Identification with One’s Occupation, Organization, and Work: How Workers in Developing Economies Respond to the Transfer of Work Systems from Developed Economies

Aruna Ranganathan
Stanford Graduate School of Business

July 30, 2018

Abstract

Workers in developing economies face changing environments as work systems are brought in from developed economies. Under what conditions do these workers cooperate with or resist the importation of outside work institutions, management practices, and technologies? This question is important because the success of such transfers depends on worker support. Drawing on ethnographic and interview data studying four occupations in India experiencing the importation of new work systems, I find there is variation in whether workers cooperate or resist. I argue that in developing economies, beyond economic and cultural considerations for how workers react to new work systems, one novel factor influencing whether a work system is met with cooperation or resistance is how it interacts with workers’ identification with their occupational communities, organizations, and existing work processes. This paper advances scholarship on employment in developing countries, the transfer of work systems across economies, and workers’ identification with their work.

---

1 I gratefully acknowledge the feedback from the participants of the ILRR Special Issue Conference on New Employment Theories in Cambridge, MA, May 2018, and in particular, the detailed comments provided by Virginia Doellgast, John Budd, Maite Tapia, Peter Berg, Christian L. Ibsen, and Salil R. Sapre. For information regarding the data utilized for this study, please address correspondence to arunar@stanford.edu
As the world of work in the developing world rapidly evolves, the study of work and employment in these countries has never been more important (Katz, Kochan, and Colvin 2015; Batt, Doellgast, and Kwon 2005). In particular, workers in developing countries are experiencing a rampant transfer of work systems from more developed countries in recent decades (Kuruvilla, Frenkel, and Peetz 2002). Work systems have been transferred by multinational corporations to subsidiaries in developing countries, spurred by suggestions from international organizations and business consultants, and undertaken by business owners and bureaucrats in developing countries who see models elsewhere in the world that they wish to emulate (van Jaarsveld and Zuberi 2011; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez 1997; Westney 1987).

The industrial relations literature highlights that the transfer of work systems encompasses the transfer of work institutions, management knowledge, and/or work technologies (Hyman 1996; Locke and Jacoby 1997). The literature also highlights how crucial it is to pay attention to workers’ reactions to the importation of work systems. Research indicates that the success of a given work system transfer often depends on whether workers cooperate with or resist the change. In particular, past Europe-based research has highlighted two conditions influencing workers’ responses to work systems transfers: First, how the new work systems affect the workers materially or economically and second, whether the new work systems are aligned with workers’ cultural values (Frege 1999; Frege and Toth 1999; Upchurch 1998).

However, the nascent research on transfer of work systems from developed to developing economies has mostly ignored worker agency and workers’ reactions to such transfers. This is an important gap to resolve given the crucial role that workers’ reactions play in the success or failure of such transfers. Therefore, in this paper, I put workers on the center stage and ask:
Under what conditions do workers in developing economies cooperate with or resist the importation of work institutions, management practices, and work technologies?

I draw herein on a body of work suggesting that workers often care about identification or personally valuing their work activities, and that identification is especially important in developing economy contexts (Marx 1844; Ryan and Deci 2000; Budd 2011; Munshi 2014). I uncover three different sources of identification among workers in developing countries: with one’s occupational community, with one’s organization and with the work process. I theorize that when the transferred work systems foster identification with a worker’s occupational community, organization, or the work process itself, such transfers are likely to receive cooperation, but when they impede identification, they are likely to be resisted.

To develop my theory, I rely on qualitative data from ethnographic observation and interviews with workers experiencing the transfer of work systems in four low-income occupational settings in India: call-center work, plumbing, handicraft, and garment production. I observed six work-system transfers in these settings, three of which were accepted and three rejected by workers. These cases allowed me to investigate the interaction between the workers’ response to a new work system and the extent to which that system appeared to support or impede worker identification.

This paper makes three important contributions. First, it contributes to research on work and employment in developing countries by “bringing workers back in” and analyzing how they respond to the importation of new work systems from advanced economies. Second, the paper contributes to the literature on the transfer of work systems by identifying a novel factor explaining whether workers cooperate or resist to the transfer of work systems, namely identification with workers’ occupational communities, organizations, and work processes,
which goes beyond the more material and cultural factors that the literature has paid attention to thus far. Finally, the paper contributes to the organizational behavior research on identification, which to date has mostly studied how identification affects outcomes within the workplace such as hours worked and turnover, by demonstrating that worker identification can also affect more “macro” outcomes such as workers’ response to the importation of new work systems.

**Literature Review: Transfer of Work Systems into Developing Countries and Workers’ Responses**

The world of work in developing countries is fast changing (Humphrey 2000). This is being driven, in part, by the rapid transfer of new ways of organizing work from developed economies to developing countries. For example, work in the developing world is increasingly in service of firms in the developed world as a result of international subcontracting and outsourcing (Gereffi, Humphrey, Kaplinsky, and Sturgeon 2001), and through these global value chains, work systems are often transferred from the developed world to the developing world (Lakhani, Kuruvilla, and Avgar 2013; Morrison, Pietrobelli, and Rabelotti 2008). In addition to subcontracting and outsourcing, new work and employment systems are also being transferred to the developing world because of direct investment by multinational firms (Edwards and Kuruvilla 2005). Today, more than 60,000 multinational corporations (MNCs) have ownership in over 800,000 foreign subsidiaries dispersed and integrated around the world (Cooke 2003). And finally, state bureaucrats in the developing world now have more opportunities to interact with their counterparts in advanced economies and often are inspired to import models they see in the developed world (Westney 1987; Meyer et al. 1997). While this phenomenon of transferring work systems from developed to developing countries is relatively recent, the theoretical idea of
“transfer” has precedence in the industrial relations literature, especially from studying work systems in Europe. This research offers a framework to help understand the transfer of work systems from advanced economies to developing countries.

Three Types of Transfer of Work Systems

Hyman (1996: 607) defines the transfer of work systems as “any cross-national transplantation…with whose principles and dynamics the local actors are unfamiliar.” He argues that cross-national imitation and emulation has been an important feature of public policy in many European countries, especially as discussions around some form of common regulatory framework in industrial relations across the European Union came to the fore (Hyman 1996). Locke and Jacoby (1997:2) also state that “one of the most important debates in contemporary industrial relations theory and policy is…how institutions and practices developed in one setting can be transferred to and implemented effectively in another context.”

In the predominantly Europe-focused literature, the transfer of work systems is investigated in several ways, including the transfer of work institutions, management practices, and work technologies. I describe each of these in greater detail below.

Transfer of Work Institutions

A large body of research has studied the transfer of work institutions from West to East Germany post-unification and into Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2006; Poole, Lansbury, and Wailes 2002). For example, Culpepper (1996) and Locke and Jacoby (1997) studied the transfer of the dual system of vocational training to East Germany, while Hyman (1996) and Jacoby (2001) studied the transfer of forms of worker representation from West to East Germany.
We see a similar transfer of work and labor market institutions from the developed to the developing world too. Westney (1987) documents how Japan in the Meiji period, 1868–1912, adopted a wide range of institutions used in advanced Western nations, such as the police and postal services’ organizational structures, in a successful effort to modernize the country. Similarly, inspired by Western professionalization institutions, associations in several developing countries have imported the institutions of formal training programs at vocational institutes as well as trade testing and certification (see as examples the Philippine Welding Society and the Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association; Essah 2008; Mori 2005; Cattaneo, Gereffi, and Staritz 2010).

Transfer of Management Practices

The transfer of work systems also includes dissemination of company management practices. Abundant research documents various forms of management knowledge transfer to the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Lang, Steger, and Weik 1998; Wilkens 1998; Lang and Steger 2002; Upchurch and Cicmil 2004; Meardi and Toth 2006). For example, the literature documents the transfer of “lean production” practices to manufacturing industries in several economies (Berggren 1992; Camuffo and Micelli 1997; Womack, Jones, and Roos 1990).

We similarly see a transfer of developed countries’ “best practices” to developing countries, through MNCs (Edwards and Kuruvilla 2005), lead buyers (Lakhani et al. 2013; Shibata 2008; Distelhorst, Hainmueller, and Locke 2017), and management consultants (Bloom et al. 2013; Bloom and Van Reenen 2010). As examples, Kuruvilla, Frenkel, and Peetz (2002) and Frenkel (2000) document that MNCs have diffused best practices on compensation policies,
work organization with self-empowered teams, strong organizational cultures, and collaborative labor-management relations to organizations across the developing world.

*Transfer of Work Technologies*

A third type of work system transfer is the transfer of work technologies (Sabel 1984; Marginson 2006). Several scholars have investigated how German foreign direct investment in Eastern and Central Europe was accompanied by a high level of technological transfer. For example, German investment in Hungary led to the transfer of a “high tech, state of the art pick and place machine” and “chip on board” technology (Meardi and Toth 2006; Dorenbacher 2002).

As with the other types of work systems, we see parallel examples of technology transfer from advanced economies to the developing world (Thompson 2002, Knorringa 1996, Schmitz and Nadvi 1999). For example, in a study on the Taiwanese ICT industry, Poon (2004: 134) looks at the relationships between global leaders and first-tier suppliers and notes that “Taiwanese suppliers gradually upgraded their technological capabilities through technology transfer and knowledge diffusion.”

The transfer of work systems can thus include the transfer of work institutions, management practices, and/or work technologies. We next focus on how workers respond to the importation of new work systems.

**Workers’ Responses to the Importation of New Work Systems**

A key question related to the importation of new work systems across countries is whether the change is successful. In answering this question, scholars have distinguished between formal (legal) transfer of work systems and normative (substantial) transfer of work systems, where formal transfer describes the process of setting up the work systems and
normative transfer refers to the establishment of support among the actors involved (Frege 1991). There is widespread evidence in the literature that worker support is crucial for the successful establishment and effective functioning of new work systems, and especially for the stabilization and persistence of these systems (for example, see Fuchs and Roller 1994).

In the European context, researchers have investigated worker responses to new work systems, finding that sometimes workers support these changes and at other times, they resist (Upchurch 1998; Frege 1998; Meardi 1996; Thirkell and Vickerstaff 2002). For example, Frege (1991: 459) surveyed unionized workers in the East German textile and apparel industry about new unions and works councils, and determined that “overall there is strong support for the new institutions.” In contrast, Frege and Toth (1999) found that post-communist union members in Hungary were skeptical and unsupportive of the new interest representation institutions. Given these divergent worker reactions, sometimes to the transfer of the same types of institutions, scholars also have investigated the conditions under which workers will support or resist new work systems. The study of work system transfers in Europe identified two factors influencing whether workers support new work systems imported from a different country. The first factor is how the new work system affects them materially. For example, Upchurch (1998) documents how secondary teachers in East Germany were unsupportive of the West German industrial relations machinery of co-determination in collective bargaining and participation at the level of the workplace, because the institutional transfer raised concerns about wage equalization, job cuts, and non-recognition of their teaching qualifications, all of which effectively threatened their livelihoods. The second factor is whether the new work systems align with the workers’ national cultural values, or in other words, whether workers’ attitudinal orientations and behavioral dispositions were congruent with the new work institutions (Roller
Hofstede (2003) outlines various dimensions of national culture such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Building on one of Hofstede’s (2003) dimensions, Frege and Toth (1996) document that a key reason why Hungarian workers were not supportive of their newly imported interest representation institutions was because of the incongruence of the institutions with the collectivist “cultural legacies” of the local workers’ attitudes and behaviors.

Despite this work in the European context, when it comes to the transfer of work systems from developed to developing countries, scholars have paid little attention to worker agency and how workers on the receiving end respond to newly imported work systems. Studying the transfer of work systems from the perspective of workers in developing countries thus has the potential to extend the literature beyond the existing Europe-centric research and reveal novel insights.

**Worker Identification in Developing Countries**

An alternative literature in organizational theory suggests that identification effects influence workers’ responses to the changing nature of work (for a review, see Rosso, Dekas, and Wrzesniewski 2010). Scholars have demonstrated that members of all occupations, including those in low-income occupations, can experience identification, where work becomes meaningful and self-fulfilling (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz 1997). In line with this, recent research argues that incumbents can “job craft” or mold any job to make it meaningful, irrespective of the intrinsic qualities of the job (Berg, Wrzesniewski, and Dutton 2010). Based on this perspective, we would expect workers to respond to the importation of work systems based on how the systems affect their identification with their jobs.
Scholars delineate various sources of identification. For example, Pratt, Pradie, and Lepisto (2013) describe that worker identification can come from “doing well,” or the intrinsic satisfaction of autonomously performing well at a job; “doing good,” or the pride from doing a job that serves a greater, public good; or “doing with,” referring to the fun of working alongside colleagues one likes. Budd (2011) additionally highlights how worker identification might arise from the centrality that work holds in an individual’s life and in defining their identity. While acknowledging the distinctions between these different sources of identification and the fact that some forms of identification might be deeper than others, in this paper, I use the term “identification” to broadly encompass all forms of identification where work organically becomes an end unto itself and therefore provides a greater sense of meaning. Importantly, I distinguish “identification” from the economic and cultural factors – the economic gains from a job and alignment with more “macro” national cultural values – that the literature has discussed as influencing worker reactions to new work systems.

In fact, some hints suggest that paying attention to identification might be especially important in the developing world. Economists have argued that in developing countries, where there is much greater likelihood of market failure and state failure, workers are more likely to value social ties to a community and enduring work traditions and norms (Munshi 2007; Munshi and Rozenweig 2006; Banerjee and Munshi 2004). The population of workers in developing countries is also different, in that many workers are employed in the informal sector and many others have only recently transitioned to working in the formal sector – in these cases, the relationships that workers have to their new employers, to whom they are grateful for their newfound status and earnings, is stronger than in many other contexts (Ranganathan 2017; Kabeer 2004; Paul-Majumder and Begum 2000).
In the next section, I move to describing the data and methods that I use in this study.

**Data and Methods**

This paper relies on comparative qualitative field data to understand the transfer of work systems into developing countries from the perspective of the worker. Field data include an array of “interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Van Maanen 1979: 520). Comparative qualitative field data provide a “way to gain greater purchase and leverage from the valuable field data we painstakingly collect” (Bechky and O’Mahony 2016: 168). Scholars argue that “by uncovering surprising commonalities or differences across divergent field settings, comparative methods are more likely to generate novel theories…. [and] show how the presence or absence of conditions contribute to a relationship or outcomes or how processes unfold” (Bechky and O’Mahony 2016: 169).

**Occupational Settings and Data Collection**

For this paper, I picked four different occupational settings in India, one of the larger economies in the developing world – call center work, plumbing, handicraft, and garment production – all relatively low-income occupations that are generally representative of common occupations in the broader economy. These occupations have all been subject to the importation of new work systems. In each setting, I focus on how the workers are understanding specific work system transfers in their respective contexts. The approach that I follow has sometimes been called a “matched approach” to case selection, where cases are selected for comparative analysis based on some type of similarity.
Table 1 lists the four settings and points out some commonalities and differences between the settings. These settings are not homogeneous; however, as Locke and Thelen (1995) highlight, it can be incredibly valuable to compare “apples” and “oranges” in terms of field sites and engage in contextualized comparisons. In fact, a strength of studying these settings is the ability to identify common processes in settings that one wouldn’t always expect to have things in common.

(Insert Table 1)

This paper relies on qualitative data. There has been a call for using more qualitative data in the study of labor relations because this kind of data can identify new mechanisms to better explain patterns in labor and employment trends (Anteby and Bechky 2016: 502). The data from the different settings was collected sequentially. As Bechky and O’Mahoney (2016) argue, this is not a problem for theory generation from a comparative field data design since data can be compared and analyzed long after it has been collected. Table 2 presents a snapshot of the data that will serve as the empirical basis for this paper, and I summarize my data collection efforts below.

(Insert Table 2 here)

**Call Center Work**

The boom in “outsourcing” a variety of low-skill information-technology-enabled jobs from the United States and other Western countries to India is widely known. In 2007, I spent two months “embedded” in the human resource department of one of the three leading outsourcing firms. As a “participant observer,” I was able to observe call-center workers’ day-to-day work lives. I also conducted 40 informal conversations with HR managers and workers at this firm and a host of other firms in the industry to develop a broader perspective.
Plumbing

I first gained access to the plumbing industry in August 2009. Then, from mid-November 2009 to mid-February 2010, I conducted in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with 42 actors in the plumbing industry, including the founders of the Indian Plumbing Association (IPA), Indian representatives of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), plumbing consultants, contractors, supervisors, plumbers, manufacturers, and builders. Following a generic opening, I inquired about how interviewees perceived the evolution of plumbing in India, the problems they experienced, details on what their jobs entailed, and how they approached their work.

Handicraft

Channapatna is a handicraft cluster in southern India home to 5,000 artisans, specializing in producing wood and lacquerware objects like jewelry and toys. I conducted eight months of ethnographic fieldwork and 40 interviews in Channapatna in 2011 and 2012. I was in the field for three days a week and spent the rest of my time in Bangalore typing up field notes, writing memos, and making sense of the emerging data. Fieldwork included intensive observation of the artisans’ day-to-day work. In addition, I conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with 40 artisans, traders, and government officials in Channapatna.

Garment Production

I gained access to one of India’s major manufacturers of branded formal wear, reporting an average annual revenue of $400 million, and I focused on the largest factory owned by this manufacturer. The factory employed 2,000 workers and produced on average 100,000 trousers and 50,000 jackets per month. Two research assistants and I conducted 18 months of ethnographic observation in the factory between April 2014 and September 2015. The
ethnography was open-ended, as I sought to inductively understand how production was managed in the factory, the various organizational practices at the firm, and how workers understood their work. To capture a range of experiences, my research team also conducted 120 in-depth interviews with a subsample of people at all levels of hierarchy within the factory—workers, supervisors, and upper management.

**Comparative Analysis**

I started by analyzing the data collected within each setting; this ensured that the detailed, rich context contributed to theory building (Vaughan 2004). The analysis of the field notes and interview transcripts in each setting was done using Atlas.ti and Excel, associating passages of text with one or more mnemonic codes to uncover the different ways in which the workers were interpreting the structural transformations of work. I also engaged in extensive memo writing to identify puzzling observations. In this way, my theorizing and analysis of the qualitative data proceeded iteratively as is characteristic of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Then I drafted memos on categories that appeared across settings. During the analysis, I carefully took note of similarities and differences across cases, often using tables that compare constructs across organizational settings to foster constant comparison. These grounded theoretical methods (Glaser and Strauss 1967) encourage mining differences to build theoretical explanations. This process led me to my findings for this paper.

**Findings**

**Six Transfers of Work Systems**
Across these four different occupational field sites, I observed six transfers of work systems, two each of work institutions, management practices, and work technologies. I describe each of these transfers below. They are also summarized in Table 3.

(Insert Table 3 here)

Transfer of Work Institutions

ID Card for Artisans. The first institutional-level transfer that I observed while doing fieldwork in Channapatna was handicraft artisans showing me photo identification cards that had been issued to them for free by the central government (Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles). Many artisans would pull out their ID cards in mid-conversation of their own accord. The card was meant to serve as a form of identity to access a variety of state benefits, including some specifically for artisans. For example, displaying this card would allow an artisan to receive an Artisan Credit Card, health insurance, and opportunities to take part in fairs and exhibitions across the country. The central government got the idea of issuing these cards from international organizations, including the United Nations (UN) and International Labor Organization (ILO).

Plumbing Codes. The second institutional-level transfer I observed was the introduction of new plumbing codes to India. The occupation of plumbing was historically governed by a short (14-page) National Building Code. A group of plumbing contractors and consultants, organized as the Indian Plumbing Association, decided that “we don't have much” and “this is all just the basics” and invited a transnational, California-headquartered labor market intermediary called International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) to write new codes for plumbing in India. IAPMO developed a Uniform Plumbing Code for India (UPC-I), a 1,000-page document including an illustrated training manual. UPC-I is a modified version of
IAPMO’s parent document, the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), which is ratified by many municipalities in the United States. The idea was for the UPC-I to replace the NBC.

Transfer of Management Practices

Fun Culture Practices in Call Centers. The first instance of management practice transfer that I observed was “outsourced” call centers trying to create a “culture of fun” at work. Such practices are common at Disneyland (Van Maanen 1999) and in the Silicon Valley. MNCs and HR professionals with work experience in the United States transferred these practices to India. I observed some organizations having hiking, swimming, and yoga forums and competitions, as a manager described, “to engage employees.” Many organizations organized sports leagues, had “TGIF” events, celebrated employees’ birthdays and wedding anniversaries, organized “movie nights,” and weekend trips. These practices catered to the demographics of most call center workers – young, upwardly mobile Indians who want to break away from the shackles of traditional Indian norms.

Kaizens in Garments. A second instance of management practice transfer I observed entailed bringing the Japanese practice of “Kaizen,” or continuous improvement, to India. The head of the garment factory described a Toyota plant he had recently visited as a “dream manufacturing unit.” This inspirational visit prompted him to invite a group from Japan to visit his factory in India and introduce the practice of Kaizen. The way it was enacted was as follows: The concept of Kaizen was first explained to workers. Then, in daily 10-minute meetings with team leaders, workers were asked for continuous improvement suggestions (called Kaizens) based on their previous day’s work. These Kaizens given by workers were subsequently tracked and evaluated and the best were monetarily rewarded.
Transfer of Work Technologies

**RFID Garment Tracking Technology.** The first instance of work technology transfer I observed was the introduction of radio-frequency identification (RFID) tracking technology in the same garment factory that had introduced Kaizens. One industrial engineer described that the technology “helps management to track pieces and bottlenecks.” Prior to introducing this technology, each operator manually logged his or her hourly output. At the end of every hour the production writer collected the data from each operator and recorded it in a tabular form. This laborious process often resulted in production losses. The project team felt the need for an IT-based production recording system to more efficiently supervise the sewing lines. The solution was an RFID-based real-time monitoring system, with every worker expected to scan RFID tags on garments so the factory could monitor production in real time.

**Channapatna Crafts Park.** The second instance of work-technology transfer that I observed entailed the importation of woodworking machines into a “Channapatna Crafts Park,” facilitated by the state. The Crafts Park was a mechanized facility for the production of high-quality goods to match international specifications of design, quantity, and size. The Channapatna Crafts Park houses machinery imported from countries including Germany, Austria, and China. An administrator of the Crafts Park described, “To give you an example, in one minute, the auto-lathe machine makes 30-40 beads. The cost is reduced from Rs.4 to barely Rs.0.22 for a bead.” He explained that “artisans have to bring their own seasoned wood, give the orders and collect the finished products. Everything will be done by the machine itself.” In interviews with the Park administrators, they expressed belief that the Park would help artisans cut costs, focus on higher
value-added activities, export high-quality goods in large volumes, and thereby pull themselves out of poverty.

Worker Responses to the Transfer of These Work Systems

My qualitative data revealed that workers responded differently to these six different transfer of work systems. Workers were not uniformly opposed to or supportive of the transfers. I observed that workers responded positively to three transfers and negatively to the other three.

With respect to the transfer of work institutions, my data indicated that workers cooperated with the introduction of the handicraft ID card and voluntarily went to the government offices to get these cards. Interviews suggested that the ID card had been issued in 2008 to about 5,000 artisans in Channapatna under the “woodwares” craft category. Given that there are just over 5,000 artisans in Channapatna, it seems like this initiative was adopted by close to 100% of Channapatna’s artisans. Artisans described that they had to wait in long lines to get the card, but that they put up with the inconveniences to get the card. In fact, artisans proudly displayed the cards to me in my conversations with them.

In contrast, workers rejected the second occupational-level transfer, namely the introduction of plumbing codes. Six months after the first version of the Uniform Plumbing Code was introduced in India, my back-of-the-envelope calculations indicated that less than 10% of the plumbers were following them. The bulk of the plumbers continued to follow the traditional “rules” that had been passed on, generation to generation, within the community. One plumber said, “I am continue doing things the way I’ve always done them.”

When it came to the transfer of management practices, call center workers seemed to wholeheartedly cooperate with the fun culture practices introduced by their organizations. In my
interviews with workers across different call centers in India, not once did I hear a worker complain about the fun practices. In fact, one worker described his organization as a “dream place to work…[because] the work experience [was] so fun.”

In contrast, the garment factory workers whom I observed did not show as much support for the Kaizens management practice transfer. Data from the factory indicated that the bulk of Kaizens came from a small number of people, while the other employees generally didn’t suggest Kaizens. A senior executive agreed. He said, “In a group of 100 operators it has never been a challenge to receive 100 Kaizens a month; but only some 15-20 of the 100 operators seem to suggest all the 100 Kaizens.” When I asked a worker, she corroborated that most workers disliked giving Kaizens.

With respect to the first work technology transfer – the RFID garment tracking technology – the majority of workers in the factory cooperated with this technology. A manager indicated that he was pleasantly surprised at how smoothly the technology adoption had gone. One worker agreed and said, “I’ve adapted to the system and like it!”

However, workers seemed to reject the Channapatna Crafts Park, the other work technology transfer that I observed. One trader who had closely observed the construction of the Crafts Park and its opening said, “The machines are imported and are of very good quality. However, the artisans are not…using them at all.” An artisan described that “they even tried to strike against the Craft Park…to publicly display [their] rejection of this government initiative.”

My analysis suggests that some transferred work systems from advanced economies are embraced by workers in developing countries while others are resisted. This calls for a theory of how workers respond to the transfer of work systems into the developing world. I theorize that workers will cooperate with or reject new work systems based on how well these systems
contribute to the workers’ identification with their occupational communities, organizations and work processes.

**Three Sources of Worker Identification Influencing Worker Responses**

Here, I turn to the key mechanism in my theory underlying how workers respond to work transfer initiatives. I uncovered three different sources of identification among workers in my data: identification with one’s occupational community, organization, and the work process. Table 4 defines each of these sources of identification, drawing on past literature, and offers examples demonstrating workers’ identification, drawing from my data as well as from accounts of other research conducted in India.

(Insert Table 4 here)

Below, I describe each source of identification in more detail and highlight how it interacts with the different kinds of work transfers discussed above.

**Identification with Occupational Community**

Identification with one’s occupational community is defined as “close (familial) bonds…linking a worker to the larger community” (Pratt, Pradies, and Lepisto 2013: 179). These bonds may be dyadic, such as seeing one’s boss as a parent, or they may be more communal, as in the case of brotherhoods or sisterhoods. These bonds need not be based on actual blood or legally binding relationships, but could also refer to when the people in an occupation consider the bonds with their fellow-occupation brethren in familial terms.

Research shows that many workers in developing economies identify with their occupational communities. A lot of work in developing countries is governed by communities
that are tied together by ethnicity, religion, or marriage (Korczynski, Hodson, and Edwards 2006). Depending on the context, these communities could be based on kinship (for example, castes in India and clans in sub-Saharan Africa) or on geographical proximity (neighborhoods or villages). As Munshi (2007) highlights, members of these well-established communities are driven by a strong sense of identification, often sacrificing immediate individual gain for the sake of the community.

Identification with an occupational community helps to explain workers’ reactions to the transfer of work institutions. I found that artisans in Channapatna were tied to their occupational community by both region and religion. Channapatna is a small town in the south of India and the mostly male, predominantly Muslim artisans developed strong bonds as they grew up together. Consistent with research on identification, it is possible that artisans in Channapatna supported and embraced the ID card because it fostered their sense of identification and attachment to their occupational community.

I posit that the ID card had the effect of bringing artisans psychologically closer to their fellow artisans from Channapatna, as well as to woodworking artisans from other parts of India whom they might have never met. One artisan, who received his ID card after a three-month wait, was ecstatic. He said, “I view it as a New Year gift for me and my entire community from the Government of India.” Another artisan said the “card will give national identity to the artisans across India and we will all be covered under a national database.”

Interestingly, the ID card was supported despite it not bringing any real financial benefits. While the vast majority of artisans in Channapatna had obtained the ID card, none of the artisans I interviewed had accessed any of the other benefits available through the card. Artisans complained that “the government made it difficult to access the benefits.” One said that he liked
the card but it “was of no use.” Another said that he liked the card despite its interference with the artisanal culture of anonymity and privacy. This suggests that identification can play an important role over and above any economic and cultural factors underlying workers’ reactions to the transfer of work systems.

In contrast to the artisans, I found that plumbers resisted the initiative to introduce new codes governing how plumbing should be performed. I posit that this resistance stemmed from the fact that the codes interfered with plumbers’ identification with their occupational community. My data indicate that plumbers in India were tied to their occupational community by ethnicity – most plumbers in India are from the state of Orissa and from a particular group of villages in the Pattamundai region. As one plumber said, “everyone knows us – the Orissan plumbers.”

The Uniform Plumbing Code, however, sought to formalize and change the basis of knowledge in the industry and was thereby seen as undermining the community-based learning system that the plumbers cherished. My data suggest that plumbers valued the opportunity to learn the ropes of their occupation from their fellow Orissans rather than from a thousand-page set of plumbing codes, and perhaps rejected the codes for this reason. As one plumber said, “I want to teach [my son] plumbing…I am looking forward to that bonding time.”

Some workers recognized that adopting the codes could allow them to earn more money and get more business, but that did not seem to influence their decision to ignore the codes anyway. Other workers worried about whether they would be able to learn the new codes and expressed concerns about having to compete with non-Orissan plumbers, who could now enter the occupation by simply studying the codes. The codes, by democratizing entry into the occupation, were compatible with the national cultural values of meritocracy though (Goodman
and Kaplan 2018). Thus, the economic implications of the plumbing codes are a bit murky, while the cultural congruence is easier to see. What my data add to the discussion is a clear sense that the need to honor and preserve workers’ identification with their occupational community certainly factored into how they responded to the plumbing codes transfer initiative.

This evidence suggests that some institutional-level work systems transfers foster workers’ identification with their occupational communities, while other initiatives impede such identification. When the new work institution fosters identification, it is more likely to be accepted by the workers. However, when the institution impedes workers’ identification, this interference factors into workers’ decisions to resist the transfer of the institution.

**Identification with Organization**

Identification with the organization is defined as the “perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization” (Mael and Ashworth 1992: 109), resulting in organizational members tending to perceive themselves and their organizations as inter-twined, sharing common qualities and faults, successes and failures, and destinies (Mael and Tetrick 1992).

Workers in developing economies may identify more greatly with their organizations than workers in advanced economies, according to the research. Pal and Buzzanell (2008) argue that India has a young workforce that is entering stable, formal employment in large numbers and that such a demographic is likely to be in awe of their organizations and identify deeply with them. For example, Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013) find that workers in a call-center organization in India became attached to their organization when its socialization practices focused on newcomers’ “authentic best selves.” Raghuram (2001) adds that building organizational identification is of strategic importance in India’s IT industry, which has had problems attracting
and retaining talented employees. Therefore, HR departments in these companies are
strategically and deliberately thinking of ways to foster organizational identification.

Organizational identification can help us understand why call-center workers in India
embraced the transfer of “fun practices” but garment workers resisted the Kaizen concept. In
particular, my data suggest that call-center workers seemed to embrace their organization’s
modern, “fun” practices because these practices fostered their sense of identification to their
organization. Call-center workers in India represented a largely young, upwardly mobile, middle-
class cross-section of India’s population. Prior to the advent of the industry, these workers would
have found it impossible to find a job paying so much so soon after finishing a basic
undergraduate degree. These workers thus identified strongly with their organizations, which
afforded them earning capacity and the opportunity to interact with the West. The fun practices
imported from the West further reinforced this organizational identification.

One worker said, “My company is nice…they understand the employee’s environment
and act accordingly…the fun practices they introduced just bring me closer to my company.”
Another worker described the fun practices as “a way for the organization to show that they
care…and understand that the call center work was monotonous….in this work, there is more
machine interaction than personal interaction!” She went on to say “I love my company even
more now because they are trying to keep me happy.” One HR manager added, “salary is usually
given on the 30th of the month but the kids who work here are [sometimes] forced to give this
salary to the parents…or sometimes the spouses. This is sad -- they work hard for the money but
can’t enjoy the result. But the fun practices can be enjoyed by them and so they wholeheartedly
adopt these and participate.”
There was no real financial incentive for workers to support these “fun” practices in call centers. To the best of my knowledge, neither managers nor HR staff tracked which employees took part. This suggests that a purely economic perspective is insufficient to explain why this particular management practice was met with employee buy-in. Further, these workers operated to some degree outside the traditional culture of India; they were often well-versed in English and fascinated by the West, and the fun activities (which in one call center included celebrating U.S. holidays like the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving) were more in keeping with the culture of the West than that of traditional India. The identification perspective thus helps to better explain why these workers embraced this transferred management practice.

Moving on to the second case of a transfer of a management practice – the introduction of Kaizens – here, in contrast to the call center workers, garment workers resisted the Kaizen initiative. I posit that the Kaizens initiative faced resistance because it impeded garment workers’ identification with their employer. My data reveal that many workers in the garment factory that I studied identified with their organization. Many of the workers were female, had never been a part of the labor force, and were very grateful to the organization for giving them employment and financial security. For example, one worker said “I love my job, my coworkers and my work environment…I would do anything for this company.” Another worker said, “I like working at this company…they provide a holistic work environment…there are no aspects that I dislike about this company.”

However, Kaizens as a management practice seemed to interfere with workers’ identification with their organization. One worker said, “I dislike looking for faults…it makes me not like my organization. Instead if I don’t look for faults, I don’t see any faults and like my organization.” One senior executive, reflecting on this issue, said of the workers, “I don’t think
they like to pick out things that are not working in the organization…they want to hold on to the image that this organization is perfect.”

Surprisingly, the Kaizens initiative failed to receive widespread support despite a small monetary reward associated with suggesting high-quality Kaizens, and despite the idea of “continuous improvement” being broadly compatible with Indian values. It is possible that the monetary reward was not large enough to be considered worthwhile, but nevertheless this again suggests that while economic and cultural considerations probably factor into workers’ responses to the transfer of management practices, they are not always sufficient by themselves to determine whether a worker cooperates with or resists the practice. Identification with the organization, and whether the practice is seen as enhancing or impeding that, can offset or enhance the economic aspect of a particular practice.

*Identification with Work Process*

Finally, identification with the work process is defined as “the idea of work being a labor of love” (Ranganathan 2017: 2). Work can be a key source of enjoyment, fulfillment and self-realization (Erikson and Vallas 1990; Adler 1993; Wrzesniewski et al. 1997; Sennett 2008). Pratt et al. (2013) posit that such fulfillment through develops in concert with doing one's work and deeply engaging with one's work tasks.

Research shows that many workers in developing economies identify with their work process. Occupations in developing economies have historically had a high likelihood of being inherited; as such, work traditions and rituals are also often passed on from one generation to another (Ranganathan 2017). This results in many workers developing a deep, almost spiritual relationship with their work as they perform routines and tasks, following the footsteps of their
ancestors (Bhowmik 2002; Korczynski et al. 2006). Scholars have demonstrated that workers in a variety of traditional jobs and contexts like artisans (Wherry 2008) and tea pickers (Besky 2013) can experience some identification with their work process. However, there is evidence of identification with work in newer occupations such as among software engineers (Metiu 2006) and lawyers (Noronha, D’Cruz, and Kuruvilla 2016) in India as well.

This identification with the work process plays an important role in whether workers in developing countries support or resist the transfer of work technologies. As I documented earlier, garment factory workers supported the transfer of an RFID monitoring technology, while artisans in Channapatna resisted the transfer of modern woodworking technologies. I argue that the new RFID work technology might have been adopted by workers because it fostered identification with the work process. In particular, garment factory work is monotonous; workers have to do the same operation over and over again for hours. However, the new technology “gamified” the work: Workers could track how many pieces they had done and try to do better each day.

One worker said, “I was very positive about RFID – it helped improve production a lot and made my work more fun than before.” This worker went on to describe that “the operators have made regularly checking their production numbers a game now, and hence the machine has helped them become much engaged as well as faster.” Another worker said that the machine is very important “to keeping her interested in the work.” Note that garment workers adopted the RFID technology even though using it was not linked to any organizational incentives, rewards or punishments, and the novel idea was certainly outside the normal culture for Indian factories. All of this suggests that a key driver of the support for this work technology might have been its fostering of identification with the work process itself.
In contrast, workers resisted the imported work technologies in the Channapatna Crafts Park (CCP) because the machines de-personalized the work and reduced their creative control. Describing his day-to-day work, one artisan pointed to the fact that he had “control over every piece and its shape and its color, I love doing this work.” Another artisan said, “this is work for the soul… I am personally enjoying my work a lot.” The CCP machines impeded workers’ identification with their work process. An artisan said, “I would never work with the machines…I earn little but making the products with my own hands is the little joy I get…I wouldn’t give this up for anything else."

Interestingly, some artisans acknowledged that working with the Crafts Park machines could perhaps lead to greater revenue and exports, but that didn’t change their mind. One worker expressed concern that the machines would ruin “our heritage and our craft.” In this case, the culture supported a heritage of handiwork that the machines ran counter to, but the artisans also saw that the work process itself was being upended by the change. This again indicates that workers’ responses to the transfer of work technologies are influenced not just by economic or cultural considerations but also by how the new technologies interact with their work process identification.

To summarize, this section documented that workers in India often identify with their occupational communities, organizations and the work process, and when transfer of work systems foster identification with a worker’s occupational community, organization or the work process itself, they are likely to be accepted, but when they impede identification, they are likely to be resisted.

Putting it All Together and Addressing Alternatives
I have argued that whether the imported work systems are met with cooperation or resistance by workers in the developing world depends on how the transfers interact with workers’ identification. I hypothesized that when imported work systems foster identification with a worker’s occupation, organization or the work itself, they are supported, but when they impede identification, they are resisted. Figure 1 illustrates this model, which is supported by the data gathered from six examples of different types of work systems transfers across four common work environments in India.

(Insert Figure 1 here)

I validate this model in Table 5, summarizing data from my fieldwork. I show how for work transfers at each of the levels (work institution, management practice, and work technology), the mechanism of identification underlies workers’ response to the transfer. I show how transferred work institutions, practices, and technologies were adopted or resisted by workers depending on whether they fostered or impeded identification with the occupational community, organization, and work process, respectively.

(Insert Table 5 here)

To be clear, in this paper I am ruling in a new explanation for why the transfer of work systems is sometimes met with cooperation and sometimes resistance, namely how a particular work system interacts with workers’ identification. I further argue that this mechanism appears especially relevant in developing economies where, as demonstrated, worker identification is important. I am not arguing that the economic and cultural factors previously posited in the literature are not important. Nor do I argue that identification matters more than economic and cultural considerations. What I suggest is that in my cases, the outcomes observed cannot be explained simply by a focus on economic or cultural considerations. If anything, the transferred
work systems that were resisted had especially tangible economic benefits to offer and were particularly incongruent with the Indian “way of working.” These cases demonstrate that considering the role of worker identification provides additional context to better understand why some work systems were supported and others resisted.

As further evidence for the mechanism of worker identification underlying workers’ reactions to the imported work systems, let’s look back at one of my cases – the RFID work technology. My data reveal that while the majority of workers strongly supported the new technology, a minority were less supportive. These workers used the technology, but did so begrudgingly. My investigation revealed that while the majority of workers in the factory performed routine tasks and welcomed the RFID technology that gamified their work, a minority of workers who performed complex tasks at the factory saw the RFID technology as a hindrance rather than as a game. This suggests that even in a setting where workers were all subject to the same imported new work system with the same economic and cultural considerations, we see that worker identification affected the response of different workers. Workers for whom the new technology fostered identification with the work process supported the technology while workers for whom the technology impeded identification were less supportive. This provides additional evidence for the mechanism of worker identification.

**Discussion**

In this paper, I focus on how workers in developing countries respond to the importation of new work systems. Drawing on ethnographic and interview data studying four different occupations in India, I show that workers sometimes embrace the importation of new work systems, and sometimes resist. I argue that whether the new work systems are supported or
resisted depends on how they interact with workers’ identification with their occupational communities, organizations, and work processes. Finally, I show that identification affects workers’ reactions even when holding the economic gains from the transfer and the cultural congruence of the transfer constant.

**Contribution to Research on Work and Employment in Developing Countries**

Existing research in work and employment in developing countries has focused predominantly on understanding the transformation of work in these contexts from the perspective of the nation or firm, rather than the perspective of the worker (for example, Lakhani et al. 2013). As such, we have little insight into how workers in developing countries respond to the importation of work systems, even though this phenomenon is increasingly prevalent and its success hinges on worker buy-in. In this paper, I look at how workers in developing countries respond to the importation of work institutions, management practices, and work technologies. In this way, this paper is “bringing workers back in” to the study of work and employment in developing countries.

**Contribution to Research on Transfer of Work Systems**

Existing industrial relations research has focused on the transfer of work systems in Europe and has highlighted two conditions under which workers will support the importation of work systems – when the new system offers material benefits or when it is culturally aligned. In this paper, I develop a theoretical framework that offers insight into one additional factor influencing how workers respond to an imported work system. In particular, my framework suggests that workers are more likely to cooperate with the transfer of work systems when the
new systems foster identification with their occupational communities, organizations, or work processes and less likely to cooperate with systems that impede such identification.

**Contribution to Research on Identification**

The paper also contributes to the organizational behavior research on identification. Scholars have documented that when individuals identify with their work, they display distinct work-related attitudes and behaviors. For example, workers who identify with their work are shown to work long hours and have low turnover intentions (Wrzesniewski et al. 1997). However, this paper shows that worker identification influences not just workplace-level outcomes such as turnover, but also more macro-level phenomena such as the importation of work systems.

**Generalizability, Future Research and Policy Implications**

While the data for this research come from a close study of four occupations in India, I expect that the theory will generalize to understanding workers’ reactions to the importation of new work systems in other regions of the world, as well. Given rampant industrialization, urbanization, and economic development across the developing world, work systems in many national contexts are being dismantled and replaced by imported substitutes (see for example Bloom et al. 2013; Macchiavello, Rabbani, and Woodruff 2015; Ranganathan 2017). This paper offers a theory to help make sense of this transformation and also predict how workers will respond. While I demonstrate that worker identification is an important mechanism in India, future work should investigate the extent to which this mechanism is important in other developing countries as well as in more advanced economies.
Going forward, I hope this paper inspires more research on the importation of work systems into developing countries from the worker’s perspective. I hope that this future work can build on and complicate the simple theoretical framework presented in this paper. For example, future research might identify other possible sources of identification that moderate how workers respond to importation of work systems. It would also be useful to investigate whether the work systems that were met with support actually improved worker welfare. Some evidence suggests that while the “fun” practices received support from workers, they were detrimental to worker wellbeing (Kinnie et al 2000). Additionally, future research might move beyond two extreme responses to the importation of work systems – support and resistance – that form the backbone of the model presented in this paper. For example, it would be productive to distinguish between covert and overt forms of worker resistance to new work systems. Similarly, it would be useful to explore workers’ responses through other channels such as exit, voice and loyalty. Future work might also analyze transfer of work systems that affect workers in multiple ways, such that the new systems foster one kind of identification but impede another form of identification. The framework presented in this paper offers a useful first step in thinking about how workers might respond to work system transfers, but future research can make progress in exploring interactions between different elements of the framework, which is beyond the scope of the current paper.

Finally, the theory outlined here offers important policy recommendations as well: It suggests that in order to reduce the likelihood of failed initiatives, the rampant importation of work and employment systems being undertaken in the developing world should be grounded in an understanding of the workers that the importation will affect, how those workers identify with their communities and vocations, and how new work systems will interact with this identification.
References


FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: A Model of How Workers in Developing Countries Respond to the Importation of Work Systems

- Importation of Work Systems from Advanced Economies (work institutions/management practices/work technologies)
- Fosters Identification (with Occupation/Organization/Work)
  - Cooperation by Workers
- Impedes Identification (with Occupation/Organization/Work)
  - Resistance by Workers
Table 1: Comparison of the Four Occupational Field Settings in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATIONAL SETTING</th>
<th>Transfer of Work System</th>
<th>Income per month (in Rupees)</th>
<th>Education Level of Workers</th>
<th>Gender composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call Center Work</td>
<td>Management Practice</td>
<td>Rs.10000</td>
<td>High school/college</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>Work Institution</td>
<td>Rs.7500</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>Predominantly Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>Work Institution and Work Technology</td>
<td>Rs.3000</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>Predominantly Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garment Production</td>
<td>Management Practice and Work Technology</td>
<td>Rs.5000</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>Predominantly Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Data Collection in the Four Occupational Field Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATIONAL SETTING</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Timing of Fieldwork</th>
<th>Location (in India)</th>
<th>Interviewee Sampling</th>
<th>Interview Language</th>
<th>Interview Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call Center Work</td>
<td>2 months of participant observation in 1 outsourcing firm and 40 interviews with HR managers and workers</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Bangalore, Mysore, Chennai</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>42 interviews with plumbers, plumbing businesses and plumbing LMIs</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>Hyderabad, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>Hindi, English</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>8 months of ethnographic fieldwork and 40 interviews of artisans, traders and state officials</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>Channapatna, Bangalore</td>
<td>Stratified</td>
<td>Hindi, Kannada, English</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garment Production</td>
<td>1.5 years of ethnographic fieldwork in 1 factory and 120 interviews with workers and management</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Tamil, Kannada, English</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Six Transfer of Work Systems across the Four Occupational Field Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSFER OF WORK SYSTEM</th>
<th>SETTING</th>
<th>CASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Work Institutions      | Handicraft            | **ID Cards**
“All artisans are now provided with a photo ID card for free...for generations, there is no record of us and now we are on a national database, just like there is a database for everything [in the West].” - Artisan |
| Plumbing               |                       | **Plumbing Codes**
“New Uniform Plumbing Codes have been written with the help of an international organization to replace our National Building Code.” - Plumber |
| Management Practices   | Call Center Work      | **Fun Culture Practices**
“For example...when Sivaji [a popular movie] released, the company organized for all of us to watch it together...here it was Sivaji, in the US probably would have been a Hollywood movie.” – Call center worker |
| Garment Production     |                       | **Kaizens**
“Soliciting Kaizens or suggestions for continuous improvement is one of the so called “world class” manufacturing practices...that our CEO imported from Japan.” – Garment worker |
| Work Technologies      | Garment Production    | **RFID Tracking Technology**
“This Leadtec technology was chosen for the factory...after someone from the management... visited some other factory abroad and liked it.” – Garment worker |
| Handicraft             |                       | **Crafts Park**
“The Crafts Park has many woodwork machines that are imported...bureaucrats probably saw these machines in some international fair.” - Artisan |
Table 4: Three Sources of Identification that Bind Workers to their Vocation in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCES OF IDENTIFICATION</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>OTHER EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification with Occupational Community</td>
<td>“Close (familial) bonds…linking a worker to the larger community” (Pratt, Pradies and Lepisto 2013: 179)</td>
<td>“I am a proud Orissan plumber…People from Orissa are all good at plumbing.” - Plumber</td>
<td>Diamond polishers from Gujarat (Munshi 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with Organization</td>
<td>“Perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization” (Mael and Ashforth 1992: 109)</td>
<td>“I love my company, I have the same feeling of going to college again.” – Call center worker</td>
<td>Call center workers at Wipro (Cable, Gino and Staats 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with Work Process</td>
<td>“Idea of work being a labor of love” (Ranganathan 2017: 2)</td>
<td>“The art and skill involved in my work is beautiful…the lacquering work brings me joy.” - Artisan</td>
<td>Workers in woolen knitwear (Tewari 1999)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Workers’ Responses to the Importation of Work Systems into India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSFER OF WORK SYSTEM</th>
<th>WORKERS’ RESPONSE</th>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>MECHANISM UNDERLYING RESPONSE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Institutions</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>ID card for handicraft artisans</td>
<td>Fosters identification with occupational community</td>
<td>“I like the ID card…it gives me pehchan [an identity] which brings me closer to my fellow brothers [artisans].” – Artisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>Plumbing codes</td>
<td>Impedes identification with occupational community</td>
<td>“I don’t approve of the UPC...they are not suited for India…and moreover, I like learning standards and best practices by shadowing my village senior rather than having everything documented.” – Plumbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Practices</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Fun culture practices in call centers</td>
<td>Fosters identification with organization</td>
<td>“My company is nice, they understand the employee’s needs and act accordingly...when Sivaji [a popular movie] released, we were given time off and we all went to watch it together with pride.” – Call center worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>Kaizens in garments</td>
<td>Impedes identification with organization</td>
<td>“Bulk of Kaizens come from a small number of people – other people don’t give Kaizens...they are satisfied with their job, they don’t want to constantly look for flaws.” – Garment worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Technologies</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>RFID garment tracking technology</td>
<td>Fosters identification with work process</td>
<td>“I am very positive about RFID – it has helped improve production a lot. I can regularly check my production numbers and that is fun.” – Garment worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>Channapatna crafts park</td>
<td>Impedes identification with work process</td>
<td>“The government is wrong if they think that we will make the products only with machines, not using labor at all...We even tried to strike against the Crafts Park.” – Artisan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>