
Introduction **Organizational behavior in multinational organizations**

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Summary

This article introduces a special issue of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* on organizational behavior in the context of multinational organizations (MNOs). MNOs have distinctive organizational characteristics and operate in national settings that have distinctive institutional and cultural characteristics that together provide a unique context for organizational behavior. We present a taxonomy, which suggests that OB scholars who have done research in the MNO context have given it theoretical meaning in several ways. This context can influence the frequency of occurrence of OB variables, influence their functional relationships, or produce nuanced or unique constructs. The articles in the special issue highlight the OB implications of the conflicting identities that are particularly likely to be found when an organization's different structural components are closely linked to different cultural and formal institutions. Copyright © 2007 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Introduction

The decision to prepare a special issue about organizational behavior in multinational organizations (MNOs) comes from the belief that multinationals provide examples of the sort of context characteristics that have been central to the editorial policy of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* in recent years. Organization behavior is the analysis of people and social situations in a context—organizations. It is distinguished from other approaches to social situations by its focus on this particular context. Context most often operates as a cross-level effect with higher level contextual elements influencing the meaning and relationships among variables at lower levels (Johns, 2006). Much has been written about the theoretical and methodological problems associated with studying such cross-level effects (e.g., Chan, 1998; Glick, 1985; Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999; Rousseau, 1985). To sidestep these problems, organizational behavior research, including that conducted in an international context, usually has confined itself to addressing relationships at a single level of analysis. Restricting research to a single level avoids the problem of attributing observed relationships to a level other than that of the unit from which data are directly obtained, such as aggregating data from individuals to represent organizations

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