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Is there Something as an Ex-Yugoslavian HRM Model? – Sticking to the Socialist Heritage or Converging With Neoliberal Practices

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Abstract

The question of this paper is whether there is an ex-Yugoslavia HRM model drawing upon Western imported features fused with ethno open-socialistic and self-management elements? In the empirical part Cranet data for 341 companies from Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia are analysed. Main characteristics of HRM systems in ex-Yugoslavia are: the HRM strategic partner role is still neglected, the mind-set of taking care for everybody is omnipresent, the value of performance management is not fully entrusted, the full-time employment still predominates, and the trade unions retained their bargaining power. Although 30 indicators revealed specifics of ex-Yugoslavia HRM model, the theorized hybrid HRM system was not disclosed.

Key words: human resource management (HRM), ex-Yugoslavia HRM model, CRANET data, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia

Introduction

Researchers believe that the distinctive transition routes and development trajectories that have occurred in the transition economies resulted in differences in the way human resource management (HRM) is conceptualized, institutionalized and practiced in those countries (Brewster et al., 2010; Morley et al., 2012). In some post-transition countries, HRM practices have come close to the neoliberal, Western HRM, such as in Czech Republic (Tung & Havlovic, 1996) or Slovenia (Kohont et al., 2015b). In some countries personnel management (PM) philosophy with high trade unions density is still present, for example in Bulgaria (Gurkov et al., 2012) or Serbia (Bogićević Milikić et al., 2008). Some countries have mixed HRM practices – world-class high performance HRM practices in some enterprises and “black holes”¹ in others, as for example Croatia (Pološki Vokić & Vidović, 2007) or Russia (Gurkov et al., 2012).

¹ A “black hole” is a situation when neither trade unions nor HRM is taking care of employees (Guest & Conway, 1999).

However, as the transition process, encompassing liberalization, privatization and restructuring of enterprises, increased foreign direct investment (FDI), macroeconomic stabilization and other legal and institutional reforms, has still not finished in many ex-socialist countries, a question emerges: Is there a directional and final convergence of HRM systems in those countries toward Western principles, or do new models, which combine the socialist platform with the Western high performance working practices (HPWP), emerge?

Among the potential “crossvergence” post-transition HRM models, especially feasible one, and a domain of this paper, is the ex-Yugoslavia HRM model. Yugoslavia was more open and liberal than other socialist countries, and therefore closer to Western, capitalistic principles of living and working. Yugoslavian citizens, compared to others in the Soviet bloc, were freer to cross borders both for travel and work, there was less media blockade, private ownership was allowed, and FDIs were possible 1960s onwards. As well, Yugoslavia was exceptional because of applying “workers’ self-management” (management by workers). Lastly, like other ex-socialist countries, Yugoslavia started with the transition process from a planned to an open market economy in 1990s, importing Western capitalistic management and HRM models. Consequently, the research question of this paper is: Can we talk about the ex-Yugoslavia HRM model? The purpose of the study, as suggested by Morley et al. (2012), is to find evidence of a hybrid HRM system drawing upon Western imported features fused with ethno open-socialistic and self-management elements typical for ex-Yugoslavia.

In the theoretical part of the paper, first the shared personnel/HRM characteristics in Central and Eastern European (CEE) socialist, later transition countries are described. Second, the two phases of personnel/HRM practices in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, the most influential states in ex-Yugoslavia since the World War II are described: (1) the administrative phase, from WW2 till 1990s, mutual for the three countries as they were constitutional parts of the former Yugoslavia with same political and cultural background (Bogićević Milikić et al., 2012), and (2) the transition phase, from 1990s till present, described separately for each country as Yugoslavia fell apart.

In the empirical part of the paper, in order to reveal whether there are idiosyncratic features of HRM in ex-Yugoslavia countries that combine the socialist heritage with high performance neoliberal HRM practices, Cranet² 2014-2015 data for Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia are analysed. Indicators

implying ex-Yugoslavia HRM specifics due to the socialist time relics are extracted, followed by consistency among the three countries and control variables analyses. Namely, the non-existence of differences among countries could imply that common HRM characteristics in the area exist, regardless of the pace of transition process, economic situation, EU membership or other external macroeconomic factors.

HRM in CEE Countries During the Socialist Times and the Transition Period

During the socialist era, so called “cadre” departments were typical personnel departments involved predominantly in administering people activities. The HRM function had a personnel rather than an HRM orientation (Morley et al., 2012), which resulted in the absence of clearly articulated human resource strategy (Gurkov & Zelenova, 2009 in Morley et al., 2012). However, after the fall of the socialist regimes throughout CEE, in order to respond to free market system pressures, HRM started taking hold in the discourse of management thinking and in emerging practice, began to be institutionalized, and moved from mostly administrative to more business-oriented function (Taylor & Walley, 2002; Weinstein & Obloj, 2002; Brewster et al., 2010; Bourke & Crowley, 2015). Foreign-owned companies especially contributed to the emergence of professional HRM (Svetlik et al., 2010); however, during the transition period East European HRM practices were still considered immature compared to the West (Kiriazov et al., 2000), as the transition period was characterized by years of resistance and vacuum in the personnel area (Karoliny et al., 2009).

Main characteristics of personnel/HRM philosophy and activities during the socialist/communist regimes and during the transition period in CEE countries are depicted in Table 1. As “ex-communist” European countries are referred to formerly have almost homogenous socialist HRM policies and practices (Karoliny et al., 2009), and as the majority of HRM aspects are converging in terms of the general direction of development (Gooderham et al., 2004; Karoliny et al., 2009), the table could be considered relevant for all CEE countries.

HRM in Yugoslavia Before the Transition

After WW2 and up to the end of the 1950s the personnel function in Yugoslavia was administrative in nature. The so called “personnel policy” consisted of merely employment, payment, and the assurance of employees’ social standard, and was determined by the state and implemented through

² Cranet (Cranfield Network on Comparative Human Resource Management) is an international research network established in 1989 conducting regular (approximately every four years) comparative surveys on HRM policies and practices on five continents in around 40 countries, with the aim of providing high quality data for academic and business purposes. See more at www.cranet.org.

Table 1. HRM characteristics in CEE countries during the socialist times and the transition period

Personnel / HRM elements	Personnel/HRM characteristics	
	Socialist era	Transition period
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopting the rhetoric of HRM (though limited application)
Main values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collectivism Egalitarianism, equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing strategic approach Emerging individualism
Main roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative, social, ideological 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still administrative but gradually strategic-oriented
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel ("cadre") department usually as a part of "General, law and cadre department" One of the least important departments in the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand-alone HR department Few systemic HRM plans, very little is written down
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administering hiring, firing, payroll, etc. – not only because the lack of HRM philosophy but because basic labour standards (duration of overtime, vacation time, conditions for medical leave, etc.), and highly articulated job classification system and associated pay rates were established by ministries of labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downsizing Introducing high-performance working practices (such as selective hiring, performance management and systemic training and development (T&D) programs)
Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals from the communist party permitting nepotism and corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing effective selection methods
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less attention to motivating employees to work hard because of the <i>uravnilovka</i>³ and the limited focus on the profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing various material and non-material motivation strategies
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost nonexistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoidance of the formal appraisal system Low degree of formalization of performance assessment Monitoring of managerial performance by providers of capital remains ineffective
Compensations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guaranteed wages and bonuses (regardless of productivity) Compensation funds not performance related (<i>uravnilovka</i>) Wages and the level of expenditures on non-wage benefits determined centrally by government decree or through collective bargaining The payment of a thirteenth monthly salary as the most common type of bonus (for everybody, not performance-related) A communist party ordering increased salaries for loyal party members and friends Many non-monetary benefits ((unlimited) paid sick leaves, paid leaves for the care of sick children, a lot of paid vacation days, subsidized/free meals, subsidized/free transportation, subsidized/free entertainment and recreational facilities, subsidized/free vacation trips, subsidized/free holiday accommodation, subsidized/free housing, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced wage rates High base pay Pay usually still not linked to performance Resistance to performance-based pay (especially among older workers) However, progressive usage of individually determined pay (especially in multinational companies (MNCs) with weaker trade unions) Year-end bonuses viewed as entitlements More short-term oriented incentives Employee financial participation (profit sharing, share-based schemes) introduced (even in public companies) Continuity of many non-monetary benefits (still appreciated), especially social benefits (social security particularly)
Training & development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merely basic knowledge training (hoping employees would learn the rest on the job) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in T&D
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politically-based (a communist party ordering the promotion of loyal party members) or nepotism Seniority-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More and more performance-based
Job security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High (lifetime employment) Jobs created to ensure full employment A communist party ordering the termination of contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Many redundancies (because of ownership and business restructuring) Many arbitrary layoffs because of the absence of formal performance appraisal system
Trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong trade union presence on the shop floor Responsibility for organizing social and sport events Decision-making on housing allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massive and steady decline in union density Membership remains higher amongst state sector employees, but is very low in newly established private organizations and in foreign-owned organizations (the level of collective organization is especially low in MNCs reflecting the national origins of the multinational)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production department responsible for work safety Bureaucratic approach to personnel issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The old work ethic of doing as little as possible still pervades

Developed using: Obloj (1986 after Weinstein & Obloj, 2002); Letiche (1998); Fey et al. (1999); Kiriazov et al. (2000); Taylor & Walley (2002); Weinstein & Obloj (2002); Buck et al. (2003); Martin & Cristescu-Martin (2003); Zupan & Kaše (2005); Martin (2006); Karoliny et al. (2009); Festing & Sahakians (2011); Gurkov et al. (2012); Morley et al. (2012)

³ *Uravnilovka* refers to the equal allocation of produced goods, incomes or profit among the producers, no matter of their individual contribution, position or responsibility for achieving results. Consequently, the negative effects of *uravnilovka* are lack of motivation, initiative and innovativeness, as well as unwillingness to learn.

legislation. The main action of the personnel function was to recruit employees for key positions who were not only professionally but also politically suitable. Gasparovič (1981 in Zupan, 1999) stresses that even the director of personnel had to be politically credible, while any special training in the field was not obligatory. As well, the task of personnel managers was to bring in enough new employees from the agricultural sector to the new industrial establishments emerging because of the fast industrialization. Nevertheless, in that period, personnel departments gradually began to introduce professional methods such as work design, personnel planning and staffing, work assessment, systemic training activities (apprenticeship, probation, mentoring, scholarships and part-time learning), promoting safety at work, and employee social assistance (Kohont et al., 2015b). However, the personnel function remained rather rudimentary compared to other business functions and played a subordinate role (Svetlik et al., 2010).

A unique feature of the personnel function in Yugoslavia was its development within the framework of self-management system, which was initiated in 1950 when the country left the Soviet bloc. The self-management introduced a formal delegation of power to workers introducing work councils in all enterprises – management activities were assumed to be shared between the state (represented by managers), and workers' collectives. Workers were appointing managers through elections, were autonomous in their day-to-day operations (self-directed activities), and fully participated in decision-making. However, many think that little real empowerment occurred and that self-management grew increasingly impotent (e.g. Lynn et al., 2002), as the Communist Party continued to use its political power to interfere in the way organisations were managed. Remunerations and employee relations, as well as the recruitment for top positions, were closely monitored by the Party and the heads of state (Svetlik et al., 2010).

During the 1960s industrialisation continued, but the personnel function remained rather administrative, and personnel policies stayed firmly within the hands of the state, especially after the establishment of The Republic Secretariat for Personnel Matters in each republic. The development of personnel function was stopped in the middle of 1960s, both as a consequence of a poor economic situation (high inflation and increasing foreign debts), and the failure of the 1965 reform to develop the personnel function (Možina, 1974; Kavran, 1976; Kohont et al., 2015b). However, during this period the personnel function became visible although not yet professionalized.

As a consequence of the failed economic reform and political unrest, at the beginning of 1970s Yugoslavia was seeking new ways of organising its economic and

political life. A new Constitution in 1974 and Associated Labour Law in 1976 took a new step in the development of the Yugoslav self-management system, and the right to work became a constitutionally guaranteed right. As the economy was regulated by social, rather than market principles, a full employment policy was achievable – labour costs were ignored, and downsizing was not allowed (no matter economic difficulties or technological changes), which resulted in low unemployment but high production inefficiency. Yet, out of the new Constitution arose the question of the proper organisation of personnel function, as it delegated personnel decisions to organisations themselves – questions concerning salaries, social standards, and workers' rights were increasingly resolved by enterprises' work councils and their committees. At a macro level, personnel policies were formally defined through so-called "social agreements" with "self-managed communities of interest" (associations of stakeholders interested in a well-functioning employment system) organised on a local, regional or state level. Nevertheless, the personnel function was still administrative (and most often organized in one department together with the legal function), and the education, expertise and role of personnel officers in decision making about personnel matters relatively weak (Kavran, 1976; Svetlik et al., 1980; Brekić, 1983; Svetlik et al., 2010).

In the 1980s, Yugoslavia was facing an inability to pay back foreign debts and enterprises were forced to cut costs. Many personnel activities were abolished or reduced (especially new employments, in-house training, and part-time study support). As well, the personnel field remained highly regulated by laws that defined employment, redeployment, payment and training of employees (Kohont et al., 2015b).

Altogether, it can be summarized that in Former Yugoslavia, HRM policies and practices were determined by the state and implemented through legislation, and the personnel function was regarded as administrative and useless, except for recruiting professional but also politically suitable employees for key positions (Svetlik et al., 2010). More to it, managers and employees were rewarded for conforming rather than for performing, and managers' efforts and skills were focused more on pleasing superior than on profitability or customer service (Svetlik et al., 2010).¹

HRM in Croatia Since the 1990

Two phases of HRM development in Croatia in the transition period could be identified: (1) the "HRM awakening phase"

from the end of the War for Independence around 1993 till 2000, and (2) the “golden HRM age” from 2000 till present.

The HRM awakening phase – Before 2000nds, there is little evidence of the HRM philosophy being embedded in Croatian organizations, especially in public sector organizations (Marušić, 1999; Taylor & Walley, 2002; Pološki Vokić, 2004), but many examples of resistance to and poor implementation of new practices such that they were demotivating (Taylor & Walley, 2002). However, numerous examples of HPWP were being introduced, such as effective recruitment, performance appraisal, performance related pay, systemic T&D, and mentoring, often associated with foreign-owned and “high tech” sector companies (Taylor & Walley, 2002).

The golden HRM age – 2000nds brought a progressive development in HRM practices that benefited organizations, their employees, and HRM professionals (as their competences are now in demand in the labour market). Especially foreign organisations operating on the Croatian market have greatly contributed to the widespread use of modern HRM practice (Svetlik et al., 2010). However, although the field is exponentially advancing, in general surveys revealed that the

strategic component of HRM is not fully developed – formal HRM strategies are still not omnipresent, HRM managers are not always top management members, performance management principles should be more widely applied, T&D investments should be greater, and trade unions still interfere in HRM activities and are therefore slowing down needed changes (e.g. Pološki Vokić & Vidović, 2007; Pološki Vokić, 2014; Pološki Vokić et al., 2015).

The major HRM researches conducted in Croatia in the transition and post-transition period and their main conclusion are depicted in Table 2.

HRM in Slovenia Since the 1990s

With 1991 independence, Slovenia lost many former Yugoslav and Eastern European markets, and had to find new markets for which the quality of products and services had to be raised, a cost effective production achieved, the new technology introduced, and redundant workers laid-off. The role of personnel departments in this process was very

Table 2. HRM in Croatia in the transition and post-transition period

Research	Year to which data refers	Sample size (no. of organizations)	Company size (no. of employees)	Main conclusions
The HRM awakening phase				
Marušić (1999)	1997-1998	120	300+	The majority of HRM activities are implemented in less than 50% of organizations, with systematic training and career development being present in only 37%, management development in only 23%, and motivation activities in only 16% of organizations.
Taylor & Walley (2002)	1996-2000	42	All sizes	The majority of organizations exhibit no evidence of wanting to embrace an HRM approach nor evidence of introducing new HRM policies and practices.
Pološki Vokić (2004)	2001	42 (27.6% of the population)	500+	Both quantitative indicators (indicators of human capital, turnover and absenteeism, performance appraisal, compensations and training) and qualitative indicators (HRM activities conducted and existence of HRM philosophy) imply that HRM is underdeveloped.
The golden HRM age				
Pološki Vokić & Vidović (2007)	2005	81 (14.5% of the population)	200+	Croatian organizations have significantly improved (in terms of greater presence and investments) their HRM practices, especially in the area of HR department position/influence, performance appraisal and compensations, however further improvements are needed.
Pološki Vokić (2014)	2012	41 (23.7% of the population)	500+	Croatian organizations are still not widely applying HPWP when attracting and retaining employees, nor integrating sustainable HRM practices into the employee value proposition such as financial participation, T&D or flexible work arrangements.
Pološki Vokić et al. (2015)	2014	48 (27.7% of the population)	500+	Besides the obvious global financial crisis and EU impact, many changes in HRM practices in Croatia could be attributed to the shift from the personnel to HRM philosophy, and to the HR department position heading towards the strategic partner one.

demanding, fostering the development and a greater utilisation of professional personnel methods. Major changes were seen in the personnel strategy development, better defined and standardised processes of employee reduction, and in the establishment of personnel information systems (Zupan, 1999).

As the self-management system was abolished, employees were deprived of most of their direct influence on personnel issues. On the other hand, by the end of the 1990s, the main players in the HRM field were top and line managers and HRM professionals (Kohont et al., 2015b), as well as trade unions whose influence has increased (Kohont & Poór, 2011). The personnel function acquired its specific professional status, which included special training programs for personnel managers, their own professional organizations, focused publications, etc. (Svetlik et al., 2007).

The Cranet data for Slovenia compiled in years 2001, 2004, 2008, and 2015 indicate devolution of personnel function/management in Slovenia and a shift towards HRM (Mesner-Andolšek & Štebe, 2006). It has been characterised by the increasingly strategic role of HRM in terms of the head of HR department having a place on the Board of Directors, and organisations having distinctive HRM strategies. However, it has also been observed that the responsibility for HRM decisions and tasks has shifted from HR departments to line managers, and that the number of employees in HR departments is shrinking as organisations partially outsource their HRM services. Although there was a big shift towards internalization between 2004 and 2014, the increased utilisation of HRM market services can still be observed by comparing data for 2001, 2008, and 2015 (Kohont et al., 2015a).

HRM in Serbia Since the 1990

Besides the effects of economic, political and social crises of the 1990s, the characteristics of the national culture (high power distance and uncertainty avoidance, explicit individualistic and feminine values) make it difficult to implement Western management techniques in Serbia.

In middle 2000nds, the HRM concept, as such, still did not exist in Serbian companies, although a growing number of companies were introducing HR departments (Bogićević Milikić et al., 2008). Most HR departments have limited functions – usually performing administrative tasks without a real strategic involvement. HRM responsibilities were formally a line managers' authority, but the factual responsibility was, indeed, in top managers' hands (Leković & Štangl Šušnjar, 2009), true also for Serbian subsidiaries of MNCs (Szlávicz et al., 2015).

The main characteristics of HRM in Serbia in the 2000nds were (Bogićević Milikić et al., 2012): (1) a strategic orientation of HRM still not fully present; (2) a lack of professional competence of HR department head, since mostly recruited from non-personnel positions; (3) a rare use of external providers for various HRM services; (4) the greater role of line managers in HRM not present because of the over-employment in HR departments; and (5) the individual forms of interaction and representation not present. The Cranet data underline that in 2014 the HRM function in Serbia had a more strategic but still moderate role, as the majority of companies did not have a general HRM strategy, and line managers still had a primary responsibility for main HRM decisions like pay and benefits, T&D, etc. (Leković et al., 2015). Expectedly, organizations that had more developed strategic HRM practices had better organizational performance indicators like productivity, profitability, and taking care of environmental matters (Slavić & Berber, 2015).

Expected HRM Specifics in Ex-Yugoslavia Countries

As the Yugoslav system was more market-oriented and open towards the West, and was applying workers' self-management, people practices encompassed more than administrative and legal issues even in the pre-transition period (Zupan & Kaše, 2005). However, as organizations in three ex-Yugoslavia countries have operated under the communist model for more than four decades, a certain remaining of a socialist platform could be expected. Namely, HRM systems in CEE have been proven to reflect national cultures, values and traditions (Karoliny et al., 2009; Morley et al., 2012), the level of industrialization and economic development (Tung & Havlovic, 1996; Bogićević Milikić et al., 2012), the EU accession (Martin, 2006), the role of state and trade unions (Zupan & Kaše, 2005), as well as a socialist inheritance (Martin, 2006).

The anticipated marks of a socio-cultural heritage determining HRM practices in the ex-Yugoslavia countries, as a consequence of socialist patterns (see Table 1) but as well region-specific self-management principles, are the following: HRM still not a strategic partner, human resource information system (HRIS) still not widely used, collectivistic and traditional recruitment, full-time and permanent employment, performance management systems not widely spread (including formal appraisal procedures, performance related pay, and merit-based advancement), centralized pay determination, many non-monetary benefits, profit-sharing in terms of thirteenth monthly salary, T&D activities still neglected, and still influential trade-unions.

Methodology

Instrument – In order to explore the distinctive features of HRM in ex-Yugoslavia countries, Cranet 2014-2015 data for Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia were used.² 326 HRM indicators collected through the Cranet questionnaire were studied, among which 30 implied distinctive ex-Yugoslavia features and are therefore analysed in the paper.

Sample – The sample consists of 341 companies with more than 200 employees – 152 from Croatia (44.6% of the total sample), 110 from Slovenia (32.3%) and 79 from Serbia (23.2%). Organizations which participated in the survey are heterogeneous by their size, ownership (type and national origin), and trade union density, implying no response bias (see Table 3).

Data analysis – Apart from descriptive statistics for country subsamples and a total sample (absolute and relative frequencies, mean values), the inferential statistics were used to analyse the existence of significant differences in HRM practices between countries, and to explore the effect of four control variables (organization size, type of ownership (private vs. public), national origin (domestic- vs. foreign-owned), and trade union density). For exploring differences between groups non-parametric tests for unrelated samples depending on the type of variables were performed (according to Bryman & Cramer, 2011, when the criterion variable was nominal, chi-square tests were used, while when non-categorical, Mann-Whitney U tests for comparing two groups or Kruskal-Wallis H tests for comparing three or more groups were used). Data were analysed with IBM SPSS 23.

Results

Specifics of Ex-Yugoslavia countries HRM model

In order to illustrate the characteristics of HRM model in ex-Yugoslavia countries, distinctive HRM elements have been identified. Table 4 exhibits 30 HRM indicators that enable the socialist heritage still to be recognized in three ex-Yugoslavia countries.

HR departments still do not have a strategic partner role in many organizations, as implied by around 40% of organizations where a person responsible for HRM does not have a place on the board or equivalent top executive team, 30 to 40% of organizations not having formal (written) HRM, recruitment or T&D strategy, and around 60% of organizations where the person responsible for HRM was involved in business strategy development from the outset. This is accompanied with a very low usage of HRIS, especially for employee self-service.

The collectivistic mindset typical for ex-socialist countries (e.g. Hofstede, 1991) could be recognized through the high incidence of word of mouth as a recruitment method for all three employee groups, and a third (for managers) to almost half of companies (for clericals/manuals) recognizing basic pay determination on the national/industry level.

One of the main characteristics of employment in socialist times was permanent employment, which is obviously appreciated nowadays as well – all four analysed flexible forms of employment are on average applied for less than 1 to 5 percent of employees, the proportion of older workers

Table 3. Sample profile – total and national samples

Indicator	Percentage of organizations				
	Total	Croatia	Slovenia	Serbia	
Organizational size (no. of employees)	200 to 500 employees	47.8	49.3	50.0	41.8
	500 to 1,000 employees	27.6	25.7	27.3	31.6
	more than 1,000 employees	24.6	25.0	22.7	26.6
Type of ownership	private	70.5	75.3	64.9	66.7
	public	29.5	24.7	35.1	33.3
National origin	domestic-owned	77.2	80.1	82.4	66.2
	foreign-owned	22.8	19.9	17.6	33.8
Union density	0%	13.5	13.6	5.6	20.5
	1-25%	24.9	25.8	35.2	14.1
	25-75%	44.2	43.9	56.4	33.3
	more than 75%	17.4	16.7	2.8	32.1

Note: Missing values not included.

Table 4. Typical ex-YU HRM indicators – total sample, subsamples and statistical differences

HRM indicators	Statistical differences																	
	Total		Croatia		Slovenia		Serbia		country		organization size		private vs. public		domestic- vs. foreign-owned		trade union density	
	value	p	value	p	value	p	value	p	value	p	value	p	value	p	value	p	value	p
Proportion of organizations where the person responsible for HRM does not have a place on the board or equivalent top executive team (1)	37.6	0.123	43.8	0.123	33.3	0.123	32.1	0.123	4.184	0.123	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of organisations that do not have a written HRM strategy (2)	32.2	0.005	41.0	0.005	21.5	0.005	31.6	0.005	10.431	0.005	4.362	0.113	0.103	0.748	2.648	0.104	10.472	0.015
Proportion of organisations that do not have a written recruitment strategy (3)	42.2	0.210	48.1	0.210	37.4	0.210	39.2	0.210	3.118	0.210	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of organisations where the person responsible for HRM was involved in business strategy development from the outset (5)	28.9	0.438	30.9	0.438	24.3	0.438	31.6	0.438	1.653	0.438	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of organisations where there is no self-service for HRM activities for managers (6)	67.0	0.062	73.9	0.062	61.2	0.062	62.0	0.062	5.565	0.062	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of organisations where there is no self-service for HRM activities for employees (7)	83.7	0.171	78.9	0.171	75.7	0.171	74.7	0.171	3.528	0.171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Word of mouth as recruitment method for managers (8)	41.2	0.026	49.3	0.026	45.6	0.026	29.1	0.026	7.527	0.026	7.113	0.029	10.374	0.001	0.350	0.554	4.366	0.225
Word of mouth as recruitment method for professionals (9)	56.8	0.042	64.2	0.042	58.9	0.042	45.6	0.042	6.347	0.042	5.948	0.051	11.649	0.001	0.002	0.968	5.891	0.117
Word of mouth as recruitment method for clericals/manuals (10)	62.2	0.004	71.3	0.004	62.2	0.004	48.1	0.004	10.987	0.004	2.017	0.365	26.640	0.000	1.090	0.297	9.345	0.025
Proportion of workforce on* part-time working (11)	0.70	0.000	0.47	0.000	1.37	0.000	0.27	0.000	106.372	0.000	4.193	0.123	7499.500	0.276	7149.000	0.867	16.138	0.001
Proportion of workforce on* job-share (12)	0.45	0.055	0.51	0.055	0.42	0.055	0.36	0.055	5.818	0.055	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of workforce on* temporary/casual work (13)	0.83	0.000	0.65	0.000	0.68	0.000	1.35	0.000	20.946	0.000	0.737	0.692	8214.500	0.712	7361.000	0.937	5.694	0.127
Proportion of workforce on* teleworking (14)	0.24	0.001	0.24	0.001	0.39	0.001	0.08	0.001	13.258	0.001	0.397	0.820	8126.000	0.461	6507.000	0.024	6.211	0.102
Percentage of the annual payroll costs spent on training (15)	2.72	0.030	2.42	0.030	3.10	0.030	2.77	0.030	6.986	0.030	0.006	0.997	5435.000	0.186	4379.500	0.022	10.551	0.014
Proportion of organisations without a formal appraisal system for managers (16)	28.1	0.001	37.9	0.001	16.1	0.001	23.1	0.001	14.130	0.001	2.186	0.335	26.329	0.000	21.719	0.000	12.430	0.006
Proportion of organisations without a formal appraisal system for professionals (17)	26.5	0.000	37.7	0.000	16.3	0.000	16.7	0.000	17.860	0.000	2.887	0.236	13.042	0.000	14.452	0.000	12.865	0.005
Proportion of organisations without a formal appraisal system for clericals/manuals (18)	27.7	0.001	37.3	0.001	16.1	0.001	22.1	0.001	14.017	0.001	1.487	0.475	11.342	0.001	11.688	0.001	9.561	0.023

Table 4 – continuation. Typical ex-YU HRM indicators – total sample, subsamples and statistical differences

HRM indicators	Statistical differences														
	Total			Croatia			Slovenia			Serbia					
	value	p	country	value	p	organization size	value	p	private vs. public	value	p	domestic- vs. foreign-owned	value	p	trade union density
Proportion of managers (19)	32.6	0.000	0.000	17.390	0.000	0.904	0.201	0.904	94.545	0.000	11.985	0.001	10.179	0.017	
organizations recognizing basic pay determination on the national/industry level	40.2	0.000	0.000	29.968	0.000	0.631	0.920	0.631	67.880	0.000	14.734	0.000	12.739	0.005	
clericals/manuals (21)	48.6	0.000	0.000	34.479	0.000	0.378	1.944	0.378	41.492	0.000	8.687	0.003	21.042	0.000	
managers (22)	35.7	0.081	0.081	5.027	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
organizations with no individual performance related pay for	33.8	0.267	0.267	2.642	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
clericals/manuals (24)	37.0	0.968	0.968	0.064	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of employees 50 years old and above** (25)	3.33	0.622	0.622	0.948	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of organizations with no action programmes for older workers (aged 50 plus) in recruitment (26)	91.9	0.085	0.085	4.920	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
training (27)	85.5	0.006	0.006	10.364	0.006	0.566	1.140	0.566	0.760	0.383	0.103	0.749	3.239	0.356	
Proportion of employees that are members of a trade union** (28)	3.80	0.031	0.031	6.929	0.031	0.984	0.033	0.984	5240.000	0.000	5469.500	0.029	-	-	-
Proportion of organizations recognizing trade unions for the purpose of collective bargaining (29)	77.0	0.018	0.018	8.060	0.018	0.160	3.667	0.160	27.470	0.000	2.174	0.140	144.740	0.000	
Extent to which trade unions influence organization (0 = "not at all" to 4 = "to a very great extent") (30)	2.09	0.001	0.001	14.838	0.001	0.420	1.733	0.420	6182.000	0.000	7325.500	0.298	155.923	0.000	

Notes: Indicators' numbers provided in brackets.

* Respondents evaluated on the scale: 0 = not used, 1 = 1-5%, 2 = 6-10%, 3 = 11-15%, 4 = 16-20%, 5 = 21-50%, 6 = >50%

** Respondents evaluated on the scale: 1 = 0%, 2 = 1-10%, 3 = 11-25%, 4 = 26-50%, 5 = 51-75%, 6 = 76-100%.

Statistically significant differences marked bold are significant on p < 0.01 level, while statistical differences marked italic are significant on p < 0.05 level.

is quite high, and action programs for recruitment or older workers' training are really rare, probably because of a high employment rate of this group.

Performance management metrics in many organizations still resemble *uravniovka* time, as around a third of organizations do not assess their employees' performance or use merit-based pay on the individual level.

Finally, trade unions continue to be influential, not only because around a quarter of employees are still trade union members, but because 77 percent of organizations are recognizing trade unions for the purpose of collective bargaining.

Differences in HRM practices among the three countries

Table 4 exhibits that 19 out of 30 HRM indicators explored are statistically significantly different among the countries.

Concerning the strategic position of HR department, statistically significant differences are visible in two out of five indicators: (1) HRM managers are most involved in business strategy development from the outset in Croatia (57.9%); and (2) Slovenian organizations most frequently have a written personnel/HRM strategy (78.5%).

The usage of word of mouth as a recruitment channel is significantly different among countries, being the most present in Croatia and the least present in Serbia for all employees group.

Statistically significant differences among countries are evident for the proportion of workforce on part-time working, on temporary/casual work, and on teleworking. The highest proportion of part-time working (1.37) and teleworking (0.39) is evident in Slovenia, and the lowest in Serbia (0.27 and 0.08), while Serbia has the highest proportion of workforce on temporary/casual work (1.35).

The percentage of the annual payroll costs spent on training is as well statistically different among countries, with Slovenian organizations investing the highest proportion of resources in human resource development (HRD) (3.10), followed by Serbia (2.77) and Croatian organizations respectively (2.42).

Differences among countries concerning the existence of employee appraisal reveal significant differences, too. Formal appraisal systems are most frequently used for all employee groups on average in Slovenia (in 83.8% of organizations) and the least in Croatia (in 62.4% of organizations).

Furthermore, organizations involve statistically significantly different in action plans for training older workers depending on a country, with Serbia having the most organizations investing in those programs (20.3%).

Finally, statistically significant differences among countries exist in the trade unions influence: (1) the proportion of employees that are members of trade unions and the perception about the extent to which trade unions influence organization are the highest in Serbia (4.09 and 2.59), and the lowest in Slovenia (3.61 and 1.83); (2) the recognition of trade unions for the purpose of collective bargaining is the highest in Slovenia (88.6%) and the lowest in Serbia (72.7%); and (3) the incidence of recognizing basic pay determination on the national/industry level is statistically significantly different.

The rest of the HRM indicators analysed did not reveal statistically significant differences among countries, although the differences on the absolute level do exist, such as: (1) Slovene organizations have the highest proportion of written recruitment and T&D strategy; (2) the highest self-service e-support for managers is present in Slovenia (in 39.8% of organizations) and for employees in Serbia (in 25.3% of organizations), (3) Croatia has the highest proportion of job-sharing, (4) the highest proportion of organizations that use individual performance related pay for managers (72.2%) and professionals (73.4%) is in Serbia, and (5) Croatia has the highest proportion of employees 50 years old and above.

Control variables impact

Nineteen HRM indicators that were revealed to be significantly different among countries were further explored from the control variables impact perspective, and the following numbers of indicators were found to be impacted: 1 by organization size, 12 by ownership type, 9 by national origin, and 12 by trade union density (see Table 4). Besides the fact that a private-public sectoral distribution and a trade union density influence HRM practices in ex-Yu organizations the most, it has to be stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between the trade union density and a sectoral distribution ($\chi^2 = 21.408$, $p = 0.000$), as trade unions are usually more active in state-owned enterprises (Ost and Weinstein, 1999).

Discussion

Common and idiosyncratic features of HRM model in ex-Yugoslavia

The last two and a half decades were a period of immense political and economic change in CEE countries (Taylor & Walley, 2002); however, it is evident that the post-communist HRM landscape is still in a transition between East and West. Although there is considerable evidence that HRM practices in European areas that were previously part of communist regimes have experienced many changes since 1990 and are still evolving (Kohont et al., 2015b), in ex-Yugoslavia countries they still hold some socialist omen. The evidence of crossvergence is strong, and in line with Bogičević Milikić et al. (2012) remark that HRM practices in ex-Yugoslavia countries will change in some aspects because of a strong need to adjust to the modern HRM, but, on the other hand, will remain the same in other areas because of the pressure of existing values coming from a national culture, which according to Morley et al. (2012) are not likely to be jettisoned in the short term. As proposed by Martin (2006), HRM systems in ex-Yugoslavia could be labelled 'transnational', since they are in a temporary, intermediary period between past and future, governed by inheritance from the social past and aspirations for a free-market future. Of course, the question about the extent and the endurance of national elements inherited from the socialist past remains.

Main characteristics of HRM systems in ex-Yugoslavia corresponding to the socialist past are: (1) the HRM strategic partner role is still neglected, (2) the mind-set of taking care for everybody is omnipresent, (3) the added value of performance management is not fully entrusted, (4) the proportion of employees in flexible forms of work is small, implying that full-time employment still predominates, and (5) trade unions retained their political and collective bargaining power. This is congruent with findings that in CEE the strategic component of HRM has so far been poorly developed (Kiriazov et al., 2000; Zupan & Kaše, 2005), that organizations try to avoid the formal appraisal system (Gurkov et al., 2012) and resist to introducing performance related pay (Kiriazov et al., 2000), and that the institutional influence of trade unions remained at a higher level (Martin & Cristescu-Martin, 2003).

However, although 30 indicators revealed specifics of ex-Yugoslavia HRM model, the theorized hybrid HRM system was not disclosed. In 63.33% of cases (19 out of 30 HRM indicators analysed) the significant differences in HRM practices among the three ex-Yugoslavia countries have been identified, implying diversity and not uniformity. Seven of those indicators could be considered indicators implying good/bad HRM practice, among which five reveal significantly better practices in Slovenia (indicators 2, 15, 16, 17, and 18

in Table 4), and two significantly better practices in Serbia (indicators 5 and 27). More to it, when looking at absolute values of 17 HRM indicators implying good/bad practice (numbers marked bold in Table 4), ten indicate better people practices in Slovenia and seven in Serbia.

Altogether, not only that it is not possible to identify a common HRM system in ex-Yugoslavia countries, but it is obvious that the most favourable HRM situations exist in Slovenia, followed by Serbia and then Croatia. Although a directional convergence of three ex-Yugoslavia countries' HRM practices toward Western ones is observable, Slovenia is a leader in that progression. Part of the reason for Slovenia's precedence is its decades-long closer link with Western Europe, higher levels of industrialization and internationalization, and 10-years EU membership. Therefore many aspects of its HRM policies and practices resemble more those of the industrialized West. Serbia's second position in terms of HRM proficiency, although not expected because compared to Serbia Croatia is economically more developed and already an EU member, is most probably a consequence of foreign-owned companies representing a third of Serbian organizations in the sample (see Table 3). Namely, it has been verified that in CEE countries foreign-owned companies are not only disseminators of good HRM practices but as well top HRM performers (Taylor & Walley, 2002; Zupan & Kaše, 2005; Martin, 2006; Karoliny et al., 2009).

Aforementioned findings could have been anticipated as previous researches provided evidence that changes in the HRM field in CEE are a consequence of different stages of economic development, cultural and political factors, and readiness for change (Kohont et al., 2015b). More to it, according to Brookes et al. (2011) different institutional factors have more explanatory power than cultural factors. Slavić et al. (2012) add that countries from a relatively homogenous region may have similar HRM practices, but the existing differences in their external and internal HRM context may predict significant divergences, too. According to Kazlauskaitė et al. (2013) CEE countries are rather heterogeneous in their HRM patterns and the region should not be taken as a uniform management model just due to the socialist heritage and transitional processes. Even Gooderham and Nordhaug (2011), based on a series of Cranet convergence studies, conclude that Europe consists of a set of distinctive HRM regimes, and that findings point to different "European models of HRM" rather than to "a European model of HRM".

Concerning the influence of control variables, it has to be mentioned that these variables are anticipated to be systematically related to the proclivity of organizations to adopt new HRM practices (Weinstein & Obloj, 2002). The number of employees is an important determinant of the adoption of HRM as marginal costs of implementing many HRM

programs decrease with the number of employees, and because larger organizations more likely need bureaucratic mechanisms that help foster procedural justice (Weinstein & Obloj, 2002). Regarding ownership (both type and national origin), private organizations and those with foreign equity participation are usually more receptive to the adoption of more sophisticated HRM principles and practices, while state-owned and domestic organizations are less likely to adopt HRM innovations (Tung & Havlovic, 1996; Weinstein & Obloj, 2002; Festing & Sahakians, 2011; Morley et al., 2012). For example, Weinstein and Obloj (2002) point that state-owned organizations score lower on HRM innovations measure than their privately-owned counterparts, and Zupan and Kaše (2005) underline that in CEE region the Western HRM models are often disseminated to the domestic sector through the subsidiaries of MNCs. Finally, trade unions are usually a conservative force slowing the introduction of new HRM programs (Weinstein & Obloj, 2002).

Limitations, managerial implications and future research

The main limitations of our research are the assumption that companies participating in the research have more developed HRM practice than those who were not ready to fill out the questionnaire, and the Cranet methodology itself. However, concerning the later, Karoliny et al. (2009) emphasize that despite the limitations of the Cranet survey,

the Cranet network contributes meaningfully both to the description and understanding of the HRM developments in a continuously growing number of countries and to the theoretical developments in comparative HRM by collecting large-scale empirical data since 1990.

There are several managerial implications of our research. First, all stakeholders' groups (local HRM managers and academics, foreign investors and HRM managers in MNCs) should be aware of the commonalities in the region coming from the socialist past. As Tayeb (1995) implies, managers and researchers in transition economies should be aware in which areas standard HRM practices can be implemented regardless of the national culture's values, and in which areas Western HRM practices should be modified and adjusted to the local conditions. Next, in order to develop a successful country-specific HRM system in Croatia, Slovenia or Serbia, managers are advised to consider elaborated characteristics of their HRM systems. Namely, knowing more about HRM in ex-Yugoslavia countries would facilitate the development of more effective business ventures in the CEE region, as an attractive FDI destination (Zupan & Kaše, 2005).

Finally, it would be interesting to compare HRM practices, especially idiosyncratic ones for the three ex-Yu countries with HRM practices in other CEE countries, but as well with HRM practices of their Western counterparts. This would exhibit the specifics of HRM model in this particular region because of its common socialist past.

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Ali obstaja post-jugoslovanski model menedžmenta človeških virov? – Oklepanje socialistične dediščine ali zблиževanje z neoliberalnimi praksami

Izvleček

V prispevku se ukvarjamo z vprašanjem, ali obstaja post-jugoslovanski model menedžmenta človeških virov (MČV), ki združuje značilnosti Zahoda z elementi etničnosti, odprtega socializma in samoupravljanja. V empiričnem delu na temelju podatkov Cranet analiziramo 341 podjetij iz Hrvaške, Slovenije in Srbije. Ključne značilnosti MČV v obravnavanih državah nekdanje Jugoslavije so: vloga MČV kot strateškega partnerja je še zanemarjena, vseprisotna je miselnost o potrebni skrbi za vse, vrednost upravljanja uspešnosti ni v celoti prepoznana, zaposlitev za polni delovni čas je prevladujoča in sindikati so obdržali pogajalsko moč. Čeprav je 30 indikatorjev pokazalo na posebnosti menedžmenta človeških virov na prostoru nekdanje Jugoslavije, teoretiziran hibridni sistem menedžmenta človeških virov ni bil razkrit.

Ključne besede: menedžment človeških virov (MČV), post-jugoslovanski model MČV, podatki CRANET, Hrvaška, Srbija, Slovenija