Abstract

The objective of this conceptual article is to illustrate how differences in societal culture may affect employees' proactive work behaviours, and to develop a research agenda to guide future research on cross-cultural differences in proactive work behaviours. We propose that the societal cultural dimensions of power distance, individualism-collectivism, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance shape individuals' implicit followership theories. We discuss how these cross-cultural differences in individuals' implicit followership theories relate to differences in the mean-level of proactive work behaviour individuals show ("whether"), in the motivational states driving individuals' proactive work behaviours ("why"), in the way individuals' enact proactive work behaviours ("how"), and in the evaluation of proactive work behaviours by others ("at what cost"). We recommend how future research can extend this theorizing and unpack the proposed cross-cultural differences in proactive work behaviours, for example, by exploring how culture and other contextual variables interact to affect proactive work behaviours.

Cultural Variations in Whether, Why, How, and at What Cost People are Proactive:

A Followership Perspective

The present paper focuses on an important domain of work and organizational psychology in which the effect of societal culture and its associated values has received little research attention to date, namely that of proactive work behaviour (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Fay & Sonnentag, 2010). Proactive work behaviours (PWBs) comprise individuals' self-started, future-oriented behaviours that aim to improve aspects of their work or of themselves (e.g., Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Proactive work behaviours entail changing the status quo, are generally positively intended and beneficial to both the individual and the organization, and are thus considered an important aspect of individuals' work performance (e.g., Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). In support of the relevance of PWBs, meta-analyses show that PWBs relate positively to individuals' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance evaluations (see meta-analyses by Chamberlin, Newton, & Lepine, 2017; Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013).

This broad support for the positive effects of PWBs does beg the question: Are these effects universal across contexts, particularly societal cultures? Is challenging the status quo valued equally across cultures, and are people in different societies proactive in the same way? There is some evidence that there may indeed be differences between cultures. Some meta-analytic correlations (e.g., of voice and performance, Chamberlin et al., 2017) have broad credibility intervals, indicating that the strength of relationships differed considerably across studies. We propose that (some of) this variance in effect sizes could be due to differences in societal cultures as the primary studies were conducted in different countries and continents.

Understanding cultural differences is crucial for organizations operating in an increasingly globalized economy. Many organizations strive to sell their products and services on global markets and choose to cooperate with business partners worldwide (World Trade Organization, 2017). As a consequence, employees' interaction with culturally diverse business partners, suppliers, and customers is becoming more frequent. In addition, cultural diversity is increasing within domestic labour markets due to ongoing international migration. Thus, many organizations need knowledge about cross-cultural issues at work. Although awareness of the importance of culture in organizational behaviour has increased (for reviews, see Gelfand, Aycan, Erez, & Leung, 2017; Gelfand, Leslie, & Fehr, 2008; Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006, 2017; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007), cross-cultural research and understanding in many areas of organizational psychology and management, including PWB, is still limited.

Only very few studies have investigated proactivity explicitly from a cross-cultural or comparative perspective. Given that the majority of theorizing on PWBs originated in Western cultures (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Matsunaga, 2015), our current understanding of PWBs is shaped by a cultural perspective placing a high value on individual agency. This may imply that individuals in Western cultures are more used to taking initiative, and that they are even expected to do so as part of their work role. In addition, the comparatively low power distance in Western countries makes it easier for individuals to speak up and to be proactive. Thus, it is likely that there are differences across cultures in terms of the frequency of PWBs, the motivations underlying PWBs, the way individuals enact PWBs, and the evaluation of PWBs by others. Unpacking these differences is important in order to understand the variability of results of previous studies, and to adequately inform interventions that aim at promoting proactivity among employees across cultures.

The aim of this conceptual article is to develop a theoretical framework to explain cross-cultural differences in PWB through the lens of implicit followership theories, and to identify relevant research questions in this field. We further outline an agenda for future

research to unpack cross-cultural differences (and similarities) in PWBs. To this end, we review existing research on cross-cultural differences in PWB and use this as a starting point to establish a theoretical model that describes the top-down effects of societal-level culture on individuals' PWBs. We focus on the role of *societal* cultures in this article, which we conceptualize as a group-level variable that reflects the shared values, motives, and beliefs of the members of a society (House & Javidan, 2004). We will use the generic term "culture" to refer to societal culture (not to organizational culture or other culture concepts) in the following.

More specifically, we propose that societal culture – particularly the dimensions of power distance, individualism-collectivism, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance – shape individuals' *implicit followership theories* (IFTs), that is, their cognitive schema of the characteristics and behaviours of an ideal follower (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Sy, 2010), which both leaders and followers hold. Individuals' IFTs determine whether PWBs are seen as ideal or counter-ideal follower behaviours. We discuss four ways that culture influences IFTs and hence PWBs: First, we show that IFTs can explain cross-cultural differences in the mean levels of PWBs, that is, *whether* followers engage in PWBs. Second, we use IFTs to explain cultural differences in *why* followers show PWBs as they affect the motivational states behind followers' PWBs. Third, we illustrate that IFTs may shape *how* followers enact PWBs across cultures. Fourth, we propose that IFTs affect the evaluation of followers' PWBs by leaders and thus determine *at what cost* followers engage in PWBs, particularly with regard to well-being and performance outcomes. We conclude with a research agenda and recommendations on what specific challenges need to be considered when investigating the proposed cross-cultural differences in PWBs.

Proactive Work Behaviour (PWB)

Over the past two decades, the interest in studying individuals' proactive efforts to improve their work and their organizations has grown. The literature differentiates various types of proactive work behaviours (Parker & Collins, 2010), such as personal initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001; Frese, Kring, Soose, & Zempel, 1996), taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), voice (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), and individual innovation (Scott & Bruce, 1994). This group of PWBs has been distinguished from proactive strategic behaviours (e.g., issue-selling; Dutton & Ashford, 1993) and proactive person-environment fit behaviours, which we will not include in our theorising due to differences in antecedents and processes involved (see Parker & Collins, 2010, for an overview and integration). Although particular kinds of PWBs can differ in their target (e.g., voicing an issue about the team versus changing aspects of one's job; Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010; Griffin et al., 2007), they all have key aspects in common. PWBs are behaviours that are initiated by the individual, that are future-oriented in nature, and that involve changing either oneself or the situation (Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker & Collins, 2010).

Much research informs us about the antecedents of individuals' PWBs (see Bindl & Parker, 2011; Chamberlin et al., 2017; Morrison, 2011; Thomas et al., 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013). In essence, studies consistently show substantial relationships of PWBs with individual characteristics (e.g., cognitive ability, self-efficacy), job characteristics (e.g., job control), and organizational variables (e.g., transformational leadership; change-conducive, error-forgiving organizational climate). More recently, the focus of PWB research has broadened to include the motivational and affective processes preceding individuals' PWBs (e.g., Bindl, Parker, Totterdell, & Hagger-Johnson, 2012; Frese, Garst, & Fay, 2007; Parker et al., 2010). Researchers have also considered outcomes of PWBs other than performance, such as health and well-being (e.g., Cangiano & Parker, 2016; Fay & Hüttges, 2017; Strauss, Parker, & O'Shea, 2017; Zacher, Schmitt, Jimmieson, & Rudolph, 2018). The 'dark side' of proactivity

has also had attention. For example, colleagues might not always appreciate PWBs as they need to adapt to new working routines due to the changes initiated by someone else's proactive efforts (e.g., Frese & Fay, 2001). Leaders might interpret PWBs from subordinates as challenging their position or power (Urbach & Fay, 2018) or as questioning their leadership competences (Burris, 2012; Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014). The evaluation of PWB by others – especially leaders – is therefore a key determinant of the consequences PWB has for the proactive individual (e.g., for performance evaluations) as well as the team or the organization (e.g., effectiveness, team conflict). An emerging focus is research that identifies when PWB can have less positive, or even negative, effects for individuals or organisations, with culture being suggested as a potential moderator that has been neglected to date (Parker, Wang, & Liao, 2019).

Societal Culture

Culture is defined as a set of "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectivities" (House & Javidan, 2004, p. 15). In line with this definition, we regard culture as a societal-level phenomenon. We acknowledge that there is also considerable variance in individuals' values and beliefs within cultural groups (e.g., Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2016). However, in this article we focus on between-group variations of culture, specifically, between-society variations. The shared cultural values and beliefs of a society have a strong influence on individuals' socialization as culture functions as an "ideological and procedural framework" for its members. It defines what is appropriate or inappropriate within this framework, and thus affects individuals' behaviour (Triandis, 1994).

Research has identified a set of dimensions and value systems that proved useful to describe universal aspects of national or societal culture (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Schwartz, 1992, 1999). Cultural regions differ with regard to their specific configuration of these dimensions

or values. One of the largest and most recent cross-cultural investigations in social sciences is the GLOBE project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness; see House et al., 2004). The GLOBE project extended Hofstede's (1980) pioneering work and offered a more fine-grained approach to making societal culture accessible to quantitative measurement. Specifically, the researchers suggest nine dimensions societal cultures can differ on (House et al., 2004). Several of these cultural dimensions seem particularly likely to affect PWBs because they directly relate to the core characteristics of PWB: power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and future orientation. Besides by GLOBE, these four dimensions are also described and studied by Hofstede (2001).

Power distance describes "the degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally" (House & Javidan, 2004, p. 30). In societies with high power distance, it is accepted that power is concentrated at higher levels of hierarchies, for example within organizations or the government, and is thus not equally distributed between members of the society. PWBs challenge the status quo in an organization and can be perceived as dominant behaviour (Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011). This is not compatible with high levels of power distance because in societies high on power distance employees are expected to take a more deferential position.

Uncertainty avoidance reflects the degree to which life in a cultural group is organized based on rules, norms and procedures to make future events less unpredictable. PWBs are change-oriented and thus come with uncertainty and risk (Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker et al., 2010). In cultures oriented towards the avoidance of uncertainty, PWB may more readily be judged to be (too) risky. As a consequence, employees may engage in PWB to a lesser extent, and supervisors are more likely to evaluate PWB as inappropriate.

With regard to the *individualism-collectivism* dimension of culture, the GLOBE project distinguishes two facets: Institutional collectivism denotes the extent to which a collective distribution of resources is practiced and collective action is encouraged within a

society, whereas In-Group collectivism relates to the expression of pride, cohesion, and loyalty regarding organizations as well as families. Cultures that score low on these dimensions are considered to be high in individualism. When individualism is high, individual agency, advancement and performance are valued (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004). PWB is considered agentic behaviour (Frese & Fay, 2001), and may result in conflicts and tension with supervisors and colleagues (e.g., Spychala & Sonnentag, 2011; Urbach & Fay, 2018; Urbach, Fay, & Lauche, 2016). Thus, PWBs may be more accepted in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures, where maintaining harmony in the group takes centre stage.

Future orientation (which Hofstede, 2001, labels long- versus short-term orientation) captures the degree to which action is directed towards the future versus the past or present, for example reflecting long- versus short-term planning or investments (House & Javidan, 2004). Given that PWBs are generally directed towards the future (Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker et al., 2010), cultures that value future-oriented action should be more open to PWBs.

Beyond the specific nature of cultural dimensions proposed, theories of culture further differ in how they conceptualize and measure culture (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2008). While most theoretical approaches have conceptualized culture in terms of existing values (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1999; Triandis, 1994), researchers of the GLOBE project distinguished between what they label "cultural values", that is how a society's culture *should be* from the perspective of its members, and "cultural practices", that is how a society's culture *actually is* practiced in everyday life (House et al., 2004). In essence, this reflects a distinction between espoused values and enacted values. While both these aspects may drive individuals' behaviour in unique ways, societal cultural practices (enacted values) mirror individuals' reality of "how things are" in a society. The espoused values describe a desired state of a culture,

which might be particularly relevant to driving longer-term societal change towards this desired state of how things "should be". Therefore, the enacted values should be more relevant in shaping individuals' behaviour in the current situation than espoused ones. In line with this, the overall results of the GLOBE study were more consistent for societal cultural practices than for societal cultural values (House et al., 2004). Given our focus on cross-cultural differences in specific employee behaviours (PWBs) that usually focus on short-term change, the more proximal societal cultural enacted values also seem to be a more relevant predictor to focus on than the more distal espoused societal cultural values. Also, these enacted values also seem closer to others' operationalizations of the four cultural dimensions we study than the espoused values.

Existing Research on Culture and Proactive Work Behaviour

As we elaborate in this section, there is already some research on culture and proactive work behaviour. We point out three limitations of this research, which we strive to overcome in our subsequent theory development: (a) the investigation of individual-level cultural values rather than societal-level cultural configurations, (b) a predominant focus on mean-level differences in PWB across cultures, and (c) a lack of theorizing on how societal-level culture can affect individual-level behaviour.

The major focus of the few existing studies on culture and PWB has been to examine whether cultures differ with regard to the mean level of PWB employees exhibit. Scholars have suggested that high levels of individualism and future orientation are conducive to PWBs, while high levels of power distance and uncertainty avoidance would hinder PWBs (e.g., Carson, Baker, & Lanier, 2014; Claes, Beheydt, & Lemmens, 2005; Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998). However, empirical evidence on these assumptions is as yet inconclusive. While Claes and colleagues (2005) report mean-level differences in proactive personality scores between Finland, Belgium, and Spain, others did not find mean-level differences, for example Fischer and Smith (2006), who investigated proactive extra-role behaviours in

samples from the UK and East Germany. Similarly, Botero and Van Dyne (2009) did not detect culturally driven differences in voice behaviour between samples from the USA and Colombia. In a study by Park and Nawakitphaitoon (2018), participants in South Korea reported higher mean levels of voice than participants in the USA (no significance test available). Given that South Korea scores higher in power distance and in collectivism and lower in future orientation than the USA, these mean differences in voice point in the opposite direction than one would hypothesize based on the countries' cultural configurations.

Studies that explicitly investigated the relationship of cultural dimensions or individual cultural values with PWBs tend to support that individuals' power distance values are negatively related to voice (e.g., Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Liu & Liao, 2013; Wei, Zhang, & Chen, 2015). In line with these results, a study by Huang, Van de Vliert, and Van der Vegt (2005) reports a positive relationship of national power distance values with organizational silence, that is, when "employees choose *not* to voice their opinions and concerns about matters in their organizations" (p. 459). However, other studies report no significant relationships of individuals' power distance values with proactive personality (Carson et al., 2014) or taking charge (Li, He, Yam, & Long, 2015). Results on the relationships of PWBs with other cultural dimensions and values are likewise mixed: While Kurman and Dan (2007) report a negative relationship of individuals' tradition values with personal initiative, Fischer and Smith (2006) found no relationships between proactive extra-role behaviours and individuals' conservation or openness to change values. Contrary to theory, Carson and colleagues (2014) even report a positive relationship of proactive personality and individuals' uncertainty avoidance values, but no relationship with individualism-collectivism values; in line with theory, individuals' future orientation values were positively related to proactive personality. Also in line with theory, Fischer et al.

(2019) report a positive trending relationship of national-level uncertainty norms (reflecting low uncertainty avoidance) and individual-level voice behaviour.

It has to be noted, however, that most of the studies cited above do not allow for valid conclusions on cross-cultural differences in PWB, because their methodological setup makes it difficult to interpret results unequivocally as differences *caused* by culture. With two exceptions (Fischer et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2005), these studies all investigated the effects of culture by modelling the relationships of *individuals' cultural value assessments* and their mostly self-reported PWBs at an individual level of analysis. In these studies, individuals rated their personal values, not their society's values. Moreover, several studies used *mono-cultural* samples only, or pooled hetero-cultural samples. Thus, the degree of variation observed in the cultural value assessments cannot be attributed to societal culture alone but also reflects differences in individuals' as well as other environmental characteristics (e.g., Taras et al., 2016). Given that culture typically is conceptualized as a characteristic of a nation or society, it should be modelled at the societal level of analysis accordingly.

While of course of interest to the field and the general understanding of PWBs, only focussing on cross-cultural differences in the average level of exhibited PWBs is of limited practical use. Simply attributing mean-level differences to national culture does not help to inform interventions on dealing with cultural differences because we cannot (or not easily) change culture itself. From an intervention perspective, it seems more fruitful to investigate the variables that explain these mean-level differences. To this end, we need to understand what motivates PWBs in different cultures, and how individuals are likely to adapt the enactment of their PWBs to the behavioural norms prevalent in their culture. Cultural differences in these processes may exist and be highly relevant to stimulating PWB. Even if there are no differences in observed mean-levels of PWBs, the specific processes underlying PWB may differ across cultures.

Only few existing studies have gone beyond investigating main effects of individuals' cultural values on PWBs and tested whether cultural values affect the strength of relationships of predictor variables and PWB. Almost all of these studies have focused on individuals' power distance values and its effects on the relevance of leader behaviours for PWB. Overall, results suggest that the relationships between leader behaviours and PWBs were less strong when individuals' power distance orientation was high rather than low (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Farh, Hackett, & Liang, 2007; Liu & Liao, 2013). Likewise, the positive relationship between LMX and voice was stronger when individuals' conflict avoidance values were low rather than high (Park & Nawakitphaitoon, 2018). We are only aware of two *multi-level* studies that investigated the interplay of specific national-level cultural dimensions and organizational-level variables to predict PWBs (Fischer et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2005).

Beyond these methodological issues, existing theorizing lacks an overarching theoretical framework that would explain *how* different societal-level cultural dimensions affect individuals' specific PWBs. In a conceptual article, Blair and Bligh (2018) introduced the idea that cultures might differ in their level of proactive followership conceptions or IFTs. However, Blair and Bligh only discuss power distance and cultural tightness as cultural characteristics that underlie these differences in followership conceptions and their work does not connect to the literature on PWB. Also, their theorizing on the consequences of proactive followership conceptions only focusses on the likelihood of follower dissent (i.e., voicing divergent ideas by a minority or by lower-status individuals), but not on other forms of PWB, such as personal initiative, which involve making larger changes than just voicing ideas.

We go beyond this existing literature and develop a theoretical model on cross-cultural differences in whether, why, how, and at what cost individuals show PWBs. In the following, we first introduce the concept of IFTs as an overarching theoretical framework that, according to our theoretical model, links societal-level culture to individual-level PWB. We use this as a

starting point to develop our theoretical propositions on culture's top-down effects on individuals' IFTs and hence their PWBs.

A Followership Perspective on Culture and Proactive Work Behaviour

In line with previous research relating to the different ways culture affects organizational behaviour (for reviews, see Chiaburu, Chakrabarty, Wang, & Li, 2015; Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012; Shockley et al., 2017), we expect that some processes related to PWB hold universally across cultures, whereas others differ across cultures. In the following, we illustrate at which stages of the process involved in PWBs culture is most likely to create differences across cultural groups. The model depicted in Figure 1 integrates existing conceptual models on the antecedents, processes, and outcomes related to PWBs (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Bindl et al., 2012; Cangiano & Parker, 2016; Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Morrison, 2011; Spychala & Sonnentag, 2011; Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012), and extends previous insights by adding the role of culture, as we will elaborate in detail below. In essence, we argue that societal culture – particularly the dimensions of power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and future orientation – shape individuals' implicit followership theories (IFTs) (e.g., Blair & Bligh, 2018; Carsten et al., 2010; Sy, 2010) and their related more specific implicit theories on PWBs (e.g., their implicit voice theories, Detert & Edmondson, 2011). These implicit followership and related implicit PWB theories will in turn affect the mean levels of PWBs exhibited across cultures, followers' motivation to show PWBs, the strategies followers choose to enact PWB, as well as leaders' evaluation of followers' PWB, that is their propensity to reward or punish followers' PWBs.

- Insert Figure 1 somewhere here -

Culture and Implicit Followership Theories

      Implicit followership theories.

      Individuals' implicit followership theories (IFTs) reflect their cognitive schemas or "lay theories" on what characterizes followers and how followers are expected to act (Carsten et al., 2010; Sy, 2010). Implicit followership theories focus on two prototypes: The prototype of a *typical* follower summarizes characteristics representing the average follower; the prototype of an *ideal* follower represents characteristics that would be valued but that do not necessarily reflect the observed characteristics of an average follower (Junker & van Dick, 2014). We focus on ideal (and counter-ideal) prototypes here because ideal prototypes are more relevant to shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviour towards other people than typical (or central tendency) prototypes (Van Quaquebeke, Graf, & Eckloff, 2014). *Followers'* IFTs act as followers' cognitive schemas of their own role and guide them in how to enact this role (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2010). *Leaders'* IFTs provide them with a prototype of valued follower behaviour that they use as a reference point to evaluate actual follower behaviour (Sy, 2010; Whiteley, Sy, & Johnson, 2012). Existing measures to assess individuals' IFTs typically let individuals indicate how characteristic certain attributes are for ideal versus counter-ideal followers, for example "thinking ahead", "engaged", "assuming responsibility" versus "passive", "rude", "aggressive" (Junker, Stegmann, Braun, & Van Dick, 2016).

      IFTs as generalized schemas on followership contain more specific implicit theories about more specific follower behaviours, including implicit theories about PWBs. Detert and Edmondson (2011) investigated individuals' implicit theories regarding voice behaviour (Morrison, 2011; Morrison & Phelps, 1999), a form of PWB. Followers' implicit voice theories – that is their "taken-for-granted beliefs about when and why speaking up at work is risky or inappropriate" (Detert & Edmondson,

2011, p. 461) – form an element of a wider followership theory that can explain why individuals may choose (not) to speak up. Implicit voice theories can include the belief that supervisors will react positively to voice or that they will interpret voice as personal criticism and that speaking up might have negative consequences for one's career. Extending the perspective of Detert and Edmondson, we assume that such implicit theories are likely to be similar across different forms of PWB, such as taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999) and personal initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001). Leaders' implicit theories on PWB will further contain beliefs about whether it is the *leaders'* prerogative to point out potential problems or to develop new ideas.

The literature on followership conceptions contrasts two perspectives on what makes an effective follower, namely more "passive" versus more "proactive" IFTs (Blair & Bligh, 2018; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Carsten et al., 2010). At one end of the continuum, *passive* IFTs include conceptions of followers as being passive, less effectual, and less competent than leaders. Accordingly, an ideal follower would do what they are told without question and adhere to leaders' directives even if they considered them problematic. At the other end of the continuum and in contrast to passive IFTs, *proactive* IFTs denote that it is part of a follower's role to take initiative, give advice, and voice critical opinions to their leader when necessary (Carsten et al., 2010). Individuals with proactive IFTs may even view followers as "co-producers of leadership" (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Then, an ideal follower would constantly be on the lookout for suggestions to offer to their leader, and would identify potential problems their organization could face in the future (for a measure of proactive IFTs, see Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2009).

Our theoretical model rests on the assumption that societal culture affects the development of individuals' IFTs. Implicit followership theories have both idiosyncratic and socially shared elements (van Gils, van Quaquebeke, & van Knippenberg, 2010). We propose that individuals from different cultures are likely to hold different IFTs. Individuals' IFTs

develop through socialization within a certain societal and organizational context, and are therefore shaped by both prevailing group norms and individual experiences of which behaviours are rewarded or are punished within that context (Carsten et al., 2010). For this reason, IFTs are likely to be shared – at least to a certain extent – by the members of the same organization and, as we argue, the same cultural group. Our assumption of cross-cultural differences in IFTs finds indirect support in research on cross-cultural differences in implicit *leadership* theories (e.g., Brodbeck et al., 2000; Den Hartog et al., 1999; Gerstner & Day, 1994), that is individuals' cognitive schemas on the traits and behaviours that are characteristic of leaders (Lord & Maher, 1991). This research shows that some leader characteristics are universally endorsed across cultures or universally undesired, whilst other characteristics are endorsed in some cultures, but not in others (Den Hartog et al., 1999). Also, cross-cultural differences in implicit leadership theories are systematically related to differences in the more generally endorsed values of cultural groups (Brodbeck et al., 2000; Gerstner & Day, 1994). Based on this, we assume that culture will also affect individuals' IFTs. Specifically, we propose that power distance and uncertainty avoidance are related to the development of more passive IFTs, whilst individualism and future orientation are related to developing more proactive IFTs.

Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and passive IFTs.

Scholars have argued that individuals' passive IFTs are reinforced through hierarchical systems in which leaders are granted status, power, prestige, and expertise, whereas followers are expected to be relatively submissive, to remain silent, and to obey orders (e.g., Carsten et al., 2010; Courpasson & Dany, 2003). Followers in high power distance cultures are more likely than those in more egalitarian societies to hold more passive IFTs because they have been socialized into behaving according to their lower position in the hierarchy (Blair & Bligh, 2018). Consequently, followers

will not see it as a natural part of their role to be proactive and to speak up to their leader, even if they are asked for their opinion (Carsten et al., 2010). Accordingly, in cultures with high power distance leaders' ideal follower prototype will likely not contain proactive follower behaviours, but rather emphasize follower subordination and industrious task fulfilment. Followers with more proactive IFTs view themselves more as partners to their leaders (Carsten et al., 2010). This is not compatible with the strictly hierarchical role conceptions individuals hold in high power distance cultures.

Proposition 1a: The higher the cultural power distance in a society, the more passive individuals' IFTs will be.

High levels of uncertainty avoidance should also facilitate the development of passive rather than proactive IFTs. In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, everyday life is structured through rules and regulations in order to avoid ambiguity and to make individuals' behaviour more predictable. This striving for clarity and predictability is also reflected in organizational practices that are characterized by higher degrees of formalization and planning (Fischer et al., 2019; Sully de Luque & Javidan, 2004). One aspect of formalization is that roles are clearly defined and are structured, which includes the tasks and responsibilities of leaders and followers. Research on personal initiative and entrepreneurship in Eastern Europe suggests that the values and practices of bureaucratic socialism – a political system characterized by high uncertainty avoidance – made it almost impossible to be proactive within the work setting (Frese, 1995). Empirical evidence shows that employees had rather little job control and jobs were designed to be of lower complexity (Frese et al., 1996) to avoid mistakes and to maximize predictability. Consequently, individuals were socialized into role conceptions that are in line with passive IFTs, that is, to follow rules and regulations. When cultural uncertainty avoidance is high, the prototype of an ideal follower is likely to express rather low levels of PWB because presenting ideas for improvement or introducing

new work procedures will induce uncertainty and risk, for example about whether the proposed or implemented changes will be successful (Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker et al., 2010). In contrast, when cultural uncertainty avoidance is low, risk and uncertainty are embraced more readily, making followers' PWBs more welcome. Research on innovation supports this notion by showing that cultural uncertainty avoidance is negatively related to national rates of innovation (Shane, 1993). Altogether, we propose:

Proposition 1b: The higher the cultural uncertainty avoidance in a society, the more passive individuals' IFTs will be.

Individualism, future orientation, and proactive IFTs.

Cultural values and practices that emphasize individualism, individual agency-, and openness to change should socialize individuals into a broader, more proactive conception of followership. In individualistic cultures (particularly those with low power distance), independence and individual agency are highly valued (Earley & Gibson, 1998), which is likely to foster the development of proactive IFTs. Members of an organization are supposed to contribute their unique skills and abilities to its success. To facilitate this individual contribution, job design focuses on maximizing individual autonomy (Gelfand et al., 2004). Individual participation in decision-making is more common than in collectivistic cultures, particularly those with high power distance (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). Within this agency-focused context, followers are likely to develop the conception that their role as followers involves being proactive rather than passive.

Proposition 2a: The higher the cultural individualism in a society, the more proactive individuals' IFTs will be.

We further propose that the development of proactive IFTs is facilitated by a high level of future orientation. In societies high in future orientation, organizations tend to exhibit a more long-term strategic orientation with a focus on long-term success (Ashkanasy, Gupta, Mayfield, & Trevor-Roberts, 2004). For example, research shows a positive relationship between organizations' future orientation values and their environmental proactivity (Calza, Cannavale, & Tutore, 2016). Further, it has been argued that visionary leadership should be highly valued in future-oriented cultures because it provides guidance in identifying long-term goals and in achieving them (Ashkanasy et al., 2004). Given the general focus of highly future-oriented societies on change and the achievement of future goals as well as the long-term benefits and consequences of actions, individuals in these cultures are expected to behave in accordance with this focus on the future. In the work context, this expectation is likely to reflect in the development of proactive rather than passive IFTs. As noted, PWBs are future-oriented behaviours that aim at improving the status quo in order to prevent future problems or to achieve potential improvements (e.g., Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). This is in line with a future oriented culture because proactive followers will be seen as contributing to pursuing the future common good.

Proposition 2b: The higher the future orientation in a society, the more proactive individuals' IFTs will be.

Implicit Followership Theories and Proactive Work Behaviour

Above we focused on how differences in societal culture may contribute to differences in individuals' proactive versus passive IFTs. Below, we outline how these differences in followers' and leaders' IFTs explain cross-cultural differences in *whether* followers engage in PWBs (i.e., mean-levels of PWBs), *why* they may do so (i.e., motivational states that drive PWBs), *how* they specifically enact PWBs (i.e., influence strategies), and *at what cost* their

PWBs may come due to cultural differences in leaders' evaluation of PWBs (in particular, well-being and performance outcomes of PWBs).

Whether: IFTs and mean levels of PWBs.

Passive IFTs and proactive IFTs differ in the degree to which PWBs are perceived as part of the ideal or counter-ideal follower prototype (Carsten et al., 2010). We propose that on the one hand, when followers hold proactive IFTs, their motivation to show PWBs and the expectation that they will be rewarded (or at least not punished) for engaging in PWBs will be higher. On the other hand, leaders with proactive IFTs will be more likely to expect, reward, and support followers' PWBs, which in turn will further reinforce followers' perception that it is desirable to show PWBs. The opposite holds for passive IFTs, where PWBs are not to be expected from followers and are not to be supported and rewarded by leaders. Thus, overall, individuals' proactive IFTs are likely to be a positive predictor of the general level of PWBs individuals show, while passive IFTs are likely to be a negative predictor of the general level of PWBs individuals show. Although research focusing explicitly on IFTs across cultures to date is scarce, one previous study indicates that followers with more proactive IFTs indeed reported a higher inclination to voice and to engage in constructive resistance (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Proposition 3: The more proactive followers' and leaders' IFTs, the higher the level of followers' exhibited PWBs.

Why: IFTs and followers' proactive motivational states.

As noted, PWB is goal-driven behaviour that aims at bringing about constructive change. To achieve this constructive change, individuals need to generate proactive goals and mobilize energy to pursue these goals. Parker and colleagues (2010) distinguish three proactive motivational states that fuel proactive goal generation and goal striving: First,

individuals need to perceive that they are able to accomplish their proactive goals through their actions, that the implementation of the envisioned changes is feasible, and that it is not too risky or costly to do so ("can do" motivation). Second, individuals need a good reason to take the risk to bring about change and to invest energy to overcome obstacles during goal striving and persist in the face of resistance from others ("reason to" motivation). Third, individuals need to feel activated to be proactive, for example through positive affect ("energized to" motivation). We have no reason to assume that the basic components of proactive motivation differ across cultures. However, we suggest that individuals' cultural context may affect individuals' "can do", "reason to", and "energized to" motivation through shaping their implicit theories on whether, when, and how followers should show PWBs, that is, their proactive versus passive IFTs.

Through shaping these implicit theories, culture conveys a sense of being (not) "licensed to" or (not) "enabled to" be proactive to its members, thereby shaping individuals' "can do" motivation. Through fostering passive constructions of followership (i.e., passive IFTs), societal culture can negatively affect individuals' "can do" motivational states. Followers with passive IFTs are less likely to feel able to show PWBs and will not see it as appropriate to voice concerns or to make suggestions for improvement (Carsten et al., 2010). They will likely perceive it as risky to show PWBs and fear negative consequences if they spoke up (Brinsfield, 2013; Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Followers with passive IFTs are also likely to perceive PWBs as less effective because they believe their leaders will not listen or take their input seriously. Reasons for this could be that leaders view such follower behaviour as inappropriate, or that they consider lower status individuals' input as less valuable (Howell, Harrison, Burris, & Detert, 2015). A study by Wei et al. (2015) lends indirect support to these assumptions. They show that Chinese followers' power distance values – which, as we argued in Proposition 1a, are likely to be associated with passive IFTs – were positively related to the perceived risk of voice, and negatively related to the perceived efficacy of voice.

In contrast to followers with passive IFTs, followers with more proactive IFTs will show higher levels of "can do" motivation because they are likely to feel higher levels of role-breadth self-efficacy. Role-breadth self-efficacy denotes "the extent to which people feel confident that they are able to carry out a broader and more proactive role" (Parker, 1998, p. 835). As such, role-breadth self-efficacy is a central "can do" motivational state that predicts PWB (Hong, Liao, Raub, & Han, 2016; Parker et al., 2010). Empirical evidence underscores that role-breadth self-efficacy is predicted by contextual variables that are more likely to be found in individualistic cultures – in which proactive IFTs should be more prevalent. These contextual variables include individuals' decision-making influence, autonomy (e.g., Parker, 1998; Parker et al., 2006), initiative-enhancing HR practices, and climate for initiative (Hong et al., 2016).

Proposition 4a: The more proactive followers' IFTs, the higher the level of followers' "can do" proactive motivational states.

Followers' proactive as opposed to passive IFTs will further facilitate "reason to" proactive motivational states, such as autonomous motivation to be proactive (Parker et al., 2010), because individuals are more likely to develop a flexible work role orientation (Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997). Individuals with flexible role orientation show a greater sense of ownership of work-related issues, in essence seeing a broader array of work-related issues as "my job", beyond the core technical aspects of their work. With this flexible role orientation, workers will feel more responsible to solve these issues proactively, under their own initiative. Consequently, individuals are more likely to show PWBs because they are autonomously motivated to do so. In contrast, as described above, followers' holding passive IFTs have not internalized the value of their contribution of PWB. Thus, they will be less autonomously motivated to show PWB, or in other words, have "no reason to" do so. Underscoring these propositions, Strauss and Kelly (2017) discuss that PWB is self-

expressive and identity-congruent in individualistic rather than collectivistic cultures, that is, when individuals hold higher levels of proactive IFTs and lower levels of passive IFTs.

Proposition 4b: The more proactive followers' IFTs, the higher the level of followers' "reason to" proactive motivational states.

Societal culture may further affect individuals' "energized to" proactive motivational states – that is, the affective driver behind individuals' PWB (Parker et al., 2010) – through individuals' IFTs. Two processes lead us to conclude that "energized to" states are affected positively by proactive IFTs and negatively by passive IFTs. First, followers' IFTs reflect their sense of duty and obligation in relation to PWB. In terms of self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), followers' IFTs could thus be conceived of as ought self-guides. Self-discrepancy theory would suggest that deviating from one's IFTs is related to feelings of fear or threat (Higgins, 1987), and that individuals are concerned with avoiding deviations from ought self-guides (Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994). Accordingly, followers with passive IFTs should perceive showing PWBs as a threat and thus avoid showing PWBs, while individuals with proactive IFTs should perceive *not* showing PWBs as a threat and thus avoid *not* showing PWBs. Second, followers' IFTs will determine what consequences of PWBs they anticipate, which creates an affective response that guides followers' subsequent behaviour. Given that individuals with proactive IFTs consider it part of their role to show PWBs, they should expect positive outcomes from engaging in PWB, such as praise from others or positive performance evaluations. For them, the prospect to show PWB is likely to promote positive affect, for example feeling proud of, excited, or enthusiastic about their ideas or initiatives. It has been argued that individuals who experience positive affective states are more likely to set proactive goals and that they put more energy into pursuing these goals (Parker et al., 2010). Research confirms that positive affect is an important facilitator of PWB (Fay & Sonnentag, 2012; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2009), particularly high-activation positive

affect (e.g., feeling enthusiastic; Bindl et al., 2012). In contrast, individuals with passive IFTs consider being proactive as running counter to norms. For them, the prospect of voicing an issue or addressing a problem at work causes worry or even anxiety, because they expect negative consequences such as punishment from leaders or peers for overstepping their competence boundaries. Based on theories of behavioural activation versus inhibition (e.g., Carver & White, 1994), we expect that feeling worried or anxious will inhibit behaviour that may result in punishment – in this case, individuals' PWB. Previous studies' results on the role of negative affect in predicting PWB are yet inconclusive: While studies conducted in a Western cultural context found that feeling anxious, worried, or tense was unrelated to PWB (Bindl et al., 2012; Fay & Sonnentag, 2012), a study conducted in an Eastern culture showed a negative correlation (Hsiung & Tsai, 2017). However, these studies measured individuals' affect in general and not affect in prospect of PWB in particular. Based on our theoretical arguments, we expect that individuals' passive IFTs are negatively related to "energized to" proactive motivation. Overall, we propose:

Proposition 4c: The more proactive followers' IFTs, the higher the level of followers' "energized to" proactive motivational state.

How: IFTs and the enactment of PWB.

We propose that followers' IFTs and their perceptions of their leaders' IFTs not only affect their proactive motivation, but also how they *enact* their followership role (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012), that is, which specific strategies followers use to express voice or implement changes. In cultures that facilitate proactive IFTs, both followers and leaders are more likely to consider PWBs desirable follower behaviour. Thus, followers can speak up more directly and critically to leaders, for example by voicing their opinion in meetings, and are more likely to feel they can take the liberty to implement changes to their own work procedures without

explicit consent from their leader. In cultures that facilitate passive IFTs, followers may need

to be more cautious in how to enact PWBs, because generally this behaviour is regarded as

not desired. However, we suggest that a culturally appropriate strategy to show PWBs can

help followers to alleviate leaders' perception of PWBs as counter-ideal follower behaviour in

cultures where leaders are more likely to hold passive IFTs, that is, when cultural power

distance or uncertainty avoidance are high.

When power distance is high, followers are expected to obey their leader. This implies

direct and confrontational approaches to showing PWB are less likely because of followers'

fears of (and the actual likelihood of) negative consequences. Instead of not showing PWBs at

all, followers are likely to choose less overt and more indirect strategies to be proactive. For

example, followers may choose to speak out to peers rather than up to the leader or voice

concerns to their leader in a much less confrontational and more indirect manner. In line with

these assumptions, research on voice strategies (e.g., Matsunaga, 2015) and influence tactics

(e.g., Yukl, Fu, & McDonald, 2003) suggests that across cultures, individuals consider

different upward-influence tactics as efficient. Direct and task-oriented influence tactics

reflect common strategies in Western countries and cultures (e.g., the USA). These cultures

are typically lower in power distance and higher in individualism than Eastern cultures; thus,

individuals are more likely to hold proactive rather than passive IFTs. More subtle, indirect

tactics involving personal relations, an informal approach, and avoidance of confrontation

seem more appropriate and likely to be more successful in Eastern cultures (e.g., China; Yukl

et al., 2003). Similarly, the literature on emic cultural constructs describes culture-specific

strategies of informal influence that relate to PWB, for example, so-called *jeitinho* in Brazil,

that is individuals' strategies to achieve short-term solutions for problems by circumventing

formal hierarchy and regulations (Smith et al., 2012). These cultures are typically higher in

power distance and lower in individualism, and are thus cultural contexts in which individuals

will likely hold passive rather than proactive IFTs. Matsunaga (2015) specifically explored

voice strategies of Japanese employees and discovered a broad set of strategies used beyond the strategies considered common in Western cultures, where openly speaking up in Western cultures (where openly speaking up in a face-to-face setting or in written communication is the norm. Japanese voice strategies included more cautious forms of disclosure, for example to briefly mention a topic in order to "test the waters", or using humorous or sarcastic ways to bring something up. Full disclosure would only follow when the leader picks up on these subtle hints, or when the timing seems right. Other strategies aim at disguising the source of voice, for example by discussing ideas with peers and waiting for the word to spread to the leader rather than speaking up directly, or by leaving an anonymous note on the leader's desk to hint at an issue.

Proactive individuals are further likely to face specific challenges in uncertainty avoidant cultures. When societal uncertainty avoidance is high, individuals perceive ambiguous situations as threatening and prefer to rely on rules and regulations that reduce uncertainty (e.g., De Luque & Javidan, 2004; Hofstede, 1980). As argued above, individuals will more likely hold more passive IFTs when uncertainty avoidance is high because PWBs bear a certain degree of uncertainty and risk (e.g., Frese & Fay, 2001). Thus, if followers do want to be proactive and change something in highly uncertainty avoidant cultures, followers may need to enact PWBs in ways that minimize uncertainty and risk. High uncertainty avoidance may, for example, give rise to the implicit voice theory that individuals should approach their leader only with well elaborated ideas and complete, well-planned solutions for problems, and otherwise remain silent (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). In line with this, research shows that in countries with high uncertainty avoidance, individuals who champion innovative ideas were preferred to act within the scope of organizational norms and procedures (e.g., stick to official channels, write formal plans), whereas when uncertainty avoidance was low innovation champions were expected to challenge existing norms and

procedures (Shane, Venkataraman, & MacMillan, 1995). Similarly, Rauch, Frese, and Sonnentag (2000) found that the relationship between entrepreneurial success and detailed business planning – an activity that reduces uncertainty – was positive in Germany (high in uncertainty avoidance), but negative in Ireland (low in uncertainty avoidance). Frese et al. (1996) report anecdotal evidence that the high level of central planning and low levels of job control employees had to deal with in bureaucratic socialism channelled their proactive efforts to "work around the system" and into other life domains. Taken together, we suggest that cultural characteristics may not only make it less likely that followers show PWBs but also shape the way in which PWBs – if they are shown – are enacted. As we suggest above, these effects are mediated by individuals' conceptions of their own work role, that is, their proactive versus passive IFTs. Overall, we propose:

Proposition 5: The more proactive followers' IFTs, the more likely followers will choose direct and overt strategies to enact PWBs; the more passive followers' IFTs, the more likely followers will choose indirect and methodical strategies to enact PWBs.

At what cost: IFTs and the evaluation of PWB.

Finally, we suggest that PWBs may be evaluated differently across cultures because individuals hold different IFTs across cultures. Accordingly, PWBs may hold different consequences for the proactive individual as they may be rewarded for PWB in some cultures but may be punished in others. Leaders are key figures in the evaluation of followers' PWBs, as employees would typically voice to them, or they would usually need their leader's (or another manager's) approval in order to implement any substantive changes to processes or procedures at work. We propose that cultural differences in leaders' evaluation of PWBs can be explained by differences in *leaders'* IFTs, that is, whether PWBs are considered ideal follower behaviour in the light of their IFTs.

Leaders use their IFTs to compare actual followers to their ideal follower prototype in order to evaluate followers' behaviour and to determine their own behaviour towards followers (Engle & Lord, 1997). The higher the congruence between actual and ideal (positive) follower characteristics and behaviour, the more positively leaders will evaluate an actual follower; the higher the congruence between actual and counter-ideal (negative), the more negatively leaders will evaluate an actual follower (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). Empirical studies support this notion by showing that leaders' ratings of followers' in-role and extra-role performance was higher the more these actual followers fit the leaders' ideal IFTs, and lower the more followers fit their counter-ideal IFTs (Goswami, Park, & Beehr, 2019; Junker et al., 2016). Leaders' own behaviour towards followers is proposed to mediate this relationship (Goswami et al., 2019; Whiteley et al., 2012). For example, Goswami et al. (2019) show that when followers fit leaders' ideal IFTs, leaders grant their followers higher levels of leader-member exchange (LMX), which results in more leader trust and support for followers and thus positively contributes to their performance. When followers fit leaders' counter-ideal IFTs, leaders are more likely to behave in unfavourable or abusive ways towards followers, which negatively relates to followers' performance.

The same processes should apply to leaders' evaluation of followers' PWBs. In cultures in which leaders are more likely to hold proactive IFTs, PWBs denote ideal and desired follower behaviours and should therefore generally be evaluated positively and find leaders' support. In cultures in which leaders are more likely to hold passive IFTs, PWBs are counter-ideal follower behaviours and should thus be evaluated more negatively. As argued above, passive IFTs should be more prevalent in high power distance cultures (Aycan et al., 2000; Blair & Bligh, 2018; Courpasson & Dany, 2003). Leaders in high power distance cultures may be more likely to perceive

subordinates' counter-ideal PWB as inappropriate, presumptuous, or even disrespectful and threatening. Previous research suggests that leaders may reject PWBs due to ego-defensiveness or power threat (Burris, 2012; Fast et al., 2014; Urbach & Fay, 2018). In contrast, we argued that leaders in individualistic cultures should hold more proactive IFTs, and individuals are generally expected to act more autonomously. In this context, PWBs should generally be more welcomed. Supporting this assumption, Sy (2010) identified the ideal follower prototype of leaders from the USA – a very individualistic culture – to be industrious, enthusiastic, and good citizens, which also includes going above and beyond role expectations, for example by showing PWBs.

Proposition 6: Leaders' IFTs determine their evaluation of followers' PWBs. The more proactive leaders' IFTs, the more likely they will support followers' PWBs.

Understanding cultural differences in the evaluation of PWBs is important because the degree to which PWBs are evaluated positively by others in the organization, particularly by leaders, largely determines the consequences followers will face for showing PWBs. This can help explain why engaging in PWBs may be more depleting and less rewarding for followers in some cultures than in others. Scholars have suggested that PWBs can have both positive and negative effects for proactive individuals' well-being (for an overview, see Cangiano & Parker, 2016). On the positive side, research supports that PWB may enhance well-being through fostering feelings of vitality (Cangiano, Parker, & Yeo, 2019) and competence need satisfaction (Cangiano et al., 2019; Weigelt, Syrek, Schmitt, & Urbach, 2019; Wu, Deng, & Li, 2018). On the negative side, studies report that PWB is positively related to job strain (Strauss et al., 2017), daily cortisol levels (Fay & Hüttges, 2017) and depletion (Lin & Johnson, 2015), long-term emotional exhaustion (Zacher, Schmitt, Jimmieson, & Rudolph, 2019), and – when motivated externally – withdrawal behaviours (Pingel, Fay, & Urbach, 2019). Engaging in PWB can increase individuals' time pressure at work (Urbach & Weigelt,

2019) and result in conflicts with others (Spychala & Sonnentag, 2011), which can further impair well-being.

Overall, these studies suggest that PWB depletes individuals' resources and thus comes with a cost for the proactive individual. How high this cost will be depends in part on how PWB is evaluated by others, particularly the leader (Cangiano & Parker, 2016). In line with Cangiano and Parker (2016), we suggest that leaders' negative feedback on PWBs is particularly relevant in shaping well-being consequences of PWBs. As outlined above, engaging in PWB seems generally resource depleting, because proactive individuals invest time and energy to solve an issue or implement changes. When evaluated negatively by their leader, this resource investment will not "pay off" for the follower, because their additional efforts are not rewarded. In addition, negative feedback from the leader will diminish the positive effects of PWBs on followers' well-being: If their PWB is evaluated negatively, followers will experience depression rather than vitality, and low rather than high competence and mastery (Cangiano & Parker, 2016).

Vice versa, leaders' positive feedback and support for PWBs may function as a reward that alleviates the negative well-being consequences of PWB for followers, making PWB worth the extra effort. Embedding these individual-level processes into our cross-cultural perspective, we suggest that proactive individuals will face higher well-being costs of their PWB in cultures that promote passive rather than proactive IFTs in individuals, because passive IFTs make it more likely that leaders evaluate followers' PWB more negatively and are less likely to support it. With regard to the effects of leaders' evaluation of PWBs, we propose:

Proposition 7a: Leaders' evaluation of followers' PWBs moderates the relationship between followers' PWB and well-being. If leaders support followers'

PWB, PWB will have positive effects on well-being; if leaders do not support followers'

PWB, PWB will have negative effects on well-being.

Beyond well-being consequences, leaders' negative evaluations of followers' PWB

may also reflect in followers' performance evaluations. Although the literature generally

supports a positive relationship between PWB and overall performance ratings of followers

(Thomas et al., 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013), there might be cross-cultural differences in the

strength of this relationship that can be explained by cultural differences in leaders' IFTs and

their evaluation of PWB. Specifically, we assume that the relationship between PWBs and

overall performance will be less positive or even negative in cultures where leaders are more

likely to evaluate PWBs negatively. Scholars have argued that PWBs involve possible image

threat for the proactive individual or lower performance evaluations by their leader (e.g.,

Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008). In a study by Burris (2012) on the evaluation of

voice, employees received lower performance evaluations from their leader if they engaged in

challenging voice rather than in voice that was supportive of the status quo. Likewise, a meta-

analysis by Chamberlin et al. (2017) shows that after controlling for task performance and

OCB, only followers' promotive voice (i.e., expressing "ways to improve existing work

practices and procedures to benefit organizations"; Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012, p. 71) was

positively related to job performance ratings. Prohibitive voice (i.e., expressing "concern

about existing or impending practices, incidents, or behaviors that may harm their

organization"; Liang et al., 2012, p. 72) was negatively related to job performance ratings. In

contrast to the future-oriented and improvement-focussed promotive voice, prohibitive voice

is more challenging for others (e.g., leaders) because it points to their past failures in

behaviour or decision-making (Liang et al., 2012).

We expect that in cultures in which individuals hold rather passive IFTs, leaders will

be more sensitive to the challenging nature of PWB and will feel offended more easily,

because followers' PWB violates leaders' role expectations and – on top of that – potentially criticizes their behaviour. Consequently, leaders will be less likely to grant followers support for their PWBs and evaluate them more negatively. Moreover, leaders with passive IFTs might consider followers' PWBs as a distraction from their core task that might jeopardise followers' work performance. From the perspective of leaders with passive IFTs, "good employees" should not engage in PWBs, so leaders will want to stop the followers they are responsible for from doing so. Under these circumstances, PWBs will not contribute to leaders' general evaluations of followers' performance, but should even be detrimental to performance evaluations. Vice versa, in cultures in which individuals hold rather proactive IFTs, leaders will feel less challenged by followers' PWBs, but focus more on the potential benefits of followers' improvement suggestions and voiced issues. In this case, leaders are more likely to support followers' PWB. Consequently, followers' PWB will contribute positively to leaders' evaluation of followers' overall performance. Therefore, we propose:

Proposition 7b: Leaders' evaluation of followers' PWBs moderates the relationship between followers' PWB and leaders' rating of followers' overall performance. The less leaders support followers' PWB, the less positive the relationship between PWB and overall performance rating.

Following from our Propositions 1, 2, and 6, cultures with high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, low individualism, and low future orientation promote passive IFTs in individuals, which make it more likely that leaders evaluate follower PWBs negatively. In these cultures, PWBs will have higher costs for proactive followers, because they will need to overcome higher levels of resistance, they will benefit less in terms of well-being, and it is more likely that their proactive initiatives are not rewarded.

In the long run, leaders' evaluations of followers' PWBs also affect whether organizations actually benefit from their employees' proactive efforts. If leaders show low levels of support for followers' PWB, organizations may miss out on valuable ideas for improvement, or may not become aware of issues that need to be resolved to avoid harmful outcomes. Moreover, if upward voice is regularly ignored by leaders, followers are likely to give up trying and come to the conclusion that voicing concerns or sharing ideas is ineffectual (Brinsfield, 2013). The experience of punishment and negative feedback will also negatively affect followers' motivation to proactively contribute to the improvement of their organization in the future (Cangiano & Parker, 2016). Initial evidence indicates that experiencing negative outcomes from engaging in PWBs, such as higher time pressure or depletion, reduces the likelihood that individuals will subsequently engage in PWBs (Lin & Johnson, 2015; Urbach & Weigelt, 2019). This is a very undesirable outcome for organizations given that individuals' PWBs are considered crucial for organizations' adaptability and performance (Crossley, Cooper, & Wernsing, 2013).

An Agenda for Future Research

Our discussion of cross-cultural differences in PWBs above resulted in specific propositions that warrant empirical testing in future research. Below, we discuss the strengths and limitations of our current theorizing and point out how our theoretical model on cross-cultural differences in PWBs could be extended further in future research. We also discuss some fundamental conceptual and methodological issues that need to be addressed to provide a basis for a sound test of specific hypotheses on cross-cultural differences in PWBs.

Possible Extensions of Our Theorizing

Interactive effects of IFTs and contextual variables.

So far, our theorizing has largely focussed on how societal-level culture affects individual-level variables and processes, such as individuals' IFTs, their motivational states, their specific ways to enact PWBs, and their evaluation of PWBs. Moreover, future theorizing

and research needs to take into account that cultural characteristics at the societal level might interact with other context factors at the organizational or group level (Kirkman et al., 2006), such as organizational culture or leadership practices. These variables might amplify, suppress, or even reverse the effects of societal culture on outcomes (Gelfand et al., 2008). A recent study by Watts, Steele, and Den Hartog (2019) shows that societal culture can also modulate the strength of relationships between micro-level variables. This may also apply to the interplay of IFTs with other meso- and micro-level variables in predicting PWBs across cultures. A detailed discussion of such interaction effects is beyond the scope of this paper; however, we would like to outline the general issue by sketching how individuals' IFTs could function as a substitute for, as an enhancer of, or even as a neutralizer of the positive effects of transformational leadership on PWB. On the one hand, proactive IFTs may function as a *substitute* for transformational leadership, and thus attenuate the strength of the positive relationship between transformational leadership and PWB, because followers with proactive IFTs are autonomously motivated to engage in PWB and thus will be less dependent on external stimulation for PWB. Following the same logic, passive IFTs may *enhance* the relationships between drivers of PWB such as transformational leadership and PWB, because followers with more passive IFTs will need higher levels of external motivation to overcome their culturally endorsed IFTs (which imply that PWBs constitute counter-ideal follower behaviour). Consequently, followers' with high levels of passive IFTs are likely to benefit particularly from transformational leadership. In line with this, Watts et al. (2019) found that the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation, a concept that is related to PWBs (Parker & Collins, 2010), tends to be stronger in cultures with high levels of uncertainty avoidance, where according to our reasoning individuals are more likely to hold passive IFTs. Watts et al. conclude that transformational leadership seems to compensate for the innovation-inhibiting effects of high uncertainty avoidance.

On the other hand, it is also possible that followers' proactive IFTs *enhance* the relationship between transformational leadership and PWB because they may then be more inclined to utilize individual and contextual resources to enhance their proactive efforts. Following the same logic, followers' passive IFTs are likely to *neutralize* the effects of transformational leadership because followers do not view PWB as part of their role expectations, and thus will be less inclined to translate additional external resources (e.g., transformational leadership) into proactive efforts. Results of existing research suggest that the relationships between supportive or stimulating leader behaviours and PWBs were *less* strong when individuals' power distance orientation was high (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Liu & Liao, 2013), which we argue implies individuals are more likely to hold passive IFTs. Future cross-cultural research needs to extend theorizing on this issue, and needs to test which of the potentially competing predictions receives empirical support. Whether the contradictory results of the studies above can be explained by the fact that they investigate individual cultural values rather than societal culture as a moderator, also remains an empirical question (Kirkman et al., 2006, 2017).

Dynamic interplay of top-down and bottom-up processes.

Moreover, our theorizing has so far focussed on top-down processes of how societal-level culture affects individual-level PWBs. At the same time, cultural dynamics will entail bottom-up processes that future theorizing needs to take into account. Bottom up, it is likely that individuals' PWBs will translate into higher-level variables, such as increasing organizational or societal levels of PWB. Cai, Parker, Chen, and Lam (2019) recommended more attention to how individual PWBs affect proactivity at the team and organisational level, speculating that social learning processes such as behaviour modelling and social contagion might result in individual PWB spreading more widely, thereby shaping team and organisational proactivity. We similarly theorize that over time, individuals' PWBs will contribute to building up a proactivity-conducive climate in organizations: If individuals'

PWBs have repeatedly been beneficial to an organization, leaders may increasingly see the value of followers' PWBs. Thus, leaders' IFTs may shift from passive to more proactive IFTs, and their support for followers' PWBs may increase. Consequently, followers' IFTs will transform, because they will experience that engaging in PWBs is less risky and more likely to result in positive outcomes. As a result, they will be more likely to engage in PWBs and thus contribute to their organizations' success. In the long run, these processes may even stimulate changes of a society's cultural values towards a more future-oriented, less power-distant and less risk-averse culture that rewards individual agency. Such a dynamic multi-level perspective (Kozlowski, Chao, Grand, Braun, & Kuljanin, 2013) suggests that individuals' PWBs may help to create an organizational and cultural environment that becomes more and more conducive to PWBs.

Differential effects for promotive versus prohibitive forms of PWB.

Moreover, our current theorizing does not yet include the possibility of differential cross-cultural effects for different types of PWB. Previous studies and meta-analytic investigations suggest that the different types of PWB, specifically voice, taking charge, and personal initiative, show very similar relationships with antecedents and outcomes (Tornau & Frese, 2013). Thus, it is legitimate that our theorizing makes the same predictions for these types of PWB. However, future theorizing could further refine our approach by differentiating predictions for promotive versus prohibitive types of PWB (Liang et al., 2012; Spychala & Sonnentag, 2011). As we have discussed with regard to Proposition 7b, the literature on voice suggests that promotive versus prohibitive forms of voice show differential relationships with performance ratings (Chamberlin et al., 2017). Chamberlin et al. further report differential effect sizes for antecedents of promotive versus prohibitive voice. Similarly, Spychala and Sonnentag (2011) report differential relationships of promotion- versus prevention-oriented initiative with subsequent task conflicts at work. These differential effects may be rooted in

differences in how these forms of voice are regulated by individuals' regulatory focus (Lin & Johnson, 2015).

Results by Lin and Johnson suggest that promotive voice is fuelled by a promotion focus, in which individuals focus on ideal goals and maximizing success (e.g., Higgins, 1997), while prohibitive voice is fuelled by a prevention focus, in which individuals focus on ought goals and avoiding undesired states (e.g., Higgins, 1997). One could argue that cultural configurations differ in their alignment with promotion- versus a prevention-focussed behaviour. For example, a stronger focus on potential gains and thus a higher inclination towards promotion-oriented PWBs might be prevalent in cultures with a high level of future orientation. High future orientation is expressed in planning ahead, being strategic, being flexible and adaptive, and focussing on investing in the future (Ashkanasy et al., 2004). Promotive voice has been characterized as being future-oriented, while prohibitive voice can also be oriented towards the past or present (Liang et al., 2012). Thus, in cultures high in future orientation, promotion-oriented forms of PWB are more in line with culture's focus than prevention-oriented forms of PWB, and may thus be perceived as more desirable. Consequently, followers may be more likely to show promotion-oriented PWBs, and leaders may evaluate promotion-oriented PWBs more positively than prevention-oriented PWBs.

In contrast, cultural characteristics that involve a strong emphasis on rules and obligations (e.g., uncertainty avoidance) might shift individuals' focus towards prevention-oriented forms of PWBs. Prevention-oriented PWBs, such as pointing out problems or voicing issues, can help to detect and reduce potential violations of rules and sources of uncertainty. Overall, it seems fruitful for future theorizing on cross-cultural differences in PWBs to differentiate promotion- versus prevention-oriented forms of PWB, and to consider regulatory focus as another mechanism that links societal culture to these different forms of individuals' PWBs.

Understand further mechanisms underlying cross-cultural differences.

Future research needs to further our understanding of the mechanisms behind cross-cultural differences in PWBs and to model potential mediator variables that link culture as a group-level phenomenon to individual-level behaviours (Kirkman et al., 2006). In this article, we suggest culturally endorsed IFTs as one mechanism through which societal culture may affect individuals' PWBs. Given the complexity of culture as a contextual characteristic, there likely are additional mechanisms that explain the culture–PWB link. One important pathway we have not discussed in detail in this article is that culture may indirectly foster or hinder PWBs by shaping organizational structures or standards of work design. For example, organizations in high power distance cultures are likely characterized by a stronger emphasis on operating in line with the formal hierarchy and also have higher numbers of formal hierarchy levels. As a result, decision autonomy and job control – a precondition for showing PWBs – will be rather low in lower levels of the hierarchy, resulting in lower levels of PWBs. Similarly, organizations in high uncertainty avoidance cultures may have much more elaborate planning systems and more detailed and formalized rules and procedures in place, affecting the extent to which there is room to show spontaneous PWBs (Frese et al., 1996).

A study by Fischer et al. (2019) suggests that – by means of work design – organizations could even intentionally counteract the potential negative effects of societal culture on employees' PWBs. The results of their study show that when societal uncertainty norms are high (that is, when there is little structure and planning), organizational formalization practices can help to foster employee voice. The authors argue that uncertainty norms tax employees' cognitive resources, which they then lack to show voice; through higher formalization in terms of set rules and regulations, organizations can help to free employees' cognitive resources for showing voice.

Recommendations for Cross-Cultural Studies on Proactive Work Behaviour

Building on our review of existing cross-cultural studies on PWBs as well as our own theory building, the following section will highlight methodological challenges for future research on cross-cultural studies of PWBs. For more general advice on cross-cultural research methods in psychology and management, please refer to Matsumoto and Van de Vijver (2011) and others (e.g., Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011; Kirkman et al., 2006, 2017; Rios & Hambleton, 2016; Tsui et al., 2007; van de Vijver, van Hemert, & Poortinga, 2008).

Exploring different manifestations of PWB.

Following our discussion of cross-cultural differences in the enactment of PWBs, there is reason to assume that PWBs manifest themselves differently across cultures. Thus, future research needs to test whether the existing measures of PWBs – which were developed in a few Western countries (e.g., the USA, Germany) and were not designed with a cross-cultural research perspective in mind – actually capture what is perceived as "proactive" across different cultures. Cross-cultural research on other constructs in organizational behaviour demonstrates that this may not be the case: In a qualitative study, Farh, Zhong, and Organ (2004) sampled and categorized OCB incidents in China. Half of the OCB categories they identified were either not recognized in the Western literature, or not considered as integral to OCB or extra-role behaviour; vice versa, some "Western" dimensions of OCB could not be identified in the Chinese data. The reason for this may be that OCBs (particularly their affiliative forms) are considered in-role performance in Confucian Asian cultures (Jiao, Richards, & Hackett, 2013). As discussed earlier, research on voice strategies by Matsunaga (2015) suggests that the behavioural strategies involved in PWB, that is which types of PWBs can actually be *observed*, also varies across cultures. Thus, until we have established measures that capture PWBs across cultures, we cannot rule out that empirical results based on the existing measures (e.g., mean-level differences between nations) reflect construct bias

rather than meaningful differences. This construct bias can result from incomplete coverage of the behaviours that constitute PWB in different cultures (Van de Vijver & Poortinga, 1997). For this reason, qualitative approaches, such as interview-based studies (Bindl, 2018; Vough, Bindl, & Parker, 2017) are warranted to explore how different forms of PWBs are conceived of and expressed across different cultures.

Apply multi-group SEM and multi-level models in statistical testing.

In addition to this qualitative approach to rule out construct bias from a conceptual point of view, researchers need to apply sophisticated quantitative methods to test whether existing and newly developed measures of PWBs (i.e., Likert-type scales) are psychometrically equivalent across cultures. None of the studies comparing samples from different cultural groups that we reviewed earlier in this paper has tested this. One initial study addressed the question of unidimensionality of a measure of proactive personality across nations (Claes et al., 2005). However, more rigorous tests of measurement invariance (or equivalence) are needed (e.g., Rios & Hambleton, 2016). Thus, future studies need to establish measurement invariance via multi-group structural equation modelling (e.g., Fischer & Fontaine, 2011; Vandenberg, 2002; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000) before we can draw meaningful conclusions about cross-cultural differences in PWBs.

Moreover, future studies need to measure those cultural dimensions that are theorized to produce the cultural differences proposed, for example, power distance or individualism-collectivism (Kirkman et al., 2006). This approach raises the challenge of determining the appropriate level of analysis at which culture is conceptualized and measured. Most definitions of societal culture see culture as espoused and enacted values or practices that are shared by its members (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004). Thus, culture should ideally be measured as a characteristic of a group rather than of individuals. However, with two exceptions (Fischer et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2005), all studies on cultural differences in

PWBs we reviewed for this article have measured culture at the individual level of analysis. In most cases, researchers assessed individual values (i.e., "I value tradition") or individuals' "subjective cultural press" (Gelfand et al., 2008, p. 502), that is their perception of their culture's norms and values (e.g., "In this culture, people value tradition"). Thus, these studies only allow for drawing conclusions on variations of perceived cultural norms *within* the respective cultural group. In order to model these individual perceptions of culture as a group-level variable (e.g., in terms of a consensus culture, Gelfand et al., 2008), multi-level study designs and multi-level modelling techniques are needed (for an introduction, see Nezlek, 2011).

In addition, future research needs to acknowledge that there are meaningful differences in cultural values *within* societies, for example between occupations, socio-economic classes (Taras et al., 2016), or geographical regions that are characterised by unique historical or societal developments (Frese et al., 1996; Talhelm et al., 2014). In fact, studies suggest that the by far larger proportion of variance in cultural values lies within rather than between nations (e.g., about 80%; Taras et al., 2016). Likewise, individuals' IFTs may differ as function of occupation or industry. Organizational cultural practices are strongly influenced by the realities specific to their work or economic context; thus, it is possible that societal culture and organizational culture emphasize very different values and practices (Brodbeck, Hanges, Dickson, Gupta, & Dorfman, 2004). For example, followers' PWBs may be indispensable in the context of dynamic and fast-developing IT businesses, but less critical to business success in consolidated, traditional manufacturing companies, and even undesirable in organizations that strongly rely on rule-based task fulfilment, such as the military. Thus, the industry and the related organizational culture may determine individuals' IFTs and PWBs so that they override the effects of societal culture. Thus, future studies need to disentangle cross-cultural differences from differences between other structural groups.

Conclusion

In this article, we have argued it is essential – given our global world – to consider cross-cultural differences in the predictors, processes, and outcomes of PWBs. Some existing research has suggested that societal culture affects whether individuals engage in proactive behaviour. Here, we went further to theorize that – through the process of shaping followers' implicit followership theories – societal culture not only is likely to affect whether individuals behave proactively and their extent of such behaviour, but it is likely to affect why people are proactive, how they enact this behaviour, and the potential costs of proactivity. Developing and testing culturally dependent models of PWB is not only of interest for scholars in the field, but also of importance for practitioners. For example, HR-managers of internationally operating corporations that seek to avoid the trap of ethnocentric simplicity, rely on empirically based insights into cross-cultural issues (Dowling & Welch, 2004). We hope that our theoretical model helps to generate such evidence-based advice and encourages more research on this topic.

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