**The Future of Global Work: What Next for International Human Resource Management?**

**Special Issue Editors:**

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**Background**

The world has changed irrevocably since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020. The pandemic has caused a great “reset” around the globe and has profoundly challenged assumptions about how employees engage with work (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Collings et al., 2021; Kniffin et al., 2021). While obvious manifestations of this reset include dramatic reductions in global mobility and a massive shift to working from home (WFH), the pandemic also accelerated trends already in motion, including the digitization of work and the transformation of business models, and has increased long-simmering tensions around diversity and inclusion, migration, and sustainability. Beyond their impact on MNEs and their employees, these ongoing changes are also challenging many of the assumptions, boundary conditions, and conclusions of established IHRM research.

The fundamentals of global work are changing. Firstly, although severe restrictions are now in the rear-view mirror for most countries, they may have indelibly changed our thinking on *where* global work is done. Second, as an ever-expanding spectrum of new technologies are created and deployed in workplaces across industries, the digitization of work is unfolding at a fast pace. While this trend has increased the efficiency of many elements of work, organizations globally continue to struggle to meet their skills demands and continuous workforce up-skilling is needed. Taken together, digitization of work and the changing skills landscape are hastening changes in *how*global work is being done on a global scale. Third, *who*is doing global work is changing. This is precipitated by two ongoing demographic trends with immense social implications: namely, an increasingly diverse workforce and the related heightened attention to EDI in MNEs, and changes in migration patterns and related challenges of integrating migrant employees in the workplace. Finally, with increased recognition of the role and impact of MNEs on environmental sustainability and the health and safety of employees, there has been a collective re-examination of *why* global work is done.

Whether we face an entirely different “new normal” remains to be seen. It does however appear that global work and international HRM are at an inflection point, as the COVID-19 pandemic has instigated reassessing the priorities for individuals, organizations, and societies at large. This special issue invites papers that examine all aspects of global work and the management of global work as they evolve in response to current circumstances. Many of the classic management theories arose in economic, social, and geopolitical conditions that are “fundamentally different and increasingly distant” from the conditions describing the world today (Howard-Grenville, 2021), and assume (often hierarchically) structured organizations, staffed by (mostly) homogenous (and mostly permanent) workforce, operating in (mostly) stable environments, largely unaffected by developments in faraway countries. Few would disagree that new theorizing and innovative empirical research are needed to capture how contemporary phenomena affect global work.

The special issue aims to highlight what is and will be shaping the future of work in MNEs, to provide greater clarity to individuals, as they seek to build global careers, and to international human resource management (IHRM) leaders, as they develop strategies, policies and practices affecting their most critical resource – their people.

**Objectives of the Special Issue**

This special issue invites research that examines the changes affecting global work and how those changes could, in turn, influence the field of international HRM. We are interested in both empirical and theoretical papers that investigate the ever-evolving context of global work, both from the perspective of individuals that engage in global work and from the perspective of organizations that deploy globally dispersed workforces, and those with supply chains heavily dependent on employing people across countries. We seek contributions that push beyond the traditional contours of topics and theories typically associated with IHRM research. We encourage studies that examine issues that are relevant to practitioners and do so while engaging in substantive theoretical work. Having said that, we welcome a critical examination of existing theory and envision several possible approaches to accomplishing this:

1. In applying existing theory, papers can revisit the theory’s fundamental *assumptions* and ask whether they still hold regarding the where, how, who, and why of global work (for example, what are the new “boundaries” in global work?).
2. Papers can scrutinize the *boundary conditions* of our field’s theories, and seek to develop new integrative theories (for example, what approaches are most effective for socializing employees who are working-from-home in a global context?; or when we speak of ‘context,’ what kind of context should we be accounting for in the case of ‘global’ work, which may now be entirely virtual?; Cook, 2018, Filatochev et al., 2022).
3. Papers can deepen our *engagement with other disciplines* and examine which of their theories we can borrow and apply to better understand contemporary global work. Truly engaging with the complexity of the questions we surface here requires insights from scholars in fields including inter alia, migration and economic geography, sociology, health, sustainability, EDI, and computing and artificial intelligence.
4. Papers that focus on important but underexamined *outcomes*such as inclusion, health and safety, and sustainability in the context of global work.

In line with JWB’s scope and aims, we also encourage phenomenon-based research – studies whose central objective is to examine current phenomena, including those for which may currently be outstripping researchers’ ability to investigate them in depth from the standpoint of an existing theory (Doh, 2015). Relatedly, in this Special Issue, we would like to see papers that inspire partnerships between academics and managers as both navigate the turbulent waters of the future of work.

From the standpoint of methodology, the Special Issue is open to all methodological approaches. Methodological fit – and methodological pluralism— are critical to investigating real world phenomena, and so are research designs that account for different stakeholder across levels and contexts. Further, the challenges faced by individuals, businesses, and governments are highly nuanced and differ around the world. To that end, we encourage contributions from a broad range of colleagues from various disciplines and geographic perspectives.

**Illustrative Themes for the Special Issue**

Below is a list of research questions of the kind we hope would be addressed by submissions to the Special Issue. The list is not exhaustive, and the suggested questions are simply illustrative of the areas that are emerging now and are important for the future of global work.

*Where* will global work be done?

* Will there be less effective control and coordination between headquarters and subsidiaries in MNEs that opt for fewer in-country international assignments?
* Will co-location of workers be more likely (and successful) in more collectivist cultures and hybrid work and WFH be more likely (and successful) in more individualist cultures?
* Are there national cultural and contextual factors affecting how remote work facilitates (or possibly impedes) employee motivation?
* How (and where) can employees with an international career orientation develop satisfactory careers in an environment where opportunities for global mobility may be shrinking?
* How can increases in flexible HRM practices affect employee retention in the various countries in which MNEs operate? Do cultural or institutional differences impact this variation?

*How* will global work be done?

* What are the cultural and institutional factors that MNEs should consider in the digitization of HR? How can MNEs balance the costs and benefits of the automation of work to mitigate risk in global production and supply chains?
* How can MNEs design jobs to enable the coordination of work and facilitate high performance in employees and teams regardless of location?
* How should MNEs work with local and regional stakeholders to ensure the skills ecosystem in host locations to meets emerging needs of technologically-advanced skills? What MNE practices can help minimize future skill gaps and upskill employees in developing countries?
* How do different cultural contexts impact on employees’ openness to and perceptions of being managed by algorithm?
* How do different cultural contexts impact on phenomena such as Zoom fatigue and how can MNEs manage virtual communications platforms to minimize impacts on employees?

*Who* will engage in global work?

* How does national context influence the relationship between EDI initiatives and EDI outcomes across diverse MNE subsidiaries?
* What are the differences in EDI outcomes in MNEs that are doing substantive EDI work vs. MNEs that engage primarily in performative aspects of EDI? What determines employees’ perceptions of employer authenticity for EDI and what are employees’ reactions to perceived inauthenticity across countries?
* How are EDI initiatives in MNEs experienced by target- and non-target employees? What determines whether local employees feel free to voice their concerns and priorities regarding EDI and what are the outcomes associated with this?
* What enables migrant workplace success? What is the combined influence of technical skills, language skills, and cultural competencies and what is the role of organization and societal context? How do migrants deal with in occupational downgrading that is often a part of migrant career transitions? How are organizations engaging with migrant job candidates and those who they hire as employees, and what makes some approaches more successful than others?

*Why* engage in global work?

* How can MNEs enable global mobility functions to deal with future global threats to health and safety? How can they develop inclusive and equitable strategies to support the long-term health and safety of their global workforce? Do the threats or the responses to these threats differ across cultures?
* Which HR practices /interventions will be most effective in creating mentally healthy workplaces? How do national differences in support for mental health affect the role of HRM in supporting employees across countries?
* What is most important for MNEs to learn from, and to change, as a result of dealing with global crises and threats, whether they are humanitarian, economic, or environmental threats? How do these responses differ in MNEs across countries and cultures?
* What are the costs and benefits of travel restrictions and global immobility for individuals’ health and safety?
* What are the most effective ways to monitor and evaluate MNEs’ progress towards sustainability targets? What is the role of IHRM?
* How do cultural differences affect employees’ perceptions and responses to MNE sustainability practices? How do MNE sustainability practices influence employee attraction, motivation, and retention?

**Deadline, submission process, and workshop**

Between August 1 and September 1, 2023, authors should submit their manuscripts online via the *Journal of World Business* submission system. To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified for consideration for this Special Issue, it is important that authors select “VSI: Future of Global Work” when they reach the “Article Type” step in the submission process. All submitted manuscripts will be subject to the Journal of World Business’s double-blind review process.

To help authors develop and improve their papers, the Special Issue editors will organize several workshops. Two will be held virtually in early Spring 2023, in two separate time slots, to accommodate a larger group of interested authors across countries. A workshop will also be organized at a major conference in Summer 2023. The exact dates and times for the workshops will be widely publicized in due time. For more information about this Call for Papers, please contact the Special Issue Editors Mila Lazarova (mbl@sfu.ca), Paula Caligiuri (p.caligiui@northeastern.edu), David Collings (david.collings@dcu.ie) and Helen De Cieri (Helen.DeCieri@monash.edu)

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**Profiles of the Special Issue Editors**

**Mila Lazarova** is the William Saywell Professor in International Business at the Beedie School of Business (Simon Fraser University (Canada). Her research interests include global mobility, global careers, career development and mobility practices in organizations, and HR issues related to workplace integration of skilled migrants. Her work has appeared in journals such as the *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of World Business*, *Organizational Science*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Human Resource Management,*and*Human Resource Management Journal*. Mila is currently a Consulting Editor at the*Journal of World Business*. Prior to this she served as an Associate Editor of *Human Resource Management Journal*. She sits on several editorial boards, including the *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Human Resource Management Journal*and *The International Journal of Human Resource Management.* Mila has guest edited several Special Issues, all of which were focused on international HRM issues.

**Paula Caligiuri** is a D’Amore-McKim School of Business Distinguished Professor of International Business and Strategy at Northeastern University (USA). She is a Fellow in both the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology and the Academy of International Business. Researching in the areas of expatriate management, global leadership development, and cultural agility, Paula has authored or co-authored several articles and books – including *Cultural Agility:  Building a Pipeline of Successful Global Professionals* and *Build Your Cultural Agility*. Her research is published in international business, human resource management, and psychology journals, including *Journal of International Business, International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of World Business, Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology,*and*International Journal of Intercultural Relations.* She has served as an Area Editor for the *Journal of International Business Studies* and as a Senior Editor for the *Journal of World Business*.

**David Collings** is Professor of Human Resource Management at Dublin City University (Ireland). His research focuses on talent management, global mobility and the future of work. His research is published in outlets such as *Academy of Management Journal, Harvard Business Review, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies*and *Organization Science*. He has extensive editorial experience. He is currently Associate Editor at *Academy of Management Perspectives*. He was previously served as Editor in Chief of *Journal of World Business, Human Resource Management Journal*and*the Irish Journal of Management*. He currently sits on a dozen editorial boards including *Academy of Management Review, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management and Journal of Management Studies*. He has guest edited many highly cited special issues.

**Helen De Cieri** is a Professor at the Monash Business School (Monash University, Australia). She has research interests and activities that combine her interests in international HRM and employee wellbeing. Helen’s research has been published in journals such as *Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of World Business, Human Resource Management,* *Journal of Organizational Behavior, Leadership Quarterly,*and *Safety Science*. Helen has extensive editorial experience, including service as an Area Editor for *Journal of International Business Studies,* and Associate Editor for *Human Resource Management* and *Human Resource Management Review.* She has guest edited special issues for several journals. Her editorial board memberships have included *Academy of Management*Journal and Journal*of Management.*