**Methods**

Project overview

Multinational companies (MNCs) are increasingly striving for organizational integration across borders. They often standardize product and service offerings, rely on international production or service delivery processes, and have cross-national teams. Global integration promises to deliver efficiency and greater managerial oversight, but can be challenging to set up and maintain. To be effective, cross-border integration needs to be underpinned by common understandings on issues such as the firm’s responsibilities towards its stakeholders, how to assess performance, or what constitutes fair allocation of work. Where such common understandings are established across borders and influence day-to-day practices, we refer to them as ‘global norms’.

Establishing and operating workplace norms across borders is no easy task. Just as culture often differs significantly between countries, so do approaches to doing business and assumptions in the workplace. Global norm-making is therefore almost inevitably a complicated, sometimes fraught, process. It requires people with foresight, inclination and skills to form, operationalize and maintain global norms successfully. We call those who are active in the process of global norm formation ‘globalizing actors’.

**Scope and Approach**

The project is based on partnerships with a range of British multinational organizations, with an emphasis on diversity of organizational forms and economic sectors. We work with over 20 organizations, from boutique creative agencies to global consultancies, from manufacturers to non-profits. This diversity benefits our research and—in anonymized form—provides useful benchmarks to participating organizations.

We use a **multi-method approach** to generate in-depth understanding of norming processes and globalizing actors’ behavior as well as broad coverage:

* In-depth interviews with participants in various roles. These interviews serve to establish the organizational context, understand how norms within the firm are perceived, and identify the ‘hot button’ issues of the moment. We use a semi-structured approach that uses a prepared set of questions to ensure consistency and triangulation of data, but is also flexible to respond to instances of norm-making that participants lead us to.
* multi-source survey of globalizing actors identifying individual-level skills and capabilities associated with global norm-making. Two questionnaires were designed. The first is sent directly to globalizing actors, and includes questions about their roles, behaviours and social skills related to their globalising work, as well as their own assessments of its impact. The globalising actors nominate five colleagues that they work with who have been impacted by their cross-national working efforts in some way. The second questionnaire asks these colleagues directly about their experiences of changes in their global work. The survey instrument was administered through the qualtrix platform.
* A diary or ‘repeat survey’ of globalizing actors tracking the utilization of their globalising skills over time. By surveying the same people over time, it is possible to examine patterns of change for individuals and teams. For example, it is possible to examine whether key variables (e.g. commitment to global team effort, global team climate) follows a general trend of improvement over time and whether this trend is significantly faster or slower for some individuals or groups. A repeat survey was conducted, with measures taken at the end of every month over a three-month period. The same survey was sent to group members and group leads (i.e., the globalising actors). The survey instrument was administered through the qualtrix platform.

Participating organizations generally make staff available for interviews and facilitate a survey of globalizing actors. The breadth and depth of each research partnership is tailored to ensure mutual benefit. In return, the research team regularly feeds back lessons learned from the research—in forms useful to participating organizations—both from the study of their own staff but also from those of others.

Organizations take part on an anonymized basis and we guarantee confidentiality of individual responses. This means that all information that could identify the individual or the organization will be removed before publication. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Survey Responses**

**Table 1: Cross-sectional survey responses**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Company** | **Status** | **Contacted** | **Returns achieved** | **Matched groups** |
| **GAs** | **Emps** | **GAs** | **Emps** | **GA+≥1** | **GA+≥2** | **GA+≥3** |
| **2** | Complete | 51 | \* | 29 | 90 | 22 | 18 | 15 |
| **4** | Complete | 45 | \* | 25 | 26 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| **5** | Complete | 25 | 124 | 14 | 72 | 13 | 12 | 9 |
| **1** | Complete | 31 | 153 | 16 | 70 | 15 | 11 | 10 |
|  |  |  |  | 84 | 258 | 58 | 47 | 38 |

\*No contact list available for employee survey; GAs were asked to send survey links themselves

**Table 2: Diary Longitudinal survey responses**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Company** | **Status** | **Contacted** | **Returns achieved** | **Surveys****completed** | **GA+≥2 matched at ≥2 times** |
| **GAs** | **Emps** | **T1** | **T2** | **T3** | **T4** | **1** | **2** | **3+** |
| **1** | Complete | 4 | 33 | 29 | 22 | 20 | \* | 29 | 22 | 20 | 4 |
| **6** | Complete | 16 | 108 | 54 | 40 | 33 | 27 | 66 | 45 | 26 | 4 |
| **7** | Complete | 6 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 10 | \* | 13 | 12 | 8 | - |
| **2** | Complete | 5 | 18 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 2 | 22 | 12 | 7 | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 130 | 91 | 61 | 10 |

\*No fourth time point for data collection

**Survey Measures**

The survey measures included a combination of previously validated scales and questions developed from the interview data. The newly created measures cover issues including globalizing roles, social skills, social capital and communication modes. The previously validated scales are below.

**Activity commitment**

Four items from WERS 2011 (6): ‘I feel satisfied with my role in this globalising activity’; ‘I feel loyal to the objectives of this globalising activity’; ‘I am proud of the purpose of this globalising activity’; ‘I share many of the values reflected in this global change’. 1=’strongly disagree’ to 6=’strongly agree’.

**Organisation commitment**

Four items from WERS 2011 (6): ‘I share many of the values of my organisation’; ‘I feel loyal to my organisation’; ‘I am proud to tell people who I work for’; ‘I feel satisfied with my job’. 1=’strongly disagree’ to 6=’strongly agree’.

**Intention to stay**

Two items from Cook and Wall (1980: 51): ‘Even if the firm were not doing too well financially, I would be reluctant to change to another employer’; ‘The offer of a bit more money with another employer would not seriously make me think of changing my job’. 1=’strongly disagree’ to 6=’strongly agree’.

**Turnover intention**

Five items from Bothma and Roodt (2013:3-4). First four items: ‘How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?’; ‘How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?’; ‘How often have you considered leaving your job?’; ‘How often do you look forward to another day at work?’. 1=’never’ to 5=’always’. Fifth item: ‘How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level, should it be offered to you?’ 1=’highly unlikely’ to 5=’highly likely’.

**Affective well-being: anxiety-comfort**

Four items from Daniels (2000): ‘Anxious’; ‘Worried’; ‘Relaxed’; ‘At ease’. 1=’Never’ to 6=’All of the time’.

**Affective well-being: bored-enthusiastic**

Four items from Daniels (2000): ‘Dull’; ‘Bored’; ‘Enthusiastic; ‘Motivated’. 1=’Never’ to 6=’All of the time’.

**Social skill**

Seven items from Ferris, Witt and Hochwarter (2001: 1077): ‘I find it easy to put myself in the position of others’; ‘I am keenly aware of how I am perceived by others’; ‘In social situations, it is always clear to me exactly what to say and do’; ‘I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others’; ‘I am good at making myself visible with influential people in my organization’; ‘I am good at reading others' body language’; ‘I am able to adjust my behaviour and become the type of person dictated by any situation’. 1=’strongly disagree’ to 7=’strongly agree’.

**Psychological capital: optimism**

Three items from Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007: 238): ‘When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best’; ‘I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job; ‘I am optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work’. 1=’strongly disagree’ to 7=’strongly agree’.