

HRM IN DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS AND FRONTIERS

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SUMMARY

This article discusses contributions of human resources management (HRM) to strengthening state institutions in development settings. It also identifies leading practices and frontiers in HRM practice and research. “Technical” HRM expertise in development exists in matching organizational performance with staffing, advancing decentralization, international project management, and training, and research also shows extensive concerns with patronage and anti-corruption. Frontiers are discussed in connection with strategic HRM, notably improved leadership development/talent management, workforce engagement in developing settings, re-thinking/professionalization of appointee–executive relations, comprehensive HRM strategies, and increased leadership for HRM itself. Although development studies often raise HRM implications, relatively few focus on HRM in development in a comprehensive fashion. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources management (HRM) is critical to strengthening state institutions and performance by attracting and retaining well-qualified and talented people to work on key issues and ensuring that leaders’ efforts contribute to organizational and worker performance (UN, 2005; Rauch and Evans, 2000). Developing countries face many, oft-discussed challenges of poverty, environmental degradation, security, regulation, corruption, and racial and ethnic integration, and all of these require civil servants and leaders who are capable and well motivated to make progress. They also require effective, ‘rightsized’ organizations that use appropriate technology and work processes. Examples of HRM supporting progress towards development goals include selecting capable public leaders, linking managerial performance to results, strengthening anti-corruption regimes, increasing employee engagement, providing personnel exchanges with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that build capacity, integrating former militants into public service, and more (Bardill, 2000; Tessema and Soeters, 2006; World Bank, 1997).

This article focuses on HRM and addresses the following questions. What is the impact of the development context on the purpose and content of HRM? What are some distinctive areas of “technical” expertise of HRM in development? What are the contributions of HRM addressing patronage? What is the use of strategic HRM (SHRM) in development contexts, focusing on leadership and performance? Examples are drawn from very-low-income to middle-income countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and, where illustrative, formerly developing countries (e.g., Singapore and South Korea). Development studies often raise HRM implications, but few focus on HRM in development in a comprehensive fashion. The sections of this article address the preceding questions in order in ways that have relevance for academics and practitioners alike.

The centrality of HRM to development has surely varied over time. HRM was once core to development efforts in the 1950s and 1960s, building up agency capacity in newly formed nations through training, selection, and organizational design of public agencies. However, disillusionment with bloated bureaucracies, rent seeking, and failure to ensure economic “takeoff” in the 1970s caused increased focus on market forces since the 1980s as a main driver

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(Brinkerhoff, 2008; McCourt and Gulrajani, 2010). The economic perspective focuses on supportive and stabilizing roles of the state sector, de-emphasizing HRM as a strategic force and involving reform and state retrenchment through new public management (NPM). By the late 1980s, HRM was largely confined to routine decisions and playing restricted, bureaucratic, and reactive roles, including support for NPM implementation. As Blunt (1990) states, “high flying managers have been inclined to look elsewhere for their route to the top...it is rarely the case that a chief executive officer will have ‘cut his teeth’ in the personnel department.”

But new trends have caused the pendulum to shift back since the early 2000s. First, the political economy is increasingly recognized by economists as a key driver in development (initially in “Asian Tigers,” and later more generalized), and within this the need for increased public leadership, effectiveness, and good governance (World Bank, 1997; ADB, 2011a). The “economic” era of the 1980s, associated with organizational restructuring and retrenchment, is now seen as “a lost decade” (Santiso, 2003), and greater attention is needed to ensure a merit-based bureaucracy that leads to meeting national goals. A managerial perspective is once again needed, and “there is solid evidence that HRM is not simply connected with organizational performance but actually determines it” (UN, 2005:27). Second, and central to this article, the field of HRM has itself evolved, from a “technical” focus in the 1960s (around training, selection, etc., discussed further) to a strategic and distributed focus in the last decades. In short, all managers are now expected to be proficient in HRM technical tasks (e.g., hiring and appraisal), occasionally supported by human resources (HR) specialists who provide guidance and support. Moreover, human capital development, retention, leadership, and workplace culture have become strategic issues for organizations and senior managers. The connection between performance, people, and strategy has been made. SHRM has become an established part of the field, and the time has arrived for increasing attention to HRM in development studies.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PARADIGM IN DEVELOPMENT

Human resources management concerns organizational practices and knowledge that address the relationship between the individual and the organization with an eye to optimizing effectiveness from the view of both the organization and individual (Berman *et al.*, 2011). HRM can be further defined as including the following: (i) technical functions for the day-to-day operations of managing people in organizations (i.e., staffing, position management, pay systems, benefits management, training, appraisal, and discipline); (ii) policies and strategies that further the development, performance, and well-being of employees; and (iii) a strategic perspective and focus on meeting/shaping future organizational needs. Of course, all practice and policy are context dependent, which, in development setting, often causes a focus or need for HRM to build up capacity under very challenging and resource-poor conditions. This section shows how the development context shapes HRM.

First, development settings often have a strong theme about nation building, or at least a palpable need for nation building, as countries find others comparably better off. For HRM, this often finds expression in building up or ensuring that the civil service has an “*esprit de corps*” of national identity and that it effectively and inclusively (across all ethnic groups and geographic areas) implements and co-shapes a broad development agenda. This is quite challenging, and recent decentralization efforts cause a need for developing public sector workforces of sub-national excellence, as well (Rohitarachoon and Hossain, 2012). Second, a cadre of senior public managers is needed to provide leadership to the civil service. The demand for loyal and excellent senior public managers often causes HRM to develop an identifiable corps, sometimes of elite standing, that is replete with career tracks, generous or competitive compensation and benefits (to ensure retention and loyalty), and developmental milestones in career progression. Although countries vary in organizing the senior public leadership corps, a key HRM governance challenge is preventing these cadres from becoming self-serving rather than nation serving (Jacobs, 2009).

Third, “immature” democracies often have a good deal of political micromanagement and intervention. The lack of clear roles between senior public managers and political appointees/elected officials quickly undermines efforts of bureaucratic leadership and is often accompanied in development settings by officials’ corruption, resulting in further leadership deficiencies and corruption to permeate through bureaucracies (Blunt *et al.*, 2012; Turner, 2013). Civil service commissions have a leadership role to play in ensuring governance of effective political and executive roles, but little is known about this. Fourth, lower employee levels often receive compensation that, at

market rates, is sometimes barely sufficient to sustain their households, even at or near poverty (UN, 2005). Whereas HRM in developed countries focuses on benefits that add value over and above sustainable salaries, HRM in developing contexts often ensures economic viability through subsidies for basic items, such as food, clothing (uniforms), basic medical care, childcare, and housing support. Income insufficiency is an important cause of petty corruption in the development context, and raising salaries is a key, long-term HRM goal, although agreement exists that this must involve ‘rightsizing’ to avoid a bloated payroll.

Fifth, although education has made remarkable gains in many developing countries, low education levels remain an HRM challenge. Entrance exams are commonly used to ensure minimal skills while also providing “leveling” (non-patronage) opportunities for competitive recruitment. A lack of technical and administrative training may cause a need for extensive civil service training colleges and overseas training (Tummala, 2013; Carmichael, 1986). Sixth, the lack of well-developed and reliable private sector capabilities increases pressure on agencies for establishing delivery units. Where local jurisdictions are weak, additional pressure is added on higher governments, as well as for the use of local NGOs to augment delivery capabilities (Anderson and Van Crowder, 2000; Sansom, 2011; Unsworth and Moore, 2010). Finally, the HRM function itself is often not well established in developmental contexts and under considerable political influence. Weak HRM programs can make little gains in attracting and retaining well-qualified employees and leaders or ensuring organizational development, reducing fraud (e.g., ghost employees), ensuring the pipeline of excellent professional and managerial staff, providing training, and more.

The development context surely shapes HRM tasks and the conditions under which they work, and the preceding discussion also identifies specific tasks for HRM. Of course, some of the aforementioned conditions also occur in developed countries (e.g., patronage, examinations, and contracting), hence, allowing for sharing and learning from others, performed mindfully. Still, the development context also gives rise to distinctive HRM capabilities and needs, described in the following sections.

THE TECHNICAL ROLE: CORE LESSONS

The technical role of HRM concerns the day-to-day operations of managing people in organizations (i.e., staffing, position management, pay systems, benefits management, training, appraisal, and discipline). Merit-based bureaucracies are positively associated with bureaucratic performance (UN, 2005; Court *et al.*, 1999), and the technical role should aim to advance merit—selection of qualified and capable employees and managers, competitive wages and benefits that attract and retain, training to ensure worker skills, position management that aligns staffing with effective organizational structures and preferred work processes, and appraisal and discipline dealing with underperformance and involuntary separation for cause. Although still more is needed for effective performance (e.g., leadership, integrity, informal networks, and collaboration with NGOs), these conditions are thought to position leaders and their organizations well for goal attainment, and they are also consistent with promoting classic (e.g., Weberian) and modern notions of good management and professionalism.

Research includes numerous articles supporting the previous discussion. Much is of older date, reflecting established consensus. In this journal, by example, Mutizwa-Mangiza (1992) writes that the Gokwe rural local government in Zimbabwe was “fairly robust and well organized” in 1990, a decade after independence, and well performing. Hallmarks are low turnover among senior officers, encouragement of in-service training leading to staff stability, meaningful salaries (despite inflation) that do not require auxiliary work to supplement as well as 5-year work plans, bottom-up participatory planning, adequate local fees and levies, and central government grants. However, articles that discuss problems are more common, which argue the lack of merit causing poor performance. Kitchen (1989) shows that macro-level structural reforms in Jamaica led to hasty, unplanned, and uncoordinated cuts in staff that caused the government to find that “the civil service, especially the line ministries, no longer had the necessary capacity to function properly” and that it needed a “long run, well-integrated human resource development programme to provide the manpower required by the public sector.” Blunt (1990) discusses various dysfunctions and the need for HRM to contribute to organizational processes that further performance.

The development literature also points to distinctive HRM development tasks and lessons that are central to performance goals. Classic HRM tasks are matching organizational performance objectives with staffing and work

processes. Early studies often examine department staffing. Jayaraman (1981) discusses that efforts to improve irrigation systems in India were impeded by civil engineers being insufficiently aware of farmers' needs. The proposed solution is a new organization and staffing that integrates additional engineering specializations and increases communication with farmers, while also providing career incentives for engineers choosing water management over professional preferences for construction. Baptiste (2004) discusses organizational change and privatization of Trinidad & Tobago postal services involving HRM identifying core competencies in all jobs, recruiting a new cadre of professional staff, and improving performance review processes. In a recent example, based on a case from Sri Lanka, Heeks and Stanforth (2014) recently discuss that project managers require skills for mobilizing and interacting with both local and global actor networks, involving practices of trust building and politics. These can be regarded as classic examples of HRM competencies of matching staffing requirements to mission, often with recruitment or compensation implications.

Other research addresses more recent and complex challenges. Numerous studies deal with building up provincial capacity as a consequence of decentralization. Olowu (2003) discusses that decentralization in Africa requires HRM strategies to ensure that local governments are able to recruit qualified officials and to motivate them, and Kolehmainen-Aitken (1992) and Thomason and Newbrander (1990) discuss that in Papua New Guinea decentralization included staffing and training for public health officials involving hands-on, action-learning, and collective problem solving across different regions. A second modern problem is repatriation, part of nation building. Tessema and Soeters (2006) discuss how reintegration by ex-fighters in Eritrea used special HRM privileges (non-competitive examinations, selection, promotions, and salaries); this increased politicization of the civil service and is now in need of moving towards equal and non-discriminatory HRM practices to further merit. A third problem is ensuring adequately trained and staffed regulatory programs. Transitions to market economy are often accompanied by insufficient regulation, and Marshall *et al.* (2007) find in Mongolia a scarcity of experienced and technically competent staff capable of establishing and operating effective regulatory agencies and ensuring compliance, over and above problems of regulatory capture.

Fourth, lessons also exist in the area of performance. Training is frequently used and studied. Early studies focus on the need for well-qualified trainers and comprehensive training institutions (Carmichael, 1986), whereas later studies suggest that training should be geared to specific development projects, even when training occurs overseas (Taylor, 1995), and that training methods should match classroom learning with experiential feedback and workplace integration through action-learning and field trials (Jacobs, 2009). Management training is discussed later. However, research is a bit thin on other technical matters, notably on appraisal, examinations, and compensation in development (e.g., addressing the aforementioned issues of adequacy). Studies with salary implications often focus on performance. Jacobs (2004) discusses a need to relate salary to performance in Latvia, such as by using quarterly performance reports, but there is converging consensus that more than salary-based performance incentives are needed. Awortwi and Vondee (2007) find that differences in performance between state and private companies in Ghana is explained by performance management processes, and not incentive structures; this is consistent with research in developed settings that also questions the performance of performance-based pay. Hodder (2014) notes the limits of Weberian-style formality and merit definitions that produce deep inequalities and that leave organizations less flexible and less capable of innovation. He notes the benefits of kinship appointments increasing informal communications and overcoming bureaucratic over-conformity and ossification, thereby improving effectiveness, although these relations also cause "distortions in the allocation and movement of money, materiel, and policy." Challenges of corruption and patronage are discussed in the next section.

Finally, lessons also exist for civil servant compensation in development settings, where salaries are often low to modest, and pensions and benefits are important factors in total compensation that contribute to recruitment, retention, and ensuring that employee needs are met (e.g., housing and insurance). In the postwar period when Taiwan was developing and having low wages, civil servant pensions reached up to 80–100% of final income, and retirement savings received preferential interest rates (18%); anecdotally, these schemes surely contributed to having a loyal and able civil service. (Recent pension solvency concerns have slightly diminished these benefits.) As regards other benefits, Liebert (2013) finds benefits and discretionary bonuses exceeding base salaries in Kyrgyzstan by up to 150%, although noting that the average civil servant salary is only US\$212 per month. However, in Nigeria,

Table 1. The technical role: findings and solutions

Key findings	Solutions
Anderson and Van Crowder (2000): insufficient funds limit agricultural extension activity (Uganda and Mozambique)	Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) contract or co-fund extension services (contracting in)
Awortwi and Vondee (2007): differences in performance between state and private companies are explained by performance management processes, and not incentive structures (Ghana)	Public sector needs effective performance management processes; improved salaries and perquisites may not be sufficient
Bardill (2000): alignment and reform of civil service hindered by fragmented human resources management (HRM) and human resources development (HRD), ineffective performance appraisal, blockages in recruitment, ineffective training, lack of career paths, and discriminatory barriers (South Africa)	Increase effectiveness of planning, prioritization, resourcing, and monitoring of HRM/HRD in line with the individual needs of staff and the service delivery needs of the organization
Carmichael (1986): training of civil service staff is fragmented, and trainers are not well qualified (Zambia)	Provide comprehensive training institutions, policies, programs, sufficient resources, and a cadre of competent staff
Collins <i>et al.</i> (2000): high staff circulation/turnover leads to lack of continuity and expertise (Pakistan)	Change decision making, reduce patronage/corruption, and use team-based strategies
Heeks and Stanforth (2014): management of development projects is under-researched (Sri Lanka)	Actors need capacity for working with and within local and global networks
Horwitz (1994): institution building requires management diversity (South Africa)	Increase management development for diversity and change attitudes of White managers
Jacobs (2004): need to relate salary to performance, improve pay, improve the HRM information system (Estonia and Latvia)	Use quarterly performance reports, raise and standardize salary across ministries, create opportunities for mobility, improve IT systems, and include senior managers in setting priorities for civil servant training
Jayaraman (1981): government irrigation efforts do not produce adequate results (India)	Ensure staffing, management and professional values, and management encourages appropriate specialism with concern for clients' interests
Kitchen (1989): ministries lack the capacity to function properly owing to hasty, unplanned, and uncoordinated cuts in staff; statutory bodies offer salaries that are higher, which further reduce ministry staff (Jamaica)	Undertake a long-run, well-integrated HRD program to provide manpower; increase pay and improve job classifications
Kolehmainen-Aitken (1992): decentralization causes conflict among goals and lack of equitable and effective staffing of lower levels (Papua New Guinea)	Need national leadership to ensure adequate financing, staffing, and capabilities of provinces
Mutizwa-Mangiza (1992): rural local government is well organized and robust (Zimbabwe)	Maintain staff qualifications, staff continuity (low turnover), training, and input from citizen groups
Olowu (2003): decentralization requires intergovernmental arrangements (Africa)	Need HRM strategies to ensure that local governments are able to recruit qualified officials and to motivate them

(Continues)

Table 1. (Continued)

Key findings	Solutions
Sansom (2011): local government does not have enough staff or departments to meet sanitation targets (Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan)	NGOs complement local government sanitation efforts
Taylor (1995): impact of training programs in the West is sometimes limited (Nigeria)	Training should be geared to specific development projects in a particular country
Taylor (1999): local government councilors need to learn new roles (Tanzania)	Training of councilor role, legal positions, technical skills, and political leadership skills
Tessema and Soeters (2006): reintegration by ex-fighters uses special HRM privileges (non-competitive examinations, selection, promotions, and salaries), leading to politicization of the civil service (Eritrea)	Need to move towards equal and non-discriminatory HRM practices
Thomason and Newbrander (1990): decentralization creates management and capacity deficits at provincial levels (Papua New Guinea).	Decentralization depends on improving management development at operational levels
Wang <i>et al.</i> (2002): health system decentralization requires effective HRM (Papua New Guinea)	Need human resources (HR) planning, staff needs assessment, understanding of employment patterns, recruitment, retaining, and re-deploying existing health personnel, staff pay, performance management, supervision, appraisal, training, and HR management capacity

Okoye *et al.* (2012) draw attention to abuse of fringe benefits, especially by top civil servants, to such an extent that “little was left for funding capital projects by government.” Fringe benefits include 100% of annual basic salary for housing, furniture allocations, car loans, use of government vehicles, and more. More study is needed of civil servants’ compensation in developing countries and its impact on state capacity.

In short, there is consensus that a merit-based approach to HR is associated with increased government performance and also that HRM in development has distinctive tasks, expertise, and lessons to offer. Table 1 shows lessons from this journal’s articles regarding technical aspects of HRM. However, the technical dimension of HRM has important limits to ensuring performance. First, its application is often affected by politics and patronage, which requires HRM to also play roles in this area as discussed in the next section. Second, the traditional, technical role misses out on modern developments relating to performance, and further leadership is needed to embrace these opportunities, which is later discussed as an SHRM issue. Third, the day-to-day HRM management requires capabilities for these roles that may not always be present, such as having good information systems (e.g., to identify ghost employees), capacity for job re-classification (e.g., assisting with re-organizations and pay inequity across departments), expertise on separation (e.g., appraisal), and salary surveys. Jacobs (2004) discusses that accession by Latvia to the European Union required it to address these gaps. Thus, although technical expertise matters for merit and performance, more is needed, as well.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, PATRONAGE, AND CORRUPTION

Patronage and corruption are widely regarded as the main cause of weak governance processes and inadequate progress on development goals. Blunt *et al.* (2012) describes how in Indonesia positions are bought for a price that depends on how well one knows the boss (sometimes at multiples of one’s annual salary), and that receiving choice assignments and promotions depend on how many illicit opportunities are brought to one’s boss. Weak implementation of civil service rules allows political patrons to influence appointments, further reducing the link between job skills and job requirements. Indonesia ranks 114 of 174 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index, and these patterns exist in other countries, too. In other settings, candidates’ rankings after civil service exams on placement lists are sold.

Corruption and patronage are clear threats to promoting technical rationality, causing “merit-based” processes to be weakened and corrupted, becoming devoid of merit. They can also be a factor in HRM maladministration, such as lax oversight of staffing requests and ineffective appraisal systems (Turner *et al.*, 2009). As Collins (2012) wryly notes, “the technical solutions by themselves have not proved as successful as their proponents had hoped.”

Although other factors may also explain poor HRM performance such as lack of capability or resources, a distinctive feature of the development literature is its focus on corruption and patronage that is also associated with intentionally undermining HRM capabilities. High-level analysis links weak public performance to a preponderance of patron–client relations in governance and the ruling political elites investing too little effort in governance. Leaders maintain power by providing rents to clients and jobs to subordinates, appropriating the resources of their office for this purpose, unencumbered by rules and laws, including that of HRM that are rendered ineffective. At worst, patron–client relations create a vicious cycle through which ruling elites and political factions intentionally weaken HRM and performance regimes in order to further opportunistic rent seeking and influence over the bureaucracy (Khan, 2005). Weak HRM systems and maladministration are consistent with such scenarios, albeit with the proviso that public governance must remain sufficiently effective to ensure regime legitimacy (Turner *et al.*, 2009), and also noting that some ruling elites have used some rents for investing in the long term (e.g., Booth and Golloba-Mutebi, 2011).

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of patronage and corruption, but rather to focus on its HRM implications. To be sure, political appointments are well accepted as appropriate tools for the political direction of agencies (Bearfield, 2009), are part of HRM staffing, and are common in democratic and non-democratic regimes alike; at issue are not institutional arrangements or form but the management of the state (Themudo, 2014). Patronage and kinship appointments (Hodder, 2014) are one thing, but corruption and poor performance are quite another. By example, Bana and McCourt (2006) discuss how, in Tanzania, staffing institutions were placed under the control of the ruling party so that they would serve national development objectives, but the effect was to contaminate the efficiency and integrity of government agencies through patronage appointments, nepotism, removal of civil servants, and oversight of agency programs by political officials. “Having moved decisively away from the Westminster model by fusing politics and administration under the leadership of the dominant party, Tanzania has gravitated back towards it” (p. 406). This is a lesson about the need for professional expertise and decision making.

This area requires important choices to be made about the role of HRM in preserving and promoting merit, but, at worst, HRM may come to be perceived as a handmaiden or toothless tiger that actively or passively furthers corruptive forces. In Tanzania, the Civil Service Commission was seen as a largely rubber-stamping body and woefully understaffed for dealing with disciplinary cases. But positive choices are available. First, the professional identity of HRM has been surely eroded by the NPM reforms and is surely to be shored up. The HRM identity centers on knowledge and expertise in people management and bureaucratic performance, not only by demonstrations of expertise but also by making the case for the relevance of a professional and reliable public service. The United Nations (UN, 2005) report goes beyond this, advocating for stronger HRM, a “guardian agency” that ensures a politically impartial, professional, and merit-based civil service. Beyond this, bureaucratic performance and people management are relevant to political elites, regardless of their own commitment to governance. Second, a nuanced analysis is to be made about opportunities for promoting merit. Corruption is usually given to specific practices and positions, and opportunities are to be found such as for strengthening merit in selection (increasing qualifications), training (required for supervisors and managers), promotion (making demonstrated performance and integrity criteria; Heywood and Meyer-Sahling, 2013), and appraisal (getting tough on malperformance). In addition, Doig (2012) notes that “Alongside the control and compliance approach, therefore, there needs to be a dedicated preventative approach that promotes the individual responsibility of politicians and officials and ensure that they understand the expectations and requirements of public life.”

Human resources management can also help improve the functioning of regulatory and anti-corruption efforts. Blunt (2009) discusses persistent grand and petty corruption in Timor-Leste, and the need to strengthen anti-corruption commissions through increased capability and technical support. In many development settings, a nuanced understanding is needed that allows for both performance and some corruption to exist side by side, at least for a time. In India, a police supervisor proudly explained to the author how some amount of “gifts” were tolerated in order to supplement inadequate salaries, while setting clear limits on gift taking, setting high performance expectations for

promotions, and furthering police effectiveness. Practices of buying civil service jobs or candidates' rankings after civil service exams serve no merit, and efforts should be made to reduce these, even if not fully eliminated. The situation is not ideal, but the question is about HRM contributions to pushing back. Additionally, at times, political elites find advantage in demonstrably pushing back on corruption, such as China's President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption drive from 2013, which has thus far punished 63,000 party officials, or other well-known efforts in Singapore and Hong Kong resulting in anti-corruption institutions (*Financial Times*, 2014; Quah, 2001; Scott, 2011). HRM expertise is important to these efforts. The UN report advocates that HRM should be "tough and objective" on anti-corruption rules, external scrutiny, and transparency, and this is surely the case in these efforts.

A vast anti-corruption literature exists with much expertise on anti-corruption (e.g., Neo and Chen, 2007; Doig *et al.*, 2007), and Table 2 shows articles from this journal with HRM implications. Of particular interest here, and a major gap, is the under-researched area of HRM maladministration and malfeasance itself (e.g., Iles *et al.*, 2012). Brown (1999) discusses the challenge of filing grievances in Trinidad and Tobago, which "in some circumstances can produce an anomalous situation where Caesar is being asked to enquire into Caesar's own act of maladministration." Little is known about the commitment of HRM officials on shoring up the integrity of HRM practices, and of interactions with political officials for this purpose. Collins (2012) calls for increased capacity of civil servants

Table 2. Human resources management (HRM), patronage and corruption: findings and solutions

Key findings	Solutions
Bana and McCourt (2006): staffing institutions placed under the ruling party reduce efficiency and integrity of government agencies through patronage, political removals, and interventions (Tanzania)	Return to "Westminster" model with increased independence and integrity of civil service staffing
Blunt <i>et al.</i> (2012): patronage networks are pervasive, ensuring that officials can accept bribes without fear of reprisal, and corrupt/undermined HRM practices for selection and promotion (Indonesia)	None offered; maybe middle class will apply pressure for representative democracy
Blunt (2009): persistent grand and petty corruption threatens legitimacy; government promotes integrity reform efforts, but they are thus far insufficient (Timor-Leste)	Need to strengthen ACC efforts through increased capability and technical support and overcome opposition within government
Collins (2012): externally managed anti-corruption approaches are not enough to produce behavioral results	Increase capacity of civil servants and leaders to think reflexively and critically
Heywood and Meyer-Sahling (2013): danger zones for corruption include personalization of appointments, political/personal influences on personnel screening, and lack of incentives for integrity (Poland)	Reduce number of political appointments, increase professional standards in personnel decisions, and ensure strict standards for integrity
Lister and Wilder (2005): developing subnational governments should not only focus on mechanisms and structures for taxation and efficient delivery of services (Afghanistan)	Need to consider local power structures and relations with national government.
Marshall <i>et al.</i> (2007): transition to market economy accompanied with insufficient regulation and scarcity of technically competent staff (Mongolia)	Need to establish genuine regulatory independence and overcome regulatory capture
Turner (2013): public administration reform failure in Southeast Asia (Cambodia)	Reduce patronage, increase accountability, increase wages, increase competitive elections, and increase bureaucratic performance

ACC, Anti-Corruption Commission.

and leaders to think reflexively and critically, and this should include HRM, too. Although, in the end, the amount of corruption in government is largely a political decision, increasing merit and professionalism also requires an act of leadership by HRM, and enforcement and assurance involve HRM in selection, promotion, training, appraisal, and discipline.

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT SETTINGS

Strategic HRM is defined as an approach to HRM that is concerned with long-term people issues and macro-concerns that directly or indirectly contribute to public performance (Truss *et al.*, 2012). Examples include leadership development, the pipeline of talented employees and supervisors for future senior positions, and the role of political officials and patronage appointments in giving direction to government units. Other examples include financial sustainability (e.g., dealing with pension liabilities) and diversity and gender issues. As Leonard (2010) notes, “The future of development administration will be enhanced by more informed choice of strategic

Table 3. Comprehensive and strategic interventions: findings and solutions

Key findings	Solutions
Baptiste (2004). Some initial change management results disappoint and decrease worker satisfaction/morale.	Need multi-year perspective with mid-way corrections, and good labor-management relations.
Blunt (1990): organizational dysfunctions include lack of clearly agreed missions, goals, strategies, and roles; lack of managerial accountability; individual effectiveness and performance appraisal insufficiently tied to proper rewards; lack of leadership (literature based)	Human resources management (HRM) interventions, including management training, should shift away from a focus on skill and knowledge transmission towards value and attitude change
Dijkstra (2004): donor-driven social funds/programs do not strengthen line agencies owing to turnover, consolidations, other agendas, and more (Nicaragua)	Need clear national policies and priorities
Jacobs (2009): change management attitudes about pro-poor policies through training (Bangladesh)	Experiential management training is effective, but implementation requires integration with planning and career development
Leonard (2010): effective agencies are found in weak governance states (literature review)	Ensure managerial leadership and autonomy from political economy
McCourt and Sola (1999): training for reform has limited effectiveness of well-designed training in isolation from institutional development (Tanzania)	Organization-level intervention is needed (action plan by senior managers)
O’Flynn and Blackman (2009): using OD for wide-scale change (Bhutan)	Implementation challenges around strategic goals
Ugyel (2014): new performance management and increases citizen feedback system does not fully result in move away from rule-driven bureaucracy (Bhutan).	Need to also reform recruitment, selection, and promotion systems
Verhoest <i>et al.</i> (2004): organizational autonomy is unclear (theory)	Distinguish dimensions of autonomy: managerial, political, structural, financial, legal, and interventional(constraints)

OD, Organizational Development.

opportunities,” and these are important needs and opportunities. The literature on SHRM in development settings is thin, but not absent, including in this journal (Table 3). SHRM in the public sector differs from that in the private sector, which is often singularly focused on using HRM for competitive advantage rather than for the assurance of continued improvement in performance. Here, we focus on strategic matters directly related to performance and goal achievement (Turner *et al.*, 2009), specifically, the following: (i) leadership development/talent management; (ii) workforce engagement; and (iii) political and appointee relations.

Leadership development and talent management

As noted earlier, countries have long regarded the performance of its cadre of senior public managers of great importance; when senior managers plan and execute well, public agencies are able to make progress on development objectives. Leadership matters, and Leonard (2010) finds that “even in countries that have poor governance and weak public sectors, exceptional well-functioning government and government-supported agencies do exist.” He finds various explanations, but notably: (a) administrative leadership that executes a multiplicity of good management practices (e.g., Bourgon, 2009); (b) leadership that is depoliticized and autonomous, yet responsive to political leadership; and (c) goals that have strong legitimacy and support inside and outside the agency and are of consequential interest to non-patronage groups advocating for the public good. Leadership does not stand alone, but it is part of what is needed.

Traditional strategies for strengthening leadership in development setting have often used or even focused on management training. Jacobs (2009) describes training of Bangladeshi officers that uses experiential learning to create a “reform minded group of leaders at the heart of government.” The effort aims to overcome “hierarchical, centralised and bureaucratic” mindsets of the civil service, noting that civil servants may in fact “deliberately impede or block pro-poor measures and act to ensure that powerful factions and their political leaders are rewarded instead.” The program has thus far trained 700 senior civil servants, resulting in over 100 performance improvement programs (PIPs). Each year, the best 80 officers are selected for Super-PIPs that are expected to yield even broader reform. Jacobs assesses that although the training program successfully built up a cadre, and some of the PIPs have had remarkable impact, challenges in the rollout of PIPs occur because of turnover and re-assignments, a lack of commitment to mobilizing resources, and lack of integration with the Bangladesh promotion system for civil servants, which is heavily seniority based. The larger reform agenda exceeds the reach of training and requires “a seriousness of vision, strong leadership and a constancy of senior staff (that) throughout the history of the Bangladesh Civil Service ... have all been problematic.” Somewhat similar problems are also noted in Pakistan and Tanzania (Collins *et al.*, 2000; McCourt and Sola, 1999). These examples show both the potential and limit of management training. Where organizations are change resistant, training itself will not achieve change (Jacobs, 1990).

Strategic HRM “best practice” increasingly relies on leadership development strategies that are linked to reform programs, career development paths, and agency goals. Examples from Singapore and New Zealand show career-focused developmental pathways where managers are selected for incrementally, developmental experiences that are designed to provide a series of developmental leadership challenges and assurance of managers’ ability to execute a multiplicity of good management practices. The New Zealand example is very recent and motivated by succession planning; it includes specific positions for senior roles across the public sector. The Singapore example is well established and includes managerial mentoring and evaluation, resulting in an ongoing formation and a competitive winnowing of senior officials (Neo and Chen, 2007, chapter 7). Training is only a small part of the leadership development experience; these efforts rely far more on feedback for on-the-job experiences. Thailand also has a high-potential performance system roadmap of cross-functional work assignments and milestones to support career growth and acceleration. These programs recognize the developmental pathway and may include specific leadership competencies such as (strategic) change management (e.g., Baptiste, 2004) in the selection of public managers. Leadership development programs have yet to be rigorously evaluated.

Talent management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention, and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization (CIPD, 2006). Talent

management encompasses the preceding definition as well as strengthening and ensuring the “pipeline” at entry level and mid-level. Anecdotally, such programs seem increasingly popular. Thailand, for example, makes yearly about 300 government scholarships available to high school students and bachelor-degree holders, which, upon completion, serve twice the amount of time taken to study (Poocharoen and Lee, 2013). The public sector executive development program attracts about 40–60 participants each year at the mid-level entry point. Participants go through intensive classroom-based training on public management and leadership and trained in practice by being seconded to three groups of public sector leaders and one private sector leader for about 2 years, while participating in a mentorship system. Very little has been rigorously evaluated regarding the size and impact of these programs. China has adopted an expansive, broad-reaching talent management program that includes state-owned enterprises, science and engineering, and the civil service. The latter emphasizes a more open personnel policy, a national integrated service network, and opportunities for talented personnel to develop innovative programs (China MIIT, 2010).

Workforce engagement and performance

An important leadership task is ensuring civil servants’ enthusiasm for mission and performance, and getting beyond *de minimis* compliance/obedience motivation that are sometimes seen in public agencies. In recent years, the term “employee engagement” has become a popular, practice-based term, denoting employees who apply themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during their performance. The term employee “engagement” bridges internal states of motivation with observable behaviors in the workplace and is linked to increased performance and productivity (Trahant, 2007; Gruman and Saks, 2011). An engaged employee can be characterized as enthusiastic and energetic about his or her work, but a Gallup (2013) survey of 140 countries finds high levels of employee engagement rather uncommon. The concept of “engagement” is different from public service motivation (PSM) which addresses employees’ intrinsic motivation for the “public” character of public sector pursuits, rather than their energetic pursuit of these; Gao and Chan (2014) state that “PSM alone does not necessarily lead to improved performance,” requiring other HRM practices, indeed. PSM became popularized in the 1990s (e.g., Perry, 1996) before the above emphasis that bridges motivation to workplace behavior.

Human resources management is obviously focused on engagement on productivity, and past lessons strongly point to multi-pronged approaches. Money matters, but the evidence on performance-based pay is inconclusive at best. Supervisory relations matter greatly (it is said that people join organizations and causes but quit their supervisors), but so, too, do job security and career development opportunities. Engagement research points to feeling valued and being meaningfully involved in decisions (Shuck and Wollard, 2010). Hence, SHRM frameworks use comprehensive HR systems that reinforce behavior and incentives. For example, high-performance work systems (HPWS) in HRM, which are associated with increased productivity and performance, emphasize the following: (1) employment security; (2) high selectivity in hiring new personnel; (3) using self-managed teams and decentralization of decision making as the basic principles of organizational design; (4) competitive compensation contingent on organizational performance; (5) extensive training; (6) extensive sharing of performance information throughout the organization; and (7) reduced status distinctions and barriers in organizations (Messersmith *et al.*, 2011; Pfeffer, 1998). There are no single bullets, and the trend is towards comprehensive strategies that are implemented with sustained commitment over time.

In this regard, the development literature discusses change strategies that are increasingly multifaceted. In this journal, Ugyel (2014) describes how Bhutan aims to move away from patronage and bureaucratic (rule and obedience driven) models of administration towards modern models that involve performance and responsiveness. Reforms have thus far involved organizational development (O’Flynn and Blackman, 2009), a new performance management system, performance compacts between ministries and government, increased use of citizen participation, and job re-classification. However, further effort is now seen as needed. Ugyel (2014) notes that HR development, recruitment, selection, and promotion have seen only incremental changes to the old system, and the earlier discussion also does not reflect much about HPWS. Liu and Dong (2012) describe efforts to improve the

performance appraisal system in China and conclude that it needs “better connection...with other human resource management (HRM) systems, consideration of the performance budget system, and improvement of appraisal technical activities.” Bardill (2000) and Horwitz (1994) discuss HRM integration in the modernization of South Africa’s civil services, including the need for diversity and workforce planning. In short, the frontier of workplace performance efforts in development settings increasingly sees integration with a cluster of HRM practices, but further research is needed around HRM strategies to be implemented across a range of different development settings.

Political and appointee relations

Reform of civil service–appointee relations is a cutting edge topic in developed and developing countries alike. Bureaucratic leadership must be politically accountable, and the challenge is to do both well. Although political theory has traditionally been concerned with political power and control over bureaucracy and recent development theory focuses on stakeholder development (ADB, 2011), from the HRM perspective, the matter is to be framed as job tasks for accountability of bureaucratic leadership. Training political officials about their roles and responsibilities helps (Taylor, 1999), but the larger question is what these roles should be. In Taiwan, democratization strongly curtailed bureaucratic leadership; senior managers are now seen to be upward looking, serving ministers, and not taking sufficient leadership. Berman *et al.* (2013) study informal understandings between (deputy) ministers and very senior public officials for initiative taking and oversight and find that only half of very senior managers report such understandings; such understandings about bureaucratic leadership and political oversight are strongly associated with increased agency innovation. In a very different case, Chan and Gao (2009) discuss how Chinese provinces mandate performance targets for local governments, which “risks boosting the short term accountability of public employees while undermining the long term productivity of government agencies” by ignoring target contradictions and opportunities for local collaboration.

The time has come for creative experimentation and intellectual framing of the management challenge. Public agencies require leadership by political appointees and senior public managers alike; there are many leadership tasks to be undertaken. Many years ago, Blunt (1990) stated that the “imperative is to institutionalize planning at all levels of management, so that it becomes a prime element of every manager’s work.” The challenge is doing so at the highest levels. First, ministerial leadership is needed that focuses on a small but salient number of politically relevant priorities, and, second, public manager leadership is needed that develops and executes strategic plans in all divisions, subject to political accountability from ministers. Agency leadership is distributed in nature and requires an assessment of whether it is sufficiently occurring, hence involving greater attention to role expectations for political appointees and senior officials. Countries vary greatly in this challenge, with some having weakly developed political institutions (e.g., Bangladesh) and others having challenges of administrative leadership (e.g., Papua New Guinea). Among the greatest challenges and frontiers in public administration today is finding a way to increase leadership at the top of agencies that ensures leadership for all agency programs.

CONCLUSION

This article focuses on HRM tasks and expertise for development contexts. Drawing heavily on research from this journal, research shows HRM practices that promote merit and professionalism are associated with increased performance. Studies show distinctive “technical” HRM expertise for development dealing with decentralization, matching of performance objectives with staffing, integration of ethnic groups, and training. It also shows critical roles in corruption control but notes unanswered questions around HRM leadership, including commitment to ensuring the integrity of HRM processes themselves. Frontier opportunities are identified in SHRM areas of leadership development and selection, talent management, workforce engagement, and ensuring leadership arrangements at the top of agencies. In line agencies as well as at the center, HRM has leadership roles to play in ensuring progress towards development objectives.

An important question concerns the capacity and appropriateness for adapting these approaches. Concerns are voiced about donors pushing upon countries best practices that do not fit the context (e.g., Andrews, 2012). By

and large, the HRM strategies discussed here require administrative leadership that takes excellence seriously, over convenience and precedent, say. These strategies are surely not expensive in terms of resourcing, nor do they impose unfit processes, but increased attention to integrity over “common practice” is surely not always convenient, nor is promotion based on demonstrated performance over seniority. Leaders need to recognize the short-term and long-term benefits of these measures, including HRM officials ensuring the integrity of HRM processes and connecting HRM to state capacity and performance. Successful strategies are found in many jurisdictions, large and small, and better understanding is needed about the conditions that allow for such reform. It is evident that countries better meet their development objectives when they have a more able and effectively performing civil service.

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