

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Global Knowledge Work: Diversity and Relational Perspectives, Edited by Katerina Nicolopoulou, Mine Karata-Özkan, Ahu Tatli and John Taylor, Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011, 282 pp., ISBN: 978-1-84844-543-7.

Carol-Anne Gauthier

Symposium : le secteur public et les services publics dans la tourmente de la crise économique : défis, stratégies et perspectives d'avenir

Symposium: Public Sector, Public Services and Economic Crisis : Challenges, Opportunities and Strategies

Volume 67, Number 4, Fall 2012

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1013207ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1013207ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Gauthier, C.-A. (2012). Review of [*Global Knowledge Work: Diversity and Relational Perspectives*, Edited by Katerina Nicolopoulou, Mine Karata-Özkan, Ahu Tatli and John Taylor, Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011, 282 pp., ISBN: 978-1-84844-543-7.] *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 67 (4), 735–736. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1013207ar>

Tous droits réservés © Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval, 2012

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

et pour Le Port et Morlet qui présentent deux interventions : l'une dans une banque et l'autre dans une agglomération lyonnaise.

En somme, cette publication permet de comprendre comment les RPS en sont venus à constituer une problématique incontournable pour les services de santé au travail en France dans les dernières années. Plutôt que d'en présenter une image unifiée, les auteurs proposent des points de vue différents, souvent critiques, sur ce type de risques et font le pont entre différentes sciences, de la philosophie à la sociologie, en passant par l'économie et l'ergonomie.

Daniel Prud'homme
Université Laval

Global Knowledge Work: Diversity and Relational Perspectives

Edited by Katerina Nicolopoulou, Mine Karataş-Özkan, Ahu Tatli and John Taylor, Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011, 282 pp., ISBN: 978-1-84844-543-7.

Despite its rise in popularity in the past few decades, the concept of the "knowledge economy" raises many debates and issues, from its very definition to whether it is the revolutionary next stage of capitalism, or simply the current form of something that has always existed. *Global Knowledge Work* presents some of the elements of debate concerning these questions, as well as studies exploring diverse facets of knowledge work and workers.

Part one of the book presents contextual elements of knowledge work: its history, its conceptual bases and its current socio-economic context. Here Adelstein invites readers to gain perspective on the current "knowledge society" and its conception as a specific period of human flourishing, by comparing it to an earlier period of what she considers to be an earlier knowledge society, the renaissance. Central to this chapter is the argument that pre-industrial and industrial societies were also knowledge societies, as can be seen by discourses pertaining to the

application of knowledge to work (as opposed to knowledge in and of itself) present during these periods. Then, in the second chapter, Manolopoulos and Sakellariou present results from a study of executives in the Middle East and assess trends in mobility, decisions to quit, career development and markets considered to be most promising.

The second part of the book explores different facets of the mobility, migration and diversity management of knowledge workers. In chapter 3, Harvey explores the reasons behind highly skilled immigrants' decisions to immigrate and to return to their home countries. The authors' findings support the argument that economic concerns like job opportunities – though important – are not the main reasons driving highly skilled workers to migrate to and stay in their host country. In chapter four, Lange and Schröder analyze how creative and knowledge-intensive workers explain their process of migration to the post-socialist, medium-sized city of Leipzig, paying particular attention to the social embeddedness of transnational labour migration. The authors argue that the migration of highly-skilled workers follows steps and circular patterns, which vary according to an array of variables. Such variables include social networks and institutions. Finally, the authors contend that migration research should consider the particularities of local places, since their scenes and milieus can have an impact on migration. In the next chapter, Nikolopoulos aims to understand how to increase the mobility of knowledge workers in small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector in Europe. In order to do so, he describes the variables studied: European ICT SMEs, strategic human resource management, culture, and knowledge labour mobility, as well as their interrelationships. Then, he exposes the theory underlying his research, reflexive sociology, and explains how it applies to the micro, meso and macro levels of research.

Chapter six presents Psoinos's research concerning the autobiographical narratives of highly-educated refugees residing in the UK, concerning their experiences with refugee and migrant community organizations promoting and devaluating their skills. The author finds that the refugees' view of the community organizations vary according to the type of narrative. In chapter seven, Malish and Ilavarasan reveal some inadequacies of the dominant view of human capital – which focuses on education and skills, and more specifically, the increased meritocratic selection (IMC) thesis – in explaining recruitment processes in the software industry. The IMC thesis states that social position in modern society is based on achievement instead of ascriptive qualities. Instead, the authors argue that selection is partly based on cultural capital, thus contributing to discrimination against socially marginalized groups in the Indian ICT sector.

Part three is dedicated to social relations and their impact on work practices. In chapter 8, Chalkiti calls upon the relational view of social networks to explore relationships between front office workers in an Australian hospitality sector and how they influence knowledge transfer, given high turnover rates. In chapter 9, Kyriakidou sets out to understand how workgroup-level dynamics influence relationality at work, or the tasks necessary to develop and sustain interpersonal relationships in knowledge work groups, as these have an impact on the exchange of knowledge between workers. In chapter 10, Al-Jenaibi explores the differences between how men and women public relations practitioners are treated in the United Arab Emirates. She finds that more is expected of men in terms of performance, that they are entitled to certain tasks, and that women's achievements often go unrecognized.

The fourth part of the book focuses on technology and skills development. In chapter 11, Harris, Harrigan and Leah challenge the assumption that current students will

be competent in using online media such as social media and blogging, having been exposed to it since a young age. In addition, the authors argue that the way students are taught in Universities does not prepare them adequately to meet the demands of employers in terms of certain skills such as entrepreneurship, creativity, collaboration and online communication. Their argument is illustrated by the study they conduct in which they explore e-learning attitudes and capabilities of students in a UK management school. In chapter 12 Warren proposes three categories of digital media users – consumers, creators and disrupters – and argues that it is the limited number of disrupters that are more likely to create value in the digital domain as knowledge workers.

The final part of the book looks at two aspects of knowledge workers' work life: stress and work-family relationships. In chapter 13, Christensen argues that, contrary to conventional management wisdom, knowledge work is a high-strain rather than active job. The author contends that, although knowledge work tends to be defined as having high demands and high decision latitude or autonomy, knowledge workers tend to suffer from higher levels of stress than expected. In the final chapter, Santos explores academics' conceptions of time, and how their use of their flexible schedules differs according to their gender.

Global Knowledge Work provides a variety of insights into knowledge workers and different social and relational aspects of their professional lives. It covers a variety of fields and cultural contexts, exposing the reader to many facets of knowledge workers' realities. Part of the interest in reading this book is that it exposes the reader to some topics of debate in the knowledge economy literature, as well as some of the factors leading to diverse experiences of knowledge work, particularly with regards to gender and cultural background.

Carol-Anne Gauthier
Université Laval