

Globalisation and Human Resource Management: Context, Challenges and Change

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Summary

Globalisation is a complex phenomenon, which is difficult to define. For present purposes globalisation refers to the growing interconnectedness of contemporary civilisation where people, goods and services cross national borders easily and where these flows are facilitated by means of modern technology. As such globalisation creates situations which call for action in networked partnerships to deal with complex global issues.

Globalisation affects all the important societal systems including governance and administration, where the capacity of the state to enforce sovereignty over its citizens and to realise value for them, are influenced by globalisation. In respect of public sector service delivery the process of globalisation has created trends towards, outsourcing, restructuring and introducing entrepreneurial approaches to state administration and management.

In respect of human resources numerous trends emerge as a result of globalisation. These include: rightsizing, pressures for productivity improvement based upon international competition and the diminishing role of trade unions. To deal with globalisation in human resources flexible mission driven organisations are necessary. From a particular perspective this is the result of the increased mobility of knowledge workers. New methods will be necessary to recruit, train and motivate globally mobile employees. Leading globalised human resources will require intrinsically fulfilling jobs rather than power based alternatives. The future is therefore not what it used to be in terms of globalised human resource management.

Introduction

In this paper the focus will be on the meaning and nature of globalisation and the implications of globalisation as context and as process for human resource management. Reference will also be made to possible expected effects of these dynamics in national mapping organisations. To serve these broad goals the following objectives will be pursued in the paper:

- Globalisation as context and process will be defined and explained.
- Some of the most important trends associated with and developing from globalisation such as networking, the effects on governance and the links with human resources will be highlighted.
- The most important implications in respect of organisation models, human resource procurement and utilisation and the resulting challenges for human resource management will be identified and discussed as challenges and new approaches to human resource development.

- Provisional effects of these trends and responses thereto relating to human resource management in national mapping organisations will be highlighted and elaborated upon from the group discussion during the presentation.

Globalisation as context and process

According to Liebenberg and Schwella (1997:26-27) one should be careful, when trying to define and explain globalisation, not to be dazzled by technology and the information superhighway. These aspects do form an integral part of globalisation, but still only a part of the whole globalisation phenomenon. It is therefore necessary to define and explain globalisation for the purposes of this paper. One also has to consider that globalisation is a process, while simultaneously it represents a context for other processes and dynamics. Finally it should also be realised that there is no one universal definition or explanation for a concept as complex as globalisation and that there is also no consensus about whether globalisation – to the extent to which it exists and can be described – is necessarily beneficial or good. These aspects will receive some attention in this section.

Globalisation explained

Globalisation is differently defined by various authors and from different perspectives. According to Liebenberg and Schwella (1997:27) globalisation as a trend indicates an increased awareness of the world as a singular place. Globalisation inherently acknowledges not only the interdependence between nation states, but also an increased acceptance of a form of world citizenship. The resulting world view is that of a 'post national order' wherein internal state events become increasingly orientated towards external international events. A new perception of reality emerges where issues, for example global warming or the spread of HIV/Aids, transcend national boundaries and have to be dealt with by means of cooperation across traditional national boundaries. In this way new forms of community around shared ideals and issues rather than around territorial demarcation is created.

When researching the concept globalisation with the objective to explain and define it there are indications that the term initially was used to describe important changes in world economic activity, but that it is now used increasingly to describe fundamental changes in the complete international system. According to Kyloh (1996:http) the economic perspective is usually defined in terms of:

- An expansion in the volume and variety of cross border transactions in goods and services (and one may add human resources).
- A dramatic increase in international capital flows.
- The more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology.

Factors facilitating these processes are:

- Reductions in trade barriers through regional or multilateral trade agreements.
- The rapid expansion of foreign direct investments across boundaries by multinational corporations.
- Reduced barriers to the international flow of capital, goods, people and information.
- Modern communication facilities resulting in a dramatic increase in the speed of the flows of capital, goods, people and information.

De Oliveira & Tandon (1994) refers to the broadening of the concept of globalisation as an increase in the global interconnectedness of contemporary civilisation. Seen in this broader way globalisation does not only affect the international economic system and its component national systems, but also the political, social and cultural systems of the component parts and the whole.

This wider reach and impact of globalisation as a phenomenon is captured well by the views of Lubbers (1998:http) who defines globalisation as: 'Globalisation is a process in which geographic distance becomes less a factor in the establishment and sustenance of border-crossing, long distance economic, political and socio-cultural relations. People become aware of this fact. Networks of relations and dependencies therefore become potentially border crossing and world-wide. This potential internationalisation of relations and dependencies also causes fear resistance, actions and reactions.'

According to Lubbers (1998) this definition captures both the objective and subjective aspects of globalisation. On the one hand geography is made less relevant due to new technologies, strategies and policies of national and international political and economic actors. Globalisation is simultaneously strengthened by ordinary people who recognise and use these possibilities and opportunities and by acting in terms of globalisation motives make globalisation happen. At the same time globalisation in reality also creates actions, reactions but also fears, insecurity and resistance.

According to Toonen (1997:5-8) this wider impact of the process of globalisation and understanding of the concept of globalisation is the result of a number of sources of globalisation which include:

- The development of international law, international security systems, and international organisations and institutions.
- The development of technology which has created the potential to instantaneously communicate on a global scale.
- The development of a global economic system.

These sources are not entirely new in causing international linkages, but have gained impetus in the second half of the twentieth century.

Globalisation: selected trends

After having attempted to explain and define globalisation as context and process some of the relevant trends developing from globalisation and influencing particular aspects of society will now be dealt with. The trends and effects which will be discussed here are:

- Globalisation and networking.
- Globalisation and governance.
- Globalisation and human resources.

Globalisation and networking

According to Toonen (1997:12) the basic assumptions of globalisation, being the emergence of a global economy, the development of information networks and the developing dynamic of interstate collaboration, provide some basis for the solving of shared problems. To facilitate the processes of collaborative problem solving networking is needed as an important basis by means of which all the units of the system can bring order to and manage the transactions necessary for the purposes of collaborative action. Networking as a means of successfully ordering transactions between collaborative actors can be distinguished from previous means of managing transactions between collaborating actors, such as markets and hierarchies.

Bouckaert (1997:3) argues that networking can be distinguished from markets and hierarchy as ordering mechanisms of transactions in terms of the way in which the interaction is organised and ordered. Markets organise and order transactions between participating actors in a dynamic and competitive way. Hierarchies utilise structure, formal measures and order to organise transactions between participating actors. Networking deals with the organising of transactions between participating actors through continuous social interaction between the actors with the ultimate aim to reduce complexity and enhance understanding, cooperation and coordination. Networking as a way of organising transactions between actors, therefore refers to continuously renewing partnerships based on mutual trust between the interacting partners which develops through the interaction during a process to, for example, solve common problems through cooperation.

As many global issues are highly complex, diverse and dynamic they create situations where few of these global issues can be dealt with by single actors irrespective of how powerful they are. In this way actors (often organisations) are forced to develop beneficial partnerships, in network format, with other organisations in an attempt to maximise the effectiveness of dealing with complexity spanning boundaries. In this way networking is realised as the most beneficial approach to dealing with complex global issues rather than hierarchy or markets which serve other purposes better (Bouckaert, 1997:44-46).

From the above it can be derived that networking as a process is very important for success in a globalised environment. Networking, as a way of organising transactions between actors participating in dealing with complex global issues, which defy singular uncomplicated action by individual actors, will therefore also impact on the way in which human resources are managed in a globalised context.

Globalisation and governance and administration

It is accepted that globalisation affects systems of governance and administration in numerous ways. For present purposes these impacts will be dealt with in terms of firstly focussing on the impact of globalisation on the role of state in society. It seems fairly clear that nation states functioning in a globalised context face different challenges than states historically and those states which attempt to isolate themselves from global influences. According to Lubbers (1998:http) the following factors contributed to a process by which states have had to give up dimensions of their territorial sovereignty:

- 1 Law has become internationalised on numerous institutions such as the United Nations Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and international treaties limit the sovereignty of national states. This trend is reinforced by means of a new international judicial system by which international courts of civil and criminal justice can adjudicate and sanction cases across international boundaries. In this way states allow external judicial authority to 'interfere' with the rights of their subjects and the activities of the states themselves.
- 2 Technological innovations, and especially innovation in information and communication technology, stimulate democratisation processes. When states or governments practice non-democratic activities these can be published and observed in far away places leading to indignation and pressure towards more democratic practices. The internal forces which oppose dictatorial regimes also gain strength from improved information and communication technology as oppressive regimes can be exposed to the global world. Citizens under autocratic regimes can also access information from global sources to enhance their campaigns by means of this type of technology.

The above trends make it more difficult for states to enforce sovereignty over their subjects in an unfettered way and even for the democratic states to realise values and quality of life for the citizens within their territorial jurisdictions.

According to Lubbers (1998:htp) there are five possible views on how nation states will be affected by and respond to these challenges. These views are:

- 1 Leave it to the market. States and other political institutions should disturb the market as little as possible and leave it to the market to regulate transactions between interacting role players.
- 2 Another possibility is that globalisation will not succeed and states will return to their core business exercising their sovereignty within their national territories.
- 3 A third option is a so called **Pax Americana**. The now seemingly chaotic worldwide governance network will be structured by a hegemonic United States of America. International issues and problems will be dealt with in 'the American way' and under American leadership.
- 4 There is also the alternative model called global coordination where national states and regional institutions (such as the European Union) and international government organisations (such as the United Nations) all fulfil a role in global governance. Governance is divided between these institutions and different aspects of the governance of particular issues are allocated to the relevant institutions.
- 5 A last option proposed by Lubbers (1998:htp) himself is a 'new governance model' which is based on the capacity of states to realise values rather than the capacity to form and enforce laws within their territorial jurisdictions. From this prospective new governance – as the realisation of values – is not only the responsibility of the state or traditionally defined governments, but also includes all the other societal institutions which assist in and contribute to the realisation of values. In this way the state, transnational companies, non-governmental organisations and civil society are all part and parcel of the new governance compound which has to realise values for the benefit of the citizens. In this model, therefore societal values and quality of life for all citizens are realised by non-governmental organisations, business and government together and all these contributing actors need to act morally, with accountability and transparency and can be held responsible for their actions by the other partners mutually. International government organisations will also play their role in this system of new governance to support and enforce moral and effective service delivery to all citizens in a globalised context.

The effects of globalisation on public administration and service delivery are summarised by Liebenberg and Schwella (1997:30-31). They argue that the increased contact between states creates opportunities for comparison, learning and taking examples from other models for administration and service delivery. This provides, potentially, the opportunity to gain from the experience of others setting new standards and to transfer knowledge between administrations. Globalisation also creates the forums through which boundary spanning issues such as global warming and the spread of HIV/aids can be addressed. Through increased awareness citizens also apply internal pressure to ensure that national administrators act in accordance with international standards.

In very concrete terms public service and service delivery models have been profoundly affected by global public service trends. According to a discussion paper prepared for a discussion at a meeting organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on **Human Resource Development in the Public Service in the Context of Structural Adjustment and Transition** during 1998, states, regions and industrial centres are competing with each other to expand – or at least maintain – their economic capacity. In this global competitive arena the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service is an important element. It is increasingly realised that without qualified, motivated and committed staff the state cannot play the role assigned to it in a rapidly changing and globalised economy (ILO, 1998:http).

The ILO (1998:http) proceeds to identify common trends in public service reforms over the world. These trends are:

- Globalisation.
- Democratisation of the state and state administration.
- Good governance as ideal.
- The impacts of technological change.
- The impact of demographic changes.

In respect of the trend of globalisation the ILO (1998:http) notes that globalisation processes have affected virtually all sectors of the world economy and economic development. The effect of this has been that states, regions and industrial centres are in a global competition to maintain and expand economic capacity. In this way economic prosperity and social development are becoming increasingly dependent upon competitive public administration performance.

Globally trends to enhance this type of performance identified by the ILO (1998:http) include as part of structural adjustment and transition the following:

- Privatisation.
- Contracting out.
- Restructuring.
- Creating entrepreneurial institutions and attitudes in the public service.

These actions, which are global trends, are aimed at cutting costs and strengthening civil society and are in accordance with the newly defined roles of the state. These newly defined roles of the state concentrate on the establishing of favourable conditions for the private sector and non-governmental actors who are involved in processes of preparing for societies with higher degrees of self-regulation. Public administration in this scenario does not exclusively implement public policy but facilitates and encourages public/private partnerships. The state, generally concentrates on the core functions such as policy-making, public planning, budgeting, international relations, defence, public security, justice and social security while leaving other societal activities to business and civil society.

This trend for the state and public administration to concentrate on core functions are supported and re-inforced by:

- A strong citizen and client orientation where client evaluation of services is regarded as a primary performance indicator.
- Good governance impacting upon administration in drives towards right-sizing and new public management initiatives to improve service delivery performance through a participative market and customer driven approach.
- Utilising technological innovations for the benefit of citizens as customers.

The above aspects point towards the relationships between globalisation and human resources which will now be discussed further.

Globalisation and human resources

Globalisation as process and context creates definite influences on human resources and the management thereof in the globalising world. Lubbers (1998:http) provides a generalised but stimulating view on this when he states that one of the social problems is that it is troublesome to create enough jobs in a globalised setting for every potential worker at the right level. This job creation issue in a globalised setting is due to two factors, namely:

- Labour markets are changing so that low paid jobs for the low educated are becoming scarcer.
- Simultaneously the amount of low paid jobs for the higher educated grow.

These trends create a mismatch between available labour and labour for which a demand exists.

Job seekers with a lack of vocational training get more and more excluded from job opportunities. Simultaneously, because of globalisation, the supply of labour from less developed countries affects the market position of all of those who have no scarce skills to offer. This results in a position where only the most competitive can retain their relative position in the market place. The winners in this situation are those having an income from capital and those who can benefit from positions in management or scarcity due to capacity in new technologies.

This generalised point of view links up with the views of organised labour who profess to speak for the workers.

As with globalisation generally, the effects of globalisation on human resources are not uncontroversial. Guiseppe Queranghi, the Director, Bureau for Workers, Activities of the ILO refers to the perceived effects of globalisation on workers and trade unions from the viewpoint of the workers and trade unions themselves. According to Queranghi (1996:http). These viewpoints include that the impacts of globalisation on workers are that:

- Because of greater competition on a global scale workers are expected to produce more output with fewer workers.
- Longer working hours and/or extra shifts are introduced without increased compensation.
- Downsizing has led to higher levels of unemployment.
- Management is threatening to move production to other countries if labour costs cannot be reduced still further.
- The rights and influence of trade unions are diminished and in some of new centres of production are actually non-existent.
- In industrialised countries globalisation and increased competition are seen as contributing to wider income differentials.
- There is a growth in precarious work forms and less job security system.
- Collective bargaining and the role and influence of trade unions are under attack and diminishing.

It is therefore also not strange that the trade union movement seeks to maximise the benefits for workers of closer economic ties while searching for ways to mitigate the undesirable repercussions of increased competition through globalisation.

Kyloh (1996:http) expands on the effects of globalisation on organised labour and trade unions. According to him the effects have been, *inter alia*, that:

- Employers and even some governments have been encouraged to adopt a more hostile approach to the claims of unions and even to oppose the unions actively.
- The power of trade unions have been eroded by competition over wages and employment conditions in an interdependent and globally linked world economy where financial markets virtually demands continuous cost cutting measures.
- Due to the situation that multinational enterprises have become more influential in domestic economies the power imbalances between labour and capital (employers) have negatively affected the workers and trade unions.
- Workers in different countries have to increasingly bid for their jobs with the same employer against workers in other countries.
- Workers have to accept the production units in relatively high cost locations will be closed down and be established or expanded in low cost locations.
- Companies and organisations in high cost industrial locations may create, or expand sub-contracting arrangements with producers in low-cost developing countries.

According to Kyloh (1996:http) these negative impacts and consequences for workers are magnified in particular industries, being especially the low-tech industries like steel, textiles and clothing where the competition from low cost producers is most intense. This results in continuous downward pressures on wages and employment in these industries.

The possible exceptions to these general positions are found in industries that have shifted to new forms of work organisation, where emphasis is placed on innovation and knowledge. In these situations less emphasis is placed on lowering labour costs to improve profitability. Instead of emphasising lowering the costs of labour these organisations focus on the quality of the product, customer service, improved marketing and technological advances.

The above concerns of workers and organised labour as articulated from an international labour perspective indicates some of the perceived negative trends, but also provides some cues on possible future scenarios in respect of the management of human resources.

In the following sections these cues will be further focussed upon in terms of the emerging implications and human resource challenges.

Globalisation: emerging implications and human resource challenges

In this section the emerging implications of globalisation on organisational forms and the procurement and utilisation of personnel will receive attention.

Globalisation and new organisation models

The context within which people work is generally represented by an organisation. It is therefore useful to focus briefly on the kind of organisation model which is emerging as the optimal model in globalised conditions. From the perspective of a globalised organisational context the organisation type which will probably function optimally is what Bergquist (1993:xiii) calls a postmodern organisation. This type of organisation:

- Emphasises small to moderate size and complexity rather than large scale bureaucracy.
- Strives towards the adoption of flexible structures and methods to meet turbulent conditions.
- Emphasises clear and strong missions.
- Accepts increasingly diffuse and weak boundaries and opens up to external influences.
- Prefers leadership to management, where the leaders are regarded as specifically effective in specific settings and times.
- Accepts that the reign of leaders is often short and turbulent.
- Realises communication through oral, but often electronically mediated media of communication rather than face to face communication.
- Experiences interpersonal relationships as temporary rather than long term.
- Realises that information and expertise is at least as important in the organisation as is capital.
- Accepts the importance and influence of knowledge workers who, on their turn, expect more satisfaction from their work than the workers in previous times.

This type of organisational setting seen in conjunction with previously dealt with effects of globalisation in terms of networking, governance and human resource generally can now be utilised to focus on some procurement and utilisation aspects of human resource management.

Globalisation and human resource procurement

When focussing on the possible effects of globalisation on human resource procurement it is interesting to take note some of the changes in the workforce predicted by the United States Department of Labor for the year 2000 as quoted by Harvey and Brown (1996:41). According to this:

- Work will increasingly rely on knowledge rather than physical effort and at least half of the United States employees will be knowledge workers.
- Up to 90% of all American jobs will be influenced, and some even replaced, by expert and artificial intelligence computer systems.
- More than 90% of all new workers will be minorities and women.
- About 80% of all jobs in the near future will require tertiary education and all jobs will require increasingly higher skill levels.
- There will be an increasing movement away from production oriented to service oriented jobs.
- Traditional autocratic management approaches will become obsolete.

From what has been said thus far the following challenges for the procurement and retention of educated and highly skilled workers can be deduced:

- 1 Knowledge and skilled workers will increasingly become mobile and cross boundaries following globalised market patterns. This implies that the recruitment of these workers will be from a global pool rather than a national or local pool. Employers who compete for these workers as a scarce resource will generally only succeed in attracting or retaining these type of workers if they are able to provide globally competitive remuneration and benefits packages. This will also result in the possibility that employers and even countries – for example developing countries – who are unable to provide competitive packages will be confronted with an increasing ‘flight’ of these types of workers and an accompanying scarcity of these valuable resources.
- 2 In recruiting new employees from a global pool, employers will have to use global media rather than local or national media. The information technology capacity and the extent to which workers who possess over the knowledge and skills to be competitive in a global sense will be connected to new media will enhance their recruitment through new media. Concretely stated it will be more effective to reach the target market in the case of a globalised recruitment source through the internet and the world wide web than through traditional media such as newspapers and company billboards. Communication with prospective employees will also rather be by means of electronic rather than traditional mail.
- 3 Selection procedures will also increasingly be based on media using electronic information technology. Face to face testing and interviewing will be used less due to long distance and possible cost factors and will be replaced by electronically mediated selection procedures.

- 4 It is conceivable that appointments will be made on the basis of internationally acceptable contract law and agreements and at remuneration and benefits levels which increasingly become standardised across national boundaries for those occupations which fall within the scope of the global work place. For this purpose recruiters and employers should be aware of the requirements of international employment law, contracts and markets.
- 5 As a result of new technologies it is becoming possible that workers recruited in a globalised work place will not necessarily have to relocate to the physical venue of the employer organisation. It may be possible to work from the present address of the employee by means of electronic networks. This possibility is enhanced by the nature of global work and jobs which will be service oriented rather than production or manufacturing oriented.
- 6 Should new employees be required to relocate from their present physical address, then recruiting employers will have to be aware of immigration and relocation laws and regulations in the receiving country. They will also probably have to provide assistance and manage the process of relocation, especially in cases where international borders are transcended and residence and work permits have to be acquired. In this setting it can be observed that many states and administrative systems are not yet properly geared to deal with the increasing mobility of the globalised work force which could lead to delays and frustrations due to official and bureaucratic blockages.

The above represents some speculative views on possible challenges emanating from human resource procurement in a globalised setting. Once human resources have been procured they have to be properly utilised for full effectiveness. The challenges in respect of management or utilisation of human resources in a globalised setting will now receive attention.

Globalisation and human resource utilisation

The highly educated and skilled knowledge workers that have to be utilised will require a different management and utilisation approach from the traditional situation. Some provisional trends in this regard are:

- 1 The employees in this group will require flexible and creative organisational arrangements focussing on outputs and performance rather than hierarchial control of procedures and processes towards reaching goals and objectives.
- 2 The leaders and managers who have to lead and motivate this type of workers will have very little to rely upon in terms of position power, motivation through loyalty or fear and control through hierarchy. To fully utilise these workers, leadership through expertise, motivation by means of intrinsically challenging and stimulating job content and managing for results by means of performance management will be a pre-condition for success.

- 3 Mere training will not suffice to enhance the knowledge and skills of these workers. A much broader concept of human resource development will be needed. This broader concept of total human resource development will have to optimise all possible opportunities for increasing and maintaining the already substantial capacity of the typical knowledge worker in the globalised setting. An important concept here will be life long learning to enhance the capacity of employers to keep abreast of rapid developments in their ever changing field. This will create new challenges for all educational and training institutions to provide opportunities for continuous learning using new technologies and methodologies different from the physical and time restrictions imposed by traditional classroom settings. Training and education will increasingly also become globalised allowing for choice and creating competition for in house and in country products on a global scale. This will make excellence in training and education more accessible to all on a continuous basis. These opportunities should be provided for and maintained in the training policies and delivery of organisations managing in a globalised setting.
- 4 Due to the rapid change in the fields of the typically globalised occupations and the short shelf life of knowledge new pressures will be put upon employees to cope with these changes and to continuously reinvent their own capacities. There is a probability that these factors will lead to new forms of work related stress, pathologies and potential burn out. This creates a need for new approaches to employee health, safety and security which will be able to deal with these newly created pressures.
- 5 The nature of work in these settings will be more temporary, creating a need for revised service dispensations and conditions dealt with through new types of contracts and agreements. One important aspect of this involves new approaches to provide in flexible ways for transferable pension and annuity funds to ensure that employees have sustainable future prospects in societies where life expectancies are increasing.

The above represents some of the possible challenges emanating from new approaches to human resource utilisation in globalised settings. There are probably many more which will emerge as the trends, in respect of globalisation, continue to develop and become more concretised. What is clear is that the future is not what it used to be in terms of globalised human resource management.

In the following section of the paper a challenge is put to the delegates to provide some ideas about the impact of these trends on national mapping organisations. The result of this deliberation will be incorporated in the final version of this document.

Possible effects of globalisation on human resource management in national mapping organisations

(to be completed by the conference delegates in session discussion)

Summary and conclusion

(to be completed by conference delegates in session discussion)

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