

**EMPLOYEE VOICE IN FOREIGN OWNED
MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES IN AUSTRALIA**

Gitika Sablok, Dip Bus, BBus

College of Business

Victoria University

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to examine the use and character of employee voice practices in foreign owned multinational enterprises operating in Australia. It specifically focuses on the impact of union presence and a strategic human resource management approach on the employee voice practices. To address the research questions a quantitative research method was adopted utilising a questionnaire. This was conducted through face to face interviews with the HR managers of a sample of 171 foreign owned multinational enterprises operating in Australia. To examine the character of employee voice practices, frequencies and cross tabulations were conducted. Logistic regression analysis was carried out to determine the influence of a union presence and strategic human resource management approach on employee voice practices. The findings provide a comprehensive snapshot of the current character and influences of employee voice approaches adopted by multinational enterprises in the Australian context. This thesis demonstrates that foreign owned multinational enterprises are high-level users of the full range of direct employee voice mechanisms with the exceptions of use of employee suggestion schemes. Indirect methods such as trade union recognition and the use of joint consultation committees across all sites were not utilised to the same extent. It was also found that trade union presence and a strategic human resource management approach; greenfield site and country of origin affect the employee voice approach adopted. High trade union presence is associated with an indirect employee voice approach. A low trade union presence is associated with a direct or a minimalist approach to employee voice. A strategic human resource management approach is associated with both direct and dualistic approaches to employee voice. Implications

can be drawn for theory and management practice.

Declaration

I, Gitika Sablok, declare that the PhD thesis entitled, 'Employee Voice in Multinational Enterprises in Australia', does not exceed 100,000 words including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature:

Date:

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this Doctoral dissertation to my Parents

Mom and Dad,

This one's for you.

List of Conference Papers/Publications

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McDonnell, A., Burgess, J., Russell, H., Sablok, G. & Stanton, P. (2010) 'Employment Relations in Multinational Enterprises in Australia: A review of existing studies and the methods employed', AIRAANZ Conference, Australia.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

EV	Employee Voice
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management
HRM	Human Resource Management
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
HR	Human Resources
ER	Employee Relations
HRIS	Human Resource Information System
IR	Industrial Relations
ER	Employment Relations
JCC	Joint Consultative Committees
PM	Prime Minister
WRA	Workplace Relations Act
HPWS	High Performance Work Systems
LME	Liberal Market Economy
CME	Co-ordinated Market Economy
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
CV	Cramer's V
US	United States of America

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore employee voice (EV) in foreign-owned multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Australia. In particular the thesis explores the determinants of employee voice and identifies how the impact of various organisational and institutional factors affects the employee voice practices of foreign-owned MNEs.

This thesis draws on a representative study of MNEs in Australia to explore employee voice practices. The first objective of this study is to explore and analyse the different determinants of employee voice such as involvement, participation, and consultation particularly focusing on direct voice and indirect voice in MNEs. The second objective is to identify the impact on employee voice practices of various organisational and institutional factors, particularly strategic human resource management approaches and union presence. The third objective is to examine the impact of other factors on EV, for example: the country of origin, the company's year of establishment, employment size, whether the company was established as a greenfield site and the company's strategic human resource management (SHRM) international orientation.

This Chapter is structured as follows. Section 1.2 presents the research questions that this thesis aims to answer. The key concepts that this thesis covers are then introduced in the following sections. Section 1.3 introduces the concept of EV and provides an explanation. Section 1.4 explains the determinants of EV. Following this Section 1.5 focuses on union presence and Section 1.6 focuses on strategic human resource management. Section 1.7 discusses union presence and a strategic human resource management approach. The next Section (1.8) provides an introduction to the Australian context and provides a brief history of the Australian IR system. Section 1.9 focuses on the importance of multinational enterprises in Australia. The methods use to answer the research questions are identified in Section 1.10. Section 1.11 highlights the contribution that this thesis will make. Section 1.12 provides a summary of this chapter. Finally Section 1.13 provides an outline of this thesis.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions that this thesis aims to address are: first, what is the use and character of EV practices of foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia? Second, does the SHRM approach of the company and the union presence within the company influence the use and character of these EV practices? Third, are there other characteristics of MNEs that influence EV practices, such as the country of origin, year of establishment, employment size, whether the company was introduced as a greenfield site and the company's SHRM international orientation? This thesis draws upon and extends a framework developed by Lavelle, Gunnigle & McDonnell (2010) to analyse the association between a SHRM approach, union presence and other institutional and

organisational characteristics on the type of EV practices utilised by foreign-owned MNEs. This framework classifies EV into four broad approaches that companies might adopt. These are direct, indirect, minimalist and dualistic. Direct voice comprises mainly direct approaches to EV, for example information sharing, quality circles, newsletters, suggestion schemes and employee feedback (Marginson, Edwards, Ferner & Tregaskis, 2010; Dundon et al., 2004). Indirect EV mainly comprises practices such as statutory representative arrangements, union structures and joint consultative committees (JCCs) (Lavelle et al., 2010). Minimalist EV has few either direct or indirect EV practices, and dualist EV comprises a combination of both direct and indirect EV practices.

1.3 Employee Voice

The term “employee voice” is a concept that appears in the academic literature from both human resource management and industrial relations perspectives (Beardwell 1998, Benson 2000). EV refers to giving employees a say regarding aspects of decision-making in their workplace (McCabe and Lewin, 1992). Freeman and Medoff (1984) popularised EV and defined it as a two-way communication between workers and managers that is advantageous to both the parties. Hence, employee voice essentially is the involvement of employees in the way an organisation operates (Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington & Ackers, 2004). As Wilkinson et al. (2004) argue, a workforce empowered by employee voice mechanisms will encourage employees to actively give suggestions, submit ideas and raise questions. Such organisations will boast a culture where employees are listened to rather than just communicated with, and are also

involved and have an influence in the decision-making process. This is seen to be beneficial for the organisation, as employees will feel empowered in the workplace, and thereby increase their motivation, commitment and, subsequently, organisational performance (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000; Gollan 2005; Schuler and Jackson, 1987).

1.4 Determinants of Employee Voice

Employee voice can be explored from different perspectives. For example, one of the ways by which employee voice can be expressed collectively in an organisation is through the presence of unions. Union voice is often referred to as collective voice or indirect voice (Marginson et al., 2010) as it involves a third-party taking on a representative role and voicing employees' concerns to management. Evidence suggests that individual employees are less likely to voice their concerns to management for fear of being penalised (Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Benson & Brown, 2010; Bryson & Freeman, 2007). Indirect voice can occur through statutory representative arrangements, including union and non-union bargaining structures, joint consultative committees and company councils (Ferner, 1997; Benson, 2000; Marginson et al., 2010). Direct voice involves a direct two-way communication and involvement between managers and the workforce without a third-party (Benson 2000; Marginson et al., 2010). Direct voice can be present through team briefings, quality circles and town hall meetings between managers and employees (Marginson et al., 2010).

The employee involvement policy dimensions that is collective, direct, indirect and minimal (Tüselmann, McDonald and Thorpe, 2006) lead to four broad EV approaches (Guest and Conway, 1999; Lavelle et al., 2010). The collective dimension can be classified as an indirect approach to EV. It can be argued that the indirect approach is the traditional collective approach to employee voice and mainly encompasses union and non-union channels of third-party representation (Marginson et al., 2010). MNEs that follow this approach possess mainly indirect dimensions to employee involvement. They possess slight traces of some direct dimensions, for example quality circles or team briefings; however, indirect dimensions are most dominant (Lavelle et al., 2010; Tüselmann et al., 2006). Direct approaches of employee voice such as two-way mechanisms of employee involvement and communication (Marginson et al., 2010) incorporate the direct dimension of EV where direct voice structures are more dominant.

Lavelle et al. (2010) adopted the model developed by Tüselmann et al. (2006), which focuses on employee relations to explore the direct, indirect, minimalist and dualistic approaches to EV. This thesis draws upon the work of Lavelle et al. (2010) and explores these four approaches to EV.

Organisations might not use the same practices for all employees. For example, different groups of employees can possess knowledge, skills and capabilities that differ in importance to the organisation's competitiveness, and thus the HR practices used to manage these employees are likely to differ (Jackson et al, 1989). Organisations can have a segmented labour force and hence manage different employee groups differently

with a ‘high road’ approach to some groups and a ‘low road’ approach to others (Lepak & Snell, 1999; Tüselmann et al., 2006). For example, an organisation might adopt a minimalist EV approach to manage its blue-collar workers. Hence the four facets of EV – the direct, indirect, minimalist and dualist voices – can have a presence in MNEs either individually or as a combination, depending on the type of employees being managed (Lavelle et al., 2010). It is not the aim of the thesis to examine if companies have different practices across work groups, only the LOG.

The literature suggests that EV can have a number of benefits for the organisation as there is evidence that EV is positively related to improved job behaviours, industrial relations climate, enhanced organisational commitment, and ultimately improved individual and organisational performance (Wood & Wall, 2007; Dundon et al., 2004). EV has also been associated with high levels of employee empowerment and motivation (Davis and Lansbury, 1996). Evidence suggests that providing employees with a voice through both direct and indirect mechanisms can also minimise industrial conflict, improve management/employee communication and enhance employee retention (Wood and Wall, 2007). Thus, it can be argued that the presence of EV is beneficial for MNEs to improve their organisational effectiveness.

1.5 Union Presence

Cregan, Bartram and Stanton (2009) suggest that EV can be associated with trade union presence and representation. Industrial relations traditions and legal regulations differ

across countries and thus it is important to understand that these can influence the role that unions play in an MNE (Botero, Djankov, La Porta, Silanes & Shleifer, 2004). The primary aim of unions in a developed economy is to bargain for improved working conditions and terms of employment for their members (Crouch, 1982). Thus, when there is union presence management prerogative is curtailed. Union presence can be very important for employees; as Freeman and Medoff (1984) argue, the collective employee voice is superior to individual employee voice because of collective and majority based decision-making. In other words, unions give individuals more power.

The presence of trade unions also plays an important role in the development of the character of people management techniques and can impact upon HRM practices such as performance appraisal as well as grievance and disciplinary procedures (Brown & Heywood 2005; Brown, Hyatt & Benson, 2010). The industrial relations literature has often associated EV with unions (Freeman, Boxall and Haynes, 2007; Haynes, Boxall & Macky, 2005). For MNEs, the extent of union presence in a company can shape their employment relations practices and make them similar to the local firms in the country of operation (Rodwell and Teo, 1999).

Union voice can also be beneficial for the organisation in that collective voice is linked with the representation of employees in an organisation (Hirschman, 1970). This collective union voice can foster efficiency and productivity within the employees of the organisation as employers only have to deal with one body and problems can be resolved. Furthermore, Freeman and Medoff (1984) argue that by having a collective

voice in their dealings with management, employees are more likely to be loyal to the firm and stay with the organisation rather than quit their jobs.

Kochan and Osterman (1994) suggest that trade union presence will have an effect upon the types of EV mechanisms used by an organisation. For example in regard to information sharing, US research shows that organisations are more likely to share information when a union is recognised and there is a lot more uniformity in its content (Kleiner & Bouillon, 1987). Also, as collective voice in an organisation is often expressed through unions it can be expected that having not only union presence but also a higher union density in organisations will mean that the indirect voice channel will dominate (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington & Ackers; 2004). However according to Bryson (2004), employees perceive management to be more responsive when the voice mechanisms provided are more direct and non-union. Furthermore, Guest (1997) suggests that when management follows direct approaches and involves employees through consultation and communication as well as utilising soft HRM techniques such as flexibility and teamwork, the result is committed employees and improved performance.

1.6 Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Over the past twenty years, evidence suggests that SHRM has impacted on organisational performance (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Purcell, 2003; Lau & Ngo, 2004; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Stanton, Young, Bartram & Leggat, 2010). Armstrong (2011, p.62) defines SHRM as being “an approach to managing people that deals with

how the organisation's goals will be achieved through its human resources (HR) by means of integrated HR strategies, policies and practices." It is based on a fundamental proposition that the human resources of an organisation play a strategic role in its success. In other words, Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) explicitly links HRM practices with the strategic management processes of the organisation and emphasises coordination and congruence among the various human resource management practices (Schuler & Jackson, 1987; Wright & McMahan, 1992).

Additionally, a SHRM approach embraces a long-term strategic orientation to the management of workers within an organisation (Boxall & Purcell, 2008). It is "concerned with strategic choices associated with the organization of work and the use of labor in firms" (Boxall & Purcell, 2008, p. 58). Boxall and Purcell (2003) argue that SHRM can be used by organisations to generate capabilities by ensuring that the organisation has the skilled and internally motivated employees required to achieve objectives and superior organisational performance. Furthermore, organisations that utilise a 'soft' strategic human resource management approach produce internally motivated workers; this improves the productivity and profitability of the organisation (Delery & Doty 1996).

According to Wright (2005), with greater competition between firms and need for continuous improvement there has been an increasing interest in SHRM, which has facilitated the development of approaches such as employee involvement and participation in managing the organisation's human resources. There has also been an emphasis on combining the HRM functions with the business strategy of the

organisation, which has caused the SHRM function to evolve and become more sophisticated over time (Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade & Drake, 2009). In particular, there has been a focus on direct EV and involving employees in the decision-making in the workplace and giving them empowerment over their work (Dundon et al., 2004). This has helped organisations gain a competitive advantage by providing flexibility and promoting creativity within the HR function in line with the organisation's strategic direction, leading to improved organisational performance (Wei, 2006; Boxall, Purcell & Wright, 2007).

With the increasing sophistication of SHRM, organisations are more likely to involve employees directly and have meetings between line managers and their staff as key components of their employee involvement strategies (Dundon et al., 2004; Macky & Boxall, 2007). As Dundon et al. (2004) argue, there has been a significant growth in HRM techniques as union representation declines in developed economies and there is an increased focus on direct EV. Furthermore, there is also evidence that increased recognition of SHRM, with its focus on a more direct employment relationship, is contributing to minimising third-party intervention in the employment relationship, especially union representation in Australia (Peetz, 2006). This thesis aims to examine the impact and influence of a SHRM approach on foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia that adopt EV.

1.7 Union Presence and SHRM Approach

Dundon et al. (2004) argue that in countries where there has been a decline in trade

union representative mechanisms there has also been a significant increase in non-union representative voice – for example, joint consultation committees (JCCs) – and direct employee involvement mechanisms. Although, there has been a substantial decline in union membership and union density in recent years in industrialised countries (Visser, 2006), in Australia the decline has been extremely precipitous as union density fell from 41 percent in 1990 to 18 percent in 2011 (ABS 2011). However, the decline in aggregate union density in Australia is considerably uneven in union membership and influence and union presence is still quite significant across various sectors (Benson & Brown 2010). For example, 43 per cent of employees in the public sector were members of unions in 2011 while only 12 per cent were union members in the private sector (ABS 2011). Some industries still retain high-density rates for example 39 per cent in education and training and 35 per cent in public administration (ABS 2011).

In Australia, even if there is no union presence in an organisation, the Fair Work Act (2009) still legally requires management to bargain in “good faith”. According to Cooper (2010), good faith bargaining is a process of information sharing, employee engagement and negotiation, which require consultation with employees. The bargaining in good faith provisions under the Fair Work Act (2009) make it easier for unions to engage in collective bargaining and seek the assistance of the Fair Work Commission if employers are not bargaining in good faith.

Furthermore, organisations must comply with the Fair Work legislation and other underlying awards and agreements, which require employees to be informed and

consulted in processes related to grievance settlement and workplace change. This forces organisations to introduce processes around information sharing, consultation and enforcement of workplace conditions (Burgess, French & Strachan, 2009). Organisations also need to meet statutory arrangements and other legislation governing information sharing with employees in the workplace, for example, occupational health and safety, anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity (French et al., 2009). On the other hand with an increased focus on SHRM, many MNEs are introducing practices that provide employers and employees with freedom and flexibility to communicate with each other and make workplace decisions, which has given a boost to direct voice and workplace consultative mechanisms (Burgess & McDonald 2003).

It is important to focus on the relationship between union presence and a SHRM approach, as this thesis aims to understand the influence of these two factors on the facets of EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Although trade unions have traditionally been considered hostile towards managerial initiatives, another body of literature advocates that trade unions can be partners of management and encourage a SHRM approach in organisations (Cregan & Bartram, 2003). Alder, Goldoftas & Levine, (1997) suggest that some unions are adopting initiatives to work in conjunction with HRM. Hence, MNEs that follow a SHRM approach may also have to take into account union presence and hence might utilise a complete range of both direct and indirect EV mechanisms (e.g., a dualistic approach). On the contrary, other evidence suggests that many organisations have changed their focus towards more individualistic practices through the use of SHRM and a trend towards minimising trade union presence (Blyton & Turnbull 1992; Purcell, 1993; Deery, 1995).

1.8 Australian Context

Australia has a distinctive business environment and over the last thirty years the industrial relations (IR) system and legislative context has evolved considerably and gone through various waves of reform. There is a strong presence of the world's largest MNEs in Australia and foreign-owned MNEs play a significant role in contributing to the economy (McDonnell et al., 2011). Australia has a long tradition of legal regulation of employment conditions through a third-party tribunal system dominated by a strong trade union presence (Holland et al., 2009). This sets it apart from many countries, including other Anglo-Saxon countries. Australia's proximity to Asia makes it an important country to research because of the significant number of Asian-owned MNEs. Since the early 1980s, however, unions in Australia – as in many other western countries – have been faced with declining membership (Peetz 1990; Cregan, Johnston & Bartram 1998).

Unions have been an important component of the Australian industrial relations system as the system was traditionally characterised by centralised and third-party institutional arrangements in which trade unions played a strong role (Lansbury & Bamber, 1998). However, the Australian industrial relations system under the Labor Government led by Prime Minister (PM) Bob Hawke from 1983 to 1991 and Paul Keating from 1991 to 1996 shifted from a highly centralised system based of compulsory conciliation and arbitration to a more decentralised approach of bargaining at the enterprise level (Lansbury & Bamber, 1998). In 1996 the Liberal-National Coalition government under

PM John Howard introduced the Workplace Relations Act (WRA) 1996 (Cth), which was focused on reducing the influence of unions and encouraging employers and employees to have a more direct relationship (Pyman et al 2006). Hence bargaining between employers and employees could be conducted directly with the inclusion of direct and non-union voice structures such as “(i) non-union certified agreements between an employer and a valid majority of employees, and (ii) Australian Workplace Agreements, which constitute individual agreements between an employer and an employee” (Pyman et al 2006, p. 546). According to Pyman et al (2006), overall the legislative amendments contained in the WRA 1996 (Cth) were radical and placed less strict requirements on employers to bargain with unions. In Australia, trade union density has declined from 41 per cent in 1990 to less than 20 per cent of the workforce in 2011, opening up greater opportunity for the introduction of direct voice mechanisms (ABS 2011).

A number of reasons have been identified for the decline of trade unions internationally and also in Australia. First, the restructuring of industry in Australia saw a decline in the manufacturing industry and a growth in the service industry. There was also a decline in larger organisations and a growth in small business and work structures, which has greatly contributed to the decline of unions. Second, there has been a growth of various forms of non-standard waged work including a temporary and casual workforce (Cregan, Johnston & Bartram 1998; Campbell, 2005; Peetz, 2006). According to Campbell (2005), temporary work is an umbrella term that covers a variety of forms of wage labour such as seasonal employment, casual employment, employment with temporary agencies and also part-time fixed term contracts. Non standard workers often

work in non –traditional unionized sectors like services and are generally fearful of unions. Unions have also often neglected these employment types and have achieved little advancement in organizing them (Keizer, 2013).

Standing (1999) argues that a growth in a non-standard workforce has been one of the reasons for labour market fragmentation. This has resulted in trade unions defending the interests of and representing employees with a permanent employment contract while excluding or neglecting temporary workers (Delsen, 1995). Standing (2011) further states that unions have been argued to identify with and represent the standard forms of employment of full time and continuous employment. Hence, the growth in non standard employment can be attributed as one of the causes for the decline in trade union membership and influence in Australia.

The decline in union membership in Australia can thirdly be attributed to the legislative changes that occurred since the passing of the WRA (1996) (Cth) by the Federal Coalition government. The changes continued and there was a shift towards individual bargaining associated with the WorkChoices legislation in 2006, which boosted managerial prerogative (Sappey, Burgess & Lyons, 2006). These legislative changes under the Howard government, withdrew traditional support for unions making it more difficult for unions to represent their members and easier for managers to oppose unions (Bray, Waring & Cooper, 2009)

Finally, it can be argued that the response of unions themselves to membership decline has contributed to the current situation in that union policy has been slow to adapt to

new challenges (Peetz, 2006).

At the same time in developed economies there has been an increased focus on direct EV (Dundon et al., 2004). Hence it can be argued that as union membership declined in Australia, and direct forms of EV gained impetus, HRM has become more sophisticated and this has contributed to minimising third-party intervention (Peetz, 2006). This has given importance to direct avenues of EV such as an increase in direct communication between managers and employees (Dundon et al, 2004; Millward et al, 2000).

1.9 Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) in Australia

Multinational enterprises are an important and growing component of the Australian economy. They are critical to Australia in terms of their contribution to employment, investment, research and development and trade (McDonnell, Russell, Sablok, Stanton, Burgess & Bartram, 2011). Johnston and Menguc (2007) argue that Australia is a popular location for MNEs as it is a politically stable country, is close to Asia and has a favourable business environment. Foreign enterprises from emerging economies such as China own a big share of Australia's vast natural resources (McDonnell et al., 2011).

Australia has a number of features that highlight the value of a study of employee voice practices of MNEs. First, as a result of the historical developments and legislative changes the employment relation's context and business environment in Australia is constantly evolving (McGraw & Harley 2003). Second, despite being a relatively small country compared to the United States (US) or United Kingdom (UK), with a

population of around 22 million, the Australian economy is one of the largest capitalist economies in the world with a GDP of 1.379 trillion in 2011 (ABS, 2012). Third, the location of Australia in relation to Asia has seen it become a growing market for Asian and Indian-owned MNEs to invest here (McDonnell et al., 2011). Fourth, MNEs in Australia can be channels for the diffusion of innovative employment relations (ER) practices and ideas leading to organisational development in Australian-based subsidiaries (Marginson & Meardi, 2010, McDonnell et al., 2011). Although these issues are crucial for Australia, there is a lack of empirical research that explores employee voice (Pyman et al., 2006, Gollan, 2005). There has also been very limited research in Australia that explores the four facets of EV in depth from a broad SHRM as well as a union perspective. This thesis aims to explore these issues using a sample of 171 foreign-owned multinational enterprises (MNEs).

1.10 Method

The challenge is addressed using quantitative data from foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. This study is part of a much larger international project exploring HRM and employment relations practices by leading scholars in the UK, Canada, Ireland, Spain, Singapore, Argentina, Norway, Denmark and Mexico. In order to examine EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia, the data was drawn from a large-scale survey conducted between 2009 and 2011. Senior HR managers of both foreign-owned and Australian MNEs were questioned through in-depth structured interviews.

First, these interviews sought to understand the use and character of EV practices of foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Second, they sought to assess the impact of the SHRM approach of the company and union presence within the company on the use and character of these EV practices. Third, they sought to identify any other characteristics of MNEs that influence EV practices, such as the country of origin, year of establishment, employment size, whether the company was introduced as a greenfield site and the company's SHRM international orientation. Lastly, the interviews particularly sought to determine the influence of the Australian institutional context on the EV practices that are the focus of this thesis, within the 171 foreign-owned companies in the survey. Frequencies and cross-tabulations were conducted to determine relationships between the variables. Cramér's V (CV) tests and binomial logistic regression analyses were also employed to test the model of the four employee voice archetypes.

1.11 Contribution to Theory

The contribution of this thesis to the IR and HRM management literature is significant. First, there is a strong presence of MNEs in Australia and MNEs play a significant role in contributing to the gross domestic product (GDP) in various industries such as mining and retail (McDonnell et al., 2011). Royle (1999) suggests that in many cases MNEs can reform the HRM practices in subsidiaries. However there is a lack of research on EV practices, SHRM approach and union presence in foreign-owned MNEs operating in the Australian institutional context. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature. Second, the Australian context is unique and despite the importance of MNEs

in Australia there is limited research on EV practices in MNEs that utilises a representative database (McDonnell et al., 2011). Additionally, the research that exists is often focused on specific industries and does not broadly cover all industries (e.g. Markey, 2007). Thus this thesis closes this research gap, as the systematic large-scale data set this thesis utilises will be a benchmark of MNE employee voice practices for future studies. The focus on employee voice will primarily aid in higher-level research and assist academics to explore the concept further. Third, evidence suggests that Australia has a long tradition of legal regulation of employment conditions through a third-party tribunal system dominated by a strong trade union presence (Holland et al., 2009). There have been various legislative changes in Australia since the passing of the WRA in 1996 with growing issues as to whether declining trade union density and decentralisation of collective bargaining are creating opportunities for more direct employer-employee relationships (Holland et al., 2009). This thesis sheds light on this significant subject. Fourth, this thesis will utilise the Lavelle et al. (2010) model of EV and further develop this framework to understand the impact of SHRM and union presence on EV. Overall, this thesis aims to make a novel and innovative contribution to theory.

1.12 Summary

This chapter explored the aims and objectives of this thesis and also identified the research questions this thesis presents. In particular it introduced the key concepts of employee voice outlining the four facets of direct, indirect minimalist and dualist EV. Furthermore, this chapter emphasised the importance of both a trade union presence and

a SHRM approach. It shed light on the Australian context with a brief history of the Australian IR system and discussed the importance of MNEs in Australia. Lastly the methods used to answer the research questions were identified along with the key contributions this thesis will make.

1.13 Outline

The thesis is organised in the following way. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive theoretical and empirical survey of EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. It focuses on the strategic human resource management (SHRM) approach and union presence along with their associations to EV. The importance of MNEs and the global mindset as well as the institutional theory and varieties of capitalism are discussed. Chapter Two also draws together the theory to create a conceptual and theoretical framework and provides a detailed description of the model that this thesis will use in order to answer the research questions. Chapter Three will cast light upon the Australian institutional context focusing on MNEs. It will also discuss predictor variables such as the country of origin, presence of a greenfield site and a SHRM international orientation. Some control variables that will be utilised in this study – such as industry, date of establishment of MNEs' Australian operations and employment size – are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter Three also presents the propositions that this thesis aims to address in order to answer the research questions. Chapter Four outlines and explains the methods that will be used to answer the research questions. Chapter Five presents an overview of the findings of this thesis, particularly the descriptive statistics. Chapter Six further investigates the hypothesis and the binomial logistic regression

analysis for the four facets of employee voice. Finally, Chapter Seven provides a discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Employee Voice, Related theory & Research Models

2.1 Introduction

This thesis examines employee voice in unionised and non-unionised environments with a particular focus on foreign-owned multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating in Australia. Chapter One provided an overview of the aims and objectives of this thesis and identified the research questions and the key concepts that will be explored. Chapter Two provides a more in-depth review and analysis of the literature relating to these key concepts. This chapter is structured as follows. Section 2.2 provides an in-depth discussion of employee voice examining theoretical and empirical evidence of how the literature on EV has evolved. This section focuses on a deeper exploration of EV and also outlines the role of trade unions and a SHRM approach to employee participation. Section 2.3 provides a discussion on the role of MNE. To gain a deeper understanding the following sections explore the global mindset (2.3.1), the institutional perspective and varieties of capitalism (2.3.2). Section 2.4 presents a discussion on the various models that exists in understanding EV. Section 2.4.1 presents the model that is utilized in this thesis. Finally, a summary is presented.

2.2 Understanding Employee Voice

2.2.1 Employee Involvement & Participation

Employee participation and involvement have received increased attention over recent years in both the HRM and industrial relations (IR) literature and from a variety of perspectives (Budd, Gollen & Wilkinson 2010; Marginson et al. 2010; Lavelle et al., 2010; Markey & Townsend, 2013). Budd et al (2010) suggest that there is nothing new in giving employees a say in their day-to-day work and claim that examples of employee involvement can be traced back from ancient Rome, through nineteenth-century Germany to the present day. However, the forms of employee involvement and the reasoning behind their use have become more sophisticated over time (Lawler, 1999; Budd et al., 2010; Marginson et al., 2010; Lavelle et al., 2010). Employee involvement can be defined as any workplace process that “allows employees to exert some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work” (Strauss 1998, p. 15). Similarly, participation can be defined as a process allowing employees to have an influence over decision-making and sharing this autonomy at all levels in the organisation (Wagner & Gooding 1987). Also, involvement can be viewed as a form of employee participation, as through involvement employees can have an input and influence over decision-making. These decisions can range from high-level strategic decisions to basic day-to-day decisions that affect their jobs (Lawler, 1986, 1994). According to Lawler (1999) the core of employee involvement means shifting decision-making power downward in an organisation. These definitions highlight the fact that decision-making in companies could be influenced both by formal consultative

mechanisms or more informal direct communication with employees (Hyman & Mason, 1995).

Black & Gregersen (1997) conceptualise participative decision-making in the workplace into six key dimensions: rational, structure, form, decision issues, degree of involvement and the decision process. The rational dimension of involvement is further classified into “humanistic” or “democratic” (Black & Gregersen, 1997; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). This means that people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives and assumes that individuals are capable of participating intelligently in decision-making (Black & Gregersen, 1997). The second dimension focuses on the structure of the involvement and participative decision-making process. This can be either formal (clear rules and procedures on who participates in what kind of decisions and how participation occurs) or informal (very few explicit rules on who participates, what kind of decisions are open and how decision-making occurs) (Black & Gregersen, 1997). The third dimension is the form of involvement, which can either be direct or indirect. Direct involvement refers to employees being personally involved and part of the decision-making process. Indirect involvement on the other hand refers to third parties who are elected or chosen by employees to represent them in the decision-making process, for example trade union representation. The fourth dimension involves decision issues such as “work and task design, working conditions, strategy issues, and capital distribution and investment issues” (Black & Gregersen 1997, p. 861). The fifth dimension refers to the degree of employee involvement in the organisation. This can be determined on a range of factors. These include whether previous information is provided to employees regarding a decision or not, whether employees provide inputs

regarding their own opinions, whether employee views are taken into consideration when the decision is being made, whether employees have the power to veto a decision and whether employees have full discretion in terms of making a decision. Lastly, the process of decision-making is another important dimension in employee involvement and participative decision-making (Black & Gregersen, 1997). The process comprises identification of the problem, generating alternatives, choosing solutions, organising implementation and evaluation.

2.2.2 Employee Voice (EV)

Employee participation and involvement is often captured under the umbrella of EV which is a concept often used in the academic literature in both HRM and industrial relations (Beardwell, 1998; Dundon et al., 2004; Benson, 2000). Various terms have been used by academics to explain employee voice, including empowerment, engagement, involvement and participation (Budd et al., 2010; Parks, 1995). This thesis focuses on this generic term and explores the different mechanisms that classify employee voice. In simple terms EV can be defined as the extent of freedom granted to employees at their workplace to have an influence on work-related activities and be involved in the decision-making process (Markey & Hodgkinson, 2003; Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). This can include both working conditions and work processes (Strauss, 1998). EV has been viewed differently under the HRM and IR body of literature. For example Wilkinson et al. (2004) argue that over the years there has been profound interest in the notion of EV, both from those looking for higher levels of organisational performance and from those desiring better systems of employee representation. The

HR domain focuses on the benefits and necessity of EV to improve organisational performance, whereas the IR literature focuses on the function of EV to express employee dissatisfaction.

Traditionally, trade unions have often been the funnel of EV in the workplace. Freeman & Medoff (1984) argue that both the company and employee need to have a voice mechanism and unions are often seen as the best agents to provide this voice as they are external and independent of the employer. Hence EV is a means of providing employees with rights and justice in the employment relationship (McCabe & Lewin, 1992). The IR literature commonly focuses on trade unions as a form of EV for employees because unions are viewed as an independent channel and they are specifically concerned with the wages and conditions of employment (Benson, 2000).

However, union representation has not been the exclusive means of communication and participation at the workplace (Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Pyman et al., 2006). EV in an organisation can be attained through various forms. According to Bryson, Gomez, Kretschmer and Willman, (2007) EV can be attained formally or informally as well as through direct or representative (i.e. through unions) means. It can also be present through management techniques or a dual means where both union voice and management-led voice are present. Collective forms of employee voice involving unions are known as indirect consultative voice while non-union voice is described as direct consultative voice (Marginson et al.; 2010; Benson, 2010). Indirect consultative voice occurs through statutory representative arrangements, including union structures, and extends to more structural features in companies such as joint consultative

committees (JCCs), however it can also occur through non-union structures such as company councils (Marginson, et al., 2010; Benson, 2000; Dundon et al., 2004; Cregan & Brown, 2010). On the other hand, direct consultative voice mechanisms focus mainly on informal means of communication such as interactions between employers and employees, information sharing, quality circles, newsletters, suggestion schemes and employee feedback (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005; Marginson, et al., 2010; Dundon et al., 2004). According to Ferner (1997), direct channels of employee voice are likely to be more flexible and creative than indirect channels of consultative voice.

2.2.3 Advantages of Employee Voice (EV)

Wilkinson and Fay (2011) argue that providing a voice mechanism to employees offers many benefits to an organisation. EV has the potential to strengthen employee morale by impacting on employee engagement and creativity, which in turn enhances productivity in the workplace (Lepak et al., 2006; Malik, 2009). According to the expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964), human beings are motivated to accomplish something if they desire it and believe that they have the capability to achieve it, and also if it is achievable; hence, if managers apply this principle to employees, providing them with a voice and rewarding their hard work with things the employees value, this will motivate them. Past studies have also associated EV with improved organisational performance (Dundon et al., 2004; Green & Tsitsianis, 2005) and employee satisfaction (Bishop & Levine, 1999). EV is also a key ingredient of high performance work systems (HPWS) as evidence suggests that employee participation is positively related to improved performance, job behaviours, climate and organisational

commitment (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Wood & Wall, 2007; Cox et al., 2006; Lewin & Mitchell, 1992; Dundon et al., 2004; Pfeffer, 1998). Providing employees with a voice through direct and indirect mechanisms can also minimise conflict, improve communication between managers and employees, as there is greater trust, increased flexibility and efficiency, and improved staff retention (Macky & Boxall, 2007). Voice mechanisms can help to identify crucial problems and issues and also resolve them, making these mechanisms of great importance in an organisation (Brewster et al., 2007).

According to Boxall, Purcell and Wright (2007), EV is also a key feature of human resource management practice in that evidence suggests it encourages employee commitment and thus improves overall organisational performance. Purcell and Georgiades (2007) suggest that EV systems using a combination of direct and indirect forms of involvement have a strong association with greater organisational commitment. As mentioned earlier, EV practices are also associated with increasing employees' motivation by creating equity in an organisation; this perceived management benefit is a consistent theme in the HR literature (Adams, 2005; Budd, 2004).

2.2.4 Disadvantages of EV

EV can also have some disadvantages for both employees and employers. According to Cabrera, Ortega and Cabrera (2003) a lack of management support for EV mechanisms can contribute to diminishing the participatory climate in an organisation. Employees

question management motives and feel that management create an illusion of participation in order to achieve their own objectives (O'Donoghue, Stanton & Bartram, 2011). Furthermore, Milkman (1998) argues that there is a huge gap between the rhetoric of participation and reality in the workplace. However, this might be attributed to indifference among managers and employees rather than action; for example, the concept of participation is just not valued (Barhaim, 2002; O' Donoghue et al., 2011). Employers are also often distrustful of unions as employees can voice their opinions through union representation, which can potentially interfere with the employment relationship and limit managerial prerogative and control (Cregan et al., 2009; Marginson et al., 2010).

2.2.5 Employee Voice and Trade Unions

Direct communication and upward problem solving in an organisation are effectively focused towards direct EV, which exists through interactions between line managers and employees either informally or formally: for example, through written information, meetings and suggestion schemes (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005; Dundon et al., 2004). Representative participation, on the other hand focuses on the role of trade union representation and the relationship between managers and employees. This form of EV often exists through mechanisms such as JCCs – which can be union or non-union – as well as collective bargaining structures (Budd, Gollan & Wilkinson, 2010).

Freeman & Medoff (1984) argue that unions not only provide EV, but that the collective voice is also economically superior to individual voice because it is based on collective, majority-based decision-making. Unions are viewed as an independent channel and are specifically concerned with the pay and conditions of employment (Benson, 2000). Hence, by having a collective voice through unions, employees are in a stronger bargaining position to negotiate their working conditions. Research shows that organisations are more likely to share information and there is a lot more uniformity in its content when a union is recognised (Kleiner & Bouillon, 1987). However, the presence of EV through unions can also be problematic. As Benson and Brown (2010, p. 81) argue, “not all unions have an equal capacity to represent members” due to different levels of union activity in workplaces. Second, it can no longer be affirmed that the only road for collective voice in organisations is through unions (Benson & Brown, 2010). Other forms of collective voice in an organisation include activities run by management such as project teams, joint consultation committees, and problem solving groups such as quality circles. It is important to note here that there can sometimes be a clash when EV is viewed from a HR discipline as compared to the IT dichotomy. For example the IT discipline would be skeptical of project teams and non union joint consultative committees as a form of collective EV because they are unlikely to fulfill the objective of voice as expressing employee dissatisfaction. Furthermore these forms are unlikely to consider employee concerns over working conditions and are not independent voice channels. Hence union and non union forms of EV can have different goals.

The value of non-union forms of collective voice is particularly clear in the case of participation in the work process (Dundon et al., 2004). From a trade union perspective, non-union collective EV strategies can be seen as attempts by management to substitute for unions or to speak directly to union members, thus undermining unions' activities and reducing their influence (Cregan & Brown, 2010; Fenwick & Olsen, 1986; Leana et al., 1992).

Evidence suggests that there has been a decline in indirect and representative employee voice mechanisms, particularly the presence of trade unions (Benson & Brown, 2010). As union influence declines, they are less able to extract information from management on key aspects of the business (Peccei et al., 2010). Furthermore, Budd et al. (2010) argue that the global decline in union membership has led to an increase in alternative voice mechanisms. Therefore, union decline and growth in direct forms of employee voice has raised debates regarding the legitimacy and functioning of alternative forms of EV (Benson & Brown, 2010; Gollan, 2007).

However, despite a worldwide decline in formal union structures in workplaces, the presence and influence of unions in organisations is considerable in some countries and varies across industrial sectors (Cregan & Brown, 2010). Union presence is still quite significant in northern European and Scandinavian countries. For example in Denmark, Sweden and Finland around 70 per cent of all employees are members of a union (Trade Union Membership, 2013). Moreover, in the UK, while overall union density in 2011 was reported at 26 per cent, public sector union density was reported at 56.5 per cent and unions had a presence in more than half of British workplaces (Department for

Business Innovation and Skills, 2011). Comparatively, in Australia the overall union density in 2012 was reported at 18 per cent and public sector union density was reported at 43 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Hence it is also possible that in many workplaces union influence is stronger than these figures suggest.

2.2.6 EV from a Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Perspective

The presence of SHRM practices in an organisation emphasises coordination or congruence among the various human resource management practices (Schuler & Jackson, 1987; Wright & McMahan, 1992). Such practices are seen to motivate workers by giving them an opportunity to contribute (Lepak et al., 2006), to empower employees by providing them with more information and a greater role in decision-making (Zacharatos et al., 2005), to improve job satisfaction and trust in management (Macky & Boxall, 2006) and create higher levels of perceived fairness (Guest, 1997). In turn, it is claimed that such practices lead to increased flexibility, improved efficiency, performance and productivity and help solve problems at the work unit level (McMahan et al., 1998; Malik, 2009; Brewster et al., 2007).

SHRM is generally perceived as a distinctive approach to managing people that seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce (Storey, 1995; Appleby & Mavin, 2000). Thus, when organisations focus on developing their employees, EV can be a key component in strategic human resource management (SHRM) practice. SHRM is also a long-term approach to managing the human resources of an organisation that involves combining

the HRM function with the business strategy of the organisation. Organisations can gain a competitive advantage by providing flexibility to the HR function to help achieve organisational goals (Gerhart, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Wei, 2006).

Within the SHRM literature, in recent years there has been a focus on empowerment for employees as well as teamwork with an increased focus on high performance work systems in organisations (Zacharatos et al., 2005). High performance work systems (HPWS) can also be referred to as high commitment (Arthur, 1992), high involvement (Lawler, 1992), flexible and alternative work practices (Godard, 2001a). HPWS can be defined as a systemic approach to human resources and organisational design that seek to strategically align the employee's attitudes and goals with the goals of the organisation. They also focus on increasing the autonomy and empowerment of employees and enhance their skills and incentives, which thereby increase employee motivation, commitment and subsequently organisational performance (Appelbaum, et al., 2000; Gollan, 2005; Harley, Allen & Sargent, 2007, Zaleska & de Menezes, 2007, Bartram et al., 2012).

The resource-based view (RBV) of the firm is a useful theory to understand the value of employee voice and SHRM in organisations (Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001; Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). RBV helps understand differences in organisational growth and performance from an organisational-level perspective (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Conner, 1991; Peteraf, 1993). According to the resource-based view organisations have different bundles of resources and capabilities and some firms from within the same industry may perform certain activities better than others based on these

resource differences (Wan et al., 2011). These unique resources and capabilities are difficult to transfer or obtain, as they might be rare and not easily imitable (Wan et al., 2011; Reed & Defillippi, 1990). The resource-based view is one perspective that can possibly provide an organisation with a sustainable competitive advantage. This is because employees or 'human resources' play a key role in the competitive advantage of an organisation, as they are the hardest to replicate. Cappelli and Singh (1992) argue that SHRM models that are based on best fit have assumptions that certain business strategies demand a distinctive set of attitudes and behaviours from employees and certain human resource policies produce distinctive responses from employees.

Furthermore, Cappelli and Singh (1992) stress it has been assumed that it is easier to rearrange complementary resources, given a choice of strategy, than it is to rearrange strategy given a set of resources, although empirical research states otherwise. Hence, these authors propose that the RBV could provide a rationale for why the human resources in an organisation can have implications for strategy formulation and implementation (Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001). Additionally, if an organisation's human resources make the difference to success, capturing the unique features and capabilities of that workforce is essential. Employee involvement and participation strategies can do this.

Hence, from a managerial perspective, employee involvement and participation practices consistently emerge as one of the key features in the strategic human resource management (SHRM) and high performance work practices literature (Huselid, 1995; Cook, 2001; Zacharatos et al., 2005; Lepak et al., 2006; Macky & Boxall, 2009,

Bartram et al., 2012). As argued previously, organisations that adopt a SHRM approach develop competitive advantages based on resources that are difficult to imitate and thus have an incentive to invest in these resources (Barney, 1991). Thus, organisations are likely to adopt high-involvement management practices for groups of employees viewed as “core” or strategically important to the business (Lepak & Snell, 1999; Doelgast, 2008). Thus, EV is linked with underlying concepts of participation and empowerment. Moreover, these concepts are embedded deeply into HPWS and SHRM literature (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boxall & Macky, 2007; Gollan, 2005; Yalabik, Chen, Lawler & Kim, 2008).

Furthermore, organisations that use SHRM are more likely to involve employees directly and have meetings between line managers and their staff as key components of their employee involvement strategies. Thus, the SHRM literature has also identified the key role of line managers in operationalising HRM practice (Purcell & Hutchinson 2007; Stanton et al., 2010). Hence Purcell and Hall (2012) argue that line managers are central actors in encouraging and responding to voice. Furthermore, it is argued that line managers play a critical role in the success of employee voice initiatives (Wilkinson, Townsend & Burgess, 2013; Townsend, 2013). Moreover, it can be argued that organisations that are non-union are more likely to use voice mechanisms that are derived from a traditional HR unitarist approach involving practices such as collective decision-making, sharing of information and participatory mechanisms such as quality circles, suggestion schemes and team meetings (Guest, 1999; Kochan, Katz & McKersie, 1994; Lawler, 1999). Verma and McKersie (1987) suggest that providing employees with a voice is an employer’s most determined effort to mobilise and directly

involve production employees in the corporate effort to strategically remain competitive in the marketplace.

Over the years, the SHRM focus in organisations has elevated the position of human resource function in organisational decision-making processes (Van Buren et al., 2011). The strategic choice an organisation makes has an impact on the employee and employer relationship. For example, if an organisation adopts a strategy of differentiation, employees may need to operate in a creative environment where teamwork and empowerment are the norm and employees may be viewed as a valuable asset deserving respect in the organisation (Legge, 2005). The strategic choice an organisation makes has had an effect on the human resource management function, which has become more sophisticated and strategic over the years (Hays & Kearney, 2001; Oakland & Oakland, 2001). Globalisation and the advancement of technology have challenged the field of SHRM, particularly in relation to balancing the needs of the organisation and the needs of employees.

According to Becker and Huselid (2006), the SHRM model is depicted by the relationship between an organisation's HR strategy, architecture and organisational performance. Becker and Huselid (2006) suggest that the HR architecture is made up of the systems, competencies, and employee performance behaviours that suggest the development and management of the firm's strategic human capital. Within the HR architecture, an organisation's HR system is its most important strategic asset because it is a source of value creation for the organisation. Furthermore it is one asset that is very difficult to imitate, as it can be deeply aligned with the organisation's strategy.

Hence, organisations need to align their HR architecture with the strategic direction of the organisation. This requires organisations to become innovators and implement a distinctive approach to managing their employees. Thus, it is important for organisations to have formal EV systems in place to assist with this and capture the ideas and creativity of employees (McMahan et al., 1998). With the help of EV and SHRM, organisations can focus on implementing strategies that can be crucial in the long run to improve the overall employee motivation and productivity (Malik, 2009).

It is also important to shed light on the HRM function and HR structures as these are crucial to SHRM and can also have an impact on EV in an organisation. The size of the HR department is crucial in determining the resources the organisation has devolved towards its employees, and can influence the HR practices and choice of EV mechanisms (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Harris, 2007). The main aim of the HR department is to meet the organisational needs of the company it represents and also meet the needs of the people employed by the organisation. The HR department comprises specialist staff members who deal with recruitment, dismissal and retention strategies including career development and promotion. It also looks after basic personnel functions such as training and wage administration (Brewster et al. 2006; Schuler et al., 2004). Ulrich (1997) developed a model that suggests that HR professionals should be equipped to focus on four key areas: acting as a strategic partner, an administrative expert, a change agent and an employee champion. First, as a strategic business partner the HR professional needs to align the HR plans of the company with its core business strategies. Second, the HR professional needs to act as

an administrative expert and eliminate excessive, unnecessary costs, improve efficiency and find ways to improve the current working of the organisation. Third, the HR professional needs to implement, support and even lead organisational change when required and hence act as a change agent. Lastly, the HR professional must listen, respond and determine means to provide employees with the resources to meet their changing demands and hence act as an employee champion (Ulrich, 1997).

The HR department also often manages the employee relations aspects for the company, particularly any bargaining and consultation with trade unions. Research suggests that an organisation's overall size can have an effect on the relative size of its HR department (Brewster et al. 2006). This means that larger organisations are more likely to devote more resources to administration and HR functions than smaller organisations (Parkinson, 1957). An HR professional will only be likely to perform the four functions as outlined by Ulrich (1997) if the organisation supports the HR function and devolves resources for its development and growth. Developments in the HR literature have raised questions about the size of the HR department. It is important to consider whether firms that carry out direct EV have smaller HR departments because most of the work is delegated to line managers. Likewise, would it mean that firms that are high users of indirect practices have larger HR departments because they have to deal with third parties such as trade unions and hence require much greater expertise?

Furthermore, another key development in the HR function is the use of HRIS. Technological advancements and the increased growth in information technology have particularly transformed key aspects of the HR function including recruitment, pay,

performance appraisal, and a range of employee services that have become automated (Bohlander & Snell, 2007). There has been a significant increase in the use of HRIS software, particularly in relation to the collection and analysis of employee information (Hussain, Wallace, & Cornelius, 2007; Ngai & Wat, 2006; Dery, Grant, Wiblen, 2009). The main purpose of HRIS in an organisation is to assist managers as well as employees. From the perspective of employee involvement managers can access employees' ideas and input in a fast and cost-effective way. For example, Pines, Donald and Lombardi (2012) suggest that employee involvement can be improved through direct approaches such as online surveys. Employee attitude surveys can summarise data and trends, which might require urgent management action. Modern HRIS systems include features of transaction processing systems, decision support systems and can even be an effective communication tool between employees and management (Kovach et al., 2002). It can be argued that organisations that make use of HRIS will be likely to give importance to HRM and engage in direct EV.

With the growth in HRIS, HR departments are able to be more strategic. One of the ways HR professionals can fulfill their duty as administrative experts (Ulrich, 1997) is by implementing shared HR services centres in organisations. Meijerink, Bondarouk and Looise (2013) argue that HR services centres are a practical way to manage HR as they can strategically align HR practices and help in cost reduction. Moreover, shared services centres can also increase efficiency and productivity and help the organisation achieve economies of scale by consolidating resources and restructuring processes (Farndale et al., 2009; Ulrich, 1995). Hence, with the growth in HRIS and shared HR

services centres, organisations have been able to devolve more resources and have a greater focus on strategy and on working directly with line managers.

2.3 Multinational Enterprises (MNE)

This thesis focuses on EV in foreign-owned MNEs as multinationals play an extremely important role in the international arena. According to Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989, p. 2), an MNE is an entity that “has substantial direct investment in foreign countries and actively manages those operations and regards them as integral parts of the organization both strategically and organizationally”. There are approximately 82,000 MNEs in the world, in excess of 810,000 subsidiaries, employing approximately 77 million and accounting for one third of total trade (UNCTAD, 2010).

According to Bartlett, Ghoshal and Birkinshaw (1995, p.5) “about 85 percent of the world’s automobiles, 70 percent of computers, 35 percent of toothpaste and 65 percent of soft drinks are produced and marketed by MNEs”. MNEs can also be viewed as the main vehicle of international knowledge and technology transfer (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989). Considering the stresses of competitive pressures on MNEs, they have been viewed as leaders of the “best practice” management approaches across the international operations (Edwards et al., 2007). Furthermore, MNEs have significant effects on employment practices in the contexts in which they operate (Gunnigle et al., 2006; Edwards & Walsh, 2008).

Hence, in the study of the transfer of HR policies and practices, particularly EV practices from home to host countries, an important question is the degree to which the MNEs are creative in terms of adapting either home country practices or host country practices, or perhaps choosing a combination of both (Edwards & Kuruvilla, 2005). The host country environment particularly influences the EV practices of an MNE (Marginson et al., 2008). However, MNEs operate in a more complex context and clusters of practices are likely to emerge depending on a range of factors that include the institutional contexts: for example, the regulatory framework, trade union presence and established practices that might be quite different between host and home country (Brewster et al., 2006).

This section begins by outlining the global mindset of MNEs and exploring how this has evolved over time. It moves on to focus on theoretical approaches that can be used to analyse EV in MNEs, the institutional perspective and varieties of capitalist approach and how they link with the global mindset. Finally, this section explores the role of country of origin and various organisational factors such as the nature of the industry, employment size of the company, date of establishment of the company, and mode of entry of the company into Australia – that is, a greenfield site. I also explore some key aspects of SHRM practices that I consider useful in shaping the MNEs international HR strategy and employee voice mechanisms. These are Australian HR representation at the international level and shared HR services.

2.3.1 Global Mindset

The global mindset can be defined as a combination of awareness and openness to the diversity of cultures and markets with an inclination and capability for diversity integration (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). Hence a key underlying focus of the global mindset is the ability to be able to accept and cope with cultural diversity in an organisation (Evans et al., 2002). It can help organisations become superior leaders globally, as organisations that adopt a global mindset can understand other cultures and countries better than those who do not (Boacigiller et al., 2004).

As MNEs cross international borders and step into new markets, opportunities also bring challenges: managing strategy, organisation, and operations are inherently more complicated, diverse and uncertain at the global level (Bartlett et al., 1995). MNEs must be competitive and meet the needs of their stakeholders while dealing with the pressures of the turbulent environment (Papulova & Papulova, 2006). They need to decide what strategy they are going to adopt when making the transition into the new country (Taylor, Beechler & Napiear, 1996). It can be extremely challenging for MNEs to develop global strategies considering the conflicting demands the ever-changing international environment places on them (Taylor, Beechler & Napiear, 1996; Schuler, Dowling & De Cieri, 1993). Furthermore, the issue of global-local tension in management practices has dominated research on MNEs and employment relations practices – all MNEs are forced to deal with this dilemma (Edwards & Kuruvilla, 2005; Edwards et al., 2013).

The well-known typology developed by Heenan and Perlmutter (1979) divides global management strategies into four different categories: the international orientation of the firm can be classified as ethnocentric, polycentric, regiocentric and geocentric. According to Heenan and Perlmutter (1979), an ethnocentric approach to internationalisation will centralise the parent company's control in decision-making and staffing subsidiaries. The polycentric approach encompasses the MNE's host country nationals managing subsidiaries with some coordination from headquarters on the operations of the subsidiary. Host country nationals have the management control over foreign subsidiaries of organisations that adopt a polycentric approach. Similar to the polycentric approach is the regiocentric approach, in which host country and third country nationals are recruited, selected and trained on a regional basis. Lastly, the geocentric approach is adopted by MNEs that seek to integrate all their foreign subsidiaries and also maintain a worldwide corporate culture. MNEs that adopt a geocentric strategy recruit the best person for the job for their worldwide operations irrespective of nationality. However, researchers argue that these orientations, with the exception of the geocentric strategy, represent evolutionary stages in the development of an MNE (De Cieri et al., 1998).

The analytical framework developed by Heenan and Perlmutter (1979) is valuable in understanding different approaches an MNE can adopt to determine its strategic direction when it approaches international markets. Dowling et al. (1994) suggest that this typology is often referred to as a MNE's international staffing orientation with specific regard to implications for IHRM.

These four strategies also correspond to the domestic, international, multinational and global phases in the MNE lifecycle literature (Milliman et al., 1991). An MNE's strategic direction can also be influenced by its situation in the lifecycle; Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) provide the most extensive typology of four distinct strategies: multidomestic, international, global and transnational. The multidomestic strategy is based on awareness of the market's local needs. This strategy focuses on low pressures for integration with the parent company's strategy and high pressures for differentiation. According to Porter (1985, p. 36) an organisation can be viewed as a collection of "activities that are performed to design, produce, market, deliver, and support its product", and these activities comprise a full range of activities that are required to bring the product into existence (Kaplinsky, 2000). Thus organisations' value chain activities are made up of both primary and support activities and can be a key source of competitive advantage (Porter, 1985; Oyson, 2011). The international strategy focuses on the expertise of the home country and thus most of the value chain activities are at the headquarters. Almond (2011) argues that an organisation can gain various competitive advantages at several levels – such as particular business units or subsidiaries – and not just the global firm as a whole. These advantages can be context-specific: they involve resources that are embedded in the environment of the local or national operations to an extent that it is extremely difficult and uneconomical to recreate them at any other location in the MNE. Other resources are argued to be context-generalisable: the transfer of the resource cross-nationally is possible and desirable (Almond, 2011). For example, value chain activities can sometimes be based at the headquarters, and they could be difficult to replicate or transfer.

The international strategy focuses on high pressures for integration and low pressures for differentiation. The global strategy is one where the subsidiaries of the organisation are highly linked to the headquarters and most of the value chain activities are based at the home country and later moved to the subsidiaries. This strategy places low pressure for integration and low pressure for differentiation. Lastly, the transnational strategy focuses on local responsiveness and integration with the headquarters and other subsidiaries. The value chain activities are developed and dispersed within the entire network. Thus, these frameworks and typologies can help to determine which strategic outlook MNEs adopt when managing their overseas subsidiaries within the ever-changing environment. They also help MNEs achieve the right balance between global integration and global diffusion. Furthermore, the strategic choices MNEs adopt can be crucial in the long run, particularly for organisational practices (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989).

Building on the work of Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989), Taylor, Beechler and Napier (1996) also identify three generic strategic international human resource management orientations in MNEs: the adaptive, exportive and integrative strategies. The adaptive orientation means an MNE will adapt to the local environment and replicate local practices by hiring managers locally who have a good understanding of the local systems and procedures. This orientation is an extension of the polycentric approach developed by Heenan and Perlmutter (1979). The exportive orientation refers to a system in which the MNE directly transfers the HR system from its home country to the host country. This strategic international human resource management orientation builds from Heenan and Perlmutter (1979) and is consistent with the ethnocentric

approach to MNE management. Lastly, the integrative approach is developed from the work done by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) and follows the best practice approach to HRM (Taylor et al., 1996). This approach focuses on global integration as well as local adaptation. The integrative orientation goes broader than the geocentric approach (Perlmutter & Heenan 1979; Taylor et al., 1996). As discussed, the understanding of a global mindset is particularly important when focussing on EV in foreign owned MNEs in Australia.

2.3.2 Institutional Perspective and Varieties of Capitalism

When focusing on MNEs it is important to understand the theoretical approaches that can be used to analyse EV in MNEs, particularly the institutional perspective. Institutional research that derives from the notion of national business systems has contributed towards understanding the embeddedness of MNEs in home and host country environments (Whitley, 1999; Almond & Ferner, 2006; Kristensen & Morgan, 2007; Almond, 2011). According to Suarez-Villa and Rama (1996), cultural embeddedness refers to the common values and ties among firms and their constituencies. Institutional perspective is an important component of research on MNEs as it provides a deep theoretical base to analyse critical issues and also looks at various levels of analysis that are imperative for research on MNEs (Djelic & Quack, 2003; Kostava et al., 2008). Institutionalism rejects economic explanations about firms, their strategy and structure and is concerned with how the social embeddedness of firms – particularly institutional contexts – shapes their structures and processes (Morgan & Kristensen, 2006).

According to Polanyi (1944), the economic activity in any country is strongly embedded in the rules and resources at a business community, regional or state level that determine organisational goals and the strategic choice of different management practices. When MNEs enter a host country they are faced with the national and workplace level institutions in the country, which can have a very significant effect on management decisions (Doelgast, 2008). Each country has its own national employment systems, which affect how work is governed in a range of settings. The early research on convergence posited that as countries liberalised their markets, developed institutions and became up to date with the latest technology, strategic business behaviour would become similar as people would embrace common values with regard to economic activity as well as working behaviour (England & Lee, 1974; Pascale & Maguire, 1980). On the contrary, Hofstede (1980) conducted research on divergence and emphasised that national culture – and not economic belief or technological growth – would continue to be the key force shaping the values, beliefs and managerial attitudes within a country.

Hence, MNEs are often faced with the convergence and divergence debate when adopting employment relations practice in foreign subsidiaries, since convergence is associated with technology, markets and multinational practices and divergence with culture and institutions (Giles, 2000; Katz & Darbshire, 2000). According to Edwards et al. (2013, p. 548), “Globalisation promotes both closer integration of the operations of MNCs across countries and more elaborate differentiation among countries, while the

interactions between the strategies of MNCs and national institutional influences are becoming increasingly complex”.

The national systems that govern employment can carry different features, which are institutionalised in management, training, bargaining and unemployment practices (Dobbin & Boychuk, 1999; Scott & Meyer, 1994). When MNEs develop their business strategies they need to beware of institutional pressures from regulatory agencies and business associations and respond to them effectively (Doelgast, 2008). One of the approaches developed by the institutional theorists is the Variety of Capitalism (VoC) approach.

According to Rafiqui (2010), the institutional perspective highlights the importance of institutions in shaping the landscape of capitalist societies, and also the ways in which variations in institutional settings can influence economic performance across nations through their effect on economic actions. The VoC approach is a dominant institutional approach (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Howell, 2003). This approach posits that the presence of appropriately organised and collaborated subsystems such as financial, labour market, training system and inter-firm relations increase the performance and comparative advantage of the firm (Hall & Soskice, 2001). When an MNE enters a host country it is faced with the home country effect: that is, the company is embedded in its home country institutional factors (Hall & Soskice, 2001). It is challenging for the MNE to adapt to a new country with different regulatory and labour market institutions. However, the VoC approach helps understand how MNEs behave and how the institutional structure of a particular political economy can provide certain advantages

to organisations for engaging in specific types of activities (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Howell, 2003; Iversen et al., 2000). Furthermore, Edwards et al. (2013, p. 550) suggest that with the varieties of capitalism perspective “the institutional embeddedness of economic activity and the complementary nature of institutions within countries create enduring national differences in management practices even in an age of globalization”.

Hall & Soskice (2001) argue that the level of technological specialisation of developed countries is determined by the VoC of those countries. The VoC approach is actor-centred where the political economy is viewed as a terrain populated around multiple actors who seek to advance their interests in a rational way by being strategically integrated with others (Hall & Soskice, 2001). The various actors can include the individual, organisations, producer groups or governments where organisations are viewed as crucial actors in a capitalist economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001).

Furthermore, Rafiqui (2010) recognises the institutional spheres that govern relationships organisations develop to solve issues around coordination of core competencies, and highlights the importance of informal rules in determining long-term interaction within the spheres. According to this approach, “the political economy of nations can be compared based on the manner in which firms solve coordination problems within these spheres” (Rafiqui, 2010, p. 312). The co-ordinated market economy (CME) and the liberal market economy (LME) are two major models that are used to distinguish whether the political economy is coordinated or not (Hall & Soskice, 2001).

CMEs refer to countries where the rate and direction of economic activity is driven by the strategic interaction between firms and other bodies such as stakeholders, investors, unions and employees. Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Japan are good examples of CMEs (Akkermans et al., 2007). LMEs refer to countries where the roles of economic actors are primarily coordinated through market institutions in an environment led by competition and formal contracting. Countries such as the US, UK, Australia, Canada and Ireland are examples of LMEs (Akkermans et al., 2007). According to the VoC approach, differences in the institutional settings between LMEs and CMEs will generate systematic differences in an organisation's strategies (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Rafiqui, 2010) and also the overall global mindset.

Thus when we focus on MNEs, the global mindset is extremely crucial. One of the main attributes of multinational enterprises as employers is their ability to transfer HR practices across countries (Edwards, Colling & Ferner, 2007). A key question in the study of the transfer of practices to host countries is the degree to which the MNEs are creative in terms of either adapting home country practices or host country practices or perhaps choosing a combination of both (Taylor et al., 1995). MNEs are faced with the challenge of global integration and local adaptation when transferring HR practices across countries. In some instances the transfer of HR practices may be influenced by whether the home country and host country are LMEs or CMEs, but it might not be as simple as that, as there are other contributing factors (Hall and Soskice, 2001).

The home country of operation influences the transfer of HR practices across countries; the literature suggests that an MNE from the US might focus on “best practice” while the European view is that MNEs are more likely to focus on “context” (Boxall, 1992; Purcell, 1993; Malik, 2009). However, empirical evidence suggests that many MNEs consider the “best practice” approach across the international operations to be most suitable considering the stresses of competitive pressures on MNEs (Edwards et al., 2007). In theory a strong focus on best practice enables MNEs to accurately identify the needs of the firm so that management practices can work successfully and efficiently across borders. Despite this, Brewster et al. (2007, p. 334), surveying public and private organisations in 22 countries, found no “evidence of the dominance of a coherent HRM paradigm reflecting the global dissemination of best practices”. Instead they argue that MNEs operate in a more complex context and that clusters of practices are likely to emerge depending on a range of factors.

The international transfer of practices such as EV mechanisms is complex. Institutional contexts – including the regulatory framework, trade union presence and established practices – might be quite different between host and home countries; and these differences raise questions as to how practices derived in one institutional domain are incorporated into a different domain (Ferner et al., 2005). A large degree of institutional or cultural difference between home country and host country might restrain the ability of MNEs to engage in transfer of practices (Vo & Stanton, 2011). Thus, the institutional and cultural environment has particular significance for employee voice mechanisms.

Ferner (1997) argues that indirect consultative EV is more constrained to local adaptation because indirect voice occurs through representative arrangements including union and non-union structures that are influenced strongly by the institutional context. EV is often seen as a key element of best practice; it is likely to appear in any cluster of good practices (Marchington & Grugulis, 2000). It could be argued that the institutional context has some influence on the type of EV mechanism used by MNEs. For depending on the institutional setting that the MNE is from will generate differences in the strategies that an organization will adopt. An MNE that is from a country that is a LME such as Australia or Canada would be more likely to have more managerial discretion and direct voice approaches to EV whereas with a CME such as Sweden or Belgium there will most likely be a strong presence of more formal consultative mechanisms and indirect approaches to EV in place (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Akkermans et al., 2007). Hence the institutional perspective and VoC approach are important theoretical approaches in determining the global mindset and EV mechanisms that MNEs adopt. These two theoretical approaches form the rationale of this thesis as they can be used to analyse EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia.

Furthermore, these theoretical approaches can influence an MNE's HR strategy, which in turn will influence how MNEs make decisions. In light of these theoretical approaches the following subsections of this chapter seek to understand the determinants of EV in MNEs. These are country of origin, size of organisation, mode of entry into Australia (greenfield site), nature of industry of operation (manufacturing versus service), date of establishment of the company in Australia and SHRM orientation comprising size of the HR department, whether the company uses shared HR

services, presence of a HRIS and Australian HR representation. These determinants might impact upon the MNE's international HR strategy in relation to EV mechanisms.

2.4 Models of Approaches to EV

This section explores the various models of approaches to EV. Tselmann, McDonald & Thorpe (2006) conceptualise employee relations (ER) into two broad typologies or dimensions: either a collective or a direct employee involvement policy dimension. Tselmann et al. (2006) build on previous work done by Guest and Conway (1999), and argue that the collective employee involvement policy dimension focuses on trade unions and/or a non-union channel of employee representation. This highlights the degree to which the ER priorities of management are aimed towards representative systems, that is, those with third-party involvement (Tselmann et al., 2006). On the other hand, the direct employee involvement policy dimension focuses on the degree to which the ER priorities of management are aimed towards the individual employee. Employee consultation, participatory mechanisms and direct information sharing are all components of a direct employee involvement policy (Tselmann et al., 2006). Collective and direct employee involvement policy dimensions lead to four broad ER approaches (Guest & Conway, 1999; Tselmann et al., 2006). The collective ER dimension can be classified as both an indirect approach and part of a dualistic approach to employee relations. The indirect approach is the traditional collective approach to employee relations and mainly encompasses union and non-union channels of representation. In other words, employees are represented by a third party. The dualistic approach – as the term “dual” suggests – is a hybrid model and comprises of a full range

of both direct and indirect voice structures. The collective and direct involvement dimensions both complement each other in this partnership arrangement that Tuselmann et al. (2006) have termed a dualistic approach to ER. The direct dimension can be classified as the “high road” direct approach and as the “low road” minimalist approach to ER (Tuselmann et al., 2006). The direct “high road” approach involves the bulk of direct, high employee involvement practices such as employee consultation, participation and information sharing. Direct practices are most dominant with a few traces of the indirect approach.

2.4.1 Model Utilised in this Thesis

While Tuselmann et al. (2006) focused on employee relations, this thesis utilises the model developed by Lavelle et al. (2010) to expand the knowledge of EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in the Australian context. Lavelle et al. (2010) drew upon the work of Tuselmann et al. (2006) and distinguish EV based on a typology of four types: indirect, direct, dualist and minimalist. According to the model (see Figure 3.1), MNEs that adopt an indirect approach to EV may have a few direct mechanisms, and indirect voice mechanisms are more dominant. MNEs that adopt a direct approach to EV may have a few elements of indirect voice mechanisms; however, direct voice structures are more dominant. MNEs that adopt a dualistic approach to EV utilise a complete range of both direct and indirect EV mechanisms. A minimalist approach refers to the absence of voice channels that fit into the direct or indirect categories of EV. Some voice structures may be present with this approach; however they are not enough to qualify as either a direct or indirect approach (Lavelle et al., 2010).

INDIRECT (Traditional Collective Approach)	DUALISTIC (Both Direct and Indirect Voice structures)
MINIMALIST (Neither Direct or Indirect Voice Structures)	DIRECT (High Involvement Approach)

Figure 2.1 EV Approaches

Adopted from Lavelle et al., (2010)

This thesis will use the model outlined in Figure 2.1 as a framework to examine employee voice in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. A key contribution of this thesis is that it will use this framework to analyse the influence of a SHRM approach as well as union presence on EV. Moreover, this model will be used to develop propositions in Chapter Three regarding the influence of various organisational factors to make inferences about their effect on EV.

2.5 Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth discussion of EV providing theoretical evidence. Furthermore, this chapter discussed the different categorisations of EV and analysed the role of trade unions and a SHRM approach. The global mindset and theoretical rationale for this thesis were also highlighted. Apart from an MNE's global mindset (that is, the MNE's strategy), this thesis aims to explore theoretical approaches such as the institutional perspective and varieties of capitalism. Furthermore, this chapter

introduced and explained the analytical framework that this thesis adopts to address the research questions that are presented in Chapter One. Additionally, it discussed the four EV archetypes (indirect, direct, minimalist and dualist) and explained the model that forms the cornerstones of this thesis. Chapter Three will introduce the Australian institutional context with a strong focus on MNEs and their importance. It will also shed light on the evolution of IR in Australia. Furthermore, Chapter Three will present various propositions to address the research questions and determine the character of EV practices in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Australian Context and Related Propositions

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two provided an overview and in-depth analysis of EV in unionised and non-unionised environments focusing on foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Chapter Two also outlined the role of trade unions and introduced the concept of a SHRM approach to employee participation. Chapter Three provides an overview of the Australian employment relation's context and focuses on the importance of foreign owned MNEs in the Australian context. This chapter also sheds light on the unique Australian institutional context. Furthermore, this chapter explores the factors that might impact upon EV in MNEs and various propositions are presented based on each of the four EV archetypes. Lastly a summary is provided.

3.2 The Australian Employment Relations Context

3.2.1 MNE in the Australian Context

Australia's industrial context has a number of features that highlight the value of studying foreign-owned MNEs' EV practices in this country. Australia's institutional

framework and long history of conciliation and arbitration through third parties make its industrial relations system unique and its business environment dynamic (McGraw & Harley, 2003; McDonnell et al., 2011a). It is a politically stable economy with a business environment that is favorable to FDI (Johnston & Menguc, 2007). Indeed foreign-owned MNEs play a significant role in the Australian economy and, to a large extent, dominate industries such motor vehicles and whitegoods (McDonnell et al., 2011a). There has been significant growth in Australian FDI with outward flows (US\$24,209 million) exceeding inflows (US\$22,266) in 2007 and Australia was positioned among the second tier of developed countries in terms of the distribution of FDI flows among economies (UNCTAD 2008). This suggests that there are “increasing numbers of Australian firms investing overseas and/or existing Australian owned MNEs increasing their foreign presence” (McDonnell et al, 2011a, p. 11). Furthermore, Australia’s geographical location and its closeness to the world’s largest international booming economies, Asia and India, make it a valuable country to research (McDonnell et al., 2011a).

Country of origin has been the focus of some of the earliest studies into MNEs’ ER practices in Australia. For example, the transferability of Japanese management strategies into Australian subsidiaries was explored in case study research by Bamber, Shadur and Howell (1992) and Dedoussis (1995) in the early 1990s. The findings of these studies indicated that only some of the home country’s HRM practices were transferred. When the focus is on country of origin, very often communication problems between the head office of the MNE and the subsidiary, particularly in the Australian and Japanese context, are a reason why practices cannot be successfully transferred (See

Bamber et al., 1992). Furthermore, language, cultural barriers and weak corporate structures can also make a transfer of HR practices from the home country to the subsidiary in the host country more problematic (Bamber et al, 1992; Stanton et al., 2009). However, the study conducted by Dedoussis's (1995) of nine manufacturing firms indicated that economic factors as opposed to socio cultural constraints influenced the transfer of Japanese management practices. Another study that focused on Japanese MNEs in Australia was conducted by Purcell et al (1999) who found that a limited number of subsidiaries replicated exactly the management systems used by their parent companies in Japan, however they adopted many of their organizational practices. Purcell et al., (1999) suggested that the intensity of the transfer of Japanese home country management practices was influenced by experience of the firm, in that the longer period the firm had been in Australia, the greater the influence of home country management practices on subsidiary management operations in Australia

Finally, the firm's industry sector also emerged as significant in this study; for example, manufacturing had a high ratio of local employees and hence a more hybrid model of employee relations, while financial services and trading companies had the largest group of expatriates and largest majority ownership, hence the strongest in Japanese managerial transfer (Purcell et al., 1999).

Between 1990 and 1995, with the publication of the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Surveys (AWIRS) there were a number of studies that focused on MNEs operating in Australia. For example the study conducted by Rodwell and Teo (1999)

compared Australian firms with UK, US and Japanese organisations and revealed a minor presence of the country of origin effect. The findings also indicated that there were limited differences between local and overseas MNEs (Rodwell and Teo, 1999). Another study by Walsh (2001) utilising the AWIRS data comparing Australian, UK, US and Japanese firms showed significant differences among the organisations by nationality. Her findings revealed among the foreign owned MNEs, US and British companies were more likely to have more sophisticated HRM policies and practices than Australian companies (Walsh, 2001). Furthermore, the findings also suggested that the strongly regulated industrial relations environment at that time did not influence the innovative HRM practices (Walsh, 2001; Stanton et al, 2009).

Other studies indicated that as MNEs were increasingly exposed to globalisation and intensive competition, they were utilizing a more sophisticated HR Paradigm with a greater range of policies and practices (McGraw and Harley, 2003). Furthermore McGraw and Harley (2003) argued that Australia is an economy where there is a pronounced divergence when the HR practices of MNEs overseas workplaces are compared with the HR practices of the local workplaces (McGraw and Harley, 2003). The various IR reforms during the period focused on significant deregulation of Australian industrial relations. Some academics argue that this has enabled organisations to adopt more innovative and individualized HRM practices (Deery & Walsh, 1999; Peetz, 2006). For example during the period there was a focus on individualized contracts, which required organizations to bargain wages and working conditions individually with employees. While the AWIRS studies provide a useful snapshot of MNEs' practice in the early to mid-1990s, they do have their limitations.

The first is that the survey is a general workplace survey and was not designed to capture some of the more specific research questions that have emerged in recent years. Second, the data was collected before the major industrial relations restructuring that took place after 1996.

Between 1999 and 2000 studies were conducted that generated a rich data set that could explore HRM practices of MNEs (For example GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness) and EURO-CRANET (study on comparative HRM)) (Mc Donnell et al., 2011; Stanton et al., 2009). Some of the studies conducted using these data sets indicated that particular cultural dimensions were correlated to specific HRM practices. For example, Papalexandris and Panayotopoulou (2004) found that communication had the strongest relationships between culture and HR practice. Furthermore, the study conducted by Gooderham et al. (2006) compared the application of three typical HR practices (described as calculative HR practices) – individual performance appraisal, individual rewards systems, and monitoring of training in US subsidiaries – in four European settings and in Australia. The findings of their study revealed that there was a strong use of the practices in indigenous Australian firms and greater use by US owned MNEs in Australia. The authors argued that the legislative changes in the 1990s have created a favorable setting for the application of calculative HRM practices (Gooderham et al, 2006). These findings also support the country of origin effect. Another study using the same database by Fenton-O’Creevy et al (2007) explored the determinants of subsidiary autonomy in establishing HRM practices in US MNEs in Europe and Australia focusing on the strategic role of the subsidiary and the host country institutional framework. Findings revealed that US

MNEs exercise a greater degree of control on their subsidiaries in CMEs than they do in those in LMEs, and greater control particularly when union density is low. The findings also show that US MNEs impose less centralised control on subsidiaries that service domestic markets as opposed to international markets allowing local adaptability (Fenton-O'Creevy et al., 2007).

Furthermore another study by McGraw (2002) compared the HR function in local and international MNEs operating in Australia and found a mixed pattern of similarity and difference between these organisations. McGraw (2002, p. 223) argues “overseas organisations were more likely to have HR representation on company boards, to have more HR staff per employee and to evaluate HR less on cost criteria”. He also argues that HR in overseas companies was more likely to be a strategic partner to line management. McGraw (2002, p. 223) also found that the locus of decision-making between domestic and foreign firms varied slightly “with overseas organisations more likely to take decisions at site level and less likely to take decisions at divisional level”. Foreign firms were more likely to make decisions at the international level particularly on issues related to pay and benefits, workforce expansion, reduction issues, and management development. Decisions concerning industrial relations and recruitment and selection were least likely to be made at international level.

Other studies indicate that although ER is usually considered a local issue, there is evidence of convergence (See Bray & Lansbury, 2000). These authors argue that internal factors such a management strategy and standardisation of product and design

as well as external factors such as changes in laws and institutions and the product market contribute to this. The findings also revealed that the three countries that they studied were moving towards a trend of decentralisation of employment relations and bargaining given they were from wildly different institutional contexts, indicating the presence of divergence (Bray & Lansbury, 2000).

This evidence clearly shows that although Australia is an important location for MNEs, there is a lack of detailed empirical information about the operations of MNEs particularly regarding employment relations practices. Much of what exists is case study-based; some of it is dated, focusing largely on findings from the AWIRS in 1990 and 1995 (Rogers, 1999; McDonnell et al., 2011a). There is also some limited evidence from the CRANET surveys – although these did not focus entirely on MNEs (McDonnell et al., 2011a). Also these studies tend to focus on employment relations and HRM in general rather than employee voice. Therefore, this thesis aims to fill this gap and explore the impact of union presence, SHRM approach and various organisational and institutional factors on EV practices of foreign-owned MNEs operating in the Australian context.

3.2.2 Australian IR Context

Organisations are faced with different legal and regulatory systems, which differ between countries (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003). This subsection provides an overview of the Australian industrial relations context and the host country environment. From 1904 to the late 1980s the Australian industrial relations landscape was dominated by a

tradition of legal regulation of employment conditions through a centralised third-party tribunal system and a strong trade union presence underpinned by the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* (Pyman et al., 2006; Holland et al., 2009). It could be argued that this system led to collective employee representation through agents like unions and employer associations who were mindful of the interests of labour and capital in that there were legal provisions for compulsory arbitration through the Australian Industrial Relations Commission if the two parties failed to reach consensus (Hawke, 1975; Macintyre & Mitchell, 1989).

In addition to compulsory conciliation and arbitration, other features of the system included legally binding industrial awards and centralised wage determination (EPAC, 1996). Burgess (2004) argues that the compulsory arbitration system ensured industrial relations harmony and stability. However, by the late 1980s this system was seen as rigid, inflexible and not meeting the needs of business and the competitive international environment. The Hawke/Keating Labor governments introduced major legislative changes including the *Industrial Relations Act 1988* and the *Industrial Relations Reform Act 1993*, which encouraged bargaining between employers and employees at the enterprise level (Forsyth & Sutherland, 2006; AIRC, 2006). It could be argued that the Labor government “made major changes to federal industrial relations arrangements, perhaps the most far-reaching in the ninety year history of those arrangements” (AIRC, 2006).

The election of the Howard Federal Coalition government in 1996 took a step further, introducing the *Workplace Relations Act (WRA) 1996*. The WRA strengthened and

encouraged more direct relationships between employers and employees by reducing the role of trade unions, limiting the role of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and introducing individual Australian Workplace Agreements to provide greater labour market flexibility (Vernon, 1997). In 2006 the Howard government introduced the *WorkChoices* legislation which further limited third-party intervention and created even greater flexibility for employers by simplifying the rules around the introduction of individual agreements (Bailey et al., 2009).

This thesis raises the question of how these developments have impacted employee voice. We know that during the 1980s and 1990s Australia, which was known for one of the highest rates of unionism in the world, experienced a massive decline in union coverage of workplaces (Hodgkinson, 1999; Wilkinson, Bailey & Mourell, 2009). This was in part due to the restructuring of the manufacturing sector, which was the traditional strength of industrial unionism, due to increasing international competition and technological changes (Hodgkinson, 1999). However, under the Howard government there was clearly a significant transformation from a collectivist system to a more individualistic system and a considerable reduction in the power of unions (Deery & Walsh, 1997; Cregan, Johnston & Bartram, 1998; Bray & Waring, 2006).

Historically, trade unions played an imperative role in the Australian context in the form of indirect EV in MNEs (Benson, 2000). However, economic and structural changes in the Australian labour market, a decline in trade union density and collective bargaining (ABS, 2011) and the increasing importance of HRM, have allowed managers to place increased emphasis on direct EV channels through involvement and communication

characterised by the absence of a third party (Pyman et al., 2006; Boxall & Purcell, 2011). Furthermore, Peetz (2006) argues that one of the contributions to minimising third party intervention, especially union representation, in Australia is the increased popularity of SHRM, with its focus on a more direct employment relationship. In particular, Federal government policy from 1996 to 2007 reduced the role of third parties in the employment relationship, shifting the balance of power to employers (Crosby, 2005; Peetz, 2006). Hence, over the past 30 years the industrial relations system has gone through various waves of reform that have had an impact on the forms, type and processes around voice mechanisms and substantive changes have been observed. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show a decline in union density from 42 per cent in 1988 to 20 per cent in 2009 (ABS, 2010). From August 1992 to August 2011, the proportion of trade union members in their main job had dropped from 43 per cent to 18 per cent for male employees and 35 per cent to 18 per cent for females (ABS, 2011). In Australia, even in 1991, less than one-third of unionised workplaces had a union structure that could provide for effective EV, and by 1995 this had fallen to 15 per cent (Morehead et al., 1997, p. 329). In Australia, this has given importance to direct communication between managers and employees, opening up greater opportunity for the introduction by management of direct voice mechanisms and other HR practices (Smith & Ewer, 2003).

The centrality to the workplace of the arbitral model, unions and industrial tribunals has been eroded. The shift towards decentralised enterprise-based bargaining from the early 1990s gave scope to direct voice and workplace consultative mechanisms (Burgess & MacDonald, 2003). The shift towards individual bargaining, associated with

WorkChoices legislation, gave greater impetus to managerial prerogative and removed the need even for many direct voice mechanisms (Peetz, 2006; Sappey et al., 2006). Furthermore, recent legislative developments associated with the Fair Work legislation have at one level removed the need for bargaining and direct engagement across a number of minimum conditions that are non negotiable, but at another level the legislation requires “good faith” bargaining, that is a demonstrable process of engagement, information sharing and negotiation that requires processes that support engagement and consultation with the workforce (Cooper, 2010). There is other legislation governing the workplace, especially around occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination, that forces organisations to introduce consultative processes around information sharing, consultation and enforcement of workplace conditions linked to safety and anti-discrimination (French et al., 2009).

Thus, as stated in Chapter One, the objectives this thesis aims to address are, first: to explore and analyse the different determinants of EV such as involvement, participation, and consultation, particularly focusing on direct voice and indirect voice in MNEs. Second: to identify the impact of various organisational and institutional factors on EV practices, particularly strategic human resource management approach and union presence. Third: to examine the impact of other factors on EV, for example, the country of origin, the year of establishment of the company, employment size, whether the company was established as a greenfield site and the company’s SHRM international orientation. These research objectives are particularly chosen as there is a lack of research on EV practices, SHRM approach and union presence in foreign-owned MNEs

operating in the Australian institutional context. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature. The Australian context is unique, and despite the importance of MNEs in Australia, there is limited research on EV practices in MNEs that utilises a representative database (McDonnell et al., 2011).

Additionally, the research that exists is often focused on specific industries and does not broadly cover all industries (e.g. Markey, 2007). Thus, this thesis contributes to knowledge in the area, as the systematic large-scale data set this thesis utilises will be a benchmark of MNEs' EV practices for future studies. There have been various legislative changes in Australia since the passing of the *WRA* in 1996, with growing issues as to whether declining trade union density and decentralisation of collective bargaining are creating opportunities for more direct employer–employee relationships (Holland et al., 2009) and this thesis sheds light on this significant subject and aims to fill a gap in the literature. In order to answer the research questions the following sections will discuss various factors such as trade union presence, country or origin, the year of establishment of the company, employment size, whether the company was established as a greenfield site and the company's SHRM international orientation as well as shared HR services and Australian HR representation and propositions will be presented.

3.3 Trade Union Presence

As previously argued in Chapter Two, trade union presence can have an effect upon the types of EV mechanisms used by an organisation as unions provide employees with a collective and representative voice within an organisation (Guest, 1999; Kochan et al., 1994). Historically, trade unions have provided employees with a major channel to voice their problems, and trade union presence is often related to indirect EV (Freeman et al., 2007; Gospel & Wood, 2003; Levine & Tyson, 1990). Freeman and Medoff (1984) suggest that collective voice provided by unions is economically superior to individual voice because collective and majority-based decision-making gives greater strength to individuals. Hence, it may be expected that not only union presence but also higher union density in organisations will mean that the indirect voice channel will dominate. As argued earlier, research suggests that EV is present indirectly in MNEs through worker representatives such as unions (Freeman et al., 2007; Gospel & Wood, 2003; Levine & Tyson, 1990).

While research suggests that a decline in trade union presence has given rise to direct EV, particularly within non-union settings (Benson, 2000, McCabe & Lewin, 1992; Dundon & Gollan, 2007, Dundon et al., 2005), it can be argued that in some instances both direct and indirect EV can be complementary. For example, where direct EV exists in relation to work tasks and indirect voice focuses on engagement with organisational-level issues (Machin & Wood, 2005; Kim et al., 2010), trade unions can work together with management to negotiate working conditions of employees combining both direct and indirect aspects of EV. Unions can do this to enhance their power and use the

synergy between direct and indirect voice to their advantage. Moreover, the interaction and existence of both direct and indirect voice can also have positive outcomes for both employers and employees in that it can increase procedural fairness and productivity as well as increasing managerial responsiveness to employees' job control (Charlwood & Terry 2007; Pyman et al., 2006). MNEs that have a strong trade union presence might be more likely to use a dualistic approach to EV as the unions may work with management to both their advantage. Furthermore, these dualistic or hybrid forms of EV can act as complementary channels in the workplace rather than as substitutes (Holland et al., 2009). MNEs that have a high trade union presence might predominantly have indirect voice mechanisms and are also likely to have fewer direct voice mechanisms as unions resist managerial attempts to deal directly with the workforce. Other MNEs have some voice mechanisms that are limited and insufficient to meet the thresholds of an indirect and/or direct EV dimension, and the practices of these MNEs would qualify as a minimalist approach to EV. Hence the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 1A: Strong trade union presence in an MNE will be positively associated with indirect EV.

Proposition 1B: Strong trade union presence in an MNE will be negatively associated with direct EV.

Proposition 1C: Strong trade union presence in an MNE will be positively associated with dualistic EV.

Proposition 1D: Strong trade union presence in an MNE will be negatively associated with minimalist EV.

3.4 SHRM Approach

As previously stated, indirect EV can be present through trade unions and elected members, for example in joint consultation committees (JCC) and work councils (WC). Pettinger (1999) suggests that formal information is shared and discussed between managers and employees through these mechanisms. It can be argued that organisations that follow a SHRM approach foster an environment that encourages information flow, through the different levels (Purcell, 1993). Such organisations also generate improved capabilities by ensuring the organisation has skilled and internally motivated employees who are viewed as strategic resources. Such employees are an investment and can achieve objectives and superior organisational performance (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Karami, Analoui & Cusworth 2004). According to Benson (2000), the emergence of SHRM has created an increased focus on information sharing, as well as collective decision-making through use of these union and non-union forms, particularly JCC and WC. Evidence suggests that in such organisations, a 'soft' approach to HRM is utilised to manage employees, encouraging employees to think creatively and rewarding them for innovative ideas that can be used in the real business environment, resulting in internally motivated workers (Delery & Doty, 1996). It can be argued that such firms would be likely to use a range of mechanisms such as JCCS and quality circles, as these would enhance the organisational environment. Furthermore, such a SHRM approach

encourages employees to exchange ideas freely which can then be implemented for the competitive advantage of the firm (Pettinger, 1999).

Importantly, a SHRM approach embraces a long-term strategic orientation to the management of workers within an organisation (Gerhart, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008). However, a SHRM approach is arguably underpinned by a unitarist ideology that involves attempts by the organisation to align the interests of the workers with that of the organisation and create a direct relationship between management and workers (Bartram, 2011), potentially circumventing the relevance and activities of unions (Burchielli and Bartram, 2009; Peetz, 2006). Hence, it can be argued that a SHRM approach is likely to have an effect on EV mechanisms as they are an important vehicle for creating a direct relationship between management and its workforce, maximising control and cooperation and reducing information asymmetries (Kelly, 1998).

Furthermore, trade union presence can also have an impact on a SHRM approach in MNEs. However, the relationship between SHRM and union presence is complex. Certain HRM practices such as occupational health and safety and training and development are associated with high trade union presence. In contrast performance management and performance related pay are negatively associated with trade union presence (Bartram, 2005). Although, in some countries where there has been a decline in trade union representative mechanisms there has also been a significant increase in union and non-union representative voice (e.g., JCCs) and direct EV mechanisms (Dundon et al., 2004; Haynes et al., 2003; Kersley et al., 2006), some companies see little need for any forms of EV beyond those prescribed by regulation. Having said this,

MNEs using a SHRM approach may also have to take into account union presence and may utilise a range of both direct and indirect EV mechanisms, that is, a dualistic approach (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Furthermore, MNEs that adopt a SHRM approach are likely to have direct EV practices in place and also less likely to have indirect EV. As argued previously, MNEs that adopt a SHRM approach view employees as strategic resources that are an investment in the firm's performance (Purcell, 1993). Furthermore, these MNEs aim to create a direct relationship between employers and employees through cooperation and communication (Kelly, 1998). Likewise, these MNEs are likely to use sophisticated HRM practices and will be less likely to have minimalist EV mechanisms. Hence the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 2A: MNEs that use SHRM are less likely to use indirect EV than their non-SHRM counterparts.

Proposition 2B: MNEs that use SHRM are more likely to use direct EV than their non-SHRM counterparts.

Proposition 2C: MNEs that use SHRM are more likely to use dualistic EV than their non-SHRM counterparts.

Proposition 2D: MNEs that use SHRM are less likely to use minimalist EV than their non-SHRM counterparts.

3.5 Date of Establishment

An MNE's date of establishment can also explain differences in its approach to EV practices. For example, if an MNE established during a period of high union density and strict regulation, it would be more likely to follow traditional practices and have union recognition in the organisation (Marginson et al., 2008). However, if the MNE established itself in the more flexible regulatory environment of recent years it will have more freedom in determining its HR practices and is likely to establish non-union-based representative arrangements than longer established firms (Marginson et al., 2008). Thus these MNEs that have recently established operations would be less likely to have indirect employee voice mechanisms in place (Lavelle et al, 2010). On the other hand, longer-established MNEs would be likely to have traditional HR practices and less likely to have sophisticated HR practices in place. These older MNEs would most likely be unionised and have indirect employee voice practices mechanisms in place. However, Beaumont and Harris (1992) argue that longer-established firms might engage in "double breasting" as older, previously unionised organisations would want to have a non- union base as well. Double breasting originated in the US construction sector; it enables organisations to operate in both unionised and non-unionised sectors of the industry to reduce labour costs and also be more flexible in work practices (Lipsky & Farber, 1976). Furthermore, Gunnigle, Lavelle and McDonnell (2009) argue that employers usually indulge in double breasting as a strategy to suppress unions where the non-union sites are added to existing unionised sites. However, evidence suggests that "double breasting" is not always pursued as a technique to avoid unions and may in fact be a tendency of organisations to acquire sites with different strategies

based on the differences between various sites and the nature of the workforce (Cullinane et al., 2012; Lamare et al., 2013). Thus long-established firms would possibly have a mixture of both union and non-union representative structures in place.

As a result of organisational inertia and the long history of collectivism in Australia (Fraser, 2003), HR practices in older organisations may be more likely to engage in the use of collectivist EV mechanisms, such as trade union representation. In Australia there have been significant industrial relations changes since the passing of the Workplace Relations Act 1996. The election of a Federal Coalition Government in 1996 impacted greatly on the development of enterprise bargaining and hastened the process of moving to workplace bargaining. Macdonald, Campbell and Burgess (2001) suggest that there is no one accepted definition of enterprise bargaining in Australia; however, a literal view of enterprise bargaining is that it is collective bargaining at the enterprise level. The emphasis of the Workplace Relations Act 1996 was away from the gradual managed approach of the previous Labor Government to a more decentralised approach of bargaining at the enterprise level (Lansbury & Bamber, 1998). The legislation emphasised bargaining at the enterprise level both collectively through the introduction of certified agreements and individually through the introduction of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs). It excluded trade unions from much of the process, thus attempting to weaken the power of the trade unions (Pyman et al., 2006). In particular the introduction of AWAs attempted to replace traditional industry award systems and union collective bargaining processes with individual agreements made directly between employers and employees (Lansbury & Bamber, 1998).

The Federal Coalition government continued to reform industrial relations and in March 2005 passed the Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Act 2005 which came into effect on 26 March 2006 (Sheldon & Junor, 2006; Stewart & Williams, 2007). Fenwick (2006, p. 86) argues “this was one of the greatest changes to Australian federal labour law since the introduction of compulsory conciliation and arbitration more than a century ago”. The WorkChoices legislation attempted to individualise industrial relations further and weaken trade unions and collective bargaining by making it difficult for unions to enter workplaces and organise industrial action (Saville, Mackinnon & Viceli 2009). It can be argued that MNEs that established in Australia between 1996 and 2007 could be influenced by the greater opportunities that the Coalition IR changes gave them, thus impacting directly on their choice of EV practices.

In 2007 the election of the Labor government under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd led to the introduction of the Fair Work Act (FWA) 2009. Gollan (2009) argues that this Act presented greater opportunities for unions to have an influence at the workplace level and to influence wage negotiations and have a greater presence at the workplace. At the time of the collection of the data in this thesis these new practices had just been introduced. However, a newly elected Liberal Coalition government in 2013 is likely to see more IR legislation changes in Australia. Thus there have been many changes in IR legislation in Australia over the past twenty years, which can have an influence on the types of ER practices MNEs adopt.

Internationally, Budd (2004) argues that a decline in union recognition has renewed

interest in other direct forms of EV. This suggests that newer MNEs are more likely to adopt direct EV mechanisms. Furthermore, Holland et al. (2009) argue that the variety of EV mechanisms in Australia and most developed economies has increased with a greater variety of participatory mechanisms. Charlwood and Terry (2007) suggest that there has been a consequent diffusion of direct and non-union voice in the workplaces. Hence older MNEs may be likely to have a combination of both direct and indirect forms of EV (dualistic EV) and less likely to have neither direct nor indirect forms of EV (minimalist EV). Hence the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 3A: MNEs with an older establishment date are more likely to use indirect EV than their younger counterparts.

Proposition 3B: MNEs with an older establishment date are more likely to utilise direct EV than their younger counterparts.

Proposition 3C: MNEs with an older establishment date are more likely to utilise dualistic EV than their younger counterparts.

Proposition 3D: MNEs with an older establishment date are less likely to use minimalist EV than their younger counterparts.

3.6 Size of the MNE

The size of an organisation has long been noted as a significant factor in HRM, (Lavelle

et al. 2010). Organisations that are larger in size have a greater number of employees and managers and are more likely to have a larger HR department, more formal HR policies and practices and arguably more integration with a greater presence of EV practices (Vernon & Brewster, 2013). Furthermore with regards to organisational size, larger MNEs are more likely to be internationalised in the scale and nature of their operations (Marginson et al., 2013). These MNEs would also be more likely to be high users of HRM practices. Furthermore, these organisations would tend to have a greater strategic integration of HRM and are more likely to use sophisticated HRM practices. For example, Bartram (2005) found that large firms (exceeding 500 employees) were more likely to use formal HRM practices relative to small- or medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, the size of the firm can influence trade union presence (Dworkin & Extejt, 1980; Bain & Elsheikh, 1980; Bain & Elias, 1985; Price & Bain, 1983). Turner et al., (1994) suggests that larger firms are more likely to have indirect EV mechanisms and representative structures such as union recognition in place and larger firms are more likely to recognise unions (Marginson, Armstrong & Edwards, 1993).

Previous work on MNEs suggests that significantly large firms are more likely to have a focus on indirect voice structures and hence trade union recognition (Blanden, Machin & Reenen, 2006; Lavelle et al., 2010; Marginson, Armstrong & Edwards, 1993). Employment size is commonly used as an explanatory variable in the MNE literature (Lavelle et al., 2010) and the literature suggests that trade union presence is positively and exponentially related to firm and workplace size (Dworkin & Extejt, 1980; Bain & Elsheikh, 1980; Bain & Elias, 1985; Bain & Price, 1983). Evidence suggests that firms that are significantly larger are also more likely to have a focus on indirect voice

structures and hence trade union recognition (Blanden, Machin & Reenen, 2006; Lavelle et al., 2010; Marginson, Armstrong & Edwards, 1993).

Moreover, numerous authors have empirically tested the relationship between size of establishment and propensity for unionisation (Dworkin & Extejt, 1980; Bain & Elsheikh, 1980; Bain & Elias, 1985; Western, 1996). Bain and Elias (1980) claim that establishment size increases the probability of unionisation. Western (1996, p. 38) suggests that workers in small firms (1-10 employees) were one-fifth less likely to be union members than the employees of larger firms (500+ employees). According to Bain and Price (1983) and Bain and Elshiekh (1979) the logic behind this finding is that larger establishments are more conducive to higher levels of union membership. Employees in larger firms are more likely to have an impersonal relationship with their employers, which may lead to more strained relations. Larger establishments are likely also to be more targeted by unions due to lower per unit costs of recruitment. Finally employers in large firms can utilise unions as tools of communication with the workforce and see advantages in this practice.

Regarding HR policies and practices in Australia, Bartram (2005) found that larger sized organisations are more likely to utilise a range of formal HR practices relative to small or medium sized enterprises. Research indicates that the utilisation of formal human resource practices and training and development are positively linked to growth in the size of an MNE (Tregaskis et al., 2001; Speth & Doeringer, 2006). Hence, sophisticated HRM practices – for example, talent management – are more likely to take place in larger MNEs than smaller ones. By having formal and sophisticated HR

practices in place, organisations can engage their employees by communicating with them directly. Furthermore, when an MNE sets up a new firm in the initial years of operation it often remains small and takes time to grow to a size where HRM and IR issues become important (Guest & Rosenthal, 1993); Scase (1995) further argues that IR in small MNEs continues to be very limited.

When discussing direct EV it is further argued that larger MNEs are likely to have more resources and therefore can have more formalised HR practices (Bartram, 2005; Speth & Doeringer 2006). Hence, larger MNEs are likely to use a combination of both direct and indirect (dualistic) EV and are less likely to use neither direct nor indirect EV (minimalist) when dealing with employees.

Proposition 4A: MNEs that employ a larger number of employees at their workplaces will be more likely to use indirect EV than their smaller counterparts.

Proposition 4B: MNEs that employ a larger number of employees at their workplaces will be more likely to use direct EV than their smaller counterparts.

Proposition 4C: MNEs that employ a larger number of employees at their workplaces will be more likely to use dualistic EV than their smaller counterparts.

Proposition 4D: MNEs that employ a larger number of employees at their workplaces will be less likely to use minimalist EV than their smaller counterparts.

3.7 Industry or Sector

An MNE can operate in a variety of different industries or sectors such as mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing, utilities, manufacturing, services, construction, retail and wholesale and transport and storage. For the purposes of this thesis I focus on three main sectors, – mining, services and manufacturing – because these sectors are particularly important for Australia (McDonnell et al., 2011).

Brewster et al., (2006) argues that the industry of operation can shape the size of HRM functions. Similarly, the industry of operation can have an impact on an MNE's strategic HR direction because each industry operates differently. Furthermore, the nature of the business sector can have an effect of the ER practices of MNEs (Marginson & Sisson, 1994). Thus, we can expect differences across the three sectors identified in regard to the kind of EV an MNE will adopt. The manufacturing sector has a history of being unionised and unions are widely recognised (Katz & Sable, 1985; Dolvik, 2001; Lavelle et al, 2010). It is a highly collectivist industry in which traditionally unions have played a very important role (Vernon & Brewster, 2013). Manufacturing firms have a high propensity for unionisation as a result of worker homogeneity, poor working conditions relative to white-collar work, and a tradition of collectivism (Deery & De Cieri 1991; Bain & Elsheikh, 1979; Kerr & Siegal, 1954). Furthermore, Marginson et al. (2013, p. 622) argue that organisations in “manufacturing sectors are more exposed to international competition, and their operations across countries are more integrated, than are companies in the service sectors, where competition remains more domestically bound”.

It is likely that the MNEs from a manufacturing sector will be less likely to focus on direct EV and have sophisticated HRM practices than MNEs from the services or mining industry. Dolvik and Waddington (2004) argue that on the other hand, MNEs from the services sector have low union density and are less likely to be covered by traditional collective agreements. Such MNEs are likely to have very sophisticated people management practices in place and would be more likely to have direct EV mechanisms (Marginson et al., 2007). Looking at the mining industry, employees have complex and varied shifts with an unfavourable working environment (Peetz, Murray & Muurlink, 2012). Other industry studies suggest some quite interesting outcomes (Bray & Waring, 2006). There are several studies of the mining sector, where both Australian-based and overseas-based MNEs have engaged in an ongoing campaign to de-unionise workplaces and to offer employees individual non-union contracts. In some cases MNEs have been able to use greenfield sites to bypass unions and collective agreements. In other cases, the confluence of weak demand conditions and new IR instruments allowed employers to significantly alter employment conditions of mining workers (Waring et al., 2001). The two largest mining companies, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto, have both attempted to de-unionise mining operations and shift workers to individual agreements in the iron ore sector (Peetz, 2006 ch.6) – some return to union recognition and collective bargaining in the context of labour shortages. It could be argued that in order to manage employees from the mining sector where a lot of employee safety needs to be ensured, the MNEs would need to have a very sophisticated HR paradigm and ER practices in place and would be likely to have direct EV practices in place.

Focusing on EV in these three industries, it is to be expected that indirect voice strategies will be more prevalent in manufacturing and mining-based MNEs than service based industries. According to theoretical and empirical research, trade unions are more likely to be present in manufacturing and blue-collar work and the public sector, rather than the private sector, service industries and white-collar work (Peetz, 2006). Hence in unionised sectors such as manufacturing we would expect unions to be more effective in representing workers than any other type of non-union voice or direct voice (Haynes, 2005).

However, this does not mean that direct voice is not prevalent in the manufacturing sector and mining sector. Historically in manufacturing organisations, employees were hired to conduct narrowly defined manual tasks that required limited skills (Shimada & MacDuffie, 1986). These organisations were characterised by high turnover, high absenteeism and low motivation (Shimada & MacDuffie, 1986). However there have been developments in the way employees are viewed and managed in the manufacturing industry: a focus on flexible production gives employees a central role in the production system (MacDuffie, 1995). This requires organisations to focus on strategic HRM functions such as job design, on and off the job training, allowing job rotation and also having problem solving groups (where employees can voice their concerns) or quality circles (MacDuffie, 1995). Flexible production focuses on high involvement and commitment human resource policies and seeks to reduce the barriers between managers and employees by giving them a voice. Thus it can be argued that manufacturing organisations will be likely to use a combination of both direct and

indirect EV mechanisms – that is, dualistic EV – and less likely to use minimalist EV. There is also some evidence that EV has an influence in the mining industry in terms of having health effects for long hours of work. For example, when employees in the mining industry choose to do a night shift themselves, evidence suggests that they adapt better to its rigours (Peetz, Murray & Muurlink, 2012; Barton, 1994). This indicates that providing a direct EV to workers in the mining industry can have a positive impact on the employees in terms of enabling them to adapt better to the working conditions. Furthermore, as previously argued MNEs that operate in the service industry will be likely to be categorised by low levels of union membership and less likely to use dualist EV and more likely to use minimalist EV. Hence, the following propositions are proposed.

Proposition 5A: MNEs in the manufacturing and mining industry are more likely to use indirect EV than their counterparts in the service and other industries.

Proposition 5B: MNEs in the manufacturing and mining industry are less likely to use direct EV than their counterparts in the service and other industries.

Proposition 5C: MNEs in the manufacturing and mining industry are more likely to use dualistic EV than their counterparts in the service and other industries.

Proposition 5D: MNEs in the manufacturing and mining industry are less likely to use minimalist EV than their counterparts in the service and other industries.

3.8 Country of Origin

There is a considerable body of literature (Almond et al., 2005; Ferner et al., 2005) that has highlighted the way that MNEs are ‘embedded’ in the country in which they originate, suggesting that the organisational structures of firms rooted in different national business systems display major differences. US MNEs are often cited as examples of this effect. Rodwell and Teo (1999, p. 313) argue that employment relations in US MNEs “reflect a unitarist, high commitment approach with little need for representative systems and trade unions”. US MNEs are less likely to engage with trade unions (Gunnigle et al., 2005; Kochan et al., 1986; Lavelle et al., 2010) compared with their European counterparts and therefore adopt a direct approach to EV. This section explores the influence of country of origin on EV mechanisms.

This thesis particularly focuses on the US country of origin, as the biggest percentage of the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia are American-owned (McDonnell et al., 2011) although there is no exact percentage available due to poor records available. Ngo et al. (1998) suggest that due to differences in cultural values, MNEs of different countries of origin are likely to have variations in terms of the extent of adaptation to local conditions. The country in which the multinational originates has a strong influence on its HR practices and management style (Edwards and Ferner, 2002). In particular, US firms for a long time have been known to create conditions in which practices developed in the US were diffused to other countries and dominate the institutional hierarchy (Edwards and Ferner, 2002). US MNEs are known to be highly centralised and exert direct forms of control (Young et al., 1985). Furthermore, US

MNEs have originated in an environment that has weak trade unions and also a strong influence of managerial authority over employees in the workplace (Kochan et al., 1994). These MNEs are likely to have direct employee involvement practices in places in particular forms of team working (Innes & Morris, 1995; Guest and Hoque, 1996; Geary & Roche, 2001). Moreover, these firms are also known to transfer direct employee involvement practices such as autonomous work teams, quality circles and team briefings into their subsidiaries (Edwards & Ferner, 2002; Innes & Morris, 1995; Beaumont & Townley, 1985). This indicates that it is unlikely for indirect EV to be present in US owned MNEs operating in Australia.

According to Edwards et al. (2013, p. 555), “the choices that MNEs make as they arrive at a configuration of integration and differentiation are influenced by their embeddedness in multiple national environments, there continue to be important national institutional influences and constraints on MNCs”. The country of origin is a key factor by which MNEs may implement employment practices associated with their home countries and this can help distinguish MNEs from others based on their nationality (Almond et al., 2005; Ferner, 1997). Ferner et al. (2005) argue that organisational structures of firms are rooted in different national business systems. Thus, it can be crucial and challenging for MNEs to decide how foreign subsidiaries should be managed in host countries (Schuler et al., 1993). Transfer of ER practices to subsidiaries is shaped by the MNE’s home country culture as well as by the host country culture (Edwards, Colling & Ferner, 2007). Ngo et al. (1998) suggest that due to differences in cultural values, MNEs originating from different countries are likely to adapt to local conditions to varying extents. Certain practices are more acceptable to

employees from certain cultures than others (Hofstede, 1980). Prajogo and Fugimoto (2006) argue that employees from a collectivist culture would be more acceptable to work in teams and receive group-based rewards than someone from an individualist culture such as the US. Also focusing on EV mechanisms,

The cultural similarity between an MNE's home country and host country can also contribute to whether the MNE is locally responsive (Ngo et al. 1998; Rosenzweig & Nohria 1994). MNEs from different home countries can use different approaches to IR management in their international operations (Child, Faulkner & Pitkethly, 2000). The country of origin effect reflects the balance MNEs must strike in terms of deciding whether or not to transfer and adopt parent country practices in their foreign subsidiaries (Ferner, 1997; Rodwell & Teo, 1999). As previously identified, the strategy that MNEs develop leads to either convergence or divergence when adopting employment relations practices in the foreign subsidiaries (Katz & Darbshire, 2000). In many cases MNEs are "potential exporters of ER practices as they want to apply home-country HRM/IR systems to host country employees" (Bae, Chen & Lawler, 1998, p. 655).

Ngo et al. (1998) argue that global integration and local adaptation are two problems that MNEs are faced with when transferring ER practices. Global integration focuses on aligning HR policies and practices of MNEs operations in the home country with the rest of the organisation. Local adaptation refers to adapting ER practices in the operations in the host country to the local host environment in which the subsidiary is operating (Ngo et al. 1998). According to Tiara (1990), the exporting of ER practices and IR systems is not about an "all or nothing" choice, but about a "what aspects and

how much” choice. Tiara (1990) suggests that some ER practices might converge into the host country operations but others might not. Moreover, when MNEs operate in less regulated labour market regimes, employee relations are handled in ways that are different to the home country (Tuselmann, McDonald & Heise, 2003). Thus, national context of origin is a key factor in shaping the behaviour (Whitley, 1999) and employment relations practices – particularly EV – in MNEs’ foreign subsidiaries (Ferner, 1997).

Lavelle, Gunnigle and Mc Donnell (2010) found high employer association membership amongst all MNEs in their study. Furthermore, Royle (1998) suggests that US owned MNEs are known for their avoidance strategies, particular in regard to unions. Thus, when US MNEs operate in regulated environments they have appeared uncomfortable with regulations and institutions governing employee representation (Edwards & Ferner, 2002). In some instances the US owned MNEs have had to adapt to host country environments and accept local norms concerning union recognition and membership (Kujawa, 1979). Hence the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 6A: MNEs that have a US country of origin will be less likely to use indirect EV.

Proposition 6B: MNEs that have a US country of origin will more likely to use direct EV.

Proposition 6C: MNEs that have a US country of origin will be less likely to use dualistic EV.

Proposition 6D: MNEs that have a US country of origin will be more likely to use minimalist EV.

3.9 Mode of Entry: Greenfield Site

The method by which an MNE establishes itself in a country has also been shown to be an important factor in explaining its HRM practices, particularly EV. This subsection explores the greenfield site as a mode of entry. There are various alternatives an MNE can use when deciding to enter a foreign market: exporting, licensing, franchising, contract manufacturing, offshoring, turnkey operations, joint ventures or foreign direct investment (FDI) (Deresky, 2011; Buckley & Casson, 1988). When a firm decides to enter a foreign market via a foreign direct investment (FDI) market strategy, the MNE has the option of acquiring an existing plant or setting up an entirely new plant (greenfield investment) (Görg, 2000). A greenfield site can be defined as an investment that establishes a production or service facility starting from the ground up overseas (Eitman, Stonehill & Moffett, 2004). Whittaker (1986) argues that this gives MNEs freedom to establish a new paradigm of work practices that foster stability and control and that suit their needs, rather than being forced to adopt traditionally embedded workplace relationships .

Researchers have identified the need for greenfield sites to have well-developed employment relation practices (Blyton & Turnbull, 1992; Guest, 1989; Gunnigle, 1995). According to O'Toole and Lawler (2006), establishing as a greenfield site is one of the most successful organisational strategies. Traditionally, a greenfield site comprises four main characteristics: a new location; a new office; new employees; and finally, a new employment philosophy to manage the new employees (Newell, 1991 in Glover, 2001). Glover (2001) argues that the new employment philosophy of MNEs comprises a combination of strategic human resource management practices and a focus on industrial relations. Beaumont (1990) also suggests that when it comes to HR practices, MNEs that establish as greenfield sites are not forced to adopt traditionally embedded workplace practices and have the opportunity to develop new HR practices based on unitarism. Preece (1993) argues MNEs that establish as greenfield sites have more control and can enable employers to set up their own ER policies as they are unencumbered by pre-existing structures and approaches. Lavelle et al. (2010) argue that there tends to be a strong preference amongst MNEs that set up as greenfield sites, to deal directly with employees. Thus, MNEs entering the Australian market through a greenfield investment could be likely to use more high-involvement systems in EV and thus a direct approach to EV. Furthermore, Evidence suggests that MNEs that set up as greenfield sites are more likely to have a sophisticated HRM approach, establish flexible working arrangements, enhanced quality initiatives and employee involvement (Gunnigle, 1995; Beaumont & Townley, 1985; Guest, 1987).

However, Leopold and Hallier (1999) argue that within a greenfield site, an MNE will not always implement new practices and “break up with the past” in terms of its ER

approach. Gamble (2003) also suggests that subsidiaries established as greenfield sites are more likely to follow the parent countries' practice. Furthermore, greenfield sites are likely to establish new approaches to industrial relations, as there is no baggage of established relationships and employment practices to overcome (Price & Price, 1994).

It can be argued that MNEs that establish as greenfield sites can respond to trade union recognition in a particular manner. Gunnigle (1995) found that when the management at a greenfield site recognises trade unions, the process of union recognition and the parameters of the management and union relationship are structured in a strict manner where managerial prerogative is reinforced. In such cases, although unions are recognised, management has the final say and union influence is restricted to simple bargaining and specific pay and conditions. These MNEs are also less likely to have a strong presence of union recognition, which is most likely carried on from earlier years.

Therefore, MNEs that establish as greenfield sites have the opportunity to develop and implement tailor-made HR strategies, which can contribute to having sophisticated HR practices (Glover, 2001). Furthermore, Glover suggests that if the MNE has formal systems for communication and consultation in place, it may aim to reduce union recognition in the organisation. Additionally, having a non-union strategy can help provide an incentive for management to adopt a sophisticated HRM approach (Glover, 2001). Hence it is less likely for MNEs that adopt as Greenfield sites to adopt dualistic EV that includes a full range of both direct and indirect EV mechanisms, and less likely to use minimalist EV. Hence, the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 7A: MNEs that are greenfield sites are less likely to use indirect EV than MNEs that are non-greenfield sites.

Proposition 7B: MNEs that are greenfield sites are more likely to use direct EV than MNEs that are non-greenfield sites.

Proposition 7C: MNEs that are greenfield sites are less likely to use dualistic EV than MNEs that are non-greenfield sites.

Proposition 7D: MNEs that are greenfield sites are more likely to use minimalist EV than MNEs that are non-greenfield sites.

3.10 SHRM International Orientation

Taylor et al. (1996, p. 961) define strategic international human resource management as “human resource management issues, functions, and policies and practices that result from the strategic activities of multinational enterprises and that impact the international concerns and goals of those enterprises.” The firm’s SHRM international orientation can be important in understanding the integration of the firm’s local and global dimensions in relation to HR policies, practices and structures. In understanding a firm’s SHRM international orientation a number of factors could be considered: levels of discretion; embeddedness into the institutional frameworks; the potential for central control through the use of shared service centres; and the upwards influence on MNE practice from the subsidiary through the presence of Australian representation. For the

purpose of this thesis particularly, the last two factors are considered as indicators of a firm's SHRM orientation: the presence of shared HR services and whether the MNE has Australian HR representation internationally. These two factors have been particularly chosen over other elements because these were the only two items in the questionnaire that we were able to capture the organizations SHRM international orientation.

3.10.1 Shared HR Services

With globalisation, the human resource function has undergone various changes over the years, particularly within large MNEs (Cooke, 2006). As the MNEs meet the demands of their competitive and turbulent environment, their human resource function is challenged to meet the business's requirements through this transition. Since the early 2000s there has been an emergence of HR shared services centres in MNEs that deliver HR functions more centrally to subsidiaries (Cooke, 2006). Meijerink, Bondarouk and Looise (2013, p. 85) define HR shared services as "a hybrid organisational model for centrally bundling resources in an HR shared service provider that performs HR activities to be controlled by its end-users and business units". Shared HR services centralise the organisation's resources and certain activities and decentralise control to business units. Bondarouk, Maatman and Meijerink (2010) suggest that HR practices that are under shared services include personal administration, training and staffing tasks, which are delivered as HR services through the use of concentrated resources such as information technologies and HR knowledge and skills.

HR services centres are a practical way to manage HR as they can strategically align HR practices and help the MNE reduce costs (Meijerink, Bondarouk & Looise, 2013).

Moreover, shared services centres can increase efficiency and productivity, helping the organisation achieve economies of scale by consolidating resources and restructuring processes (Farndale et al., 2009; Ulrich, 1995). Thus, if MNEs operating in Australia make use of HR shared services centres it indicates that these organisations do see the value of HR – and the centralisation of HR practices globally – in their companies. Having shared HR services in an MNE will allow HR managers to focus on strategic and value-added activities as they do not have the burden of administrative activities to look after. This will hence ensure a presence of sophisticated ER practices in MNEs that make use of shared services centres.

Shared HR services have become one of the most popular organisational forms in the last two decades in various MNEs (Rothwell, Herbert & Seal, 2011; Friebe, 2013). There is a growing body of literature that focuses on value added activities and functions in an organisation such as shared HR services (Ulrich, 1993; Cooke, 2006; Boglind, Hallsten & Thilander, 2011). Shared service centres can have many advantages for the organisation as they can strategically align the HR practices of MNEs and also can help the organisation achieve economies of scale (Davis, 2005; Meijerink et al., 2013). Wachter, Peters, Ferner, Gunnigle and Quintanilla (2006) argue that organisations that make use of shared HR services by coordination and controlling HR internationally across different subsidiaries maybe seeking to achieve international economies of scale in the provision of HR services.

According to Ulrich (1995) the key drivers for shared HR services are globalisation, re-engineering of work processes, value-added productivity as result of fewer employees,

and improved service and technology. Implementing shared HR services can allow organisations to deal with knowledge management as value follows from the knowledge resources in the organisation itself and as they have the opportunity to share best practices across the entire organisation (Grant, 1996; Reilly, 2000; Ulrich et al., 2005). Moreover, it can provide an improved overall service, as it can be more streamlined, consistent and accurate. Bowman and Ambrosini (2000) suggest that resources in the organisation are value-added if they allow the company to better satisfy customers at competitive prices than their competitors and shared HR services can allow organisation to achieve this value added capability.

Shared HR services can also increase the credibility of the HR department in the organisation as the administrative tasks can be carried out by the shared services centers allowing the HR department to focus on strategic change and capability issues which are important in the long run (Reilly, 2000; Ulrich et al., 2005; Lawler, 2006; Holly, 2009). Having shared HR services promotes a lean and flat organisation structure that is focused on cross group learning, building synergies across different units, best practice sharing and a greater strategic impact for HR (Reilly, 2000; Meijerink and Bondarouk, 2013). This indicates that firms adopting shared HR services are more likely to have a strategic focus on sophisticated HRM practices and would be more likely to have direct EV and dualist EV practices and less likely to have indirect and minimalist EV practices in place. Hence the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 8A: MNEs that use shared HR services would be less likely to use indirect EV than MNEs that do not use shared HR services.

Proposition 8B: MNEs that use shared HR services would be more likely to use direct EV than MNEs that do not use shared HR services.

Proposition 8C: MNEs that use shared HR services would be more likely to use dualistic EV than MNEs that do not use shared HR services.

Proposition 8D: MNEs that are big users of HRIS would be less likely to use minimalist EV than MNEs that do not use shared HR services.

3.10.2 Australian HR Representation

Australian HR representation refers to MNEs providing the subsidiary with an opportunity to make a contribution to the company's global HR practices. Wächter, Peters, Ferner, Gunnigle and Quintanilla (2006) argue that the internationalisation of operations and management in firms has increasingly been reinforced by an international architecture within the HR function. MNEs can maintain this international HR architecture by having a structure such as a worldwide committee responsible for determining HR policy, as well as regular meetings and networking between HR managers in the different country operations (Edwards et al., 2013). According to Freeman, Boxall and Haynes (2007), employees want a form of voice at work, which will enable them to deal with their problems. Employees expect to have co-operative styles of engagement with management, which will enhance firm performance as well as the employees working lives (Purcell & Hall, 2011). This would be possible if MNEs

allow their subsidiaries to represent the HR function globally and provide a contribution when global HR practices are developed and reviewed (Edwards et al., 2013).

When focusing on the structural aspects of the organisation, Bjorkman, Barner-Rasmussen and Li (2004) argue that inter-unit visits, international committees, teams and taskforces can positively influence knowledge outflows from a major subsidiary. The extent to which HR staff from the Australian subsidiary are involved within the ultimate controlling company committee of senior managers globally to develop HR policies, which apply across different national borders, may promote a SHRM international orientation. As argued by Tregaskis, Glover and Ferner (2005), the key role of the international HR function is to build cross-border social capital networks and also contribute to the competitiveness of the firm. There has been limited research on the evolving nature of the international HR function (some exceptions are Wachter et al., 2006; Sparrow, Brewster & Harris, 2004). The amount of autonomy the MNEs extends to their HR function in the subsidiary when HR policies are developed internationally can influence the types of EV practices used by the MNE.

HR managers who have an impact internationally are likely to be well aware of and understand the institutional context within which they operate. According to Ferner, Tregaskis, Edwards, Edwards, Marginson, Adam and Meyer (2011) the decision-making authority of subsidiaries is a crucial issue as they provide a major channel for the international diffusion of practices with their cross-national governance structures. Furthermore, MNEs that provide their subsidiaries with Australian HR representation

would possibly be likely to engage with unions in the Australian context and adopt indirect EV practices. They would also be likely to have some dimensions of direct EV practices and these firms would have an international SHRM orientation. Hence they would also be more likely to have dualistic and less likely to have minimalist EV practices in place. Hence, the following propositions are presented.

Proposition 9A: MNEs that have Australian HR representation globally would be more likely to use indirect EV than MNEs that do not use shared HR services.

Proposition 9B: MNEs that have Australian HR representation globally would be less likely to use direct EV than MNE's that do not use shared HR services.

Proposition 9C: MNEs that have Australian HR representation globally would be more likely to use dualistic EV than MNE's that do not use shared HR services.

Proposition 9D: MNE's that have Australian HR representation globally would be less likely to use minimalist EV than MNEs that do not use shared HR services.

3.11 Summary

This chapter introduced the Australian institutional landscape with the importance of multinationals in the Australian context and also the evolution of industrial relations in Australia. This chapter also presented the propositions that are developed to understand the impact of a SHRM approach and union presence and various organisational and

institutional factors on EV. Propositions were focused on the four employee archetypes and trade union presence, SHRM approach, date of establishment of the MNE, size of the MNE, industry type, country of origin of the MNE, whether the MNE established as a greenfield site in Australia, and a SHRM orientation comprising shared HR services and Australian HR representation. The next chapter will explain in-depth the research methodology utilised to undertake this study. Each step that was undertaken is outlined and explained, such as sample selection, instrument design, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three introduced the Australian institutional landscape with the importance of multinationals in the Australian context and also the evolution of industrial relations in Australia. The Chapter also identified the propositions this thesis presents in order to address the research questions. As identified in Chapter Three, the central purpose of this study is to explore the influence of various institutional and organisational factors, particularly a SHRM approach and union presence on EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. The focus of this chapter is on the research methodology utilised to undertake this study. Sample selection, instrument design, data collection and data analysis, including the statistical procedures employed, are discussed.

For the purposes of this thesis, Section A (profile of the company), Section C (HR function), Section F (employee involvement and communication) and Section G (employee representation and consultation) from the foreign-owned questionnaire are utilized (Please refer to Appendix C). The measures for these sections in the questionnaire were developed by international scholars from the INTREPID project

based on the literature (Edwards, Edwards, Ferner, Marginson & Tregaskis, 2007). However, the measures for the SHRM variable used in this thesis are derived from Huselid (1995), which has been incorporated into the questionnaire.

As detailed in Chapter One, the research questions posed in this thesis seek to explore the character of EV mechanisms in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. In particular, a model was developed to explore the effect of a SHRM approach and union presence on EV. This model utilises the different facets of employee voice – direct, indirect, minimalistic and dualistic voice – in MNEs. The model also explores the influence of predictor variables (See Section 4.3.11) upon EV, including: trade union presence, SHRM, country of origin, whether the company was established as a greenfield site and the firm's SHRM orientation, including size of the HR department, whether the company utilises shared HR services, presence of HRIS and Australian HR representation. The model controls for industry date of establishment and establishment size.

To answer the research questions, a quantitative research approach was utilised as this study aims to explore EV in foreign owned MNEs operating in Australia. A quantitative research approach allowed testing the validity of the propositions and assisted in answering the research questions. Senior HR managers of both foreign-owned and Australian MNEs were interviewed through the survey, which was carried out face to face. Overall, 171 people were interviewed as part of the investigation for this thesis. The data was then analysed using frequencies, cross-tabulations, one-way ANOVA and

logistic regression. This chapter explains in-depth how the study was conducted from the population development stage to the data analysis stage.

The chapter is structured as follows: first, background information on the study is presented. Second, the various steps involved in the research methodology of the study are explained. Third, tests used in the multivariate analysis are then discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes and identifies the limitations of the study and how these were addressed.

4.2 Background information

This research forms part of an Australian study that provides the first representative evidence of HRM policy and practices and employee involvement practices among MNEs operating in Australia. This Australian study is part of a larger international project – INTREPID, which involves associations between international scholars and research teams from the UK, Canada, Ireland, Spain, Singapore, Argentina, Norway, Denmark and Mexico. The Australian study focused on both Australian-owned and foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Two separate questionnaires were utilised for each, and in total 211 HR managers/directors of both Australian-owned and foreign-owned MNEs were interviewed as part of the study. Given the aim of this thesis and nature of the research questions, this thesis only focuses on the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia and 171 questionnaires were utilised as part of the study. This study is consistent with the international research approach. The next section provides a detailed overview of research methodology employed in this study.

4.3 Research Methodology

4.3.1 Research Process

One of the first and most important stages in research design is identifying and setting out the research questions and the most relevant research method. It is important to identify the problem and establish a framework that helps understand the context of the study (Wilkinson, 1991). A quantitative methodological approach was utilised for this study. The quantitative approach stems from a positivist foundation and is sometimes perceived as a scientific approach to inquiry (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1972). According to positivism, the world works by fixed laws of cause and effect; it contends there is a true reality that can be measured objectively. Furthermore, Brewerton and Millward (2001) suggest that quantitative researchers can make propositions of cause and effect between events within a value-free framework. A quantitative research approach is used to develop relationships between key concepts and ideas. Hence, a quantitative method is utilised in this study to answer the research questions posed, as these questions seek to understand how a SHRM approach and union presence influence employee voice in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia.

To answer the research questions a survey was administered face to face to a selected sample from the population of MNEs operating in Australia. Survey research is often used in research methodology designed to collect data from a specific population or a sample from the population. Survey research most commonly utilises a questionnaire or an interview as the survey instrument (Robson, 1993). The survey was adapted from

surveys utilised by the international project teams and tailored to the Australian context by the Australian research team. This study employs the use of a structured questionnaire as the survey instrument for data collection.

4.3.2 Population Development

The first research step involved the identification of the population of MNEs in Australia.

Before developing a comprehensive, reliable listing of all MNEs in Australia, it was important to finalise the definition of an MNE for the purposes of this study. In this study, a definition derived from the other international, comparative studies was used. A *foreign-owned MNE* is defined as any wholly or majority foreign-owned organisation operating in Australia, with 500 or more employees worldwide and 100 or more employed in its Australian operations. On the other hand an *Australian-owned MNE* is defined as any wholly or majority Australian-owned organisation with 500 or more employees worldwide and at least 100 people employed abroad.

Developing a reliable, widespread and representative population of all MNEs in Australia was a challenging, time-intensive and crucial process. One of the main reasons that this task was difficult and complex was the absence of a national body that recorded information on the presence and actions of MNEs operating in Australia as well as an incomplete and erroneous representation of company database listings in Australia.

Although the Australian economy is open to FDI and international trade, there is no official data that relates to MNEs' activities (McDonnell et al., 2011). Moreover researchers in the past have not been successful in defining the total population of MNEs and therefore have used readily available sources (McDonnell et al., 2011). Another challenge was that many of these listings – such as Business Source Complete, Mint Global and OneSource – did not have employment figures for the Australian operations, and obtaining this figure was crucial to determine if the organisation fulfilled the definitional criteria of an MNE.

Ideally the sources used should provide employment figures for the Australian and worldwide operations, the ultimate controlling company's country of origin, the correct contact details for the Australian headquarters and the name and details of the HR director/manager. Getting all this information on one or two lists was not possible. Hence, various available company listings (see Table 4.1 for a full list of all sources used) were sourced and cross-checked individually to develop a new database listing. This was a time-consuming and resource-intensive process as it was found that details from different sources were often contradictory.

After establishing the population of MNEs, an organisational-level survey was conducted. It was important to interview the most senior HR person, as he or she would be the most suitable candidate to answer the questions, having knowledge of the employment relations practices in the Australian operations. One of the challenges faced was double counting of the MNEs, as the intention was to speak with the national level operation of the MNE and not to each and every subsidiary operating in Australia. Thus,

it was important to identify the Australian headquarters of the ultimate controlling company. However, this was challenging as often a company had numerous subsidiaries. Moreover, as a lot of merger and acquisition activity had taken place, many delisted and bankrupt firms added to the challenges. Each company had to be checked individually utilising other sources such as company websites, annual reports, press releases or directly contacting the company. To get the most accurate and up to date information approximately 600 phone calls were made directly to the companies. The phone calls were made to address the issues of missing information and also contradictions that arose from the various sources that were utilised. Making these phone calls was difficult particularly and various problems were faced (See Section 4.3.7).

Table 4.1 List of sources utilised for development of population of MNEs in Australia

Business Source Complete	Data Monitor
Mint Global Database	OneSource Database
FAME Database	Dun & Bradstreet
Business Research Weekly Top 1000 Companies in Australia	American Chamber of Commerce Listing of US Firms in Australia
Top 150 Companies Listed on Australian Stock Exchange	Mayne Report of Foreign Firms in Australia
Mayne Report of Indigenous Firms with Foreign operations	Vault Top Australian Employers List
Indian Embassy List of Firms in Australia	German Embassy List of Firms in Australia
Norwegian Embassy List of Firms in Australia	World Investment Report 2008 of Top 100 Infrastructure MNEs by foreign assets
World Investment Report 2008 of Top 100 non-financial MNEs by foreign assets	World Investment Report 2008 of Top 100 non-financial developing country MNEs

Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) List of Member Organisations	Graduate Careers in Australia Website List of Member Organisations
Forbes Top 2000 Companies 2007 for Australian Owned Organisations	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Country Profiles Listed main Organisations with operations in Australia
Kompass	Business Week

After completing this process a population of 1,008 MNEs in Australia (see Table 4.2) was developed. Predictably US owned MNEs were the largest category of MNEs, followed by Australian-owned and UK MNEs. The services sector emerged with the greatest number of MNEs with 554 companies, followed by 392 manufacturing MNEs and a total of 62 MNEs operating in the primary sector.

Table 4.2 Australian MNE population

Country of Origin	No. in Population	Industry	No. in Population
US	407	Services	554
Australia	168	Manufacturing	392
UK	90	Primary	62
Japan	71	Total	1008
Germany	49		
France	39		
Nordic	26		
Asia	54		
Rest of World	44		
Rest of Europe	60		
Total	1008		

4.3.3 Sample Selection

A sample is a subset of a larger population and the purpose of sampling selection is to allow researchers to adequately represent the population and estimate some unknown characteristics of the population (Zikmund, 2003). Having an adequate sample representing the population enables researchers to make inferences and conclusions about the whole population. Once the total population was collated a random stratified sample of 549 MNEs was taken. The sample was stratified according to country of origin and sector. Consequently, 22 firms were eliminated from the 549 during the fieldwork stage. This was due to merger and acquisition (M&A) activity, delisted or bankrupt companies or because the companies did not meet the definitional criteria set out in this study. Therefore the final sample size was 527 MNEs.

The target respondent for this study was the most senior HR Practitioner – for example, the HR Director or Senior/Group Head HR Manager – for the MNE in Australia. The aim was to interview the most senior HR representative able to answer specific questions on the HRM practices and policies of the organisation's Australian operations. In a small number of cases where there was no overall company head office in Australia we sought to interview the most senior HR practitioner for the largest division or site of the company in Australia.

4.3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument chosen for the study was a structured questionnaire with eight sections that focus on HR practices in MNEs in Australia. It was derived by the research team in Australia from the questionnaires used by the international project teams in England and Ireland and adapted to the Australian context. As mentioned earlier, two questionnaires were developed: one for the foreign-owned MNEs and the other for Australian-owned MNEs operating in Australia. This thesis utilised the questionnaire that was developed for the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. It was written in plain English (Please refer to Appendix C).

4.3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken to determine the suitability of the survey instrument to the Australian context. The participants in the pilot study were the HR managers at the large MNEs operating in Australia. The pilot study intended to collect valuable feedback from actual targeted respondents. It was conducted to test whether the HR managers could easily understand the questions, which had been constructed in the survey instrument. The pilot study focused on the wording and presentation of the questions, the layout of the questionnaire as well as the time estimated to complete answering the questions. The pilot study generated feedback on the wording of a few questions as well as the time estimated to complete the questionnaire.

As stated, in this study the method of data collection was survey research and was specifically chosen due to the large sample size involved. The survey was administered through a structured face-to-face interview. This form of administration was chosen because of its success in yielding better response rates compared to postal, online or telephone methods, as well as its ability to reduce the amount of missing data (McKnight, McKnight, Sidani, & Figueredo, 2007). The questionnaire also guaranteed the respondents that their answers would remain confidential.

Before the face-to-face meeting was set up with the HR managers a letter signed by Professor Pauline Stanton and Dr Anthony McDonnell was sent out providing detailed information about the study (Please refer to Appendix D). Another letter was sent out signed by Professor Pauline Stanton and the Victorian research coordinator Helen Russell addressed to the relevant HR manager/director requesting co-operation and participation in the study (Please refer to Appendix E). These letters were used to promote the study and were endorsed by the Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI), which is the national association representing human resource and people management professionals. A separate letter signed by the national president of AHRI Peter Wilson was sent out with the first two letters encouraging participation (Please refer to Appendix F). AHRI also put information about the study on its website that was viewed by a diverse range of its members. This endorsement was particularly helpful as it encouraged and motivated HR managers to be a part of this study.

4.3.6 Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this study began in December 2009 and was completed in February 2011. Interviews were set up and conducted with the HR managers at the MNEs. The research method of mailing the questionnaire has been criticised because of its possibility of generating an insufficient response rate and inability to verify the responses given (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Thus the interviews were conducted face to face with a view to get a good response rate. The interviews took approximately 35 to 50 minutes to be completed. Once the fieldwork was completed a total of 211 interviews were obtained. Of the 211 interviews that were collected, 171 were foreign-owned and 40 were Australian-owned MNEs. As mentioned earlier this thesis focuses on the 171 foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Thus, the total overall response rate achieved was 40 per cent.

4.3.7 Challenges

Various challenges were encountered in developing the population and conducting the fieldwork for this study. One of the challenges was the fact that the listings of private sector company databases were out of date, inaccurate or otherwise incomplete. Due to the issues of reliability and comprehensiveness of the individual company databases, a listing of all the MNEs operating in Australia had to be created. This was an extremely intensive and time-consuming process as more than twenty different sources were utilised to prepare this list. Furthermore, this led to another challenge of double counting of all the MNEs due to duplication of firms. This was a major challenge as the

most appropriate person to speak to was from the national level operation of the MNE, rather than each subsidiary operating in Australia. To deal with this, each organisation had to be revived and cross-checked individually to make sure that the criteria for employment was met. Other details that needed to be checked were the country of origin, the contact details of the Australian headquarters and details of the most senior HR practitioner. To check these details telephone calls had to be made to the organisation directly, which was another challenge, especially when the name of the HR person was unknown. Many companies have a policy of not putting through outside calls when the name of the target person is unknown. Even in cases when the HR person's details were known, he or she was often reluctant to give out company information such as employee numbers, especially for the ultimate controlling company. Thus, ensuring that each company was only represented once and determining the country of origin of the MNE was challenging. Furthermore in the fieldwork stage, setting up the interview was particularly challenging, as the HR practitioners were always extremely busy. This was also extremely time-consuming and expensive as the interviews had to be conducted face to face.

4.3.8 Ethical Considerations

Since all the collection of primary data requires ethical clearance, and the quantitative methodological design required face-to-face interviews to be conducted with the HR managers of the MNEs, before the research methodology began it was imperative to get ethics approval from one of the universities participating in this study. The Ethics application was initially granted by University of Newcastle one of the four universities

participating. The application was made by Professor John Burgess who was the key investigator on the application along with all the other researchers (Please refer to Appendix A). Ethics for the project was also applied for at Victoria university by Professor Pauline Stanton and the research coordinator at Victoria university Helen Russell. This was granted on the 6th August, 2011 (Please refer to Appendix B).

4.3.9 Data Entry

Following the data collection, the next phase was data entry. Once the questionnaires were completed they were double-checked and all the data was entered manually into the SPSS software. A data file was created for the foreign-owned MNEs. The variables were defined and the data was typed and saved in the data files.

4.3.10 Data Cleaning and Analysis

Following the data entry, the data needed to be thoroughly examined and cleaned so any missing values were fixed. Missing data can be harmful to a research study and primarily results from errors in data collection or data entry, or from omission of answers from respondents (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial for remedies to be provided for dealing with missing data in the analysis. Outliers or extreme responses may also influence the outcome of multivariate analysis. Thus methods to assess their impact should be considered.

Accordingly, the database was checked and any errors and missing data were identified. The impact of missing data was evaluated and outliers were identified. For example, if non-response bias existed and there was missing data, this bias was identified when the data were examined and remedies could be applied. The erroneous data were then corrected and the database was rechecked. Once the data were verified and there were no errors the next step was the analysis phase.

4.3.11 Model of EV

In order to go ahead with the analysis phase, it was important to develop a model of EV practices. Following Lavelle et al. (2010), EV practices were categorised as either indirect or direct practices. Respondents could identify up to ten direct practices and two indirect practices if they were relevant to their organisations' operations. The following thresholds were used for indirect EV: union recognition at all sites; and non-union structures of collective employee representation at all sites (e.g. JCC). Direct employee voice practices included the following: formally designated teams; quality control circles; meetings between senior management and whole workforce; attitude and opinion surveys; suggestion schemes; systematic use of management chain to cascade information; newsletters or emails; company intranet providing information to employees; meetings between line managers and employees; and open door policy. Further, the direct dimension of EV was categorised under three headings: participation, consultation and information sharing. These were ranked from strong to weak and then totalled to come up with a median score. All variables were dummy coded. Thus, the model of EV was developed using the following methods. First, the suite of direct and

indirect EV practices was identified and used to develop the direct and indirect dimensions of EV. Cross-tabulations were then conducted to determine the dualist dimension of EV. The cross-tabulations indicated whether the MNE used both direct and indirect dimensions of EV. Lastly, cross-tabulations were again used to determine the minimalist dimension of EV. The cross-tabs helped distinguish MNEs that have no direct or indirect elements to EV.

4.3.12 Dependent variables

EV mechanisms were characterised into four approaches: direct, indirect, minimalist and dualistic. Indirect EV practices comprised trade union recognition at all sites and the presence of non-union-based structures of collective employee representation such as JCCs. Direct EV practices comprised: formally designated teams; quality control circles; meetings between senior management and the whole workforce; attitude and opinion surveys; suggestion schemes; systematic use of the management chain to cascade information; newsletters or emails; company intranet providing information to employees; meetings between line managers and employees; and formal performance appraisals. Following Lavelle et al. (2010), each of the four EV approaches were dummy-coded: Indirect 1/4 1, Rest 1/4 0; Direct 1/4 1, Rest 1/4 0; Dualistic 1/4 1, Rest 1/4 0; and Minimalist 1/4 1, Rest 1/4 0.

4.3.13 Predictor variables

The predictor variables were identified from the literature review and are operationalised as follows:

Trade union presence. To determine the union membership size in the MNEs operating in Australia, respondents were asked to answer, “What proportion of the total number of employees in [Name of Company] in Australia are members of a trade union?” The following options were provided to respondents: “1-10%”; “11-25%”; “26-50%”; “51-50%”; and “76-100”. Low union presence is defined as between 0 and 25 per cent density of the LOG and high union presence is defined as between 26 and 100 per cent of the LOG. High (1) and low union presence (0) were coded as dummy variables.

Strategic human resource management approach. To ascertain if SHRM was used in the foreign MNE’s Australian operations and the Australian MNE’s local operations, participants were asked to respond using a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree” to the following items: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Australian Operations?” Participants were asked to rate each of the statements. “There is a distinct HR strategy in the company”, “The HR strategy is effectively integrated with corporate strategy”, “The HR strategy has a sufficient input influence on corporate strategy”, and “Our HR practices are integrated and consistent with each other”. This measure was developed for this study and is based on Huselid (1995) and a comprehensive analysis of the HRM

literature. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the factor structure of the measure. All four items loaded satisfactorily onto one factor. Reliability analysis was also conducted on the four items ($\alpha=.82$). The measure was coded as “SHRM”.

American country of origin. To determine the country of origin of the MNEs operating in Australia, participants were asked to answer the following question: “In which country is the operational headquarters of the ultimate controlling company located?” We constructed a dummy variable to indicate whether a national context was characterised by an American country of origin or the rest of the MNE country of origins (e.g., United Kingdom, Japan, France, Germany, Asia, etc.) For this study, American country of origin was coded as a dummy variable (AMERICAN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN=1, REST=0).

Greenfield site. In order to determine the method the company used to enter the Australian market and set up their operations, respondents were asked to respond to the following question: “Through what method did the current ultimate controlling company first establish in Australia?” Participants were asked to select a response: “a) Greenfield investment, b) Merger or Acquisition, c) Other (Please specify), d) Don’t Know”. The variable dummy coded “GREENFIELD” (1=Greenfield, 0=Other).

Shared HR services. We asked respondents about whether their HR function in Australia used “shared service” centres. This variable was coded as a dummy variable “Shared HR services” (Yes 1/4 1, No 1/4 0).

Australian HR representative. Managers were also asked the following questions: “Is there a body within the ultimate controlling company, such as a committee of senior managers, which develops HR policies that apply across countries?” If the respondent select “Yes” they were also asked: “Is there someone from the Australian operations on this committee?” The responses to these two questions were combined and developed into a variable that was dummy-coded as “Australian HR rep” (Australian HR rep on body 1/4 1, No HR policy formulation body exists but no Australian rep 1/4 0).

4.3.14 Controls

Industry. Three categories were developed that represented industry sectors: manufacturing and construction; service; and primary industries. Manufacturing comprised manufacturing all aspects of both heavy and light goods, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, engineering and electronic goods, as well as construction and utilities. The service industry included organisations that provided all aspects of services including financial and business, information and communications, consultancies, retail and wholesale, transport and other professional services. The primary industries category included mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing. Each category was dummy coded: MANUFACTURING=1; REST=0; SERVICE INDUSTRY=1; REST=0; PRIMARY INDUSTRY=1; REST=0). Service was used as a reference category and therefore is not included in the logistic regression model.

Establishment size. To determine the employment size of the MNEs in Australia participants were asked to respond to the question, “Approximately how many employees work within the Australian operations?” This variable was coded as a continuous variable, “EMPSIZE”.

Date of establishment of MNE’s Australian operations. To determine the MNE’s date of establishment in Australia, participants were asked to answer the following single item question: “When did the company establish in Australia?” This variable is coded as a continuous variable “ESTABLISHMENT DATE” (e.g., 1957, 1989, etc.).

4.3.15 Statistical Software

The data was analysed using version 19 of the IBM SPSS Statistics package. Various methods were used for the data analysis to help unearth the answers to the research questions. Elaborations on the methods used follow.

4.4 Data Analysis: Measures used in the Multivariate Analysis

This section provides an insight into the measures that were used in the data analysis. First, descriptive statics were conducted to present a quantitative description of findings and determine some emerging patterns in the data. Frequencies cross-tabulations and Cramér’s V tests were conducted. Following this, the model was applied to the data and further analysis was conducted to determine any key associations between the variables. One-Way ANOVA and binary logistic regression was conducted to determine the

impact of SHRM approach and union presence on EV mechanisms in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia.

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis was conducted and the raw data was transformed into a form that would present information to describe a set of factors in a situation. Descriptive statistics are used to illustrate and analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the form of frequencies and percentage. The main aim is to present quantitative description in a simplistic form that is straightforward and easy to comprehend.

4.4.2 Frequencies

Frequency distribution is used to condense and summarise large amounts of data in a useful and easy to understand format. Raw numbers are converted into percentages and provide a useful description of the data. Frequency distribution will be used as a means to make early inferences about the character of the population from the sample of 549 MNEs in Australia. Frequencies facilitate graphical representation of the data so the data can be displayed in a manner that is easy to comprehend. Through the frequencies basic statistics such as mean, mode, and standard deviation are used to describe the data set.

4.4.3 Cross-tabulations

Cross-tabulation aids the researcher in organising that data collected by group categories and classes to fit comparisons. It is a joint frequency distribution of observation on two or more variables. Cross-tabulations are an extremely useful and analytical tool designed to analyse categorical (nominal measurement scale) data (Barghoorn, 1996). This study utilises cross-tabulations to record the frequency of responses and also to make inferences about the different predictor variables: trade union recognition, SHRM approach, American country of origin, establishment size, whether the company established as a greenfield site, industry or sector, date of establishment and a SHRM orientation including HR department size, shared HR services, presence of HRIS and Australian HR representation. It also uses cross-tabs to determine the minimalist and dualist dimension of EV. The cross-tabs indicate whether the MNE uses both direct and indirect dimensions of EV. They also help to differentiate between MNEs that have no direct or indirect elements of EV. Furthermore, the cross-tabs help to determine the relationship between the dimensions of EV and the predictor variables.

4.4.4 Cramér's V Tests

The Cramér's V test is used further to the Chi square tests to determine correlation between variables. The Cramér's V test is a post-test and aids in analysing the strength of the association after the Chi-square has determined the significance between two

variables (Cramér, 1999). To determine the V, it is calculated by first calculating the Chi-square and then using the following equation.

$$V = \text{SQRT}(c^2 / (n(k - 1)))$$

where c^2 is chi-square and k is the number of rows or columns in the table (Cramér, 1999).

In this thesis, the Cramér's V test investigates proportion differences between the use of EV practices in the four EV archetypes (direct, indirect, minimalist and dualist). This test enables categorisation of MNE practices in Australia according to the four archetypes of EV.

4.4.5 One Way ANOVAs

The one-way analysis of variance is a method used for analysing the difference between two or more sampled relationships. It is a test that uses only one independent variable to compare mean differences in two or more groups. It assumes that the means are normally distributed and can be achieved by subdividing the total sum of squares. This thesis uses the one-way ANOVA test to analyse the differences between the four EV archetypes: minimalist, dualist, direct and indirect.

4.4.6 Binary Logistic Regression

Binary logistic regression analysis is a useful econometric tool that can be used to predict the presence or absence of a characteristic or outcome based on values of a set of

predictor variables (Hartman, 2000). Binary logistic regression was used to make inferences about the relationships between the EV archetypes and the predictor variables. It was run separately for each of the EV archetypes: direct, indirect, minimalist and dualist. Binary logistic regression is generally suitable to use when the dependent variable is dichotomous. The logistic regression coefficients can be used to estimate odds ratios for each of the independent variables in the model. The binomial logistic regression calculates *b*-weights or regression weights. However, these *b*-weights are not utilised to predict scores but they are instead applied to the logit, that is, the natural logarithm of the odds ratio. The odds ratio is somewhat like a probability and is the ratio of the numbers in one category to the number of cases in the other category. The logistic regression equation has the form:

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X$$

The rationale for using binary logistic regression is to explore the four EV archetypes individually and understand their associations with the predictor variables.

4.5 Conclusion & Limitations

This survey is the first of its kind in Australia and has incorporated a number of methodological and conceptual innovations. The survey conducted presents the most representative study of EV in MNEs in Australia. It gathers data concerning not only the nature of employment policy and practice in MNEs but also the character of the

Australian operations and the larger worldwide firm. A key innovation from this study is that it is structured around three categories of employees. The first two groups – managers and the largest occupational group – are commonly explored but the third group – the key group – is a key innovation in this study. This research will be of value to practitioners in industry and policy-makers concerned with understanding the impact of EV in MNEs in Australia, particularly the influence of a SHRM approach and union presence. The survey helps enhance the understanding of the extent to which MNEs are a source of innovation in EV practices in Australia and the mechanisms and processes through which MNEs transfer practices into the country.

However, some limitations were encountered. First, this is a cross-sectional study, which represents a snapshot of MNEs' EV practices at one point in time. Future research should collect time series or panel data to further examine MNE EV practices in order to determine causation. Second, the study only measured the perceptions of the most senior HR manager. The limitation is that there can be a certain bias as only one person's view is only taken into account and it is their interpretation of the HR policies and practices in the organization. The problem is that there is no opportunity to capture the views of other stakeholders and it cannot be discovered whether or not these policies and practices are effective or not. Future studies should also incorporate the views of other senior managers such as the CEO, middle managers, line managers and employees themselves.

4.6 Summary

This chapter introduced and explained the research methodology utilised to undertake this study and each step that was undertaken was outlined. The sample selection, instrument design, data collection and data analysis including the statistical procedures employed for the data analysis were all explained in detail. Chapter Five presents the findings of the descriptive statistics and provides an insight into the character of EV practices in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Findings in relation to both direct EV and indirect EV are presented. The next chapter will also focus on the findings in relation to a SHRM orientation of the firm.

Chapter 5

Findings

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four discussed in detail the research methodology utilised to undertake this study. The chapter described and explained the sample selection, the procedures used to design the instrument and collect the data, and the statistical procedures used to analyse the data. Presenting data from the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia, this chapter provides an insight into the character of EV practices in MNEs operating in Australia. Section 5.2 looks at employee participation and involvement and presents an overview of the practices that constitute the direct EV mechanisms. The findings in relation to direct EV mechanisms and participatory mechanisms are presented. What MNEs are doing in Australia in relation to these practices is explored. The second section focuses on indirect forms of EV with a strong focus on trade unions. The third section discusses a SHRM approach. Factors that can contribute to an international SHRM orientation such as shared HR services, and Australian HR representation, are also explored in this section. This section also provides an overview of the importance of HR in MNEs in Australia as well as the presence of a SHRM orientation. The last section provides a summary with an overview of the key findings from this chapter.

5.2 Employee Participation and Involvement

It is important to focus on participation and involvement in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia, as evidence shows that involving employees in the decision-making process and empowering employees can enhance employee commitment contribute to the overall success of the organisation (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Ugboro & Obeng, 2000; Bartram & Casimir, 2007). There is a range of practices that an organisation can use to provide employees with a voice and involve them in decision-making. Table 5.1 presents a range of practices that make up the direct EV mechanisms along with the frequencies for each practice in the foreign-owned MNEs in this study. The direct EV mechanism was developed from the survey data and includes a range of items listed in Table 5.1, which are related to information sharing and participative voice mechanisms. The participatory mechanisms listed in Table 5.1 are commonly associated with direct EV with the exception of formal performance appraisals. However this thesis includes performance appraisal in the direct EV category, as it can be an avenue for organisations to facilitate worker growth and development, providing worker autonomy and to encouraging individualized two-way employee participation (Roberts, 2003).

Table 5.1 Direct EV mechanisms**(N=171)**

Direct EV mechanisms	Frequency
Formally designated teams	144(84.2)
Quality control circles	141(82.5)
Meetings between senior management and whole workforce	149(87.1)
Attitude and opinion surveys	141(82.5)
Suggestion schemes	100(58.5)
Systematic use of management chain to cascade information	161(94.2)
Newsletters or emails	167(97.7)
Company intranet providing information to employees	155(90.6)
Formal performance appraisals	138(80.7)
Meetings between line managers and employees	170(99.4)

Table 5.1 demonstrates that the MNEs sampled in the survey reported that they are high-level users of direct EV practices. It is evident that the MNEs use a range of participatory practices (formally designated teams, quality control circles, formal performance appraisals, attitude or opinion surveys) as well as communication mechanisms (meetings between line managers and employees, newsletters or emails, company intranet providing information to employees, suggestion schemes) and information sharing (systematic use of the management chain to cascade information, meetings between senior management and the whole workforce).

The most frequently used direct voice practice among MNEs was “meetings between line managers and employees”; 99.4 per cent of MNEs indicated they used this EV

practice. Another common way of providing information and communicating with employees was through “newsletters and emails” with 97.7 per cent and “company intranet” with 90.6 per cent of MNEs indicating that they used these practices. The vast majority (94.2 per cent) of MNEs also popularly used the practice “systematic use of management chain to cascade information” reflecting the presence of traditional forms of communication indicating a top-down management approach. The least common direct communication mechanism used was “suggestion schemes”, which only 58.5 per cent of MNEs indicated they used. Overall, Table 5.1 indicates that there is a strong presence of direct EV practices utilised by foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. It also tells us that although there is a presence of traditional top-down methods of involvement, there is also a presence of some practices that indicate a direct two-way communication between employees and line management.

Organisations were also provided with a list of communication mechanisms and asked to indicate which they saw as the most important. Hence, Figure 5.2 presents the most important communication mechanism that MNEs use to provide employees with a voice.

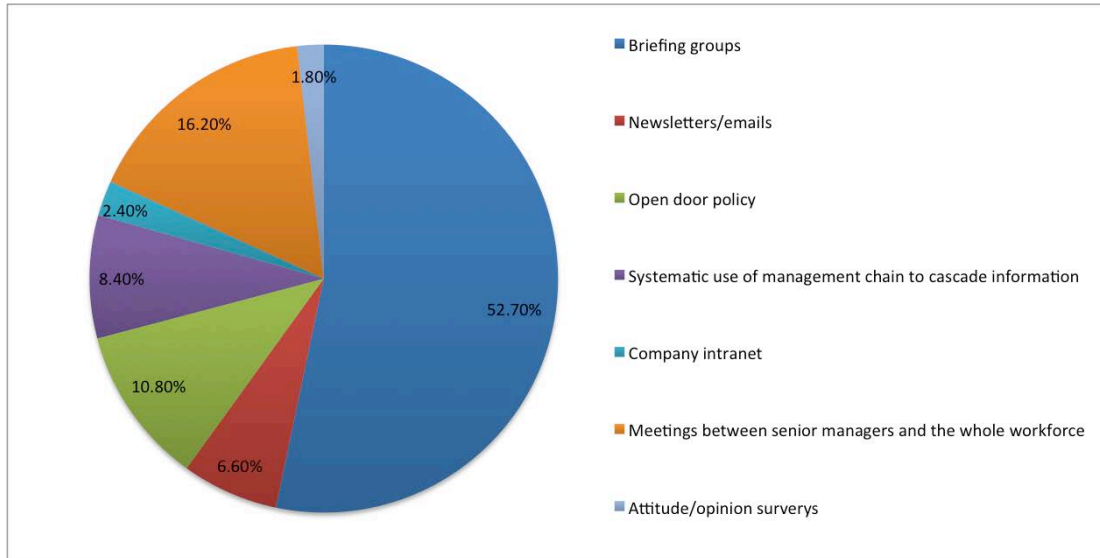


Figure 5.1 The most important communication mechanism

(N=167)

Figure 5.1 indicates that “meetings between line manager/supervisors and employees” also known as “briefing groups” were the most important communication mechanism reported by almost 53 per cent of MNEs. This is interesting as it indicates that there is a strong presence of a direct form of two-way communication through the involvement of line management in the MNEs. On the other hand only about 16 per cent of MNEs indicated that they had “meetings between senior managers and the whole workforce”. This is unsurprising since a majority of the MNEs in the sample were quite large. Only around 15 per cent of MNEs indicated that “systematic use of management chain to cascade information” and “use of newsletters or email” had a presence and were important. Every other form of communication scored low ratings, including the electronic forms of communication such as use of emails and company intranet to provide information to employees. Another important finding was the use of attitude

and opinion surveys were not regarded as being the most important communication mechanism, reflecting their low scores in terms of use as communication mechanisms. Overall there was a significant minority that indicated a traditional top-down approach towards information sharing and communication. The implication is that top-down communication flows were seen by HR managers to be important to the organisation. However, a strong presence of communication processes also flowed upwards from employees. This suggests that there is a presence of EV mechanisms in a strict ‘involvement’ sense flowing from employees to manager. In essence, the findings may suggest that involvement along with communication is the norm.

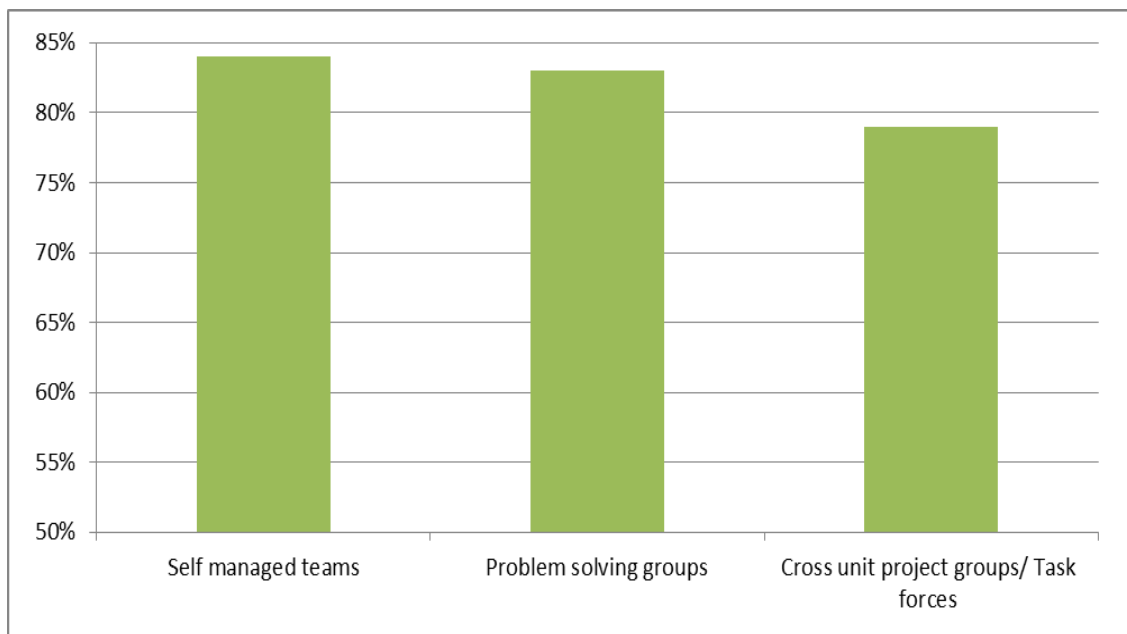


Figure 5.2 Employee Participation practices

(N=171)

Furthermore, there is a range of participatory practices that MNEs can use to provide employees with a voice in the organisation. The analysis in this thesis suggests that

there is a presence of some level of participatory practices such as self-managed teams, problem-solving groups and taskforces in the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia (See Figure 5.2). Almost 84 per cent of MNEs indicated that the LOG (largest occupational group) were organised into teams in which employees had responsibility for organising work and carrying out a set of tasks. Similarly, 83 per cent of the MNEs indicated that the LOG were organised into groups where employees discussed issues of quality, production or service delivery.

Another important finding revealed that 79 per cent of MNEs indicated there was a regular use of project teams and taskforces that included employees other than managers across different operations (See Figure 5.2). Thus, MNEs can provide a direct voice to the employees through these practices.

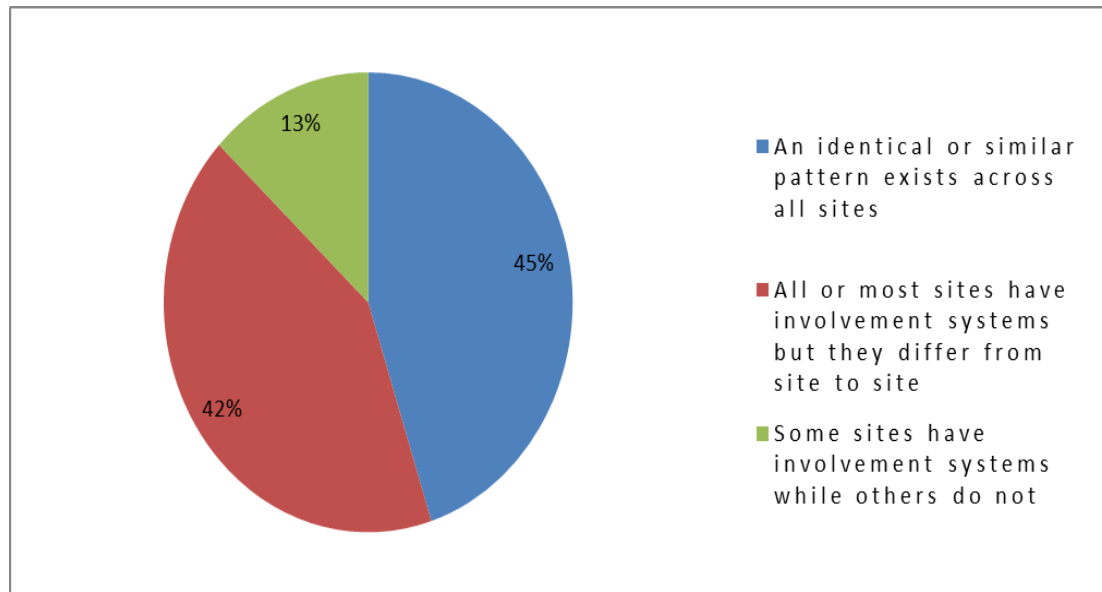


Figure 5.3 Employee involvement across Australian locations

(N=157)

It is also important to look at the pattern of employee involvement across the MNEs' operations across different locations in Australia. Employee involvement refers to the full range of overall employee involvement practices in the organization. In terms of the uniformity of communication systems across Australian sites, 45 per cent of the respondents had identical or similar patterns of employee involvement across all sites (see Figure 5.3). Similarly, 42 per cent of respondents indicated, "all or most of the sites have involvement systems, but they differ from site to site" (see Figure 5.3). Only 13 per cent of MNEs said "some of their sites have involvement systems while others do not" (see figure 5.3). These findings suggest that most MNEs have some form of employee involvement systems, which can be identical, similar or differ from site to site.

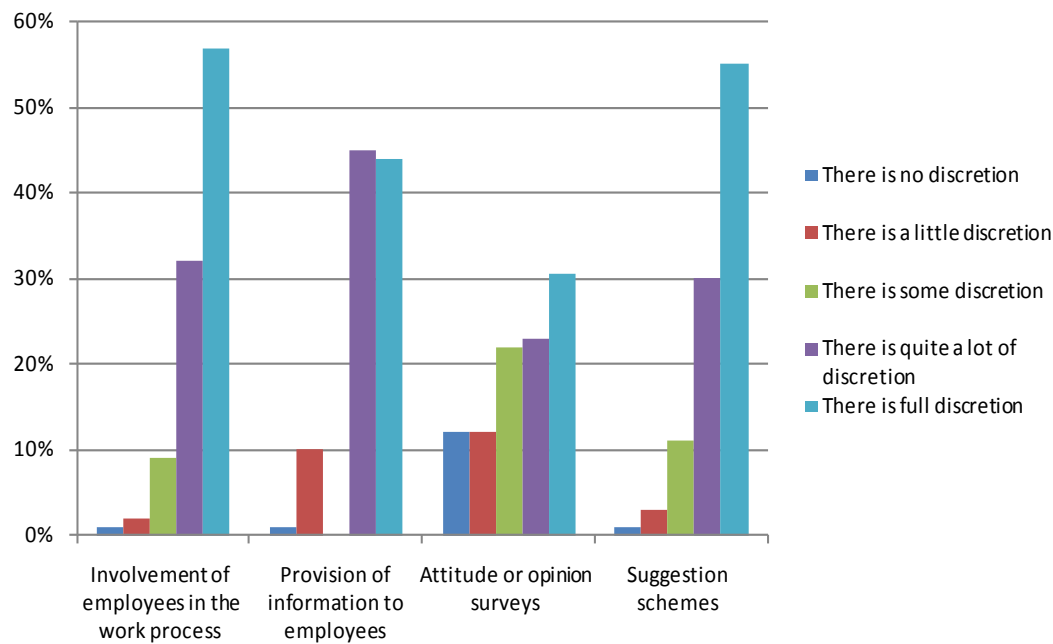


Figure 5.4 Discretion of the Australian operations over the determination of employee involvement and communication policy

(N=100 (suggestion schemes), N=141 (attitude/opinion surveys), N=171 (remaining two variables))

In terms of discretion and control over employee involvement and communication it is important to see how much discretion the parent company provides to its Australian operations. This can provide the degree of local autonomy exercised over communications and indicate the extent to which communications policies, details and processes are determined by head offices. In some instances the subsidiaries merely follow what the parent company says. The foreign-owned MNEs were asked a number of questions about the discretion of the Australian operations with respect to different forms of communication (see Figure 5.4). Significant findings reveal that, with respect to “involvement of employees in the work process”, in excess of 80 per cent of MNEs

indicated that full discretion or quite a lot of discretion was provided. Less than 15 per cent of MNEs indicated that there was little, some or no discretion in terms of involvement of employees in the work process. This is an important finding as it indicates that it is possible that the foreign MNEs are adapting to the Australian context and allowing local managers to have an input when decisions are made. In terms of “provision of information to employees” over 85 per cent of MNEs stated that full discretion or quite a lot of discretion was provided. Less than 12 per cent of MNEs indicated that they have little, some or no discretion in terms of provision of information to employees. The figures for “attitude and opinion surveys” indicate that 55 per cent of MNEs provide full or quite a lot of discretion and 45 per cent provide little, some or no discretion. This indicates that the parent company most likely prepares the attitude and opinion surveys which are used globally for all subsidiaries of the MNE. Lastly, with regard to “suggestion schemes” around 85 per cent of MNEs indicated that they have full or quite a lot of discretion and just over 15 per cent of MNEs said they had little, some or no discretion. This indicates that the foreign-owned MNEs provide opportunities for their subsidiaries to offer suggestions and feedback to the parent company (See Figure 5.4). These findings are very important as they provide a good insight into how much discretion is provided to the Australian subsidiary.

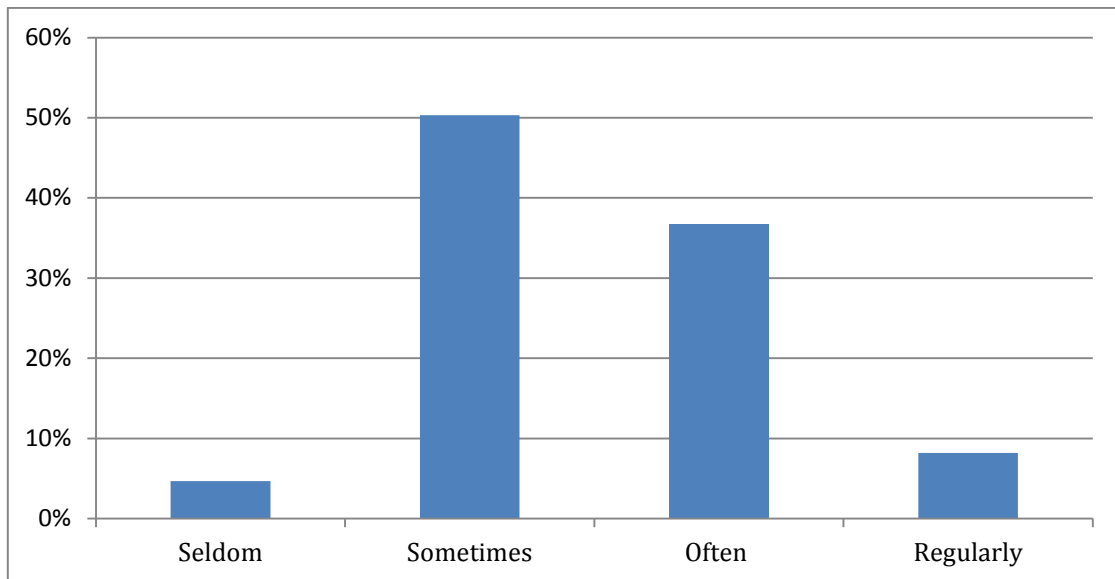


Figure 5.5 How often management act on employee suggestions

(N=171)

Additionally, in order to see if organisations value their employee's input, it is crucial to determine the extent to which management acts on employee suggestions. Although organisations can have suggestion schemes in place, whether the employee suggestions are taken into account when decisions are made varies. The findings indicate that around three-quarters of participants (87 per cent) stated that employee suggestions were acted on often or sometimes. In only 8 per cent of the cases did respondents report that they were regularly acted upon (see Figure 5.5). This does not reveal the frequency or quality of employee suggestions. This evidence suggests that in most cases the management decision to act on employee suggestions is positive.

Table 5.2 Extent to which information is reported to the LOG**(N=171, N=165, N=169)**

Item	Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Regularly
Financial situation (all MNEs)	1.2%	10.5%	16.4%	36.3%	35.7%
Investment for Australian operations plans (foreign MNEs)	26.7%	26.1%	21.2%	12.7%	13.3%
Staffing plans for Australian operations (foreign MNEs)	18.3%	25.4%	31.4%	16.0%	8.9%

It is also crucial to focus on the types of information that the MNE discloses to the employees to determine if the employees are in some way a part of major decision-making. The survey asked about the type of information that was disclosed to the LOG. Table 5.2 reports on the provision of financial information, investment plans and the staffing plans of Australian operations to the LOG. Almost 36.3 per cent of the MNEs stated that the financial situation is “often” and 35.7 per cent “regularly” reported while the comparable incidence for investment and staffing plans is around one quarter of firms. The least regularly reported item to the LOG was the staffing plans of the Australian operations. This tells us that most likely the MNEs are only providing selective information either “often” or “regularly”. With regard to staffing plans for the Australian operations, this could be a contentious area: for example, if the MNE plans to make jobs redundant it could lead to unrest among employees. This may be one of the possible reasons the MNEs do not disclose this information so readily to the employees.

5.3 Summary

Overall the evidence suggests widespread use of direct EV mechanisms in the Australian operations of MNEs. Teams and quality circles were present across most of the MNEs' operations. In terms of the channels of communication that were applied there was widespread use of traditional forms of communication (meetings, open door policy) and electronic forms of communication (emails, the intranet). JCCs and suggestion schemes were the least likely communication mechanisms to be used, which suggests that MNEs are communicators in a top-down sense. However, when asked to rate the importance of the communication mechanisms, by far the most important mechanism was meetings between line managers/supervisors and employees. Meetings between senior managers and the whole workforce were rated second. These results indicate that there is also a presence of some forms that are focusing on 'true' employee involvement. Respondents reported that they regularly act upon employee suggestions. The questionnaire asked about the type of information that was disclosed to the LOG. The financial situation of the MNEs' local operations is often/regularly reported in excess of 70 per cent of the responses while the comparable incidence for investment and staffing plans is around one quarter of responses. However, a significant number of MNEs provide information on key organisational facets to their workforces. Overall, there appears to be an emphasis on participatory mechanisms with a focus on teams and also the presence of top-down, management-directed and traditional communication mechanisms.

5.4 Trade Unions

In order to determine the indirect EV mechanisms present in MNEs operating in Australia, it is crucial to focus on trade union recognition and the presence of non-union based structures of collective employee representation such as joint consultation committees (JCCs) at all sites.

Table 5.3 Indirect EV mechanisms

Indirect EV mechanisms	(%)
Trade union recognition at all sites	35(20.5)
Joint consultation committees at all sites	24(14.0)

The findings of this thesis reveal that 20.5 per cent of MNEs recognised trade unions at all sites. Only 14 per cent of MNEs reported that there was a presence of JCCs at all sites in their Australian operations (See Table 5.3).

Table 5.4 Cramér's V Test: EV mechanisms versus union presence

EV Practice	In use Low union (%)	In use High Union (%)
Indirect employee involvement practices		
Trade union recognition at all sites	13(13.33)	18(46.2)***
Joint consultation committees	13(13.33)	6(15.4)
Direct employee involvement practices		
Formally designated teams	86(87.8)	31(79.5)
Quality control circles	80(81.6)	37(94.5)**
Meetings between senior management and whole workforce	84(85.7)	36(92.3)
Attitude and opinion surveys	82(83.7)	29(74.4)
Suggestion schemes	55(56.1)	27(69.2)
Systematic use of management chain to cascade information	94(95.9)	36(92.3)
Newsletters or emails	94(95.9)	39(100)
Company intranet providing information to employees	91(92.9)	31(79.5)**
Meetings between line managers and employees	97(99)	39(100)
Formal performance appraisals	90(91.8)	16(41.0)***

p< .10, **p< .05, *p<.01 (N=137)*

Furthermore, to determine the differences of employee involvement practices in low and high-unionised settings Cramér's V tests were conducted. Table 5.4 indicates that Cramér's V tests for proportional differences between the use of EV practices in low unionised and high unionised settings show that indirect employee involvement practices are more likely to be used in highly unionised settings across all sites. Findings reveal that MNEs with a high union presence are more likely to recognise trade unions in all sites (CV=.36, $p < .010$). The findings also reveal that highly unionised MNEs are more likely to use quality control circles (CV=.17, $p < .05$) and less

likely to use formal performance appraisals ($CV=.55$, $p<.01$) than their low unionised counterparts. Furthermore, the findings suggest that low unionised MNE's are more likely to use the company intranet to provide information to employees ($CV=.19$, $p<.05$) than highly unionised MNE's.

5.4.1 Trade Union Recognition

In addition, this thesis focuses on the effect of the US country of origin on trade union presence in the Australian operations to determine if there is any influence of this on union presence.

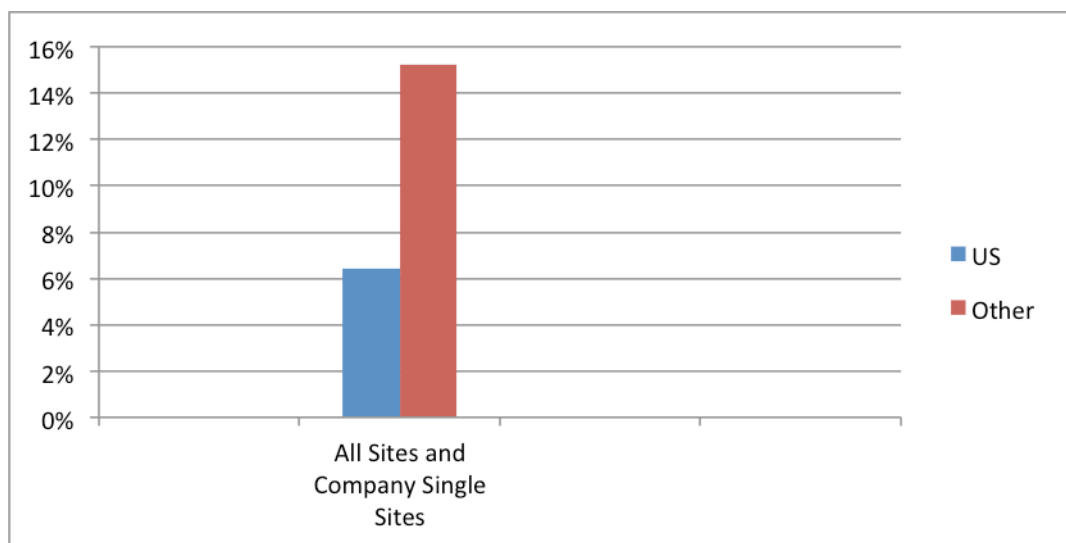


Figure 5.6 Trade union recognition by country of origin

(N=171)

Figure 5.6 illustrates union recognition by country of origin. A dichotomous variable is used whereby the MNE does not recognise unions or it recognises them in all sites and the company's single Australian sites. In excess of 15 per cent of MNEs indicated that they were likely to have union recognition at all sites and the company's single Australian sites. Only over 6 per cent of US-owned MNEs indicated that that they were likely to have union recognition at all sites and the company's single Australian site. The findings reveal that US MNEs are the less likely to engage with trade unions for collective bargaining purposes (See Figure 5.6).

Furthermore, respondents were asked to indicate the number of unions that all the MNEs recognise for the purpose of collective bargaining. A total of 89 per cent of respondents recognised one or more trade unions, for the purpose of collective bargaining. Nearly 19 per cent of MNEs recognised three or more trade unions. The mean response in the sample was 2.56 unions with a standard deviation of 1.98. This is an important finding and indicates that most MNEs recognise at least one union for collective bargaining purposes at their Australian operations.

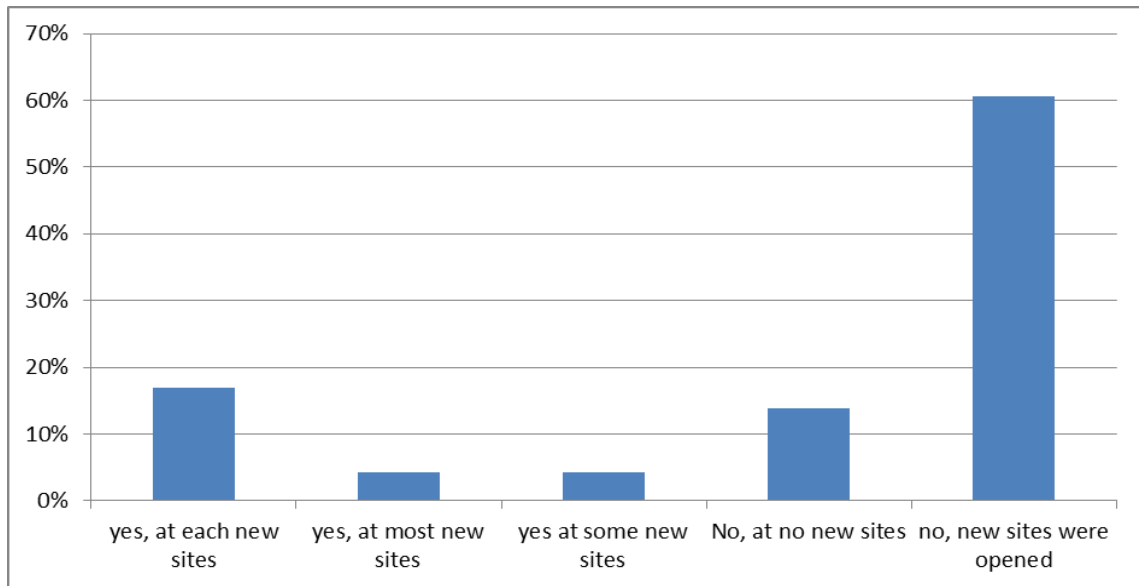


Figure 5.7 Trade union recognition in new Australian sites in the past five years

(N=89)

Respondents were also asked to consider any new sites established in Australia in the previous five years, and whether unions had been recognised for the purposes of collective employee representation. Over 60 per cent of respondents indicated that no new sites had been opened in the last five years. Of those that had opened new sites, 17 per cent reported that trade unions had been recognised at every site for the purposes of collective employee representation (See Figure 5.7)

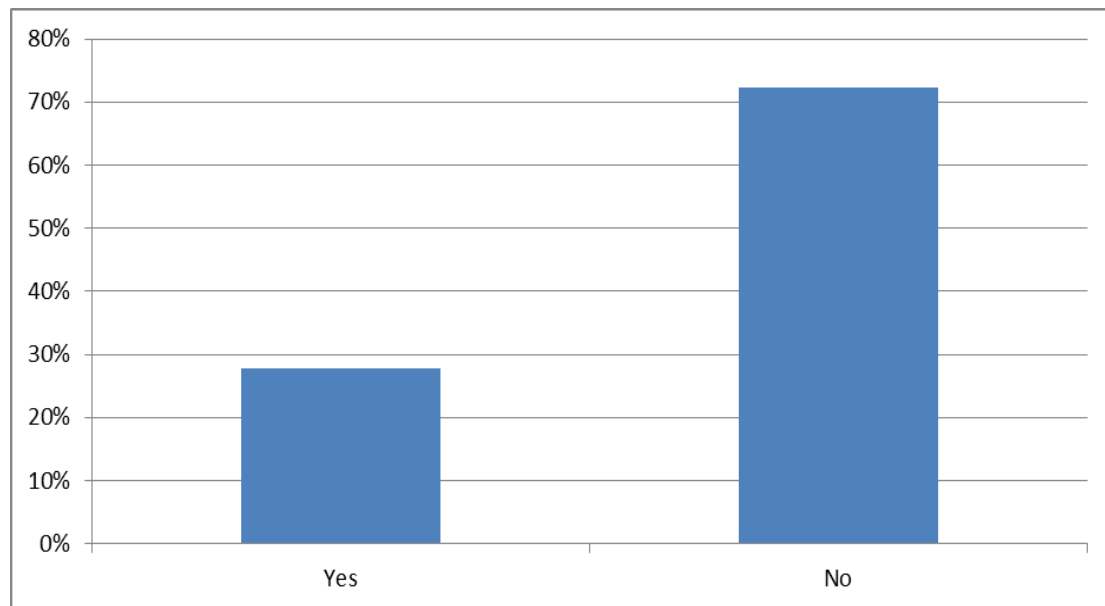


Figure 5.8 Changes have taken place in trade union recognition since acquisition(s) over the past five years

(N=47)

Moreover, to determine the importance of unions in new MNEs it is important to also look at the number of sites the MNEs acquired in recent years and if they were unionised or not. A total of 52.1 per cent of sites in Australia were acquired by MNEs operating in Australia in the last five years. Of the 45 MNEs that answered this question, the mean of 7.82 was reported for the number of sites MNEs have acquired in Australia in the past five years. Of the acquired sites, the mean for the number of acquired sites that were unionised was 2.36. Since the acquisitions, 27.7 per cent of MNEs reported that there had been new trade union recognition for the purpose of collective bargaining with 72.3 per cent of the acquired sites having no new trade union recognition arrangements (See Figure 5.8). Considering the survey took place in late 2009, 2010 and early 2011 this indicates that these MNEs were established 2004 onwards during the period of the Howard Government's previous IR regime.

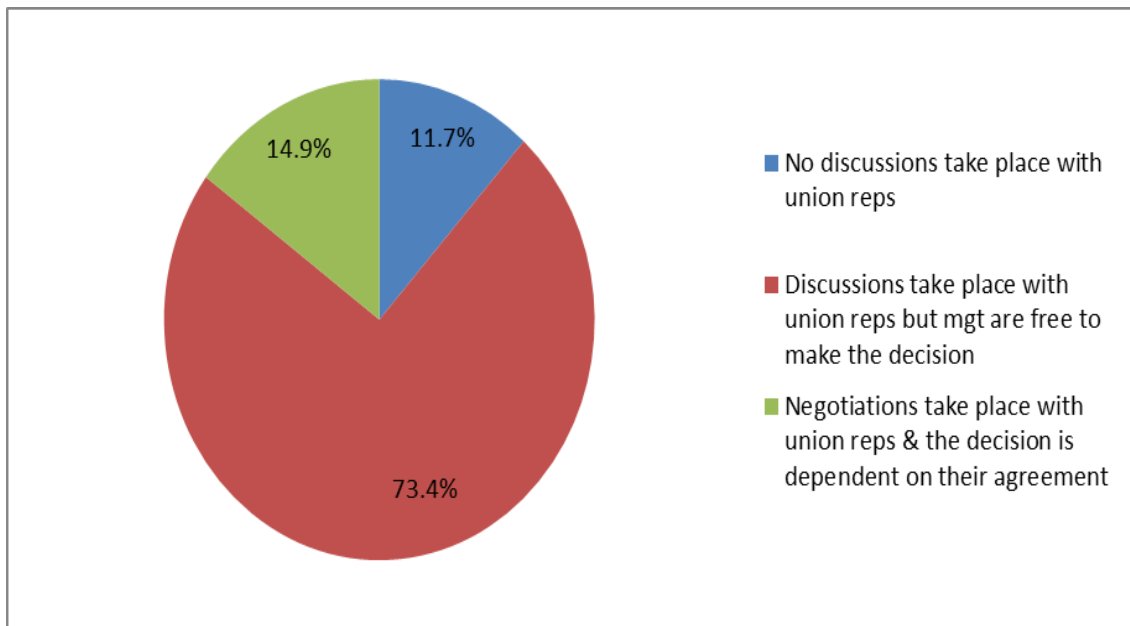


Figure 5.9 The role of trade unions in managing organisational change

(N=94)

The role of trade unions in managing organisational change is valuable to determine the impact of unions in the organisation. The findings of this thesis reveal almost three-quarters of respondents indicated that the role of trade unions in managing organisational change was best described by the statement, “discussions take place with union representatives in a way that their views are taken into account but management are free to make the decision”. A further 14.9 per cent reported that “negotiations take place with union reps and the decision is dependent on their agreement”. A total of 11.7 per cent of respondents indicated that “no discussions take place with union reps” regarding organisational change (See Figure 5.9). This clearly tells us that although the

MNEs might involve the trade unions to a certain extent in decision-making, ultimately the managerial prerogative prevails.

5.4.2 Trade Union Membership

In order to establish the level of union presence in the MNEs it is imperative to determine the proportion of the total number of employees in the Australian operations who are members of a trade union. Hence respondents were asked this question and categories were provided to participants if they were unable to provide a numerical response. The mean response of the total number of employees in the Australian operations who are union members was 17.7 per cent. Almost 31 per cent of MNEs reported no union members. Of those that reported trade union membership, 59 per cent of HR managers indicated that union membership was below 50 per cent in their MNE Australian operations. Just over 7 per cent of MNEs reported that trade union membership was between 76 and 100 per cent. It is important to note that there was a significant percentage of respondents who were unable to provide union membership.

These responses were investigated in terms of country origin and industry sector. The findings are presented below.

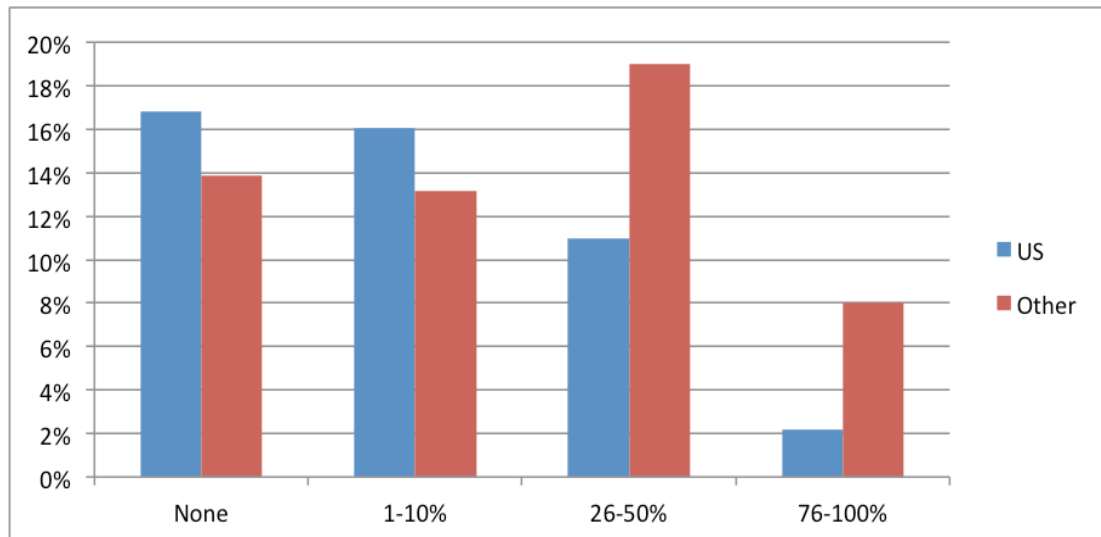


Figure 5.10 Trade union Membership by US Country of Origin

Union membership by country of origin was also analysed. The findings suggest that over 30 per cent of US MNEs reported that either none or only between 1-10 per cent of their total employees in the Australian operation were members of a trade union. A total of 11 per cent of MNEs indicated that between 26-50 per cent of their total number of employees were members of a trade union. Only 2 per cent of MNEs reported that between 76-100 per cent of their total number of employees were trade union members. Hence this suggests that US MNEs reported a low union membership figure compared to the other countries. However, this figure may be an artifact of the particular organisations included in the sample.

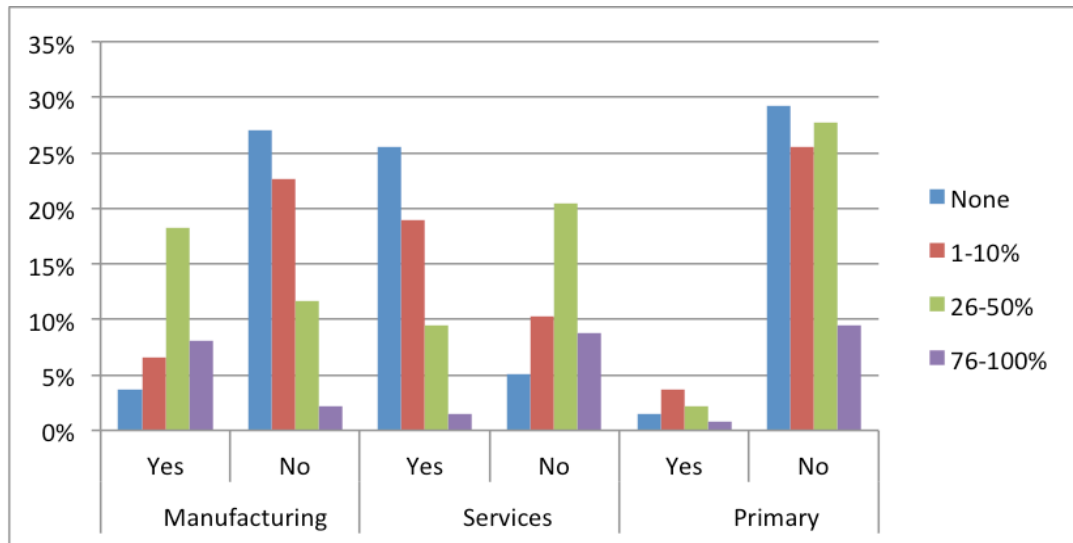


Figure 5.11 Trade Union Membership by Industry Sector

Union membership by industry sector was analysed. Findings largely echoed general Australian industry figures. MNEs operating in the manufacturing sector reported higher levels of union membership than the services and primary sector. In the manufacturing sector, only less than 5 per cent of MNEs did not have trade union membership. However, in the services sector 25 per cent of MNEs did not have trade union membership. Additionally, more than 28 per cent of MNEs operating in the primary sector – which includes agriculture and mining – did not have trade union membership.

**Table 5.5 Employment arrangements for the largest occupational group
(N=164)**

Union Collective Bargaining	27.08 %
Non Union Collective Bargaining	7.13%
Award Only	18.04%
Individual Level	52.63%

Furthermore, it is essential to determine which employment arrangements the MNEs provide to the largest occupational group. Respondents were asked to indicate “what percentages of the LOG in the Australian operations are covered by the following arrangements (union collective bargaining, non-union collective bargaining, award only and individual level arrangements)?” Union collective bargaining covered 27.08 per cent of the LOG (mean values) in the Australian operations; non-union collective bargaining covered 7.13 per cent of the LOG (mean values), while award-only provision covered 18.04 per cent of the LOG (mean values). Furthermore, 52.63 per cent of LOG in the Australian operations were reported as being covered through individual level arrangements (See Table 5.5). This is an extremely important finding and indicates the preference among MNEs and importance of individual-level arrangements. It can also demonstrate the impact of the Howard Government’s industrial relations policies in that companies had more scope to introduce individual agreements such as Australian Workplace Agreements.

Moreover, to determine the attitude of management towards trade unions, managers in MNEs were asked “to what extent do you agree with the following statements in respect to the approach of management-employee relations in the Australian operations?” First, “management prefers to deal directly with employees”. Second, “management would not mind dealing with unions should employees join one”. Overwhelmingly, almost 88 per cent of HR managers reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “management prefer to deal directly with employees”. Only 7.6 per cent of respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement. Also, 40 per cent of respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement, “management would not mind dealing with unions should employees join one”. However, a total of 36.4 per cent of managers reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. This indicates that in majority of MNEs the managers would prefer to deal directly with employees.

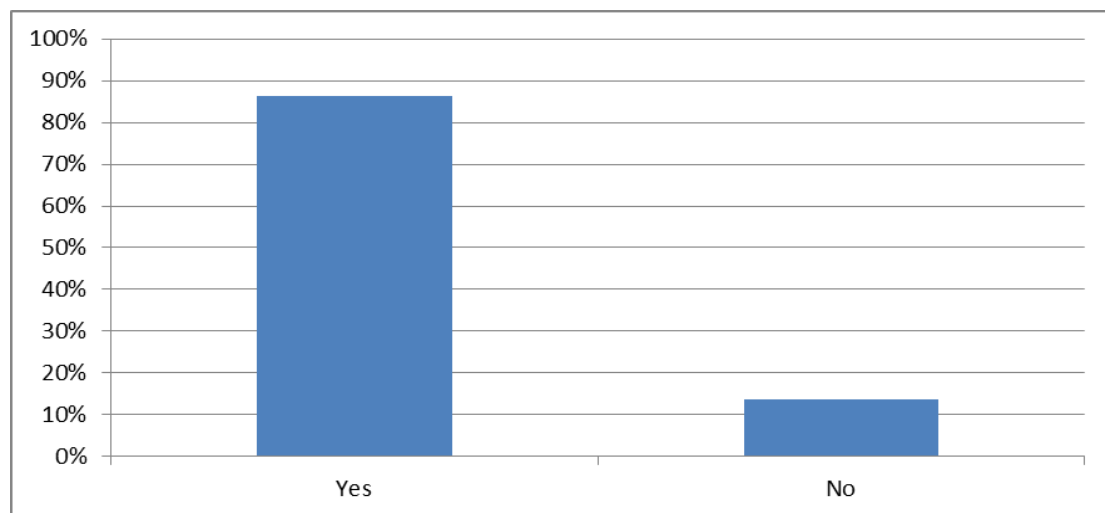


Figure 5.12 Membership of employer/industry associations

(N=169)

To understand the impact of industry or employer association membership respondents were asked whether their Australian operations were members of an industry or employee association. Over 86 per cent of the Australian operations reported that they are (See Figure 5.12). These significantly high numbers indicate the high use of employer and industry associations within the Australian context. For example looking at this from a comparative perspective, in European countries membership of an employer association was traditionally associated with an acceptance of trade unions and collective bargaining. Conversely Lavelle et al's (2010) research on MNEs as noted earlier shows a very high percentage of unionized and non-unionized MNEs are members of an employer association. They've interpreted this as indicating that MNEs are not concerned with the collective bargaining "stigma" or association but rather see employer associations as particularly useful for lobbying functions. Furthermore, Barry & Wilkinson (2011) note the trend internationally for employer associations to become more active in lobbying, opinion formation and developing political influence. Hence we can use why there is a great use of employer association in the foreign owned MNEs operating in Australia.

Table 5.6 Services utilised from employer/industry associations

Services	N	%
Information on Pay Rates	146	74
Advice on Occupational Health and Safety	146	77.4
Advice on Dismissals	146	67.8
Employment Legislation	146	86.3
Legal Advice	146	65.8

Respondents were also asked to indicate the type of information management sought from its industry or employer associations. A total of 74 per cent of respondents reported that their Australian operations sought information on pay rates from their employer or industry association. 77.4 per cent reported that they sought advice on OHS matters, 67.8 per cent use them for advice on dismissals, while 86.3 per cent stated they use them for advice on employment legislation. Finally, 65.8 per cent advised that they use them for other legal matters (See Table 5.6). These figures indicate that the MNEs use these associations particularly to gain advice in regard to OHS matters and also information on pay rates. In terms of importance, legal advice and advice on dismissals was less sought after, which indicates that the MNEs probably have their own legal departments that they consult for such matters.

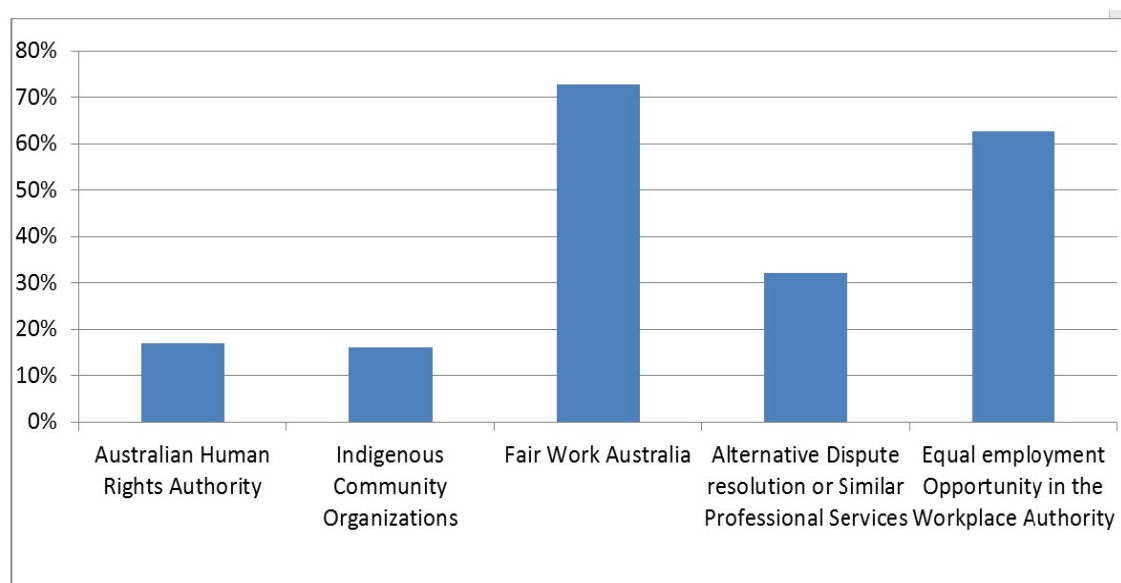


Figure 5.13 Percentage of MNEs that have had direct dealings with the following groups over employment issues

(N=166, N=168, N=169, N=168, N=171)

To determine which associations in Australia are commonly used by MNEs respondents were asked to indicate whether MNEs had dealings with a number of key bodies or associations. Almost 17 per cent reported that they have had direct dealings with the Australian Human Rights Authority, 16.1 per cent with indigenous community organisations, 72.8 per cent with Fair Work Australia, 32.1 per cent with alternative dispute resolution bodies, and 62.6 per cent also answered they have had direct dealings with the Equal Employment in the Workplace Authority (See Figure 5.13). The results indicate that Fair Work Australia and Equal Employment in the Workplace Authority are the most commonly used key associations followed by alternative dispute resolution, the Australian Human Rights Authority and indigenous community organisations. The importance of these bodies is that the bodies such as the Fair Work Australia and EEO in the workplace authority underpin the legal framework for

consultation mechanisms in Australia, which are extremely important for MNEs. Bodies such as the alternative dispute resolution and similar professional services as well as indigenous community organisations indicate whether outside agencies are involved in the workplace to undertake bargaining and dispute resolution.

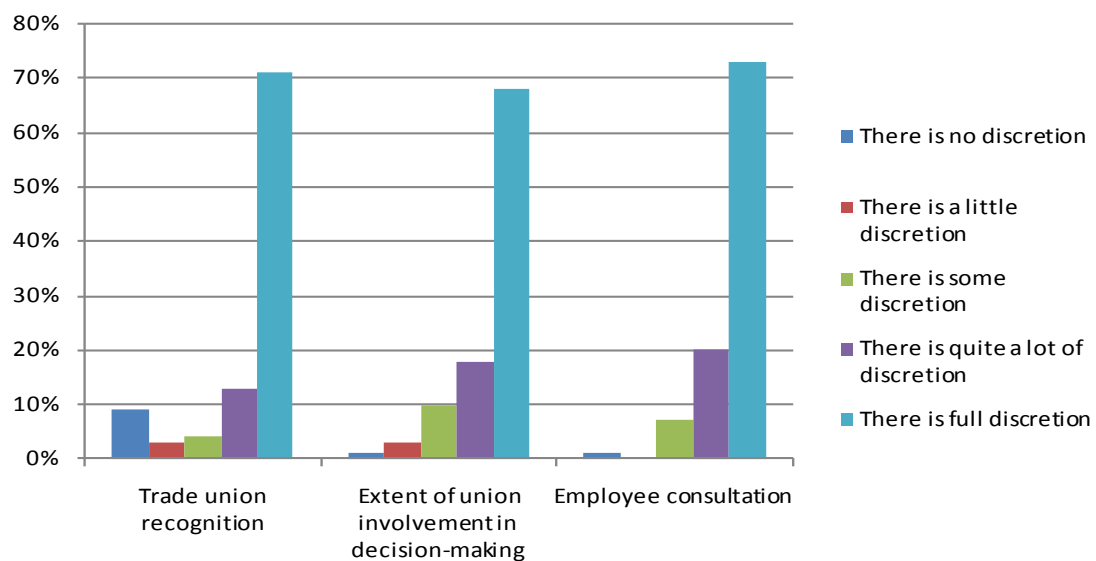


Figure 5.14 Discretion of the Australian operations over the determination of employee representation and consultation policy

(N=160, N=90, N=168)

Subsequently it is crucial to see how much discretion the MNE provides to its Australian operations over employee representation and consultation policies. Findings reveal that 71.3 per cent of HR managers in foreign-owned MNEs reported that they had full discretion over trade union recognition in their Australian operations. Only about 9 per cent reported that Australian operations had no discretion over the trade

union recognition policy. Moreover, close to 68 per cent of foreign MNEs reported full discretion over the extent to which they involved trade union in management decision-making. Further, 72.6 per cent reported that they had full discretion over employee consultation. Only 1 per cent of foreign MNEs reported having no discretion over the extent of union involvement in decision-making and over employee consultation (See Figure 5.14). This is an important finding and indicates that the Australian operations have a limit on the level of freedom over the determination of employee representation and consultation policy.

5.5 Summary

Overall, findings reveal that 20.5 per cent of MNEs recognised trade unions at all sites and only 14 per cent of MNEs reported that there was a presence of JCCs at all sites in their Australian operations. Findings also reveal that MNEs with a high union presence are more likely to recognise trade unions in all sites, are more likely to use quality control circles and less likely to use formal performance appraisals than their low unionised counterparts. Furthermore, the findings suggest that low unionised MNEs are more likely to use the company intranet to provide information to employees than highly unionised MNEs. With regard to trade union recognition, findings reveal that US MNEs are the least likely to engage with trade unions for collective bargaining purposes. The findings also indicate that most MNEs recognise at least one union for collective bargaining purposes at their Australian operations. Moreover, over 60 per cent of respondents indicated that no new sites had been opened in Australia in the last five years. Of those that had opened new sites, 17 per cent reported that trade unions

had been recognised at every site for the purposes of collective employee representation.

The findings reveal that although the MNEs might involve the trade unions to a certain extent in decision-making, ultimately the managerial prerogative prevails. Furthermore, with regard to trade union membership, the mean response of the total number of employees in the Australian operations who are union members was 17.7 per cent and 31 per cent of MNEs reported no union members. Results also suggest that US MNEs indicated a low union membership figure compared to the other countries. The findings highlighted the importance of individual level arrangements among MNEs and also that at the majority of MNEs, the managers would prefer to deal directly with employees.

The results also indicated the importance of employer and industry associations among foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Most MNEs use the associations to gain advice, particularly for employment legislation followed by advice in regard to OHS matters and also information on pay rates. In terms of importance, legal advice and advice on dismissals was less sought after. Furthermore, findings reveal that Fair Work Australia and Equal Employment in the Workplace Authority are the most commonly used key associations followed by alternative dispute resolution, the Australian Human Rights Authority and indigenous community organisations, indicating that the Australian operations have some limits over the level of freedom over the determination of employee representation and consultation policy.

5.6 SHRM Approach

Globalisation is bringing about a reorganisation of power on the world, national and subnational level and arguably the primary driver of globalisation is the MNE (Graham, 2003; McDonnell et al., 2011). This has also had an effect on the human resource management function, which has become more sophisticated and strategic over the years (Beer, 1997; Hays & Kearney, 2001). It can be argued that sophisticated human resource management strategies are underpinned by a unitarist frame of reference and focus on a combined commitment by employees to the organisation (Pyman, Teicher & Holland, 2006). In order to determine if sophisticated HRM strategies are increasingly being pursued by the foreign-owned MNEs operating in the Australian institutional context, this section explores the SHRM approach. SHRM is a long-term approach to managing human resources of an organisation that involves combining the HRM function with the business strategy of the organisation (Armstrong, 2011). It is important to focus on strategic HRM as the organisations can gain a competitive advantage by providing flexibility to the HR function to help achieve organisational goals (Gerhart, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Wei, 2006). In order to determine the presence of SHRM in the Australian operations of the MNE a series of questions that were derived from Huselid (1995) and a comprehensive analysis of the HRM literature were incorporated into the survey.



Figure 5.15 Summary responses regarding the Australian operations

(N=171)

Findings reveal that almost 84 per cent of HR managers reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “There is a distinct HR strategy in the company” indicating a strong presence of SHRM. Only 6.5 per cent of respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. Furthermore, 82.4 per cent of managers reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “The HR strategy is effectively integrated with corporate strategy”. Over 8.5 per cent of respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. Furthermore, 67.3 per cent of respondents reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “The HR strategy has a sufficient input influence on corporate strategy”. Almost 19 per cent of managers reported that they either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. Moreover, 76 per cent of respondents either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “Our HR practices are integrated and consistent

with each other” and 8.2 per cent per cent of respondents reported that they either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement (See Figure 5.15). These findings clearly indicate a strong presence of SHRM in the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia.

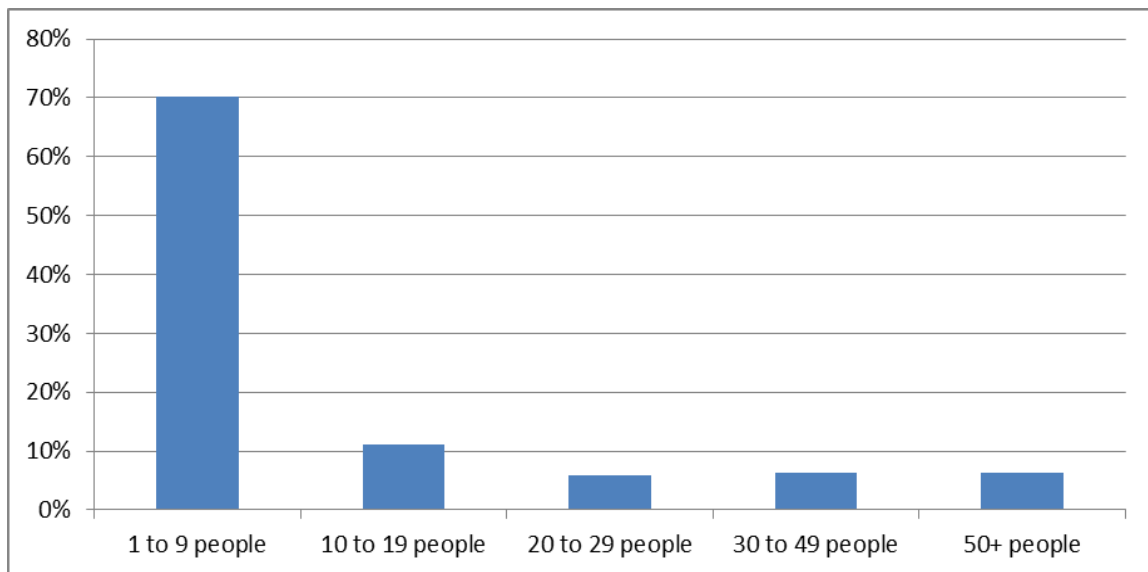


Figure 5.16 Number of people employed in the HR function of the Australian operations

(N= 171)

Another factor that can contribute to a SHRM approach is the size of the HR department. It is a significant factor that can tell us a few important things about the organisation. First, it can determine if HR is important, as organisations will invest resources into the HR function if they believe it is an asset to the organisation. Second, as HR specialists are essential and play a crucial part in many situations, it can also indicate if there is a strong presence of indirect EV mechanisms. To determine the size

of the HR department in Australian operations of the MNE, managers were asked to respond to the following question: “How many people are employed in the HR function of the Australian operation?” Findings reveal that 70.2 per cent of MNEs employed between one to nine people in their HR function of the Australian operations. Over 11 per cent of MNEs indicated that they employed between ten to nineteen people in their HR function of the Australian operations. Overall only 18.6 per cent of MNEs employed more than 20 people in their HR function of the Australian operations (See Figure 5.16). Interestingly, HR departments are overall quite small for such large companies. This could imply that many HR functions are done elsewhere, that is, at shared services centres or by line managers.

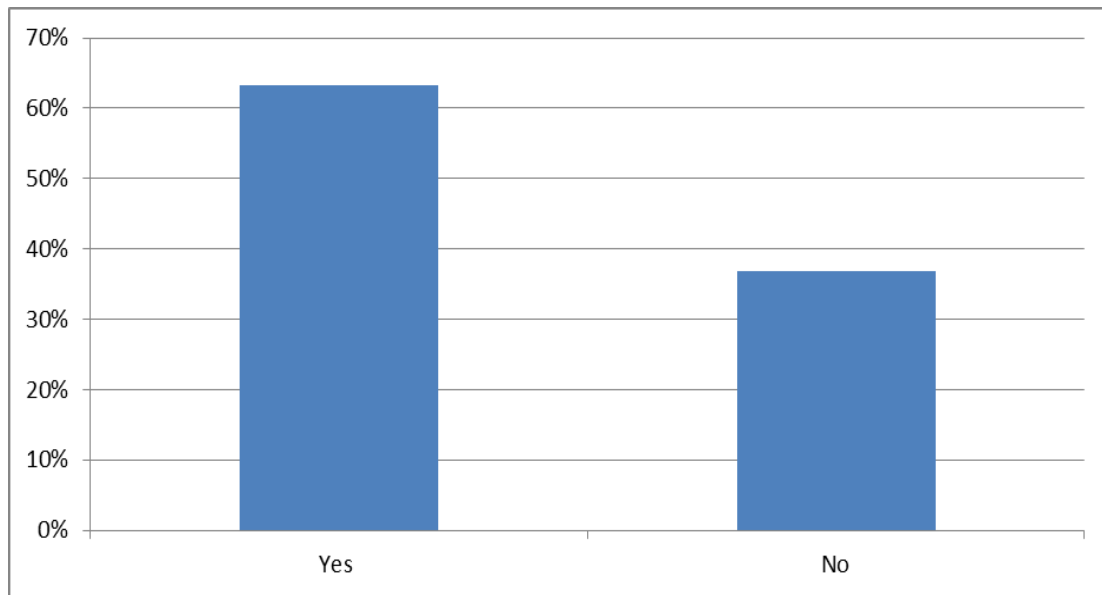


Figure 5.17 Utilisation of HRIS by ultimate controlling company

(N=171)

Another factor, the presence of HRIS, can also indicate the presence of a SHRM approach as it allows for simplified collection and analysis of vast amounts of employee information (Hussain, Wallace & Cornelius, 2007). This can assist organisations and employees in the long term with respect to all aspects of the HR function. It could be argued that organisations that invest in HRIS take HRM seriously and see its potential within the organisation. Respondents were asked to respond to the question, “Does the ultimate controlling company utilise a HR information system (e.g. PeopleSoft or SAP HR) that holds data relating to the firms international workforce?” Findings reveal that 63.2 per cent of MNEs do utilise a HRIS to manage data relating to the firm’s international workforce. 36.8 per cent of MNEs indicated that they do not utilise a HRIS to hold data regarding the firm’s international workforce (See Figure 5.17). Hence the

findings reveal that a significant proportion of the foreign-owned MNEs in Australia are quite dependent on HRIS and can use this to hold data and use this data for decisions relating to the firms international workforce.

5.6.1 SHRM International Orientation

In this thesis, as discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, two items have been used as indicators of the firm's SHRM international orientation. These are the presence of shared services centres and Australian HR representation globally. This sub section will focus on these two concepts.

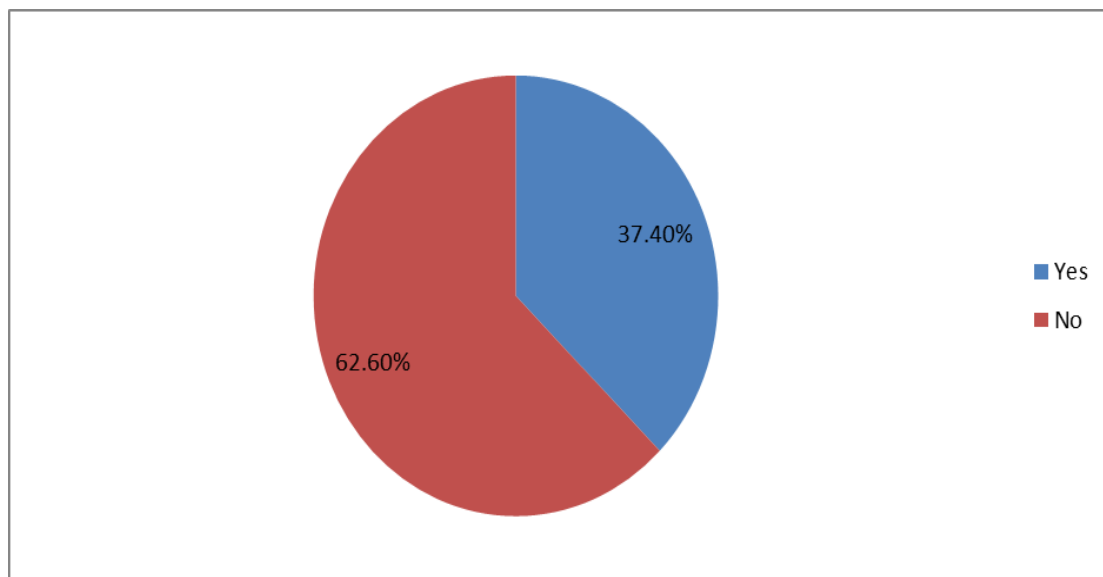


Figure 5.18 Utilisation of shared services centres by HR function

(N=171)

As previously argued in this thesis, the presence of shared services centres is an indicator of a SHRM international orientation. According to Cooke (2006), HR shared services centres deliver HR functions more centrally to subsidiaries. They are important in terms of a sophisticated international HRM orientation as these centres help HR departments reduce the administrative load and also improve the accuracy of HR information. Furthermore, the presence of shared services means that the foreign-owned MNE would have more control on the subsidiary's activities. In the long run HR shared services centres allow organisations to consolidate resources and achieve economies of scale. Managers were asked if the HR function in Australia makes use of shared service centres. Findings indicate that in the Australian operations of MNEs only 37.4 per cent of the organisations do make use of the shared services centres while 62.6 per cent do not make use of them (See Figure 5.18).

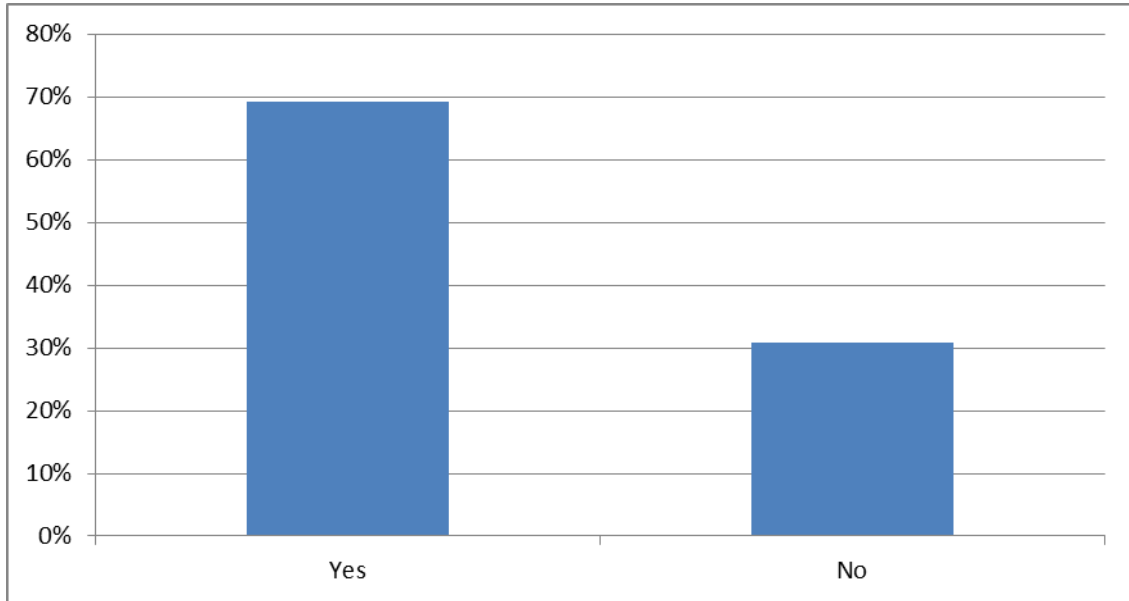


Figure 5.19 Development of HR policies by global committee with application across countries

(N=169)

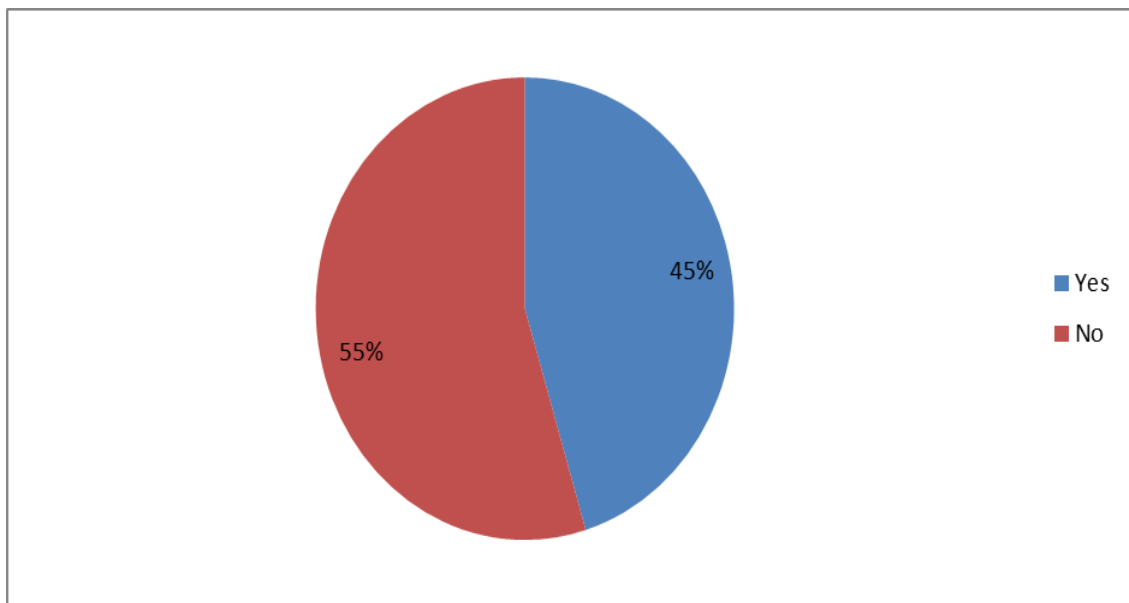


Figure 5.20 Australian HR representation globally

(N=117)

Another indicator of a SHRM international orientation is the level of Australian HR representation. This helps the MNE gain input from other parts of the operation in regard to the HR policies, and in the long run the feedback can help in improving HR policies overall. In order to determine if the foreign-owned MNEs give anyone from their Australian operations an input when global HR policies are developed, respondents were asked two questions. Firstly, “Is there a body within the ultimate controlling company such as a committee of senior managers that develops HR policies which apply across countries?” and “Is there someone from the Australian operations on this committee?” Findings reveal that 69 per cent of the respondents answered “yes” to the first question (See Figure 5.19) and 45 per cent agreed that “yes” there was someone from the Australian operations on the committee (See Figure 5.20). Overall, 55 per cent of managers responded “No” to the question, “Is there someone from the Australian operations on this committee?” (See Figure 5.20). This indicates that the Australian operations have some input when the global HR policies are developed. Furthermore it indicates that the HR function is seen as being important within the global operations of the MNE.

5.7 Summary

Overall, the findings indicate a strong presence of SHRM approach in the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. With regard to the size of the HR department, findings reveal that HR departments are overall quite small for the mostly large MNEs operating in Australia. This could imply that many HR functions are done by either line

managers or through the presence of shared services centers. Furthermore, the findings also reveal that a significant proportion of the foreign-owned MNEs in Australia are make use of HRIS and can use this to store employee data and use this data for decisions relating to the firms international workforce. In relation to a firm's SHRM international orientation, results indicate that in the Australian operations only 37.4 per cent of the organisations do make use of the shared services centers while 62.6 per cent of MNEs do not make use of them. Furthermore, with regard to Australian HR representation globally results indicate that the HR function is seen as being important within the global operations of the MNE.

5.7 Mode of Entry

Another important indicator utilised in this thesis is the presence of a greenfield investment. To determine the mode of entry of the foreign MNEs to Australia the following question was asked: "Through what method did the ultimate controlling company first establish in Australia?" Findings indicate that 47.1 per cent of companies first established in Australia through a greenfield investment. Furthermore, 49.4 per cent of companies first established in Australia through either a merger or acquisition. Only 3.5 per cent of companies first established through other modes of entry (See Table 5.7). Thus, this indicates that greenfield sites and mergers and acquisitions were the most common modes of entry utilised by the foreign-owned MNEs when they first established in Australia.

Table 5.7 Mode of Entry

(N=170)

Mode of Entry	%
Greenfield Investment	47.1
Merger or Acquisition	49.4
Other	3.5

5.8 Summary

Chapter Five provides some interesting insights into the character of EV mechanisms operating in Australia. The findings demonstrate MNEs' preference for participative and direct employee representation and consultation in their Australian operations. However, it is also clear that despite recent trends towards the growth in individual-level and decentralised employment arrangements in Australia, union representation and collective employment arrangements still remain an important feature within the Australian landscape. The results suggest that MNEs continue to engage with collective employee representation and consultation. Furthermore, the results also indicate a strong presence of a sophisticated SHRM approach in the Australian operations of MNEs. They also reveal that the primary mode of entry for MNEs into Australia is either through a greenfield investment or merger and acquisition. Moreover, findings reveal the primary and most dominant sector of operation of MNEs in Australia is the services sector, followed by manufacturing and mining. The next chapter will provide a further insight into the model of EV utilised by this thesis. It will also determine the

associations between the independent variables and the different EV mechanisms with the help of binomial logistic regression analysis.

Chapter 6

Findings: Application of the Model

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five discussed the findings, particularly the descriptive statistics, from the survey data and provided an insight into the character of EV practices in MNEs operating in Australia. Furthermore, Chapter Five provided an overview of the practices that constitute both direct and indirect EV in Australia. The SHRM approach and factors that can contribute to a SHRM international orientation such as shared HR services, and Australian HR representation were explored using frequencies and cross-tabulations. The importance of the HR function in MNEs in Australia was also highlighted in Chapter Five along with the presence of a SHRM international orientation.

Chapter Six first presents the descriptive statistics of the typology of the four EV approaches – direct, indirect, minimalist and dualist – which incorporate the model developed by Lavelle et al (2010) that this thesis utilises. Second, the chapter analyses the control variables that are utilised in this thesis. The control variables comprise the date of establishment, establishment size, and the industry of operation. Third, this Chapter presents the Cramér's V test which tests for proportion differences between the

use of EV practices in the four archetypes. In order to determine the impact of a SHRM approach and union presence on the four EV approaches presented in this thesis, the next section presents the logistic regression model of the four EV approaches utilised in this study. Nine external variables are included in the logistic regression model. The inclusion of these variables indicates that these variables will be likely to use one of the four EV archetypes and have an influence on them. Variables included in the MNL analysis are premised upon theoretical reasoning. The predictor variables used are trade union presence, SHRM approach, US country of origin, Greenfield site, and a SHRM international orientation for the purposes of the this thesis is identified by Australian HR Global representation and the use of shared HR services. Finally, a summary is presented with the conclusion of the findings.

6.2 Model of EV

This thesis utilises the model developed by Lavelle, et al. (2010), who drew upon the work of Tuselmann et al. (2006), which distinguishes EV based on a typology of four EV approaches: direct, indirect, minimalist and dualistic.

As previously mentioned, according to the model MNEs that adopt an indirect approach to EV may have a few direct mechanisms, and indirect voice mechanisms are more dominant. MNEs that adopt a direct approach to EV may have a few elements of indirect voice mechanisms; however, direct voice structures are more dominant. MNEs that adopt a dualistic approach to EV utilise a complete range of both direct and indirect EV mechanisms. A minimalist approach refers to the absence of voice channels that fit

into the direct or indirect categories of EV. Some voice structures may be present with this approach; however they are not enough to qualify as either a direct or indirect approach (Lavelle et al., 2010). Figure 6.1 indicates the frequencies of the four EV approaches adapted from the Lavelle et al. (2010) model. The minimalist approach represents the largest group followed by the indirect, direct and dualistic approaches.

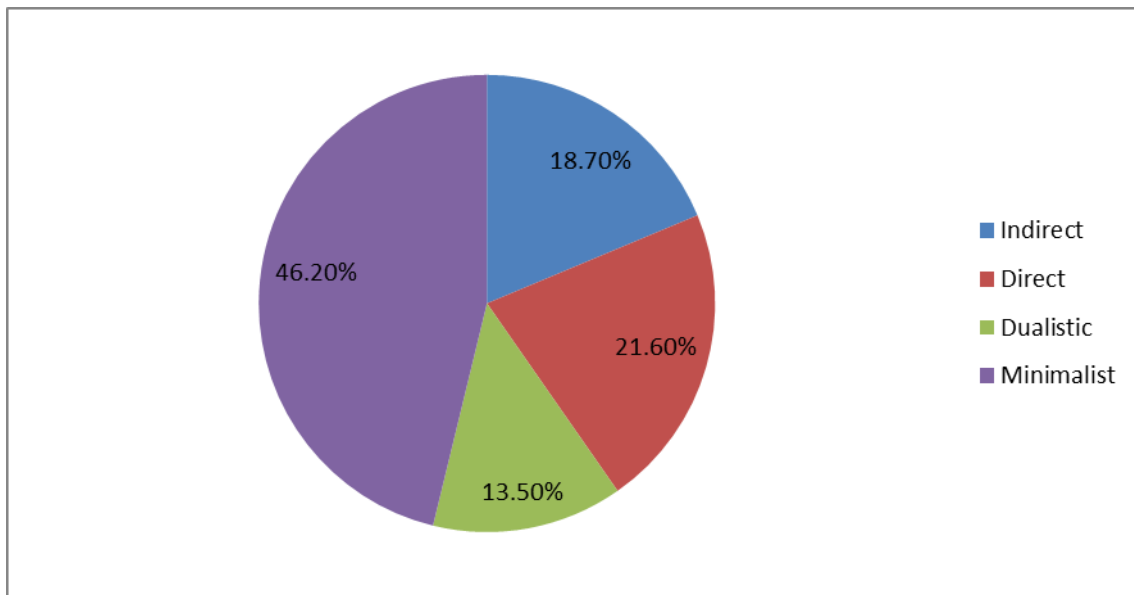


Figure 6.1 EV approaches: Frequencies

(N=171)

Despite the fact that the frequencies suggested that MNEs are strong users of a range of employee involvement and participation practices, the application of the model suggests that over 46 per cent of MNEs are following a minimalist approach to EV which includes some EV mechanisms but not enough to meet the threshold of other EV archetypes.

6.3 Control Variables

In order to determine the impact of a SHRM approach and union presence on EV in foreign-owned MNEs in Australia, various control variables were utilised. The date of establishment is a commonly used control variable as it may have an influence on the relationships. Findings indicate that the foreign-owned MNEs first established in Australia from the beginning of the colonies in Australia through to 2008. The survey commenced in late 2009 and finished early 2011. Findings also illustrate that of the 171 responses, the mean year for when the current company first established in Australia was 1976.

Another commonly utilised control variable is the size of the MNE in Australia. To determine this, participants were asked to respond to the question, “Approximately how many employees work within the Australian operations?” Findings reveal that over 49 per cent of MNEs employed 100-499 employees, nearly 20 per cent of MNEs employed 500-999 employees, more than 22 per cent of MNEs employed 1000-4999 employees and only a little over 8 per cent of MNEs employed 5000 plus employees.

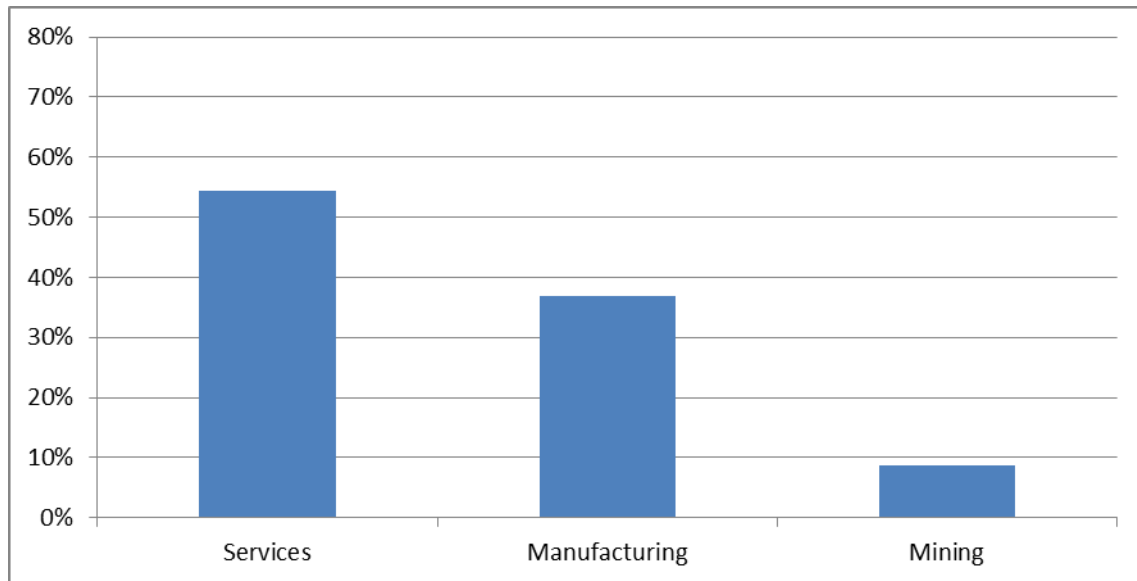


Figure 6.2 Dominant Sector of Operation

(N = 171)

Finally, another commonly used control variable is the industry of operation of the MNEs. This can also possibly have an influence on the impact of a SHRM approach and union presence on the EV mechanisms. Respondents were asked to indicate their dominant sector of operation. Findings revealed that 54.4 per cent of MNEs indicated the services sector was their primary sector of operation. A total of 36.8 per cent of MNEs indicated that the manufacturing sector was their primary sector of operation. Lastly, 8.8 per cent of MNEs indicated that the mining sector was their primary sector of operation (See Figure 6.2).

6.4 Proportion Differences between the Four EV archetypes

This section presents the proportion differences between the four EV archetypes, that is, the indirect, direct, dualist and minimalist and various EV practices.

Table 6.1 : The Four Archetypes and EV Practices

Indirect EV practices	Indirect%	Direct%	Dualistic%	Minimalist%
Trade union recognition at all sites	18(69)	0(0)	14(67)	0(0)***
Joint consultation committees	17(65)	30(77)	18(86)	40(47)***
Direct EV practices				
Formally designated teams	20(77)	38(100)	21(100)	64(75)***
Quality control circles	23(89)	39(100)	21(95)	58(68)***
Meetings between senior management and whole workforce	20(77)	39(100)	21(95)	69(81)***
Attitude and opinion surveys	18(69)	39(100)	21(100)	63(74)***
Suggestion schemes	5(19.2)	39(100)	21(100)	35(41.2)***
Systematic use of management chain to cascade information	22(85)	38(97)	20(95)	81(95)
Newsletters or emails	25(96)	39(100)	20(95)	83(98)
Company intranet providing information to employees	21(81)	39(100)	21(100)	76(89)**
Meetings between line managers and employees	26(100)	39(100)	21(100)	84(99)*
Open door policy	25(96)	39(100)	21(100)	82(97)

N= 171, * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Cramér's V tests for proportion differences between the use of EV practices in the four archetypes are presented in Table 6.1. The table shows that the four archetypes of EV

are able to categorise MNE practice in Australia. For example, each archetype behaves similar to the typology present in the literature review: the direct group has a high use of direct forms of EV practices relative to the minimalist and indirect groups; the indirect group has a high use of indirect EV practices; the dualistic group has a high use of both indirect and direct practices; and the minimalist group has a lower use of a number of indirect practices relative to the dualistic and direct groups. Moreover, the results show that indirect and dualistic groups have the highest use of JCCs and trade union recognition at all sites. Interestingly, the minimalist and direct group has zero use of trade union recognition at all sites.

Respondents were also asked their views on which EV practice was the most important mechanism used in the MNE. Meetings between line managers and employees (over 50 per cent across the four categories) were singled out as the most important, followed by meetings between senior management and whole workforce. A Cramér V test showed no statistical difference in the responses between the four groups ($CV=.21$, $P=n.s$, $N=167$).

6.5 The Logistic Regression Model

Logistic regression is used to test the model of EV utilised in this study for each of the EV archetypes individually to determine the influence of SHRM and union presence on EV. The control variables mentioned previously are also included in the model. The logistic regression model is as follows:

$$EV = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Industry Sector} + \beta_2 \text{ American Country of Origin} + \beta_3 \text{Employment Size} + \beta_4 \text{Date of Establishment} + \beta_5 \text{ Greenfield} + \beta_6 \text{ Union Presence} + \beta_7 \text{ SHRM Orientation} + \beta_8 \text{ Australian HR Rep} + \beta_9 \text{ Shared HR Services} + \epsilon$$

The model of EV is tested using four separate logistic regressions models, one for each of the archetypes. The first model (Model 1) tests the predictors of MNEs categorised by indirect EV mechanisms. The second model (Model 2) tests the predictors of MNEs categorised by direct EV mechanisms. The third model (Model 3) tests the predictors of MNE's categorised by dualistic EV mechanisms. The fourth model (Model 4) tests the predictors of MNEs categorised by minimalist EV mechanisms. Table 6.2 shows the logistic regression results for Model 1.

Table 6.2 Logistic Regression Analysis: Indirect EV Practices

Variables	S.E.	Exp(B)
Primary sector	.884	3.352
Manufacturing sector	.646	1.396
US Country of Origin	.588	.220***
Employment Size	.516	.891
Date of Establishment	.012	1.025**
Greenfield Site	.591	2.029
Union Presence	.633	2.139
SHRM	.092	.868
Australian HR Rep	.267	1.138
Shared HR Services	.547	.991
-2LLR	108.557	
Nagelkerke R ²	.255	

N = 134, **P* < .10, ** *P* < .05, *** *P* < .01

A total of 134 cases were included and analysed in the logistic regression model. The model accounted for 25.5 per cent the variance in indirect MNEs (Nagelkerke R^2). Table 6.2 shows standard error and exponential beta values for each of the independent variables.

Of the nine determinants investigated in the logistic regression, one coefficient was negatively and statistically significant: US country of origin at a 99 per cent confidence level ($P < .01$). Moreover, date of establishment was positively and statistically significant at a 95 per cent confidence level ($P < .05$). These results indicate that MNEs within the indirect EV category were more likely to be non-US MNEs, which is not surprising. However, it is surprising to note that these MNEs are more likely to be a younger establishment.

Table 6.3 shows the logistic regression results for Model 2.

Table 6.3 Logistic Regression Analysis: Direct EV Practices

Variables	S.E.	Exp(B)
Primary sector	.891	.981
Manufacturing sector	.612	.701
US Country of Origin	.483	2.034
Employment Size	.500	.745
Date of Establishment	.009	1.006
Greenfield Site	.540	1.652
Union Presence	.655	1.004
SHRM	.099	1.247**
Australian HR Rep	.250	1.051
Shared HR Services	.479	1.893
-2LLR	121.894	

Nagelkerke R ²	.170
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N = 134, *P < .10, ** P < .05, *** P < .01

A total of 134 cases were included and analysed in the logistic regression model. The model accounted for 17.0 per cent of the variance for the direct approach (Nagelkerke R²). Table 6.3 shows standard error and exponential beta values for each of the independent variables. Of the nine determinants investigated in the logistic regression, one coefficient was positively and statistically significant: SHRM approach (P < .05). This is not surprising and indicates that MNEs that follow a direct EV approach are likely to have a SHRM approach in place.

Table 6.4 shows the logistic regression results for Model 3.

Table 6.4 Logistic Regression Analysis: Dualistic EV Practices

Variables	S.E.	Exp(B)
Primary sector	1.219	.706
Manufacturing sector	.760	.533
US Country of Origin	.592	.910
Employment Size	.636	.747
Date of Establishment	.009	.995
Greenfield Site	.688	2.274
Union Presence	.789	4.870**
SHRM	.137	1.412**
Australian HR Rep	.287	1.803**
Shared HR Services	.592	1.297
-2LLR	85.092	
Nagelkerke R ²	.262	

N = 134, *P < .10, ** P < .05, *** P < .01

A total of 134 cases were included and analysed in the logistic regression model for the dualistic approach. The model accounted for over 26 per cent of the variance for the dualistic approach (Nagelkerke R^2). Of the nine determinants investigated in the logistic regression, three coefficients were positively and statistically significant at a 95 per cent confidence level: Union Presence ($P < .05$); SHRM orientation ($P < .05$); and Australian HR Representation ($P < .05$). These results are extremely interesting and demonstrate that MNEs within the dualistic EV approach were more likely to have a SHRM orientation, have a high presence of unionised employees and have an Australian representative on a body within the ultimate controlling company such as a committee of senior managers that develops HR policies, which apply across countries.

Table 6.5 shows the logistic regression results for Model 4.

Table 6.5 Logistic Regression Analysis: Minimalist EV Practices

Variables	S.E.	Exp(B)
Primary sector	.722	.699
Manufacturing sector	.527	1.372
US Country of Origin	.411	1.701
Employment Size	.421	1.238
Date of Establishment	.007	.984**
Greenfield Site	.472	.332**
Union Presence	.553	.296**
SHRM	.080	.839**
Australian HR Rep	.228	.636**
Shared HR Services	.436	.461*
-2LLR	152.638	
Nagelkerke R^2	.287	

N = 134, * $P < .10$, ** $P < .05$, *** $P < .01$

A total of 134 cases were included and analysed in the logistic regression model. The model accounted for almost 29 per cent of the variance in the minimalist category (Nagelkerke R^2). Table 6.5 shows standard error and exponential beta values for each of the independent variables. Of the determinants investigated in the logistic regression, four predictors were negatively and statistically significant: SHRM Orientation ($P < .05$); Greenfield Site ($P < .05$); Date of Establishment and Union Presence ($P < .05$); and Australian HR Rep ($P < .05$). Moreover, Shared HR services ($P < .10$) was negatively and statistically significant at a 10 per cent confidence level. MNEs within the Minimalist cohort are less likely to have a strategic HRM orientation and have a large presence of unionised workers and be established as a greenfield site. These findings are not surprising; however it is surprising to note that these MNEs are more likely to be older establishments. Also unsurprisingly, these MNEs are less likely to use shared HR services and to have an Australian HR representative on a committee that develops HR policies to apply across different countries.

6.6 Summary

This chapter presented the descriptive statistics of the typology of the four EV approaches – direct, indirect, minimalist and dualist – which incorporate the model developed by Lavelle et al (2010) that this thesis utilises. Furthermore, this chapter also presented the proportion differences between the use of EV practices in the four archetypes. Lastly this chapter presented the results of the logistic regression model of the four EV approaches utilised in this thesis. The results of the logistic regression analysis are very interesting and have provided support for many of the propositions

presented in Chapter Three. The findings reveal that a SHRM approach and union presence do have an influence on the EV mechanisms utilised in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. Apart from that, the US country of origin, Australian HR representation, year of establishment and greenfield investment are other factors that have shown to influence the type of EV mechanisms adopted by foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. The next chapter provides the discussion and conclusion for this thesis.

Chapter 7

Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

Chapter Six provided an overview of the results of the logistic regression model of the four EV approaches utilised in this thesis. The overall aim of this thesis was to explore EV in foreign-owned MNEs in Australia. This chapter discusses all the findings in this thesis and draws conclusions. Furthermore, this thesis investigates the character of EV practices in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. This thesis utilised an analytical framework developed by Lavelle, Gunnigle & McDonnell (2010) that classifies EV into four approaches – direct; indirect; minimalist; and dualistic – to determine the influence on EV of a SHRM approach, union presence and various organisational and institutional factors. This chapter begins by revisiting the research questions. The following sections discuss the findings and draw conclusions based on each of the research questions investigated in this thesis. Finally, a conclusion is presented.

7.2 Revisiting the Research Questions

The research questions that this thesis investigated were: First, what is the use and character of EV practices of foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia? Second, does the SHRM approach of the company and union presence within the company influence the use and character of these EV practices? Third, are there other characteristics of MNEs that influence EV practices, such as the country of origin, year of establishment, employment size, whether the company was introduced as a greenfield site and the company's SHRM international orientation? A thorough literature review was conducted exploring these questions and was reported in Chapter Two and propositions were presented in Chapter Three.

In order to address these research questions, a survey was conducted using a sample of 171 foreign-owned multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Australia. Chapter Three presented various propositions and some of these were examined using descriptive statistics in Chapter Five. Here, an insight into the character of EV practices in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia was presented. Furthermore, an overview of the practices that constitute both direct and indirect EV in Australia were outlined. The SHRM approach and factors that can contribute to a SHRM international orientation – such as shared HR services and Australian HR representation – were explored using frequencies and cross-tabulations. The importance of the HR function in MNEs in Australia was also highlighted along with the presence of a SHRM international orientation, which in this thesis included the presence of Australian HR representation

globally and shared services centres. Further the analytical framework developed by Lavelle et al (2010) that classifies EV into four approaches – direct; indirect; minimalist; and dualistic – was used to understand the associations between SHRM approach, union presence and various institutional and organisational factors on EV. Chapter Six presented the binomial-logistic regression which was carried out to determine any associations between the EV archetypes and the variables including presence of a SHRM approach and union presence in the company.

The next four sections present the findings in relation to the each of the research questions presented.

7.3 Research Question One

What is the use and character of EV practices of foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia?

The findings of the descriptive statistics provided a comprehensive snapshot of the current character of EV approaches adopted by foreign-owned MNEs within the Australian context. The findings of this thesis demonstrate that, foreign-owned MNEs are high-level users of a full range of direct EV practices with the exception of employee suggestion schemes within the Australian context. Although it is important to note that MNEs most frequently occupied the minimalist category of EV. Furthermore, there is a range of participatory practices that MNEs are using to provide employees with a voice in the organisation. These findings are consistent with the literature that

demonstrates MNEs are high users of direct voice practices (Pyman et al., 2006; Marginson et al, 2007; Boxall and Purcell, 2011) and also supports the work by Edwards et al (2007) which suggests that MNEs often consider a best practice approach across international operations to be most suitable considering the stresses of competitive pressures on their business. These findings suggest that foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia tend toward the US approach on the use of ‘best practices’ as opposed to the European view where MNEs are more likely to focus on “context” (Boxall, 1992; Purcell, 1993; Malik, 2009). However, this result could also be strongly influenced by the high proportion of US-owned MNEs in the population.

The findings also demonstrate that top-down communication flows were seen by HR managers to be important to the organisation. However there also was a strong presence of communication processes that flowed upwards from employees. This finding suggests that there is a presence of EV mechanisms in a strict ‘involvement’ sense flowing from employees to manager.

In essence, the findings may suggest that involvement along with communication is the norm. This is consistent with the literature, which indicates a growth in employee involvement and communication systems (Marchington, 1992), which can help facilitate good workplace relations (Thomas et al., 2009), improve the quality of management-employee relationships (Thomas et al., 2009), improve workplace performance (Clampitt & Downs, 1993), and contribute to trust and commitment to the organisation (Rodwell, Kienzle & Shadur, 1998). Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the literature suggesting that employee involvement practices are becoming more sophisticated over time and organisations are high users of direct EV practices (Budd et al., 2010; Marginson et al., 2010). However it is important to note

that this thesis did not examine the effectiveness of the quality of communication mechanisms.

Furthermore the findings also support Dundon et al (2006) who found the presence of a growing preference for more communication and information based channels of EV among MNEs rather than consultative type mechanisms. The findings are also consistent with Lavelle et al (2010) who found that the average incidence of weaker voice mechanism such as briefing groups and newsletters is higher than the presence of stronger voice mechanism such as trade union recognition.

The findings of this thesis also reinforce the central role that line managers play in implementing EV practices at the operational level (e.g. Purcell & Hall, 2012; Wilkinson et al., 2013; Townsend, 2013). Purcell and Hall (2012) suggest that line managers are central actors in encouraging and responding to voice and also play a critical role in the success of EV initiatives. Furthermore, the findings of this thesis also suggest that there is a presence of some level of participatory practices such as self-managed teams, problem-solving groups and taskforces in the foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. This finding is consistent with the literature and demonstrates the growth in the use of more sophisticated participatory mechanisms rather than just communication (Guest, 1999; Kochan, Katz & McKersie, 1994; Lawler, 1999; Marginson et al., 2010; Lavelle et al., 2010). However, it is also interesting to look at this finding from a culturalist perspective as the work by Hofstede (1980) suggests that certain practices are more acceptable to employees from certain cultures than others; for example, some countries have a more individualistic culture while others have a more collectivist culture. Furthermore, the work by Prajogo and Fugimoto (2006) suggests that employees from a collectivist culture are more prepared to work in teams than

someone from an individualist culture such as the US or Australia. Evidence in this thesis shows that while Australia is known to be an individualist culture, there is no evidence to support this assumption, as there is clearly an extensive use of self-managed teams, problem-solving groups and taskforces in MNEs. The findings of this thesis clearly show a presence of team-based initiatives by foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia.

The findings also suggest indirect EV practices are not that highly used, particularly trade union recognition at all sites and the use of JCCs across all sites. This finding is not surprising and consistent with the literature, which suggests that since the 1990s there has been a decline in union coverage in workplaces (Hodgkinson, 1999; Wilkinson et al., 2009).

The findings also revealed that the least regularly reported item to the largest occupational group (LOG) was the staffing plans of the Australian operations. This tells us that most likely the MNEs are only providing selective information either “often” or “regularly” to their LOG. Staffing plans for an MNE’s Australian operations could be a contentious area: for example, if the MNE plans to make jobs redundant it could lead to unrest among employees. Hence, if MNEs prefer to only provide selective information and this suggests that the type of information MNEs provide to their employees is limited. While, we have no direct evidence for this it does suggest that further research is needed to explore the quality of information provision from employers to employees. This finding could also highlight the weakness of trade unions in that they are not able to extract such key information from employers.

7.4 Research Question Two

Does the SHRM approach of the company and union presence within the company influence the use and character of these EV practices?

Despite the fact that there is less use of indirect EV practices such as trade union recognition at all sites and the use of JCCs across all sites, the descriptive statistics provided clear evidence that union presence influences the use and character of EV practices. For example, the findings revealed that most MNEs recognise at least one union for collective bargaining purposes at their Australian operations. Since the majority of the MNEs included in the population were significantly large, this finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that larger firms are more likely to have indirect EV practices and representative structures such as union recognition in place (Marginson, Armstrong & Edwards, 1993; Turner et al., 1994).

The findings also indicate that the Australian operations have a high level of discretion over the determination of employee representation and consultation policy. This finding is consistent with the literature, which indicates that organisations may try to use different options to increase information flows up, down and across the organisation and are likely to adopt high-involvement management practices for particular groups of employees viewed as “core” or strategically important to the business and hence are a source of competitive advantage (Lepak & Snell, 1999; Doelgast, 2008). The literature also suggests that these concepts are embedded deeply into the SHRM approaches that focus on high involvement (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boxall & Macky, 2007; Gollan,

2005; Yalabik et al., 2008). The findings of this thesis suggest that the companies are using high levels of discretion to employ a wide range of strategies many of them focusing on employee involvement.

Another finding suggests that MNEs in low-unionised workplaces are more likely to use an intranet, suggesting a more individual approach to communication and information sharing. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that MNEs from sectors that are characterised by low union density are less likely to be covered by traditional collective agreements and would be more likely to have direct EV mechanisms (Dolvik & Waddington, 2004; Marginson et al, 2007; Bartram, 2011).

The findings also revealed that unionised MNEs are more likely to use quality circles and less likely to use formal performance appraisals, suggesting that trade union presence has some impact on HRM and other managerial practices. This is consistent with the literature, which suggests that union presence has a positive association with human resource management (Slichter et al., 1960; Verma, 2005) with the exception of performance appraisals (Ng & Maki, 2008). However, it is consistent with the study by Bemmels (1987) who found that union presence reduces the effectiveness of some managerial practices undertaken to increase productivity (for example, performance appraisal). With regards to the influence of union presence on HRM aspects such as performance appraisal, this contradicts Clark's (1980) findings, which suggested that unionisation leads to productivity gains deriving largely from a series of changes in management procedures. Hence, it is important to note the role of unions and also that they might be adverse to appraisals.

Using the analytical framework developed by Lavelle, Gunnigle & McDonnell (2010), which classifies EV into four approaches – direct, indirect, minimalist and dualistic – the influence of a SHRM approach and union presence on the EV archetypes was also explored. The chapter now turns to the discussion of the findings for each archetype of EV.

Indirect EV

The findings raised in both the descriptive statistics and regression analysis reveal that the greater the trade union presence, the more likely that some form of indirect practices are utilised. This confirms evidence from the literature that trade union presence can have an effect upon the types of EV mechanisms used by an organisation (Guest, 1999; Kochan et al, 1994). It also is consistent with Benson's (2000) suggestion that indirect EV is present through unions in many organisations.

Direct EV

On the other hand, findings demonstrate that there is a group of MNEs who are focusing on a range of direct EV practices, and these companies are more likely to use an SHRM approach. This finding is not surprising and is consistent with Peetz (2006), who suggests that with the increased popularity of SHRM there has been a focus on a direct employer and employee relationship. Furthermore, the literature suggests that with the emergence of SHRM there has been an increased focus on information sharing, as well as collective decision-making through use of these union and non-union forms (Benson,

2000). It is also consistent with the work done by Bartram et al (2011), which suggests that an SHRM approach is arguably underpinned by a unitarist ideology that involves attempts by the organisation to align the interests of the workers with that of the organisation and create a direct relationship between management and workers.

Dualistic EV

However, there is another more complex picture emerging, as a number of MNEs are using a dualistic approach to EV and these companies are more likely to operate in a highly unionised environment as well as to utilise an SHRM approach. In addition, the institutional context can have an influence on an MNE's HRM practices. The work by McGraw and Harley (2003) suggests that foreign-owned MNEs are embedded in the institutional context in which they operate, and MNEs' subsidiaries in overseas countries have shown that HRM practices in local branches will more closely resemble indigenous HR practices than those of overseas parent companies. Furthermore, the institutional factors such as the labour market, legislation and political processes have a major shaping influence on the adoption of HR practices (Ferner, 1994). Benson (2000) argues that MNEs operating in the Australian institutional context would be likely to recognize unions because of their strong history and imperative role in Australia. While this generality is not completely supported the findings of this thesis suggest that this only applies to companies operating in highly unionized environments and they would be likely to recognize unions. Furthermore, these MNEs are practicing a more

sophisticated form of SHRM that recognises that working with unions, as well as engaging directly with employees, can be a beneficial company strategy, particularly where unions are entrenched (Cregan & Bartram, 2003).

Minimalist EV

The findings revealed that MNEs within the minimalist cohort are less likely to have a large presence of unionised workers and also less likely to use an SHRM approach. This finding is unsurprising and consistent with the literature, which suggests that practices of certain organisations are referred to as “bleak houses” or “black holes” (Sisson, 1993; Guest & Conway, 1999) as they often utilise an ad hoc and reactionary approach to management that lacks any kind of formality. The term ‘black hole’ refers to organisations that have minimalist practices such as little formalised individual HRM or collective IR structures and practices to manage their employees; hence “black hole” is characterised by the absence of union presence and human resource management practices (Guest & Conway, 1999). However, it is possible in the Australian context that these while these MNEs will meet the minimum standards governing the workplace under the Fair Work legislation around information-sharing, consultation and enforcement of workplace conditions, these organisations do not view HR strategy as being important (French et al., 2009; Cooper, 2010).

7.5 Research Question Three

Are there other characteristics of MNEs that influence EV practices, such as the country of origin, year of establishment, employment size, whether the company was introduced as a greenfield site and the company's SHRM international orientation?

In order to answer the third research question, organisational and institutional characteristics such as the country of origin, year of establishment, employment size, whether the company was introduced as a greenfield site and the company's SHRM international orientation were tested using the model of EV and logistic regression analysis. The results of the logistic regression analysis using the four EV approaches reveal some interesting associations. Here, a different pattern begins to emerge and although no impact of establishment size or industry effect was found, there were other characteristics emerging. The discussions of the findings in relation to the archetypes are presented.

Indirect EV

The findings reveal that MNEs within the indirect EV category were more likely to be non-US MNEs; in other words, they are more likely to be headquartered in Europe or Asia. These findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that the country of origin is a key factor by which MNEs may implement employment practices associated with their home countries and this can help distinguish MNEs from others based on their nationality (Edwards et al., 2003; Ferner, 1997). For example Ferner et

al. (2005) suggest that US MNEs are known to have a history of anti-unionism and a preference towards direct forms of EV. It is possible that a number of companies using indirect forms of EV are from countries such as Germany, Sweden, France and Japan, where working with trade unions or in more formal structures is the norm. Hence it is interesting to note the lack of US MNEs that appear in this category, confirming expectations from the literature (Kochan et al., 1986; Gunnigle et al., 2005).

The findings also reveal that MNEs within the indirect EV category are more likely to operate in newer establishments. It is possible that these MNEs have chosen to invest in Australia relatively recently and are working within a more traditional Australian approach (Cregan & Bartram, 2003). This is a surprising finding as it could be expected that these firms establishing in recent years would be taking advantage of the options in a more deregulated and less unionised IR environment.

Dualistic EV

The findings also reveal that there are a number of companies utilising a dualistic approach to EV. These companies are likely to have one element of the SHRM international orientation: that is, they have an Australian representative on their global HR committees such as a committee of senior managers that develops HR policies, which apply across countries. This finding is consistent with the findings of Wächter et al. (2006) who argue that the internationalisation of operations and management in firms has increasingly been reinforced by an international architecture within the HR function. Further, it is consistent with Edwards, Marginson and Ferner (2013), who

suggest that MNEs can maintain this international HR architecture by having a structure such as a worldwide committee with the responsibility for determining HR policy, as well as regular meetings and networking between HR managers in the different country operations. However, there was no significant association between MNEs using a dualistic approach to EV and the presence of shared services centres. It had been expected that the presence of shared services centres, by centralising administrative functions internationally, could give more autonomy to the subsidiary on more strategic and localised HR practices.

Minimalist EV

The findings demonstrate those MNEs that operate with minimalist approach to EV are more likely to operate in older establishments. This finding is surprising as it was expected that MNEs that operate as older establishments in Australia would be likely to have trade union recognition and more likely to be embedded in the Australian institutional context (Gunnigle et al., 1998).

Another finding revealed that these MNEs are also less likely to be established as a greenfield site. This is another surprising finding, because Gunnigle et al. (1998) suggest that if MNEs are established as greenfield sites they are less likely to inherit already existing industrial relations practices. Furthermore, the literature suggests that MNEs that establish as a greenfield sites have freedom to establish a new paradigm of work practices which foster stability and control and that suits their needs rather than being forced to adopt traditionally embedded workplace relationships (Emery, 1980;

Whittaker, 1986). Greenfield sites would also be expected to have well-developed employment relations practices (Blyton & Turnbull, 1992; Guest, 1989; Gunnigle, 1995).

The findings also suggest that these MNEs are less likely to have an Australian representative on a global HR committee. This is not surprising as on a range of factors SHRM is clearly not important to these firms, and an Australian HR representative on an international committee would not be a priority for these firms.

The work by French et al. (2009) suggests that these MNEs may carry out their minimum employee consultation requirements under regulation – especially around occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunities and anti-discrimination – which forces organisations to introduce processes around information-sharing, consultation and enforcement of workplace conditions, but these organisations do not put a high priority on engagement with employees.

Moreover, findings suggest that these MNEs are less likely to have shared services centres. Shared services centres bring value to MNEs by delivering HR administrative functions more centrally to subsidiaries (Cooke, 2006). However, the MNEs in the minimalist category put a low priority on HR. Hence this finding is not surprising given that MNEs that do make use of shared services centres are more likely to use sophisticated ER practices. Thus if MNEs operating in the Australian operations do make use of HR shared services centres it is an indication that these organisations see the value of HR and the centralisation of HR practices in their companies. Having

shared HR services in an MNE will allow HR managers to focus on strategic and value added activities as they do not have the burden of administrative activities to look after.

7.6 Key Contributions

This thesis used the model developed by Lavelle, Gunnigle & McDonnell (2010) as a framework to examine EV in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. A key contribution of this thesis is that it used this framework to analyse the influence of a SHRM approach and union presence on EV. Moreover, this model was used to develop propositions regarding the influence of various organisational factors to make inferences about their effect on EV practices in foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. This thesis has provided an insight in the character of EV practices of foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia and reveals that foreign-owned MNEs are high-level users of direct EV practices. Particularly, a key contribution to the literature is the influence of a SHRM approach, which comes out as a key influence on EV in both the direct and dualist EV approaches. Literature suggests that the growth of SHRM and the decline of trade unions go hand in hand as a SHRM approach is arguably underpinned by a unitarist ideology that involves attempts by the organisation to align the interests of the workers with that of the organisation and create a direct relationship between management and workers (Bartram et al., 2011), potentially circumventing the relevance and activities of unions (Burchielli and Bartram, 2009; Peetz, 2006). However, the findings of this thesis have demonstrated that SHRM can also be utilised in an environment where there is trade union presence such as with the dualist approach to EV. This is another key contribution of this thesis to theory.

Furthermore, an additional contribution is the revelation that trade union presence strongly influences the type and extent of EV practices in foreign-owned MNEs operating in the Australian institutional context. This thesis also sheds light on the various legislative changes in Australia since the early 1990s, with growing issues as to whether declining trade union density and decentralisation of collective bargaining are creating opportunities for more direct employer-employee relationships (Holland et al., 2009).

These findings of this thesis can primarily aid in higher-level research and assist academics to explore the concept of EV further. Furthermore, they can assist HR practitioners to determine how EV practices can benefit their organisations. Hence, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the IR and HRM management literature and a novel and innovative contribution to theory.

7.7 Limitations

The discussed results should be interpreted cautiously, given the limitations inherent in this study. While these limitations exist and need to be taken into account, they do offer several suggestions for future research. First, this is a cross-sectional study that represents a snapshot of MNEs' EV practices at one point in time. Second, the study only measured the perceptions of the most senior HR manager and did not include the views of other important organisational participants. Third, another limitation that arose

was common method bias since all the variables in this research framework were measured by one common method, the questionnaire. Common method bias distorts the true relationship between variables (Hair et al., 2006) and may thus lead to an incorrect conclusion about the result. In this study since both the dependent and independent variables were from the same source it may have inflated the likelihood of correlations being present.

7.8 Future research

Given the methodological limitations of this thesis there are a number of possible areas of future research. A future research program that overcomes the aforementioned limitations and incorporates the views of other senior managers such as the CEO, middle managers, line managers and employees themselves could be advocated. This methodological approach would involve the development of matched questionnaires for each group of managers and employees. This would enable the data to be analysed using a multi-level statistical approach and thereby capture the views of different cohorts of organisational members regarding EV. The analysis could be extended to the collection of time-series or panel data to further examine MNE EV practices, as well as the inclusion of objective individual and/or organisational performance data. The matching of individual and/or organisational performance data with employee and manager responses, particularly using a longitudinal research design, will overcome potential limitations of common method bias and enable researchers to more completely understand how EV approaches impact manager and employee attitudes and behaviors, and subsequently performance. Furthermore, future research could also examine the

relationship between the EV archetypes and employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, empowerment and overall individual performance. Future research could focus on unpacking these relationships as advocated by Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000 and Gollan 2005. The value of this thesis is that it sets a foundation to examine the effectiveness of EV in foreign owned MNEs that future research can specifically focus on. Thus the information gained from this thesis can enable future researchers in developing new areas of research measuring the effective use of EV practices. It can also enable researchers to make comparisons between those organizations that have a high quality of EV practices and organisations that are not serious about EV practices. Using more sophisticated categorical and continuous variables as opposed to dichotomous variables would also be worth pursuing in future research as evidence of greater sophistication in statistical analysis. Finally, this thesis has utilised a quantitative research approach to conduct the study; however in future, case studies that utilise a more in-depth qualitative approach could be utilised to bring a richer exploration of the phenomena under investigation.

7.9 Conclusions

In conclusion, this thesis has established that, while foreign-owned MNEs are high users of direct EV practices overall, trade union presence clearly influences the type and extent of these practices. The greater the trade union presence, the more likely that some form of indirect practices are utilised; and where trade union presence is lacking, the more likely a direct approach or a minimalist approach will be adopted. The other key

influence on EV is the firm's SHRM approach, which features strongly in both the direct and dualistic approaches.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval University of Newcastle



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

To Chief Investigator or Project Supervisor:
Cc Co-investigators / Research Students:

Conjoint Professor John Burgess
Mr Parth Patel
Dr Anne Vo
Professor Pauline Stanton
Doctor John Lewer
Doctor Anthony McDonnell
Ms Zeenobiyah Hannif
Doctor Timothy Bartram
Miss Gitika Sablok
Doctor Brendan Boyle
Mrs Vivien McComb
Mrs Helen Russell
Miss Marjorie O'Neill
Dr Karen Manning
Employment Relations Practices of
Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in Australia
15-Jul-2013
H-2009-0232

Re Protocol:

Date:

Reference No:

In accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct of Human Research, 2007* the University is obliged to monitor at least annually those projects approved by its Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to check:

- compliance with the approved protocol;
- status of project;
- progress to date, or outcome in the case of completed research; and
- maintenance and security of records;

Continuation of your HREC approval for the above project is conditional upon receipt, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. A report is due on each anniversary of the approval until the research is completed, which includes the period of data analysis or long-term follow-up of participants.

Even if the research has been completed in the year leading up to the current anniversary date, it is expected that a progress report be provided in line with the expectations of the *National Statement* with regard to the monitoring of research.

Should a progress report not be received by the due date your HREC approval for this project will expire and the research will need to cease. A new application for HREC approval will then need to be submitted and approved prior to the continuation of the research.

Our records show that you were granted approval for the above project on **27-Aug-2009** and therefore **a progress report is due next month.**

Please note that a reminder letter will be automatically forwarded should the annual progress report not be received by the 15th of next month.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator, or in the case of a student research project, the Project Supervisor, to submit the report by the due date.

Please go to the [Application Procedures](#) page of the Human Research Ethics website for details of how to complete and submit the **Annual Progress Report**

DUE DATE:
Last working day of next month

Professor Allyson Holbrook
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

For communications and enquiries:
Human Research Ethics Administration

Research Services
Research Integrity Unit
The Chancellery
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
T +61 2 492 18999
F +61 2 492 17164
Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au

RIMS website - <https://RIMS.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp>



Appendix B: Ethics Approval Victoria University

MEMO

TO Ms Helen Russell
 Victoria University
 City Flinders Campus

DATE 24/01/2011

Prof Pauline Stanton
School of Management and Information Systems
City Flinders Campus

FROM Dr Harriet Speed
 Chair
 Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee

SUBJECT Ethics Application
Dear Ms Russell and Prof Stanton,

Thank you for submitting this application for ethical approval of the project:

Employment Relations Practices of Multinational Corporations (MCNs) in Australia

The Chair of the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee assessed your application and resolved to **approve** the project as an 'external project' without further amendment in line with the ethical approval from the University of Newcastle.

The proposed research project has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been granted to 6th August 2011.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9919 4781.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Kind Regards,
Dr Harriet Speed
Chair
Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix C: Foreign Owned MNE Questionnaire



SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES OF MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES IN AUSTRALIA

Foreign-owned Questionnaire

Interviewer Name: _____

Date of Interview: Day ____ Month ____ Time Began (24 hour clock): ____:____

SECTION A: PROFILE OF THE COMPANY

A1. What is the name of the Australian company or operations that you work for?

A2. What is the name of the ultimate controlling company?

A3. In which country is the operational headquarters of the ultimate controlling company located? [Interviewer instructions: Ensure that a tax haven is not provided (e.g. Panama, Bahamas). If Australia then switch to indigenous owned questionnaire].

A4. Approximately how many employees work within the worldwide operations of the ultimate controlling company (please include employment in the Australian operations)?

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 1].

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) 500 – 999 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) 1,000 – 4,999 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) 5,000 – 29,999 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) 30,000 – 59,999 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) 60,000 + employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A5. Approximately how many employees work within the Australian operations of the ultimate controlling company?

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 2].

- a) 100 – 499 employees ☐
b) 500 – 999 employees ☐
c) 1,000 – 4,999 employees ☐
d) 5,000 + employees ☐
e) Don't Know ☐

A6. Approximately how many employees in your Australian operations work in each of the following core functions? [USE SHOWCARD 3. Interviewer instructions: Enter 0 if answer is none, do not leave blank].

- a) Research & Development DK ☐
b) Manufacturing operations DK ☐
c) Sales and marketing DK ☐
d) Customer service DK ☐
e) Business services (e.g. IT, payroll) DK ☐
b) Other, please specify _____ DK ☐

A7. Over the last three years, to what extent have the following indicators changed for your Australian operations? [USE SHOWCARD 4. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or don't know (DK) or not applicable (NA) option].

(1) Greatly Decreased (2) Decreased (3) No change (4) Increased (5) Greatly Increased

a)	Total number of employees	
b)	Employment in research and development	
c)	Employment in manufacturing	
d)	Utilisation of casual workers	
e)	Profit generation	
f)	Market share	

A8. How many sites does the ultimate controlling company have in Australia? Read out: A site is where 2 or more employees are based permanently and company holds more than a 50% shareholding.

A9. In how many countries (including Australia) does the ultimate controlling company have operating sites? [USE SHOWCARD 5].

- a) 2 countries ☐
b) 3 – 5 countries ☐
c) 6 - 10 countries ☐
d) More than 10 countries ☐
e) Don't Know ☐

A10a. Are you able to answer questions relating to employment practices in?

- a) All of the Australian operations ☐ => Go to A11a
b) A part of division only ☐ => Go to A10b

A10b. By what name would you like to refer to this part or division? Read out: From this point forward, please answer questions in relation to this part or division unless otherwise stated.

A11a. In which of the following sectors are the Australian operations engaged? Read out: Please state all that apply. [USE SHOWCARD 6].

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Agriculture, forestry & fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Utilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Manufacturing - food & beverages, non-metallic minerals, paper, publishing & printing, clothing & footwear | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Manufacturing - engineering, computer, electrical & medical equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Manufacturing - chemical & pharmaceuticals | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Services: financial & business | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Services: information & communication technology | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Engineering services/consultancy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) Retail and wholesale | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l) Transport & storage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m) Other, please specify _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask A11b if more than one sector was selected in A11a].

A11b. Which one of these is the primary sector in which the Australian operations operate?

[Interviewer instructions: Insert the relevant letter from A11a. Primary refers to revenue generation].

A12. When did the current ultimate controlling company first establish in Australia? Read out:

This refers to the date the existing parent company first established in Australia.

_____ Don't Know ☐

A13. Through what method did the current ultimate controlling company first establish in Australia? Read out: Please think of the first significant investment in Australia.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| a) Greenfield investment | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to A15a |
| b) Merger or acquisition | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to A14 |
| c) Other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to A14 |
| d) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to A15a |

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask A14 if the current ultimate controlling company first established in Australia through a method other than a greenfield site. This question attempts to identify how long the Australian operations were in existence prior to the most recent acquisition].

A14. When were the Australian operations established?

_____ Don't Know ☐

A15a. Do any of the following levels or divisions of business organisation exist in the ultimate controlling company? Read out: Please select all that apply. [USE SHOWCARD 7].

- | | Yes | No | DK |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) International product, service or brand based divisions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Regions (e.g. Asia-Pacific, Europe) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Global business functions (e.g. global sales, R&D) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) National subsidiary companies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

[Interviewer instructions: Ask A15b if more than one option was selected in A15a, otherwise go to A15c].

A15b. Which one of these levels or divisions is the most important within your worldwide company? Read out: Please think about the level or division which is most influential within your worldwide company's organisational structure? [Interviewer instructions: Select one option only].

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) International product, service or brand based divisions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Regions (e.g. Asia-Pacific, Europe) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Global business functions (e.g. global sales, R&D) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) National subsidiary companies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) No one level/division is more important than the other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A15c. Do any of the following levels or divisions have their HQ in Australia? [Interviewer instructions: Only ask options which were selected 'yes' in A15a, if not applicable go to A16a].

- | | Yes | No | DK |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) International product, service or brand based divisions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Regions (e.g. Asia-Pacific, Europe) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Global business functions (e.g. global sales, R&D) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A16a. What is your job title? [Interviewer instructions: Do not read out options. Select the most appropriate with respect to answer provided].

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Vice President of Human Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) HR/Personnel Director | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) HR/Personnel Senior Manager/Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) HR/Personnel Senior Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) HR/Personnel Officer/Generalist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) HR/Personnel Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A16b. How long have you worked for [Insert Name of Company] in Australia? [Interviewer instructions: Round answer to number of years].

_____ years

SECTION B: WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

USE SHOWCARD 8: Much of the rest of this interview focuses on your policy and practice in relation to three groups of staff. The three groups are:

- Managers:** employees who primarily manage the organisation, or a department, subdivision, function or component of the organisation and whose main tasks consist of direction and coordination of the functioning of the organisation. In other words, managers refer to those above the level of first-line supervision.
- LOG (Largest Occupational Group):** the largest non-managerial occupational group among the employees in the 'headcount' in Australia. For example, in a manufacturing business it might be semi-skilled operators, and in an insurance company it may be call centre agents.
- Key Group:** employees whom you might identify as critical to your firm's core competence and organisational learning. For example, these might be research staff, product designers, major account handlers, developers of new markets etc. We do not want you to think of a sub group of management (e.g. the senior management team does not equate to our key group concept).

B1. Approximately how many managers are there in the Australian operations?

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 9].

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| a) 1 – 9 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) 10 – 24 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) 25 – 49 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) 50 – 99 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) 100 – 199 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) 200 – 249 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) 250 – 299 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) 300 – 399 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) 400 – 499 managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) 500+ managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B2. What is the name of the largest non-managerial occupational group (LOG) among the employees in the Australian operations? [Interviewer instructions: Use the name provided here for all future questions on the LOG].

[Interviewer instructions: If respondent is having difficulties, please ask them to think about the largest non-managerial group of employees whose main terms and conditions are similar. If respondent does not know what name the LOG is called, please refer to as the LOG. If there are 2 or more large-size groups, prompt for whether the main terms and conditions are similar. If similar, treat both groups as the LOG. If different, treat the largest group as the LOG].

B3. What do the [LOG] do? *[Interviewer instructions: Use the answer provided in B2 for the LOG on future questions on LOG. Only record the principal task(s)].*

B4. How many [LOG] are there in the Australian operations?

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 10].

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| a) 1 – 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) 10 – 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) 25 – 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) 50 – 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) 100 – 249 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) 250 – 499 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) 500 – 749 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) 750 – 999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) 1,000 – 2,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) 3,000 – 4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) 5000+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B5a. Does [Name of Company] recognise any specific Key Group in its Australian operations?

[Interviewer instructions: allow respondent to read description of key group again].

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Yes, one specific key group | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to B6 |
| b) Yes, more than one key group | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to B5b |
| c) No | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to C1 |
| d) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to C1 |

B5b. Please focus on the group that is most unique in that they possess skills and capabilities that are difficult to obtain on the labour market. If it is not easy to distinguish between groups on this basis, please think about the largest group.

Can I check whether you are thinking about the group that is?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Most unique in terms of skills and capabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Largest group | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Both the largest and most unique group | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B6. By what name is this group known? *[Interviewer instructions: Use the name provided here for all future questions on the key group].*

B7. How many employees are in this group across [Name of Company] in Australia?

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 11].

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1 – 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 – 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25 – 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50 – 99 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 100 – 249 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 250 – 499 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 500 – 749 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 750 – 999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1,000 – 2,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3,000 – 4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5000+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION C: THE HR FUNCTION

C1. How many people are employed in the HR function of the Australian operations? [USE SHOWCARD 12].

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| a) 1 - 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) 10 - 19 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) 20 - 29 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) 30 - 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) 50 + | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C2. On which, if any, of the follow issues is information on the Australia operations monitored by management outside of Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 13].

- | | Yes | No | DK |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Managerial pay packages | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Management career progression | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Selection of the top management team | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Overall labour costs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Numbers employed (headcount) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Staff turnover | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Absenteeism | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Labour productivity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Workforce diversity (e.g. gender, disability) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Employee attitude and satisfaction | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C3. Does the ultimate controlling company utilise a HR information system (e.g. PeopleSoft or SAP HR) that holds data relating to the firm's international workforce?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

C4a. Is there a body within the ultimate controlling company, such as a committee of senior managers that develops HR policies which apply across countries?

Yes ☐ => Go to C4b No ☐ => Go to C5a Don't Know ☐ => Go to C5a

C4b. Is there someone from the Australian operations on this committee?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

C5a. Are HR managers from different countries brought together in a systematic way (e.g. like conferences or task forces)?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Yes, on a global basis | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to C5b |
| b) Yes, on a regional basis | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to C5b |
| c) No | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to C6 |
| d) Don't Know | <input type="checkbox"/> => Go to C6 |

C5b. How frequently does contact between HR managers of different country operations take place through any of the following mechanisms? [USE SHOWCARD 14].

- | Mechanisms | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Annually | Other | Never | DK |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Face-to-face meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) International conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Task forces | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Virtual groups
(e.g. conference calls) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C6. In the Australian operations to what extent are any of the following HR services outsourced to third party suppliers (such as consultants or trainers)? [USE SHOWCARD 15. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or DK on each line].

(1) Not at all (2) A little (3) Somewhat (4) Quite a lot (5) Extensively

a)	Payroll	
b)	Mentoring (for performance management)	
c)	Handling employee grievances	
d)	Recruitment and selection	

C7a. Does the HR function in Australia make use of 'shared services' centres?

Yes ☐ => Go to C7b

No ☐ => Go to C8a

Don't know ☐ => Go to C8a

C7b. Do these 'shared services' centres cover? [Interviewer instructions: Select one option].

- a) The Australian operations only ☐
- b) The Australian operations and other countries within the region ☐
- c) The worldwide company ☐
- d) Don't know ☐

C8a. How many of the top five management positions in the Australian operations are filled by individuals who previously worked for the company in [enter answer from A3 – country of origin]?

0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Don't Know ☐

C8b. How many of the top five management positions in the Australian operations are filled by individuals from other parts of the worldwide company (i.e. outside of Australia but not from the country of origin – these are sometimes known as third country nationals)?

0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ Don't Know ☐

[Interviewer Logic check: ensure answers provided in C8a and C8b combined do not exceed 5].

C9. I would now like you to think about your company's approach concerning its management of employees. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. [USE SHOWCARD 16. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or insert DK on each line].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

a)	There is a worldwide approach covering all global operations	
b)	There is a regional approach covering all Australian operations	
c)	The development of an approach is left to the national operating countries	
d)	Traditions in the country of origin have an overriding influence on the approach to the management of employees	

C10. What is the overall influence of each of the following levels on HR policy in [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 17. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or insert NA or DK on each line. If the respondent stated that there are no regional structures, international product or service divisions or an Australian headquarters in A15a, insert NA for these options].

(1) No influence (2) A little (3) Some influence (4) Quite a lot (5) Extensive influence

a)	Corporate headquarters	
b)	Regional headquarters	
c)	Headquarters of the international product or service division	
d)	The Australian headquarters	
e)	Individual sites of the Australian operations	

C11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Australian operations. [USE SHOWCARD 18. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or enter DK on each line].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

a)	There is a distinct HR strategy in the company	
b)	The HR strategy is effectively integrated with corporate strategy	
c)	The HR strategy has a sufficient input-influence on corporate strategy	
d)	Our HR practices are integrated and consistent with each other	

SECTION D: PAY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

D1. With respect to pay levels in relation to market comparators, what quartile do [Name of Company] in Australia aim to be in? Read out: Please include formal and informal policy. [USE SHOWCARD 19. Interviewer instructions: select one option for each group of workers, if no key group was identified in B5a then do not ask and select the NA option for this employee group].

	Top quartile	2 nd quartile	Median/ Midpoint	Below the Median	No Policy	DK	NA
a) For [LOG]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) For [Key Group]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For Managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

D2a. Is there a system of regular formal performance appraisal for? [Interviewer instructions: If no key group was identified in B5a then select NA option for this employee group].

a) The [LOG]	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	
b) The [Key Group]	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
c) Managers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	

[Interviewer instructions: If yes was selected for more than one staff group in D2a, ask D2b. If yes was selected for only one staff group go to D3. If all staff groups were coded No, DK or NA go to D6].

D2b. Are the different staff groups covered by? [Interviewer instructions: Do not read out DK option].

a) A single integrated appraisal scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Different appraisal scheme for the different groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

D3. Is a 'forced distribution' applied to the results of appraisals for the following employee groups in the Australian operations? Read out: By forced distribution we mean that a certain % of employees have to be in a particular performance category or rating, e.g. 10% are poor performers, 70% are reasonable performers etc. General Electric (GE) would be the prime example. [Interviewer instructions: If no key group was identified in B5a then select NA for this employee group].

a) The [LOG]	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	
b) The [Key Group]	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
c) Managers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>	

D4. Is a formal system of periodic 'upward', 'peer', or '360-degree' feedback used in evaluating performance of any of these groups of employees in the Australian operations? [Interviewer instructions: If no key group was identified in B5a then select NA for this employee group].

- a) The [LOG] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
b) The [Key Group] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐ NA ☐
c) Managers Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask D5 if performance appraisal for managers was selected in D2a].

D5. Thinking about managers in the Australian operations, how important are the following kinds of performance evaluation? [USE SHOWCARD 20. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or DK].

(1) Not important (2) Little importance (3) Some importance (4) Important (5) Very important

a)	Individual quantitative outputs (e.g. financial)	
b)	Individual qualitative outputs (e.g. completing a task)	
c)	Group outputs (e.g. for business unit or team)	
d)	Competences or personal skills (e.g. leadership skills)	
e)	Behaviour in relation to corporate values	

D6. Does [Name of Company] in Australia offer the following to any of these groups of employees? [USE SHOWCARD 21. Interviewer instructions: If no key group was identified in B5a then select NA for this employee group].

Read out: **Employee share ownership** is where the organisation acquires shares on behalf of employees and provides employees with part ownership of the company.

- a) The [LOG] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
b) The [Key Group] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐ NA ☐
c) Managers Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Read out: **Profit sharing** refers to rewards given to employees in addition to normal salary and bonuses which are dependent on the levels of profit in the business.

- a) The [LOG] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
b) The [Key Group] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐ NA ☐
c) Managers Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Read out: **Share options** are where employees are given the option of buying company shares, often at a reduced rate.

- a) The [LOG] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
b) The [Key Group] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐ NA ☐
c) Managers Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

D7. Is there variable pay for the following groups in [Name of Company] in Australia? [Interviewer instructions: If no key group was identified in B5a then select NA for this employee group].

- a) The [LOG] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
b) The [Key Group] Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐ NA ☐
c) Managers Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

D8. To what extent do the Australian operations have discretion over the determination of the following aspects of pay and performance management policy? [USE SHOWCARD 22. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK or NA option on each line.].

- 1 = The Australian operations have no discretion (must implement policy set by a higher organisational level such as corporate or regional HQ).
 2 = The Australian operations have a little discretion.
 3 = The Australian operations have some discretion (can develop policy within the guidelines/framework set by a higher organisational level).
 4 = The Australian operations have quite a lot of discretion.
 5 = The Australian operations have full discretion (can set own policy).

a) Relating pay levels in [Name of Company] in Australia to market comparators DK ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Ask b) if coded yes for any employee groups in D6, otherwise select NA].

b) Employee share ownership schemes in [Name of Company] in Australia DK ☐ NA ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Ask c) if yes selected for [LOG] in D2a, otherwise select NA].

c) Performance appraisal system for [LOG] DK ☐ NA ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Ask d) if yes selected for Managers in D2a, otherwise select NA].

d) Performance appraisal system for Managers DK ☐ NA ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Ask e) if yes selected for [LOG] in D7, otherwise select NA].

e) Variable pay for [LOG] DK ☐ NA ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Ask f) if yes selected for Managers in D7, otherwise select NA].

f) Variable pay for Managers DK ☐ NA ☐

SECTION E: TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

E1. What percentage of the annual pay bill in the Australian operations was spent on training and development for all employees over the past 12 months? Read out: This includes structured and unstructured training. [Interviewer instructions: if answer is none, please mark 0, do not leave blank].

_____ %

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 23].

- a) Up to 1% ☐
 b) Over 1% and less than 4% ☐
 c) Over 4% ☐
 d) Don't Know ☐

E2a. Thinking of [Name of Company] in Australia is there a formal system of succession planning for senior managers? [Interviewer instructions: wait for a yes/no answer and if yes is provided then ask whether it covers all or some operations. Do this for all questions like this].

- a) Yes, in all Australian operations ☐ => Go to E2b
 b) Yes, in some Australian operations ☐ => Go to E2b
 c) No ☐ => Go to E3
 d) Don't Know ☐ => Go to E3

E2b. Is this system also used in other parts of the worldwide company?

- a) Yes, in all operations ☐
 b) Yes, in some operations ☐
 c) No ☐
 d) Don't Know ☐

E3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [USE SHOWCARD 24. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or enter DK].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

a)	Our company favours internal promotion over external management recruitment	
b)	Decisions about the career progression of senior managers in the Australian operations are made outside of Australia	
c)	International experience is a key criterion for career progression at senior levels	

E4a. Do [Name of Company] in Australia have a management development programme aimed at developing its 'high potentials' or senior management potential?

- a) Yes, in all Australian operations ☐ => Go to E4b
b) Yes, in some Australian operations ☐ => Go to E4b
c) No ☐ => Go to E5
d) Don't Know ☐ => Go to E5

E4b. Is this system also used in other parts of the worldwide company?

- a) Yes, in all operations ☐
b) Yes, in some operations ☐
c) No ☐
d) Don't Know ☐

E4c. How extensively are each of the following techniques used for the development of these high potentials in [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 25. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK option on each line].

(1) Not used (2) A little use (3) Some use (4) Used quite extensively (5) Used very extensively

a)	Short term international assignments (< 12 months)	
b)	Long term international assignments (> 12 months)	
c)	Formal global management training	
d)	Assessing performance against global management competencies	
e)	Qualifications programmes (e.g. MBA)	

[Interviewer instructions: only ask E5 if the respondent identified a key group. Otherwise go to E6a].

E5. Is there a specific development programme for the key group in the Australian operations?

- a) Yes, in all operations ☐
b) Yes, in some operations ☐
c) No ☐
d) Don't Know ☐

E6a. Does [Name of Company] in Australia undertake talent management?

Yes ☐ => Go to E6b

No ☐ => Go to E7

Don't Know ☐ => Go to E7

E6b. Are any of the following elements of this talent management system? [Interviewer instructions: ask each part of question].

- | | Yes | No | DK |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) The strategic identification of pivotal organisation positions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) The use of talent pools | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) The utilisation of a differentiated HR architecture based on the strategic importance of employee groups. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

E6c. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements with respect to your talent management system? [USE SHOWCARD 26. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or enter DK].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

a)	Our talent management systems incorporates both internal and external talent	
b)	We focus on developing broad competencies to allow individuals to fit a range of roles rather than only narrow, specialist positions	

E7. How extensively are each of the following forms of global staffing practices used in [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 27. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK option on each line].

(1) Not used (2) A little use (3) Some use (4) Used quite extensively (5) Used very extensively

a)	Short term international assignments (< 12 months)	
b)	Long term international assignments (> 12 months)	
c)	International frequent flyer assignments	
d)	Virtual assignments	

E8a. How many expatriates are currently working on long-term assignments (i.e. more than 12 months) in the following functions in [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 28. Interviewer Instructions: If answer is none, do not leave blank, enter 0. If the respondent does not know, then insert DK].

		Parent country nationals	Third country nationals
a)	Research & development		
b)	Manufacturing operations		
c)	Sales & marketing		
d)	All other functions		

E8b. How many expatriates from [Name of Company] in Australia are currently working on long-term assignments (i.e. more than 12 months) overseas in the following functions? [USE SHOWCARD 29. Interviewer Instructions: If answer is none, do not leave blank, enter 0. If the respondent does not know then insert DK].

		Parent country headquarters	Other operations in the worldwide company
a)	Research & development		
b)	Manufacturing operations		
c)	Sales & marketing		
d)	All other functions		

E9a. Which of the following are used to facilitate organisational learning on an international level? [USE SHOWCARD 30].

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) International assignments | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) International project groups or task forces | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) International formal committees | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) International informal networks | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) Secondments to other organisations internationally
(e.g. to suppliers, customers, universities, R&D facilities) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |

[Interviewer instructions: Ask E9b if more than one mechanism was selected in E9a. If only one option was selected then enter that number in E9b and ask E9c. If no option selected go to E10].

E9b. Which of these is the most important international organisational learning mechanism used?

_____ [Interviewer instructions – enter relevant number from E9a].

E9c. How important is this mechanism to the following organisational learning outcomes? [USE SHOWCARD 31. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK option on each line].

(1) Not important (2) Little importance (3) Some importance (4) Important (5) Very important

a)	International policy development	
c)	Dissemination of best practices internationally	
d)	Development of core global organisational competencies	
e)	Generation of new knowledge or know-how internationally	

E10. To what extent do the Australian operations have discretion over the determination of the following aspects of training and development policy? [USE SHOWCARD 32. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK or NA].

- 1 = The Australian operations have no discretion (must implement policy set by a higher organisational level such as corporate or regional HQ).
 2 = The Australian operations have a little discretion.
 3 = The Australian operations have some discretion (can develop policy within the guidelines/framework set by a higher organisational level).
 4 = The Australian operations have quite a lot of discretion.
 5 = The Australian operations have full discretion (can set own policy).

[Interviewer instructions: if there is no formal T&D policy then select the NA option].

a) Overall policy on training and development in the Australian operations DK ☐ NA ☐

[Interviewer instructions: only ask b) if coded yes at E2a, otherwise select NA option].

b) Policy on succession planning for senior managers in the Australian operations DK ☐ NA ☐

SECTION F: EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

[Interviewer instructions: Advise the interviewee that there are only 2 more sections after this one].

F1. Could you tell me whether you use the following practices in relation to the [LOG] in [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 33].

a) Formally designated teams in which employees have responsibility for organising their work and carrying out a set of tasks. Yes ☐ No ☐ DK ☐

b) Groups where employees discuss issues of quality, production or service delivery such as problem-solving groups. Yes ☐ No ☐ DK ☐

[Interviewer instructions: only ask F2 & F3 if there is more than one Australian site].

F2. Which of the following most closely corresponds to the pattern of employee involvement in [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 34].

- a) An identical or similar pattern exists across all sites ☐
 b) All or most sites have involvement systems but they differ from site to site ☐
 c) Some sites have involvement systems while others do not ☐
 d) Not applicable (1 site only in Australia) ☐
 e) Don't Know ☐

F3. Does the [Name of Company] regularly use project teams or task forces, embracing employees other than managers that function across more than one operating unit in Australia?

Yes ☐ No ☐ NA (one site only) ☐ Don't Know ☐

F4a. Which of the following mechanisms do you use to communicate with employees of the [LOG] in your Australian operations? *[Interviewer instructions: read out individually and wait for answer before moving on to next mechanism].*

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Meetings between senior managers and the whole workforce | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Meetings between line managers/supervisors and employees
(sometimes known as briefing groups) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Attitude or opinion surveys | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Suggestion schemes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) Systematic use of the management chain to cascade information | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) Newsletters or emails | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) Company intranet providing information to employees | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8) Joint consultation committees | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9) Open door policy | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |

[Interviewer instructions: only ask F4b, if yes was coded for more than one communication mechanism in F4a, otherwise move to F5].

F4b. Which of these is the most important mechanism? *[Interviewer instructions: enter relevant number from F4a, or select DK].*

_____ DK ☐

F5. Using the following scale, how often would you say that management act on employee suggestions? *[Interviewer instructions: Enter the relevant number in the space provided below or select DK. USE SHOWCARD 35].*

(1) Never (2) Seldom (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Regularly

Answer: _____ DK ☐

F6. To what extent does [Name of Company] provide the following types of information to the [LOG]? *[Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK. USE SHOWCARD 36].*

(1) Never (2) Seldom (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Regularly

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Financial position of the company | <input type="text"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Investment plan for the Australian operations | <input type="text"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Staffing plans for the Australian operations | <input type="text"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |

F7. To what extent do the Australian operations have discretion over the determination of the following aspects of employee involvement and communication policy? [USE SHOWCARD 37.
Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK or NA].

- 1 = The Australian operations have no discretion (must implement policy set by a higher organisational level such as corporate or regional HQ).
2 = The Australian operations have a little discretion.
3 = The Australian operations have some discretion (can develop policy within the guidelines/framework set by a higher organisational level).
4 = The Australian operations have quite a lot of discretion.
5 = The Australian operations have full discretion (can set own policy).

- a) Involvement of employees in the work process (e.g. problem solving groups) DK ☐ NA ☐
- b) Provision of information to employees DK ☐ NA ☐
[Interviewer instructions: only ask c) if coded yes at F4a3, otherwise select NA option].
- c) Attitude or opinion surveys DK ☐ NA ☐
[Interviewer instructions: only ask d) if coded yes at F4a4, otherwise select NA option].
- d) Suggestion schemes DK ☐ NA ☐

SECTION G: EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION

G1a. In Australia, are trade unions recognised for the purposes of collective employee representation at? [USE SHOWCARD 38. Interviewer instructions: select one option].

- No sites ☐ All sites ☐ Most sites ☐ Some sites ☐
The company's single Australian site ☐ Don't Know ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask G1b if trade unions are recognised, if trade unions are not recognised in the Australian operations go to G5].

G1b. How many trade unions are recognised for the purposes of collective employee representation in Australia?

_____ Don't Know ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask G2 if there is more than one site in Australia, otherwise go to G4].

G2. Thinking about any new sites (i.e. Greenfield sites) which have been established in Australia in the previous five years, have trade unions been recognised for the purposes of collective employee representation? [USE SHOWCARD 39].

- a) Yes, at each new sites ☐
b) Yes, at most new sites ☐
c) Yes, at some new sites ☐
d) No, at new sites ☐
e) No new sites were opened ☐
f) Don't Know ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask G3a if there is more than one site in Australia, otherwise go to G4].

G3a. Has the ultimate controlling company acquired any sites in Australia in the previous five years?

Yes ☐ => Go to G3b No ☐ => Go to G4 Don't know ☐ => Go to G4

G3b. How many sites were acquired? _____ Don't Know ☐

G3c. How many of the acquired sites were unionised? _____ Don't Know ☐

G3d. Since the acquisition(s) has/have there been new trade union recognition for the purpose of collective representation?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

G4. Which of the following statements best describes the role of unions in managing organisational change? Read out: Union representatives could be workplace delegates or full-time officials. [USE SHOWCARD 40].

- a) No discussions take place with union representatives ☐
- b) Discussions take place with union representatives in a way that their views are taken into account but management are free to make the decision. ☐
- c) Negotiations take place with union representatives and the decision is dependent on their agreement. ☐
- d) Don't know. ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Ask G5 to all respondents]

G5. What proportion of the total number of employees in the Australian operations are members of a trade union?

_____ % Don't Know ☐

[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 41].

1 – 10% ☐ 11 – 25% ☐ 26 – 50% ☐ 51 – 75% ☐ 76 – 100% ☐

G6. What percentage of the [LOG] in the Australian operations are covered by the following arrangements? [USE SHOWCARD 42. Interviewer instructions: if the answer is zero % then enter 0, do not leave blank. Once you reach 100% you do not need to ask remaining options just enter 0].

- a) Union collective bargaining _____ % Don't Know ☐
- b) Non-union collective bargaining _____ % Don't Know ☐
- c) Award only _____ % Don't Know ☐
- d) Individual level _____ % Don't Know ☐

G7a. Are there any non-union based structure(s) (e.g. joint consultative committee) of collective employee representation used in the Australian operations?

- a) Yes, at sites where there is no trade union recognition ☐=> Go to G7b
- b) Yes, at sites where there is also trade union recognition ☐=> Go to G7b
- c) No ☐=> Go to G8
- d) Don't Know ☐=> Go to G8

[Interviewer instructions: only ask G7b if there is more than one Australian operation. If this is the case and yes was selected in G7a then automatically select the first answer in G7b and move to G8].

G7b. Do these non-union based structure(s) of collective employee representation in the Australian operations cover?

The company's single Australian site ☐ All sites ☐ Most sites ☐ Some sites ☐
Don't Know ☐

G8. Are regular meetings held between management and representatives of employees in the Australian operations for the purposes of information provision and consultation? Read out: By regular we mean more than once a year.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

G9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in respect to the approach of management – employee relations in the Australian operations? [USE SHOWCARD 43].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

a) Management prefer to deal with employees directly (i.e. without a union). DK ☐

[Interviewer instructions: Only ask part b) if the Australian operations are non-union].

b) Management would not mind dealing with unions should employees join one. DK ☐

G10a. Are the Australian operations a member of any employer/industry association?

Yes ☐ => Go to G10b No ☐ => Go to G11 Don't know ☐ => Go to G11

G10b. Which of the following services do the Australian operations use from employer/industry associations?

1) Information on pay rates	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
2) Advice on occupational health & safety	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
3) Advice on dismissals	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
4) Representation in negotiations with trade unions	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
5) Employment legislation updates	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
6) Legal advice	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>

G11. Do the Australia operations have direct dealings with any of the following groups over employment issues?

1) Australian Human Rights Authority	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
2) Indigenous community organisations	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
3) Fair Work Australia	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
4) Alternative dispute resolution or similar professional services	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>
5) Equal Employment Opportunity in the Workplace Authority	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	DK <input type="checkbox"/>

G12. To what extent do the Australian operations have discretion over the determination of the following aspects of employee representation and consultation? [USE SHOWCARD 44. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK or NA].

1 = The Australian operations have no discretion (must implement policy set by a higher organisational level such as corporate or regional HQ).
 2 = The Australian operations have a little discretion.
 3 = The Australian operations have some discretion (can develop policy within the guidelines/framework set by a higher organisational level).
 4 = The Australian operations have quite a lot of discretion.
 5 = The Australian operations have full discretion (can set own policy).

a) Trade union recognition DK ☐

[Interviewer instructions: only ask b) if trade union recognised in the Australian operations, otherwise select NA and c)].

b) Extent of union involvement in decision making DK ☐ NA ☐

c) Employee consultation DK ☐

SECTION H: REVERSE DIFFUSION AND COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS

[Interviewer instructions: Advise the interviewee that this is the last section].

H1. Have the Australian operations provided any new practices in the following areas that have been taken up elsewhere in the worldwide company? [USE SHOWCARD 45. Interviewer instructions: enter X where appropriate for each category].

	Yes, in a few parts of the firm	Yes, in major businesses	Yes, taken up globally	No	DK
Pay & performance management					
Training & development					
Employee involvement & communication					
Employee representation & consultation					
Manufacturing processes					
Sales & marketing					

H2. Which of the following statements best describes the Australian operations? [USE SHOWCARD 46].

- a) It produces a single product or service that accounts for more than 90% of sales ☐
- b) It produces a number products or services but one of these accounts for between 70% and 90% of sales. ☐
- c) It produces a number products or services but no single one of these accounts for more than 70% of sales. ☐
- d) It produces a range of unrelated products or services. ☐
- e) Don't Know. ☐

H3. Which of the following statements best describes the ultimate controlling company's most important product, service or brand (or group of products, services or brands)? Read out: Most important refers to product, service or brand which generates the most revenue. [USE SHOWCARD 47].

- a) It is adapted significantly to national markets. ☐
- b) It is adapted to different regions of the world but standardised within them. ☐
- c) It is standardised globally. ☐
- d) Don't Know. ☐

H4. Which of the following statements best describes how the ultimate controlling company competes internationally? [USE SHOWCARD 48].

- a) A low-cost standardisation strategy which seeks location economies by performing value creation activities in optimal locations worldwide. ☐
- b) A localisation strategy focused on customising products to national markets. ☐
- c) A strategy designed to simultaneously achieve (a) & (b) and to foster multi-directional flow of knowledge between global units. ☐
- d) A replication strategy to sell products/services developed in the home market internationally with minimal customisation. ☐
- e) Don't Know. ☐

H5. With respect to the role of the Australian operations in the ultimate controlling company, to what extent do you agree with the following statements. [USE SHOWCARD 49. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

- a) The Australian operations have international responsibility for one or more products/services on behalf of the worldwide company. DK ☐
- b) Significant expertise in research & development within the worldwide company is generated in the Australian operations. DK ☐

H6a. Are any of the components, products or services of the Australian operations produced for operations of the ultimate controlling company based outside of Australia?

- a) Yes, in all operations ☐
- b) Yes, in some operations ☐
- c) No ☐
- d) Don't Know ☐

H6b. Do other parts of the ultimate controlling company supply components, products or services to the Australian operations?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

H7. Approximately what percentage of revenues of the Australian operations comes from sales abroad? [Interviewer instructions: if answer is none, please enter 0, do not leave blank].

_____ % Don't Know ☐
[Interviewer instructions: If the respondent is having difficulty in providing a numerical response, then USE SHOWCARD 50].

1 – 10% ☐ 11 – 25% ☐ 26 – 50% ☐ 51 – 75% ☐ 76 – 100% ☐

H8. Are the shares of the company?

Privately owned ☐ Publicly traded ☐

H9a. In the past five years, did any merger or acquisition result in a change in the nationality of ownership of the [Name of Company] in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 51. If the respondent says 'no', ensure you select the correction option].

- a) No mergers or acquisitions involving the Australian operations took place in past five years. ☐ => Go to H10
- b) No change in nationality of ownership took place although there were mergers and/or acquisitions in the past five years. ☐ => Go to H10
- c) Yes ☐ => Go to H9b
- d) Don't know ☐ => Go to H10

H9b. What was the nationality of the Australian operations previously?

H10. Over the past five years, have the Australian operations been involved in a significant investment in a new site or expansion of existing sites in Australia?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

H11. Over the past five years, has any site been closed in Australia?

- a) Yes, one site ☐
- b) Yes, more than one site ☐
- c) No ☐
- d) Don't Know ☐

H12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your Australian operations? [USE SHOWCARD 52. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

In Australia, our company:

- a) Participates in industry forums to discuss labour market issues. DK ☐
- b) Engages in discussions with non-governmental organisations on acceptable standards for corporate social responsibility. DK ☐
- c) Is engaged in partnerships with universities for research & development. DK ☐

H13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the relative competitive advantage of your firm's operations in Australia? [USE SHOWCARD 53. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or select DK option].

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

- a) Safeguarding employees' jobs is a high priority for our Australian operations. DK ☐
- b) Our Australian operations are moving activities to low cost countries outside Australia. DK ☐
- c) Our Australian operations can recruit the specialist skills they require in the Australian labour market. DK ☐

H14. To what extent are the following positive or negative factors in terms of whether the Australian operations receive new investments or mandates? [USE SHOWCARD 54. Interviewer instructions: Insert relevant number or enter DK].

(1) Very negative (2) Negative (3) Neither negative or positive (4) Positive (5) Very positive

a)	Labour costs in Australia	
b)	Operating costs in Australia	
c)	The industrial relations climate of Australia	
d)	Availability of financial incentives (e.g. subsidies for R&D)	
e)	Availability of skilled labour	
f)	Quality of infrastructure (transport, broadband)	
g)	Environmental regulations	
h)	Access to raw materials and sources of energy	

H15. Since the middle of 2007 which of the following changes have taken place in the Australian operations as a result of the global financial crisis?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Closure of one or more sites | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Reductions in total employment | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Reduced working hours | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Increased use of part-time and casual employment | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Reduced use of casual/temporary employees | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Relocation of some operations offshore | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Outsourcing of operations | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Reduced recruitment activity | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Reduced expenditure on training & development | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Reduced employee remuneration | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) Reduced international travel | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | DK <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank respondent for their participation

Time End (24 hour clock): __:__

Appendix D: Information Brochure



Survey of Human Resource Practices in Multinational Enterprises operating in Australia 2010

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The *Survey of Human Resource (HR) Practices in Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) operating in Australia, 2010* is a study of innovations in employment practice and their transfer across countries. It will provide the first comprehensive portrait of HR policy and practice amongst MNEs operating in Australia. It is part of an international project known as *INTREPID* [Investigation of Transnationals' Employment Practices: an International Database] which will allow comparison on HR practices in multinationals across 10 other countries, namely the UK, Singapore, Ireland, Canada, Spain, Mexico, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and Argentina.

The survey involves recording details on:

- the human resource function
- Pay and performance management
- Employee involvement and consultation
- Training, development, talent management & expatriation

The Australian survey is coordinated by Dr. Anthony McDonnell and Professor John Burgess (University of Newcastle) and Prof. Pauline Stanton (Victoria University) in conjunction with other researchers at La Trobe University and University of Wollongong. The study is funded from research funding provided by the partner universities and has passed all ethical standards. Feel free to contact Anthony if you have any queries over this study (contact details below).

HOW YOU WERE SELECTED

The name and address of your company was selected on a random statistical basis from a list, prepared by the researchers, of all major Australian-owned and foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia. The selection procedure used ensures a representative mix of companies across sectors and national origins. The definitions used for MNEs were as follows:

1. *All foreign-owned MNEs operating in Australia, with 500 or more employees world-wide and 100 or more in Australia.*
2. *All Australian-owned MNEs with 500 or more employees world-wide and at least 100 abroad.*

CONFIDENTIALITY

You can be assured that all the information collected by the interviewer will be treated in the strictest confidence. We give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality in respect of all information which we collect.

The identity of individual respondents and businesses will not be revealed in the report or any future publications that emanate from the study. For example, the reports we produce deal only in general, aggregate terms giving percentages and averages for different groups. Individual information on any respondent or firm is never revealed to anyone outside of the research team in any manner which would allow the individual respondent to be identified.

YOUR PARTICIPATION COUNTS

Although voluntary, your participation is crucial to the success of the study. It is your chance to have your views and experiences as a Human Resource manager recorded and compared to others who are operating in Australia including MNEs across a wide spectrum of nationalities and sectors. With the more difficult operating conditions faced by organisations, such a study has never been timelier. The survey also has the strong support of the Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI).

All collaborating firms will be able to access a confidential report synthesising our major research findings. This should be of great interest as it will allow firms to benchmark their practices against the more general trends emanating from this study.

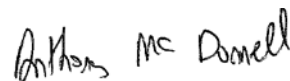
If you are busy when the interviewer first calls he/she will make an appointment to call back at a time which suits you.

I hope you will support us in our work and I would like to thank you, in anticipation, for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,



Professor Pauline Stanton
Head of School
School of Management and Information
Systems (incorporating Victoria Graduate
School of Business)
Faculty of Business and Law
Victoria University
300 Flinders Street, Melbourne Vic 3000.
Pauline.stanton@vu.edu.au
T: +61 3 99191542



Dr. Anthony McDonnell
Centre for Institutional and Organisational
Studies
Faculty of Business and Law,
University of Newcastle,
Callaghan, NSW 2308.
anthony.mcdonnell@newcastle.edu.au
T: +61 2 49215495

Appendix E: Key Informant Letter of Request

<Insert Victoria University Letterhead>

Date :

Human Resource Manager

Dear

We are writing to request your co-operation in an important survey of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in this country. The objective of the study is to address innovations in employment practice and their transfer across countries. It will provide the first comprehensive portrait of human resource policy and practice amongst MNEs operating in Australia. Being part of an international project, it will also allow comparison of MNEs in other countries, including the UK, Canada, Singapore, Ireland, Spain, Mexico and Argentina.

Participation in this study would involve a face-to-face interview of 45 – 60 minutes duration utilising a structured questionnaire covering issues such as the HR function, performance management and pay, training and development and employee involvement and communication. The anonymity of respondents and respondent firms will of course be maintained, and responses will be treated in confidence. This project has also passed all ethical requirements across the universities.

The survey has the strong support of the Australian Human Resource Institute and all collaborating firms will receive a report synthesising our major research findings. This should be of great interest as it will allow firms to benchmark their practices against the trends emanating from this study.

Our interviewers will be as flexible as they possibly can in arranging interviews. They can call back at any time you specify. You can make a firm appointment with them or they can simply 'try again later'. Feel free to contact us using the details below to arrange a suitable interview date and time or alternatively we will contact you by telephone over the next fortnight.

We thank you for your time and we very much hope that you will agree to participate in this important programme of research.

Yours sincerely



Professor Pauline Stanton
Head of School
School of Management and Information
Systems (incorporating Victoria Graduate
School of Business)
Faculty of Business and Law
Pauline.Stanton@vu.edu.au
Tel: + 61 3 9919 1542

Helen Russell
Victorian Research Coordinator
School of Management and Information
Systems (incorporating Victoria Graduate
School of Business)
Faculty of Business and Law
Helen.Russell@vu.edu.au
Tel: + 61 3 9919 1542

January 2010

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to encourage you to participate in a study looking at the management of human resources in multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Australia. This study focuses on innovations in employment practice and their transfer across countries. This will be the first study of its kind to focus on MNEs in Australia and thus will be a major resource for practitioners, policy makers and academics alike.

The Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) is supporting this exciting research project, as we believe it will lead to the construction of a comprehensive picture of the nature of multinationals and their human resource practices in the Australian economy. It will enable our members to assess the nature of practices used by multinationals, and how these vary by sector, nationality of parent company, size of firm, and so on. Considering the difficult economic conditions MNEs find themselves in around the world, such a study could not be timelier.

The Australian study forms part of a larger international project on the management of human resources in MNEs which adds a further interesting dimension. Studies have recently been completed or are currently in the field in the UK, Canada, Singapore, Ireland, Spain, Mexico, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Argentina. The Australian study is led by Professors John Burgess and Pauline Stanton and other researchers from the University of Newcastle, Victoria University, La Trobe University and University of Wollongong.

All companies taking part will be guaranteed anonymity. For your participation, which I strongly recommend, you will receive a report of the key findings.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Wilson AM
National President