

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT

Global Human Resource Development

Regional and Country Perspectives

Edited by

Thomas N. Garavan, Alma M.

McCarthy and Michael J. Morley

ROUTLEDGE


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Alma M. McCarthy and
Michael J. Morley



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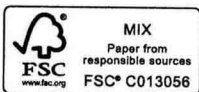
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Global Human Resource Development

“*Global Human Resource Development* is an excellent book on the ins and outs of human resource development across almost 100 countries. The chapters are written by experts in the countries represented following a common format. The book can be used effectively in courses on global training and development, global talent management, and global leadership.”

—Randall S. Schuler, Rutgers University, USA

Drawing on contributions from leading academics in the field, this volume within the Routledge Series in Human Resource Development specifically focuses on global human resource development (HRD). The volume provides an overview of 17 regions, 85 countries, and includes one emerging market grouping, CIVETS. This book examines the role of the state in HRD, the relationship between HRD and the level of economic development in the country or region, the influence of foreign direct investment within the country or region, and firm-level HRD practices within countries or regions.

Employing a comparative perspective, *Global Human Resource Development* makes it possible to analyze trends across countries and regions and to draw conclusions about the contemporary nature of the field of HRD in a global context. The ground covered is diverse, encompassing both policy and practice aspects of HRD around the world.

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1 Global Human Resource Development

Landscaping the Anatomy of An Evolving Field

*Thomas N. Garavan,
Alma M. McCarthy and
Michael J. Morley*

INTRODUCTION AND THE ORIGIN OF THE VOLUME

This volume is the culmination of a substantial cooperative effort by a global team of individuals with whom we have had the pleasure of collaborating with over the past several years. As co-editors, we have had the good fortune to have a sustained and mutually rewarding research collaboration stretching back over a considerable number of years. This volume is vested partly in this historical engagement, along with an on-going professional interest in the evolving field of human resource development from a comparative and cross-cultural perspective.

Beyond our own immediate academic relationship, we have also had the good fortune to encounter and connect with all of the chapter contributors, either individually or as an editorial team, as part of our own academic journeys over several years. In so doing, we became enthusiastic about the possibility and the prospect of creating a platform for the gathering and articulating of a collective set of ideas that underscore the field of human resource development (HRD) from a comparative perspective. In particular, we were excited about the prospect of augmenting our “Western” thinking with insights and lessons from emerging economies and territories previously underrepresented in the HRD literature but which offered the prospect of providing fresh insights on the field of HRD and its evolving nature.

That said, our initial collective enthusiasm inevitably gave way to periods of doubt about our enterprise, most likely because there is something slightly unnerving about the preparation of a volume, no matter what the topic, worthy of being labeled a “global perspective”. It has the connotation of seeking to provide an all-encompassing, grand view vested in a vision perhaps somehow broader than that offered by others and possessed of a deeper insight on each quarter and territory that the volume focuses on. In light of this, it is important at the very outset to set the record straight on this front regarding the genesis of this volume and our underlying motivation for

preparing it. Far from starting from the perspective that we as an editorial team were somehow possessed of more privileged insight than others, rather the opposite point of departure was the order of the day and served as our basic motivation. We were gradually becoming aware of gaps in our knowledge of the basic elemental building blocks of HRD in many territories that were on a significant developmental trajectory, territories that are marked by distinct institutional and cultural tenets, and that have witnessed a growth in indigenous enterprise along with emerging as important locations for foreign direct investment. This dearth of knowledge, insights, and research in the extant literature on many of these locations and territories persuaded us of the importance of a volume which might garner diverse contextual insights on HRD from a range of countries and territories, many of which were historically underrepresented in the existing literature, but all of which offered the prospect of generating insights on unique idiosyncratic elements governing the HRD system in different territories and countries. These insights, which of necessity might span the national level, along with organizational-level policy, practice, and preferred approaches could, we felt, when set opposite each other, allow the reader to judge what they would consider to be elements of commonality and difference at play in each territory and system, elements of stability and change in response to internal or external forces, along with elements of adaptation and transition, depending on the genesis of the forces for change and the manner in which HRD and institutional systems change being brought about.

Adopting this basic comparative approach as the architecture for the volume would, we felt, have a number of advantages. First, it would allow for a basic landscaping of regions and territories, some documented in the HRD literature heretofore, but many that are also undergoing deep change, such as, for example, in the major emerging markets, but which remain significantly underrepresented in the literature, relative to their counterparts in Western developed economies. Akbar (2006) highlights that, from an academic perspective, the emerging markets, as a heterogeneous group of societies, offer an important testing ground for our existing theories, models, and concepts. They also represent a potential source of new theories and new approaches, which call into question the value and sustainability of simply imposing Western approaches and solutions in these territories (Horwitz, Budhwar, and Morley, 2015). The HRD literature has to date been very USA and Euro centric. Second, allied to this, we were persuaded by the view that such dynamic contexts provided an important opportunity for scholars not just to observe the nature and shape of the HRD system in the territory being examined but also to observe whether and how core tenets of HRD are unfolding as part of the broader developmental trajectory being experienced by that location. Third, it would, we felt, afford us the opportunity to at least speculate as to the antecedents of similarities and differences between territories and allow the reader to make a judgment about the explanatory power of different factors at different levels of analysis as the likely root

source of differences or indeed similarities. Fourth, implicitly or otherwise, the exercise would also allow for a further explication of the convergence thesis found in the organization and management literatures (see for example, McGaughey and DeCieri, 1999; Guillén, 2001; Brewster et al., 2004; Mayrhofer et al., 2011) in terms of whether HRD systems were becoming more similar as a result of globalization or indeed remaining different and embedded in distinct institutional, socio-cultural, economic, and labor market idiosyncratic elements. Finally, given that much of the effort to date has been focused on more micro- or meso-level perspectives on the field, we set ourselves the task of establishing a more macro, regio-comparative perspective as our initial point of departure for the book, although in addition to such regional clusters forming the comparative architecture of the majority of the chapter contributions, on occasion we also do include single country accounts of the prevailing national HRD system. We do so on the basis of the degree of dynamism characterizing those countries and the inherent lessons for other countries and territories that may be garnered from a deeper contextual account of their particular experience.

Of necessity, the ground that we cover is diverse and variable, covering HRD as a field of policy and practice and crossing different levels of analysis. Importantly though, despite the breadth of our endeavor, in as much as is practicable when commissioning chapters that have an inherent contextualism underlying their preparation, we sought to ensure that each chapter had a similar basic structure. Here we invited authors to provide an account of the historical, political, economic, institutional, social, and cultural context of the territory under consideration. This was followed by an outline of the general vocational and educational base for HRD, including consideration of key actors, such as government and government agencies, employer bodies, labor unions, nongovernmental agencies, etc., in addition to the legislative and policy context within the territory, including how regulated, integrated, and coherent the HRD system is. We also encouraged contributors to provide an account of HRD systems and practices at the organizational level. In the situation where the chapter was covering a number of countries, we asked for a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of HRD in that region, along with similarities and differences between countries within the region. Finally, we encouraged authors to speculate about potential future challenges that HRD was likely to encounter in that territory, region, or country. Importantly, given the varying conceptualizations of HRD across the diverse territories covered, along with significant variations both in the level of maturity of the field along with the actual research base from a scientific point of view that authors in each territory could utilize, we had of course to allow a degree of flexibility on how the overall chapter framework was interpreted and developed in order to ensure that the authors were afforded the opportunity to provide coverage of contextually important elements.

In the remainder of this overarching chapter, we briefly introduce the field of HRD, we call attention to its evolving nature, its growth as a field

of investigation, and we discuss several contiguous themes underscoring the development and promulgation of a more global understanding of HRD. First, we call attention to the importance of bringing certainty to the research trajectory or route that one embarks on and that serves to position the line of inquiry one pursues. Allied to this, we highlight the importance of the overarching paradigm or archetype guiding the research effort and the ongoing debate on convergence and divergence. We also call attention to emerging patterns of global mobility, talent development, and human capital accumulation as potential drivers of fresh conceptualizations and a novel discourse in HRD. Additionally, we point to the reemergence of the social role of HRD, an emphasis that had partially waned in the field in recent years in favor of a more rational economic perspective. Finally, we provide an introduction to each of the contributions in the volume.

HRD AS AN ACADEMIC FIELD

McGuire (2014) in explicating the origins of the field proposes that HRD has three major concerns: the development and enhancement of human potential, the enhancement of organizational effectiveness, and overall societal development. The combination of these concerns emphasizes the multidisciplinary nature of HRD (Swanson and Holton, 2001; Chalofsky, 2004) and despite variations in emphases in early scholarly contributions from different countries, these three basic tenets of the field have been largely consistent. Heretofore, scholarship has been most significantly influenced by US and UK discourse, with European and Asian contributions being more visible in recent times. Such traditions have inevitably led to variations in how HRD is conceptualized, what level of analysis is emphasized, the nature of whom it is it serves and whether HRD is good for organizations and society. Early writings in the US in particular (e.g., Nadler 1970; Knowles, 1998) proposed a conceptualization of HRD focused on individual development and betterment with a strong emphasis on education as an instrument toward achieving those outcomes. In contrast, a retrospective examination of the origins of the field of HRD in the UK yields an account vested in the role and value of training to the primacy of learning as an underlying process of HRD (Tjepkema, Stewart, Sambrook, Mulder, and Schwerens, 2002). A particularly strong feature of European approaches is their espousal of humanistic and philosophically rooted notions of HRD (Kenney, Donnelly and Reid, 1979) and the use of training to develop the job skills required to achieve economic growth. This early emphasis was to eventually culminate in the opening of a new line of inquiry on the strategic value and import of a best practice approach to HRD (Garavan, 1991). Subsequent European contributions were to emphasize a composite blend of individual, organizational, and national systems concerns.

In the early writings, the primary focus was on the individual. This level of analysis was reflected in writings about motivation to learn, learner readiness, personal development, and skills development. This subsequently shifted to an organizational level of analysis with an emphasis on the business contribution of HRD and in particular the performance contribution. More laterally, community, national, and societal concerns have been emphasized (Garavan, McGuire, and O'Donnell, 2004). There has also been a significant evolution in the field in recent years toward examining different systemic approaches to HRD and engaging in a discourse on preferred national models and approaches (Cho and McLean, 2004), although it is of relatively recent vintage. Allied to this, there is the debate on globalization as a driving force for the spread of ideas and practices, which, as a phenomenon, has acted as a trajectory for the promotion of international and global HRD as a field of inquiry (Wang and McLean, 2007; Garavan and Carbery, 2012). Arising from the unique set of conditions that gave rise to the recent global financial crisis, a line of inquiry has commenced on whether HRD has indeed contributed to its emergence (MacKenzie, Garavan, and Carbery, 2012), and regardless of what we conclude on that matter, there are those who suggest that the crisis has resulted in a shift in emphasis in the field whereby it has disengaged from its earlier roots in humanistic social science to a new found overemphasis on economic pressures and concerns (Ardichvili, 2013). Finally, providing evidence of the growing maturity of the field is the emergence of critical perspectives on HRD (Fenwick, 2005; Lawless, Sambrook, and Stewart, 2012; Fenwick, 2013). These critical perspectives question the purpose of HRD, its underpinning ideologies, its representationalist organization perspectives, and its humanistic assumptions. They suggest that there is an inherent tension between the needs of individuals and organizations. The emergence of critical perspectives is a signal that the field has reached a point of maturity whereby it can engage with its foundations, assumptions, and practices in a critical way.

GLOBAL HRD AS AN EMERGING FIELD OF INVESTIGATION

As noted above, global perspectives, vested in more macro comparative approaches to HRD are less common, although growing in popularity. The literature contains a small number of contributions that take as their starting point the 'global' view of HRD through the lens of globalization and internationalization (Garavan and Carbery, 2012; Kim and McLean, 2012). There are several reasons underscoring the emergence of a global perspective on HRD. Morley (2007) describes three distinct, but overlapping, research trajectories that are helpful to positioning lines of inquiry in management research that span national boundaries, namely an