“Project GLOBE: A Large Scale Cross-Cultural Study of Leadership”

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ARTICLE INFO	William W. Liddell (2005). Project GLOBE: A Large Scale Cross-Cultural Study of Leadership. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *3*(3)
RELEASED ON	Tuesday, 30 August 2005
JOURNAL	"Problems and Perspectives in Management"
FOUNDER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”

NUMBER OF REFERENCES	NUMBER OF FIGURES	NUMBER OF TABLES
0	0	0

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BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

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SECTION 1
MACROECONOMIC PROCESSES AND REGIONAL ECONOMIES MANAGEMENT

Project GLOBE: A Large Scale Cross-Cultural Study of Leadership

William W. Liddell

Project GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) is a major long-term multiphase, multimethod research project to study cross-cultural leadership differences and similarities among countries (Javidan and House, 2002). Project GLOBE's 150 researchers, located in universities around the world, collected data from 15,000 middle managers from 875 organizations in the financial services, food services, and telecommunications industries in 61 nations. The fundamental research questions were:

1. Are there leader behaviors, attributes, and organizational practices that are universally accepted and effective across cultures?
2. Are there leader behaviors, attributes, and organizational practices that are accepted and effective in only some cultures?
3. How do attributes of societal and organizational cultures affect the kinds of leader behaviors and organizational practices that are accepted and effective?
4. What is the effect of violating cultural norms relevant to leadership and organizational practices?
5. What is the relative standing of each of the cultures studied on each of the nine core dimensions of culture?
6. Can the universal and culture-specific aspects of leader behaviors, attributes, and organizational practices be explained in terms of an underlying theory that accounts for systematic differences across cultures (House, Javidan, Hanges, and Dorfman 2002, p. 4)?

The GLOBE project definition of leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization of which they are members" (House et al., 2002, p. 5). Starting with 23 leadership styles, the researchers eventually identified the following six global leader behavior dimensions:

1. The transformational-charismatic leader is decisive, performance-oriented, a visionary, an inspiration to subordinates and is willing to sacrifice for the organization.
2. The team-oriented style characterizes a leader who is an integrator, diplomatic, benevolent, and has a collaborative attitude about the team.
3. The self-protective leader is a self-centered, status conscious, conflictual, procedural, and a face-saver.
4. The participative leader is a delegator and encourages subordinate participation in decisions.
5. The humane style leader is characterized by modesty and a compassionate orientation.
6. Autonomous leaders are individualistic, independent, autonomous, and unique.

The GLOBE project defines culture as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of collectives and are transmitted across age generations" (House et al., 2002, p. 5). Project GLOBE uses nine cultural dimensions. The first six dimensions had their origins in the dimensions of culture identified by Hofstede (1980) and include (1) uncertainty avoidance; (2) power distance; (3) social col-

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lectivism; (4) in-group collectivism; (5) gender egalitarianism; and (6) assertiveness. Dimension (7), future orientation, is from Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's framework and (8) performance orientation, is similar to McClelland's concept of need for achievement while (9) humane orientation is similar to his need for affiliation.

1. Definitions of the nine dimensions of culture studied by Project GLOBE are:
2. Uncertainty Avoidance is the extent to which member of an organization or society strive to avoid uncertainty by reliance on social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices to alleviate the unpredictability of future events.
3. Power Distance is the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be unequally shared.
4. Collectivism I: Societal Collectivism reflects the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
5. Collectivism II: In-Group Collectivism reflects the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
6. Gender Egalitarianism is the extent to which an organization or a society minimizes role differences and gender discrimination.
7. Assertiveness is the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships.
8. Future Orientation is the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification.
9. Performance Orientation refers to the extent to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.
10. Humane Orientation is the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others (House et al., 2002, pp. 5-6).

To measure each dimension, questionnaire items distinguished what a respondent think of as is in organizations and what should be. Parallel questions asked respondents about what actually is in society and what they think should be in society.

The Country Clusters

Clustering societies provides a way to examine similarities and differences across societies. Project GLOBE divided the 61 countries in its sample into 10 clusters (Iupta, Hanges, and Dorman, 2002).

Findings In Four Cultural Clusters

This section presents selected research findings from four country clusters identified in Project GLOBE – the southern Asia, Anglo, Arabic, and Latin European clusters. To provide context for interpreting the survey data, the Project GLOBE reports provide detailed demographic economic historical and religious data for each cluster. However, the focus is on the findings concerning the cultural values and leadership patterns based on data collected from a sample of middle managers who reported the cultural practices and values of their countries and the effectiveness of alternative leader behaviors.

The Southern Asia Cluster

Countries in the southern Asia cluster are India, Indonesia, Phillipines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Iran. Of the nine dimensions of societal practices, group collectivism, power distance, and humane orientation rated high. Gender egalitarianism rated low with the other cultural dimensions in mid range. "The cluster is distinguished as highly group oriented, humane, male dominated, and hierarchical" (Gupta et al., 2002, p. 21).

On societal values, this cluster rates high on performance orientation, future orientation, group collectivism, and humane orientation. It scores very low on power distance. "In comparing

the societal practices and values, the managers from this cluster prefer their countries as a whole to be more performance and future oriented, and more assertive. They desire a higher level of structure in their societies, but a lower level of male domination and power differentiation" (Gupta et al., 2002, p. 20).

Concerning leadership, transformational-charismatic and team-oriented leadership rated highest for the most effective models for achieving outstanding results in southern Asia. This means that the most effective leaders are visionary, inspirational, decisive, performance-oriented, and willing to make personal sacrifices. Leaders who are team building, collaborative, and diplomatic are also highly valued.

Humane and participative leadership rates as effective in this cluster. Autonomous leadership has an average score and self-protective leaders scored the lowest suggesting that "whether or not leaders are self-centered, status conscious, face-saver, and procedural has no positive or negative effect on effectiveness" (Gupta et al., 2002. p. 24).

These leadership preferences are explained by this cluster's high power distance and family-oriented culture that expect leaders to act as patriarchs while maintaining the team and family orientation of organizations.

The Anglo Cluster

The Anglo cluster comprises Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa (white sample), and the United States. The scores of these countries on the nine cultural societal practices were at the mid range for all dimensions except for a high score on power distance and a low score on gender egalitarianism.

Concerning societal values – how things should be rather than are – this cluster scores high on performance orientation, humane orientation, family collectivism (collectivism II), and future orientation. The managers gave low scores to power distance and mid range scores to all other dimensions.

Leadership scores were highest for the charismatic, team-oriented, and participative styles. Humane leadership also scored relatively high and autonomous and self-protective leadership relatively low. The GLOBE researchers observed that: An important conclusion for these results, and consistent with the culture findings, is the emphasis placed on participative leadership as a means to facilitate effective leadership. As the countries in this cluster are relatively individualistic in cultural orientation, and all are democracies, people place great emphasis on their freedom and being able to have their say. It is therefore very important for a leader to recognize this, to induce, all relevant parties in the decision making process, to delegate responsibility, and not to try to lead uncompromisingly from the top (Ashkanasy, Tevor-Roberts, and Earnshaw, 2002, p. 370).

The Arabic Cluster

The Arabic cluster consists of Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Kuwait, and Zatar. Societal practices for this cluster indicate high ratings on in-group and family collectivism and power distance and low on future orientation and gender egalitarianism (Kabasasakal and Bodur, 2002). Uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, humane orientation, performance orientation, and assertiveness are in the mid range. In societal values this cluster rates high on future orientation, performance orientation, humane orientation, group and family collectivism, institutional collectivism (collectivism I), and uncertainty avoidance. Low ratings are for power distance, assertiveness, and gender egalitarianism.

Leadership scores were highest for team-oriented and charismatic followed by participative and humane styles which respondents understood to have a slight influence on effective leadership. Self-protective and autonomous styles received low scores, and the managers reported them to have a slight negative influence on effective leadership.

The Latin European Cluster

The Latin European cluster of countries includes Spain, Portugal, Italy, French Switzerland, France, and Israel. This cluster's scores on societal practices are high on power distance and relatively high on group and family collectivism. Gender egalitarianism had the lowest score with

future orientation slightly higher. The other dimensions – humane orientation, uncertainty avoidance, and assertiveness – are at the mid point.

For the societal values, this cluster rates high on performance orientation, group collectivism, future orientation, and humane orientation with a very low score on owner distance. (These scores are similar to the averages in the 61 countries). For leadership, charismatic, team-oriented, and participative leadership rate as the most effective leadership attributes. Low scoring behaviors are humane leadership, followed by autonomous and self-protective leadership.

What Do The Project Globe Findings Mean?

The most important implication of Project GLOBE for global managers is that because each culture varies, the actual leadership based on cultural values and differences in leader behavior should inform the global manager's selection of leaders for specific international assignments. It also suggests that international managers should interact with managers from other cultures in ways that correspond with the preferred leadership style of the specific country. For example, an implication for managers from the findings of the Arabic cluster is that "foreigners should demonstrate their capabilities and competencies and at the same time be ready to allocate time for building trust in order to maintain business in the Arabic cluster" (Kabasaleal and Bodur, 2002, p. 52). In the Anglo cluster, it is important for managers to know that individualism is the actual practice but there is a desire to be more collective. Similarly, while gender inequality is the norm, there is a desire to promote gender equality that is consistent with a meritocratic approach to managing people (Ashkanasy et al., 2002).

Another important finding from Project GLOBE is that across cultures there is strong and universal endorsement of charismatic-transformational leadership (Den Hartog et al., 1999). This suggests that despite important cultural differences, most populations have similar understandings and expectations of leaders – at least as understood from the perceptions of middle-level managers. This contradictory finding – that despite cultural differences there is a universal preference for a particular type of leadership – is also ironic because it is difficult for most managers, including those in the top ranks of organizations, to either become or display the traits of charismatic-transformational leaders.

Women as Leaders

Project GLOBE also found that most country clusters have relatively low scores on gender egalitarianism. In many parts of the world, including the Anglo cluster which is the most advanced economically, women occupy a secondary role compared to men, particularly in leadership positions in organizations. However, the Eastern European cluster – Albania, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia – is relatively high on gender egalitarianism compared with other clusters. The World Values Survey also documents the persistence of gender inequality in most cultures and the difficulty women experience moving into leadership roles (Inglehart and Norris, 2003), as do studies of women in specific cultures (Holloway and Mukurasi, 1994; Siemienska, 1994; Steinhoff and Tanaka, 1994).

Findings from a study that used Project GLOBE data to examine the perception of organizational culture and women's advancement in organizations found that characteristics of organizational culture typically associated with women in management. In particular, organizational cultural practices reflecting high humane orientation, high gender equity, high performance orientation, and low power distance are related to women's advancement in organizations. Further, organizational values, emphasizing high humane orientation and high gender equity are also related to women's advancement. Relatively speaking, the results…suggest that organizational culture practices may be more strongly related to women's advancement in organizations than organizational cultural values (Bajdo and Dickson 2002, pp. 409-410).

The distinction between organizational culture practices and organizational values is important because it suggests that although organizations reflect the values of the larger culture, they may develop internal practices that recognize the contribution of women based on merit. Although

the extent of the difference in organizational practices and values is not known, the existence of variation between them illustrates that in some ways, management practice is more programmatic and egalitarian than either societal or organizational values.

Finally, the rational and humane use of human resources argues that societies should permit women to develop their fullest potential. While many cultures disagree with this position, and the rise of fundamentalist religion reinforces the traditional role of women (Inglehart and Norris, 2003), the participation of women in managerial positions worldwide is likely to increase as modernization and globalization increase. Another factor influencing prospects for more gender equality is that multinational corporations usually select the most talented people for management positions (Adler, 2002).

Forces For Convergence Of Leadership Styles

Project GLOBE found that there is a significant convergence of leadership in organizations because in most countries in the study there is a preference for charismatic and transformational leadership. This could reflect a universal human desire for authority figures to provide meaning and direction to human activity.

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