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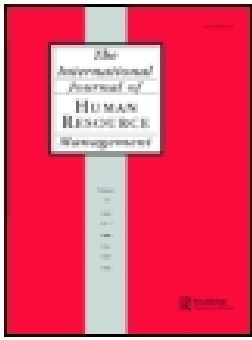
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EDITORIAL

Muslim Diaspora in the West and International HRM

Interest in Islam and how Muslims organise themselves within the so-called Western world has largely stemmed from the flow of Muslim immigration since the 1960s and the 1970s (Loobuyck, Debeer, & Meier, 2013). Many of these immigrants have come to these new lands in the hope of making a better life for themselves economically, or to escape the political or religious pressures of their homeland (Lebl, 2014). Initially, deeming the influx of these foreigners to be largely irrelevant, there was little interest in their presence by the different governments across many jurisdictions. Typically, scant interest was shown towards entering into dialogue with the Muslim immigrant community. Indeed, until the 1990s, it was not uncommon for Islam to be perceived as a strange, foreign religion that was best managed through outsourcing to respective consulates (Loobuyck et al., 2013). Yet, migration and work-based mobility has a significant influence on the world of work and societies in which organisations are embedded. Many individuals migrate for better employment perspectives, as well as due to chain migration, betterment in the quality of life and based on fleeing famine, war and terror zones globally (Sharma & Reimer-Kirkham, 2015; Valiūnienė, 2016). Migration could involve upward as well as downward mobility/ wages, depending on the country and organisation. For example, minimum wages differ from € 184 in Bulgaria up to € 1923 in Luxembourg (Valiūnienė, 2016). Migration also contributes to the lived religion of diasporic communities as they navigate their faith at work (Sharma & Reimer-Kirkham, 2015).

Coupled with migration, immigrants bring their faith with then and these faiths may stem from religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In fact, religion at work is increasingly an area of importance in research. Organisations today have to contend with a pluri-religious workforce and hence there is a need to enhance and expand knowledge, understanding and managerial practices in dealing with religion at work. Such augmentation of knowledge and practices generally falls within the domain of human resource management and when we consider diasporic realities, this knowledge is within the realm of international human resource management. For example, the faith and work organisational framework discusses faith-friendly workplaces (Miller & Ewest, 2015). These authors identify four distinct organisational approaches to religion and spirituality at work: faith avoiding, faith-based, faith-safe and faith-friendly. The faith-avoiding organisation chooses to suppress personal/community expressions of faith and employees may perceive that the organisation is acting unjustly with regard to religious accommodation. The faith-based organisations are generally grounded in one particular faith tradition, often reflecting the faith traditions of the founder and/or top management team. However, those outside the dominant faith tradition may feel marginalised and excluded. The faith-safe organisation tolerates faith at work, ensures compliance with basic legal requirements but does not necessarily embrace or encourage its expression. The faith-friendly organisation goes beyond minimum legal requirements and welcomes manifestations of faith at work, with all faith traditions treated at par and with respect.

'The scholarly debate within the management guild concerning the relationship between and definitions of spiritually and religion continues with no end in sight' (Miller & Ewest, 2015, p. 6). In contemporary organisations, there are a 'plethora of diverse, individualized ways of seeking the sacred … religion is increasingly viewed as a transnational phenomenon. No expression of religion – whether institutionalised or personalised – can be understood as anything but globalized, albeit particularized and contextualized' (Sharma & Reimer-Kirkham, 2015, p. 35). Drawing on the concepts of lived religion or religion in daily life, the concept of the gaze and its power to form and shape relations in organisations along with social capital/social networks, Sharma and Reimer-Kirkham (2015), examine diasporic women at work in Canada. Their study indicates that religion is embodied and intimate but also has the capacity to be social and public thus shaping and contributing to the richness of religion in organisations. Therefore, for the purposes of this special issue (SI), Islam is seen both as spiritual and religious, for the adherents of Islam bring a multiple lens in their interpretation and practice of Islam in organisations and at work.

In the current century, mismanagement of religious expression could potentially be a fertile ground for lawsuits and litigations. Thus, it is all the more crucial that organisations and in particular human resource practices are aligned with and kept up to date with the faith and practices of their employees, many of whom wish to practice their religion visibly at work (Pio, 2014). Numerous scholars believe that spirituality and religion at work are a positive influence on individuals and includes ethical and organisational citizenship behaviour (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014). Cadge and Konieczny (2014, p. 553) write that there is much to learn about religion in secular organisations, the need for making religion visible and the necessity for a 'better understanding how individuals piece together a bricolage of meanings, including those forged from religious beliefs and practices'. These authors note that it is important to understand how religion can revitalise organisations as well as how private and public lives can be negotiated and change over time. Yet organisations lack the language, knowledge and frameworks to understand religion at work, coupled with organisational ambivalence, particularly for non-Christian religions (Miller & Ewest, 2015).

However, while many Muslims continue to immigrate to Western countries, a number of these residents are now second- or third-generation descendants from those who originated in Muslim nations and so are citizens by birth in the countries where their predecessors settled. Additionally, some Westerners have converted to Islam (Lebl, 2014). Taking into account immigration as well as conversions to Islam (Doyle, 2011), the number of Muslims domiciled within the Western world is steadily growing (Lebl, 2014). Muslim diasporic communities, while originating in countries or communities dominated by Islamic religious practices and laws, are far from uniform. They are shaped in their existence and experiences by a complex web of ethnicity, gender, sect, class, and socio-cultural influences of their adopted homes – either as migrants, refugees, expatriates or business partners. Since the 1980s, there has been a steady growth of Islam, leading to what Bolognani and Statham (2013) refer to as a global upsurge of the religion at both a political and religious level (Shalabi, 2014). This revival is especially noticeable amongst second- and third-generation younger Muslim immigrants who, according to Lebl (2014), are seeking to advance a totalitarian ideology. It is this fear that has led to the rise of Islamophobia (Loobuyck et al., 2013) or an irrational fear of Islam (Bruckner, 2011).

In the context of the US, Pervez (2015) notes that, the perception of Islam continues to be overshadowed by the events of 9/11, as is evident in right-wing rhetoric and the various obstacles facing Muslim communities. Indeed, the perpetrators of violence, though they may be motivated by radical Salafi/Wahabi or Deobandi ideologies are considered by a wide majority of Sunni and Shia Muslims as driven by their own warped agendas that

have nothing to do with Islam. Also it is a fact that more Muslims than non-Muslims have suffered at the hands of violent Islamist groups, such as ISIS, Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Indeed, dozens of Muslims died in the World Trade Center attacks. These included executives, managers, businesspersons, technicians, restaurant employees, airplane passengers and first responders. They suffered alongside their fellow Americans, and some of them heroically gave their lives while trying to rescue others. For example, Abdu Malahi, an audio-visual manager at Marriott World Trade Center, personally guided many guests to safety before dying himself. Tariq Amanullah went to work at the World Trade Center on 9/11 and simply never returned. An assistant vice president of Fiduciary Trust, few people know that Amanullah was also one of the founding members of Why Islam, a non-profit organisation dedicated to creating a more holistic awareness about Islam (Pervez, 2015).

Due to the numeric growth of Muslims within Europe, along with their growing desire for the advancement of Islamic values within the countries where they or their ancestors have settled (Loobuyck et al., 2013), there has been a significant change in attitude by Western governments towards the presence of Muslims since the 1990s. A number of European countries initially sought to manage these labour migrant Muslims (Loobuyck et al., 2013) though a set of multicultural policies. The aim of these policies was that they would foster a culture beyond that of 'national particularism' towards one where persons from different ethnicities could live harmoniously together on the basis that each culture was equally legitimate and worthy of respect. This approach emphasised cultural diversity and group differences (Bolognani & Statham, 2013; Lebl, 2014). However, Lebl (2014) opines that the outcome of such policies was that it was no longer appropriate for anyone to promote the dominant or majority culture, as to do so would be to undermine the equality or status of other equally valid, minority perspectives.

In casting the spotlight on Islam, we wish to emphasise that it is more than just a belief – it goes beyond acts of worship to embrace social and economic activities, thus the Islamic work ethic goes well beyond that of the Protestant work ethic (Ali, 2008). Work is a form of worship, and human activity of any nature is understood in the context of *Istikhlaf* or vice-regency because the human being is the vice-regent of God. Consistent with the fundamental belief in the unity of God (*Tawhid*), all economic and social activities in Islam are guided by three basic principles: (1) all wealth and resources are owned by God; (2) humans manage wealth and resources as trustees of God; and (3) those most valued by God are those who are most pious, helpful and useful to other creations, including humans, animals and the environment (Branine & Pollard, 2010). In their normative study of employment relations in Islam, Syed and Ali (2010) argue that despite varied interpretations and practices of the economic system in Islam, it is possible to identify a common emphasis on ethical conduct of employers and employees and social justice in Islamic ideology.

There are an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims around the world, making Islam the world's second-largest religion after Christianity (Desilver, 2013). Hackett (2015) notes that the Muslim share of Europe's total population has been increasing steadily, from 4% in 1990 to 6% in 2010, a pattern that is expected to continue through 2030, when Muslims are projected to make up 8% of Europe's population. As of 2010, the European Union was home to about 13 million Muslim immigrants, including 4.8 million Muslims in Germany, 4.7 million in France and 3 million in the UK. In Europe overall, however, Russia's population of 14 million Muslims is the largest on the continent. In the US, the percentage of Muslims is about 0.8% of the population, with an estimated 2.6 million Muslims as of 2010 (Whalen, 2014). Given that most Western countries have historically evolved from Christian traditions to secular democracies, there are likely to be some frictions, uncertainties and misperceptions about Muslims not only as immigrants and citizens but also as

employees, managers and entrepreneurs. Additionally, Muslims are a heterogeneous group and differences amongst Muslim are not just related to theological or denominational streams. There are also many ethnic, sectarian and political dissimilarities (Loobuyck et al., 2013) such as those Muslims who maintain that their ideological struggle in pursuit of a global Caliphate should include violence or *Jihad* and those who are essentially non-violent (Lebl, 2014).

Rising concerns over a rapidly increasing Muslim population in the West seem to stem from a view whereby cultural preservation of values may mean that host country values are rejected and in the case of Muslims that their values are incompatible with Western liberal values, such as wearing of *hijab* and *niqab* (Ng & Bloemraad, 2015). Aspects such as festivals, food preferences, dress code, work schedules, prayer times as well as behavioural responses to leadership styles and gender can affect how international human resource management is played out in organisations (Pio, 2014). For Muslims in Western countries, they may seek to negotiate their ethnicity, gender and religion through confronting stereotypes, and making their ethnic identity visible while making their religious identity invisible as these dimensions are simultaneously played out and shape their organisational interactions (Tahseen, 2015).

Bouma, Haidar, Nyland, and Smith (2003) suggest that there is no inherent conflict between Islamic faith and modern workplaces, and therefore any potential areas of friction between Islam and contemporary HRM practices can be managed effectively. For example, the notion of Islamic piety *(taqwa)* upholds a balance of both spiritual and social responsibility and in viewing Islam as a complete way of life, can uphold organisational positive behaviour and reduce workplace deviance, such as antisocial behaviour, incivility and aggression (Bhatti, Alkhtani, Hassan, & Sulaiman, 2015; Forster & Fenwick, 2015). Islamic worldviews encourage stewardship, support and cooperation (Machouche & Bensaid, 2015) and for Muslims their religion significantly influences their relationships at work (Possner, 2015). Islamic leadership is related to ethical, transformational and authentic leadership (Galanou & Farrag, 2015), hence managers who are adherents of Islam may choose to follow such leadership styles in organisations. Muslim organisational leaders tend to be collectivistic in nature preferring avoidance and evading arguments in organisational settings if it benefits the communal good, despite the fact that they are more autocratic leaders as compared to Christian leaders – this may be based on their strict adherence to Quranic principles (Possner, 2015). Institutional regulation of religious practices also goes a long way in ensuring that there is a rigorous system of religious supervision so that religion and adherents of various religions practice their religion peacefully in organisations and society (Elischer, 2015). The role of institutional actors such as the government and identity networks based on source country and host country are other determinants of success when religion and secularism are intertwined (Yamak, Ergur, Unsal, Uyguyr, & Ozbilgin, 2015) as is the case of Muslims in the West and international HRM.

In their multilevel study of Muslim migrant women in Australia, Syed and Pio (2010) note that holding organisations solely accountable for diversity policies may be inadequate as diversity management is impacted by both macro-societal and micro-individual issues. The authors emphasise sophistication in dealing with the multilayered and intersecting complexities presented by migration, ethnicity, religion and gender. Acquisti and Fong (2015) report that in most Republican states in the US, employers may be less likely to interview job candidates whose social networking profiles indicate that the applicants are Muslim. However, organisations are increasingly valuing multicultural skills and employees from diverse faith and ethnic backgrounds may make a huge, positive difference to the success of global projects and processes (Doz, 2013). Human and social capital remain two

of the key considerations of many employers. In his statistical analysis of the consequence of religious affiliation on the status of female migrants in the labour market in the West, Foroutan (2011) suggests that employment differentials facing Muslim minorities tend to be mainly the consequence of human capital and length of residence in the country of destination.

The association of individuals whose roots are from abroad has been coined in academic literature as the mobilisation of collective identities by immigrants (Ireland, 1994). Within this construct Koopmans and Statham (1999) classify immigrant groups as primarily falling across four distinctive types of collective identity. These comprise (1) groups based specifically on affiliation with the homeland or place of ethnic descent; (2) organisations that focus on a wider racial grouping, such as Asians; (3) the cross ethnic collective of those who identify as generic immigrants, minorities or foreigners and (4) those organisations centred on religious identification. Added to these categorisations is also the identification that a group may have with its place of settlement. Across these organised civil society groups (Loobuyck et al., 2013) there exists considerable overlap of aims and objectives leading to a highly competitive environment for membership (Bolognani & Statham, 2013) and also for funding (Atouba & Shumate, 2015; Osula & Ng, 2014). Furthermore, there is also a great deal of fluidity amongst Muslim organisations, with many experiencing troughs and peaks in activity (Bolognani & Statham, 2013).

Within this context, this SI of the International Journal of Human Resource Management is aimed at enhancing awareness of the complexity of the Muslim diaspora at work in the West in order to crumble and tease out the dissonance that exists in organisations with reference to Muslims. Articles in the SI present and synthesise research on international HRM (IHRM)-related issues pertaining to Muslim workers in Western countries, taking into account the diverse national, cultural and organisational contexts, staffing, performance, training and development, work ethics and approaches to other aspects of HRM. The idea is to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the Muslim diaspora and in so doing facilitate deeper understandings of the 'Muslim edge' in organisations.

Despite an extensive literature on Muslims in the context of work and organisations, many IHRM-related issues facing the Muslim diaspora in the West remain underexplored. By the Muslim diaspora, we mean Muslims who have who have immigrated to, were born in, or are expatriates in a Western country. By deploying this term, we acknowledge a collective reality while also being mindful of contemporary heterogeneity in understanding Muslims in the West. Articles in this SI present scholarship that challenges dominant IHRM and organisational approaches in managing Muslim employees, question assumptions about the homogeneity of Muslim worldviews and performance and highlight the significance of the exponentially growing Muslim diaspora. These articles highlight why it is necessary to consider how Muslim workers use their unique resources and agency to overcome multilevel challenges (Afiouni, Ruël, & Schuler, 2014; Pio, 2010; Syed & Özbilgin, 2009; Syed & Pio, 2010) faced at work, and how organisations can make use of the resources (financial, social and human capital) potentially available from the Muslim diaspora. Given the relatively high rates of unemployment and discrimination facing the Muslim diaspora in the West, it is pertinent to assess organisational responses to managing religious diversity, particularly with respect to Muslim workers. Equally it is important to critically reflect on some of the boundaries created in defining Muslims, for example, *hijab*, beard and skin colour, and the way such boundaries affect access and employment opportunities for Muslims. Such reflections may help policy-makers and employers to understand how work may be reconstructed to 'accommodate' and include Muslim employees, including women and men, diverse ethnicities and religious practices.

For Muslim communities as well as businesses, such reflections may also include how Muslim women and men mould themselves to organisational requirements and vice versa.

Alkhazraji, Gardner, Martin, and Paolillo (1997) suggest that while Muslim immigrants in general retain their original national culture for their private or social lives rather than to adopt the US national culture, most of them accept US organisational cultures. The study suggests that national acculturation, collectivism and perceived discrepancy in work cultures affect Muslim employees' acculturation to US organisational cultures. From a political perspective, a related consideration is the extent to which historical contexts of the Crusades are re-lived in contemporary organisations. In the post 9/11 world, religious sensitivities and stereotypes continue to infiltrate organisational space. For example, Greenhouse (2010) reports that an increasing number of Muslim workers in the US are complaining of employment discrimination, from co-workers calling them 'terrorist' or 'Osama' to employers barring them from wearing head scarves, or taking prayer breaks. In her study of the impact of Islamic revival on HRM, Tayeb (1997) notes that there are differing manifestations of Islamic values across Muslim countries and cultures, which could lead to differing implications for employee relations and management.

In diverse internationally staffed workplaces, it is important for human resource professionals to manage 'the nexus of the two important and enduring institutions, religion and work' (King, 2008, p. 221). Focusing on the diaspora phenomenon, The Economist (2011) highlighted how migrant business networks are reshaping the world by providing not only financial investments but also the critical managerial and technical skills needed for economic development. Mellahi and Budhwar (2010) acknowledge that more research is needed to develop a deeper understanding of the role Islam plays at the workplace, and specifically how Islamic ideals, culture, values and norms are used in practice and implications thereof on workplace environments and overall organisational performance.

This SI presents scholarship that challenges dominant IHRM and organisational approaches in managing Muslim employees, question assumptions about the homogeneity of Muslim worldviews and performance and highlight the significance of the exponentially growing Muslim diaspora. How can work be reconstructed to 'accommodate' and include Muslim women? How do Muslim women and men mould themselves to organisational requirements? To what extent are historical contexts of the Crusades re-lived in contemporary organisations? Some of the questions have been addressed in the collection of articles in this SI. In relation to Muslim diaspora in the West, a number of topics and issues currently confront Muslim and non-Muslim employees, employers, policy-makers and other stakeholders. For example, cross-national comparisons of the Muslim diaspora, employee-level perspectives and stereotypes at work, refined Islamophobia and unconscious bias in recruitment and selection, learning and development in diverse organisational cultures, Muslim migrants and talent management, Muslim women and intersectional identities at work, religious diversity, IHRM and organisational change.

The six articles in this SI use diverse methodologies, presenting innovative theoretical and empirical insights, organisational and country case studies and examples of IHRM research on and with the Muslim diaspora. The following is a brief overview of the articles reviewed and chosen for this SI on the Muslim diaspora in the West: Whither international HRM?

In their article titled 'Muslim employees within "white" organizations: the case of Moroccan workers in the Netherlands', Berger, Essers, and Himi (2016) focus on how Muslim employees perform agency and identity work within the context of white, Western organizations. Drawing on interviews with highly educated Muslim employees in diverse sectors in The Netherlands, using structuration theory and the concepts of identity regulation and identity work, their study shows how Muslim employees encounter constraints

and opportunities within their white organizations and how they perform identity work and agency in relation to their religious practices. The authors contribute to the IHRM and diversity management literature by providing a relational view on religious diversity and bringing in the notion of whiteness in studies on diversity management.

In their article titled 'Dominant discourse, Orientalism and the need for reflexive HRM: Skilled Muslim migrants in the German context', Mahadevan and Kilian-Yasin (2016) argue that HRM in Western countries needs to pay attention to local and migrant Muslim minority of their population and employees. To better understand the HR requirements with regard to this group, the authors analyse HR discourses on skilled Muslim migrants in a German research company. Their study suggests that dominant macro-societal discourses based on Orientalist thought might result in pre-reflexive IHRM that creates inferior Muslim Others. Based on this finding, the authors establish the need for reflexive IHRM. Their study extends the analytical scope of IHRM as discourse to the macro-societal level while uncovering Orientalist thought in IHRM discourse.

In their article titled 'A relational understanding of work-life balance of Muslim migrant women in the West: Future research agenda', Ali, Malik, Pereira, and Al Ariss (2016) take into account the increasing work intensification in a globalised world that has led to a blurring of roles and boundaries between work and family. The authors argue that such influences are more pronounced for migrant workers who often struggle to balance their work and life in a new national context. Therefore, the authors argue, the challenge of work–life balance (WLB) is compounded in the case of minority migrant groups such as Muslim women living and working in a Western context. For this group it is unclear how, in the face of discrimination, Islamophobia, family and other socio-cultural and religious pressures, the WLB issues of migrant Muslim women are shaped and addressed. Their article contributes to the WLB literature by providing a multilevel relational understanding of WLB issues of Muslim migrant women working in the West.

In their article titled 'The dynamics of workplace relationships in a diverse internationally staffed organization: a qualitative ethnographic assessment', Liao, Soltani, Wang and Iqbal (2016) examine the experiences of foreign Muslim workers in China. Their article study, although conducted in China, has important implications for Muslim diaspora in the West given that the increasing economic prosperity in China and the complex challenges facing Muslim and other minority communities are not too dissimilar from the West. The authors use a qualitative ethnographic methodology to examine the dynamics of workplace relationships in a large diverse internationally staffed organisation with operations in recruitment services for both individual and commercial clients. The inductive analysis suggests that negative stereotypical views of religious and ethnic minorities' results in both implicit and explicit forms of job discrimination against them. One concrete outcome of undesirable experiences of Muslim minority workers is reported to be their definite willingness and strong inclination towards inward integration.

In their article titled 'Work ethic, religion and moral energy: The case of Turkish SME owner-managers', Uygur, Spence, Simpson, and Karakas (2016) explore how religious beliefs influence the work ethic of Turkish Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) owner-managers. The authors draw on Weber's notion of *Lebensführung*, which captures the manner of living one's life, as a theoretical and explanatory lens. Based on a qualitative study of Turkish entrepreneurs, they find that the new Islamic discourse – appearing as more liberal and pro-market – together with the Muslim work ethic, drive entrepreneurialism in Turkey. The study shows that the contemporary Muslim work ethic comprises a 'moral energy', which manifests itself variously as rational/secular, shared/communicated and action-oriented driver for Muslim entrepreneurs, helping to sustain their entrepreneurial activities in the Turkish context.

Murray and Ali's article (2016) titled 'Agency and coping strategies for ethnic and gendered minorities at work' examines the comparative workplace experiences of Muslim professional women from the United Kingdom and Australia. At the vanguard of their study are the coping strategies and agency of these women. The authors note that Muslim migrants have often been stereotyped as uneducated, tradition bound and extreme in broader society, even while institutional laws provide some framework for inclusion policies at the organisational level. Muslim women may be highly discouraged if Western workplaces are not conducive to social and cultural needs. Using human agency and coping theory, drawing on interviews with Muslim female professionals in the UK and Australia, the authors investigate the coping strategies of Muslim professional women, how they adapt and react to and reflect on stressful workplace events such as discriminatory behaviour. The findings indicate that active coping and planning to deal with stressful events is important to ethnic minorities and that emotion-focused coping is invoked when less active planning is prevalent. A significant contribution of the study is the relationship between coping strategies and the triple jeopardy effects of race-related ethnicity, work practices and gender.

Overall, we hope that this SI will be helpful in developing a nuanced and informed understanding of Muslim employees, not only for managers and employers but also for government policy-makers, activists and community groups. We are also optimistic that this SI will foster debate and create novel initiatives for interacting with, celebrating and collaborating with Muslims in the West as peoples of the world learn from each other.

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