

Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations

Call for Papers for a Special Issue on a Renewed Approach to Human Resource Management

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In the wake of increasingly dominant forms of economic liberalism, human resource management (HRM) emerged to replace personnel management in the late twentieth century. According to a number of observers, HRM has evolved, over time, to become a strategic function which brings the interests of individuals and those of the organization closer together. In this way, the HRM function has distanced itself from the regulation of the employment relationship, which might make the discipline less complementary with other sub-fields of industrial relations. Rather, it limits itself to being a function that adapts and aligns itself with organizational strategies (Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna, 1984; Snell, Morris and Bohlander, 2016), adopting an approach that is disconnected from issues of socio-economic conflict.

From French-speaking Europe (Galambaud, 2014; Léonard, 2015; Taskin, 2011) as well as the Anglo-Saxon world, where the field of *Critical Management Studies (CMS)* is expanding widely (see Grey, Huault, Perret and Taskin, 2016), critical voices have emerged to go against the hegemony of prescriptive and normative models of HRM (Beer *et al.*, 1984; Fombrun *et al.*, 1984; Meifert, 2014; Schuler, 1990; Ulrich, 1997) and their productivist offshoots (Appelbaum and Batt, 1994; Lawler, 1986). They mainly criticize the unitarist character of dominant or '*mainstream*' HRM with its quasi-exclusive focus upon short-term economic and financial performance at the expense of social and societal well-being, as well as the exclusionary effects upon certain segments of the workforce.

Indeed, the strategic approach to HRM, which appeared in the early 1980s, represents a unity of interests, replacing participation and commitment with command and control. Although the normative discourse adopts a 'win-win' perspective in terms of the construction of the employment relationship, in practice, employers and employees do not necessarily have the same objectives and do not necessarily use the same means to achieve them; thus, this recognition of HRM's strategic role is perhaps made at the expense of its role of defending the interests of employees (Legge, 2005; Haines III, Brouillard and Cadieux, 2010).

Furthermore, this conception of HRM reduces and guides human activities solely towards economic performance indicators, ignoring the complexity of the human context (Chiapello and Gilbert, 2013: 92), and thus contributes to the development of a strictly commercial view of the employment relationship (Capelli, 1999). Being confined to a support and service function (Galambaud, 2015, 32), the role of HRM risks being diluted in the managerial arena if it fails to give legitimacy to a mode of governance that contributes not only to economic performance but also to social performance.

Finally, in using an increasing individualized and psychologized view of the employment relationship (Godard, 2014), in which it is individuals rather than groups who perform, mainstream HRM results in a 'weakening of collective identities' (Galambaud, 2002: 277) all potentially serving as a pretext for the exclusion of [some] employee profiles (Taskin and Devos, 2005). Hence, if the normative and prescriptive discourse invites us to consider HRM practices as practices of *inclusion*, critical discourse reminds us that they are also practices of *exclusion*.

In the same vein as current critical debates, and in response to calls to reconfigure HRM by adopting a (more) human approach to management, we propose, in this special issue, to contribute to challenging the influences of organizational behaviour approaches and the instrumentalization of HRM. The perspective adopted focuses not only upon the critical analysis of current HRM practices, but also upon experiments relating to alternative approaches. Indeed, critical discourse must be supported by empirical studies that look at innovations aimed at making a more pluralist HRM that directs its efforts towards the regulation of the employment relationship from an institutional complementarity perspective (state, union, business, community, etc.).

This special issue will prioritise four angles of approach:

- analysis of the negative effects of dominant or '*mainstream*' HRM practices, calling upon critical models of analysis in the social sciences;
- analysis of experiments or practices that reintegrate HRM within the field of industrial relations and are complementary to other fields;
- analysis of the scientific work on HRM (scientific journals and teaching programs) and comparative historical studies on the origins and evolution of HRM by country;
- analysis of empirical experiments that go beyond the organizational framework, putting forward an HRM that is social, societal, territorial or global (Boxall, 2014) when taking into consideration the context and criteria of social acceptability.

Deadlines:

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| • for the reception of full papers and the decision to submit them to the peer review process: | October 30, 2016 |
| • the response to authors after the review process: | March 1, 2017 |
| • the production of a revised version: | June 1, 2017 |
| • the publication of the special issue: | December 15, 2017 |

RI/IR's selection criteria:

The criteria traditionally used by RI/IR are:

- originality of the research problem;
- consideration of elements in recent literature (and in what way the paper contributes to the advancement of knowledge);
- explicit theoretical or analytical framework;
- clearly explained methodology (of data collection and analysis);
- original findings presented, analyzed and discussed.

The length of the full manuscript (including the text, tables and figures, notes and references)¹ should be between **7000-8000 words**.

Each issue of RI/IR publishes **half of its papers in English and the other half in French**. The manuscript should include an **abstract** of 125 words in the same language as that of the manuscript and a **summary** (approximately 300 words) in both languages.

Please send the manuscript to relat.ind@rlt.ulaval.ca

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¹ For more details, in particular on the bibliographical standards, please consult our Website: <http://www.riir.ulaval.ca/regles.asp?var=EN>

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