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Chapter 18

Shirley Anne Tate and Naheed Arshad Mather

Visioning Muslim Women Leaders and Organizational Leadership in the 21st Century

Introduction

According to a report by the Women and Equalities Committee (2016) Muslim women are the most economically disadvantaged group in Britain. They are three times more likely to be unemployed jobseekers and two times as likely to be economically inactive as women in general. There has been progress, however, as forty –five percent more Muslim women are now in work than was the case in 2011. Office for National Statistics (2015) figures show that Muslim women are the least economically successful group in the UK (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). Between March and May 2015 sixteen percent of Muslim women were unemployed and seeking work compared with five percent of women nationally. Beyond the ‘patriarchal bargain; (Kandiyoti, 1999) which keeps women as home makers, there are a number of external contributing factors to Muslim women’s economic disadvantage including Islamophobia, routine recruitment discrimination, poverty and language barriers, perception that there will be hostility, fear of discrimination in the workplace as well as continuing evidence that applicants with ‘white sounding names’ are more likely to get an interview (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). There is clearly ‘racialized gendering’ (Brah, 1994) once in work which produce barriers that prevent progression. Ipsos MORI (2009) found that Muslim women who were currently employed were more likely to cite factors relating to gender discrimination, religious discrimination and employers’ policies as reasons for their lack of progression and twenty-two percent (22%) of working women believed that employers were anti-Muslim.

The chapter’s analysis **draws from interviews conducted with Muslim women** attends to Muslim women’s accounts of ‘racialized gendering’ as a barrier to progress because of how organizations are constructed and maintained intersubjectively through power relations, identifications and values. The model of shared leadership developed by putting Muslim

women at the centre of analyses of leadership is one solution for ending the organizational racialized gender discrimination that Muslim women face.

Power relations, identifications and values

The experiences of Muslim women in the UK are shaped in the 21st century by global events- Palestine, 9/11, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, the 2005 7/7 attacks in London, the 2009 attacks in Mumbai, the war against ISIS and concerns in the press of 'home-grown terrorism', for example- which add to an increase in racist and Islamophobic attitudes (Shaffi, 2009). In the UK, 'forced marriages' and the political, social, cultural and religious significance of the 'veil', assumed importance in the media because of the focus on integration which underlies the emphasis on tolerance with its accompanying rights and responsibilities of citizens. In this debate Muslim women are seen as a homogeneous group and represented as oppressed by patriarchal cultures, victims of educational and economic disadvantage, or, the cause of their own disadvantage and trapped by an anachronistic culture (Shaffi, 2009; Hussain and Bagguley, 2007). Muslim women are rarely represented as having leadership potential.

After decades of work on equality and diversity within organizations, gender and 'race' equality still present significant challenges. A TUC report (2006) confirms that BME women take jobs that are lower than their qualification levels, are more likely to be working in temporary jobs and are more likely to be in the public sector than all men and white women. The Policy Evaluation Group (2007) looked at the comparatively low level of participation in employment by Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in West Yorkshire. It found that they are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than any other group and 42% stated that they had no experience of paid work. Qualifications could explain this as 40% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women of working age had no qualifications compared to 17% of white women. Another explanation could be related to age as the 'Pakistani and Bangladeshi female populations are relatively young and have a larger proportion of women of child-bearing age'. Religious or cultural attitudes may also play a part in economic

inactivity (Connolly and White, 2006: 6). Further, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's activity rates are much lower (20.7%) than for their male counterparts (39.5%). Indian women have higher levels of economic activity which are very similar to white women. However, Muslim women are also well educated whether that was in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India or the UK. This 'well educated' group was highly ambitious, well- motivated and more likely to be from 'professional and managerial' families (Policy Evaluation Group, 2007; Hussain and Bagguley, 2007).

The Ipsos MORI (2009) Muslim Women Survey on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission was based on a total of 414 interviews, comprising 135 working and 279 non-working Muslim women. The study investigated Muslim women's views and attitudes to work, barriers to progression, religious practice at work and future aspirations. It found that the top three reasons chosen for working were 'money', 'need to work to cover costs of living' and 'independence'. The three things that were most important when considering a career/ job were 'good pay', 'interesting job' and 'work/life balance'. The EOC 'Moving On Up?' report (2006) showed high labour market participation for Muslim women born in the UK. However, many 'women perceived discrimination against them, having difficulties finding work, gaining permanent contracts and progressing once in employment' (Policy Evaluation Group, 2007: 5). At the level of faith, the majority of the working women in the Ipsos MORI (2009) survey felt comfortable at work taking 'time out to pray' and 'wearing a headscarf' although they stated that religious discrimination impacted their failure to progress within organizations more than racial or gender discrimination. 'Better understanding of employers of the needs of Muslim women' was the most important issue in helping 'Muslim women to progress in the workplace and get to the top of their careers' with 'more support from management within the workplace' being amongst the most important issues (Ipsos MORI, 2009). The majority of the women surveyed thought that 'work can be an important part of women's lives'; 'it is possible to balance a successful career with having a family'; 'more

British bosses are seeing the advantage of having a diverse workforce'; and, 'there is no difference between what Muslim women and non-Muslim women want in their careers'.

Muslim women were ambitious with two-thirds (66%) wanting promotion to a more senior role in the next few years. A third of employed Muslim women (33%) can one day imagine themselves being the Chief Executive or the leader of the organization they work for (Ipsos MORI, (2009). Only one in five Muslim women believed that childcare, family responsibilities and pressure from the family or community are key factors that prevent progression in the workplace but the majority cited gender/religious discrimination and employers' policies as significant barriers. Twenty-two percent (22%) of working women as opposed to eleven percent (11%) of non-working women believe that employers are anti-Muslim (Ipsos MORI, (2009). Muslim women are optimistic about their potential to lead even in the face of continuing gender, 'race' and religious discrimination. Organizations have not yet realized that Muslim women want the same from their careers as other women. Muslim women are a relatively untapped, highly motivated pool of leadership talent but organizational discrimination continues to hinder their progress.

Much feminist work on leadership presumes that the organizations and interactions they study are 'race', ethnicity and faith neutral and that they are generalizable to all people across cultural and class boundaries and all situations. An example of this is gendered leadership styles where we see the notion of masculine instrumentality and feminine collaboration forming the basis of understandings of gendered differences in leadership within organizations (Parker, 2008). Leadership needs to move away from this 'race', ethnicity and faith neutral thinking and theorize using the intersectionality espoused by Black feminists (Collins, 2008; hooks, 1981; Lorde, 1984). This would allow us to think about 'race', class, gender, sexuality, age, disability, ethnicity and faith as features which construct organizations and the relationships of the people within them. These are influential factors that impact on leadership because there is no generic woman. Instead, attention must be paid to how organizations are constructed and maintained intersubjectively through power

relationships, identities and values within the leadership context. Leadership then becomes the processes and practices through which members create meanings and structures within organizations.

In such meaning and structure making 'race', gender, ethnicity and faith are significant. Organizational cultures ensure that leaders are expected to behave, look, think and feel in particular ways. However, these expectations conflict with stereotypes which exist about Muslim women. Doing a brainstorm with women in our study on stereotypes of Muslim women within organizations produced the following:

- a) 'Stay at home mothers', not good workers
- b) Oppressed by patriarchy, submissive and not leadership material
- c) Poorly/under educated, lacking in intellect and poor communicators
- d) 'Caught between two cultures', unable to assimilate to organizational culture and work within the tensions and paradoxes of organizations
- e) Incapable of functioning outside of 'their own cultural contexts'

We have seen from the studies cited previously that the barriers faced by British Muslim women at work are based on how women are viewed rather than their motivations, attitudes or abilities. Stereotypes of Muslim women negatively impact how they are viewed as potential leaders within a wide range of organizations. Rather than running organizations on the basis of stereotypes we should move to recruiting and promoting on the basis of talent so as to have a larger pool of thinking and practice for achieving required outcomes (Middleton,2007).

Putting British Muslim women at the centre of the analysis of leadership in organizations allows us to examine how 'race', gender, ethnicity and faith intersect with leadership theory and development. The exclusion of British Muslim women from studies on leadership is as much a reflection of their place within organizations as it is an expression of the problematic nature of 'race'/gender/ethnicity/faith neutral theorizing on leadership. Such

theorizing continues the organizational circulation of stereotypes of 'Muslim women's inferiority', their exclusion from influential networks and their silencing if they speak out on discrimination. In common with all women Muslim women take longer to establish their careers, tend to be located in certain management functions and particularly within the education, social or public service sector and, earn less than their male counterparts (Mallon and Cassell, 1999). In managing diversity, organizations must recognize the skills, knowledge, experience and values of Muslim women in 'enhancing the contribution of each and every member of an organisation and creating an inclusive culture, the stimulus being business rather than social justice' (Mallon and Cassell, 1999: 138).

Organizations have to become learning organizations which value all input including personal self –knowledge and individual acumen. They need to work as networks where different people with different talents work across projects in teams so that leadership rotates depending on skills and knowledge. This is a partnership-orientated model which would build intellectually and emotionally diverse organizational communities where collaboration stimulates goal achievement (Bissett, 2004). This diverges from leadership that avers what is needed for effective organizations is the top-down forging of a mutualist workplace culture which integrates and homogenizes all differences. Such mutualism does not affect all employees beneficially because this entails a top-down management approach which presumes homogeneity around the norm of 'the white male employee'. Feelings of alienation from this approach are erased by deeply embedded assimilation processes of mutualism (Bissett, 2004). Thus, within organizations 'the subject is constituted through a discursive knowledge/power matrix where, for the bulk of the organisational populous, aspects of personal identity are made invisible' (Bissett, 2004: 316). Personal identity cannot fit so easily into 'the business case' in Managing Diversity. Although managing diversity assumes that workplace cultures can be changed in a short space of time this is not the case because such cultures are deeply embedded. Managing diversity is a consensus model which simply will not benefit Muslim women because of the assimilationism in organizations around unity

of purpose in achieving desired outputs. Individuals have different expectations of the organization so the challenge is to reconcile these with organizational cultures through developing 'personalised quality relationships' which replaces the 'human resource' utility model with a 'human relations' approach 'where the individual is seen as a potential strategic partner in an evolving "community of practice"' (Bissett, 2004: 321). Within such a community of practice there would be a 'process-orientated approach' representing organizational activities as dynamic and interrelated rather than isolated, static and without tensions or conflicts. Talent, knowledge, skill, experience would decide one's *positioning* in shifting project teams rather than one's *position* in the organizational hierarchy. Relationally orientated communities of practice would be the 'necessary infrastructure to allow organisational diversity to flourish [through integrating] participative leadership, workplace collaboration, strategic thinking and quality management' (Bissett, 2004: 323).

This approach is important given that, as for other women of colour, Muslim women are silenced in the workplace or opt to be silent as a survival strategy in hostile organizations. Hostile environments emerge, for example, because of placement in all white work groups as the token Muslim woman; exclusion from the informal life of the organization which means exclusion from the informal decision making processes which are then later ratified; being outside of the same nurturing and supportive environment as white colleagues leaves women uninformed with no contribution to make to the workgroup; and colleagues refusal to acknowledge their abilities, experiences and knowledge (Bravette, 1996). One approach to grappling with these issues which emerged from the research on Muslim women leaders in the private/not for profit/ public sectors is 'shared leadership'.

Shared leadership

The necessity for balance between the development of the individual and the organization is linked with organizational culture and 'requires an environment in which people feel a sense of community, and where their goals are in tandem with the aims of the organization' (Hay,

2007: 12). Organizations as communities of empowered individuals and teams entail that people make decisions, take responsibility, use their initiative and interact well with colleagues. These are the expectations of what Muslim women in our research called 'shared leadership'. Further, shared leadership understands that emotionally intelligent leaders pay careful attention to interpersonal aspects of the organization and are aware of how emotions affect work quality. Emotions also need to be managed to enhance performance (Condren, et al, 2006). Shared leadership is 'transformational' because it about transmitting a clear vision, developing commitment and trust, empowering people to achieve, managing change, influencing colleagues to work for the organization and using emotion as well as rationality to lead (Condren, et al, 2006). Shared leadership mobilizes teams *to want to do* the work through 'modelling the way' (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Leaders must respect colleagues irrespective of their organizational status. Further, leadership is participatory as it is viewed in relational terms with leaders and team together comprising the leadership relationship. If we show respect to others that means that we have to be committed to listening, hearing and understanding divergent perspectives and needs. Clearly decisions must take into account the actual views and needs of others involved and it is only through understanding other perspectives and needs that leaders can see the consequences of their action on all 'stakeholders' in a given situation (Perreault, 2005). A further positive consequence of listening is that for the team member being listened to is empowering. Listening and being listened to involve a process where the leader works with the group to develop a collective vision to which all involved can commit.

Shared leadership is an example of leadership based on the construction of shared meanings, processes and practices within diverse workplaces. It involves both control and empowerment. However, control is not merely distant but interactive, personalized, with an astute awareness of 'what makes people tick'. This brings to mind Julia Middleton's (2007:4) idea of 'leading beyond authority' in which she says that this is not about having authority but choosing not to use it, having ideas that resonate and having an approach to leadership that

means that people willingly grant authority to you. This, of course is 'blue skies thinking'. Unfortunately, we have not quite reached the shared leadership ideal espoused by the Muslim women leaders in our research because their legitimacy as leaders continues to be called into question because of the interaction of 'race'/gender/ethnicity/faith even if they are extremely talented.

A further point that they made is that all ideas do not resonate equally within organizations. Rather, it depends on *who* is the originator of the idea and *who* the organization facilitates in having their ideas heard, accepted, discussed and validated. Legitimacy remains a difficult issue for Muslim women leaders as they potentially already stand as the delegitimized outsider before they enter their workplace roles. Middleton speaks about going outwards from the core circle of authority and accumulating learning as we go as the mark of a good leader. However, the challenge for Muslim women embarking on shared leadership is twofold. First of all, moving inwards to the core circle of authority from the margins to gain legitimacy and second, moving outwards to accumulate learning. Unlike 'the best leaders' that Middleton (2007: 12) describes as not needing authority to be able to lead, Muslim women's status in the organizational hierarchy do not automatically guarantee them any authority within the organization. Unlike the best leaders, who do not need authority, they cannot lead through just charisma, knowledge or experience as these possibilities are disavowed because of the impact of perceptions of their capabilities. Indeed, the Muslim women in our research speak about getting compliments on their most banal achievements from those who very clearly had low expectations and thought they had become leaders *because of not in spite of* their 'race'/gender/ethnicity/faith. Assumptions that Muslim women occupy their roles 'because of', show the depth of their de-authorization in some organizations.

For Muslim women to 'lead beyond authority' (Middleton, 2007) which is an important aspect of shared leadership, they need large amounts of the power of personality, ideas, communication and, power to connect in order to be successful. All of these are culturally

specific so if Muslim women managers are seen to be marginal to the organization's or society's 'core culture' that very perception could well be a barrier to success. This is so because the assumption will be that their ideas are faulty, their personality not quite right and their ability to communicate effectively suspect. Participating in the requisite level of networking involves the taken for granted of socializing, for example, the after-work drink. The point we are trying to make here is that, though essential, none of these powers which enable one to 'lead beyond authority' are neutral. They are impacted by inequality in the workplace and society at large.

Shared leadership must be inclusive. This inclusion acknowledges that 'race'/ethnicity/faith/gender construct some as lacking in proficiency, intelligence and talent so that those left unmarked are by default able, intelligent, proficient and having the temperament for leadership (Puwar, 2004: 59). Inclusion is also problematic. Not imagined as the norm in terms of leadership Muslim women unsurprisingly are anomalous in 'places where they are not the normative figure of authority, [and] their capabilities are viewed suspiciously [...] There is a significant level of doubt concerning their capabilities to measure up to the job' (Puwar, 2004: 59). As women who bear the burden of race/ethnicity/gender/faith organizational doubt, they have to continuously show that they have a right to be there. Even if this burden of proof is not the case in their leadership core circle outside of that organizational doubt reappears.

Muslim women leaders have to show proficiency and competence in the face of the infantilization that is the result of reluctance to accept them as capable people in senior positions of authority (Puwar, 2004). Infantilization is about Muslim women being assumed to be less competent and also more junior in status than they actually are. As perceived outsiders Muslim women are also subjected to what **Nirmal** Puwar (2004: 61) calls 'super-surveillance' so that Muslim women have to be absolutely perfect performers of their role as imperfections are picked upon and amplified. Muslim women in organizations are constantly under the microscope and any mistake is taken as evidence for de-authorization. If they

make no mistakes, if they are excellent at their job, then they are seen as working beyond expectations of the groups that they are seen to represent. For the women in the research, if one is seen to represent Muslim's capabilities, one feels an extra burden to do the job well. However, it is difficult to succeed if one is facing intangible, impossible to assess qualities, like an assessment of character or 'best fit for the job', which are implicit requirements attached to positions of authority. However, these requirements can operate as real aspects of inclusion and selection without ever being formally stated. For example, there are appropriate behaviours that enable one to fit in, like how one's accent, or one's ability to put across one's ideas 'confidently' but 'non-aggressively'.

Muslim women have to acquire the practical knowledge of the normative behavioural codes of organizations, often by themselves, by observation and without the help of mentors. Language is an essential component of normative organizational behaviours. People are more likely to be heard, listened to and understood if they speak in the legitimized organizational tones, syntax, accents and emotionality because this marks distinction across organizations and society as a whole (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002). As such these areas of exclusion must be addressed so as to embark on shared leadership.

Emotionality is usually assumed to be detrimental to the effective running of organizations and also to be the preserve of women. However, in shared leadership we need to move beyond the divide between rationality and emotionality. We have to recognize that first, people construct their identities in organizations through everyday interactions, rules, behaviours and meaning systems; and second, organizational practices and processes construct women's and men's identities differently, women by and large are seen as only capable of participating in certain dimensions of the organization eg support/ human relations services (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). It is not only the case that Muslim women have to work within this masculinist culture but they also have to negotiate the power dynamics of organizations based on 'race'/ethnicity/faith as well as manage their emotions in terms of organizational expectations. Organizations seek to constrain emotion within their

cultures by prescribing and monitoring ceremonies, practices, norms and values and the socialization effect of cultural symbols that enhance organizational identification. As Muslim women engage in emotional labour within organizations their feelings become commodities that serve task functions (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). Emotional labour removes individual experiences of relationality and personal feelings because emotion is not considered part of the cognitive aspect of work. This is significant because it is through the value premises inculcated by emotional control and organizational identification that members are guided in the formulation, selection and choice of alternatives to problems. The implications are wide ranging for shared leadership that is inclusive of Muslim women as leaders as these women are often left out of the circuits of belonging within organizations. What needs to be acknowledged is that there are work feelings that emerge in the everyday process of task, relationship and social activities within organizations and these encourage interrelatedness, mutual understanding and co-constructed interpretations (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). When individuals share emotional experiences they develop feelings of community through the development of mutual affection, cohesion and coherence of purpose (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). This is one of the by-products of shared leadership but it should be one of its principal components because feelings help us to be responsive to others, which in turn may aid in developing different organizational identities for Muslim women than that of 'employees out of place'. Emotional literacy is key to understanding how feelings can affect the nature of organizational change and indeed whether change occurs or not based on ethical behaviour, mutual dependence and solidarity, all vital components of shared leadership.

In 'Different Women Different Places' The Diversity Practice's study of ethnic minority women leaders across Europe identified eight leadership attributes that successful Black and minority ethnic women exhibit. 'Factor 8', as these attributes were called, were said by them to be invaluable in their performance as effective leaders. The first of these was *bicultural competence* being familiar with both British values and the norms of their own ethnic group. This gave them the ability to lead across cultures, an asset that is recognized

as invaluable in our increasingly diverse and globalized work and political contexts. Added to this the challenges and experiences based on 'race', gender, ethnicity and faith, they felt gave them a unique ability to *see things from multiple perspectives* and therefore arrive at novel solutions. Their *cultural capital* gained from their cultural backgrounds as well as involvement with and experience of voluntary work with religious and community organizations, served the women well in building teams, leadership and motivating others. The study called these women *transformational leaders*. That is, they were transformational in implementing change as well as transactional in their abilities to negotiate change sensitively and charismatically. The women cited discrimination as being the catalyst for their development of *self-mastery*, self-confidence and a resilience to deal with issues and setbacks. They saw themselves as having *power, presence and passion* in that they could communicate their views with conviction and enthusiasm and hold others' attention. They also felt that they had a *values-driven* leadership approach underlain by the desire to make a positive contribution to their organizations and communities and many felt that they derived their inner strength in part from *religious faith or spirituality* which they saw as being fundamental to their success. Paying attention to Factor 8 illustrates that shared leadership must also take a holistic approach to a Muslim woman as leader and that Muslim women can both transform organizations as well as be influential actors in change agendas and that some of that has to do with organic values.

According to Argandoña (2003 :16) values as:

central desires or beliefs regarding final states or desirable conducts that transcend specific situations, guide the choice and evaluation of our decisions and, therefore, of our conducts, becoming an integral part of our way of being and acting to the point of shaping our character.

Values are normative and our *'valuations are subjective'* things are valuable for us; we feel the value of things. *We cannot be indifferent about them*, they demand a

response from us- this is what sets them apart from mere tastes or preferences' (Argandoña (2003 : 16).

Values impact affect, behaviour and cognition and shared values benefit organizations (Cha and Edmondson, 2006). Shared values play a crucial role in ensuring commitment, effort and thus organizational performance (Cha and Edmondson, 2006). Although values are abstractions individuals and groups organize values in a hierarchy of importance and although Cha and Edmondson (2006) assert that values are universal, it is having values that is universal and the values in the hierarchy change in relation to context.

Organizations espouse values of empowerment, mutual respect, employee development, participation in decision making, the necessity for the organization to appear benevolent and 'on the worker's side', alongside performance oriented values such as quality, efficiency and profitability (Cha and Edmondson, 2006). The values of organization and employee might at times be at odds with each other and affect interpersonal relationships, organizational performance and the individual's standing in the organization. Two key organizational values in the participants' responses were an inclusive culture and valuing diversity if shared leadership is to be built through the organic development of values.

A central aspect of organic values is to faith/ spirituality. Indeed the:

spiritual values of integrity, honesty, and humility, and the spiritual practices of treating others with respect and fairness, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, appreciating others, and taking time for personal reflection have all been linked to quantifiable effects for organizations and

individuals. They cause leaders to be judged as more effective by both their peers and their subordinates and they lead to enhanced performance

(Reave, 2005:681)

Faith does not stand without the workplace, nor does islamophobia. Organic values related to Islam have a place in organizations especially if we take on board the fact that many of the characteristics of 'spirituality in the workplace- the building of community, concern for social justice within the organization and its vision, and equality of voice are basic themes of Islam' (Kruger and Seng, 2005: 776). Further, the *Qur'an*, popular Islamic wisdom literature and philosophical debates stress the values of service, surrendering self, truth, charity, humility, forgiveness, compassion, thankfulness, love, courage, faith, kindness, patience and hope (Kruger and Seng, 2005). Spirituality important in leadership in Islam and leadership arises from the authority of community. A spiritually guided leader in Islam does not to seek 'personalized power' but to engage in 'socialized power', that is, 'the use of power for the service of others' (Kruger and Seng, 2005: 777). Within Islam, leaders are servant-caretakers and are 'part of the reciprocal relationship between the leader and the led' (Kruger and Seng,2005: 778). As caretakers leaders must ensure justice as they are accountable for fairness to all (Kruger and Seng,2005).

Islam clearly has much to tell us about shared leadership and much to impart to organizations caught within the problematics of buy-in to values. The organic values which Muslim women bring to organizations because of their faith should be seen as knowledge assets (Bontis).

Recommendations

BME women leaders within organizations have to be resilient and to ensure resilience, shared leadership must focus on enabling Muslim women to thrive and be sustained. Barsh,

Cranston and Craske (2008) highlight some factors that help women to be effective through developing resilience in their ideas on 'centred leadership'. It seems to us that this focus has much to offer to our conceptualization of shared leadership. Centred leadership does not negate the relevance of emotion for organizations and individuals within them. Rather, it takes as a starting point that physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual strength are the basis for personal achievement and that positive emotions serve an extremely positive role. Managing energy is something that is often seen as outside of organizations as it is too 'touchy-feely' and too 'women's life and beauty advice column'. However, being aware of where your energy comes from, how it is dissipated or increased and how to actively manage energy levels is crucial (Barsh, et al, 2008). As we all know, how we view the world and the frames within which we process experiences do make a difference to professional outcomes. In shared leadership we must adopt a 'positive framing' (Barsh, et al, 2008) which enables us to adopt a constructive way to view the world, expand our horizons and be resilient enough to move forward in the face of what might appear to be insurmountable difficulties. Successful Muslim women leaders must identify those with whom they can build stronger relationships in order to increase their sense of belonging within organizations, as well as accepting opportunities with their attendant risks, collaborating with others and engaging with organizational potentialities, issues and cultures.

Many of the Factor 8 characteristics that are positive strengths that these women have as a result of their backgrounds, experiences and expertise, will not be seen as relevant to the task or useful in team relationships. Thus, a 'pull influencing style' becomes essential where one has to state one's view, clarify the views of others', explore and discuss the options thoroughly, look for a joint solution and come to a joint agreement on the options and ways forward. The skills involved here relate to listening, questioning and talking convincingly, understanding individual needs and getting to know people, influencing people through working with them and using networks and coalitions as well as focusing on long-term cooperation. Thus, it becomes clear to the team that the final decision is not yet made

and that they can impact that, which leads to less alienation, ensures commitment to the outcome and generates energy around a shared purpose. Shared leadership should be about persuading through structured ideas, emotional literacy and modelling cohesive team attributes such as acceptance of emotionality, optimism and vision. All of this should be done without resorting to negative behaviours including being judgemental, overly personal in one's negative comments to others, confrontational and blaming others for problems and issues. This brings to mind Hurley and Brown's (2009) capacities for a 'conversational leader' described as: ask powerful questions and articulate shared understanding; listen for connections between ideas; explore assumptions and beliefs; suspend premature judgement; embrace ambiguity and not-knowing; listen to understand; honour diverse perspectives and create the climate for emergence; and balance advocacy and inquiry. Shared leadership then is the capacity to engage in a variety of conversations with a variety of organizational actors, sometimes within situations of extreme ambiguity and de-authorization in order to achieve a jointly worked through and agreed upon outcome which all involved can sign up to. Aiming for shared leadership in organizations would mean developing collective visions based on trust, respect, listening to different perspectives, relationship building, developing strong teams whose leadership shifts depending on the needs of the project, emotional literacy, recognizing and building on talent within the organization and seeing leadership as a process of communicating and buying in to shared vision rather than being top-down and based solely on the organization's hierarchical structure. This is a challenge for all involved as values, attitudes and commitments will be tested. However, to ensure diversity and equality of opportunity for Muslim women shared leadership must be attempted.

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