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justifie cela par le fait de vouloir combler un vide dans la littérature. Par ailleurs l'évolution des mentalités est le principal facteur d'évolution des pratiques mis en avant et les relations de pouvoir au quotidien dans l'entreprise sont peu présentes. Cela dit, l'ambition et la nouveauté de ce travail font de ce livre une référence importante.

Cet ouvrage est le premier traitant avec méthode et de façon très complète de l'histoire de la fonction personnel en

France. Il est une mine d'informations collectées avec la rigueur de l'historien et témoigne de l'apport de l'histoire de l'entreprise à l'étude du management. C'est un ouvrage de référence pour tous ceux qui veulent saisir dans la longue durée les enjeux et les techniques du gouvernement des individus dans l'entreprise.

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Human Resource Development and Information Technology: Making Global Connections

edited by Catherine M. SLEEZER, Tim L. WENTLING and Roger L. CUDE,
Boston, Mass.: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, 277 pp., ISBN 0-7923-7594-7.

When I first received this book, I was quite excited. After all, information technology (IT) has the potential to interact with human resource practices in a variety of ways, some beneficial, some problematic. What I was hoping for was a set of detailed examples of how IT can contribute to HR practice, along with a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of various applications, and the pitfalls to avoid. In fact, this book is very different from that.

This book consists of a collection of thirteen papers, most of them originally presented at a technology "pre-conference" at the 2001 Academy of Human Resource Development's annual meetings. The articles themselves are very much a mixed bag, in terms of topic, focus, interest, and quality. Four chapters (1, 3, 4, 5) focus on relationships between information technology and various aspects of human resource management at the firm level. Another four chapters (7, 8, 9, 10) deal with the utilization of web-based learning within organizations. The remaining five chapters consist of a discussion of community-based "knowledge development networks," a paper on measuring intellectual capital at the firm level, a study

of the learning styles of eBay customers, a plea not to forget the importance of human interaction, and a brief concluding chapter.

The book begins with a chapter proposing parallels between the evolution of information technology and the evolution of "human resource development" (HRD) as key managerial tools within organizations. Essentially, the authors first argue that both IT and HRD have evolved from technical tools into strategic management tools, with similar stages along this progression. The authors then go on to discuss how IT can play a role in the development of the firm's human resources. While the authors make some interesting points I found the IT/HRD comparison to be forced, and there is a lack of data or even examples to support their claims about how IT can facilitate HRD.

Chapter 2 is out of place, so I will discuss it later. Chapter 3, which describes how numerous HR functions can be transferred to organizational "customers" through the use of a web-based intranet, is the most interesting and useful piece in the book. Mike Christie, of Hewitt Associates, waxes enthusiastic

about how an intranet can enable managers to hire, transfer, promote, and change pay for individual employees—without any involvement from HR staff. He exults that the intranet “will enable managers to access, at their fingertips, complete employee histories, goals and objectives, performance and pay records, disciplinary records...” (p. 53).

I liked Christie’s use of the “information,” “automation,” and “transformation” model in assessing the impact of intranets, as well as his use of numerous industry examples. However, he gives short shrift to some of the potential difficulties and pitfalls. For example, allowing line managers to make pay, promotion, termination, and other decisions without any consultation from HR staff could result in arbitrary, inconsistent, or capricious managerial behaviour. Furthermore, many of these decisions are not cut and dried, and would benefit from discussion with an HR professional. Another issue is that confidentiality of employee data is increasingly being protected by privacy law. Finally, Christie’s assumption that the devolution of “routine” HR functions to line managers would then lead to HR assuming a more purely strategic role does not necessarily follow.

Two other chapters examine aspects of the IT/HRM relationship. Chapter 4 is based on interviews with ten managers about the impact of IT on their organizational structures, and the authors seem oblivious to the considerable amount of empirical research that has more effectively addressed this issue. Chapter 5 gives some examples of IT-facilitated knowledge sharing “communities of practice” in some major organizations. While the examples are interesting, it would have been useful to have had some attempt to identify the conditions under which virtual “communities of interest” are likely to be successful or unsuccessful.

Four papers examine the use of web-based learning within specific organiza-

tions. Chapter 7 attempts to compare the results of classroom-based vs. web-based training of customer service managers, but the sample of web-based managers is so small as to make it impossible to derive any meaningful conclusions. Chapter 8 examines a program at Motorola intended to engage teams of youth (teen-aged children of Motorola employees) in a 4- to 5-week problem-solving experience using computer-supported collaborative tools, with the purpose of helping to “prepare the children of employees for future employment opportunities... and to contribute to development of potential leaders.” (p. 156). Only two of the six teams completed the project (developing a marketing plan for a wireless communication system), and the main conclusion I would draw is the unsurprising one that, absent intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, people (including teenagers) will lose interest in a task.

Chapter 9 develops and applies a conceptual framework for designing a “computer-supported collaborative learning system requiring immediate presence,” in order to create a virtual lab environment that can be accessed remotely. However, at the time of writing, the project had only reached the design stage, so no results were available. The same is true for Chapter 10, which is a very technical piece discussing the design of a virtual lab for helping students learn how to design and install telephony systems.

The remaining chapters really do not fit any common theme. Chapter 2 discusses how community-based “knowledge development networks” can be set up to help coordinate the provision of needed training. Chapter 6 discusses methods for measuring intellectual capital at the firm level, and the results of a study examining the relationship between measures of intellectual capital and performance indicators in U.S. firms. Chapter 11 examines the learning styles of eBay customers, and attempts

to draw conclusions about the “digital divide” separating IT users from non-users. Chapter 12 is an impassioned plea by Clifton Taubert, author of *Eight Habits of the Heart*, to not lose sight of the underlying importance of values-based human interaction in the IT jungle. In Chapter 13, the editors provide some reflections on the earlier material, but real insights are sparse.

In sum, despite its promising title, HR specialists will find this book of

limited interest. However, it may be of some utility to IT specialists, inasmuch as it raises some technical issues of direct interest to them, and some human resource issues to which they may be seldom exposed.

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Working Time Changes: Social Integration through Transitional Labour Markets

sous la direction de Jacqueline O'REILLY, Immaculada CEBRIAN et Michel LALLEMENT, London : Edward Elgar, 2000, 345 p., ISBN 1-84064-280-7.

Cet ouvrage regroupe un certain nombre d'articles d'auteurs européens qui travaillent depuis plusieurs années sur le thème du temps de travail, de la réduction du temps de travail, des aménagements de temps de travail. Nombre d'entre eux ont participé au Séminaire international sur le temps de travail et plusieurs sont associés aux travaux du Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin Fur Sozialforschung (WZB), important centre de recherche de Berlin, où les travaux sur les « marchés transitionnels » ont pris naissance.

Comme pour tous les ouvrages collectifs, il n'y a pas toujours parfaite cohérence et correspondance entre tous les textes, mais comme plusieurs de ces auteurs ont mené des projets de recherche ensemble, participé aux travaux du SITT ou du WZB, il semble que la cohérence des perspectives soit plus forte que dans nombre d'ouvrages collectifs. De plus, les directeurs de l'ouvrage ont pris la peine d'écrire une bonne introduction collective à l'ouvrage, puis de présenter deux textes sur la théorie et la méthodologie, qui permettent de donner cohérence à l'ensemble.

L'introduction, rédigée par les trois directeurs de publication, présente le

concept de marchés transitionnels, son utilité pour l'analyse de situations de travail liées à l'intégration, au maintien sur le marché du travail ou encore à l'exclusion. Différentes transitions ont été identifiées par Gunther Schmid, du WZB de Berlin, et sont ici reprises pour être analysées de façon quantitative (enquêtes nationales) et qualitatives (enquêtes de chercheurs) dans les chapitres qui suivront les trois chapitres introductifs. Ainsi, les auteurs présentent les transitions école-travail, chômage-emploi, non emploi-emploi et finalement la transition vers la retraite. Les auteurs qui suivront dans les chapitres ultérieurs traiteront de ces transitions dans divers pays, et des enseignements que l'on peut éventuellement en tirer. La flexibilité du temps de travail ressort comme un élément majeur des analyses, mais il n'est pas clair (pour moi en tout cas) en quoi l'utilisation du concept de marchés transitionnels apporte quelque chose de plus que l'analyse de la flexibilité interne-externe ou autres modes d'analyse de la flexibilité des temps de travail notamment. Les auteurs indiquent que cette approche ne se limite pas à la description, mais évalue aussi la qualité des arrangements, ainsi que la qualité des politiques qui favorisent l'intégration