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Global workers and managerial ethnocentrism – A discussion on their origins and effects

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Abstract

Based on some convergences identified on previous studies, the authors aim to discuss the correlations between two phenomena: the advent of the so-called "global workers" and the persistence of the "ethnocentrism" on the organizational vision.

As long as the cultural values of an organization are mainly shaped by the cultural values of the involved social groups, the organization background stands for a historical record of its cultural construction. For the period of an internationalization process some specific groups of workers join the cultural melting: the entitled "global workers", which are specific groups of workers as for instance migrants, expatriates, "brains-abroad", remote service providers, and remote manufacture producers.

On the other hand, one of the most relevant dimensions involved in the construction of a global company is the "type of organizational vision", which is dependent on the cultural model. But, regardless of the fact that many reasons explain why the global organization needs to develop a so-called "geocentric vision", evidence shows that the parochialism (lack of sensibility to understand other cultural models) endures.

Discussing the convergences and contrasts of these two contemporary questions, the study identifies their origins and infers about their future impacts on our societies.

I. INTRODUCTION

The present discussion paper aims to investigate the possible intersections between the role played by the so-called "global workers" and the endurance of the "managerial ethnocentrism" on the international arena.

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Taken the multitude of the globalization process, we found relevant to clarify that the main standpoint to be adopted here is the one of business administration studies, although some elements may be sustained by arguments from sociology and psychology.

The scholars in the international business administration fields tend to understand that the process of company internationalization supports the use of global workforce, as well as collaborates on the construction of a so-called "geocentric" vision. But some empirical evidence shows that as long as the use of global workers is evolving, the changes on the international company vision is still somewhat shy, (Azevedo e Bertrand, 2002).

In order to attempt to understand this apparent opposition, our investigation will focus on the building of the two constructs.

The advent of the so-called "global workers" will be investigated by recognizing: (1.) the types of global workers, (2.) the migrant global workers, (3.) the remote global workers, and (4.) the general consequences of the advent of the global workers. These topics were basically treated on a previous study (Azevedo and Bertrand, 2002).

The persistence of the "managerial ethnocentrism" will be analyzed by reviewing: (1.) the concepts of ethnocentrism, nationalism, patriotism and xenophobia, (2.) the types of organizational vision, and (3.) the concept of managerial ethnocentrism and the signs of its endurance. These elements represent both the employment of pioneer psychological concepts to the business administration field as well as the present discussion of the matter on this field

These two constructs will represent the ground development of this study. The results will emerge from the crossing analysis of the two constructs and will support the final discussion, where the major findings will be summarized. The final goal, as stated on the abstract, is to infer about the future impacts of both phenomena.

II. THE ADVENT OF THE GLOBAL WORKERS

The first construct to be disclosed is the one of the global workers. It refers to the groups of workers that are particularly affected by the globalization process, Azevedo and Bertrand (2002). Instead of observing the socio-economic impact on people as consumers – the dominant view concerning globalization of markets – we are here interested in observing the consequences to these individuals as workers. By this manner some different categories can be mentioned.

Types of global workers

The movement of people is usually indicated as one of the facets of the globalization. In Joag (2000): "(...) *demolish trade barriers to enable free exchange of goods, services, and people among economies (...)*"; in Azevedo and Bertrand (2001): "*the increasing flows of capital, merchandise, people and data across national borders*"; among others.

These groups of moving people are constituted of "global workers" (or "globalized workers"). But other categories, which do not move but perform global tasks, can be considered as global workers as well. To the scope of this study the global workers are the groups of workers that are particularly impacted by the changes related to the globalization of companies, markets and visions.

Virtually all the manufacture and service processes of all world locations are at least minimally connected to the advent of globalization. Therefore, it is difficult to identify people in the

developed or in-development world whose work is not impacted. But there are some specific groups that suffer a stronger influence. Among them we found:

- Migrants: people who go overseas seeking for new work possibilities;
- "Expatriates": migrants who are sent overseas by companies to perform specific tasks;
- "Brains-abroad": migrants who have special educational skills acquired at motherland and used in other countries;
- Remote service providers: workers producing services that are used in other countries; and
- Remote manufacture producers: workers producing goods that are used in other countries.

Among these categories there are two major groups, the "migrant global workers" and the "remote global workers".

Migrant global workers

These are the groups of workers that are moving from one place to another. "Expatriates" and "brains-abroad" are peculiar types of migrants.

The expatriates, as we consider in this study, are the workers, typically executives or specialized technicians, that are sent from places where a company is firmly established to other locations where they are performing development operations. They are most normally playing the role of managerial staff, new business prospectors, consultants or technical specialists and usually represent the interest of the headquarter in other lands.

As identified by Hsieh, Lavoie and Samek (1999a) multinational corporations employ them to exploit overseas opportunities. They are among the scarcest and dearest resource, and they are considered the "cornerstones on which international ventures are built", despite the fact that they represent a very significant cost – five times as much as home-based managers.

The term "expatriate" is not perfectly accepted, Kobrin (1994), for instance, criticizes its use. His opinion, also based on other authors' works, is that the term "expatriate" is outdated and of an ethnocentric content. As understood by Adler and Batholomew (1991), the term "transpatriates" is more accurate to refer to migrant global workers. These people can be sent from all parts of the world to all other parts to develop their worldwide perspective and cross-cultural skills.

The so-called "brains-abroad" are normally people moving on the opposite direction. They are typically highly educated workers who seek better positions in more developed markets. As the global dispute for talent heats up, indicate Devan and Tewari (2001), this flow of the best and the brightest from the developing countries is likely to increase.

Some astonishing data can be picked up from specific cases. For instance, 30 percent of the 1998 graduating class of the famed Indian Institute of Technology – and a staggering 80 percent of the graduates in computer science – headed for graduate schools or jobs in the United States.

The income of the migrants compared to their countrymen is, in some cases, impressive. The gross domestic product of China (2000's figures) is 1.030 U\$ billion. Chinese emigrants' annual income is about 700 U\$ billion. In other words, the emigrants, a group 25 times smaller than the original population, earns the equivalent of 68% of China's GDP. Each

overseas Chinese touches 17 times more money than a Chinese in China. These figures illustrate how the pressure to cost reduction acts.

In India, wages for highly educated professionals in accounting, engineering, software development and others, are 70 to 80 percent lower than they are in developed economies, (Sharma, Sood and Vollenweider, 2000). Many fear that this talent drain will have lasting economic repercussions on the developing world. Developing and retaining highly skilled professionals is therefore a crucial long-term outlay for any economy.

These groups represent the movement of workers from one place to another. The next groups represent movements of jobs from one place to another

Remote service providers and manufacture producers

As long as it became simpler to export products and, in some cases, services, the labor cost differences among the countries contributed to the transference of job position to lower cost regions. At first related characteristically to the settling of industrial plants overseas, the information technology allowed services to be remotely produced as well.

India is an example of the early advent of the so-called "remote service". India's advantages as a platform for software development was the most important of the competitive advantages employed by multinational companies: "*a supply of educated workers who can be hired for a fraction of the cost of their colleagues in the developed world and lower infrastructure expenses*", (Sharma, Sood and Vollenweider, 2000).

Nowadays the remote services are opening up possibilities for moving many parts of a company's business system. As forecast Sharma, Sood and Vollenweider (2000), by 2008, global remote service operations may undertake activities accounting for half a trillion dollars around the world and represent every element of the value chain: upstream activities such as research and design, manufacturing related activities such as procurement and logistics, front-end activities such as marketing and sales, and staff functions such as accounting, information technology, and human resources management.

Sharma, Sood and Vollenweider (2000) present the example of companies from the financial-service sector. Several companies in this sector have remotely serviced certain processes, thereby cutting their costs by 50 to 60 percent after adjusting for higher telecommunication and management expenses. Just one global financial-services international company has achieved annual saving of more than \$250 million – according to its management, only a fraction of the total saving potential.

Even among the developed countries these differences can be remarkable. In a comparative analysis between France and the United States, Duchesne (2000), identifies some reasons for the transfer of jobs: "*(...) France's high minimum wage, generous mandatory social benefits, and obstacles to eliminating redundant jobs have made French industry loath to hire, though the country's unemployment rate is almost three times that of the United States.*"

One key to these new possibilities, says Ohmae (2000), is the availability of global high-speed freight integrator (such as overnight delivery air services), networking (internet) and financial system (credit cards and banks). These are part of a global logistic availability, based on the management of multi-modal transport and information technology network.

As noted by Barlett and Ghoshal (1989), the global company aims to use the competitive advantages of the different parts of the world. Yip (1995) identifies that this creates a "global chain of value". Activities such as research and development, design, buying, manufacture, assembling, marketing, sales, distribution, and services are distributed around the world.

The remote service providers and manufacture producers run this global chain of value. But not only cost-cutting orientation moves jobs and people across borders, specialty goods and services also demand skilled workers and moves jobs and people. So that clusters of development where vanguard activities on a certain filed are performed also attract new job positions, not simply because of competitive cost basis, but mainly because of innovative environment and synergy (Porter 1998). Kanter (1995) also brings attention to the fact that total productivity is more important than wages rates.

Consequences of the advent of the global workers

Regarding primarily the effects to people’s lives and culture – and not the economical and competitive ones that are implicit on the business administration point of view – the consequences of the advent of the global workers can be observed according to the two different sets of movement, which are the transference of people and of job positions.

Both movements represent a pursuit to balance the present state of affairs. Two main concerns are involved: the search for competitive advantages from low-cost goods and services producing platforms and the seeking for competitive advantage from specialty goods and services producing platforms.

As presented on Diagram 1, the resulting flows of work positions and workers are the response to the combined search for competitive advantages, where both areas send out and receive transference of job positions and workers. Cost-efficiency areas receive low-cost working positions and specialty areas receive the work position to be filled by its skilled workers. On the other hand, migrants from low-cost areas are transferred to specialty areas to perform some specific skilled work (as is the case of brains-abroad) or simply looking for an enhancement on its living standards, and migrants from specialty areas are transferred to low-cost areas typically to implement and manage low-cost production plants (as is the case of the expatriates) or simply seeking for opportunities of new-ventures.

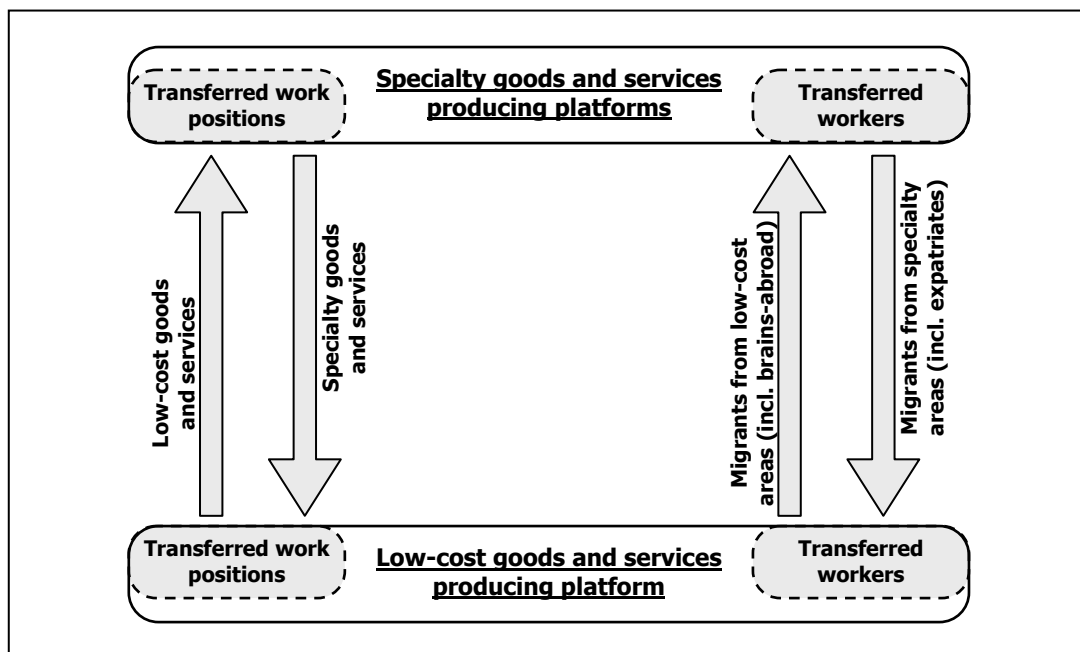


Diagram 1 – Flows of work positions and workers

The case of transference of people mainly implies changes on the cultural and behavioral model of the specific moved groups. The diverse groups of migrants – expatriates and brains-abroad included – will be exposed to a new set of environmental *stimuli* which will modify

their way-of-living and specific cultural concerns. The results are, therefore, intense but restricted to specific sets of people. Secondary effects to the countries receiving migrants are also noticeable as subtle additions to the local culture.

Many cases, concerning specifically the case of expatriate, for instance, have been studied. Some authors observe the expatriate point-of-view. As the case of Stahl (2000), where the author identifies that one of the main challenges to the expatriates is to cope with the competing demands of adjusting to the local culture and, at the same time, maintaining a trusting relationship with corporate headquarters.

Other studies focus on the position of the host subsidiary employee. Florkowski and Fogel (1999) identify the host subsidiaries' unwillingness to accept foreigner managers has been cited as an important deterrent to the accumulation of international experience. Internal labour market concerns (*e.g.* apprehension that expatriates create career "glass ceiling" for local managers) partially explain this host opposition.

The second set of cases, the one of job transference, results mainly in local changes. These local changes concern both places where the jobs are created and other where jobs are lost. By creating jobs overseas the transnational companies are also transferring knowledge and technical skills to other economies. The economies that are losing work positions are denied to find new possibilities of employment, which tend to be more related to technology and knowledge generation than to production of goods and services – the solution is related to the professed "knowledge intensive economies", (Gomes, Azevedo and Carvalho, 2001).

In the foreseeable future these movements are likely to continue, but not necessarily between the same places or in the same intensity. The picture is changing. The simple opposition between low-cost labor of the developing countries and specialty skill of the developed economies is becoming more difficult to distinguish.

Devan and Tewari (2001) suggest some possibilities of reversion concerning the flow of brains-abroad: "instead of being unambiguous losers in the global war for talent, emerging markets may find that they can be winners after all". Also does Omaha (2000) concerning the centers of technology creation: "(...) *large cities are governed by conservative establishments, but India (Bangalore, Hyderabad and Pune), Ireland, Finland, Singapore and Malaysia (the Multimedia Super Corridor) may have good chance to succeed (...)*".

Some studies (*e.g.* Hsieh, Lavoie and Samek, 1999b, and Adler and Bartholomew, 1992) indicate that the extensive use of expatriates also needs to be reviewed. Local managers have not only better understanding of their markets but also relationships that outsiders lack. Possibilities of reframing the present equilibrium are related to exploring overlooked talent pools and investing heavily in training programs.

Concerning the use of low-cost work force, there are also some signs of change. An example is given by the accusations against some sports material producers regarding their operations in Asia (Athreya, 1995). Acting as global companies these organizations design their products in the headquarters, contract the manufacturing in low-cost producing platform areas, and commercialize them worldwide. Investigations by the Asian American Free Labor Institute on interviews with workers from Asia had revealed working conditions that left much to be desired. As the consumer markets have become aware of these conditions, the pressure of public opinion imposed new practices on the companies and their suppliers. Certainly there is still a long way to go, but some "Codes of Conduct" were put into practice and the companies realize that.

Summarizing the first preliminary construction, we could understand that:

- Global workers are groups of workers that are particularly impacted by the changes related to the globalization of companies, markets and visions;

- Both "migrants" (expatriates and brains-abroad included) and "remote workers" (remote service providers or remote manufacture producers) are global workers;
- The consequences of the advent of the global workers can be observed as two different movements: transference of people and transference of job positions;
- People's transference implies changes on the cultural and behavioral model of the specific moved groups and, secondarily, additions to local culture;
- Job positions' transference implies transferring of knowledge and technical skills to oversea operation, cost savings to the complete process and challenge of creating new employment models in the home-country; and
- The transference system is being permanently re-equilibrated, the countries' roles are being re-defined, and the internal and external companies environments are impacted and re-feed the transference system.

Once the global workers construct is sketched, the second construction – the "managerial ethnocentrism" – may be treated.

III. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE MANAGERIAL ETHNOCENTRISM

In order to attain the construction of "managerial ethnocentrism" concept, some other conceptions may be visited. For that reason we will first come back to the origin of the psychological concept of ethnocentrism and introduce some correlated concepts, *i.e.*, nationalism, patriotism, xenophobia and parochialism. Afterwards those concepts will be related to the type of organizational vision, and, finally, some signs of the endurance of managerial ethnocentrism will be interpreted.

Concepts of ethnocentrism, nationalism, patriotism, xenophobia and parochialism

As pointed out by Balabanis et al. (2001), the use of the ethnocentrism construct on the organizational studies came from the general concept introduced as a psychological term by Sumner (1906). Ethnocentrism focuses on a "we-group" feeling where the ingroup is the center and all the outgroups are judged in relation to it. The only analytical references are the ingroup ones. When this concept is translated to nations as groups, the sense of nationality emerges: "(...) achieve personal relevance for individuals when they become sentimentally attached to the homeland (affectively involved), motivated to help their country and gain a sense of identity and self-esteem through their national identification (ego involver)", (Druckman, 1994).

The way ethnocentrism is performed reveals two sides of the phenomenon. Sumner's (1906) original concept already suggested a two-dimensional structure of ethnocentrism: an unfavorable attitude towards outgroups and a favorable attitude towards the ingroup.

The recognition of the two-sides of the nationality ethnocentrism originates the common sense of "Patriotism" and "Nationalism", as compiled by Balabanis et al. (2001): (1.) Patriotism refers to strong feelings of attachment and loyalty to one's country without the corresponding hostility toward other nations, and (2.) Nationalism encompasses that one's country is superior and should be dominant, thus implying a denigration of other nations.

As long as patriotism reveals a feeling of loyalty (affection or love) to ones' country, and nationalism reveals both feeling of loyalty to ones' country and rejection (disaffection, hate) to other countries, the isolated feeling of rejection towards other nationalities is commonly

understood as xenophobia (fear of others "they-groups"). That is typically related to the hate toward individuals of foreign nationalities, and which is usually understood as a much negative feeling.

Summarizing, we can consider that: (1.) the employment of the ethnocentrism to national groups originates what we call nationalism, and (2.) both feeling of patriotism and xenophobia compose the notion of nationalism, as presented on Diagram 2.

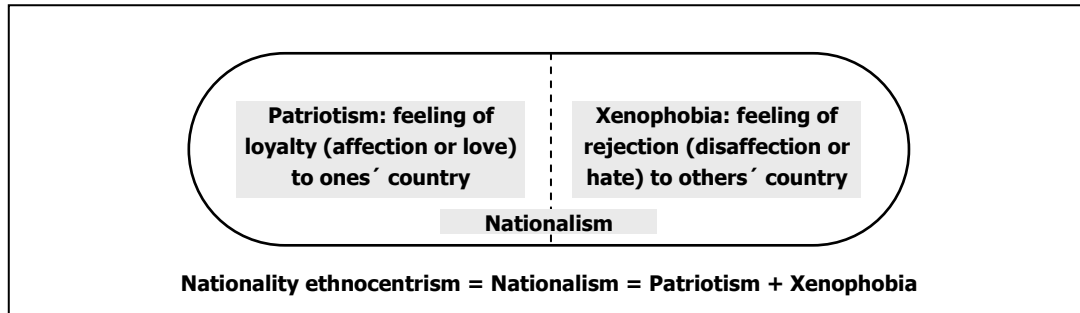


Diagram 2 – Employment of ethnocentrism to national groups

Other current term we found useful to define is "parochialism". If, on one hand, nationalism is a neutral concept by encompassing both positive and negative values, on the other, parochialism is neutral simply because of the inherent incapacity of understanding and judging other models. Thus, parochialism is referred to as the lack of sensibility or knowledge to understand other cultural models.

Those terms refer to people's country of origin, but can be directly reassigned to company's country of origin. Or, in a second analysis, could be transferred to the groups of people working for a company instead of the groups of people of the same nationality. And we would be referring to what is commonly known as "organizational culture", as a parallel to any other in-group cultural code – a "collective programming of the mind" (Hofstede, 1997).

The concept of "organizational vision" refers to this possibility, and, as summarized by Lee (1999), "just reflects the values of their people and societies".

Types of organizational vision

Among some of the very first studies concerning the international company, the geographic coverage of action was usually considered as the most distinctive characteristic of the multinational company. But some authors very early argued that external quantitative measures such as geographic scope were not sufficient to define multinationality: "*the more one penetrates into the living reality of an international firm, the more one finds it is necessary to give serious weight to the way executives think about doing business around the world*", Perlmutter (1969).

The very decisive paper of Perlmutter (1969) enlarges the understanding of the international company by arguing that external quantitative measures such as geographic scope are not sufficient to define their category. The "mind-set", or the way executives think about doing business around the world, becomes important to classify the international company. Many other authors consider that the managerial "mind-set" is determinant to understanding the strategic position of an organization. Illustrating the importance of one "mental outlook", Iqbal (2001) points out that: "*In other words, what we think, that's what our world becomes*".

Perlmutter's (1969) taxonomy defined multinacionality in terms of managers' mind-sets, contrasting "ethnocentric" (home-country), "polycentric" (host-country), and "geocentric"

(world orientation) mind-sets. Understanding that the same orientations can be assigned, not only to the management level, but also to the company as an entire organization, the present-day classification of the types of organizational vision remains quite the same.

Having an ethnocentric vision means observing the world with domestic references only, as domestic companies do, and as could be learned from the original ethnocentrism concept of Sumner (1906). Under this attitude the managers tend to treat the international marketing merely as an outlet to deal with problems associated with the domestic marketing – which is the primary focus. This vision is related to the early steps of the internationalization process. Often this first movement is more likely to be caused by internal market threat, *e.g.* shortage of demand or economic crisis, rather than being the fruit of a strategic decision. As points out Czinkota and Ronkainen (1995), these are “reactive motivations” to become international.

This first step is usually related to weak international results and lack of positioning. The main reasons for it are the low concern given to the international operations and the inability of understanding the differences. This “myopia” takes place when the organizations try to observe the world with domestic references only. As added by Iqbal (2001): “*you stay parochial (and) if a firm adopts this approach, it does not make a distinction between its domestic operations and nondomestic operations, (...)*”.

In the same way the multinational company tends to adopt a polycentric vision, *i.e.*, tends to observe the world with some different domestic references. Each national market is looked upon as a unique market requiring a separate, independent, and different strategy. Low or minimum effort is therefore made in comparing, coordinating, or integrating the actions. The focus is to be as able as possible to reach the specific needs of each country. The national borders tend to be respected.

The geocentric vision (to have the world as reference) is typically attributed to global companies. These companies “*consider themselves as the citizens of the world and not of any specific country*”, Joag (2000). Kobrin (1994) points out that the objective of a geocentric HRM (Human Resource Management) is the gradual elimination of the very idea of a home or host country, opposing ethnocentrism and geocentrism.

In some contexts, as for instance common markets and economically integrated regions, the regiocentrism emerges as an intermediate state. Under these concepts the national borders are ignored and the world (or the region) is conceptualized as a single market.

So that nowadays many authors understand that a geocentric vision is an important attribute of the proclaimed global company. This vision concerns the internal aspects of the organizations, (*e.g.* Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1987a, 1987b and 1989; Campbell 1993; and Keegan 1995), as well as the external ones (Randolph, 1990; Parker 1998; among others). As noted by Randolph (1990) the multi-domestic strategy (polycentrism) adopted by the multinational company was useful when the world was a simpler place and the nations were more insular. Nowadays, claims some of these authors, the company that continues to use this approach will probably not survive.

Many current definitions of global company also reclaim the reference of geographic scope. So that Parker’s (1998) *world as home* also refers to a *worldwide presence*. Other authors, as Porter (1990) and Omaha (1985), also refer to global presence by referring to being present in all the key-markets of the world. So that we probably could infer that geographic scope and organizational vision tend to march together.

Summarizing the currently accepted types of organizational vision we do have:

Types of organizational vision	
Ethnocentric	To observe the world with domestic references only, as domestic companies tend to do.
Polycentric	To observe the world with some different domestic references, as multinational companies tend to do.
Regiocentric	To observe the world with regional (groups of nations) references, typically attributed to companies focused on serving regional blocs.
Geocentric	To have the whole world as reference, as global companies tend to do.

Table 1 – Types of organizational vision

The above-mentioned taxonomy foresees a correspondence between the type of vision and the model of international companies: the early-internationalized company has an ethnocentric vision, the classic multinational company has a polycentric vision, the pre-global company has a regiocentric vision, and the global company has a global vision. But other company models, representing new advancements of the global company, are being proposed. As illustration we could mention Barlett and Ghoshal (1989) "Transnational Company" or, more recently, Doz (2001) "Metanational Company", described as "a company that builds a new kind of competitive advantage by discovering, accessing, mobilizing, and leveraging knowledge from many locations around the world."

The "managerial ethnocentrism" and signs of its endurance

Despite the proclaimed advantages of having a geocentric mind-set management, some previous studies signaled that this possibilities still far from being considered a fact:

"The borderless world that some organizations are trying to envisage is a beautiful model that does not fit the real world yet. Each one needs to be aware of the risks of treating reality based on visionary pictures. People, culture and national interests are, to this day, too strong and too diverse to allow the immediate adoption of geocentric values." (Azevedo and Bertrand, 2002).

An understandable observation on this matter is that a lack of geocentric vision development remains. That can be explained by the inherent difficulty of abandoning the multi-domestic (or domestic) backgrounds or of changing people's minds, as pointed out in Azevedo and Bertrand (2001), Andersen et al. (1997) among others.

As a matter of fact, many works agree by pointing out that the main challenge involved in the transition is to overcome the mentality barriers of the management staff; that a geocentric attitude is a rare human resource that may be difficult to develop; that to find and create this kind of people and to maintain them at the company are difficult tasks, (Simmonds, 1985; Kobrin, 1994; Kanter, 1995; and others).

A plausible argument on that point can be the here-found:

"(The) geocentric vision is rare because there is no coincidence with the majority of people's reality. (...) Part of the opposition to be surmounted is based on a very simple reason: there are barriers and borders in the existing world. The uniformity to be built among the several units of the organization is not found in the external reality. In other words, the individual still living in a local environment and not in a global one as the organizations would like them to be." (Azevedo and Bertrand, 2002).

In other words, the lack of organizational geocentric vision development is related to the difficulty of having individual geocentric vision development. Some authors profess that some very specific individuals could bring these geocentric values to a company, as is the case of Kanter's (1995) "new business cosmopolitans":

"They [, the new business cosmopolitans,] carry concepts from place to place and integrate activities spread throughout the world. They act as global Johnny Appleseeds, planting seedlings wherever they go, which grow into similar orchards throughout the world. Cosmopolitans bring alternatives from one place to another. They are familiar with many places and aware of distinctively local characteristics."

This stimulating proposal reinforces the confrontation of a human-sized point of view and a corporation-sided one, suggesting that some heroic "global-minded executives" could provide proper compensation. But this beautiful image overlooks the important differences of learning capacity, life span and behavioral diversity that distinguish individuals and organizations.

The same leap that allowed the concept of behavior to be applied to organization might now be undone in order to understand the differences of individual and organizational vision building process. In this way, we advocate that the construct of "managerial ethnocentrism" may be observed somewhat closer.

The proposed construct of "Managerial Ethnocentrism" is basically the employment of the two-dimensional Sumner (1906) general psychological concept to the management *praxis*. I.e., the "Managerial ethnocentrism" encompasses both the positive feeling of acceptance of one specific management model and the negative feeling of rejection of other models.

Holding the expectation of using the two built constructs (of the global worker and of the managerial ethnocentrism) we proceed to the final discussion phase.

IV. CONVERGENCE AND CONTRAST OF THE TWO CONSTRUCTS

The "global workers" concept surveillance exposed some interesting insights concerning the increasing interchange of workers and workers positions between low-cost and specialty producing areas. These movements indicated a progressive cultural homogenization and, therefore, a progressive building of a global vision. Both the "migrant global workers" and the "remote global workers" are involved on this process.

Observing the evolution of the organizational vision, we could suppose that the role of some specific global workers could hypothetically help the development of the global vision. But we could also understand that the improper projection of individual characteristics to collectivities might enclose some limitations. And, indeed, the reality apparently brings a much more bashful picture.

We believe that the key to understand this apparent contradiction resides on the duality of the ethnocentrism definition.

When projected to management *praxis* the first side of the ethnocentrism concept represents the loyalty and the esteem *vis-à-vis* a certain managerial model. It is the "pure-patriotism" side of managerial ethnocentrism and it stands for the confidence of a certain cultural model success and collaborates to the building of a strong organizational culture.

When we refer to the image of "organizational culture" we are on the lookout for a collective behavior pattern (or mind-set program). The brightness of one company behavior pattern is measured by its competitive success. The lack of a strong organizational culture represents a weak strategic positioning.

Hasty changes on cultural matters normally lead to bad results. Because the cultural roots of an organization are their very core value, the transformations of companies need to be conducted by preserving them. Many are the cases of unsuccessful merges and acquisitions where the fiasco was caused by mishandling of cultural differences, (Azevedo and Bertrand 2002; Kobrin, 1994; Carrol and Harrison, 2002). An English worker will not be able to act as a German one only because BMW bought an English car factory. Ghosn (2002) reports the process of recovering of the Japanese company Nissan and understands that its success is mainly based on the respect to the traditional Japanese cultural model.

The second side of the management ethnocentrism is the feeling of rejection towards foreign models (the "xenophobic" side of managerial ethnocentrism) and it collaborates to the surviving (competitiveness maintenance) of the organization by refusing other management models, by fearing an undesired cultural merger that could shift its strategic positioning weaker.

As a result, the most successful the organization is, the most the managerial ethnocentrism tends to evolve. The same core organizational values that bring the company competitiveness are the ones that will keep the company from changing in an appropriate way.

Even if this need of equilibrium could be envisaged before: "Organizations that ignore the need of cultural changes will perish as well as those that do not respect the original cultural roots", Azevedo and Bertrand, 2002. The necessity of both loyalty to the "we-group" organizational model and rejection of "they-group" organizational models, were not clear.

The same strength that builds a company's success tends to keep it from understanding other models and, consequently, from changing. That may better explain why successful companies, that are big enough to have geographic scope to become global, are so reactive to developing a geocentric vision. That may better explain the observable signs of managerial ethnocentrism endurance. We begin to perceive how well engineered the global management trap is.

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