



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

European Management Journal

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/emj

PARIS LONDON BERLIN MADRID TORINO



The influence of Islamic values on management practice in Morocco

Gillian Forster*, John Fenwick**

Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 July 2013

Accepted 7 April 2014

Available online 9 May 2014

Associate editor: Sabina Siebert

Keywords:

Islamic values

Patriarchy

Moroccan management

Education

Islamic work ethic

ABSTRACT

This article explores how Islamic values influence management and business practice in Morocco with a view to a new understanding of how one of the global, socio-political tides of the early twenty-first century is now beginning to make itself felt commercially. An interpretivist approach, coupled with access to a rich and hitherto inaccessible mix of diverse and highly placed participants, allows the authors to augment extant research with a vivid rendering of the lived reality of Islamic management practice. And in consequence, sweeping monocultural generalisations about national character and practice can be refined into a nuanced and layered analysis of actual management behaviour. In order to understand how Islamic values influence management practice the findings unravel what has hitherto been presented in the extant literature as a Gordian Knot of complex influences. By putting the voices of participants 'centre-stage' the Gordian Knot is replaced by the metaphor of the Arabesque, a Moorish artform typically comprising motifs of flowing branches, leaves and scroll work all interlaced and entwined. Just as these typical motifs are ever-present in the form of the Arabesque yet take on a unique pattern in each individual depiction, so it is with the characteristics which influence management practice in Morocco. The principal motifs elicited from participants include: 'living' Islam (including the interaction of Islam and personal beliefs, alongside the influence of kinship); Islam versus Moroccan Islam (the national culture's ingestion of a religion); national characteristics of family and patriarchy (including the support that employees expect from their managers); socio-economic factors, in particular education and gender (life experiences including education and the home); and foreign influences (the impact of Western colonialism). This research identifies that these principal motifs are ever-present in their influence on management practice, yet in each individual's case the pattern of such influence bears the unique imprint of the individual manager's own religiosity and character.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

The following paper asks the question how do Islamic values shape management practice in Morocco? This research sits in the area of cross-cultural and comparative HRD literature in which culture is of central importance to its message (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002) to multinational organisations and other global players on how to practise successful and culturally intelligent business on the world stage. The guiding principle of this research is that "the study of values . . . reveal deep insights about how work is viewed" (Robertson, Al-Khatib, & Al-Habib, 2002, p. 585). Further justification for the choice of Islamic values as the focus to this study on management practice in Morocco is provided by other researchers who reveal Islam as a "unifying force" (Weir, 2003, p. 72), "an integrating framework" (Weir, 2001, p. 17) or a "moral filter" (Rice, 1999, p. 346) for management

in the Arab World, referred to as the "fourth paradigm" (Weir, 2003, p. 71) to distinguish Arab management from the first three paradigms of American, European and Japanese management. The aim of this research is to develop a framework for greater understanding of how different cultural contexts affect business practices. Existing research highlights that the pervasive and intensifying presence and influence of Islamic values is not just a geopolitical issue, it is also a business and management issue. Those managers working in, and with, cultures that have Islam as their "moral filter" (Rice, 1999, p. 346) should recognise the role Islam plays in shaping organisation and management practices. However, what also must be considered is that Islamic values do not work in isolation but are an integral part of a country's "national character" (Tayeb, 1988, p. 154) – an all-encompassing phrase used by Tayeb to include all of a country's cultural, political and socio-economic (i.e. national) characteristics. All of these characteristics have a significant bearing on management styles in particular countries. Thus the scope of this research goes beyond the identification and enactment of Islamic values in the workplace and seeks additionally to identify other contextual influences (national characteristics) that also shape how managers 'practise' management in Morocco.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 0 191 227 4356.

E-mail address: gillian.forster@northumbria.ac.uk (G. Forster).

** Corresponding author.

E-mail address: john.fenwick@northumbria.ac.uk (J. Fenwick).

But why choose Morocco as the cultural context for the exploration of Islamic values in management practice? Although Weir (2003, p. 74) identifies the countries of the Maghreb to be outside of his ‘fourth paradigm’ – i.e. the Middle East – because “their historical, administrative and linguistic traditions are different,” existing research on management in Morocco (Benson & Al Arkoubi, 2006; Cox, Estrada, Lynham, & Motii, 2005; d'Iribarne, 2002, 2003 and Al Arkoubi, 2008) indicates that Islam here plays an important role comparable to that in any other Arab country. And whilst research into Arab Management is growing and developing – for example, leadership (Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 2001; Ali, 2005), features of Arab cultures (Hutchings & Weir, 2006), values studies (Yousef, 2000), the Islamic Work Ethic (Ali, 1988, 1990), women in management (Metcalfe, 2006; Mostafa, 2005) – Morocco continues to receive “little attention . . . by management scholars” (Benson & Al Arkoubi, 2006). Islamic values are said to play a significant role in organisational life, but ethnographic studies (Al Arkoubi, 2008; d'Iribarne, 2002, 2003) have been limited to one organisation only; and other studies (Wahabi, 1993), whilst providing breadth through their quantitative approach, fail to provide a full understanding for the conclusions they draw. This paper, however, provides breadth where there is depth (Al Arkoubi, 2008; d'Iribarne, 2002, 2003) and depth where there is breadth (Wahabi, 1993) through the presentation of a qualitative study of 24 participants – all of whom are top-level managers – from 22 organisations which are both Moroccan-owned and multinational. In unravelling how Islam, and other national characteristics, shape management practice, this research contributes in two ways. First, the qualitative research approach provides findings of a depth and texture which far exceeds that of existing quantitative studies. Second, the diversity of the participants, together with their unusual seniority, embodies and illuminates the internationalisation and cross-cultural richness of management in Morocco, an aspect untouched by other researchers.

We begin this paper by providing the reader with an overview of how we developed our heuristic framework, drawing on hitherto discrete academic disciplines – anthropology, Islamic studies, business and management – to provide an all-encompassing set of sensitising concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) specific to Morocco for the purposes of research. We then present our research approach and findings and provide the reader with an adapted heuristic framework – the metaphor of the Arabesque – which reveals and reflects ‘actual’ management practice in Morocco. We conclude with our suggestions for future research.

Developing the heuristic framework for research

What are values?

In order to explore how Islamic values influence management practice in Morocco, it is necessary to outline our ‘working definition’ of values for research purposes. Values have been described as a “. . . conception, explicit, or implicit of what an individual or a group regards as desirable . . .” (Guth & Tagiuri, 1965, pp. 124–125); a preference for “certain affairs over others (Hofstede, 1981, p. 19); and that which “... guide and direct our behaviour and affect our daily lived experiences” (Dolan, Garcia, & Richley, 2006, p. 27). These are, however, thumbnail ‘definitions’ and as such, they are challenging to employ in a study which seeks not only to discover the existence of values but also their enactment within a cultural context. This challenging task is further compounded by Ali’s reminder (Ali, 2005, p. 63) that values are often “confused with other related terms such as attitudes, beliefs, needs and norms.”

However in following Rokeach’s (1973) definition of values we are able to operationally distinguish values from concepts such as attitudes which he believes to be the favoured concept of social scientists because of the ease with which they can be researched.

Rokeach provides in-depth descriptions of the nature of values, how they are integrated into organised systems, and how values refer to the mode of conduct (instrumental values) and the end-state of existence (terminal values). For Rokeach, how individuals get to their desired end-state is just as important as the end-state itself and a value is understood as that which

“is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence (and) a value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance.” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5)

Rokeach’s definition is useful but it is unwieldy compared to the brevity of others (Dolan et al., 2006; Guth & Tagiuri, 1965; Hofstede, 1981) and for our research purposes – seeking the existence of, and enactment of, values – a middle ground was sought. It is from the work of Schwartz (1994), who himself sought to modify earlier definitions, that the possibility of a ‘working definition’ of values can be discerned. Schwartz (1994) substantiates that there are indeed universal values, which act as motivators of behaviour, and he has identified and measured these in a variety of contexts, for example culturally (Schwartz, 1994), cross-culturally (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) and in respect of religiosity (Schwartz & Huisman, 1995). Thus in this study we follow Schwartz and subscribe to values as “desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 21).

We now introduce Morocco as our context for exploring how Islamic values influence management practice.

Morocco

Morocco’s Arabic name is Maghrib meaning “land of the setting sun” (Pennell, 2003, p. 1). It is the most Westerly of the North African countries collectively known as the Maghreb which also includes Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Morocco has a bicameral Parliament and, in formal terms, a constitutional monarchy but “the King has such strong powers that one could easily think of [Morocco] as an absolute monarchy” (Benson & Al Arkoubi, 2006, p. 277; CIA, 2012; Stewart, 2011). King Mohammed VI’s power derives from his family’s (the Alawis) rule since the seventeenth century and their claimed direct descent from the Prophet Mohammed. Thus, the “monarchy embodies Morocco’s Muslim consensus: Arabism, Islam and Moroccan nationalism” (Sater, 2010, p. 2). The socio-economic and political reforms begun in the 1990s – including greater respect for human rights and attempts to improve the economy through liberalisation of trade and privatisation (Cohen & Jaidi, 2006; Najem, 2001) – prompt some commentators to describe Morocco as able to “preserve its rich cultural heritage” and yet be “one of the Arab countries most open to Western values and intellectual movements” (Benson & Al Arkoubi, 2006, p. 276). Seen on the ‘inside’, Morocco is subject to familiar tensions between the secular and the religious (Sater, 2010). Whilst Morocco has made considerable social, political and economic reforms, the rate of progress is slow. Corruption, patronage, poverty and unemployment remain (World Bank, 2009). From this slow progress there has emerged “political alienation and disaffection” and a concomitant “rise of Islam (political Islam)” (Cohen & Jaidi, 2006 p. 4; Kristiansen, 2012).

Moroccan culture

Anthropologists (Clifford Geertz, 1968, 1973; Hildred Geertz, 1979; Gellner, 1969) and historians (Munson, 1993; Pennell, 2003) have been engaged by Morocco’s cultural characteristics. A key focus of their work is the meaning of family and patronage (Geertz, 1979) and the ingestion of Islam (Geertz, 1968; Gellner, 1969; Munson,

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات