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Preface

A personal note to readers: I wish to share some reflections on my experience interviewing Dr Susan Jackson for the Scholars Corner, as I find myself in awe of her research and professionalism. In reading a cross-section of her work to prepare a list of questions, I deeply admired the layers of scholarship that integrated the many meaningful topics related to “human resources” she addressed. Frankly, I couldn’t stop asking her questions! Dr Jackson responded with grace and genuine respect, providing in-depth, thoughtful, and scientific answers relating to a wide variety of research themes. A prolific writer and true collaborator, Dr Jackson is a brilliant scientist who “walks her talk” with value, values, and professional rigor in all ways. I was truly honored to be able to discuss her work with her, and I am privileged to share a small slice of it with you.

Summary

Dr Susan E. Jackson, a well-known scholar, scientist, and prolific author in the human resource field, provides intelligent, in-depth, and thoughtful insights on the topics of burnout, diversity, global talent management, cross-cultural management, strategic human resource management

(HRM), and environmental sustainability. Highlighting the personal and professional foundations of her work, she describes how her research journey has blended ideas from social psychology with strategic management. She quickly reviews her earlier research on burnout and chronicles the progress that has been made in the field over the past thirty years. Dr Jackson recounts and critically examines the history as well as the positive and negative effects of diversity, and argues that the multiple aspects of both relations- and task-oriented types of diversity require coordinated study in order to understand diversity's fullest range of consequences in varied organizational environments.

Because firms need to get closer to their customers and use strategic alliances and mergers and acquisitions to globally compete, diversity management is a strategic imperative. Dr Jackson describes a leading-edge, "aspirational" framework for strategic HRM that captures both its multidisciplinary nature and its powerful potential to contribute to business effectiveness. She illustrates the role of HRM in helping organizations achieve environmental sustainability, manage culturally diverse environments, and provide financial, social, and human wealth to all stakeholders in a firm's ecosystem. She encourages practitioners and scholars alike to step aside from the propensity to categorize people into in-groups and out-groups, so as to reduce bias and promote effective cross-cultural research and relationships.

Dr Jackson inspires and challenges business leaders and managers, as well as human resource practitioners and scholars, to more deeply value "HR" and to understand the integral role that human resource management plays in creating sustainable, highly performing organizations.

Background

Dr Susan E. Jackson is Distinguished Professor of Human Resource Management at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University. Her primary areas of expertise include workforce issues in environmentally sustainable organizations, managing team effectiveness, strategic human resource management, global talent management, and designing human resource management systems to support learning and innovation.

Dr Jackson has published nearly 150 scholarly articles and chapters on these and related topics. She is also the author or editor of several books, including *Managing Human Resources for Environmental Sustainability* (with D. Ones and S. Dilchert), *Managing Human Resources* (with R. Schuler and S. Werner), *Managing Knowledge for Sustainable Competitive Advantage* (with A. DeNisi and M. Hitt), *Managing Human Resources in Cross-Border Alliances* (with R. Schuler and Y. Luo), *Managing: A Competency-Based Approach* (with D. Hellriegel and J. W. Slocum), *Creating Tomorrow's Organizations: A Handbook for Future Research in Organizational Behavior* (with C. L. Cooper), *Selected Research on Work Team Diversity* (with M. N. Ruderman and M. W. Hughes-James), *Maslach Burnout Inventory and Manual, 3rd Edition* (with C. Maslach and M. P. Leiter), *Diversity in Work Teams: Research Paradigms for a Changing Workplace* (with M. N. Ruderman), and *Diversity in the Workplace: Human Resources: Initiatives*. As a service to teachers, students, scholars, and managers interested in environmentally friendly workplaces, she founded and manages www.greenhrm.org.

In addition to her university activities, Professor Jackson has held numerous positions in professional societies. In the Academy of Management, she is a fellow, a former president, and member of the Executive Committee, having served previously as a member of the Human

Resources Division's Executive Committee, Chair of the Academy's Organizational Behavior Division, and editor of the *Academy of Management Review*, a journal devoted to the publication of scholarly reviews and theory development. She has also served as chair of the New Journal Implementation Task Force (2012), chair of the Heneman Career Achievement Award Committee, and a member of the Institute of Medicine Task Force, Journal Restructuring Committee, Career Achievement Awards Committee, Editor Search Committee, and several committees within the Human Resources Division.

Dr Jackson is also a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, the British Academy of Management, and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, where she served as a member of the Executive Committee for several years. Additionally, she has served in numerous leadership capacities in the International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management, the International Association of Applied Psychology, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and the International Research Seminar in Service Management. She has been a member of the Board of Governors, chair of the Research Advisory Committee, and member of other committees at the Center for Creative Leadership.

Dr Jackson has served as editor (or coeditor) of numerous journals and special-issue publications, including *Oxford Research Reviews*, *Management and Organization Review*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *German Journal of Research in Human Resource Management*, *Academy of Management Journal*, and *International Journal of Manpower*. She is, or has been, on the editorial advisory board of *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, *Journal of Trust Research*, *International Journal of Manpower*, and the ESADE-DEUSTO Series: *Managing People in 21st Century Organizations*. She has also been an editorial board member of *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, *Human Resource Planning*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Organizational Dynamics*, and *Personnel Psychology*.

Dr Jackson has received numerous honorary appointments, including Scholarly Advisor at the Institute for Inclusiveness and Diversity in Organizations (College of Business Administration, San Diego State University), Research Fellow at the Centre for Performance-Led HR (Lancaster University, UK), Research Fellow at Lorange Institute of Business (Zurich), and Fellow at Sunningdale Institute (National School of Government, UK).

Prior to joining Rutgers in 1998, Dr Jackson served on the faculties of New York University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Maryland, where she taught courses on a wide range of topics related to the challenge of effective workplace management. She received her BA in psychology and sociology from the University of Minnesota and her Master's and PhD degrees in organizational and social psychology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Interview

Overview

You are a scholar and scientist in the human resource field, and you have delivered leading-edge research in numerous areas such as burnout, diversity, strategic human resource management, knowledge management, and sustainability. How have your life experiences—your heritage and upbringing, your schooling and work, your relationships and service—served to guide, inform, or even challenge your scholarship?

If I were a better psychologist, I would probably have some deep insights about that! I'm sure my upbringing instilled some sensitivity to the issue of diversity. As a child, I was surrounded by religious, ethnic, political, and economic diversity (and, unfortunately, intolerance) in my immediate family and at school. That probably laid the groundwork for my later research on workplace diversity. But I only began to think about diversity as a topic for my research much later, when a few American employers began to see that effectively managing an increasingly diverse workforce would be absolutely necessary to the success of their businesses. This was an important shift for American executives, who previously framed the issue of diversity as "merely" a legal issue—that is, what was required in order to comply with nondiscrimination laws.

By the 1990s, societal changes had resulted in a workforce and customer base that were much more diverse than the management ranks in most companies. As stakeholders, employees and customers from a wide range of demographic groups and backgrounds began to agitate for changes in how businesses operated. Some employers viewed the changes as threatening; others saw new opportunities for their businesses. My colleague Jane Dutton (who studies strategic issues) and I were young faculty members at NYU then, and we were looking for a topic to work on together. Coincidentally, at about the same time, Don Hambrick and Phyllis Mason published their seminal article describing how the demographic composition of top management teams could influence a company's strategic decisions (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). And the final situational factor for me was that I had another colleague who was interested in entrepreneurship, Ian MacMillan, who knew about Hambrick and Mason's ideas and suggested we study small businesses. So all of these things came together in a way that no one could have planned.

With Jane Dutton, I began contacting companies and interviewing executives about how they viewed the increasing diversity of their workforce. Our goal was to understand why some companies viewed it as an opportunity while others saw it as a threat. At the same time, with the support and assistance of Ian MacMillan, I conducted a study of small businesses, examining the role of political, religious, and gender diversity within management teams. The study was never published, but the project convinced me that diversity was just as important and powerful a factor for businesses as I had observed it to be in families and school settings. In the example I just gave you, it is pretty easy for me to see how my early childhood experiences combined with my later educational training and work experiences to shape a stream of research.

My more recent interest in environmental sustainability illustrates how my professional service roles have shaped my work. Nearly twenty years ago, when I was serving as editor of

the *Academy of Management Review*, I was approached by colleagues who proposed a Special Topic Forum on Organizations and the Natural Environment. It was a topic I knew nothing about, but it seemed like a worthwhile subject. We proceeded to produce the special issue, which was published in 1995. I never did any related research on the topic of the environment, nor was I active in environmental groups. For me, nature was for recreation and was unrelated to my work.

Then, in 2008 as vice president-elect and program chair for the Academy of Management (AOM), I had the duty and privilege to select a theme for the 2009 AOM conference. It was one of the most difficult decisions I've ever had to make! I analyzed and thought about it for months and couldn't think of a theme that I felt was meaningful and relevant to all AOM members, regardless of where in the world they lived and worked and regardless of their divisional affiliations.

That same year, I also started to feel alarmed about environmental issues in general and especially the consequences of climate change. I had been hiking recreationally in the Swiss Alps for many years, but that year I had several conversations with local Swiss people who could recall how much larger the glaciers had been a few years earlier. The same topic of retreating glaciers had come up in conversations during a recent trip to Alaska. Environmental issues were very prominent that year in American politics as well. For reasons I cannot explain, that was the year I woke up to the importance of environmental sustainability. I became convinced that it was an issue of global significance, and I was in a position to encourage others to pay attention to it—even if I had not yet done so myself. Thus, the theme for the 2009 Academy of Management conference became “Green Management Matters,” and I decided to engage in research related to that topic.

What inspired the various transitions you made between these topics?

As a student, I recall that professors valued most highly those scholars who devoted their entire careers to research on a single topic, and I expected to follow a similar path. But I quickly discovered that I become interested in new topics quite often and want to explore them. The turns my research takes often reflect what is happening around me as well as my basic interest in real-world problems. Looking back, I can say that most of my work sits at the intersection of two fields of study: social psychology and strategic management. That was never planned in advance, however.

In graduate school, I was fortunate to work as a research assistant to Christina Maslach, who was then just getting started in her career as a social psychologist. She is an example of someone who pursued a single topic for her entire career and in doing so has made a significant contribution to our understanding of burnout. It was great working with her when she was pioneering burnout research. In graduate school, I also learned that each young professor was expected to carve out her own distinctive research niche. Following in the footsteps of your mentors was not the way to have a successful career. So, as a young professor, I began to explore new areas. Most of my research since graduate school reflects my training in social psychology and the subsequent influence of colleagues trained in fields other than psychology—in particular, strategic management.

My interest in doing work that blended ideas from psychology and strategic management was considered quite unusual thirty years ago, but as a young business school

faculty member, I found it stimulating to collaborate with colleagues who had other areas of expertise. As a social psychologist, I was most interested in the power of situations (rather than personality or biological processes) to influence behavior, and that perspective fits well with the strategic management perspective, which looks at how the external environment influences the “behavior” of organizations.

Burnout

Let’s begin with your early work. Along with your colleague Dr Christina Maslach, you developed a standardized instrument for measuring burnout called the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) that has been the leading measure to assess burnout around the world. What dimensions of burnout are measured in this instrument?

Burnout was a new construct when Christina Maslach and I began working together in the late 1970s. At the time, her focus was on the psychological costs of caring, which were borne by people working in emotionally charged jobs and especially those working in human services (for example, medical professionals, teachers, police officers, and clergy). Maslach’s early qualitative observations suggested a range of employee responses to such work, so we set out to develop a psychometrically sound, standardized measure that could be used to study burnout systematically across a wide range of settings. In the process of developing that measure, we identified three dimensions of burnout that were prevalent and could be reliably measured in a wide range of social service occupations: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of one’s clients, and a sense of low personal accomplishment. Our early research also demonstrated the cost of burnout to employees—their physical and mental health often suffered, family life was often adversely affected, employers paid the cost in higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, and society often lost the talents of dedicated professionals who eventually chose to leave their human service careers behind and find less stressful types of work.

How have burnout research and interventions changed since you began studying them?

During the past thirty years of burnout research, one change has been to examine burnout in other types of occupational groups and work settings. Eventually, a version of the MBI was created to assess burnout in almost any occupational setting. That is probably the biggest change in burnout research. Originally, the focus was on employees working in human services, but today burnout is recognized as a reaction that employees experience in many different types of work.

Of course, another significant change has been the global expansion of burnout research. The MBI has been translated into numerous languages and used to conduct research in dozens of countries.

A third change in burnout research is occurring now, as research turns to finding effective interventions. Our understanding of burnout today rests on a solid foundation of basic research about the organizational correlates of burnout, which include work overload, lack of control, insufficient reward, breakdown of community, absence of fairness, and values conflict. Needed now are rigorous studies that demonstrate how organizations can effectively intervene

to reduce burnout and promote positive engagement. Michael Leiter and his colleagues are doing exactly such research to establish the effectiveness of a structured process, dubbed “CREW,” aimed at improving civility, respect, and engagement at work. The CREW process relies on local facilitators who lead workgroup members in discussions over a period of six months and use a toolkit of group exercises and discussion topics to learn to improve their usual ways of interacting. In rigorous field studies, Leiter and others have now demonstrated that CREW helps reduce some burnout symptoms while also improving job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and management trust.

It is worth noting that the CREW approach to reducing employee burnout relies on a successful collaboration of researchers and practitioners. Business leaders must recognize the existence of a problem and be motivated to address it. Researchers provide the expertise to design and evaluate interventions to ensure their effectiveness. CREW relies on employees who are trained to take on the role of facilitators, which helps ensure that the process fits an organization’s unique conditions. And HR professionals set the stage for this diverse set of actors.

Workplace Diversity

Let’s now talk about diversity. First of all, what do you mean by this term?

Many people think that diversity refers to the differences that exist between individuals. Sometimes you even hear people refer to an individual person as “diverse” (meaning “different”). What they really mean is that the person is dissimilar to the majority on a particular attribute, such as ethnicity or gender. That is not an appropriate use of the term. The term diversity refers to the composition of social units such as work teams. Work team diversity, for example, uses compositional measures that assess the distribution of team members’ personal attributes, including their demographic and psychological characteristics.

What types of diversity can exist in work teams?

The possible forms of diversity are many. Diversity researchers often try to simplify things a bit by talking about distinctions such as relations-oriented versus task-related dimensions of diversity, and readily detected (or surface-level) versus underlying (or deep-level) diversity.

Relations-oriented diversity refers to the distribution of attributes that are instrumental in shaping relationships but that typically do not directly influence task performance—attributes such as age, gender, and personality characteristics.

Task-related diversity refers to the distribution of attributes that are potentially relevant to the team’s work—for example, organizational tenure, formal credentials, and functional expertise. Within each of these two broad categories are attributes that are readily detected (or surface-level) and those that are underlying (or deep-level).

As an example, the dimensions of diversity that are relationship oriented and readily detected include gender, age, ethnicity, and nationality. It is very difficult to conduct research that takes into account every possible type of diversity present within a social unit—a work team or an organization—yet it’s very likely that different combinations and patterns of diversity have different consequences.

I should also mention that there is another important social feature that must be taken into consideration—namely, status. Women and members of ethnic minority groups have lower social status in most societies. In some societies, status is associated with age or one’s family name. When such status hierarchies are ignored in diversity research, it is easy to miss some of the most important drivers of interactions at work.

What types of work team diversity are most easily or most widely studied?

In “Work Team Diversity,” we reviewed the empirical research on work team diversity and focused on studies that investigated diversity’s potential consequences in three broad categories: affective and attitudinal responses (for example, cohesion, conflict, commitment, and satisfaction); behavior processes (such as communication, use of information, learning behavior, and turnover); and performance (for example, achievement of team goals and other indicators of effectiveness). The greatest accumulation of evidence at that time pertained to readily detected types of diversity—such as race or ethnicity, gender, functional background, and age—and their relationship to performance. I believe that is still true.

There have been a relatively high proportion of studies on cognitive/mental models and tenure and their impact on performance as well. We’ve seen some interesting empirical research examining the relationship between various types of diversity and their consequences on communication, communication networks, friendship networks, task conflict and emotional conflict, social cohesion, commitment and turnover, creativity and innovation, and performance. Most of the studies have focused on readily detected types of diversity.

Throughout your work, you’ve emphasized the importance of taking into account the many different types of diversity that are usually present in a social unit, instead of focusing on a single attribute at a time. So, rather than trying to understand gender or ethnic or age diversity, you believe these types of diversity should all be studied together. Why is that important?

Diversity is a very complex topic. Different types of diversity may have different consequences, and the combinations of diversity present in a team also make a difference. So if we want to fully understand the consequences of, for example, gender diversity, we should not ignore the other types of differences present in the situations under investigation. Understanding diversity is complicated by the fact that the attributes of employees who work together in a team may be correlated. For example, if the women in a team are generally all younger than the men and perhaps also have higher educational levels than the men, the interpersonal and intergroup dynamics in the team are likely to be influenced by all of these types of diversity in combination.

This idea is captured by the concept of “faultlines.” A faultline occurs when attributes are correlated such that distinct subgroups form within the larger group. The presence of distinct subgroups—where members within a subgroup are similar to each other and different from others in the larger group—seems to trigger the problematic interpersonal dynamics that are associated with diversity. These problems include bias and favoritism toward members of one’s ingroup (people who are similar) and competition and conflict with members of the outgroup (those who are dissimilar).

What are some of the more interesting findings of diversity research?

One tentative conclusion to draw is that relations-oriented diversity in work teams is often (but not always) of little consequence—at least for the work team outcomes that have been examined thus far. It can be disruptive under some specific conditions—for example, if the work teams are islands of diversity struggling to succeed in a sea of homogeneity.

Evidence indicates that task-oriented diversity of characteristics such as functional background, education, and job or organizational tenure is often likely to be beneficial for team performance. Many organizations appear to reap the benefits of task-related diversity, despite any negative effects that such diversity might have on social relationships among team members. What's important is that employers shouldn't make assumptions about how diversity influences work teams in their organizations. Instead, they need to examine the effects of the types of diversity present in their organizations for the specific outcomes that are of most interest and importance to their organization.

In *Diversity in the Workplace*, you've noted that many diversity programs arose out of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs. How successful have EEO and AA programs been?

Let me first step back and create a context for answering this question. For many people concerned over issues of diversity, the core problem is improving the employment experiences and outcomes for women and ethnic minorities. Such concerns were addressed historically in the US and many other countries by equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs, which were designed to *create* greater diversity in their organizations—that is, attract and hire a more diverse workforce. Subsequent diversity and inclusion initiatives arose from the realization that *managing* a more diverse workforce required making other internal changes in how people were managed. Although they are interrelated, these are actually two different goals: affirmative action goals are intended to help ensure the presence of diversity, while diversity and inclusion initiatives strive to effectively leverage diversity and ensure that employees from all backgrounds feel a sense of inclusion.

Judging the effectiveness of public policies such as equal employment opportunity laws and affirmative action programs is extremely difficult because we don't know how much progress society may have enjoyed if these had been absent during the past fifty years. Personally, I believe these legal mandates have facilitated positive change—that is, they have helped remove or weaken some barriers and increase workplace fairness. Nevertheless, the behavior of individual employees too often fails to live up to the standards many of us have for workplace fairness. And many institutionalized employment practices still allow the biases of individual managers to negatively affect the work experiences and outcomes of their employees.

How can HR professionals help managers and leaders better address deeply held beliefs, prejudices, and attitudes that create tension and conflict in organizations? What is the most effective way to reduce managerial bias and realize observable behavioral changes?

That really is the question I hope to see more diversity researchers focus on. There is a great deal of research that investigates the positive and negative consequences of diversity, but relatively little research is aimed at designing and evaluating specific interventions. There have

been a few studies looking at the effectiveness of diversity training programs for employees, and those results are rather disappointing when it comes to changing people's behaviors.

As a general principle, I'm not keen on the idea of employers trying to change the deeply held beliefs of their employees. It's more appropriate for employers to focus on job-related behaviors and work outcomes. Furthermore, a growing body of evidence from studies conducted with schoolchildren suggests that changing deeply held beliefs and habits may not be the path we need to travel. We all have biases. The good news is that the negative consequences of our biases can be muted by attending to the social structures in an organization—for example, the composition of work units and status stratification.

Changing the social composition of organizations was the goal of EEO and AA programs, as you mentioned. Those programs also have some negative effects, don't they? What are some negative effects of affirmative action?

This is not my area of expertise, but it has been studied extensively by Madeline Heilman at New York University. She has conducted several interesting studies examining the unintended negative effects of perceived "preferential selection"—that is, the perception that someone was selected for a job based on a personal attribute such as being a woman instead of being selected because of demonstrated competence. Her research looks at how people react to someone who they believe was preferentially selected because of affirmative action programs. She also examines how the beneficiaries of such decisions feel about themselves and how they perform in their job. Most of her work uses experimental designs, which is very important because she can ensure that the people who are selected are equally qualified and competent. Even when there are no differences in the skills and competence of people who have been affirmatively (preferentially) selected, there are negative consequences. People attach a "stigma of incompetence" to employees who they believe have obtained their positions through preferential selection. The beneficiaries of preferential selection experience some negative consequences too, including lower self-perceptions of their own performance and a greater tendency to mistreat others who are similar to themselves.

What is clear, I think, is that laws and regulations do little to reduce the deep-seated biases and prejudices of particular individuals in the short term, including the insecurities and negative self-perceptions that members of minority groups sometimes experience. But over time, laws and regulations can positively influence the institutional processes used by organizations to select, evaluate, and reward employees. And as those processes change, the social structures of organizations gradually change. And social structures matter—they influence behavior. For example, when we studied the compensation received by women and nonwhite employees in a large multinational company, we found that pay discrimination against these minority groups was substantially lower in work units where women and nonwhites were better represented among the managerial ranks.

It is easy to get discouraged by the very slow pace of societal changes and the unrealized potential of organizations to realize the benefits of a diverse workforce. Nevertheless, gains are being made at many companies and in many societies. I am confident continued gains are possible if talented employees insist on it. Change that starts at the bottom through employee activism and change that trickles in from popular culture may ultimately be necessary to realize the goals of top-down legislative solutions.

Why is diversity a strategic imperative for organizations today?

Diversity is a strategic imperative to most organizations because we are dealing with numerous forces that are changing the business environment. A hundred years ago, we were going through the industrial revolution. Small family businesses and artisan workshops were replaced by large factories and assembly lines. The social intimacy of work relationships gave way to mass production. People worked side by side but they did not have to interact much to do perform their jobs. Today, the importance of person-to-person contact and effective communication is increasing in many sectors of the economy. For example, by 2020, it is estimated that nearly four out of five American employees will work in the service sector. Even manufacturers integrate services with products—they know they need to provide excellent customer service to build long-term relationships with customers and gain competitive advantage. Myriad internal service exchanges also occur between companies. In a service economy, customer literacy and customer intimacy are important. Employees need to be able to read their customers and interact with them in a nearly flawless manner. They have to be able to understand their perspectives, anticipate their needs, and respond sensitively and appropriately to address these needs.

So in the midst of all this change, along with the need for firms to get closer to their customers, organizations are becoming more culturally diverse and need to better manage diversity?

Yes. And the high rate of strategic alliances and mergers and acquisitions means companies must often deal with yet another type of diversity—namely, diversity of corporate cultures. Many of the same principles that are relevant to fusing together diverse corporate cultures are relevant to working through other types of diversity. In the twenty-first century, communications and the people they connect will be the lifeblood of business. Regardless of who is doing the communicating and the process they are using to communicate, high-fidelity transmission will be essential. Managers are realizing the value of employees with cross-cultural sensitivities as they work with new international partners. They are also realizing how much they need organizational systems that help knit together different organizational cultures into a seamless whole. These systems are needed so that organizations will more fully utilize the talents of employees from all parts of the world and avoid the costs and disruptions that cultural diversity can create.

How is the labor force changing today? What impact is this having on diversity?

The labor force is constantly changing in response to a variety of economic and social forces. However, the long-term trend projected for developed countries is that the supply of skilled labor will continue to be low compared to demand. Under such conditions, employers are forced to compete to attract and retain the human talent they need to grow and succeed. As firms compete on a worldwide stage under dynamic conditions, they will continue to be confronted with a major obstacle—a shortage of skilled and talented employees, especially knowledge workers. There will be times when there is too little talent available when it's needed, and at other times there will be too much talent available that isn't needed. The needed talent may be available in the wrong place or at the wrong price. Firms may need to

reduce or add workers in their home country or in other countries, or initiate numerous other HR actions to address the consequences of a fluid labor market. At the organizational level, these dynamics will create more workplaces with much more diversity of all types, so the value of managing diversity effectively will only increase.

Globalization has also elevated the amount of diversity in organizations and the importance of managing diversity effectively. A majority of the world's largest firms are expanding internationally and optimizing the location of their value chain activities. With trade barriers falling, foreign trade is increasing. Economic development of countries such as Brazil, China, India, and South Africa has created new opportunities for market expansion through cross-border alliances, mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures. Taking advantage of these new opportunities often creates not only more cultural diversity in organizations, but also many other types of diversity—educational, occupational, religious, political, and so on.

While some executives extol the virtues of a diverse workforce, empirical evidence reveals that few employers have fully succeeded in leveraging workforce diversity to achieve positive outcomes. Why is that?

Actually, I think employers are getting better at leveraging workforce diversity, simply out of necessity. I can't point to a great deal of rigorous research to support my belief, but my observation of American companies suggests they are getting better at leveraging diversity. That's particularly so for firms that thrive on creativity and innovation.

Work teams facilitate innovation by bringing together experts with dissimilar knowledge bases and perspectives and by providing an environment for creative thinking. When teams are formed—whether they are intentionally designed to stimulate creativity or formed as a natural byproduct of pulling together team members from a diverse employee population—diversity is created. In my own research, I've focused on understanding the dynamics of diversity in knowledge-intensive work teams, such as those engaged in research and development (R&D). Our research shows that well designed HRM systems—that is, systems designed specifically to support knowledge-intensive teamwork—and effective team leadership can both ensure that the diversity found in R&D teams is used productively to achieve a team's work objectives.

For many companies, the economic costs of alienating talented employees or potential customers from any demographic background are apparent, as are the economic rewards for productively channeling the positive energy of all of their employees. So managers who cannot manage diversity effectively get weeded out and the voices of employees get listened to. Gradually, workplace practices evolve and change to be more supportive of diversity. Gradually, the best places to work are recognized and copied. Gradually, improved practices for managing diversity and inclusion are becoming institutionalized. But we have a long way to go.

Global Talent Management and Cross-Cultural Management

Recently you've delved a bit into the topic of global talent management. What is global talent management?

Global talent management has become a very big topic during the past decade. Like so many new concepts that migrate from organizational practice to the arena of scholarship, it means

different things to different people. In many large multinational firms, global talent management refers primarily to developing and retaining relatively high-level managers. This is a natural extension of an earlier business model that relied on a small cadre of expatriates, who were managed as a unique population of employees.

But I think the meaning of global talent management is gradually evolving toward a much broader view. Despite the recent recession that has affected so many companies, long-term projections continue to point to a future in which the demand for talented employees exceeds the supply, thus creating a global talent shortage. Meanwhile, as globalization continues to bring economies and social institutions around the world into closer contact, even small and medium-size businesses operate in a global context and confront global talent management challenges; these include decisions about expanding and/or moving their operations to take advantage of lower labor costs or access larger pools of skilled workers, selling to and servicing customers in rapidly growing “off-shore” markets, pulling out of countries or regions as economic and political conditions change—sometimes quite rapidly—and so on.

In other words, the meaning of global talent management seems to be shifting to encompass the full array of strategically important decisions that involve locating and managing an organization’s workforce. And, with the increasing attention being paid to sustainable development, it’s not only the organization’s own global workforce that requires attention—global talent management should also address the treatment of employees located in partner organizations throughout a company’s entire (increasingly global) supply chain.

What other forces are driving the need for global talent management?

My colleagues Randall Schuler and Ibraiz Tarique and I have identified some of these forces. They include increasing levels of world trade, wage differentials between countries and regions, intensified competition, global demographic patterns, and changing technologies. Today, I would add political uncertainties within and between countries, as well as the means through which these uncertainties are addressed (whether through diplomacy, armed conflict, or international treaties, for example).

Who will fill the shortage of knowledge-based workers in the developed world?

One approach to answering that question is to examine how countries fare in global competitiveness rankings. A recent report that readers might find interesting is titled “The Global Competitiveness Index 2013,” compiled by Bruno Lanvin and Paul Evans. The report provides detailed discussions about talent quality and abundance around the world, recognizing that there are many types of “talent” that might be needed by a particular organization (such as low-cost talent, highly skilled talent, talent that is motivated to learn, and talent that is geographically mobile). No doubt, government policies regarding immigration, economic development, and education are key drivers of global talent stocks and flows.

Who will train and educate the abundance of people in developing and emerging economies?

Ideally, the development of global talent stocks will occur through the shared commitment of businesses, educational institutions, governments, organized labor, and individual employees.

What is the role of HR in addressing global talent management challenges in order to enable a multinational firm to gain and sustain a competitive advantage—especially in knowledge-based organizations?

Working together, HR professionals and scholars can contribute in a variety of ways. Providing detailed analyses such as those in the Lanvin and Evans report is extremely useful, for those analyses supply much needed systematic information that can be used when making decisions about where to (re)-locate company facilities and where to seek access to particular types of talent, such as through acquisitions and joint ventures. In other words, HR should be deeply involved in the strategic planning process. Of course, once decisions are made concerning where and when to grow the company's workforce organically, acquire new talent through alliances with external partners, or reduce dependence on particular sources of talent, HR should then take the lead in implementing those decisions.

Strategic Human Resource Management

You have conducted extensive research in the area of “strategic human resource management” (strategic HRM). What is strategic HRM?

Among HRM professionals, the term “strategic HRM” is used broadly to signal the view that HRM activities should contribute to business effectiveness. Strategic HRM provides a linkage between HRM activities, the needs of the business, and organizational effectiveness. There are many activities included under its umbrella, including the development and articulation of an HRM philosophy, the design of HRM policies that reflect the firm's overarching philosophy, and the implementation and evaluation of specific HRM practices—like planning, recruitment, training, and compensation.

It's important to understand the greater context for the development of strategic HRM. In North America, the practice of human resource management has always included ensuring that a firm's HRM practices comply with legal requirements, monitoring competitors' pay practices in order to compete for employee resources, and tracking labor conditions. Strategic HRM goes beyond these activities to also include developing a comprehensive understanding of trends in the external environment and their implications for workforce management. When a firm develops and implements a strategic HRM system, it is just that—a system—that requires integration and coherence among all of its elements.

What are the main assumptions of strategic HRM?

There are essentially three pervasive assumptions. First, effective human resource management leads to improved organizational effectiveness. HR professionals still handle traditional HR activities such as creating remuneration and benefits packages, tracking employee progress, bargaining collectively with unions, and evaluating employee performance. The essential shift is that the firm moves away from relying solely on professional and technical standards for evaluating the effectiveness of HR policies and practices, and toward the inclusion of business-relevant metrics of organizational effectiveness like economic value added (EVA) or return on investment (ROI).

Second is the assumption that effective human resource management requires an understanding of and integration with an organization's strategic objectives. Strategic HRM,

therefore, strives to align people management practices with conditions in the organization's external environment (business-related contingencies) and with the firm's specific strategic objectives.

Third, strategic HRM assumes that effective workforce management requires achieving an appropriate alignment among the many specific practices that comprise an HRM system—for example, activities related to staffing, performance management, and rewards. When HRM practices are properly aligned, they reinforce each other. When they are misaligned, they work against each other and interfere with an organization's success. An organization's vision, mission, and values are meant to provide a shared understanding of what the organization is striving to be—its desired identity. They can serve as valuable guides for both employees and HRM professionals.

In “An Aspirational Framework for Strategic HRM,” you present a framework that captures both the multidisciplinary nature and evolution of strategic HRM. You first provide a new definition of strategic HRM. What is it, and why is it needed?

Many HRM professionals believe that effective HRM contributes to organizational effectiveness, and that this will be accomplished by HR professionals working closely together with line managers and having a seat at the table when business decisions are made. The meaning of strategic HRM has varied over time, between cultural contexts, and because of the different disciplinary lenses scholars have used. However, the field is unified by the assumption that new insights about managing people at work can be gained through research that treats the many activities involved as an integrated HRM system that, if properly designed and linked to the broader context, yields beneficial outcomes. We offer the following definition of strategic HRM to capture these ideas: “The study of HRM systems (and/or subsystems) and their interrelationships with other elements comprising an organizational system, including the organization's external and internal environments, the multiple players who enact HRM systems, and the multiple stakeholders who evaluate the organization's effectiveness and determine its long-term survival.”

Why do you call your model an *aspirational* framework?

We call it aspirational because we know it would be impossible to incorporate all of the framework's elements in any particular theoretical or empirical piece of work. Nevertheless, we hope for a future in which many more elements are recognized as important influences that practicing HR professionals and HRM scholars alike should take into consideration.

What are the main components of your aspirational framework for strategic HRM?

The framework portrays a complex HRM system whose elements include (a) overarching HRM philosophies, which specify the values that inform an organization's management approach, (b) formal HRM policies, which are statements of the organization's intent, serving to direct and partially constrain the behavior of employees and their relationship to the employer, (c) actual HRM practices, the daily enactment of human resource philosophies and policies, and (d) the associated technological and social processes through which HRM philosophies, policies, and practices are established, modified, and terminated. The HRM system is contextualized by its position within a specific organizational environment and a dynamic external environment.

Importantly, the framework also identifies the multiple internal and external stakeholders who are affected by a firm's HRM system, along with some of the measurable outcomes that such stakeholders may use to evaluate strategic HRM effectiveness.

What are some of underlying theories and disciplines that are reflected in this integrative framework?

Strategic HRM scholarship is closely related to and extends work in many other fields, including industrial-organizational psychology, personnel management, industrial relations, and human resource management. We've drawn on an array of theoretical perspectives from those fields, including systems theory, role theory, resource-based theory, institutional theory, human capital theory, social capital theory, and stakeholder theory.

Why is it so hard to create a linkage between a firm's competitive strategy and its HRM practices?

Creating an HRM system that reflects a firm's strategic objectives is difficult because it is a tailored approach to designing an HRM system. A fundamental assumption is that there is no "one best way" to manage people effectively. Each organization must find its own way. That's difficult. It requires understanding how the behaviors of employees relate to the achievement of specific strategic objectives. In "Linking Competitive Strategies with Human Resource Management Practices," Randall Schuler and I presented one approach for making the links, which has since become known as the behavioral perspective for strategic HRM. Briefly, the idea is that different competitive strategies require different types of behaviors from employees as they work together and interact with key role partners (for example, customers). These needed employee behaviors are what we call role behaviors. The importance of these behaviors along with their dysfunctions—particularly in role conflict and ambiguity—has been well studied. Based on an extensive review of the literature, we identified numerous role behaviors that are assumed to be instrumental in the implementation of competitive strategies.

How can strategic HRM help firms create competitive advantage?

Let me give you a couple of examples. The strategic importance of innovation to the sustained competitiveness of companies and countries is well known. Research has shown that innovation-based competition shapes the way work is structured and has predictable consequences for organizational design. Now there is growing evidence that certain HRM policies and practices are especially supportive of the employee behaviors required for innovation. Commitment-based HRM systems that encourage employees to adopt a longer-term perspective improve firm performance by promoting behaviors needed for product-, process-, and organization-focused innovation. Some research also suggests that flexible HRM systems can enhance innovation and market responsiveness by fostering absorptive capacity among core knowledge employees. Likewise, several studies have demonstrated that the behaviors required to excel at providing excellent customer service can be facilitated by HRM systems designed specifically to target such behaviors.

One feature many people associate with strategic HRM scholarship is its focus on establishing the economic value of appropriately designed HRM systems, which elevates the importance

of the investor stakeholder. What about the other stakeholders in the firm's ecosystem? What is the role that HR plays, or can play, to help organizations provide financial, social, and human wealth to all stakeholders in the ecosystem?

Thanks for asking that question! When strategic HRM first emerged, it was partly a reaction against the widespread reliance on effectiveness criteria such as construct validity (for example, to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment instruments and job performance measures), compliance with legal regulations (such as nondiscrimination laws) and the reactions of employees (for example, job satisfaction and job performance). Early empirical work on strategic HRM shifted attention to financial performance indicators, such as profitability and ROI. Since 1995, when Mark Huselid published evidence that HRM systems are associated with better financial performance at the firm level, the concerns of owners and investors have garnered the most attention in the empirical literature. In fact, our recent review (Jackson et al., 2014) revealed that 77 out of a total of 154 empirical strategic HRM studies assessed outcomes that reflect the concerns of owners and investors. Employees were not ignored, however: 48 of the 154 studies included outcomes that reflect the concerns of employees—for example, psychological well-being and the quality of relationships employees had with managers. The concerns of customers were represented too, with 36 studies addressing outcomes such as customer service and product quality.

What about the concerns of the broader community, including employees' family members, schools, and society at large? The truth is that empirical studies of strategic HRM have mostly ignored the concerns of the broader society when examining the effects of HRM systems. So we know very little about how HRM systems might be designed to enhance family life, expand educational resources available to communities, or improve the quality of the local environment. Other stakeholders who have mostly been ignored by strategic HRM scholars (so far) are the strategic partners of an organization—for example, other organizations within the supply chain.

How has the field of strategic HRM evolved and changed since you began studying this topic?

Strategic HRM emerged in the United States about thirty years ago. Today's understanding of strategic HRM reflects the culmination and confluence of several trends that have unfolded during this time. Some of these include developing a contextualized understanding of human resource management, thus facilitating vertical integration between HR and the organization; developing systems of internally consistent and aligned HRM practices for horizontal integration; demonstrating the effectiveness of HR practices; and forging an effective partnership among HR professionals, line managers, and employees and their representatives in the design, development, and implement of HRM activities. We also see the growing recognition of the importance of multiple stakeholders for HRM as well as organizations, and a growing professionalism in HRM, both domestically and globally.

There are many research streams associated with strategic HRM. For example, one has focused on demonstrating that more sophisticated HRM systems (sometimes referred to as "best practices," "high performance work systems," "HR bundles," or "one best way") create more economic value. Another stream of research follows the logic of strategic contingency theory, where the choice of human resource practices is viewed as a process of matching HR practices to the strategies pursued by the organization. Closely associated with the

development of this contingency perspective is the configurational perspective, where the idea is that HR practices need to be aligned with each other (horizontal integration) and that they should be aligned with the broader context (vertical integration). Most recently, attention has begun to focus on the design of “targeted” HRM systems, such as those designed specifically to support innovation or excellent customer service, as we just discussed.

Where do you think the field of HRM is heading?

Making predictions is always a dodgy business, but many people are thinking about what’s next for HRM. Not surprisingly, different experts have different answers. The predictions of several leading figures in the field are nicely described in an article appearing in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness* (edited by Cary Cooper and Paul Sparrow). My own *hope* is that the next decade will see some significant changes in HRM research, including investigations that seek to address the following:

- Improve our understanding of how to design and implement HRM policies and practices that fit the unique needs of specific organizations.
- Identify the major cultural values and behavioral styles that are specifically relevant to understanding how employees from different national backgrounds respond to various HRM approaches, and in the process perhaps also identify HRM practices that are effective and readily accepted by most employees around the world.
- Identify effective approaches to and processes for creating change in an organization’s HRM system, promoting continuous learning, and developing adaptive capabilities. Doing this will require us to become adept at using new technologies and leveraging the wealth of data now being captured by organizations of all sorts.
- Expand our view of HRM’s role and potential value to include myriad activities that reach beyond an organization’s boundaries—that is, shift from our current inward-looking focus to identifying HRM’s role in developing positive relationships with an array of external stakeholders, including employees’ families, local schools and universities, community groups, strategic alliance and supply chain partners, governments, and so on.

HRM and Environmental Sustainability

Your inclusion of multiple stakeholders seems to be the bridge that spans your work on strategic HRM and environmental sustainability. In “The greening of strategic HRM scholarship” (2010)” you say that scholarship that is focused at the intersection of strategic HRM and environmental sustainability has yet to reveal itself. What is the role of human resource management in organizations striving to achieve environmental sustainability?

Before answering your question about the role of HRM in organizations striving to achieve environmental sustainability, we need to recognize that HRM’s role is likely to differ across countries. There is little doubt that the broader institutional context plays a huge role in pushing organizations to attend to environmental issues. In Germany, for example, businesses

must adhere to relatively strict environmental regulations, and they may also be able to take advantage of government subsidies for “green products” such as solar energy. In the UK, by comparison, there has been less concern about nuclear power plants and greater emphasis on animal rights and road construction projects. In the United States, protections for the natural environment—particularly forests and endangered animal species—have garnered most attention in the past, although recently concerns about pollution from fossil fuel extraction have become more prominent. In Brazil, where nearly 70 percent of CO₂ emissions are attributable to degradation of the natural environment, environmentalists have focused on preserving natural landscapes, especially the forests of the Amazon region. And public opinion polls show that attitudes about the environment vary greatly from country to country. Thus HRM’s role is likely to differ as a function of the different types of environmental issues an organization considers to be most important and the public pressure brought to bear on employers.

The importance of legal and cultural pressures that differ among countries cannot be ignored, but having said that, we see that there are some nearly universal pressures on firms to address environmental issues. Recently, investors have begun pressuring companies to improve their environmental performance as part of a broader desire to encourage businesses to balance their drive for profitability with a concern for social responsibility and sustainable development. Their success in doing so is reflected in indices used by financial analysts and investors. For example, the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes identify environmentally responsible companies in a variety of regions and industry sectors. The FTSE4Good Index is a similar effort. Many of the world’s largest firms now provide data that are used to produce reports and indexes for investors who want to invest selectively in companies that have been screened for acceptable environmental performance. Related to these rankings, many firms now publish annual sustainability reports and are modifying their business practices in order to acquire various environmental certifications (for example, ISO 14000).

So, what does all of this have to do with HRM? HRM’s role becomes clear when firms view environmental sustainability as a strategic imperative. Many business leaders now understand that they may be able to enjoy a competitive advantage by improving the environmental quality of a product to increase demand and, therefore, revenues. They may be able to more easily gain access to financial capital as a result of positive environmental performance. And they are discovering that they may have an advantage in the labor market, where they can gain greater access to human capital by establishing a positive environmental reputation. Pressure from governments, investors, and even consumers may motivate business leaders to elevate the importance of environmental performance objectives in the company’s strategic business plans, but regardless of the motivating factors, achieving environmental objectives requires successfully harnessing the organization’s human talents and energies. Unless employees at all levels make decisions and choose actions that are consistent with improving environmental performance, any lofty aspirations business leaders espouse will be as ephemeral as clouds passing overhead on a pleasant summer day. And of course, HRM systems can shape myriad employee decisions and actions that contribute to or detract from an organization’s environmental sustainability.

Basically, you seem to be saying that HRM's role is to help change organizational cultures. Culture change is hard to achieve, yet important in the quest to create healthier, more sustainable, and/or "green" organizations. How may strategic HRM practices be used to help create culture change in organizations?

Yes, part of HRM's role is to create an organizational culture that supports environmental sustainability, and changing an organization's culture is not easy. Certainly, HRM can't do it alone—strong and effective leadership is needed at every level of the organization. If leaders are on board, HRM policies and practices can be aligned with environmental goals.

For example, college recruiting can target applicants from schools where environmental sustainability is known to be central to the curriculum. Selection decisions can take into account an applicant's environmental knowledge. Performance goals and performance metrics can be developed to include explicit indicators of pro-environmental behaviors and outcomes. Training programs can be used to educate employees about environmental issues. Employees can be encouraged to engage in community service activities aimed at improving the local environment. Career paths can be designed to ensure that managers gain exposure to the firm's environmentally sensitive operations. Incentives and awards can be used to encourage employees to offer suggestions for how to reduce the organization's environmental footprint. The ways in which HRM can promote improved environmental performance are nearly endless! Readers interested in getting more ideas are encouraged to read some of the company cases in "Managing Human Resources for Environmental Sustainability."

Given the recent worldwide recession, many organizations have downsized while increasing the productivity demands on their employees. Reports show that workers are unhappy, organizational loyalty is down, and apathy and stress are overwhelmingly high. Do most managers and leaders recognize the human costs of the recession? What strategies can organizations—particularly HR professionals—do to create (perhaps to recreate?) healthier, thriving workplaces and sustainable organizations?

It's impossible to generalize about the views of managers and leaders. I think it would be difficult for most human beings to not recognize the human costs of the recent economic recession that has affected so many employees and their families, as well as entire communities and nations. Some business leaders really do feel personal responsibility for doing whatever they can to minimize the damage caused by economic downturns. Others adopt the view that their exclusive role as business leaders is to maximize financial returns to investors.

Can HR professionals convince leaders in the latter category to change? Probably not. To be fair, business leaders who focus on financial returns to the exclusion of almost all other concerns do so in response to external pressures and rewards that encourage and permit their business decisions. Politicians, employees, customers, and voters in democratic societies all bear some responsibility for creating a situation in which financial considerations are allowed to overwhelm all other concerns. Can HR professionals help business leaders create healthier, thriving workplaces and sustainable organizations? Yes, the best HR professionals certainly can work with other willing executives to achieve these goals. But doing so is not a simple matter. There is no seven-step (or ten-step or twenty-step) program that, when implemented, produces an ideal workplace. Organizations are complex places, and people are complex beings. Creating vibrant organizations involves making judgments about how to balance the

many concerns of multiple stakeholders. It requires continuous attention and nonstop organizational learning and change.

The good intentions of many business leaders; a body of scholarly knowledge about human attitudes, emotions, and behavior at work; and the skills of HR professionals can all contribute to creating the types of organizations where you and I and most other workers want to work. Among the many ways HR professionals can contribute to creating great workplaces, some that I feel are most important are these:

- Define their role to include being an advocate for employees. HR professionals who can persuasively articulate how addressing employees' concerns contributes to the financial success of a business and the satisfaction of customers are more likely to be successful in creating great places to work.
- Partner with professionals in other areas—accounting, marketing, finance, sustainability officers, production engineers, and so on—to find solutions that address multiple concerns and help solve a wide set of problems. Being an effective employee advocate involves finding win-win solutions, not adopting an adversarial posture toward other managers.
- Follow established principles for effective HR management, and avoid the temptation to chase the latest management fads and fashions. Effective HR management involves establishing a coherent system of policies, practices, and processes for staffing, developing, motivating, and rewarding employees. The integrity of such systems is often damaged when an organization adopts a newly popular HR initiative that promises to be the latest cure-all.
- Generate and embrace data. As I've already hinted, I'm a big believer in the value of appropriate data collection and analysis. Unfortunately, too many HR students and professionals dislike working with numbers and statistical analyses—at least, this is my experience. We are entering an era of "big data," which presents many new opportunities to advance our understanding of what it means to manage effectively. HR professionals should be thought leaders, taking center stage during important discussions in this new era.

Concluding Remarks

What have been some of the most difficult challenges associated with being an HR scholar?

I'm sure everyone faces unique challenges in their work. For me, the challenges are mostly positive. Occasionally, however, it's frustrating working in the field of HRM. One source of frustration is the low regard that people have for "HR"—in the business world as well as in American business schools. Many people associate HR with administrative rules, procedures, and bureaucracy, and they don't see it as particularly valuable. HRM scholars need to be personally resilient and self-motivated to avoid letting such attitudes negatively affect them. Of

course, gaining access to organizations that are willing to provide data is always a challenge, but that challenge is not unique to people in our field. Mostly, I find being an HR scholar to be very satisfying. Most of my students are working toward a master or doctoral degree in HRM. They are highly motivated, and they come from all around the world. So the time I spend with students is usually quite stimulating. Likewise, I have been fortunate to work with colleagues with many different areas of expertise and from many different cultures. Such collaborations are extremely interesting and enjoyable.

What key questions require further research and study with respect to human resource management in cross-cultural management environments?

We know very little at this stage, so the list of “key” questions is far too long to enumerate. I encourage doctoral students and other colleagues to focus on questions that they feel are important. The best way to expand our knowledge is through the efforts of people who are dedicated to studying their topic. Such dedication comes from a mysterious mix of influences, including our own personal values, our own skills and knowledge, and the particular challenges and opportunities we each see in the world around us. Having stated that caveat, I find that the human propensity to categorize people into in-groups and out-groups—with nationality and other demographic cues triggering such categorizations and their (often negative) interpersonal consequences—is perhaps the most vexing challenge to cross-cultural management. One consequence of the technological advances that spur globalization is that political conflicts and economic competition between nations are omnipresent and, it seems, increasingly salient in culturally diverse organizations. Thus, one high-priority goal for management scholarship is discovering ways to ensure that individuals at all levels in an organization respect and feel comfortable with people who are not members of their cultural in-group. It isn’t possible to shield workers from ongoing external political and economic conflicts, but it may be possible to create organizational processes that minimize the potential damage caused by intergroup biases while improving our understanding of the interpersonal skills that promote effective cross-cultural relationships.

What’s next on your research and writing agenda?

Personally, I’m very focused now on the issue of environmental sustainability, and I expect to continue working on this topic for some time. Very few HR scholars or HR professionals seem to believe this is a topic that is relevant to HR. I see it as a topic that’s relevant to us all! About three years ago I began teaching a class titled “Green HRM” and very few HRM students enrolled. Those who did enroll acknowledged that they had no idea how HRM was relevant to environmental issues. Students soon realize that with a little education and some creative thinking, it’s pretty easy to see that effective HRM is essential to organizations striving to improve their environmental performance.

Environmental initiatives aimed at reducing a company’s environmental footprint and ensuring the future availability of sufficient natural resources (on which all humanity depends) typically require and stimulate major changes in how a company functions and its relationships with all major stakeholders. HRM knowledge and tools are essential to implementing these organizational changes. Increasingly, environmental considerations shape how and where work gets done as well as the expectations that employees have concerning what it means for a

company to be a “great” and responsible employer. There’s no doubt that environmental sustainability is a challenge for the future. It’s a global issue, it’s a strategic issue, and it’s an opportunity for HRM to have a positive influence on the lives of people everywhere.

Is there anything else you’d like to share with the readers of *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*?

Yes. First, I would like to acknowledge the important contributions of *all* of the many colleagues I have worked with in the projects we have been discussing. I’ve mentioned some of these people by name here, but there are many others whose contributions deserve to be recognized. A few that I simply must mention are Aparna Joshi, who has been so important to my diversity research; Yuan Jiang, Chih-Hsun Chuang, and Yunhyung Chung, who have worked with me on the topic of knowledge-intensive teamwork; and finally, although I have worked with them only virtually and have never met them personally, Douglas Renwick and Charbel Jabbour are key contributors to my current work in that they keep me motivated to pursue the topic of Green HRM. Also, a big thank-you goes to you, Kristine, for inviting me to participate in this interview, and to the journal’s editor, Simon Dolan, for the wonderful job he is doing. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* serves a vital role by bringing together a truly international mix of scholars devoted to understanding the complexities of cross-cultural management and improving how organizations address those complexities. As an incubator for new and creative scholarly work, it plays a key role in supporting the development of global management talent.

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