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INTRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

In this special issue we aim to advance the theoretical, conceptual and empirical knowledge about the relationship between global teams and human resource management in international organizations. We argue that although the prevalence of global teams in international organizations is rapidly rising, simultaneously affecting the management of firms on global, regional and local levels, the response of firms and scholars alike to such changes has been slower, especially in the area of IHRM. The HR function in organizations could play a vital role in understanding, managing and leveraging the benefits of global teams to ensure that they contribute positively to the performance of firms, organizational units, and people. We demonstrate that there is still a disconnect in this respect and we highlight several areas in which the increasing use of global teams may challenge our conventional understanding of IHRM issues, and at the same time offer solutions for improvement in international organizations. The selected articles in this special issue provide both theoretical and practitioner implications by highlighting the need to explore the relationship between global teams and IHRM more generally and fully, as well as the need for HR practitioners and IHRM scholars to focus more on the 'human' and less on the 'resources' aspect. We trust that readers of this issue will agree that the articles all offer novel insights into key issues that open new avenues for further research in this nascent yet promising area.

Introduction

As societies and organizations are becoming more diverse in response to increasing globalization, organizations are faced with the challenge of coming up with solutions to deal with rapid change. Among these challenges are finding new ways of organizing work. The international business environment has witnessed

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changes such as shifts in the global landscape with the growth of emerging markets and shifts in the ways firms engage with each other, with a rise in strategic alliances, licensing and contracting, and growth of smaller, technology-oriented, flexible international firms alongside large multinationals (Mayerhofer, Hartmann, Michelitsch-Riedl, & Kollinger, 2004; Sparrow, 2012). It is appropriate to question whether traditional models of organizations and the HR function in international organizations are in need of new perspectives (Collings, Wood, & Caligiuri, 2015; Robinson-Easley, 2014; Tung, 2016), as well as whether the role of the corporate HR function will be diminished or strengthened in response to these changes (Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007; Sparrow, 2012).

The field of IHRM still largely focuses on human resource management with an emphasis on developing the international expertise of a relatively small number of employees (e.g., through various types of international assignments) (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). As global teams become ever more employed, organizations are faced with HR challenges, and have potential to benefit from global teams, at the levels of the individual, the team and the organization as organizations are increasingly moving away from traditional hierarchy-based to more flexible, team-based structures (Schwartz, Bohdal-Spiegelhoff, Gretczko, & Sloan, 2016; Zander et al., 2015). Key roles of HR with regard to global teams pertain to developing and maintaining a coordinated HR system throughout the organization that taps into the potential of global team members and includes processes for the provision of core HR practices, such as appropriate recruitment and selection, training, career development, developing global leaders who possess global mindsets, managing international assignments, and global talent management (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Tung, 2016).

In this special issue, we aim to bridge two areas of research – that of global teams and their important role in organizations, and that of IHRM and the role of HR in international organizations with respect to leveraging the benefits of global teams. In developing the special issue, we encouraged manuscripts that address important IHRM issues with respect to global teams in organizations at various levels of analysis (the organization, team and individual levels), as well as those that contribute to the development of new theoretical perspectives. Interestingly, in response to our call for papers, papers addressing the vital role of HR in ensuring that international organizations may, in fact, make the best use of global teams and receive benefits from them were not as prevalent as those addressing the benefits of global teams for international organizations. We concluded that this is, indeed, an area that is lacking in research. In our view, global teams provide an effective mechanism by which organizations can become more flexible in keeping with the pace of change in a global context. Organizing international work in global teams involves both challenges and benefits to international organizations, where HR has a role to play in alleviating problems while leveraging the benefits. With this special issue, we hope to advance theoretical, conceptual and empirical knowledge about IHRM implications of leveraging global teams in international organizations.

In this introductory article we will first briefly outline how global teams are (re) shaping international organizations and specifically discuss the HR implications of (1) global teams as assisting in creating a positive climate of diversity, (2) global teams as a solution to global talent management, and (3) global teams as a means of global integration. We outline key international human resource challenges and discuss ways in which global teams can serve as a means for meeting these challenges. Our particular focus is on how (1) global teams can act as a cross-cultural training tool, (2) global teams can assist in developing global competence, and (3) global teams can provide leadership development. We conclude with a presentation of the three articles selected for this special issue.

Global teams are (re)shaping international organizations: HR implications

The world is more interconnected than ever before. Traditional organizational forms, traditional leadership roles and traditional ways of managing people need to adapt to changing times. Interconnectedness is linked to rapid response, greater global reach and electronic-based forms of communication. In turn, organizations need to be more flexible in order to keep up with change, finding and bringing the best, most capable leaders and employees from different locations, in order to stay integrated and responsive. More and more so, organizations need to increase their speed of reaction to changing markets and to source the needed knowledge and skills to respond to changes. They cannot rely on the traditional acquisition or development of skills in each of their various geographic locations or units, and must develop means for tapping the diversity of skills they possess throughout the entire organization, to do so quickly and rise to challenges (Schweiger, Atamer, & Calori, 2003). We have long seen more frequent travel and more individuals engaging with more cultures (Mayerhofer et al., 2004), but in the last decades communication technologies (including social media) have evolved at a rapid pace; virtual forms of organizing work are completely changing the landscape of global work. The structure of international business is moving away from traditional hierarchical multinational enterprises to more flexible international arrangements (Beamish & Lupton, 2016; Kostova, Marano, & Tallman, 2016; Zander et al., 2015). It has been suggested that the organization of the twenty-first century will be smaller, flatter, more flexible, technology-, learning- and innovation-oriented, and that this will be achieved through the increased use of global teams (e.g. Gilson, Maynard, Jones Young, Vartiainen, & Hakonen, 2015; Hitt, Keats, & DeMarie, 1998; Kets De Vries, 1996).

Organizing work in global teams has become the modus operandi in multinational organizations (Zander, Zettinig, & Mäkelä, 2013). These are teams whose members are globally dispersed and that are heterogeneous on multiple dimensions (Maloney & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2006; Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2012). These teams span multiple countries, time zones, cultures and languages, and they often

rely mostly on communication technologies rather than face-to-face interaction. Whether they are collocated, virtual, or a combination of both, global teams can be seen as catalysts for new forms of organizing, or perhaps even as organizational forms in themselves, changing our traditional conceptions about organizational boundaries (Gibbs & Boyraz, 2015; Schweiger et al., 2003; Zander et al., 2015).

As organizations move from vertical hierarchies to flatter, networked forms, global teams assist in enhancing horizontal coordination across the organization (Schweiger et al., 2003). Although the advantages of such cross-border coordination are numerous, organizations must have the capability to attain and sustain them, to recognize and promote activities that translate into organizational benefits. Global teams, already present in most organizations, are a powerful vehicle for overcoming these challenges, transcending organizational, national and cultural boundaries, providing flexibility, integration of globally dispersed skills and capabilities, and, in the case of global virtual teams – connectivity across geographical and temporal boundaries, to name but a few advantages (Gibbs & Boyraz, 2015). With this comes the need to change our conceptions about traditional IHRM, and develop new ideas about the role of HR in order to reap the benefits of organizing work in global teams as well as new team-based structures in international organizations. Brewster and Suutari (2005) have identified the key challenges of global HRM as: identifying and sourcing key skills within the international organization, the dissemination of knowledge and practices throughout the organization, and the global development of talent. The fact that global teams are distributed across time zones, geographic locations and cultures raises certain challenges, but global teams may also bring international organizations together by promoting more interdependence among organizational units, through the development of global networks via team members and leaders.

In the sections below we will discuss how (1) global teams can assist in creating a positive climate of diversity, (2) global teams provide a solution to global talent management, and (3) global teams may be used as a vehicle for global integration in international organizations.

Global teams assist in creating a positive climate of diversity

Team-based structures in organizations are receiving increasing attention of late, for example, the implications of project-based work (Kaplan & Levinthal, 2015), and an emphasis on managing national, cultural and linguistic complexities in the leadership of global teams as a mode of global organizing (Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2014). Among the many strengths of global teams are their abilities to integrate specialized and globally dispersed capabilities, to understand local needs and demands, and to leverage cultural diversity, with respect to values, beliefs, attitudes, perspectives and experiences, among team members. Yet in order to surmount the challenges of coordination, interaction across multiple borders and boundaries, and managing multiple stakeholder demands (Mäkelä et al., in press),

global teams must be effective. Global teams, however, also face a host of problems and challenges related to their inherent complexities, such as diversity issues, team leadership, process and outcomes (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Davison, 2012; Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander, & Maznevski, 2010; Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010; Zander et al., 2012).

Global teams may assist organizations in developing an inclusive climate of diversity. Organizations can reap advantages from the diverse values, expertise, cultures, know-how and skills of their workforce by instilling a culture of cross-border collaboration. 'Diversity management' refers to the systematic efforts by organizations to attract and develop people with diverse backgrounds and skills, and includes recruiting, rewarding and developing people to reap competitive advantages for the firm (Bassett-Jones, 2005). Organizations that operate across borders are already by definition diverse. Converting diversity into advantages involves leveraging differences. HR policies that foster increasing cooperation across boundaries, instead of simply managing diversity would assist in creating such a positive climate.

As global teams function across multiple boundaries, and exhibit cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, one of the key challenges is the creation of a positive climate of diversity within teams (Zander et al., 2015). In global teams diversity has been shown to have both positive and negative outcomes (Stahl, Maznevski, et al., 2010); diversity can potentially lead to innovations but also interpersonal conflict, and reduced interaction and communication among team members (Schweiger et al., 2003). Thus the challenge for firms lies in transforming negative effects into positive outcomes. It has been suggested that the creation and maintenance of a positive climate can lead to enhanced creativity and performance in global teams (Lauring, Paunova, Umans, Butler, & Zander, 2014). Interpersonal interaction challenges within global teams are not automatically overcome by promoting participation in and of global teams. Problems resulting from diverse values, views and expectations of team members may even become amplified due to an inability to effectively communicate because of linguistic distance. Thus, the onus is on organizations to develop HR policies and practices that encourage cross-border, inter-unit and cross-functional coordination of resources, knowledge, skills, information and people, networking, and horizontal cooperation (Schweiger et al., 2003), by creating a culture that encourages, rewards, supports and legitimizes global teamwork. At the same time, as global organizations develop more effective HR policies and practices, such as global diversity management, they will tend to develop more effective global teams (Konrad, Yang, & Maurer, 2016; Nishii & Özbilgin, 2007).

Global teams as a solution to global talent management

Global talent management is an additional and as yet developing area of IHRM. It involves organizations knowing where their key talent lies within the organization

and being able to tap that talent at the right time. Tarique and Schuler (2010, p. 124) define global talent management as

> … systematically utilizing IHRM activities (complementary human resource management policies and practices) to attract, develop, and recruit individuals with high levels of human capital (e.g. competency, personality, motivation) consistent with the strategic directions of the multinational enterprise in a dynamic, highly competitive, and global environment.

Scholars (e.g. Collings, 2014; Scullion & Collings, 2006; Tarique & Schuler, 2010; Tung, 2016) have raised several issues that are cause to or exacerbate the problems that international firms face with respect to global talent management, such as: the downsizing of organizations leading to a surplus of talent and rising unemployment, the unwillingness of individuals to relocate for extended periods overseas, economic and technological development disparity between emerging and developed country markets that leads to difficulty filling positions in emerging market MNEs, and an aging workforce and simultaneous rise in GenY workers. These issues pose challenges for international firms in sourcing talent, dissemination of knowledge and practices throughout the organization and ensuring the ongoing development of global talent (Roberts, Kossek, & Ozeki, 1998; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Further, Tung (2016) puts forth that traditional IHRM topics such as recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, compensation and repatriation must be re-evaluated in light of this changing global mobility context. Recent surveys provide yet another reason for questioning the benefits of international assignees. Seventy percent of firms do not source international assignees from external locations, seemingly relying on traditional locations for sourcing talent (Brookfield Global Relocation Services [BGRS], 2016). This puts employees in non-traditional or peripheral locations at a disadvantage in terms of amassing international experience and knowledge. These benefits are concentrated in a few locations and individuals. Tarique and Schuler (2010) argue that development of appropriate IHRM activities is key to developing and sustaining competitive advantage, in turn strengthening HR leadership. These are activities, such as: emphasis on the importance of international work in recruiting employees, developing global leaders, reducing negative repatriation outcomes and increasing employee engagement.

In light of the changing global mobility context, international organizations will need to determine how to best use their available human resources. We have highlighted the many advantages in our discussion thus far of global teams. Their use as a key to global talent management is no exception. As the extent of inclusion of employees in such programs varies with respect to whom organizations most focus on (e.g. top managers, international managers, all employees) (Tarique & Schuler, 2010), adding to difficulties in defining and researching the scope of global talent management, we suggest a more nuanced and layered approach to developing and assessing global talent management within international organizations, in which global teams play a pivotal role. Attracting individuals with an

interest in international work to positions in global teams in the initial recruiting stages would help firms to identify motivated individuals with potential for future leadership positions. As a result of active and successful participation in various types of global teams, individuals may be identified for strategic overseas positions (having gained experience working across multiple countries/cultures), with the benefit of reducing expatriation and repatriation turnover risks.

Thus, the identification of high potential employees for international assignments or global leadership positions should focus on potential returns to the organization (McNulty & Tharenou, 2004). Although rotational international assignments have traditionally been seen as a means for developing international competence in expatriates, we propose that greater benefits could be attained by engaging individuals in rotational global teams assignments. High performing global teams could be identified as potential sources of talent; and individuals who engage with members from other cultures successfully may be tagged as future international managers, helping to diminish some of the difficulties with traditional international assignments, expatriate training, acculturation, etc. Thus, HR must accept the challenge of including global teams in training programs, or creating training programs with global teams in focus, assessing team performance, and developing assessment criteria (cultural intelligence could be one such tool).

Global teams as a means of global integration: network builders and coordination

Global teams can become a major resource in themselves, enhancing the flow of information and knowledge, and developing lateral ties throughout the organization. Maznevski and Distefano (2000) argue that because global team members are constantly negotiating, sharing ideas and knowledge, resolving conflicts and building trust, they generate new team-based solutions and knowledge, learn from one another and build global business knowledge. Team members learn from one another about the individual markets, functions, processes and practices in each of their locations, turning tacit knowledge into explicit team-based knowledge. The coordination of knowledge, expertise, and resources by members located throughout the organization, makes these accessible to the team, and this accessibility is in turn transferred to the different locations of the team members. Global teams not only enhance coordination, but global integration. Maznevski and Distefano (2000) stress that the new knowledge generated by global teams may provide unique resources and competitive advantages for the organization. They also suggest that HR managers could ensure opportunities for global teams to meet face-to-face on a regular basis, sustaining the connectedness between team members, and enhancement of cross-border networks and relationships.

Schweiger et al. (2003) have highlighted network development as a key HR focus for international organizations in facilitating global coordination via global teams. Fostering socialization via formal and informal channels promotes

horizontal cooperation. Examples of formal approaches are management development programs to help managers to augment their international skills. Informal opportunities for socialization with employees throughout the organization via social events, or employee-initiated forums, allow the formation of relationships based on mutual interests and expertise. Short term rotational assignments also provide opportunities for employees to gain first-hand experience in a variety of contexts, build relationships, and draw upon these relationships and expertise in forming global teams, enabling the sourcing of resources via established networks. Yet, Harvey and Novicevic (2002) caution that to be effective vehicles of global coordination, global teams should be carefully selected so that members possess a balance of skills, resources and leadership capabilities, and that they be provided with the freedom to take initiative, and be mandated with decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities.

In the next section, we briefly outline key international human resource challenges and examine how global teams can address these and provide solutions with respect to cross-cultural management training, global competence and global leadership development.

Key international human resource challenges: overcoming them through global teams

In the IHRM literature, it has been argued that traditional HR policies and practices need to change in order to keep pace with an ever increasing globalized workforce and increasing global mobility (Tung, 2016). Collings et al. (2007) suggest that the changing global context, with its rise in alternate forms of international assignments, necessitates new perspectives on our conventional understanding and application of international work. Expatriate assignments have long been regarded as a primary mechanisms by which international organizations develop the international skills of their employees, although the forms of international assignments are increasingly diverse (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Cascio & Boudreau, 2016). They help international managers develop global mindsets and global management skills (Bolino, 2007; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016), enable the transfer of knowledge and skills between employees and organizational units (Riusala & Suutari, 2004), and help to overcome skills shortages in different locations (Morley & Heraty, 2004). The role of HR has conventionally been more or less standardized with respect to managing international assignments (Collings et al., 2007), with international assignments as a primary vehicle for international career development (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yun, & Lepak, 2005).

More recently, scholars have begun to question the traditional view and role of expatriate assignments in international organizations (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). Some point to an increasing reluctance of employees to relocate overseas, due to increasing concerns about personal security (Collings et al., 2007), declining loyalty to organizations, dual career management issues, and family concerns. The

domestic HRM literature has pointed to concerns by employees about balancing their work and personal lives (Mayerhofer et al., 2004), often difficult to attain when traditional international assignments put a strain on the expatriate and one's family. Reluctance may also stem from a lack of formal career management practices in international organizations. A recent survey reports that as high as 77% of firms do not have career planning processes in place for international assignees, and 82% still do not have formal repatriation strategies linked to career planning (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016).

Because of these issues, scholars have argued that international assignments may actually be less beneficial to international organizations than ideally thought (Dickmann & Harris, 2005), although the lack of HR analytics to evaluate international assignees means that return on investment in international assignees is both questionable and difficult to measure (McNulty & De Cieri, 2016). Given the inability of many firms to retain their expatriates after international assignments, and to extract and build upon the knowledge and skills acquired overseas, this is not surprising. Collings et al. (2007) argue that international assignments may in fact be more beneficial to individual assignees, from the perspective that these help them to develop their individual skills and relational capital, than they are to the organization. McNulty, De Cieri, and Hutchings (2013) reinforce the importance of considering the costs and benefits of international assignees from the perspectives of both the employing organization and the individual.

Alternatives to traditional international assignments are being employed in firms, such as frequent flyer assignments, flexpatriates, commuter assignments, international business travellers, and rotational assignments. The advantages of these short term assignments have been discussed in the literature, and include decreased costs, flexibility and simplicity in managing them (Mayerhofer et al., 2004; Tahvanainen, Welch, & Worm, 2005), but they also have disadvantages with respect to psychological side-effects, fatigue, logistical issues (work permits) and the quality of relationships with host country nationals (Mäkelä, De Cieri, & Mockaitis, 2015). Global teams can be used to develop international expertise in more employees in a shorter time frame at lower cost, avoiding issues associated with relocation, expatriate failure, repatriation difficulties and dual careers. The challenge for HR will be to not only include non-traditional international assignees into their global mobility policies, but also tie these to career planning, training and development. It is probable that the return on (relatively smaller) investment of employees assigned to global teams will be manifold greater than for the single international assignee. Some of the key benefits of international assignees can be impressed upon global team leaders and team members. By engaging in cross-border teamwork, members hone their intercultural skills, share resources and knowledge across numerous locations simultaneously at lower cost; the risks of failed acculturation and repatriation, as well as negative family consequences are also significantly lessened.

Thus, global teams are an efficient and effective means for enhancing HR potential within international organizations. We further consider three specific areas in which global teams provide such advantages and discuss how (1) global teams can act as a cross-cultural training tool, (2) global teams can assist in developing global competence, and (3) global teams can enhance leadership development.

Global teams as a cross-cultural training tool

Although the benefits of cross-cultural training for expatriate adjustment and performance have been well documented in the literature (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, & Riedel, 2006; Morris & Robie, 2001), recent research questions the effectiveness of training programs. McEvoy and Buller (2013), for example, point to evidence suggesting that the academic literature is out of sync with what international HR managers in international organizations see as important. In their research, international HR managers lamented that although organizations see training programs (typically from one to two days in duration) as beneficial, few expatriates and their accompanying family members show interest in participating in these programs. Some research has also found that expatriate training has little or no effect (Selmer, 2005) or even negative effects (Jenkins & Mockaitis, 2010) on cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates. Generic or 'one size fits all' approaches to training that neglect unique workplace demands in specific countries are in part to blame (Vance & Paik, 2002).

Although training effectiveness depends on many factors, such as timing, duration, method of delivery and quality, given these mixed findings about the effects of training on individual expatriates, the extent to which training programs are useful in developing intercultural competence of assignees that translates into organizational benefits, is arguable. And, it appears that fewer firms are offering formalized cross-cultural training programs. In a recent KPMG survey (2015), 38% of firms offered training to expatriates and their families. Another global survey found that 39% of firms offer cross-cultural training for all of their international assignees, however in 77% of the firms, training was optional (BGRS, 2014). In a study of Australian firms employing expatriates in China, Hutchings (2003) found that although firms desire employees with sufficient knowledge and intercultural skills to work in culturally distant locations, cross-cultural training in Australian firms was not offered.

Ideally, cross-cultural training programs should enhance expatriate intercultural skills as well as their cultural intelligence, which would translate to a favorable international assignment experience. These improved skills should, in theory, also translate to organizational capabilities in the long run, enhancing organizational learning and performance. Adler and Bartholomew (1992) found that firms often operate under the illusion that providing more cross-cultural

training to their managers will improve their organizational capabilities. Yet the authors argue that enhancing individual learning or increasing the number or duration of cross-cultural training opportunities is not sufficient for improved organizational performance. This can best be achieved by allowing employees to 'continually work with and learn from people worldwide and disperse that knowledge throughout the firm's worldwide operations (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 62)'. Lenartowicz, Johnson and Konopaske (2014) emphasize that in order to truly acquire intercultural competence, employees should be exposed to as many brief cross-cultural experiences as possible, stressing socialization of employees in intercultural encounters as a key vehicle for acquiring tacit cross-cultural knowledge. This notion is also supported in a study by Shen and Lang (2009), who found that more frequent shorter term international assignments were seen by Australian firms to provide more benefit than formal cross-cultural training programs. Despite the brevity of many of today's international assignments it has been shown that even short term international experience increases individuals' levels of cultural intelligence (Engle & Crowne, 2014).

On this basis, we argue that global teams can help to overcome the aforementioned difficulties and serve as a training tool for improving cross-cultural competence. Adler and Bartholomew (1992) have proposed that training programs must be created by multinational teams, and must be offered to multinational participants, not to a select group of individuals who are exposed to a single culture. Global teams themselves may serve as a training mechanism; participation in global teams provides exposure to many cultures at once, to large numbers of employees. This participation on common tasks enhances members' cross-cultural management skills, as team members are socialized into a variety of cultures; coupled with short term visits or face-to-face meetings, expatriate knowledge is enhanced. In turn, this learning by interacting with multiple cultures would improve each member's cultural intelligence. But Maznevski and Distefano (2000) caution that HR departments should focus on offering cross-cultural training to global teams as well, not simply to individual expatriates or employees. Making team members aware of similarities and differences within their teams and the development of strategies to bridge differences could help teams overcome challenges due to cultural and linguistic differences, and help ensure effectiveness. Cross-cultural skills are acquired and developed through interaction with employees in various locations, as well as other stakeholders, on a frequent basis.

Cross-cultural training in global teams should be an ongoing process, and it may be provided at little cost relative to traditional training programs for international assignments. Participation in several global teams and short term assignments to work on team projects ensures that potential expatriates have prior international experience, shown to be positively linked to cultural intelligence (Crowne, 2008).

Global teams can assist in developing global competence

Adler and Bartholomew (1992) have questioned the use of international assignees in developing the international or global capabilities of the firm's workforce; only a select few are able to reap the rewards. Sending an employee on an international assignment also provides exposure to a single culture (or a few). An issue to consider is whether this constitutes global competence; in addition, how long would it take to develop the global competence of a single international manager with successive (and often lengthy) international assignments?

The development of global competence is thus a function of the time spent overseas, as well as the intensity of interactions (Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis) and the quality of interaction with host country nationals (Bandura's (1977) social learning theory). These are well-established theories in the expatriate management literature. Mayerhofer et al. (2004) with respect to international assignees; argue that individuals who engage in short term international assignments may in fact, be more globally competent than traditional expatriates. Short term international assignees allow employees to work simultaneously in several countries, on several tasks, with more flexibility and at lower cost and risk.

While the benefits of expatriate assignments extend, for the most part, only insofar as the expatriate assignments acquires international skills and expertise, the benefits of global teams as a tool for developing global competence are far-reaching. We argue that global teams can extend these benefits even further. Adler and Bartholomew (1992) posit that globally competent managers are quite different from traditional international managers. The acquisition of global skills is linked to a global mindset. Whereas traditional expatriates focus on a single country, global teams already provide exposure to multiple countries, cultures and mindsets. Global teams satisfy the competencies outlined by Adler and Bartholomew (1992) in several additional ways. Global team members, unlike traditional expatriates, do not focus on issues arising in a single culture sequentially. They must deal with issues arising in many cultures at once. Regular contact with other team members, either via computer mediated technologies or face-to-face visits, enable team members to adapt to interacting and working in multiple cultures. Adler and Bartholomew have suggested that global managers interact with their colleagues as equals rather than from a position of hierarchy (as an expatriate manager). Global teams satisfy this criterion as well.

In addition, upon completion of an international assignment to a single location, many expatriates are often left with a feeling that the competencies acquired on the international assignment are no longer needed or no longer applicable upon repatriation (Bolino, 2007; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). Although many organizations find it difficult to motivate repatriates with challenging tasks upon return (or even offer them employment guarantees (Bolino, 2007)), the competencies acquired in leading or working in global teams could be more readily applied in a variety of international project tasks.

Global teams can provide leadership development

In a survey of 323 HR professionals, 94% stated that the development of globally competent leaders was key to their organization's success (UNC Executive Development, 2015). Multicultural sensitivity and awareness and communication skills were among the top ranked qualities of global leaders, and the need to develop global competence was the main issue for most respondents. Just over half (52%) of firms, however, indicated that they struggle to recruit global leaders, and international travel and networking outside of the organization were named as the two ways in which organizations develop their global leaders' competencies. Yet organizations could also hone the leadership skills already present in their organizations, and identify high potential global leaders within their existing global teams. Caligiuri and Bonache (2016) argue that global mobility through international assignees has profound influence on developing the capabilities of global leaders: cross-cultural skills, an openness to diversity of ideas, creativity, enhanced ability to integrate knowledge and understanding the broader global strategies of the organization. They argue that without global mobility, individuals' understanding of their work environment is restricted to that of a single culture, and that competency development is augmented by quantity and quality of experience.

According to Zander et al. (2012), leaders who are fluent in more than one culture, are culturally intelligent and have a global mindset are most suited to leading global teams. Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, and Sutton (2012) have identified three roles of global leaders that assist in attaining essential global leadership competencies. In our view, these roles are also relevant to global teamwork. Global leaders are boundary spanners, managing within and across organizational units and various groups (Harvey & Novicevic, 2002); they are adept at developing and maintaining relationships in various locations and are able to connect people and resources across these boundaries. Schweiger et al. (2003) add that effective global team leaders also have extensive international experience and know the key players, functions and operations throughout the organization. They are able to leverage these relationships to negotiate resources and secure support for the team's needs. The second global leadership role identified by Butler et al. (2012) is that of bridge maker; they are able to successfully bridge cultural differences between team members. Schweiger et al. (2003) argue that multilingual leaders have an advantage in that they are more sensitive to difficulties caused by linguistic differences, and can act as a communication bridge when needed. Global team leaders also need to be open-minded and sensitive to various perspectives in order to use the collective knowledge of the team effectively through clarifying communication, to foster team creativity and performance. Effective global teams find a balance between similarities and differences among team members (Maznevski & Distefano, 2000), leading to team synergy. Such synergy may be enhanced by the global leader's role as blender, the third global leadership role (Butler et al., 2012), involving an ability

to understand each team member's sense of teamness, as well as uniqueness, and assists in developing relationships in such a way that the team exists as a whole while recognizing each member's individual contributions.

HR managers in organizations may help to foster the development of global leadership competencies through global teams in a variety of ways. At the very least, the global team should be recognized by the organization for its strategic significance as providing global leadership training. Members of global teams often traverse several projects and locations, and the local presence of members may be seen as more important by immediate superiors. Factoring global teamwork as a priority by HR is a key step in communicating the importance of teams for global leadership development. Selection and performance criteria centered on teamwork, and the global team leader characteristics outlined above, should also be key HR considerations. Many organizations already have global leader development programs, however, these programs are often reserved for the organization's elite. Training programs with a focus on global teams could help to identify potential global leaders, with far-reaching benefits for the organization. The above approaches may foster the development of global leadership competencies and provide leaders with a variety of perspectives and skills most quickly than may be acquired from longer term international assignments.

Contributions to this issue

The articles in this special issue all contribute to enhancing our understanding about the important role of global teams in international organizations. These were selected as they address the aims of this special issue by bridging the fields of research on global teams and IHRM. We introduce the papers next and briefly summarize their connection to the theme of the special issue (see Table 1).

'An Employee-Focused Human Resource Management Perspective for the Management of Global Virtual Teams' by Mladen Adamovic

The first article focuses on the creation of a positive climate of diversity in international organizations via the instilling of inclusive policies and practices through global teams. Adamovic outlines various ways in which the HR function in international organizations may intervene to manage global virtual teams toward improved performance. In this conceptual paper, Adamovic presents a theoretical framework in which various organization-level support systems are presented as potential avenues for mitigating negative team processes in global virtual teams. These types of teams are inherently complex, as they operate across borders, cultures, languages, perspectives, time zones and the like. This has the potential to raise numerous challenges for global team members, such as increased conflict, misunderstandings, barriers to knowledge exchange, learning and cooperation, and increased personal and team-level stress. Adamovic argues that these

Table 1. The multifaceted implications of global teams for IHRM.

The benefits of global teams for international organizations: HR implications

Global teams are (re)shaping
International organizations: HR implications
Global teams as assisting in creating a positive climate of diversity
Global teams as a solution to global talent management
Global teams as a means of global integration

Key international
Human resource challenges: global teams as a solution
Cross-cultural training in global teams
Developing global competence in global teams
Leadership development in global teams

Article contributions to the special issue

Adamovic:
An employee-focused human resource management perspective for the management of global virtual teams
Global team job demands as stressors (e.g. creativity and performance)
Improvements in global virtual team members' wellbeing will enhance team performance and benefit the international organization
Creation of a positive diversity climate and employee-focused IHRM

Presbitero and Toledano:
Global team members' performance and the roles of cross-cultural training, cultural intelligence, and contact intensity: the case of global teams in the IT offshoring sector
Cross-cultural training in global teams increases cultural intelligence
Cultural intelligence is linked to performance and positively moderated by contact intensity in global teams

Butler, Minbaeva, Mäkelä, Maloney, Nardon, Paunova and Zimmermann:
Towards a strategic understanding of global teams and their HR implications: an expert dialogue
HR to ensure development of global competences
Global teams assist in global talent management
Global teams play a role in managing the dual pressures of global integration and local adaptation

challenges may result in impaired or reduced well-being of global team members, which poses its own set of negative consequences. The HR function in organizations has the ability to mitigate these potentially damaging outcomes by creating a positive climate of diversity in organizations, or, by instilling what Adamovic terms 'employee-focused IHRM'. This includes a focus on a corporate culture that is focused on the international, and drives the development of policies tailored to enhancing the international skills and international careers of employees.

Adamovic calls for a shift in focus in IHRM to better enable international organizations to align their HRM strategies with team-based structures. An important contribution in this paper is the focus on employee well-being at the intersection of global virtual teams and IHRM. He argues that HRM research has thus far concentrated on high performance work systems and practices, more or less neglecting the role of the individual, except as considerations of improving employee productivity and financial indicators. Although the IHRM field has placed much focus on the well-being of expatriates, in considering the role of the family, dual careers, and cross-cultural adjustment issues, there has been little consideration as yet of the effects that working in global virtual teams may have on individual team members, their work-life balance, quality of work life, and the impact that these, in turn, have on organizational performance. Adamovic incorporates job demands (that function as stressors) and job resources (that help to mitigate job stress) in his model of organizational responses to global virtual team challenges, and calls for a much-needed shift in focus in IHRM research from that on resources to a closer look at the human aspect.

'Global Team Members' Performance and the Roles of Cross-Cultural Training, Cultural Intelligence, and Contact Intensity: The Case of Global Teams in the IT Offshoring Sector' by Alfred Presbitero and Lemuel S. Toledano

The second article by Presbitero and Toledano is empirical and builds upon the idea that enhancing team members' cultural intelligence provides far-reaching benefits to the organization. The authors focus on global teams within the information technology (IT) sector that provide IT solutions to overseas clients and work closely with their clients on all facets of the project. These project teams are multicultural; thus they must be able to leverage these differences to ensure positive task performance outcomes. The authors demonstrate that the enhancement of cultural intelligence may be achieved through HR-facilitated cross-cultural training of team members. In their study, the authors first assessed the level of cultural intelligence of 252 global team members, who then participated in six cross-cultural training sessions over a six-month period. After the completion of training, cultural intelligence was measured once again, revealing that there was an improvement to the pre-training cultural intelligence scores. Data from global team members' supervisors were also collected to gauge the level of task performance of each participating team member. The results show that the improved

cultural intelligence was positively related to task performance. In addition, the intensity of contact between team members was found to moderate the relationship between cultural intelligence and task performance. Interaction among global team members helps with sense making with respect to deciphering disparate opinions, attitudes and practices, likely based on cultural differences. In this study, a higher contact intensity among global team members was associated with a stronger positive relationship between cultural intelligence and task performance.

Although the jury is still out regarding the value of cross-cultural training in the IHRM literature, especially with respect to the international assignment literature (see our review above), the study by Presbitero and Toledano demonstrates that such training, when provided to global team members, has more and farther-reaching positive benefits. In their study, cross-cultural training was provided repeatedly to numerous participants over a long period of time. This type of training presumably allowed team members to improve their skills and obtain feedback while engaged in their global teams. Presbitero and Toledano examine a question that has received limited attention, but, given the increased use of global teams in organizing work, and in some firms even resulting in a transition from hierarchical- to team-based organizations, is of critical importance to address. The benefits of this type of cross-cultural training *in situ* and in 'real time' were demonstrated by way of improvement in team members task-related outcomes, as well as in enhanced cultural intelligence. These skills were reinforced through team member interaction, enabling team members to hone these skills. The authors also provide suggestions for the role of corporate HR in assisting and ensuring that international organizations make the most of these positive outcomes, using global teams for cultural intelligence and global competence development.

'Towards a Strategic Understanding of Global Teams and their HR Implications: An Expert Dialogue' by Christina Butler, Dana Minbaeva, Kristina Mäkelä, Mary M Maloney, Luciara Nardon, Minna Paunova and Angelika Zimmermann

Our last article in this special issue is an expert dialogue by Butler, Minbaeva, Mäkelä, Maloney, Nardon, Paunova and Zimmermann. The authors all have extensive expertise in research on global teams and IHRM, and had participated in a panel session at the 2016 annual European International Business Academy conference in Vienna, Austria, on the theme of this special issue. This expert dialogue article simultaneously raises critical issues not addressed in earlier papers with the aim of bridging the fields of IHRM and global teams research, while providing an inspiring closing of the special issue.

Butler, Minbaeva, Mäkelä, Maloney, Nardon, Paunova and Zimmermann discuss various challenges that have arisen with the advent of the new global landscape in which global teams operate, and that international organizations must increasingly learn to manage. These challenges lie within teams, across

organizational units, and throughout the organization in its entirety. Echoing observations in our review and discussion above, a key challenge is for organizations to find ways to improve their global talent management systems by not only reacting to but also actively maneuvering and facilitating a global HR landscape through the coordination, movement and development of global talent. Global teams play a pivotal role in this process.

In their expert dialogue, the authors placed particular emphasis on the need for the HR function in international organizations to help shape the context in which global teams operate. They demonstrated the importance of global teams in their role as boundary spanners, as a strategic human capital resource, as a vehicle for knowledge transfer and organizational learning, as a means for efficiently developing social capital and creating innovation – all of which drive the creation and maintenance of a competitive advantage for international organizations. As insightfully discussed among the authors, with several poignant points raised to its effect, the challenge for IHRM in organizations lies in ensuring the recognition and development of new competencies that keep pace with this rapidly changing landscape fueled by global teams.

Conclusion

In this introductory article, we have attempted to analyze key HR issues from the perspective of global teams, and demonstrate that international organizations benefit from global teams in developing their human resources. At the same time, the field of IHRM faces many challenges in keeping abreast with the changes that are necessary to integrate HRM processes and practices across countries in response to the rise in global teams.

We have outlined the above benefits in some detail throughout this article, but we still lack research on precisely how IHRM systems can be designed to ensure that organizations reap these benefits, during each phase of IHRM activities, as well as in combination, to keep pace with the dynamic global context. As the authors of three articles in this special issue highlight, in order to bridge the gap, we cannot rely on extant theories in these fields; they are overly simplistic. The increasing organizational complexity and the complexity inherent in global teams require a more holistic overarching perspective that takes context into consideration.

We trust that the readers of this special issue will agree with us that there is still much potential for the inclusion of global teams-based research within the context of IHRM research. Research still has some way to go in order to keep abreast of rapid changes in the global organizational context. Echoing the words of Butler et al. in this issue, research needs to move from context-free to context-rich. IHRM research is no exception. Through our exploration of a contemporary organizational phenomenon – the rise of global teams – it is our belief that this special issue provides interesting theoretical, empirical and practical insights about the

role of HR and associated IHRM implications when global teams are leveraged in international organizations.

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