

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



*The Oxford Handbook of Human Resource Management*, edited by Peter BOXALL, John PURCELL, and Patrick WRIGHT, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 658 pp., ISBN 978-0-199282-51-7.

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[See table of contents](#)

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chronostyles présentée dans cet ouvrage innove en restituant contre la tradition macrosociologique toute l'importance d'une mise en cohérence par les individus eux-mêmes de leurs pratiques temporelles en tenant compte entre autres des chevauchements d'activité. De même, les enquêtes par entretiens biographiques auprès des chômeurs laissent convaincre d'une urgence à s'emparer d'un point de vue théorique renouvelé pour qualifier la situation de demandeur d'emploi par rapport à un temps vécu. Il y a également bien des manières de tirer partie de l'idée qu'une mobilisation de l'analyse de données en cours d'investigation de terrain peut être profitable parallèlement à la méthode de l'entretien et l'analyse de contenu pour objectiver un espace de négociation et obtenir une compréhension plus fine des processus de régulation des temps sociaux (cas de la négociation des normes temporelles dans un secteur d'activité, celui des sociétés de services informatiques). Tous ces éclairages de même que certains non cités élargissent la palette des savoirs temporalistes et plaident pour

la mise en œuvre d'une science des temps qui, comme le signalait William Grossin, « reste à entreprendre ».

Alors qu'une part importante de l'ouvrage apporte des éléments théoriques qui permettent de revisiter une manière de considérer l'action publique dans le formatage du temps, on regrette que l'espace politique européen n'ait pas été introduit dans les interrogations actuelles autour du paradigme de gouvernance. La feuille de route pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes 2006-2010 trace des stratégies globales pour l'emploi. La construction et le suivi d'indicateurs de conciliation de la vie familiale et de la vie professionnelle sont désormais requis par la Commission auprès des États-membres, cette question étant désormais au cœur des politiques d'égalité. Un tel objectif n'est pas sans soulever de nouvelles interrogations. On aimerait que ces repères méthodologiques soient prolongés d'une nouvelle vague de contributions.

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***The Oxford Handbook of Human Resource Management,***

edited by Peter BOXALL, John PURCELL, and Patrick WRIGHT, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 658 pp., ISBN 978-0-199282-51-7.

At 658 pages, and with 42 contributors, *The Oxford Handbook of Human Resource Management* is notable not only for its size and heft, but also for the density of ideas and perspectives packed between its covers. By enlisting top academic experts to review theory and research within their respective areas of expertise, the editors are not only attempting to pull together the latest and best thinking in the academic field of human resource management (HRM), but also to go considerably beyond the conventional remit of an academic handbook.

However, since there is no preface or foreword to explain the editors' goals

and aims for this volume, we don't discover this until more than halfway through their introductory chapter. On page 8, we learn that the editors' aim is "to foster a more integrated conception of HRM with much better connections to the way production is organized in firms and the way workers experience the whole management process and culture of the organization."

This is clearly a laudatory aim, but if readers are looking for a unified framework that integrates the field of human resource management, they won't find it in this volume. Although some of the individual contributions do work towards this, what this book

actually does is to convey the immense complexity of the terrain covered by HRM. However, while readers may find this degree of complexity can be somewhat overwhelming, charting the full scope of the complexities of the field is a necessary first step in coming up with a real understanding of how things fit together and in developing the “integrated conception of HRM” that the editors seek.

Although I wouldn’t necessarily recommend that this book be read sequentially chapter by chapter, I do recommend that all readers tackle the first chapter before going further. Chapter 1 is written by the three editors, and provides the underlying perspective that informs the editors’ conceptualization of the field of HRM and their rationale for how they have organized and selected the content for this book. For example, one key perspective shared by the editors is a deep skepticism of universalistic prescriptions, as propounded by advocates of “best practices.” The editors therefore stress the need for researchers to be alert for possible interactions both among the various HRM practices themselves and between HRM practices and aspects of their context.

The editors suggest that HRM consists of three major “subdomains:” (a) micro HRM, which deals with “subfunctions” of HRM policy and practice such as recruitment, training, compensation, and work organization; (b) strategic HRM, which examines how the various HRM policies and practices might fit together; and (c) international HRM, which seeks to understand how HRM policies and practices need to be adapted to different national and cultural contexts. They observe that researchers have tended to pursue questions in specialized niches within these subdomains, and contend that it is “critical for the intellectual life” of all three subdomains to apply the concept of “analytical HRM” in future work.

They identify three key goals of “analytical HRM.” First, to understand

*what* management tries to do with work and people in different contexts, and explain *why* organizations try these things. Second, to understand the chain of processes through which various models of HRM work (or do not work). Third, to assess the outcomes of HRM, for both employee and management interests, in order to lay a “basis for theories of wider social consequence.”

Beyond this introductory chapter, this volume consists of 28 chapters, organized into four parts—Foundations and Frameworks, Core Processes and Functions, Patterns and Dynamics, and Measurement and Outcomes.

Part I (“Foundations and Frameworks”) contains eight chapters, each intended to situate HRM within a broader context. One chapter looks at historical development of HRM, another looks at the goals of HRM, three chapters relate HRM to the fields of economics, strategic management, and organization theory, two chapters look at implications for the worker—one from a positivistic perspective and one from a critical perspective—and the final chapter links HRM to the broader social context. All provide useful perspectives, but taken together, they can certainly overwhelm the reader with the complexity of the field.

Part II (“Core Processes and Functions”) contains nine chapters, each intended to illuminate a particular subfunction or process of HRM. One chapter looks at work organization, another looks at employment “subsystems,” another looks at employee “voice systems,” another examines the management of diversity, and the remaining chapters look at the more traditional subfunctions of recruitment, selection, training, compensation, and performance management. Each chapter provides an excellent grounding in the latest theory and research in each area.

Part III (“Patterns and Dynamics”) contains seven rather eclectic chapters.

But aside from the first chapter in this part (which examines the issue of “internal fit” among HRM practices), a commonality is that each chapter relates the practice of HRM to a different organizational context. One chapter examines HRM in the context of manufacturing organizations, another in service organizations, another focuses on knowledge workers, another focuses on governmental organizations, and the remaining two chapters focus on multinational and transnational firms.

The fourth and final part of the book (“Measurement and Outcomes”) contains just four chapters, with two focused on the relationship between HRM and performance, one that relates HRM to family-friendly and equal opportunity management, and the final chapter, by eminent industrial relations scholar Thomas Kochan, puts the practice of HRM into its societal context.

Overall, this book has many merits, chief among these the high caliber of the contributors and their contributions, along with the impressive scope and depth of the content. Many contributors go beyond the usual remit of summarizing theory and research as it currently

exists and contribute new theoretical insights and directions.

However, given the complexity and diversity of the subject matter, it would have been useful if the editors could have provided more integration, perhaps by adding at least one concluding chapter. It also would have been nice if contributors could have responded to or built upon arguments made in some of the other chapters, but contributors display very little linkage to related chapters within the volume. Finally, unlike many handbooks, there is no common format for each entry, which may have helped provide greater consistency across the contributions.

Of course, all of these suggestions add complexity to the already onerous task of coordinating and bringing such a work to fruition, and may not have been possible given the project time lines. Overall, this is a very useful work, and should be seen as essential reading for any academic with a serious interest in advancing research in HRM.

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***International and European Protection of the Right to Strike : A Comparative Study of Standards Set by the International Labour Organization, the Council of Europe and the European Union,***

par Tonia NOVITZ, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2003, 419 p., ISBN-10 : 0-19-8298-54-4.

Il s’agit d’un exposé comparatif de l’étendue de la reconnaissance et de la protection du droit de grève offertes par le droit international du travail et celui qui a cours sur le plan régional européen. Dans le premier cas, les instruments et les institutions de l’Organisation internationale du travail sont au premier plan, bien que le regard se tourne également sur l’apport des deux pactes de 1966 des Nations Unies portant sur les droits humains fondamentaux; dans le second,

il en va de même pour ce qui est du système du Conseil de l’Europe – la *Convention européenne des droits de l’homme* de 1950 et la *Charte sociale européenne* de 1961 – par rapport au droit de l’Union européenne, dont le droit « dur » laisse libre cours à l’intervention étatique nationale en la matière. À ce titre, l’ouvrage apporte la synthèse de l’évolution historique des modes d’élaboration de la normativité touchant à la grève dans chacun des systèmes en