



Call for papers for an *ephemera* special issue on:

Managing the human? Towards diverse, engaged and critical HRM studies

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Today considerations about the management of so-called ‘human resources’ is taken up almost routinely both in governmental programs, in organizations as well as in the private lives of citizens (Jackson et al., 2014; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009). This, in tandem with the increasing power of HRM practices in contemporary corporations, signals how HRM has succeeded to construct itself as a ‘serious’ and ‘established’ field of research.

The field of HRM has for a long time been criticized by a lively tradition of work, which has engaged with the development of management in late capitalism and through this criticised HRM for its one-sided and restricted way of engaging with the human as a manageable ‘resource’. One stream of research often drawing upon Marxist theory and/or labour process theory (e.g. Braverman, 1973; Burawoy, 1979; Legge, 2005; Storey, 1995) and one based on a more Foucauldian perspective, criticizing HRM and related ideology and practices (e.g. Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Townley, 1993; 1994; Grey, 1994; Barratt, 2002). Grounded in the argument that HRM is an ideological force, contemporary studies have continued the critique of the organization and management of the human workforce/resource (Weiskopf and Munro, 2012; Fleming and Sturdy, 2011; Watson, 2004; Janssens and Steyaert, 2009; Delbridge and Keenoy, 2010). Such perspectives reach into discussions of, for example, humanism, post-humanism, human capital, affective labour, and the sociology of work (see also Beverungen et al., 2013; Dowling et al., 2007; Figiel et al., 2014; Chertkovskaya et al., 2013; Murtola and Fleming, 2011).

In this way, the history of HRM has been characterized by disciplinary disputes, methodological disagreements and most of all ideological differences, which seem to uphold the boundaries between two separate conversations (e.g. Watson, 2007). This has led to one part of the literature operating on a practical/strategic level and the other part of the literature engaged with ideology critique. The former is easily picked up by practitioners, resulting in its dominance in business schools and HRM teaching. The latter, meanwhile, is engaged in a critique that leaves little room for action and thus falls short of converting theoretical critique into practical implications. A way to bring the field further, we argue, is to develop a constructive and engaged critique of HRM – one that can both theorize the human in HRM and take practice into account – possibly as a form of critical performativity (Spicer et al., 2009).

We invite papers that strive to connect different theoretical and methodological resources to current HRM practices and research. Promoting pluralism, diversity and empirical sensitivity in critical engagements with HRM, we expect not only new insights to the present theorizing of HRM, but also papers that may suggest alternative practices, roles and identities to its various organizational actors (Hallet, 2010). At the core of HRM is the concept of ‘the human’ and how ‘the human’ can be used as a resource to gain for example political, economic or commercial gains. This special issue seeks to reflect upon how humans are seen as an organizational ‘resource’ in the first place and how various ways of ‘organizing the human’ influence the way HRM is theorized and practiced.

Furthering a (new) tradition of critical and engaged HRM scholarship may include, but is not limited to the following topics:

- The role of critique in contemporary HRM
- The various ways in which the different approaches to HRM have conceptualized the human
- The modes and practices of organizing the human
- Ethics of managing the human
- Critical approaches to methodology in HRM studies
- Critical uses of quantitative analysis in HRM studies
- HRM as engaged scholarship
- Studies of the negotiated and practical effects of HRM
- Analyses of the increasing professionalization of HRM practitioners and its effects to practice and theory of HRM
- Analysing the various actors involved in HRM: Who/what are the neglected actors/agents of HRM?

Deadline for submissions: April 1st, 2015

All contributions should be submitted to Frans Bévort (fb.ioa@cbs.dk). Please note that three categories of contributions are invited for the special issue: articles, notes, and reviews. Information about these different types of

contributions can be found at: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit>. Contributions will undergo a double blind review process. All submissions should follow *ephemera's* submissions guidelines, available at: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit>. For further information, please email Frans Bévort (fb.ioa@cbs.dk).

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