

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special issue of *International Journal of Human Resource Management*: Danger and risk as challenges for HRM: how to manage people in hostile environments

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Guest Editors

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More than 20 years have passed since the publication of Harvey's (1993) seminal study on corporate programs managing terrorist threats. Though Harvey's research focus was relatively novel at that time, many of the identified challenges caused by terrorism are still existent today – maybe even bigger considering recent developments in the world. For instance, the Arab Spring preluded a series of turmoil and instability in the Middle Eastern/North African region. Iraq is struggling with the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and experiences violence at a very severe level. Drug cartels in Latin America fight for hegemony and control several major cities. The violent conflict in Ukraine caused major Western stock markets to plummet, bringing scenarios of the Cold War to mind. And everywhere there are Multinational Companies (MNCs) involved, doing business in these hostile environments. Obviously, the environment and context these firms are embedded in cause severe challenges for international HRM, such as ensuring well-being and safety of the employees in these countries. However, the literature on HRM in hostile environments, i.e. countries or regions that suffer from terrorism, severe crime or other forms of violence, is still in its early stages.

Terrorism can be considered to be severely affecting the business environment, clearly posing a threat for internationally operating firms. However, it is not the only form of violent risk and danger though. While already having or currently developing prosperous and growing markets, many countries in the world are endangered by violent conflict, civil unrest, drug-related crime and other forms of crises. This is detrimental for business, especially for subsidiaries of foreign MNCs (Oh & Oetzel, 2011). In terms of foreign direct investment, Oh and Oetzel (2011) revealed that the presence of man-made disasters, such as terrorism, compared to natural disasters, significantly decreases the number of foreign subsidiaries. Besides responses to violent conflict and terrorism on subsidiary level, there are also negative outcomes on the individual level. For instance, Bader and Berg (2013) found that various terrorism-related pressures can cause stress, which eventually impedes expatriate work attitudes and performance. Reade and Lee (2012) showed that violent ethno-political conflict decreases organizational commitment in foreign-based firms, whereas such effects could not be detected for indigenous companies.

In a study on expatriate social networks, Bader and Schuster (2015) empirically showed that the prevalence of terrorism per se does not directly decrease the individual's psychological well-being; however, positive effects of a big social network are even more important when a country's terrorism threat is high. All these impacts are burdensome to business and their employees and can create bigger problems if the organization, in particular HRM, is not dealing with them appropriately.

Hence, despite some studies having considered HRM issues in hostile environments (e.g. Bader & Berg, 2013; Bader & Schuster, 2015; Reade, 2009; Reade & Lee, 2012), many questions remain unanswered (Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, & Steen, 2010). First of all, most research still takes place on an individual level. However, if one wants to understand the entire phenomenon, it is essential to address these issues on an organizational level as well. Hence, research on (co-worker) social support and perceived organizational support (POS) in hostile environments needs to be extended (Bader, 2014). In future studies, POS could be a link between organizational and individual outcomes and, therefore, should be further investigated. Moreover, Howie (2007) identified several negative effects of terrorism, such as workplace discrimination and impacts on diversity management. Even though he states that due to the sample population his research is not generalizable, it still is an important starting point that is worthwhile to be followed up on. With regard to the challenges posed by drug cartels in Latin America, it is also important to look at HRM in regions of the world suffering from other forms of organized crime and violence. Moreover, the role of psychological contracts, as done by Davila and Elvira (2007), should receive more attention, as they are supposed to help understanding the success and failure of various HRM practices. And finally, there is little research on the impact of culture and different ways of dealing with violent conflict and risk depending on the companies' and the employees' origin. This is especially important, since most research focuses on expatriates from US American or European MNCs. However, while expatriates have the possibility to leave the country, if it is getting too dangerous, it is still unclear how local employees of foreign MNCs should be managed in such a case. Localization is severely underexplored especially considering the wider phenomena going beyond the level of locals' skills acquisition and including issues such as trust or corruption. This is relevant in terms of challenges such as organizational and HRM strategies including value generation, staffing, talent management or contingency planning.

Overall, we believe that there is still a substantial need for new research on such an increasingly important topic. This special issue aims at filling this gap by soliciting manuscripts on the theme of managing people in hostile environments. We invite papers that are theory driven, preferably empirical, and that address the following, though are not necessarily limited to these topics:

- Organizational effects: issues of challenges and consequences for MNCs operating in hostile environments.
- Protection and corporate programs for managing violent threats such as terrorism, crime and civil war.
- Ethical considerations – should MNCs do business in hostile environments?
- Organizational support in hostile environments – what to do and what to avoid from an organizational perspective.
- Subsidiary staffing and other issues of managing local employees versus expatriates in hostile environments. These would also include localization approaches and models – including an exploration of talent management, trust and corruption (avoidance) issues.

- Gender issues under the prevalence of violent threats.
- Hardship premium and risk add-ons: issues of expatriate compensation and kidnap-and-ransom insurance.
- Psychological effects of exposure to danger – questions on an individual level.
- Psychological contracts in hostile environments.
- The responsibility and role of the HR department in hostile environments.

Findings of these issues should be novel and have both theoretical and practical implications. The guest editors are happy to discuss potential paper ideas informally via Email (benjamin.bader@leuphana.de).

Please note that the format must comply with submission guidelines of *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* stated on the website. Manuscripts should be submitted online using *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* ScholarOne Manuscripts site: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rijh>. New users should first create an account. Once a user is logged onto the site, submissions should be made via the Author Centre. All submissions will undergo a double-blind peer-review process. Therefore, authors need to prepare and upload two versions of their manuscript. One should be a complete text, while in the second version all document information identifying the author(s) needs to be removed. In the submission system, authors will be able to define the anonymous version as ‘Main document without author information’ which will then be sent to the referees.

When submitting your manuscript, please choose the title of this Special Issue from the Manuscript Type list. Also, on the ‘Details and Comments’ page, please answer ‘yes’ when prompted ‘Is this manuscript a candidate for a special issue?’ so that it will be forwarded to the guest editors. We are looking forward to receiving your submissions.

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