social good,

beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law" (McWilliams et al.,

2006). The participants experienced that their companies' social responsibility framed

how they do things for their customers and the community and how their corporations

treat the employees. The participants experienced that social responsibility is

communicated from the upper level of management and sets the parameters of their work

behaviors regardless of the geographic location. An organizational culture can be understood in terms of "the grown-up pattern of *accepted* and *expected* behaviors" (Drennan, 1992, p. 3). Setting such boundaries or criteria for inclusion or exclusion of certain behaviors helps an organization to manage itself and sustain internal stability (Schein, 1983, 1984). Building a "shared consensus on who is in, who is out" represents "one of the most important areas of culture" (Schein, 1984, p. 11).

In the experiences of the 12 participants in this study, how they do things in their corporations is also shaped by knowledge. "Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experiences, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information" (Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 5). To the participants, how they do things in their corporations is shaped by creativity, professional development, and cross-cultural awareness. Creativity is welcomed; sharing of innovating ideas among employees is an integral part of the work process. This finding parallels Marquardt's (1999) suggestion that "support for innovation, experimentation, and risk taking" are core values of a geocentric culture of global companies (p. 74). Employees' desire to take risks and seek for knowledge, which can also be referred to as curiosity, leads them to actively engage in explorative behaviors, to think, and to observe (Reio, 2004). When the assumption that ideas ultimately come from employees underlies organizational culture, employees are treated as capable, motivated, and responsible (Dyer, 1982). Therefore, employees are trusted to find the best solution and take care of individual, team, or organizational problems. When organizational culture fosters and relies on new ideas that come from employees,

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companies feel safe to try new ways to do business and, hence, can maintain their competitive advantage (Dyer, 1982).

The participants also experienced developing professionally through many and various opportunities that were offered to them and that they sought themselves. This finding shows the assumptions about the nature of human nature (e.g., what is the nature of human character?) and the nature of human activity (e.g., what is the modality of human activity?; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schein, 1993) that underlie a geocentric organizational culture. Human nature is considered good and active, as opposed to evil or passive; the human activity is considered evolving and exciting, as opposed to linear and fatalistic (Schein, 1993). Engaging in different organizational functions, roles, processes, and teams brings novelty and excitement in people's work and "is an essential part of the [geocentric] organizational culture" (Kets De Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 300). Continuous professional development also shows that in a geocentric culture work and learning are intertwined and people are encouraged and enabled to improve their skills and broaden their knowledge (Marquardt, 1999).

To the participants, things are also done in their corporations through working on a daily basis with colleagues and customers from different cultures and becoming aware of different national cultures and business practices. This finding points to another underlying assumption of an organizational culture – homogeneity vs. diversity (Schein, 1988). In a geocentric culture, high diversity is considered best for the corporation survival in the external environment and for internal stability. An organizational culture that fosters learning about different national cultures and business practices increases an organization's ability to develop a common language and effective communication

among its diverse and geographically dispersed employees (Schein, 1988). This finding echoes Marquardt's (1999) suggestion that understanding and appreciation of different national cultures and how people do business in different cultures represents one of the values of a geocentric culture. Similarly, Tolbert et al. (2002) consider cross-cultural learning and awareness as one of four components of a geocentric culture.

Response to Subsidiary Question 2: What are Employees' Experiences with Their National Identities in the Context of a Geocentric Organizational Culture?

National identity refers to "feelings of closeness to and pride in one's country and its symbols" (Citrin et al., 2001, p. 74). National identity includes a love for one's homeland and its people, creates a sense of uniqueness and distinctiveness and feeling of belonging, and willingness to act in the interests of the group (Kelman, 2001). National identity is constructed through lived experiences and is rather symbolic in nature (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). The 12 participants in this study experienced their national identities as sources of knowledge about the culture of their native countries. The participants felt that their familiarity with the culture and language of their native countries, or the region, represent a source of knowledge. They felt that this knowledge is rather unique and, hence, distinguishes them from many other employees who do not have this knowledge (Kelman, 2001). The participants also think that due to their cultural background, they have certain unique characteristics that are beneficial for their work in a global company. This unique knowledge and characteristics ultimately give them an advantage in terms of what they can contribute to the corporation. They feel that their knowledge and characteristics are invaluable for their jobs and the corporation. This finding corresponds to previous research (e.g., Nowicka, 2006; Smith, 2007) that in cross-cultural situations

people perceive their competence in two or more cultures and in two or more languages as beneficial for their professional and educational careers.

The participants also experienced their national identities as sources for perspective consciousness. Perspective consciousness refers to the understanding that one's perspective on the world may not be shred by others and that this perspective has been shaped by forces that one cannot always know or realize (Hanvey, 1976). Working for the global companies provided the participants the multiplicity of interactions and relationships where they could reflect on some of the feelings, assumptions, and behaviors they have or had as nationals of their home countries. In cross-cultural situations, people have increased self-awareness (Nowicka, 2006) and are re-thinking and reflecting on their national identities (Goldin, 1999; Yeoh et al., 2003). This reflection leads to the participants' learning about selves and change in some of their feelings, assumptions, and behaviors.

Response to the Primary Research Question: How do Employees with Different National Identities Experience a Geocentric Organizational Culture of a Global Corporation?

A geocentric organizational culture "transcends cultural differences and establishes 'beacons' … that are comprehensive and compelling" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 299) for all employees, regardless of their national origins, ethnic backgrounds, or professional experiences. The answers to the two subsidiary questions represent these beacons that the participants in the study identified through their experiences. The answers to the two subsidiary questions represent *what* the participants experienced. The primary question asks *how*, or in what way, the participants

experienced *what* they experienced, or the beacons. To answer the primary question, this

section connects the *what* (i.e., beacons) with the *how*.

The participants in this study experienced a geocentric organizational culture of a

global corporation as on in which they felt *connected*, *valued*, and *growing* personally

and professionally. In a geocentric organizational culture, the participants felt connected

to the companies via business goals of achieving high profits and attracting more

customers. The participants also felt connected by the companies' social responsibility

that frames how they behave towards their customers, other employees, and the

community. Both business goals and social responsibility (i.e., beacons) represent the

elements of a geocentric organizational culture that help create consensus among

employees of a corporation (Martin, 2002; Schein, 1983, 1984). These elements guide

employee behaviors toward a common goal and outline accepted and expected behaviors

(Drennan, 1992), regardless of the geographic location where employees work, the

presence or absence of a supervisor or a team, or the nature of a problem that might arise

on the job. These elements make employees feel connected to the company.

Also, in the geocentric organizational culture the participants felt valued by the

company because the participants' creativity was welcomed and they could share their

creativity with others. The participants also felt that each of them could contribute to the

corporation because they had certain unique knowledge of the culture and language of

their native countries that ultimately gave them advantage over other employees.

Creativity and unique contribution due to national identity (i.e., beacons) represent the

elements of a geocentric organizational culture that reflect the underlying assumption that

ideas ultimately come from employees (Dyer, 1982). In a geocentric culture, people are

treated as capable and motivated; they are trusted to find the best solutions and to take care of individual, team, or organizational problems. Relying on new and creative ideas of employees helps global companies feel safe when introducing an innovation and, hence, maintain their competitive advantage. Therefore, these elements foster employee involvement in the organization and make employees feel valued.

In a geocentric organizational culture, the participants felt that they are growing personally and professionally through the professional development opportunities provided by their companies, cross-cultural awareness, and perspective consciousness. Professional development, cross-cultural awareness, and perspective consciousness (i.e., beacons) represent the elements of a geocentric organizational culture that show an organization's assumptions about the nature of human character, activity, and diversity (Schein, 1993). In a geocentric culture, people are considered good and active; their work is evolving and intertwined with learning and joy; diversity is the best and only way for organizational survival in the external environment and for internal stability. Therefore, these elements foster employees, regardless of their national, cultural, educational, or professional background, to continuously grow personally and professionally.

This section of this chapter included the answers to the two subsidiary questions and the primary research question. The next section presents a model of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation: An employee perspective that was developed based on the answers to the primary research question. The discussion of the model is followed by implications for research and practice. A summary concludes this chapter.

A Model of a Geocentric Organizational Culture of a Global Corporation:

An Employee Perspective

Global corporations are a rather new phenomenon, but the number of these companies is increasing (Marquardt, 1999). Most business literature on geocentric organizations focuses on quantitative measures, such as global production, sales, consumption, or investment (Jones, 2005). Research on social and internal changes in organizational practices of these corporations and, particularly, in organizational culture, is limited (Jones, 2005). Previous empirical research on a geocentric culture of global companies (Kets De Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002; Marquardt, 1999) looked at the organization as a whole. To broaden the limited scope of existing research, the current study examined employees' experiences with a geocentric organizational culture. Based on the answer to the primary research question, a model of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation: An employee perspective was developed (see Figure 1). In the model, the grey boxes show the *what* (i.e., beacons) that the participants in this study experienced. The blue arrows represent the *how* (i.e., three ways in which the employees experience a geocentric culture); the blue arrows point in both directions to show the interactive, dynamic, and reciprocal relations between the culture and employees.

This study showed that personal and professional growth is one of the three main processes through which the participants experienced a geocentric organizational culture. Regardless of their national identities, employees feel that they grow personally and professionally through professional development, cross-cultural awareness, and perspective consciousness. This personal and professional growth is not articulated as a

main characteristic of the geocentric organizational culture in other conceptual (e.g., Marquardt, 1999; Tolbert et al., 2002) and empirical (e.g., Kets De Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002) works on a geocentric organizational culture. For example, Marquardt (1999) includes "continuous learning" (p. 69) as one of nine values that comprise the global values component of the culture of a global company. This continuous learning
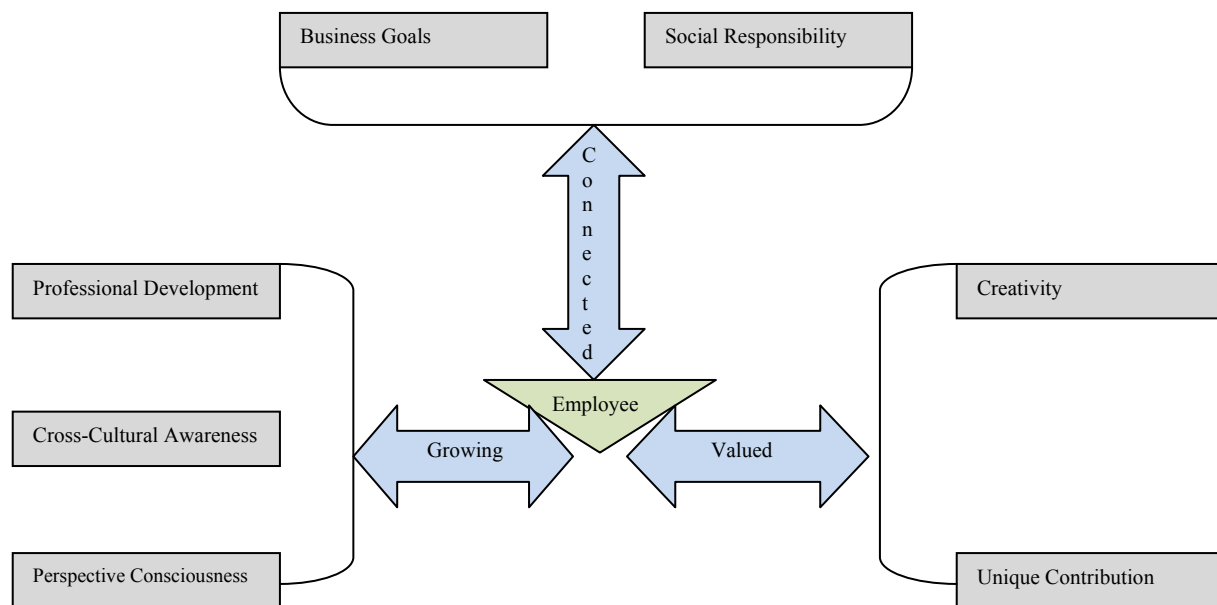
Figure 1. A model of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation: An employee perspective.

is discussed in terms of organizations fostering learning and new forms of learning and employees learning together as a team. Therefore, to Marquardt (1999) continuous learning is driven by the organization. The model proposed in this study adds two components, professional development and perspective consciousness, that suggest that learning is driven by employees, not the organization. Also, while Marquardt (1999)

suggests "appreciation of and sensitivity to other cultures" (p. 69) as a global value

separate from learning, the proposed model includes cross-cultural awareness as a part of

professional development and personal growth.

The proposed model also extends Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy's (2002)

discussion of learning in a geocentric culture. Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy (2002)

suggest that "continuous learning" (p. 300) is a pre-requisite of the pleasure meta-value

of a geocentric culture. As they explain, "Having fun by doing new things – which results

in continuous learning – is an essential part of the organizational culture" (p. 300). They

discuss continuous learning in terms of "the opportunity to learn new things" and "a

sense of personal growth" (p. 301); however, they do not explain what these

opportunities for learning and personal growth are. The model in this study suggests three

elements of a geocentric culture (i.e., professional development, cross-cultural awareness,

and perspective consciousness) that foster personal and professional growth.

The creativity and unique contribution components of the proposed model in this

study also extend Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy's (2002) understanding of the

pleasure meta-value. They explain that in a geocentric culture people derive pleasure

from learning new things and growing personally. However, this study suggests that

employees also feel valued if their creativity is fostered and if they can contribute to the

organization their unique knowledge of cultures of their native countries. Therefore, this

model suggests that employees derive pleasure not only by learning on the job but also by

being valued by the organization.

The unique contribution component of the model also challenges the concept of

geocentric staffing. Geocentric staffing is considered a part of the organizational culture.

For example, in their model of geocentric culture, Tolbert et al. (2002) suggest that employee promotion and development processes are one of the four components of the geocentric culture and should be consistent with the organization's global approach. Geocentric staffing refers to a staffing strategy where top management positions are filled with employees who have the best competencies for a job, regardless of their national backgrounds (Perlmutter & Heenan, 1974). This geocentric staffing is built on the premise that employee ability is more critical than employee nationality (Dowling, Welch, & Schuler, 1999). However, in this study employees felt that certain knowledge that they had *because* of their national backgrounds increased their ability to perform their jobs. Similar issues can be raised about the promotion process. Therefore, the first way in which the unique contribution component of this model challenges the concept of geocentric staffing involves the degree to which employee national background really matters.

The unique contribution component of this model also challenges the focus of the geocentric staffing strategy. Geocentric staffing is used to fill top management positions or "key jobs" (Gowan, 2004) or "key positions" (Edstrom & Galbraith, 1994). In this study, only two participants held positions that can be considered top management: Regional Director of HR and Regional Director of Communications. Nine other participants held middle-level management positions and one had a non-management job. However, they *all* felt that they had knowledge due to their national backgrounds that helped them bring value to the organization. Therefore, the model suggests that geocentric staffing strategies should not be used only to fill top-management positions to increases overall organizational effectiveness.

The proposed model also supports one of the key elements of a global company that separates a global company from a MNC – the focus on both profitability and public acceptance (Perlmutter, 1985). In the model, the business goals and social responsibility components represent two components of the geocentric culture that connect the employees to the organization. Nether the business goals nor the social responsibility component is included as major elements in Marquardt's (1999) model. The two components also differ from Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy's (2002) research. In the proposed model, these components together represent one process through which employees experience a geocentric culture – a process of feeling connected to the company. Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy (2002) exclude business goals as an element of a geocentric culture and discuss social responsibility in terms of the companies treating their employees with trust and respect and in terms of creating environment where employees feel that they contribute something great to the society.

Implications for Research

This study utilized an emic perspective (Pike, 1967) to study a geocentric organizational culture of global corporations. The emic perspective allows a researcher to go to the people (Bogdan & Tylor, 1974), observe, and interact to research what is important for people in a particular cultural context (Peterson & Pike, 2002; Pike, 1967). In this study, the researcher provided "extrapolations [that] are modest speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions" (Patton, 2002, p. 584). To continue to understand a geocentric organizational culture, the proposed model can be used in future research done from both the emic and etic perspectives.

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Emic. The emic perspective allows study a culture from inside the system (Pike, 1967). Research from the emic perspective focuses on insiders' experiences and understandings of the system. This study included employees of four global companies with headquarters in different parts of the world (U.S., France, Germany, and Japan/Sweden). However, the participants were interviewed while working in the companies' offices located in only one country – U.S. Organizations, including global companies, are influenced by the local culture (Helmreich, & Merritt, 2001; Hofstede et al., 1990; Trompenaars, 1993). Therefore, similar phenomenological studies may include employees employed by the same four global corporations and be conducted in another country(s) or region(s) of the world. Consequently, the results of these several studies could be compared to examine whether employees' experiences with a geocentric culture vary depending on the location of their offices. This research might help understanding how a geocentric culture is shaped by national and regional cultures.

The proposed model can also be informed by collecting data from employees with different demographic characteristics. Because this study focused on experiences of employees with different national identities, the researcher had the diversity of national backgrounds as one of the selection criteria. Other demographic characteristics were not a part of the selection criteria. Most of the participants in the study held mid-level management positions. A similar study with participants who have top management positions and/or non-managerial positions might shed a light on whether an employee position in the global organization shapes his/her experiences with the geocentric culture.

Similar research can be conducted in a global company that does not have headquarters in the U.S., the European Union, or Japan and does not operate from the

Western capitalism perspective. Such research can explore whether the elements of the geocentric culture (e.g., business goals and social responsibility) would emerge and whether a geocentric culture of non-Western-based global companies includes elements that are not included in the proposed model.

Etic. The etic perspective allows study of a culture from outside the system (Pike, 1967). While the emic perspective is focused on one system or place, the etic perspective is focused on many systems or places and uses criteria developed by researchers a priori. The proposed model and the instrument developed and used in this study can also be used to create a survey to aid global companies in examining, building, and sustaining their geocentric cultures. In HRD research, only one other instrument, *Global Success: Capability and Readiness Profile* (Marquardt, 1999), has been developed to assess whether a company has reached the global status. The instrument contains only seven questions to examine the culture of the global company. Marquardt's (1999) instrument was developed based on his research of global companies as a whole; therefore, the proposed model can add the employee perspective on a geocentric culture in the development of a more comprehensive instrument. This instrument can be used in multiple geographic locations and multiple global companies and allow researchers to compare and contrast findings. Such an instrument can also help measure the strength of each component of a geocentric culture and explore cause and effect relations among the components and between the components and other variables, for example, employee organizational identity, job performance, innovation, and creativity.

"More than 90% of organization behavior literature reflects U.S.-based research and theory" (House, Hanges, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2004, p. xxi). This study is not an

exception. Although the researcher of the present study was born in the U.S.S.R. and included scholarship from non-U.S. researchers to conceptualize this study, she received training in HRD research and practice in the United States. Future research on global companies would benefit if conducted by teams of scholars or scholar-practitioners who received training and practical experiences in other countries and regions of the world.

Implications for Practice

HRD professionals are responsible for building, shaping, and enhancing organizational culture by providing organizational development interventions that lead to the optimization of employee potential and improved organizational performance (Gilley et al., 2002). The findings of this study can be useful for HRD professionals to increase the effectiveness of organizational development initiatives related to a geocentric organizational culture. Table 6 provides questions that HRD professionals can ask about each component of the proposed model.

Table 6

Suggestions for How to Use the Proposed Model for Organizational Development Initiatives

Model Components	Questions to Ask
Business goals	Are business goals few and clear?
	Are business goals well understood among employees at all levels of the organization?
Social responsibility	Does the company code of ethics provide employees guidance in how to behave towards customers, community, and peers?

Table 6 (continued).

	Do organizational leaders serve as role models in regards to following the company social responsibility?
Professional development	Are there interventions (e.g., job enlargement, job enrichment, and alternative work schedules) to provide employees exposure to various responsibilities and enhance their job satisfaction? Are there structural barriers that impede employees' hierarchical and lateral professional development in the corporation?
Cross-cultural awareness	Are there processes to increase employee formal and informal socialization and communication within and across different geographic locations? Is there a system to continuously assess, adjust, and improve interventions and processes that facilitate cross-cultural awareness?
Perspective consciousness	Is there a conscious attempt to incorporate reflection into individual, team, and organizational learning? Is there support (e.g., mentoring, blogs) for capturing, sharing, and learning from employees' experiences?
Creativity	Are there team building interventions to enhance communication and interdependence and decrease conflicts and competition among employees?

Table 6 (continued).

	Is there a systematic way to collect employees' feedback and learn from this feedback?
Unique contribution	Is there a formal or informal reward system to acknowledge individual employees for their unique contributions?
	Is there a conscious attempt to show employees at all levels of the corporation how their unique individual contributions help improve performance of their teams and functions and the corporation as a whole?

The proposed model and the suggested questions can guide HRD professionals to design organizational development interventions in corporations that are already global and in corporations that are in transition to become global.

The proposed model can also be used in global companies to improve the socialization process for its newcomers. Socialization is a learning or adjustment process during which the newcomer learns certain domains of the organization and during which the organization creates an environment conducive to such learning (Korte, 2009). The effectiveness of the socialization process has been linked to many other factors, including employee job satisfaction, attitude, turnover, or organizational commitment. Therefore, HRD practitioners can use the proposed model to create processes and procedures that can help newcomers learn a geocentric culture of the global company.

Summary of the Study

"Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victim to them" (Schein, 2004, p. 3). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to further our understanding of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation. A geocentric organizational culture "transcends cultural differences and establishes 'beacons' … that are comprehensive and compelling" (Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002, p. 299) for all employees, regardless of their national origins, ethnic backgrounds, or professional experiences. Specifically, the primary research question was: How do employees with different national identities experience a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation? Twelve participants were selected using criteria, convenience, and snow-ball sampling strategies. The participants worked for global corporations located in South Florida. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide and analyzed inductively, using Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data.

The participants in this study experienced a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation as on in which they felt connected, valued, and growing personally and professionally. In a geocentric organizational culture, the participants felt connected to the companies via business goals of achieving high profits and attracting more customers. The participants also felt connected by the company social responsibility that frames how they behave towards their customers, other employees, and the community. Also, in the geocentric organizational culture the participants felt valued by the company

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because the participants' creativity was welcomed and they could share their creativity with others. The participants also felt that each of them could contribute to the corporation because they had certain unique knowledge of the culture and language of their native countries that ultimately gave them advantage over other employees. In a geocentric organizational culture, the participants felt that they are growing personally and professionally through the professional development opportunities provided by their companies, cross-cultural awareness, and perspective consciousness. Based on the findings from this study, a model of a geocentric organizational culture of a global corporation: An employee perspective was proposed. Implications for research and practice concluded this study.

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Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on your experiences with organizational culture of a global corporation. Global corporations strive to create cultures that unite employees regardless of employees' national identities. National identity is one aspect of anyone's social identity, including gender, age, profession, race, religion, or memberships in health or sports clubs. National identity means different things to different people. I will begin with some background questions about you, and then we will talk about your national identity and experiences with organizational culture of this corporation.

Background Information

1. Tell me about your current position.

2. Tell me about other positions you have had in this corporation.

3. How long have you worked for this corporation?

4. How long have you worked at this location?

5. In what countries besides U.S. have you worked for this corporation?

6. Tell me why you chose to work for this corporation.

7. Tell me what keeps you here.

8. Tell me about your professional experiences prior to working for this corporation.

9. What age group do you belong to?

    a. Under 30
    b. 30-39
    c. 40-49
    d. 50-59
    e. Over 60

National Identity: General

1. Where were you born?

2. Where were you raised?

3. Tell me how you understand the concept/term "national identity".

    a. If I were a person completely unfamiliar with concept/term "national identity",
        how would you explain it to me?

    b. What words or phrases do you think can describe or relate to the term "national
        identity"?

4. How would you identify yourself in terms of your national identity?

    a. If you were asked "Who are you in terms of your national identity?", how would
        you complete the sentence: "I am_____."

    b. Would you explain that?

5. Tell me what your national identity means to you.

National Identity and Global Corporation

1. You are working for a corporation that is considered "global". Would you agree with
    this?

    a. Why?

    b. (if agreed) Tell me what do you think makes this corporation global.

    c. (if disagreed) Tell me why.

2. Tell me what it means to you as _____ to work for this global corporation?

    a. How do you feel as _____ about working for this global corporation?

    b. Tell me about what makes you feel as a part of this global corporation.

3. Tell me how you understand the term culture.

    a. What is culture?

4. Tell me how you understand the term corporate culture.

    a. What is organizational culture?

5. How would you describe the corporate culture of this global corporation?

   a. How do you see yourself within this corporate culture?

   b. How do you feel as _____ about working within this corporate culture?

6. Tell me about values of this global corporation that you would describe as the core values.

7. Tell me about values and beliefs of this global corporation that you as

   _____easily accept or relate to?

   a. Why?

   b. Please, give me an example.

8. Tell me about values and beliefs of this global corporation that you as _____ find difficult to accept or relate to?

   a. Why?

   b. Please, give me an example.

9. Tell me about what you as _____bring to this corporation.

10. Tell me about relationships with other people that have made you think about your national identity.

    a. What were you feeling at the time?

    b. What values or assumptions did you question?

    c. Take me through the experience.

11. Tell me about corporate activity, event, or a ritual that that has made you think about your national identity.

    a. What were you feeling at the time?

b.   What values or assumptions did you question?

c.   Take me through the experience.

12. Tell me about other corporate events or circumstances that have made you think about your national identity.

a.   What were you feeling at the time?

b.   What values or assumptions did you question?

c.   Take me through the experience.

13. Tell me about things about yourself as _____ that you do not feel comfortable revealing or sharing with others at work.

14. What emotions did this conversation bring up within you?

15. What should I have asked you that I didn't think to ask?

16. Do you have anything you would like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Title: How Employees with Different National Identities Experience a Geocentric Organizational Culture of a Global Corporation: A Phenomenological Study.

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The investigator of this study is Maria (Masha) S. Plakhotnik, a doctoral candidate at Florida International University. This study may include approximately 15 employees who work for global corporations. Your participation will require approximately 1 hour of your time. We are looking at how employees with different national backgrounds experience organizational culture of a global corporation. National identity is one of many social identities of an individual. National identity refers to people's pride in their homeland. In organizations that undergo globalization, national identity becomes particularly relevant to employees' social reality. Global organizations build organizational culture that is not based on any country's national culture and, hence, appeals and unites all employees, regardless of their national identity. The objective of this interview is to learn more about how you experience organizational culture of this corporation.

If you decide to be a part of the study, you will participate in a semi-structured interview that will be recorded. A list of questions will be used as a guide for the interview. We do not expect any harm to you by being in the study. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you get upset or feel discomfort during the survey, you may ask to take a break. There is no cost or payment to you as a participant. You will not get any direct benefit from being in the study. However, your participation will give us information about national identity and organizational culture of a global corporation.

Your responses will be identified by a pseudonym, and not your name. All your answers are private and will not be shared with anyone unless required by law. You may ask questions about the study at any time. If you choose not to participate, no one will be upset with you. You may also choose to stop your participation before you finish the interview.

If you would like more information about this research study after you are done, you can contact Maria (Masha) Plakhotnik at (786) 200-1654 or mplak001@fiu.edu. If you would like to talk with someone about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Dr. Patricia Price, the Chairperson of the FIU Institutional Review Board at 305-348-2618 or 305-348-2494.Your signature below indicates that all questions have been answered to your liking. You are aware of your rights and you would like to be in the study.

_____ _____ _____
Signature of Participant   Printed Name   Date

I have explained the research procedure, subject rights, and answered questions asked by the participant. I have offered him/her a copy of this informed consent form.

_____   _____
Signature of Witness   Date

VITA

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PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

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