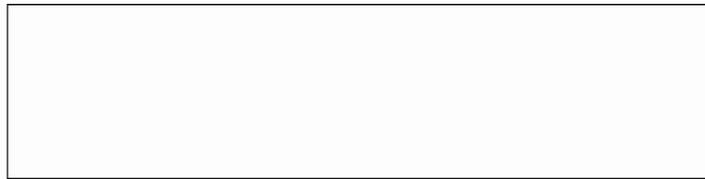




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**Chapter 34: Cross-Cultural and Global Leadership**

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### Abstract

This chapter summarizes the field of cross-cultural and global leadership research. It starts with a brief historical overview and descriptions of international landmark projects of high impact until today. The progress achieved in the field since about the mid 1990s is critically reviewed along fundamental research questions, for example: Which definitions of leadership are appropriate for cross-cultural study? Which approaches to culture are suitable for studying leadership? Which focus on leadership to take – leadership differences or communalities across cultures? What is the magnitude of cultural effects on leadership? What is the moderating role of culture on the relationship between leadership and other relevant variables? What methodological issues have been and still need to be resolved in cross-cultural leadership research? With that as a foundation, the chapter delineates how the findings of contemporary cross-cultural leadership research can enhance managerial practice. Targeting the future, seven recommendations are offered that specify fundamental conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and practical issues in which significant progress can be made.

## Introduction

Cross-cultural leadership research considers cultural factors relevant to leadership, its conditions, its processes, and its consequences, in the development of theoretical concepts and the use of research methods. Dickson, Den Hartog, and Mitchelson (2003) noted in their review of the field, “It would be essentially impossible to prepare a single chapter that presented an exhaustive account of the research on cross-cultural issues and leadership.” (p. 730). Bass (2008) concluded his more recent review of the field by saying, “I have tried and hope I did not leave out too much.” (p. 1047). We agree with both points and therefore restrict the present review to the most noteworthy developments in cross-cultural leadership research and integrate these into a distinctive account of what contemporary cross-cultural leadership research has to offer for future research and practice.

After clarifying some terms and distinctions, we give a brief historical overview and describe landmark projects in this expanding field. We then address basic questions that were, and still are, addressed in cross-cultural leadership research, together with the progress made since about the mid 1990s (for reviews of earlier research, see e.g., Dorfman, 1996; House, Wright, & Aditya, 1997). Finally, we take a practitioners’ perspective, asking the question, what has the field delivered, in practical terms, to resolve “real world” problems of international leadership. The chapter ends with a summary of conclusions and a collection of recommendations addressing future directions and topics that remain to be addressed.

### About the Use of Terms

In the literature, you will find several more or less synonymously used terms and expressions, like “*cross-cultural ...*”, “*international ...*”, “*multi-national ...*”, “*multi-cultural ...*” or “*global ...*”, each combined with “*... leaders*”, “*... leadership*”, “*... managers*” or “*... management*”, depending on the authors’ preferences, paradigms and methods used, or on the publication outlet chosen, which might be more practically oriented (e.g., managerial,

business-related, political), or more academic in nature (e.g., psychological, sociological, anthropological). No wonder that we found cross-cultural leadership research to be a rather interdisciplinary field. Some disciplines are more dominant, for example, psychological leadership research, cross-cultural psychology, international management, and business research. Each is well represented in journals or periodical book volumes, for example, *Leadership Quarterly*, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of World Business*, or *Mobley's Advances in Global Leadership*, to name just a few.

For the purpose of this chapter, we decided to not engage in scholastic arguments about the correct use of terms and definitional compartmentalization of fields into sub-fields. In our view, the field of cross-cultural leadership research is not mature enough for such an approach. How could it be, when even the field of leadership research has not yet reached paradigmatic consensus (Glynn & Raffaelli, 2010)? Instead, we take an inclusive approach, and where appropriate, discuss relevant distinctions.

### **“Cross-cultural” versus “Global” Leadership Research**

Recently, the distinction between cross-cultural and global leadership was pointed out by Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) in an *Annual Review of Psychology* article about leadership research. *Cross-cultural leadership* research focuses on the direct or moderating impact of cultural phenomena (often captured in dimensions) on leadership and, for example, the extent to which leadership practices and values that emerge in one culture apply to others. As such it often takes a comparative approach. The field is mainly represented in the academic literature (for earlier reviews, see Bass, 2008; Dickson et al., 2003). The field of *global leadership* focuses on the more practical problems of international leaders and leading multi-national organizations, for example, selection and development of international leaders, the cultural experience and particular competencies necessary for effective international

leadership, and international HRM to inform organizations' strategy and international politics. The term global leadership is currently mainly represented in the popular literatures (e.g., Green, Hassan, Immelt, Marks, & Meiland, 2003; Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 1999; Lane, 2004) and seldom in more academic outlets (e.g., Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 2002). We found little sound empirical research published under the label "global leadership". A book about various practical issues of global leadership (and management) which is also well informed by empirical cross-cultural research has been presented by Adler (2008). Furthermore, the series "Advances in global leadership" (cf. for the latest volume, Mobley, Li, & Wang, 2011) publishes regularly new developments in the field of cross-cultural and global leadership and leadership development, including empirical studies. The focus of this chapter's review is on the academic field of cross-cultural leadership and its potential application to the field of global leadership.

### **A Brief Historical Overview**

The documented thinking about leadership has a long tradition in the Western and the Eastern cultural hemispheres. In Indian philosophy, the Bhagavad Gita – one of the most famed Hindu texts dated to over five thousand years ago – includes leadership lessons (Rarick & Nickerson, 2008). In the scripture, in which Lord Krishna explains to prince Arjuna his duties as a ruler and warrior, leadership is understood as fulfilling one's responsibilities, demonstrating pro-activity, and working for the benefit of the greater good. Today, such leadership might be classified as *responsible* and *sustainable*. In the sixth century B.C., the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu described ideal leadership as being *invisible* and *empowering* and emphasized the aspect of leader's *humility*: "A leader is best when people barely know he exists. Not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him ... But of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say 'We did this ourselves'" (Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1986, p. 216).

About the same time, Confucius in China (551 – 479 B.C.) framed leadership in terms of authentic *role modeling*: “Go before the people with your example, and be laborious in their affairs.” (The Analects of Confucius, Book 13). Not very much later, the Greek philosopher Plato (428 – 348 B.C.) described successful rulers in the “ideal state” (*politeia*) to be *wise* like philosophers. In the second best state (*nomoi*), Plato added citizen *participation*, because he was convinced that unrestricted power will corrupt anyone. Nearly a thousand years later, Saint Benedict (480 – 547 A.D.), known as the founder of Western monasticism, noted in the Regula Benedicti (Rule of Benedict, published in 540) that the successful abbot is *wise, righteous, benign, and serving* the nature of many, “Let him know that he has undertaken the care of sick souls, and not a tyrannical authority over such as are well” (Ch. 27, Sentence 6) – today one would say *people orientation*. Another thousand years later, in his book “*Il Principe*” (The Prince, 1513), Nicolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), a historian, philosopher, Italian state secretary, and one of the founders of modern political science, described the “*strive for power in the interest of the lot*” as the core of effective leadership, thereby formulating an initial stage of *charismatic leadership*. Its darker side is commonly known as “Machiavellianism” – the tendency to manipulate other people for one’s personal gain. Machiavelli also noted, “Everyone sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are” (The Prince, Ch. 18). Therewith, he addressed a rather modern perspective on leadership, which has been elaborated within *leadership categorization theory*, namely “leadership is in the eye of the beholder”.

Because leadership has been a long-standing construct of interest in organization studies, beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Bogardus, 1920), today we can look more closely into and beyond the remarkable insights of the above cited historical writers (for recent reviews about leadership research in general, not covered in this chapter, see other chapters in this volume, as well as Avolio et al., 2009; Bass & Bass, 2008). However, nearly

all leadership research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been conducted from a social science perspective and within single cultures, mainly within North America and some European countries, which has resulted in predominantly Western and ethnocentric approaches to leadership theory and practice.

### **Ethnocentrism and Parochialism**

The insights from the above cited historical writers are not only influenced by the occupational context of their individual *métier*, but demonstrably also by the historical, philosophical, religious, political, social, and economic conditions of their cultural epoch. From the perspective of cross-cultural research, the same is the case for contemporary leadership researchers and the way they conceptualize, plan, and conduct leadership studies. Without explicitly considering cultural factors and their interactions with leadership and followership phenomena and the background of the research protagonists, the potential consequences of cultural impact are likely to remain unnoticed and find subliminal entry in leadership theory, empirical results, and global leadership practice. Such *ethnocentrism* has been diagnosed for organizational behavior research in general in the past, although it has decreased lately, to at least some extent (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007, p. 496 ff).

A similar and somewhat broader phenomenon is *parochialism*, which means viewing the world only through one's own perspective, thereby neither recognizing nor appreciating the fact that differences in world view, working, and living can create serious consequences or offer significant opportunities (Adler, 2008, p. 11). As will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, ethnocentrism and parochialism hinder theory development and knowledge integration in leadership research in general.

### **Leadership in a Global World**

Since World War II, an unprecedented globalization of organizations, both private and public, has taken place, requiring leaders to work internationally at particular locations

outside their home culture (*expatriate leaders*), often across a diverse set of many different cultures (*global leaders*). The raise of e-communication and the World Wide Web, which took its first steps only about 20 years ago in 1991, made it possible for multi-national organizations to literally operate continuously, for example, on global projects, for 24 hours, across all time zones, and across many different cultures around the world. The increasing interest in cross-cultural leadership research is thus also plausible from a practitioners' point of view, resulting in the rise of what has been above described as "global leadership".

As stated in one of the earlier volumes of the Mobley series on global leadership: "Multiple authors (...) have documented the accelerating globalization of business, the relative dearth of leadership talent, the inadequacy of global leadership development processes and the continued derailment of international executives." (Mobley & Dorfman, 2003, p. ix).

Understandably, the selection and development of internationally successful leaders and leadership practices are major goals in the practitioners' world. One way to achieve such practical goals is seen in the advancement of cross-cultural leadership research, by empirical identification of culturally relevant (and irrelevant) antecedents, processes, and consequences of leadership in a global world.

Accordingly, in the present review, we focus on the scientific side of cross-cultural leadership and its consequences for issues in global leadership, rather than on the multitude of practical issues dealt with under the label of global leadership (for an excellent collection of these, see e.g., Adler, 2008). The extent to which the field of cross-cultural leadership research is up to this challenge will be addressed in a later section.

### **The Growth of Cross-cultural Issues in Leadership Research**

By now, a substantial body of cross-cultural leadership research is available, as is documented, for example, in the reviews from Bass (2008), Dorfman (2004), and House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004). Further extensive reviews exist for cross-

cultural research that indirectly links to leadership (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2007; Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006; Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005). Publications about cross-cultural leadership have annually grown fourfold in the second half of the last century (Hofstede, 2001, p. 525). A particular increase is evident from the late 1980s on, the decade in which Hofstede's seminal book "Culture's Consequences" (1980, 1984) was presented, and during the 1990s, when several seminal reviews about cross-cultural leadership were published (e.g., Dorfman, 1996; House et al., 1997) in the same year in which two special issues from *Leadership Quarterly* (Vol. 8 (3/4), 1997) were devoted to original research papers in the field of cross-cultural psychology. Since then, the field has grown continuously.

### **Landmark Projects**

Since Hofstede (1980, 1984) presented his seminal 53 nations study about culture values, it took more than a decade until further studies of similar scope and scale were available: Schwartz's (1992, 1994, 1999) teachers' and students' value survey in 49 nations, Trompenaars' (1993) employee value survey in 46 nations, a 43 nations sub-sample which was reanalyzed by Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars (1996), and a student sample value survey comprising 21 countries from especially Asian cultures, conducted by the *Chinese Culture Connection* (CCC, 1987; Bond, 1988). For a review of some earlier mid-scale cultural values studies comprising up to 25 nations, see Ronen and Shenkar (1985). Two recently published cross-cultural studies, one empirical study comprising employee and student samples from 33 nations (Gelfand et al., 2011) and one meta-analysis (Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010) addressing the impact of cultural differences, measured by the Hofstede dimensions, on individual behavior in organizations, are promising candidates for becoming landmark projects in the future.

The above mentioned projects resolved some major conceptual and methodological shortcomings in comparative cross-cultural research which usually are evident in small scale

studies, which sample only one or two handful of countries. However, while focusing on culture values, they did not directly investigate leadership phenomena, nor did they take advantage from sampling especially leaders or managers in their various natural habitats. However, they served - and will do so in the future - as a useful context of reference for a multitude of small scale studies about cross-cultural leadership (for a review, see Bass, 2008).

To our knowledge, only two large scale multi-nation studies address culture and leadership concordantly, thereby also sampling managerial populations from various organizations. One project began with Smith and Peterson's (1988) early work about leadership, organizations, and culture, along the lines of which an event management evaluation model was developed and refined (e.g., Smith, Wang, & Leung, 1997). Their approach culminates in a 47 nation study about event management styles of nearly 7,000 managers (Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002). The other project is GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness), a multi-nation (N = 62), multi-industry (N = 3), multi-organization (N > 900), multi-level (country, industry, organization, N = 17,000 middle level managers), multi-method (quantitative-comparative and qualitative-interpretative), and multi-investigator study about societal culture, organizational culture, leadership, and performance, with more than 170 management and social scientists participating from the countries studied. It resulted in a multitude of research papers (up to 2003 reviewed by Dickson et al., 2003) and two authoritative book volumes (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007; House et al., 2004).

Because most of the recent work in cross-cultural leadership research refers to one or several of the above landmark projects, they are discussed in somewhat more detail: first the large scale culture values studies, and second, the large scale cross-cultural leadership studies.

### **Large Scale Culture Values Studies**

**Hofstede's culture dimensions.** Hofstede was the first to identify fundamental culture dimensions on the basis of large scale multi-nation questionnaire studies, which were conducted between 1967 and 1973 with altogether 117,000 IBM employees from originally 66 nations (Hofstede, 1980), later 40 nations, which were expanded to 53 nations (Hofstede, 1983, 1984). With his seminal research project, Hofstede was the first to actually map the territory of comparative cross-cultural research in a way that advanced the understanding of the societal culture construct at that time, thereby offering new possibilities for hypothesis development and testing in many areas of cross-cultural studies, including leadership research (cf. Kirkman et al., 2006).

Four dimensions were identified (individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance). A fifth dimension was later added (long-term orientation) in response to the findings from the Chinese Culture Connection (1987), which converged with three of Hofstede's dimensions, but not with uncertainty avoidance. The reliability and validity of Hofstede's four- and five-dimensional models was disputed by several authors (e.g., Kirkman et al., 2006; Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001). For example, it was pointed out that only one company (US based) was studied, that the data was somewhat "old" (reaching into the 1960s), and that individual cultural values within cultures cannot be treated as homogeneous. It was also criticized that the fifth dimension is empirically interrelated with the original four dimensions in a manner that would suggest to replace the uncertainty avoidance dimension by it and not to add it as a fifth dimension to the original model (e.g., McSweeney, 2002; see the rebuttal from Hofstede, 2002). Today, Hofstede's four-dimensional model is the most widely used.

Although there are many problems, for example, the scale construction process, the cultural equivalency of items, and the multi-level nature of the data, to name just a few of the

problems all cross-cultural researchers have to cope with, some respectable correlations between Hofstede's dimensions and other relevant culture dimensions were established in subsequent studies (for reviews to each dimension, see House et al., 2004, chapters 14 to 17 and 19). The largest of these studies, which were conducted about four decades after Hofstede's original study, sampled respondents from many different organizations, and used Hofstede's four (Smith et al., 2002; Gelfand et al., 2011) and five dimensional model (House et al., 2004), are described further below.

**Schwartz's cultural value types.** Schwartz (1999) surveyed individual value preferences (cf. Schwartz, 1992) of some 35,000 individuals from 122 samples of school teachers and college students in altogether 49 nations. He identified seven value types (embeddedness, affective autonomy, intellectual autonomy, hierarchy, egalitarianism, mastery, and harmony) which are structured along three polar dimensions (conservatism versus autonomy [intellectual or affective], hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony). The value type approach helped identify groups of national cultures via similarity structure analysis (SSA; Borg & Lingo, 1987) which, for example, share (or are distinct in) social working norms or values about the centrality of work in life. Schwartz (1999) asserts that the cultural value type approach might fruitfully be further exploited to predict and interpret national differences in managers' behavior towards followers.

Apart from several studies within single cultures (e.g., China: Fu, Tsui, Liu, & Li, 2010) only few mid to large scale cross-cultural studies are available, which investigate Schwartz's values together with leadership phenomena (for a large one, see Smith et al., 2002, described below). In a very recent study, comprising over 20,000 participants from 18 countries, Leong and Fischer (2011) used a meta-analytic approach, which is seldom employed in cross-cultural leadership research. They established positive correlations

between Schwartz's mastery (-harmony) and egalitarian (-hierarchy) dimensions and transformational leadership, which shared about 25% of the societal cultural variance.

**Trompenaars' cultural dimensions.** Trompenaars (1993) surveyed the values of more than 11,000 employees in 46 countries (see also Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). He identified seven dimensions (orientation in time, attitudes towards the environment, universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. collectivism, neutral vs. emotional, specific vs. diffuse, and achievement vs. ascription) for understanding cultural diversity in business. Although Trompenaars' dimensions correlate to some extent with culture dimensions of other large scale studies (e.g., Smith et al., 2002; House et al., 2004), they were disputed extensively. In a review of Trompenaars' (1993) book (*Riding the Waves of Culture*) which was titled *Riding the Waves of Commerce*, Hofstede (1996) points out several problems in scale development and construct validity and presents a list of suggestions for improvement. Obviously not hoping to get access to Trompenaars' data base (which only few researchers did, e.g., Smith et al., 1996), he concludes his review by stating that Trompenaars' (1993) work is a "fast food approach to intercultural diversity and communication" (p. 198). Smith et al. (1996) drew a 43 nation data base of about 8,800 managers from Trompenaars' (1993) original databank and applied multi-dimensional scaling techniques to establish convergence with earlier large-scale surveys (e.g., Hofstede's, Schwartz's, CCC). They ended up simplifying the dimensional space of cultural values into two dimensions (egalitarian commitment vs. conservatism and utilitarian involvement vs. loyal involvement).

**Cultural tightness versus looseness.** According to Gelfand, Nishii, and Raver (2006) the tightness versus looseness of national cultures is a neglected source of cultural variation that is dominating the geo-political landscape. Tight cultures have strong norms and a low tolerance of deviant behavior and loose cultures have weak norms and a high tolerance of deviant behavior. In a recent *Science* article Gelfand and her colleagues (Gelfand et al., 2011)

empirically examined cultural tightness versus looseness and a variety of antecedent and consequent variables across 33 Nations. Results speak to the high validity of this culture dimension, in particular its distinctiveness from other culture dimensions such as Hofstede's. Moreover, results support the underlying theoretical model about how culture affects our everyday life and psychological adaptation. Distal factors, such as ecological and historical threads (population density, history of conflict, natural disasters, resources scarcity, human diseases) in combination with socio-political institutions (government, education, media, legal, religion) shape the strength of social norms and the tolerance of deviant behavior in a given society (i.e. tightness versus looseness). These in return affect proximal and contemporaneous processes, such as recurrent episodes in local worlds (structure of everyday situations, degree of situational constraint) and our individual psychological adaptation processes within respective social situations (e.g., self-guide, self regulation, epistemic needs, self monitoring abilities). The authors further argue that cultural tightness versus looseness has the potential to be a major source of cultural conflict in a global economic and political sphere.

**Cultures' Consequences meta-analysed.** In a comprehensive meta-analysis of 598 studies, Taras, Kirkman and Steel (2010) examined the relationship between Hofstede's four cultural value dimensions and various individual level outcome variables which are relevant for organizations (e.g., emotions, attitudes, perceptions, behaviours, job performance). All four cultural dimensions have a similar average predictive power at the individual level of analysis ( $\rho = .18$ ). Interestingly, for some dependent variables, namely job performance, absenteeism, and turnover, the cultural effects are significantly weaker than effects attributable to personality traits, demographic characteristics or general mental ability, whereas, for other dependent variables, such as organizational commitment, identification, citizenship behavior, team-related attitudes, or feedback seeking, the cultural effects are

significantly stronger. Furthermore, cultural values were more strongly related to outcomes for particular groups of individuals, for example, for managers (rather than for students), and for older, male, and more educated respondents. Both findings appear to be of relevance to the cross cultural study of organizations and leadership. It was also found that cultural tightness versus looseness (described above) moderates the relationship between Hofstede's culture dimensions and individual level outcome variables. The moderator effect speaks to the relative independence of the cultural tightness versus looseness dimension from the established Hofstede dimensions.

Although not directly studying leadership phenomena, all above described landmark studies of cultural values (Hofstede, CCC, Schwartz, Trompenaars, Smith et al.) stimulated cross-cultural leadership research indirectly. They are often cited and widely used as reference points for cross-cultural studies about different social and organizational phenomena - including leadership. And the last two more recently published studies by Taras et al. (2010) and Gelfand et al. (2011) have the potential to serve as similar reference points in future research.

### **Large Scale Cross-cultural Leadership Studies**

**Leaders' event management across cultures.** Surveying nearly 7,000 middle managers from 47 countries, Smith et al. (2002) aimed to examine how cultural value dimensions identified by Hofstede (1984), Trompenaars (1993), and Schwartz (1999) relate to the sources of guidance that managers use in handling a set of specific work events. The authors focused on investigating sources of guidance as these are more contextualized than are values, and are thus expected to have a closer linkage with actual managerial behavior. The sources of guidance analyzed in the study included sources relevant in vertical organizational relationships (e.g., formal rules and supervisor advice) and other sources such as co-workers, specialists, unwritten rules, and beliefs. The study yielded that cultural values

of power distance (Hofstede) and mastery-harmony (Schwartz) can predict the managers' reliance on hierarchical sources. However, cultural values were less able to explain the use of lateral and the more tacit sources of guidance.

**The GLOBE Project.** The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project has been described as “the Manhattan Project of the study of the relationship of culture to conceptions of leadership” (Triandis, 2004, p. xv). It investigates the impact of societal and organizational culture on organizational leadership prototypes and performance, thereby testing hypotheses about the link between culture, organization, leadership, and performance derived from leadership categorization or implicit leadership theory (Lord & Maher, 1991), value-belief theory of culture (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995), implicit motivation theory (McClelland, 1985), and structural contingency theory of organizations (Hickson, Hinings, McMillan, & Schwitter, 1974). Following a quantitative-comparative (*etic*) approach, together with a qualitative-interpretative (*emic*) approach, GLOBE analyzed cultural values in relation to leadership prototypes, thereby distinguishing societal *culture universal* from societal *culture specific* leadership attributes and dimensions (cf. Dorfman, Hanges, & Brodbeck, 2004).

By 1997, when a major part of the first GLOBE data set was gathered, the project involved about 170 social scientist and management scholars from more than 62 nations, covering all major regions of the world (Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Northern Europe, Latin America, North America, North Africa, Middle East, the Pacific Rim, Sub-Saharan Africa). Data from about 17,000 middle level managers from about 900 organizations across three industries (food processing, financial services, telecommunications) were obtained and validated in the GLOBE phases 1 and 2 (House et al., 2004). Additional qualitative data was gathered by many of GLOBE's country co-investigators via focus group and individual interviews with leaders, media analysis, participant observations, historical

records, and economic databases. All that information has been integrated in each of 25 country chapters as part of GLOBE's second book volume (Chhokar et al., 2007). A third GLOBE volume focusing on CEOs as leaders and organizational productivity is currently in preparation (House, Sulley, Dorfman, Javidan, & Hanges, in prep).

On the basis of previous cultural theorizing and empirical studies about cultural values (see also the review from House et al., 1997), GLOBE developed and validated a set of four types of cultural scales: a) societal culture and b) organizational culture (with equivalent dimensionality for societal and organizational levels), thereby distinguishing c) cultural values (by using “*should be*” - items) from d) perceived cultural practices (by using “*as is*” - items) for each of nine cultural dimensions: (1) assertiveness, (2) future orientation, (3) gender egalitarianism, (4) humane orientation, (5) in-group collectivism, (6) institutional collectivism, (7) performance orientation, (8) power distance, and (9) uncertainty avoidance. In addition, country level measures of leadership prototypes (i.e., culturally endorsed implicit theories of leadership, CLTs; Dorfman et al., 2004) were constructed, based on 112 items comprising cross-culturally equipollent leadership attributes and behaviors. Twenty-one first order factors emerged that were clustered into six second order dimensions of leadership: (1) charismatic value-based (transformational), (2) team-oriented, (3) humane, (4) participative, (5) autonomous, and (6) self-protective (defensive and hierarchical) leadership. Findings showed that the charismatic and team-oriented leadership dimensions were universally viewed as contributors to effective leadership, whereas the four remaining dimensions were more or less culturally contingent.

GLOBE's newly developed multi-level and multi-measures approach did not remain undisputed. In *Leadership Quarterly*, Peterson and Castro (2006) criticized how level of analysis issues were dealt within GLOBE's scale construction, which was rebutted by Hanges and Dickson (2006). Dansereau and Yammarino (2006) settled the case by presenting a

checklist of what a (cross-cultural) researcher needs to consider in testing a multiple levels of analysis theory and focusing on correlations or multiple regression. They examined the design of the GLOBE study and concluded that it satisfies all of the criteria in their checklist.

### **Fundamental Research Questions and Progress Made**

The progress made in the field of cross-cultural leadership research in the past 15 years can be discussed in terms of nine questions: (1) How to define leadership for purposes of cross-cultural study?, (2) Which approach to culture to take for studying leadership?, (3) Should the focus be on leadership differences or communalities across cultures?, (4) What is the magnitude of cultural effects on leadership?, (5) Are there culture-specific dimensions of leadership?, (6) Are there emic “species” of leadership beyond dimensions?, (7) How does culture moderate the relationship between leadership and other variables?, (8) Is leadership culturally contingent or universal or both?, and (9) What are appropriate methodologies for use in cross-cultural leadership research?

### **How to Define Leadership for Cross-cultural Study?**

Among leadership scholars, there is no consensual agreed-upon definition of leadership (Bass, 2008; House et al., 1997). And even the question, whether this state of affairs is good or bad for leadership research, is controversial. Garry Yukl, who regularly reviewed the field of leadership, takes the position that it is neither feasible nor desirable to attempt to resolve the controversies on the appropriate definition of leadership at this stage (Yukl, 2006, p. 6). This appears plausible when taking the perspective that particular initial definitions of leadership should not predetermine the answer to central practical questions, like “How can leaders be identified?”, “How do leaders affect followers?”, or “What makes leadership effective?”.

Glynn and Raffaelli (2010), who analyzed the field of leadership research between 1957 to 2007 from a theory of science perspective (as an example of a domain with high

theoretical pluralism), conclude that the field displays sparse instances of stock taking initiatives and a considerable lack of commensuration by which concepts and theories can be compared or synthesized. The field is seen to be highly pluralistic in concepts and theories which, once suggested, continue to exist, often unchallenged, unshaped, and not integrated with others or substituted by better ones, thereby cluttering the field of scientific enquiry.

Glynn and Raffaelli (2010) conclude that the field of leadership research provides a compartmentalized context of scientific enquiry, in which long existing “stand-alone silos of thought” reflect “incommensuration across theoretical boundaries” (p. 390). From a cross-cultural perspective such a field is likely to be inhabited by parochial and ethnocentric views and attitudes. Over the last 20 years, along the advancements in cross-cultural research, cross-cultural leadership research built up the potential to set an example for the too pluralistic general field of leadership research in how to advance development towards more integrated concepts and theories. To that respect, Glynn and Raffaelli (2010) note that the scientific development of leadership research could indeed profit from a cross-cultural research perspective.

Thus, rather than inherit a multitude of leadership definitions from its mother discipline (and the controversies with them), some cross-cultural leadership researchers began to ask the question of how definitions and theories of leadership should be constructed in order to best suit the purpose of the cross-cultural investigation of leadership phenomena. In that respect, we find two definitional approaches to leadership noteworthy, one is social psychological in nature and addresses leadership as a universal social phenomenon, and one is based on a cross-nationally agreed upon definition of organizational leadership.

**A social psychological “universal” definition of leadership.** Because social psychological research is intended to advance universal theories of human experience, emotion, motivation, cognition, and behavior in social situations, it is oriented towards

universalistic concepts and definitions of leadership as a social psychological phenomenon (e.g., Bond & Smith, 1996). These are likely to fit the purposes of cross-cultural research. Smith (1995), for example, defines leadership from a social psychological perspective, as “a quality attributed to people as a result of their interrelations with others”. This admittedly very abstract and broad definition does not imply that leadership comes with people (e.g., personality characteristics) or a position (e.g., line manager) or the organizational and societal cultural context (e.g., hierarchical values). Instead, personal characteristics, peculiarities of positions, and cultural contexts are seen as conditions that shape, facilitate, or inhibit the expression of leadership and its effectiveness in social contexts, and as such, they are matters for scientific discovery rather than defining constituents of the terms “leader” and “leadership”.

One advantage of such an approach is its compatibility with psychological and social psychological theory building, which operates from basically universal concepts of human motivation, cognition, or behavior, for example, the cognitive leadership categorization theory (Lord & Maher, 1991), the propositions of which should principally apply to leadership across all cultures in the world. Smith et al. (2002) argue for the use of a relatively nonspecific social psychological concept of leadership in order to be better able to explore value-behavior linkages by taking a culture general (*etic*) approach.

Another advantage is that a nonspecific social psychological definition is better suited to cross-cultural leadership research than definitions of leadership which make subliminal ethnocentric value assumptions. For example, some authors understand leadership in terms of exercising persuasive (and not coercive) influence on followers, for example, “Leaders are individuals who significantly affect the thoughts and behaviors of others, without using coercion, but rather through persuasion.” (Adler, 2002, p. 167). Thereby, it is implied that individuals who rely on coercion and manipulation for influencing followers, although

possibly appropriate and effective in some cultures or contexts, are not seen (or categorized by their followers) as “leaders” and respective leadership values and behaviors are likely to be excluded or degraded as subject for scientific enquiry.

**A cross-cultural “consensual” definition of organizational leadership.** An attempt to define leadership cross-culturally was undertaken by the GLOBE project. In its beginning phase, in 1995, in a meeting of 84 scholars representing 56 countries, a consensual and culture-universal (with respect to the countries represented) definition of “organizational leadership” emerged, that is, “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (House et al., 1997, p. 548). The developmental process was to find consensus among a culturally heterogeneous and large sample of cultural backgrounds of the scholars involved. And, for better comparability across many countries, the focus of enquiry was laid on leadership in business organizations and industries existent in all 61 countries studied, and, for a start, middle managers were used as respondents, because they lead and are being led, and thus have experience with the leader and the follower perspective. Employees or top level executives would have been an equally appropriate comparison reference across all countries studied. The latter group of managers has lately been investigated in GLOBE phase 3 in relation to organizational productivity (see House et al., in prep).

### **Which Approach to Culture to Take for Studying Leadership?**

As can be seen from the various definitions of culture suggested by prominent social scientists, like with leadership, there is no consensually agreed-upon definition of culture. It has been defined as the man-made part of the environment (Herskovits, 1955), as patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting acquired by human collectives (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961), as norms, roles, values, and belief systems that form meaningful wholes (Triandis, 1972), as the collective programming of the mind, that distinguishes the members

of one human group from another (Hofstede, 1980), or as standard operating procedures – “the way things are done around here” (e.g., Triandis, 1994). While the meanings of culture as a construct converge, its measurement tends to differ more and more (for a review of current measures, see Tsui, Nifadkar Ou, 2007). Although it is often acknowledged that culture operates at multiple levels (e.g., national culture, sub-cultures, and organizational culture) national culture has been the predominantly used category for cross-cultural leadership research in the past and today. Therefore this review is concerned primarily with national culture and how it relates to leadership.

**Cultural values versus cultural practices.** It appears that no newer definitions of culture which deviate substantially from the above presented have been suggested lately, except perhaps for one distinction made in the GLOBE study. GLOBE introduced the distinction of cultural values (culture as a normative system of its members - “should be”) as compared to cultural practices (culture “as is” experienced by its members) into the cross-cultural research domain (House et al., 1997; House et al., 2004). The cultural values or normative approach is consistent with traditional culture value-belief theory (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Triandis, 1994) that has been widely used in cross-cultural research. According to the experiential (“as is”) definition of culture in GLOBE’s cultural practices approach, “cultures are distinctive environments about which members share meaning and values, resulting in a compelling model pattern of common affective, attitudinal, and behavioral orientation that is transmitted across generations and that differentiates collectivities from each other.” (House et al., 1997, p. 540). Both cultural values and practices measures have been validated on the country level of analysis with different data sets inside and outside from GLOBE (Gupta, Sully de Luque, & House, 2004; Hanges & Dickson, 2004; Javidan & Hauser, 2004).

What the distinction between cultural practices and values actually means is still not fully explored. Even among GLOBE country co-investigators, there is considerable disagreement about the meaning of this distinction (e.g., see the country chapters in Chhokar et al., 2007). Whereas the standard cross-cultural literature assumed that societal cultural practices and values are positively correlated on the country level of analysis (e.g., Triandis, 2004), the GLOBE data show that for most dimensions (7 out of 9) negative country-level correlations between their value and practices counterparts are obtained (ranging from  $r = -.26$  to  $r = -.62$ ). One explanation for these findings was suggested by Brodbeck, Chhokar, and House (2007) in the form of the *deprivation hypothesis*. For the individual respondent, a disparity between “as is” and “should be” responses to commensurable culture dimensions is based on perceiving certain societal cultural practices as less or more dominant in their society than they think they should be (i.e., deprivation). On the country level, the respondents’ shared perceptions of a disparity (negative or positive) between culture practices and values imply a culturally shared “sympathy” with (higher or lower levels of) certain cultural values. It remains to be tested whether the deprivation hypothesis can actually explain or predict cultures’ readiness for change towards the implementation of desired cultural values that are deprived (for a more detailed account, see Brodbeck et al., 2007).

With respect to leadership prototypes, the GLOBE results show that cultural and organizational value (should be) dimensions are overall much stronger predictors than culture and organizational practice (as is) dimensions. Given that cultural values reflect an idealized state of what should be in societies and organizations respectively, and that leadership prototypes comprise individuals’ implicit beliefs regarding idealized or effective leadership, cultural (should be) values and leadership prototypes ought to correspond more strongly (Dorfman et al., 2004, p. 701ff).

**Emic versus etic approach to the study of cross-cultural leadership.** There are two basic perspectives that can be employed in the study of a society's cultural system - the point of view of either the outsider or the insider. For that distinction, the linguist and anthropologist Kenneth Pike (1954) coined the neologisms "*etic*" (for an outside view and "*emic*" (for an inside view), which were readily adopted in the cross-cultural literature (cf. Triandis, 1980). Pike derived the terms by analogy from the terms "phonetics" and "phonemics", two sub-disciplines in linguistics for the study of languages' sound systems: *Phonetics* asks the question of which phones can be physically expressed by human beings and *phonemics* asks the question of which meaningful distinctions are referred to by particular phones, and if identified as meaningful, phones become phonemes.

An etic approach to the cross-cultural study of leadership attempts to generalize leadership phenomena and theory across cultures and examines similarities and differences, thereby preferring quantitative and comparative methods. An emic approach focuses on the study of leadership and its meaning within the particular cultural-contexts in which it occurs, thereby preferring qualitative, narrative, and interpretative methods. Etic approaches have been more dominant in cross-cultural leadership research than emic approaches. Recently, both approaches were combined in the GLOBE study (Chhokar et al., 2007).

Scandura and Dorfman (2004) pointed out that it is a common misinterpretation in cross-cultural (leadership) research, when "*etic*" is equated with culture-common or universal leadership phenomena and "*emic*" with culture-specific ones, because in the distinction in linguistics, "*etic*" utterances encompass all "*emic*" utterances, which is not the understanding when culture universal leadership attributes are differentiated from culture-specific ones. We would not go as far as Dorfman, who suggested "to ditch the terms emic and etic" (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004, p. 288), the use of "*etic*" for an outer perspective and "*emic*" for an inner

perspective of culture, each in the above described sense, is still helpful for addressing the particular approach that is taken to the study of cultural issues in leadership.

### **Should the Field Focus on Leadership Differences or Communalities Across Cultures?**

The distinction between culture-specific and culture-universal leadership phenomena addresses a different set of questions than the distinction between emic and etic approaches to the study of cultural issues. Grounded in a basically etic perspective on the cross-cultural study of leadership, *leadership “differs culturally”-approaches* ask the question of whether leadership is culturally contingent and which leadership attributes are most strongly affected by cultural factors. Also grounded in an etic perspective, *leadership “is universal”-approaches*, in contrast, seek to establish leadership and certain leadership attributes as globally concordant phenomena.

**The leadership “differs culturally”-approach.** Coming from the leadership domain, Yukl (2006) distinguished four types of questions raised in cross-cultural leadership research. Each type of question comprises one theme inherited from general leadership research plus the addendum “*differ culturally*”: a) “How conceptualizations of leadership behavior (e.g., prototypes, descriptions) differ culturally?”, b) “How beliefs about effective leadership differ culturally?”, c) “How actual patterns of leadership behavior differ culturally?”, and d) “How relationships between leadership behavior and outcomes differ across cultures?”. Questions like these reflect traditional approaches to the study of cross-cultural leadership, implying that leadership differs across cultures. Studies which take the leadership “differs culturally”-approach are often descriptive in nature and usually compare small samples of countries (for a review, see Bass, 2008). Their results yield leadership peculiarities in certain countries and cultural regions as compared to other countries. As in other areas of cross-cultural management research, usual reference points in such comparisons are countries which are of interest for economic reasons, the USA, European countries such as Germany, France, or the

United Kingdom, as well as some Asian cultures such as China, India or Japan (cf. Tsui et al., 2007). However, integration of all these findings is a difficult undertaking, because of the multitude of different leadership definitions and concepts used and the often not overlapping sets of countries and groups of respondents studied.

The same approach is taken in studies which are described to establish “main effects of culture” (cf. Gelfand et al., 2007) on leadership, usually evidenced in the amount of variance in leadership phenomena which can be explained by country differences or zero-order correlations between cultural dimensions and leadership phenomena on the country level of analysis (for overviews, see e.g., Bass, 2008; House et al., 2004). From these studies it is hoped to derive the extent to which findings from leadership research can (or cannot) be transferred or generalized from one culture to another.

**The leadership “is universal”-approach.** A classic question in cross-cultural leadership is about the universality of leadership and leadership attributes, e.g., “is leadership a universal phenomenon?” (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004), is there a “global idea” of leadership? (Peterson & Hunt, 1997). Being aware of the problem to become trapped within the most commonly asked, although often misleading, question of *whether* organizational dynamics (including leadership) are universal or culturally-specific, Adler (2008) suggests, from a practitioners’ point of view, to focus on the more “crucially important questions of *when* and *how* to be sensitive to culture.” (p. 7). This perspective helps to readjust the question of *whether* leadership and leadership attributes are universal or culturally-specific into questions like in *which respects* are leadership phenomena more culture-specific and in which are they more universal (cf. Scandura & Dorfman, 2004).

**Types of universality.** Research summarized by Bass (1997, 1999) and GLOBE (cf. Dorfman et al., 2004) suggest that some aspects of leadership, in particular, transformational, charismatic, and team-oriented leadership, may be universal. But what does “universal”

mean? Bass (1997) has pointed out that the term can have a variety of meanings when applied to leadership (see also Dickson et al., 2003, p. 732 ff): a) *simple universal*: a leadership phenomenon or principle that is constant throughout the world (e.g., country level means on leadership prototype dimensions that do not vary across cultures), b) *variform universal*: a general leadership phenomenon or principle which holds across cultures but the enactment of it differs across cultures (e.g., various ways of how participative leadership is enacted exist in a set of countries where this principle is equally strongly endorsed, cf. Brodbeck et al., 2007), c) *functional universal*: when the relationship between two leadership relevant variables is the same across cultures (e.g., within-country correlations are non-variant across cultures), d) *variform functional universal*: when a relationship between two leadership relevant variables is found in all cultures but the strength or direction of the relationship varies across cultures (e.g., collectivistic cultural values strengthen the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employees' job satisfaction, e.g., Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003), and e) *systematic behavioral universal*: when leadership theory defines a process such as a sequence of behaviors or a structure such as a distinct behavioral cluster that is empirically shown to be constant over cultures.

Dickson et al. (2003) diagnosed a decline in the volume of research focused on identifying simple universals and an increase of attempts to find differences between cultures on leadership traits, characteristics, and relationships which can be explained by the various available sets of cultural dimensions. In our view, this is still the case in principle, although some progress has been made towards the development of cross-culturally more sophisticated leadership theory, which attempts to quantify cultural effects on leadership and to establish more clear cut distinctions between *near-to-universal* and culture-specific leadership characteristics in several ways: by empirically establishing the magnitude of cultural effects on leadership, by identifying culture specific leadership dimensions and emic "species" of

leadership beyond dimensions in particular groups of countries, by investigating culture as a moderator of the relationships between leadership relevant variables, and by empirically investigating the *culture congruency* proposition (i.e., cultural forces affect the kind of leadership behaviors accepted, enacted, and effective within a particular culture, cf. House et al., 1997, p. 590) in relation to the *universality* proposition of leadership phenomena. Studies and findings as to each of these theoretical questions and propositions are described next.

### **What is the Magnitude of Cultural Effects on Leadership?**

To empirically quantify the magnitude of cultural effects on leadership phenomena was first suggested by House et al. (1997). Answering this question requires large-scale cross-cultural studies or meta-analytical designs. In their 61 nations study, the GLOBE researchers empirically established effect sizes (coefficient of determination) for cultural (country level) differences between 14% (with respect to autonomous leadership) and 36% (with respect to self-protective leadership); 20% was obtained for charismatic value-based leadership (Dorfman et al., 2004, p. 697). The latter leadership dimension conceptually overlaps with transformational leadership. Further results of HLM analyses indicate that the six GLOBE leadership dimensions are significantly associated with the nine societal cultural *values* (“should be”) scales from GLOBE with an average country-level common variance of about 25% (Dorfman et al., 2004, p. 699ff).

Whereas the GLOBE research focused on characteristics of leadership prototypes, Leong and Fischer (2011) focused on transformational leadership behaviors (as assessed with the MLQ) by using a meta-analytical design comprising about 20,000 respondents from N = 18 countries. They found that cultural differences in transformational leadership behavior share up to 50% of the total variability between countries. And similar to the GLOBE findings, they found that about 25% could be explained by cultural value dimensions (from Schwartz and Hofstede). More specifically, Leong and Fischer (2011) report that managers in

more egalitarian contexts are seen as engaging more in transformational leadership behaviors. This finding corroborates with the GLOBE findings with respect to charismatic value-based leadership, which relates positively to the GLOBE cultural value scales “in-group collectivism” ( $r = .41$ ), “gender egalitarianism” ( $r = .41$ ), and negatively to “power distance” ( $r = -.57$ ) (Dorfman et al., 2004, p. 699).

### **Are There Culture-specific Dimensions of Leadership?**

For studying particular leadership phenomena dominant only in certain cultures or groups of countries, specific scales and dimensions have been developed. Two groups of researchers demonstrated that paternalistic leadership has a positive impact on employee attitudes in collectivistic and high-power-distance cultures (Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, & Deller, 2000; Farh & Cheng, 2000). In a study with five nations in North America and Asia, Dorfman, Howell, Hibino, Lee, Tate, and Bautista (1997) showed cultural specificity for directive, participative, and contingent punishment leader behaviors. And, by studying behavioral patterns of leader-follower dyads in China, *guanxi* (i.e., personal relationship characterized by sentiment [*qing*] and obligation [*yi*], cf. Yang, 1994) between supervisor and subordinate was shown to be distinct from the Western concept of leader-member exchange quality (LMX) and to predict supervisor decisions such as promotion or bonus allocation after controlling for performance (Law, Wong, Wang, & Wang, 2000). Interestingly, also negative effects of *guanxi* practices on trust in management were found and shown to be mediated by perceived (low) procedural justice. In an experimental scenario study, this negative effect was replicated and further relevant moderators were identified, such as favoring a familiar tie (e.g., a family member or a friend), which reduces trust in management to a greater degree than favoring a neutral party (Chen, Chen, & Xin, 2004).

A multi-dimensional scaling approach (MDS) for identifying culture-specific dimensions of leadership was taken by Brodbeck et al. (2000) who investigated a subset of

European countries (N = 22) from the GLOBE study. Three leadership dimensions (interpersonal directness and proximity, modesty, autonomy) were obtained via MDS (cf. Smith et al., 1996) which differentiate well between the European cultural regions (Anglo, Nordic, Germanic, Latin, Central, South East Europe) identified in earlier studies (cf. Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). Whereas the “interpersonal directness and proximity” leadership dimension is strongly related to Smith et al.’s (1996) culture dimension “egalitarian commitment” and the “modesty” leadership dimension is moderately related to Smith et al.’s (1996) “loyal involvement” dimension, the “autonomy” dimension comes out as a rather distinct facet of leadership. Autonomous leadership is positively endorsed in only a small subset of Central (Germanic) and East European countries (i.e., Germany, German speaking Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, and Georgia). For an in-depth analysis of the Germanic “brands” of autonomous leadership see Brodbeck, Frese, and Javidan (2002), Brodbeck and Frese (2007), and Szabo, Brodbeck, Den Hartog, Reber, and Weibler (2002).

### **Are There Emic “Species” of Leadership Beyond Dimensions?**

Triandis (1994) pointed out that cultures, on the one hand, can be specified on some common dimension (e.g., collectivism versus individualism), but on the other hand, they differ on additional culturally-specific elements of the constructs of interest. He suggested that the cross-cultural construct of interest should be polythetically defined as in zoology: The defining features of the category “bird” are wings and feathers, but distinguishing between different species of birds requires consideration of some further combinations of attributes (e.g., yellow beak, carnivorous). Analogously, for distinguishing between leadership phenomena in societies, cross-culturally valid leadership dimensions constitute a necessary first step, but they are not sufficient. Further theoretical and empirical refinement is necessary.

By combining etic and emic approaches to the study of leadership in 25 countries, Brodbeck et al. (2007) polythetically identified “species” of participative leadership for a subset of countries which all share very high scores on the participative leadership dimension. On the basis of emic accounts of participative leadership in each country, four different “species” of participative leadership were established. Each describes how the high endorsement of participative leadership manifests itself and is rooted in the respective cultures’ societal cultural practices and values: (a) as an opposition to non-participative, autocratic, or directive leadership without an identifiable prescription of how to practice participative leadership (e.g., Finland, Argentina, France), (b) as a principle to organize interactions at work between “labor and capital” (or management) in a participative way, which is manifest in particular societal and organizational cultural practices, values, and even in legal systems (e.g., Austria, Germany, Switzerland), (c) as a set of personal competencies apparent in leadership conduct, which surfaces, for example, in treating others as equals, being informal and not preoccupied with oneself (e.g., USA), and (d) as a set of communication behaviors like listening and inviting suggestions from others that aligns with societal cultural resentment against formal rules and a preference for open exchange but with few consequences in actual decision making practices in organizations and society (e.g., Greece). With a purely etic dimensional approach, these different “species” of participative leadership would not have surfaced, because all described societies score in the same high band (i.e., not significantly different from each other) on the GLOBE dimension of participative leadership (cf. House et al., 2004; Chhokar et al., 2007).

Subtle differences and emic leadership practices dominant in certain countries or cultures may even not become apparent until detailed behavioral analysis is undertaken. This was done for some of the above mentioned European countries by Reber, Jago, Auer-Rizzi, and Szabo (2000) who observed leaders’ actual decision making behavior in leadership

training situations derived from Vroom and Yetton's (1973) model of participation. They found that Austrian (similar to German and Swiss) leaders displayed significantly more participative decision making behavior at work than leaders from Finland, France, Czech Republic, Poland, Turkey, and the USA. Furthermore, Austrian as well as German managers were observed to use participative leadership behavior more often than others to bring information and different perspectives to bear on the task. And even more interesting, Austrian managers responded to and resolved conflicts among subordinates by becoming *more* participative, whereas French, Finnish, US American, Polish, and Czech managers displayed more autocratic leadership behaviors when conflicts occurred.

### **How Does Culture Moderate the Relationship Between Leadership and Other Variables?**

Moderating effects of culture have been investigated mainly in small to mid scale studies, which were reviewed by Tsui et al. (2007). For example, two different research groups showed that collectivistic (vs. individualistic) cultural values strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' job satisfaction, organizational attitudes, and turnover intentions (e.g., Walumbwa & Lawler 2003; Spreitzer, Perttula, & Xin, 2005). And, by comparing Sweden and Russia, Elenkov and Manev (2005) found that in Russia innovation was facilitated by active and passive management by exception, charismatic leadership, confidence in and idealized influence on followers. In contrast, in Sweden only inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation had similar facilitative effects on innovation. Studies of this type inform global leadership consultants about culture- and country-specific relationships between leadership relevant variables and they should invite further investigation about the culture-specific enactment, acceptance, and interpretation of leadership characteristics, such as transformational versus transactional leadership, which have been identified as potentially universal leadership characteristics

(Bass, 1999; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Judge, Woolf, Hurst, & Livingston, 2006; Leong & Fischer, 2011).

Such further investigation was undertaken in a laboratory study reported by Ensari and Murphy (2003) who examined the interactive effects of two alternative processes of leadership perceptions on attributions of charisma cross-culturally. They found that in individualistic cultures, perception of charisma is based on recognition-based perceptions (i.e., leadership effectiveness is a perception that is based on how well a person fits the characteristics of a “good” or “effective” leader), whereas in collectivistic cultures, it is based on inference-based perceptions (i.e., leadership effectiveness is an inference based on group/organizational performance outcomes). In addition, it was shown that the investigated leaders’ prototypical characteristics were more effective in forming a leadership impression in an individualistic culture, whereas collectivistic people made attributions based on the company performance outcome. Even more complex relationships between culture, leadership characteristics and other relevant variables, like followers’ reactions or leader effectiveness, are lurking when, for example, classic propositions such as the *culture congruency proposition* and the *universality proposition* are not only, on plausibility grounds, transferred to other related phenomena than those originally investigated, but when these propositions are directly empirically investigated for the purpose of the development of cross-cultural leadership theory.

### **Is Leadership Culturally Contingent or Universal or Both?**

According to the cultural congruency hypothesis, which has been described as “an article of faith among cultural theorists” (House et al., 1997, p. 590), cultural forces affect the kind of leadership behaviors that are usually accepted, enacted, and effective within a particular cultural collective. Behavior that is consistent with collective values is more acceptable and effective than behavior representing conflicting values. But what actually

follows from this for cross-cultural leadership theory? Is perfect cultural congruency always desired, or would it be beneficial to exceed cultural expectations on some dimensions of leadership, as has been formulated in the *cultural differences proposition* (House et al., 1997, p. 591)? Can a leader who violates culturally endorsed leadership expectations still be seen as effective? Are culture universal leadership characteristics of the simple or variform type? And, do cultural congruency effects hold up in the same way for *variform* cultural-universal as compared to culture-specific dimensions of leadership characteristics and behaviors, or are they of a different type?

Despite wide ranging differences in cultural norms and values, the *near universality of leadership proposition*, stating that some leadership behaviors are universally or nearly universally accepted, enacted, and effective (cf. House et al., 1997, p. 591), has received some empirical support. Increasing empirical evidence is available that indicates that this proposition holds for attributes of charismatic value-based and transformational leadership (Bass, 1999; Dorfman et al., 2004; Judge et al., 2006) as well as for team oriented leadership (Dorfman et al., 2004). However, it is a difficult task to empirically establish leadership characteristics and behaviors to be universally endorsed (in the sense of simple universality), because it requires the reverse of the way hypotheses are typically tested – which essentially means testing the null hypothesis, for which very large samples are required. There is always some variance between cultures or countries detectable in the enactment, acceptance, and effectiveness of leadership, which makes it difficult to unequivocally identify certain leadership characteristics as simple universal. Therefore, variform universal characteristics are considered when testing the near universal proposition empirically. And a thereby important question is, whether the variable components of a variform universal are meaningful with respect to a criterion variable that can be tested empirically in the form of a functional universal.

This reasoning was employed in a recent study presented by Ruderman, Brodbeck, Eckert, Gentry, and Braddy (2011) by testing the cultural congruency proposition and the near universality proposition concordantly with a set of culture contingent and a set of near universal leadership characteristics. For this, the authors developed a new 360° feedback instrument (Eckert et al., 2011) and analyzed data from N = 1,837 respondents (including N = 316 target leaders) from over 80 countries. By using a different set of items than was used in the GLOBE study, the six GLOBE leadership prototypicality dimensions could be replicated and were shown to be valid on the individual level of analysis. This not only speaks to the robustness of the GLOBE dimensions but also extends the GLOBE scales, which were originally validated only on the country level of analysis, to the individual level of analysis. Each of the items in the new 360 feedback instrument measures characteristics of individual respondents' leadership prototypes (expectations) and also their respective perceptions of their supervisor's (i.e., target leader's) leadership attributes (not measured by GLOBE). As in the GLOBE study, charismatic value-based and team oriented leadership could be established as characteristics of a universal leadership prototype while other dimensions, notably autonomous and hierarchical leadership, were shown to be culture-specific. With polynomial and multiple regression analyses, the culture congruency proposition (for autonomous and hierarchical leadership) and the near universality proposition (for charismatic and team oriented leadership) were concordantly tested with leadership effectiveness ratings as dependent variable.

It was found that for the culture-specific leadership dimensions the congruency or fit (expressed in a polynomial interaction term) between commensurate leadership expectations and perceptions of a target leader significantly predicted leader effectiveness ratings, which is in line with leadership categorization theory (Lord & Maher, 1991) and the culture congruency proposition (House et al., 1997). In contrast, for the universal leadership

dimensions the congruency between commensurate expectations and perceptions did not relate to leader effectiveness ratings. Instead, leadership perceptions of charismatic and team oriented leadership significantly predicted leader effectiveness ratings directly. The respective leadership expectations did not seem to matter at all.

The described findings are remarkable in several respects: With respect to near universal characteristics of leadership prototypes the results obtained align with the near universality proposition but they contradict leadership categorization theory, which up to now was only tested within and not across cultures (e.g., Germany: van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011; Great Britain: Epitropaki & Martin, 2004, 2005; USA: Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984; Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994). More importantly, whatever amount of cross-cultural variance in leadership expectations about the considered near to universal charismatic and team oriented leadership characteristics may exist, it does not seem to matter for leader effectiveness ratings, neither directly, nor as a part of the interplay between leadership expectations and perceptions. What matters instead only is the variance in perceptions about the target leader. Finally with respect to culture-specific characteristics of leadership prototypes the predictions from both leader categorization theory and the culture congruency proposition hold up.

In summary, from universal leadership characteristics (charismatic and team oriented leadership), once perceived to be shown by a target leader, leader effectiveness is directly inferred. For culture-specific leadership characteristics (autonomy and hierarchic leadership), leadership expectations and leader perceptions must match for leader effectiveness to be inferred. These findings are an example of how leadership categorization theory, which has been developed and tested in laboratory and mono-cultural field settings, can be further refined and developed by using cross-cultural leadership studies, thereby also suggesting a

solution to the long standing problems of how universal versus culture-specific leadership characteristics can be empirically differentiated and validated.

### **Where Do We Stand Regarding Methodological Issues in Cross-cultural Leadership Research?**

From the landmark studies described above and the further mid to large scale research programs reviewed, it is apparent that it takes many steps until sound empirical results in cross-cultural leadership research are reportable, not to mention the time and effort necessary for establishing international research networks and larger samples of countries that go beyond convenient assemblies of respondents. It appears, however, that with these programs long lasting methodological shortcomings of cross-cultural leadership research, discussed for example by House et al. (1997) and Dickson et al. (2003), have been addressed to considerable extent during the last 15 years.

In the studies reviewed, effortful attempts and sound approaches to tackle long standing methodological problems are apparent, like establishing measurement equivalence across cultures (e.g., Hanges & Dickson, 2004), sampling of sufficiently large numbers of countries or cultures and respondents ( $N > 45$ ; e.g., House et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2002), consideration of multiple levels of analysis and relevant collective units, like country, subcultures per country, industries across countries, organizations, types of respondents (House et al., 2004; House et al., in prep; Taras et al., 2010, Gelfand et al., 2011), or various managerial levels (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1999). Sophisticated statistical techniques were used such as multi-dimensional scaling (Brodbeck et al., 2000; Smith et al., 1996), multi-level confirmatory factor analysis (Hangs & Dickson, 2004), hierarchical linear modeling (Dorfman et al., 2004), polynomial regression with response surface analysis for congruency hypothesis testing (Ruderman et al., 2011), and meta-analysis (e.g., Leong & Fischer, 2011; Taras et al., 2010) to address various important

issues, such as construct validity of scales (e.g., Gupta et al., 2004; Gelfand et al., 2011), assessment of effect size estimates, correlations, moderation, and interaction effects, involving leadership relevant variables, as well as a diverse set of qualitative methods and techniques to combine data and results obtained from etic and emic approaches to cross-cultural leadership phenomena (e.g., Brodbeck et al., 2007).

Occasionally, external data sources about countries were also used to triangulate cultural dimensions (e.g., World Values Survey, Human Development Report; cf. Javidan & House, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2011), behavioral observation was undertaken in order to investigate actual participative leadership behavior across several cultures (Reber et al., 2000), or CEO's rhetoric in speeches for an international audience were analyzed with discourse analysis (Den Hartog, & Verburg, 1997), to name just a few of the more creative approaches to the study of cross-cultural leadership. However, despite the advantage of using multiple methods, survey research is likely to continue to be the dominant research tool in cross-cultural leadership research. The difficulties inherent in conducting qualitative research (cf. Chhokar et al., 2007; House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991), quasi and field experiments (e.g., Reber et al., 2000) or in-depth content and discourse analysis (Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997) will continue to limit the number of more innovative studies.

In summary, it appears that since the mid '90s not only a raise of large scale cross-cultural leadership studies is apparent but also an increase in the diversity and sophistication of measurement instruments and statistical analysis. The advantages of large numbers of cross-cultural samples are manifold: they appear to be rather robust against unmatched samples (Smith et al., 1996) and allow the empirical testing of more complex theoretical models. Furthermore, data from large scale cross-cultural studies can be used as country level input in other studies, thereby promoting further validation and testing as well as a better integration of cross-cultural empirical findings and leadership theory in general. In the future,

small samples of a few countries or cultures would need to be justified by compelling reasons explaining, for example, why the particular countries were selected (Bass, 2008; Scandura & Dorfman, 2004).

Some classic methodological questions still remain to be answered: To what extent are leadership characteristics comparable (e.g., leadership prototypes versus leader behavior perceptions versus actually observed leader behavior). Are nations suitable units for cultural comparison? Are the leadership phenomena we look at functionally equivalent across cultures? How to address levels of analysis problems, which arise because of the varying levels of measurement among constructs? For example, societal and organizational culture are by definition aggregated phenomena, but leadership could be an individual, dyadic, team, organization, and/or society level phenomenon (cf. Scandura & Dorfman, 2004).

### **A Practitioners' Perspective**

As organizations increasingly face global markets and operate across national borders, career paths become more and more international and management assignments are most likely to involve leading in multi-cultural contexts. Associated with that, managers and human resources practitioners face multiple new challenges: i.e., culturally diverse teams have to be managed, people have to be diagnosed for their international leadership potential, professional training programs have to be created in which managers get systematic education on cross-cultural leadership (e.g., Schyns, Kiefer, Kerschreiter & Tymon, 2011), and – in the case of cross-cultural joint ventures – cultural difference between the partners has to be acknowledged (e.g., Javidan, Stahl, Brodbeck & Wilderom, 2005).

Although cross-cultural research on leadership has generated a substantial amount of knowledge, which may help address these challenges, most research results have not been translated into concrete recommendations and tools for practitioners. Thus, their potential to enhance managerial practice appears to be largely untapped. In the following, we briefly

point out some examples of how findings reported in the cross-cultural leadership literature may contribute to resolve practical questions of (1) evaluating and training international managers, (2) selecting international executives, and (3) planning and conducting international joint ventures.

To successfully manage multi-national teams and projects, leaders greatly benefit from professional preparation and education programs, in which relevant cultural knowledge is transferred and cross-cultural competencies are developed (Bass, 2008). Black and Mendenhall (1990) showed the general effectiveness of cross-cultural training programs. Programs to equip managers for international projects and assignments should comprise general and culture-specific briefings, which, for instance, could be derived from GLOBE's comparative 61 nations study (House et al., 2004) and in-depth studies of 25 societies (Chhokar et al., 2007), and may start with a sound diagnosis of one's leadership style.

360 leadership feedback instruments could be constructed along the lines of empirically established cross-cultural dimensions of leadership (e.g., Ruderman et al., 2011). They can provide leaders with feedback about their own and others' leadership expectations and perceptions in cross-cultural and global contexts, thereby supporting the understanding to what extent "leadership is in the eye of the beholder" and what the role of culturally congruent and near universal leadership attributes is in this process.

Organizations have to assess and select employees for their potential of international leadership. Spreitzer, McCall, and Mahoney (1997) developed a tool –*Prospector*– that allows for early identification of international executives. The instrument includes 14 dimensions (i.e., sensitive to cultural differences, business knowledge, courage to take a stand, brings out the best in people, acts with integrity, is insightful, is committed to success, takes risks, uses feedback, is culturally adventurous, seeks opportunities to learn, is open to

criticism, seeks feedback, is flexible), which measure individuals' relevant competencies and ability to learn from experience.

The concept of "global mindset" may be another fruitful way to approach the selection of international leaders (cf. Beechler & Javidan, 2007). Research established that global mindsets and the cognitive capabilities of senior managers are central to organizational success in international environments (e.g., Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Levy, 2005). Integrating different research findings, Levy, Bechler, Taylor, and Boyacigiller (2007) suggested that a global mindset consists of three components: openness to multiple spheres of meaning and action, differentiated articulation of cultural and strategic dynamics on the local and the global level, and integration across these spheres. Organizations may use scales for measuring global mindsets (e.g., Levy, 2005; Javidan & Teagarden, 2011) in their assessment procedures to filter out potential cross-culturally leaders.

Additionally, research on societies' cultural profiles and regional cultural clusters may be helpful in the planning and conduct of international joint-ventures. Predictions on the success of joint-venture partnerships frequently built on an index, which determined the cultural similarity between the actors by using the Hofstede dimensions (Kogut & Singh, 1988, for a review of newer indices; cf. Magnuson, Wilson, Zdravkovic, Zhou, & Westjohn, 2008). The GLOBE project offers more recent and sophisticated profiles of society culture and cultural clusters, which have been applied for analyzing inhibiting and enhancing cultural factors for cross-cultural joint-ventures (Javidan et al., 2005). The indices developed by Smith et al. (1996) in their work on event management reflect what sources of guidance manager use in handling work events and, thereby, are closely related to managerial contexts. And more generally, the culture tightness looseness dimension offered by Gelfand and her colleagues (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2011) provides a further option to systematically compare cultures on grounds that are relevant for global economic and political conduct.

In summary, there appears to be scarce empirical research that measures the impact of cross-cultural leadership research in terms of its practical applications and its usefulness for supporting the above described and further tasks in international human resources management (IHRM) and global leadership development. There is no doubt that the research findings reviewed here and elsewhere are considered to be impactful in an indirect way, for example, in that wide appreciation and acknowledgement of cross-cultural issues in organizations and management is given in practical publications (e.g., Adler, 2008) and recent reviews of cross-cultural organizational behavior (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2007). However, like with the more general endeavor of evidence based management (e.g., Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Rousseau, 2006), which aims to close the gap between theory driven empirical research and practical application in the management domain, empirical studies actually demonstrating the impact and usefulness of concrete interventions in global leadership that have been derived from cross-cultural leadership research are rare.

### **Conclusions**

Rather than being seen as an adjunct to leadership research or an adjunct to cross-cultural research, cross-cultural leadership research today can be seen as a valid and distinct domain of study, even more so than a decade ago (Dickson et al., 2003). As this review illustrates, cross-cultural leadership research is thriving.

Major parts of the progress seem to have been driven by large scale research programs, notably the GLOBE project, a long lasting program (since 1994) which is also recognized as a major contributor to cross-cultural leadership in recent reviews of cross-cultural organizational behavior (Gelfand et al., 2007) and leadership research in general (Avolio et al., 2009). The difficulty to integrate single or small scale culture studies into the broader developments of cross-cultural leadership theory becomes apparent, when comparing Bass' (2008) comprehensive review, which is mainly descriptive rather than integrative in nature,

with the present one, in which attempts are made to integrate commensurate research findings and theoretical developments along the lines of central questions of the field. Due to space limitations, we had to be selective in the choice of studies, thereby taking the risk to omit potentially relevant studies and research programs - we apologize for that and urge the reader to cross check the present review with other available reviews of the field. Though, we do hope to have succeeded in stock taking of central questions, theoretical developments, empirical findings, and methodological advancements in the current field from which integrative avenues for its future development can be derived.

Large scale multi-nation studies conducted by teams of researchers, using the same instruments and construct definitions, are one way to overcome the classic hurdles in cross-cultural leadership research. The present review has demonstrated that such studies emerged and contributed, directly and indirectly, to the progress made in the field during the period sampled here. Several advances in theory development and in the methods of cross-cultural leadership research have been alluded to in this review. Several of these could not have been made without large scale multi-national studies, be they meta-analytic (Leong & Fischer, 2011), quantitative, evaluative, and comparative (e.g., House et al., 2004; Ruderman et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2002), or qualitative, analytic, and culture-specific (Chhokar et al., 2007).

Another way to promote theory development in cross-cultural leadership research was shown to come from the employment of multiple and creative approaches, be they large scale comparative, small scale culture-specific or quasi experimental, observational or qualitative in nature, as long as a common basis of commensurate theoretical concepts was identifiable. This was achieved, so to say from scratch, on the basis of universal social psychological or cross-culturally consensual definitions and empirically derived dimensions of culture and leadership and related variables, or, on the shoulders of giants, by using well-established constructs from broader leadership research which appeal to cross-cultural investigation, such

as transformational and transactional leadership, leader member exchange theory (LMX), participative leadership, or leadership categorization theory, to name just a few. From there, several avenues of further enquiry can be distinguished, working towards culture-specific (e.g., *guanxi* in China), culturally contingent (e.g., hierarchic, autonomous), and near universal (e.g., charismatic, transformational, team-oriented) leadership phenomena, thereby exploring relevant cultural variables as potential direct predictors of cross-cultural leadership phenomena or as moderators of known relationships between leadership and other relevant variables.

A third approach to further the development of cross-cultural leadership theory is seen in testing propositions that are grounded in the field, such as the cultural congruency proposition or the near universal propositions (cf. House et al., 1997). Both are widely employed in practice, on plausibility grounds, but are rarely tested in relation to leadership theories, that are meant to capture universal characteristics of human information processing and behavior, like leader categorization theory (Lord & Maher, 1991).

As was pointed out in the review by House et al. (1997), an important task in cross-cultural leadership research is to find out about how culture influences human leadership processes and reactions to leadership, via values, beliefs, attitudes, motives, schemata, and other psychological mechanisms which obviously have to be shared by some mechanism (e.g., social norms) to be relevant from a cross-cultural viewpoint. To this respect, it is worthwhile to take a view beyond the fence of leadership research towards other sub-domains of organizational behavior and social psychology. There is a wealth of social phenomena relevant to leadership which are strongly related to cultural differences, for example, the strength of social norms (Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011), the nature of roles (McAuley, Bond, & Kashima, 2002; Peterson & Smith, 2000), beliefs about the social and the physical world (Leung, Bond, de Carrasquel, Muñoz, & Hernández, 2002), or domain-

specific implicit theories (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000). Gelfand et al. (2007) who reviewed these and other related phenomena point out that cultural differences might also manifest themselves outside of conscious awareness, suggesting the use of non-obtrusive and implicit measures in addition to the usual reactive measures taken. Such approaches are quite uncommon in leadership research (e.g., House et al., 1991) and even less so in cross-cultural leadership research (e.g., Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997).

Our review shows that the integration of cross-cultural issues can help to broaden leadership concepts and theory. As a sub-domain of leadership research, cross-cultural leadership appears to offer a viable escape route from too much conceptual and theoretical pluralism and compartmentalization in the general field of leadership. In line with Glynn and Raffaelli (2010), who analyzed the field of leadership research from a theory of science perspective, we see cross-cultural research as a critical ingredient to make leadership research more global and less ethnocentric and to make leadership researchers less parochial in their theoretical and conceptual focus.

One caveat unearthed by this and earlier reviews is the relative lack of empirically demonstrable impact of cross-cultural leadership research in the practical world of global leadership. We do not mean to say that the remarkable work of cross-cultural research, accumulated during the last half century, is not widely acknowledged and used in the practitioners' world. Quite the opposite is the case (e.g., Adler, 2008). But what we do mean to say is that we have found only rare and scarce scientific evidence that cross-cultural leadership theory does indeed make a difference if applied in the practical world (as compared to not), and also making this difference for the reasons and mechanisms specified in the respective cross-cultural leadership theories used. In fact, it appears that we have yet to deliver such theories and the studies for testing and applying them to the practical world.

Tsui et al. (2007) note in their review of 93 cross-cultural management studies in 16 leading management journals, “The 21st century should be, if it is not already, the century of international management research.” (p. 427) and, while being aware that cross-cultural research is “not for the faint-hearted” (Smith & Hitt, 2005), the authors salute all cross-cultural researchers for their dedication and contribution to global learning - so do we.

### **Future Directions**

Although significant progress has been made in cross-cultural leadership research, it is overshadowed by some conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and applied science issues. The basic concepts of culture and leadership are not systematically investigated in relation to what is necessary for the study of cross-cultural and global leadership. The welcomed recent raise in large scale cultural values studies came with a proliferation in overlapping and inconsistent cultural dimensions. And for leadership research in general an unhealthy pluralism and compartmentalization in leadership theory is apparent, for which cross-cultural leadership research might provide an escape route. However, for this, the apparent ignorance of the fact that culture is not only a differentiator of nations but also of cultures within nations, industries, multi-national and domestic organizations, and other social entities (e.g., multi-national teams), which are relevant to cross-cultural leadership, needs to be overcome. In most research projects reviewed, the essentially cross-level nature of the phenomena empirically studied is ignored, and respective multi-level theory development in leadership research has not yet taken place to sufficient extent, although asked for about 15 years ago by House et al. (1997). Last but not least, there is no empirical evidence for a direct impact of cross-cultural leadership theory on the applied world of global leadership, perhaps because not very much progress has been made in the development of truly cross-cultural leadership theory in the first place. With the goal to stimulate advances in future research, we offer

seven recommendations to address these fundamental issues. Most of our recommendations are not new, which should qualify them as classic issues which no longer should be ignored.

### **Recommendation 1: Consolidate Culture Values Frameworks**

Since the seminal work by Hofstede, several cultural values frameworks have been developed, some of which are directly linked with the cross-cultural study of leadership (Smith et al., 2002; House et al., 2004). This offers an increased choice in cultural frameworks, but it also means the risk of arbitrariness, especially when cultural dimensions are treated as independent measures of culture. By criticizing the dominance of the latter approach, Tsui et al. (2007) advocate a configuration of culture approach which, for organizational cultures, has been shown to predict organizational outcomes differently from independent culture dimensions.

Most definitions of culture comprise a group-level construct. As discussed by Klein and Kozlowski (2000a, 2000b), a group-level construct (e.g., nations) can have three types of properties: global (e.g., GDP), shared (e.g., individual perceptions, cognitions), or configural (e.g., looseness – tightness of cultural norms; Gelfand et al., 2006). Most operationalizations of culture pertain to the shared property type. Configural property means that a cultural value, like collectivism, can have different effects depending on whether respective cultural norms are, for example, tight or loose (Taras et al., 2010; Gelfand et al., 2011). Together with Tsui et al. (2007), we see opportunities for future research by configuration oriented theorizing and empirically modeling the role of national culture for individual, team, and organizational behavior. This requires multi-level modeling and large scale studies in the format of Smith et al. (2002) and GLOBE (e.g., Chhokar et al., 2007; House et al., 2004).

**Recommendation 2: Make Leadership Concepts More Suitable for Cross-Cultural Study**

We have pointed out examples of universal psychological and cross-culturally consensual concepts of leadership, because they offer advantages to the cross-cultural leadership researcher (e.g., less prone to ethnocentrism, more compatibility with theorizing about human behavior). We also suggest a focus on the integration of current leadership theory and on commensurate findings in (cross-cultural) leadership research, for example, with respect to leadership phenomena that are meant to be universal (e.g., leadership categorization, cf. Lord & Maher, 1991; leader motivation, cf. McClelland, 1985) or have been empirically established as near universals (e.g., team-oriented, charismatic leadership prototypes, Dorfman et al., 2004; transformational leadership behaviors, cf. Bass, 1999). Note that if we wish to make statements about universal leadership characteristics, they need to be phrased in more abstract ways (Bond & Smith, 1999; Smith & Bond, 1999), and if we focus on the culture specific meaning of these universal characteristics, the specific situations, events, and behaviors relevant to the enactment of these leadership characteristics need to be taken into account (e.g., Brodbeck et al., 2007). For this, a mix of methodological approaches and research designs appears to be helpful, with large-scale comparative studies, preferably repeated over time to gain insights in the changing nature of culture and leadership, on the one extreme, and small scale studies, which are local, indigenous, and rich in the sense of near to actual behavior and non-obtrusive in nature, on the other extreme.

**Recommendation 3: Focus on both Leadership Communalities and Differences across Cultures**

The convergence found across cultures with respect to some dimensions and characteristics of leadership is one of the most interesting findings of the last 15 years. This should encourage additional investigations of leadership that can consolidate the previous

findings and examine what is unique about leadership in particular cultures. Certainly, there remains the meta-question “if the phenomenon of leadership is universal and found in all societies (Bass, 1990; Murdoch, 1967), to what extent is leadership culturally contingent?” (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004, p. 282). Thus, investigating the causal mechanisms by which organizational behaviors, such as leadership and followership, become culturally contingent (or uniform) would be the next logical step. Both approaches, the “behavioral routines” explanation taken by Peterson and Smith (2000) in their event management studies of leadership (e.g., Smith et al., 2002) and the “cultural values” explanation taken by GLOBE (cf. House et al., 2004) in its leadership prototypes study, constitute viable theoretical pathways along the line of which further progress can be made. The further above described types of universal (e.g., variform, functional universal) distinguished in the literature can serve as a useful framework to organize respective theoretical developments and empirical findings for their integration in the field.

#### **Recommendation 4: Conduct Country-specific Research – from a Cross-cultural Perspective**

As Gelfand et al. (2007) point out for organizational behavior, indigenous perspectives are critical for progress in the field and need to be prioritized in the future. This holds true for cross-cultural leadership as well. Taking emic approaches to leadership in particular cultures not only contributes to the development of more universal knowledge by identifying a variety of emic formats of leadership processes and reactions to it (cf. Brodbeck et al., 2007), which might be of benefit in other cultural contexts. If properly transferred (Javidan et al., 2005), they also help us to understand how leadership “works” in other cultures (e.g., Chhokar et al., 2007) – as well as in our own.

Earlier in our review, we discussed the distinctions made between “etic” (i.e., comparative, outer perspective) and “emic” (i.e., indigenous, inner perspective) for the study

of culture and leadership. Within etic approaches, a further distinction was made between “leadership is universal”- and “leadership differs”-approaches, to which recommendations are given in the paragraph before. The history of cross-cultural leadership research demonstrates that nearly all etic-comparative approaches, be they universal- or differences-oriented, stem from North America, which is likely to have resulted in North American views on cross-cultural leadership phenomena. Currently, these are supplemented by similar ethnocentric approaches taken from other cultures. The underlying phenomenon is widely discussed in the literature under the terms ethnocentrism and parochialism.

We would like to point out that taking a particular (cultural) lens not only might affect the questions posed, the theoretical understanding taken, and the empirical findings obtained in etic comparative approaches, but also when emic approaches are taken to the cultural study of leadership. There the risk of holding consistently on to one orientation is that the researchers might not be asking “the right questions”, that is, studying issues that may be of low relevance to other cultures. As has been stated by Pruitt (2004, p. xii), “characteristics that are dominant in one culture tend to be recessive in another, and vice-versa. By studying other societies where these features are dominant, they can develop concepts and theories that will eventually be useful for understanding their own.” Thus, the investment in more emic studies of leadership should be finished by taking a truly cross-cultural perspective to build a more comprehensive global science of leadership.

### **Recommendation 5: Engage in Proper Theory Building in (Cross-cultural) Leadership Research**

Proper theory building in cross-cultural leadership research relies on proper theory building in leadership research in general. Yukl (1999, p. 301) asserts, for example, that it is evident that charismatic and transformational leadership theories provide important insights, but some serious conceptual weaknesses need to be corrected to make the theories more

useful. Underlying influence processes need to be formulated more clearly and the leader behaviors related to these processes need to be specified. Such theoretical specification is important to make particular leadership theories more useful for cross-cultural research.

House and colleagues (1997) outlined a basic framework for making progress in building theories in cross-cultural leadership research, which served as a blue print for the GLOBE study. Among the many suggestions given for how to develop cross-cultural leadership (and organization) theory, they assert that the processes by which cultural entities affect members' psychological states and behavior, and how these relate to cultural differences *and* communalities, are not clear yet and need to be investigated more intensively. A focus might be laid on psychological and social psychological constructs which appeal to cross-cultural leadership, such as shared attitudes, social norms, or motives. These have been studied cross-culturally in the wider realm of organizational behavior and social psychology, as is evident, for example, in the review from Gelfand et al. (2007) and the empirical cross national study from Gelfand et al. (2011), however, much less so in sufficiently large cross-cultural leadership studies.

To this respect, Glynn and Raffaelli (2010) state in their systematic theory of science review of leadership research in general, "a fairly unexplored territory in leadership is that of international or cross-cultural theorization and methods. Although there have been some initial forays into this area, notably in the GLOBE Research Project on Leadership Worldwide (House et al., 2004; Selznick, 1957, p. 151), there are considerable possibilities for leveraging cultural dimensions to induce new theories of leadership." (p. 394).

### **Recommendation 6: Make Use of Advanced Methodology, Social Networks, and New Technology**

Throughout the review and also in our recommendations, we point out suggestions for analytical methods and design paradigms which are likely to support future progress in cross-

cultural leadership research. Rather than repeating them here, we pledge more generally for the use of advanced measures and statistical methodology, international social networks of researchers, and new technologies and point out examples for each.

In order to better “recognize the nature of the beast” (Tsui et al., 2007), cross level models of statistical analysis should be used to be able to interpret cultural or national effects on the individual, social-interactive, and organizational levels of analysis, which are the common levels of theorizing in leadership research. For a more detailed account of such models, see Tsui et al. (2007), who refer to Klein and Kozlowski (2000) in their review of levels of analysis in cross-cultural management research. Another pledge is concerned with the focus on cross-cultural construct validity, a *sine qua non* for cross-cultural theory development. It encompasses such issues as consideration of the “ecological fallacy”, semantic and translational equivalence in measurement practice, establishing context free measures by adaptation, de-contextualization and contextualization (cf. Farh, Canella, & Lee, 2006) or culture-specific scales (e.g., *guanxi*; cf. Chen et al., 2004). Further methodological recommendations along these and here previously discussed lines (e.g., the use of emic and etic items by latent class and variables analysis) are addressed by Tsui et al. (2007).

The necessity of large scale cross-cultural leadership research requires our attention for how to maintain existing cross cultural research programs (like the GLOBE 61 nations study or the 47 nations study by Smith et al., 2002) and how to build new social networks which can carry out similar research from new angles in the future. Tsui et al. (2007) calculated a sample of about 300 researchers who would serve the bill. We are confident that ten times more interested researchers can be counted on worldwide. Beware, such programs may take more effort and resources than originally anticipated (cf. House et al., 2004), especially when the also needed longitudinal design is to be realized.

While the technological backbone of, for example, the GLOBE program, back in the mid 1990s were fax and postal services supported by literally ten thousands of e-mails, and lately also an internet portal for the exchange of documents and news, there are more powerful new technologies available today which could be used as support in the future. For example, the availability of already assembled cross-cultural data can be enhanced by the use of professional data banks (e.g., world data bank, world value survey, cf. Javidan & Hauser, 2004), and new technologies like data mining, cloud computing, evaluation polls or decision markets on the internet, to name just a few, could be explored for the cross cultural study of leadership and related phenomena.

### **Recommendation 7: Care About the Practical Impact of Your Work**

Of course the final question is the question of impact. In our conclusion, we addressed the relative lack of empirically demonstrable impact of cross-cultural leadership research in the practical world of global leadership. This, we think, is partially due to a lack of cross-cultural theory development which should remind us to Kurt Lewin's word, "there is nothing as practical as a good theory". On the other hand, in numerous conversations we had with practitioners in the field, especially when we reported research results like the ones from GLOBE, there was one common denominator in the reactions among the audience – "So what does this actually mean for our daily work and organizational strategy?". Rather obviously, we should try harder to identify barriers to, and develop ideas about how to encourage the implementation of what follows from our research results. Furthermore, we should assemble existing and conduct new intervention research to empirically demonstrate the direct impact the field of cross cultural leadership research has on the practical world.

### **General Conclusions**

With the present review, we aimed to provide a coherent picture of where we stand today in the field of cross-cultural leadership research, with an eye on the more applied field of global leadership, and to set out critical directions for future research. Cross-cultural leadership is a vibrant research arena, becoming even more important in view of rapidly growing globalization. Our review showed that theory development and methodological refinement has moved significantly forward in the last two decades, especially due to large scale multi-nation studies and the increasing examination of theoretical propositions specific to the cross-cultural leadership domain. We believe that the scientific development of leadership research in general could indeed profit from a cross-cultural research perspective. At the same time, however, several conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and applied science issues still remain unsolved. Many of which have been addressed in previous reviews by other eminent authors in the field. In particular, on the basis of our review, we call for further consolidation of cultural value frameworks, investment in proper integrated theory building, and more empirical research about the practical applicability of the results from cross-cultural leadership research.

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