



**Call for Papers for a Special Issue of  
Human Resource Management**

**Relational Perspectives on Human Resource Management**

**Guest Editors:**

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**Summary:**

Despite significant theoretical, empirical and practical advances, the relationships “boom” has yet to prominently reach the HR literature (Soltis et al., 2018). This special issue is intended to generate new insights on a relational view of Human Resource Management. In applying the term “relational,” we seek examinations centered on how formal and informal patterns of interactions between dyads and groups of individuals within and outside the organization impact and are impacted by HRM practices and systems (e.g. Carpenter et al., 2012; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ferris, 1985; Gittell & Douglass, 2012).

**Background and Objectives of the Special Issue:**

HR scholars and practitioners have deep traditions in selecting, developing, and rewarding employees based on their human capital—the stock of individuals’ knowledge, skills, and abilities in an organization (Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, & Lepak, 2014). Yet, the changing competitive landscape, sweeping adoption of virtual interaction platforms, the transition to an information-based economy, and the increasing interdependence of work suggest that competing on employees’ knowledge, skills, and expertise is no longer sufficient for competitive advantage.

Rather, today’s knowledge economy operates through systems of relationships. Employees are embedded in webs of face-to-face and virtual relationships—including communities of practice and informal social networks—that transmit resources such as information, goodwill, and influence that drive individual and organizational effectiveness. As Hollenbeck and Jamieson (2015: 370) noted, “many of the phenomena and outcomes related to human capital, such as recruiting and onboarding, teamwork and communication, knowledge management, and employee satisfaction are...dependent on social capital and the relational networks that exist among employees.” Therefore, managing constellations of employee relationships is a core competency in organizations.

In response, HR scholars are re-orienting their focus on human capital to consider the value of social capital—a set of resources inherent in, accessible through, and derived from networks of informal relationships (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Krebs, 2000; Leana & Van Buren, 1999). Indeed, we have seen mounting interest in incorporating principles from relational perspectives into the HR literature, and the development of social network and relational coordination analytic methods has accelerated this trend (e.g., Gittell, 2003; Hatala, 2006; Hollenbeck & Jamieson, 2015). Burgeoning research has positioned employee relationships in various forms—including social capital (e.g., Jiang & Liu, 2015; Leana & Van Buren, 1999), social networks (e.g., Collins & Clark, 2003; Evans & Davis, 2005), relational coordination (Gittell, Seidner & Wimbush, 2010; McDermott, et al, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2019), respectful interacting (Vogus, 2006), and relational climates (Mossholder, Richardson, & Settoon, 2011)—as mechanisms linking HR practices and systems to enhanced performance. Recently, Methot, Rosado-Solomon, and Allen (2018) developed the network architecture of human capital theory, in which they propose that formal HR practices directly and indirectly transform organizations’ internal social structures, which can disrupt employees’ understanding of how to effectively perform their jobs. Similarly, Soltis, Brass, and Lepak (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of the research on human resource management that incorporates a social network lens. They advocate for moving the study of HRM toward “Social Resource Management” by meaningfully integrating a relational view broadly, and a social network lens more specifically, into the study and practice of HRM.

### **Themes for the Special Issue:**

This special issue will advance research and theory on a relational perspective of HRM in three ways. First, it will enrich our understanding of how HRM systems can be designed to shape relationship patterns that are more networked than siloed. Second, it will advance our understanding of how particular relationship patterns impact particular HR-relevant outcomes. Third, and perhaps most ambitiously, this special issue will advance our understanding of the process of change when HRM systems are redesigned to support new relationship patterns. We expect and encourage papers employing a variety of theoretical frameworks to address issues across multiple levels of HRM topics. As such, we invite submissions that use a wide variety of research designs (e.g., survey-based research, experimental designs, simulations, multi-level approaches, and non-obtrusive designs) and analytic methodologies (e.g., social network analysis, dyadic/triadic-based analysis, relational coordination analytics, and qualitative studies).

We provide some guidance for potential theoretical frameworks and research questions below in order to illustrate how broadly we define relational perspectives. While we are intentionally aiming to broadly capture a variety of these perspectives, we expect all submissions to be both relational and HRM at their core. For instance, a recruitment paper with four studies that introduces a relational variable in study four would not be considered a relational perspective on HR. Similarly, a study which focuses exclusively on the development of workplace relationships with no clear examination of the role of HR antecedents or consequences of such relationships would also not be considered a relational perspective of HRM. We seek submissions that utilize relational approaches to HRM as a defining characteristic so that we can meaningfully advance this crucial perspective.

*Relevant theoretical perspectives might include:*

- Social Networks
- Social Capital
- Relational Coordination
- Relational Architecture
- Positive Relationships at Work
- Leader-Member Exchange
- Structural Embeddedness
- Relational Embeddedness
- Job Embeddedness
- Person-Environment Fit
- Human Capital Emergence

*Examples of research questions might include:*

- How can HR practices cultivate networks of employee relationships that are appropriate for achieving particular performance outcomes?
- What are the performance effects of targeted relationship-oriented HR systems?
- What are the relational effects of workspace and organizational design?
- How do various forms of social capital (i.e., structural, cognitive, relational) differentially impact turnover?
- How do HR redesign efforts succeed or fail to support new relationship patterns in the context of culture change efforts?
- How do relationships shape the success or failure of HR practices or initiatives?
- How can non-survey-based methodologies such as emails and sociometric badges facilitate the analysis of employee relationships and interactions?

**Submission Deadline:** 30 June 2021

**Submission Process:**

Authors can submit their paper starting on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 to *HRM* for review, but no later than the submission deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Details on the manuscript submission process will be made available nearer to the submission window. Papers should be prepared and submitted according to the journal's guidelines:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/1099050x/homepage/forauthors.html>. All papers will be subject to the same double-blind peer review process as regular issues of *HRM*.

If you have questions about a potential submission, please contact Prof. Jody Hoffer Gittell at [jgittell@brandeis.edu](mailto:jgittell@brandeis.edu).

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