

AGRH September 2007

Some Trends in HRM Instruments

Empirical Studies in Europe, Switzerland, and the Swiss Public Sector

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Bern, September 2007

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Thèses principales

Thèse 1

On ne peut pas s'intéresser au seul développement **d'instruments et d'outils de GRH** sans prendre en considération **les concepts managériaux** dans lesquels ils s'intègrent. Le concept de **«durabilité»** (traduction française de sustainability) concerne bien l'ensemble des facteurs de production, même si dans cette approche, les **ressources humaines** devraient y être considérées comme un **facteur de première importance.**

Thèse 2

Une GRH durable (sustainable) est une conception de la GRH à long terme, qui vise à concilier **responsabilité sociale** et **logique économique** dans la relation aux ressources humaines. Dans cette approche, une importance particulière devra donc être accordée au **développement** et à la **rétenion** du personnel.

Thèse 3

La **performance des concepts managériaux** est fortement influencée par le **niveau** de développement des **instruments RH**. **L'articulation** entre les différents instruments est également essentielle : ces instruments devraient être à la fois **cohérents**, **consistants** et **complémentaires**. Il est toutefois probable que cette condition ne puisse pas toujours être respectée dans la réalité quotidienne des organisations.

Thèse 4

Les enquêtes auprès de **responsables RH éclairés et progressistes** sont essentielles pour continuer à développer le champ des connaissances dans la discipline académique de la GRH. En même temps, il faut aussi pouvoir **relativiser** les déclarations des responsables RH. Ces derniers peuvent être influencés par des effets de mode, par des effets de conformité sociale ou par l'efficacité des campagnes marketing de certains consultants ou de certaines sociétés de services IT.

Thèse 5

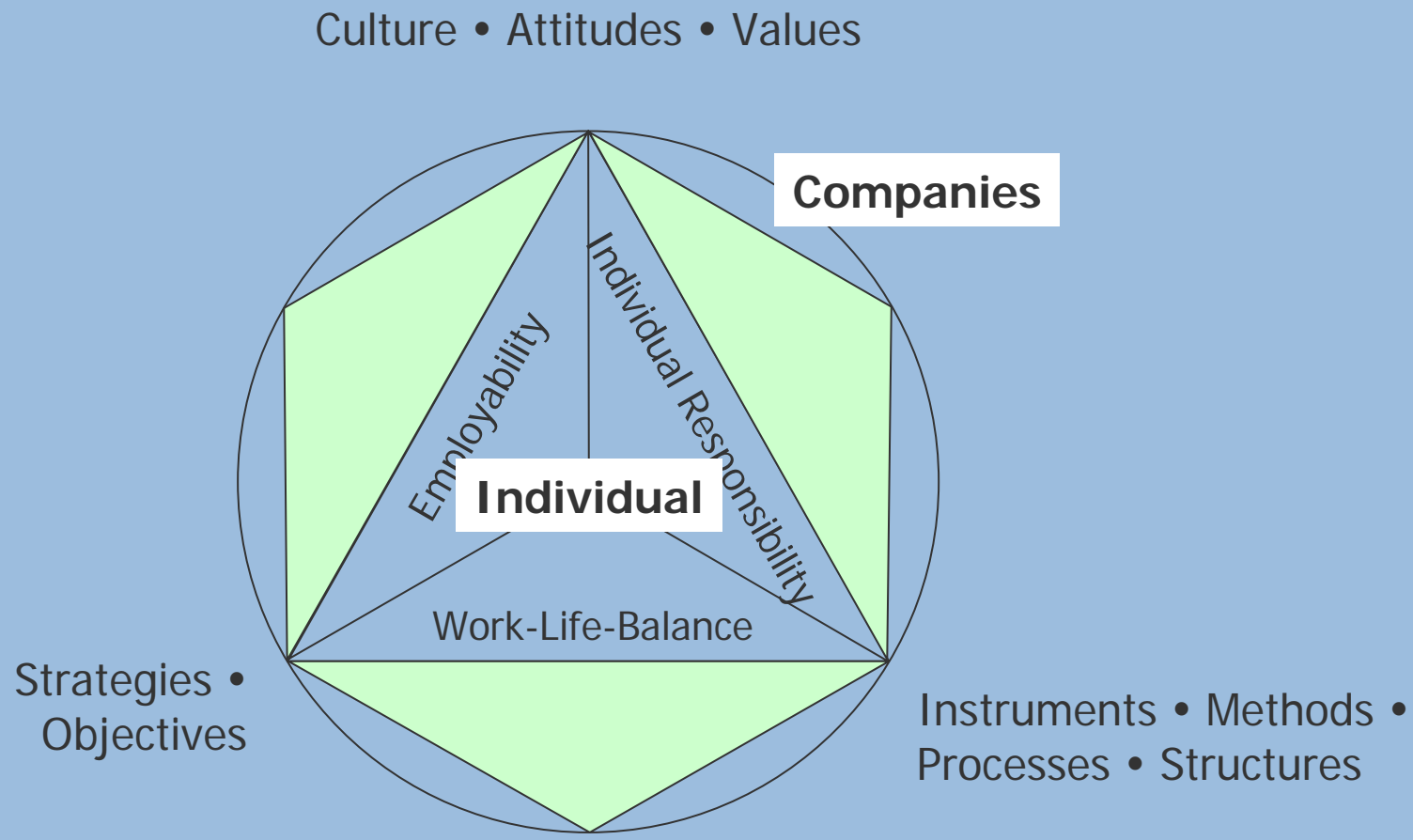
Pour continuer à développer le champ des connaissances en GRH, il est donc nécessaire de développer des **coopérations** (par exemple sous forme d'enquêtes ou d'études de cas) entre praticiens et chercheurs dans un climat de confiance. **Praticiens** et **chercheurs** ont beaucoup à apprendre les uns des autres.

2

EUROPE

Sustainability in Human Resource Management

Model of a sustainable human resource management



Three pillars of sustainability

Work-Life-Balance

♀: Growing importance of professional career

♂: Growing importance of private and family life

Individual Responsibility

Increased autonomy and self-determination in questions of professional development

Employability

Focus on continuous development and professional agility rather than specific activity

The pillars in practice

Survey of 1016 European companies. Aims:

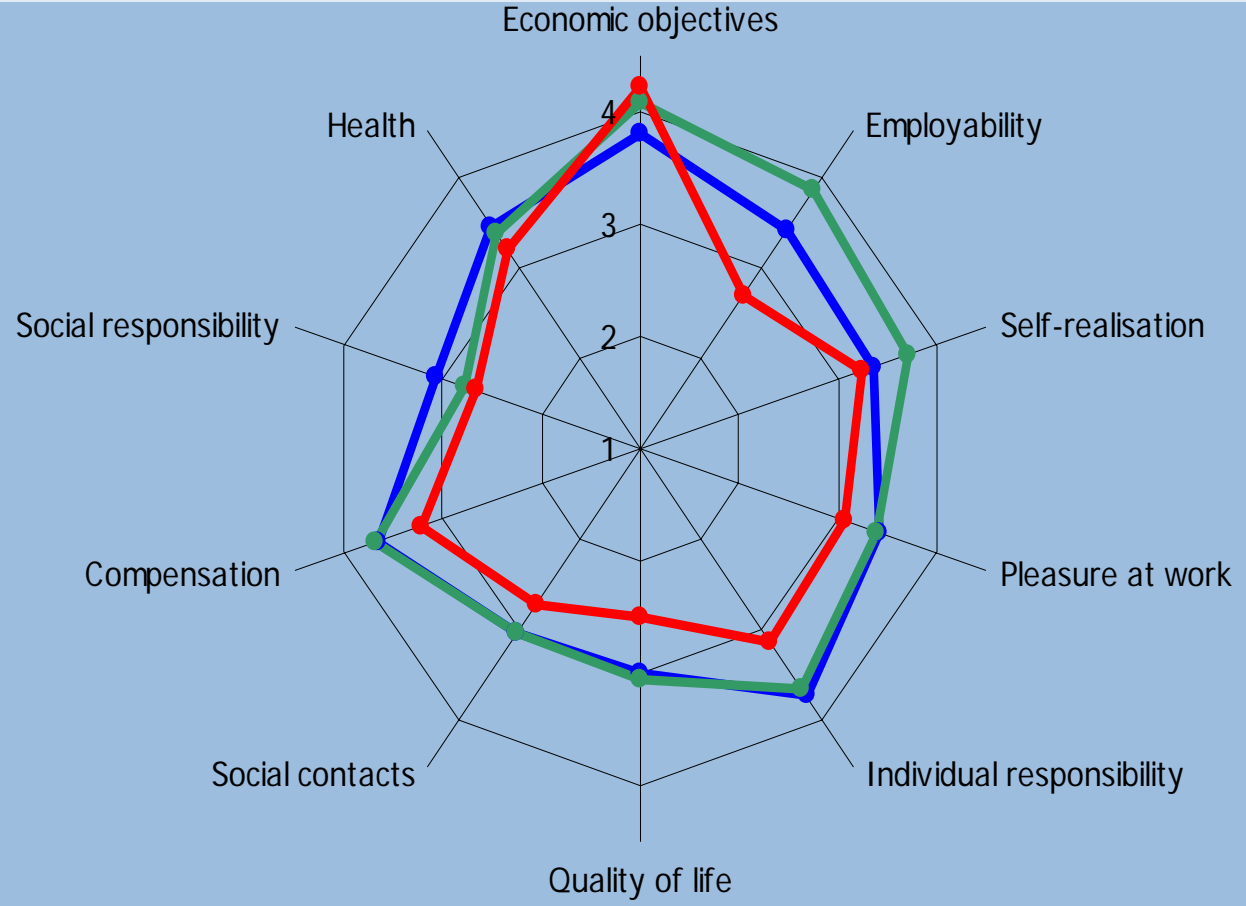
- Overview of state of the art of HRM in Europe
- Determining conception and stage of implementation of sustainable HRM in European companies
- Cross-country comparison

Sample

Country	Switzerl.		Germany		Italy		France		Spain		Netherl.		Austria		England	
	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%
Questionnaire																
Mailed Questionnaires	3020	47	500	7.8	500	7.8	500	7.8	500	7.8	500	7.8	400	6.2	500	7.8
Returned Questionnaires	749	73.7	45	4.4	81	8	42	4.1	37	3.6	37	3.6	12	1.2	13	1.3
Return rate	24.8%		9%		16.2%		8.4%		7.2%		6.8%		3%		2.6%	
Total of mailed questionnaires									6420							
Total of returned questionnaires									1016							
Total return rate									15.83%							

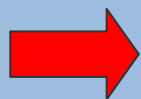
- *Sectors:* industry, service providers, trade, transport, public sector, IT, healthcare, banking, construction, insurance
- *Company size:* 40% >500 empl; 47% 50-500 empl; 13% <50 empl

Objectives of HRM in European companies



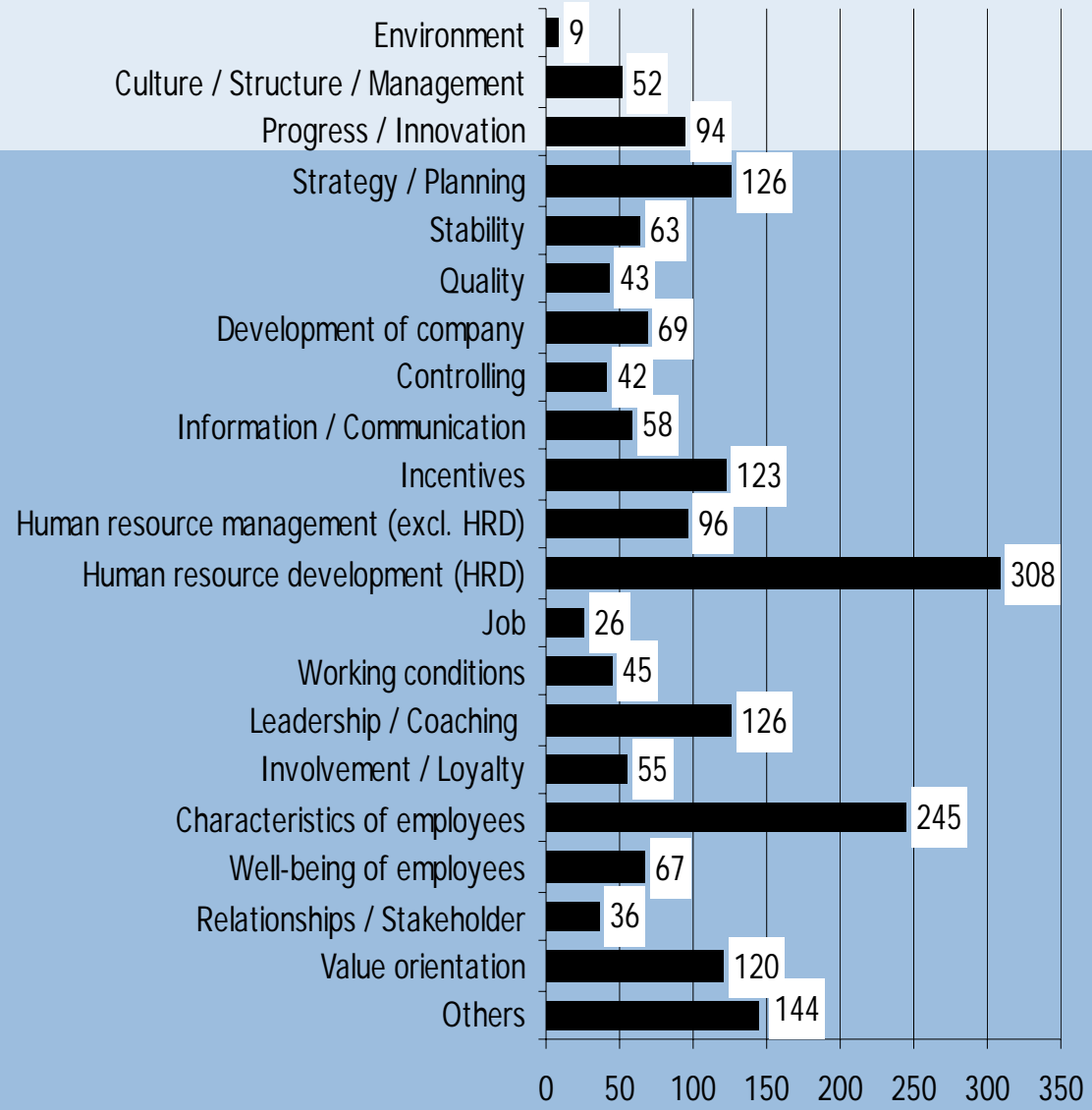
Central objectives of HRM in European companies

- Contributing to achievement of *economic objectives*
- Promoting *individual responsibility* (90% of questioned companies!)
- Ensuring adequate *pay* and promoting *employee health*
- Enhancing *employability* (strong dispersion: 68% of Dutch vs. 22% of French companies)



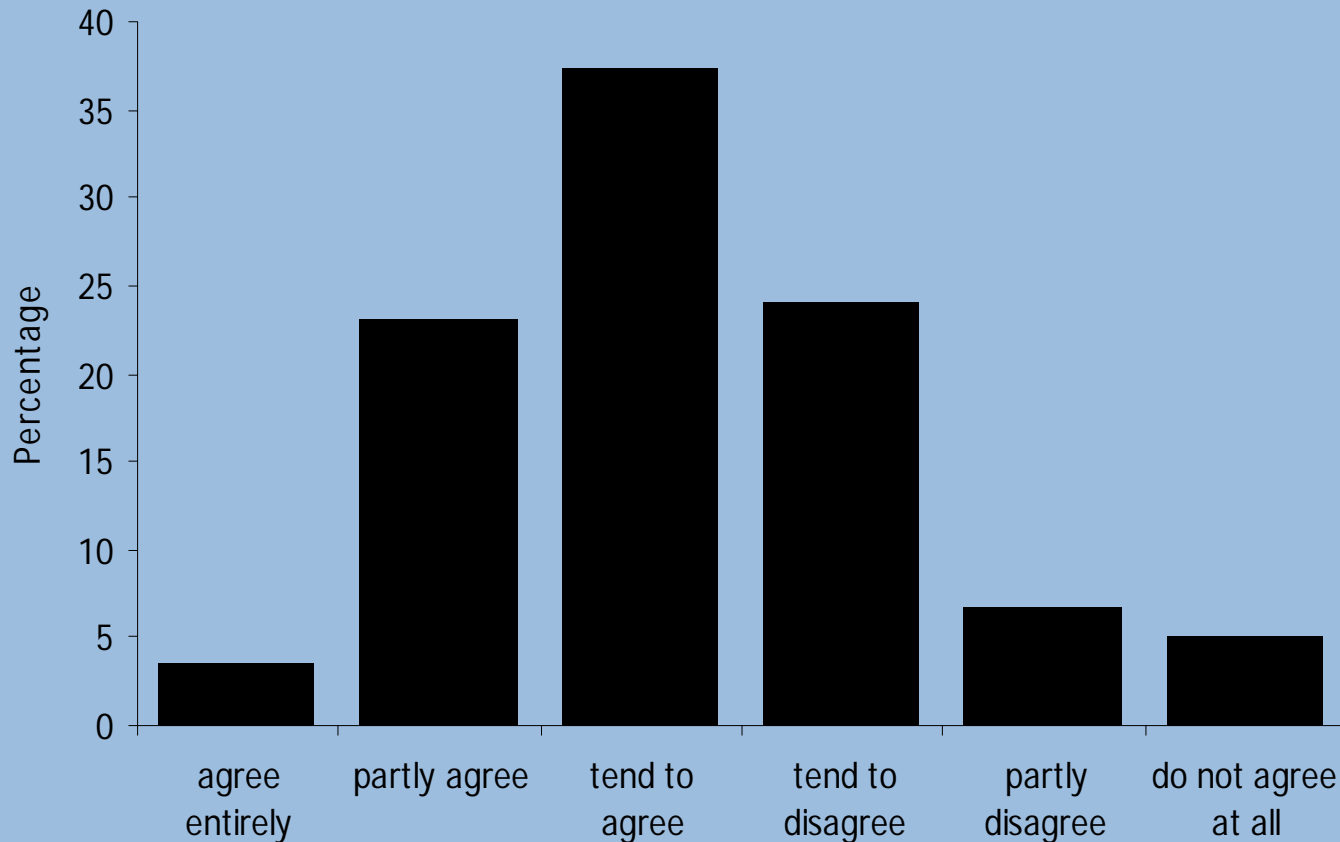
- *HRM is gaining in strategic importance.*
- *Sustainability as defined by the model is an issue.*

**Conception of sustainable HRM
in European companies:
keyword categories**



Sustainability in European companies

„I am of the opinion that our company has a particularly innovative concept for sustainable human resource management .“



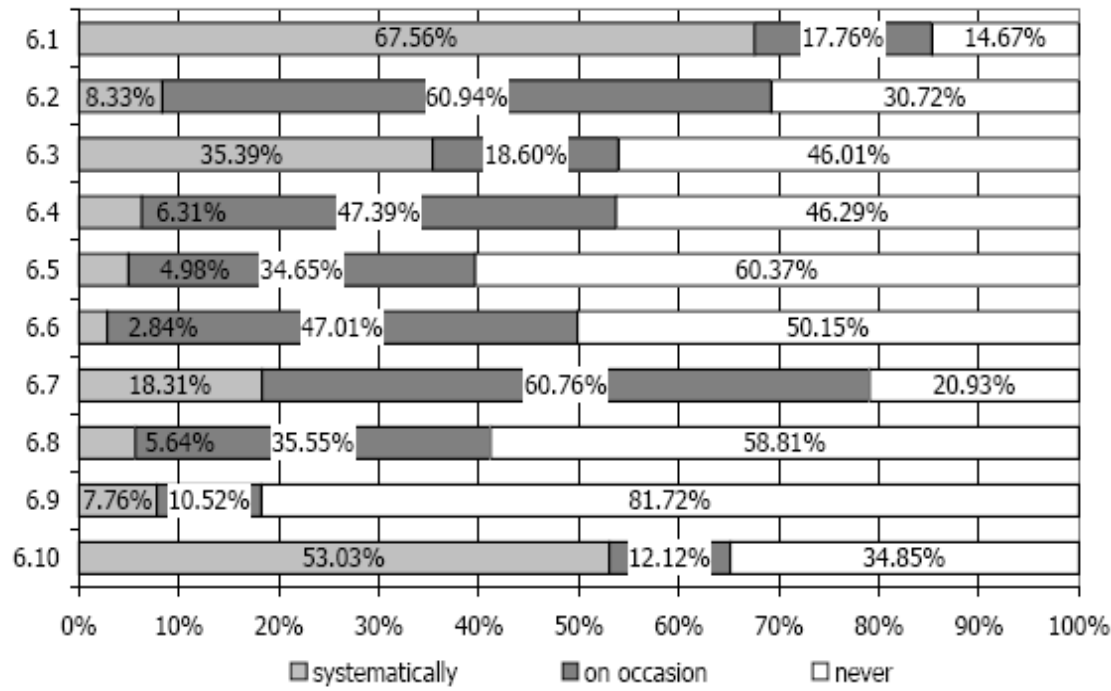
Personnel deployment: staff composition

Demographic and economic developments in Europe increase the significance of the potential of employees of advanced age.

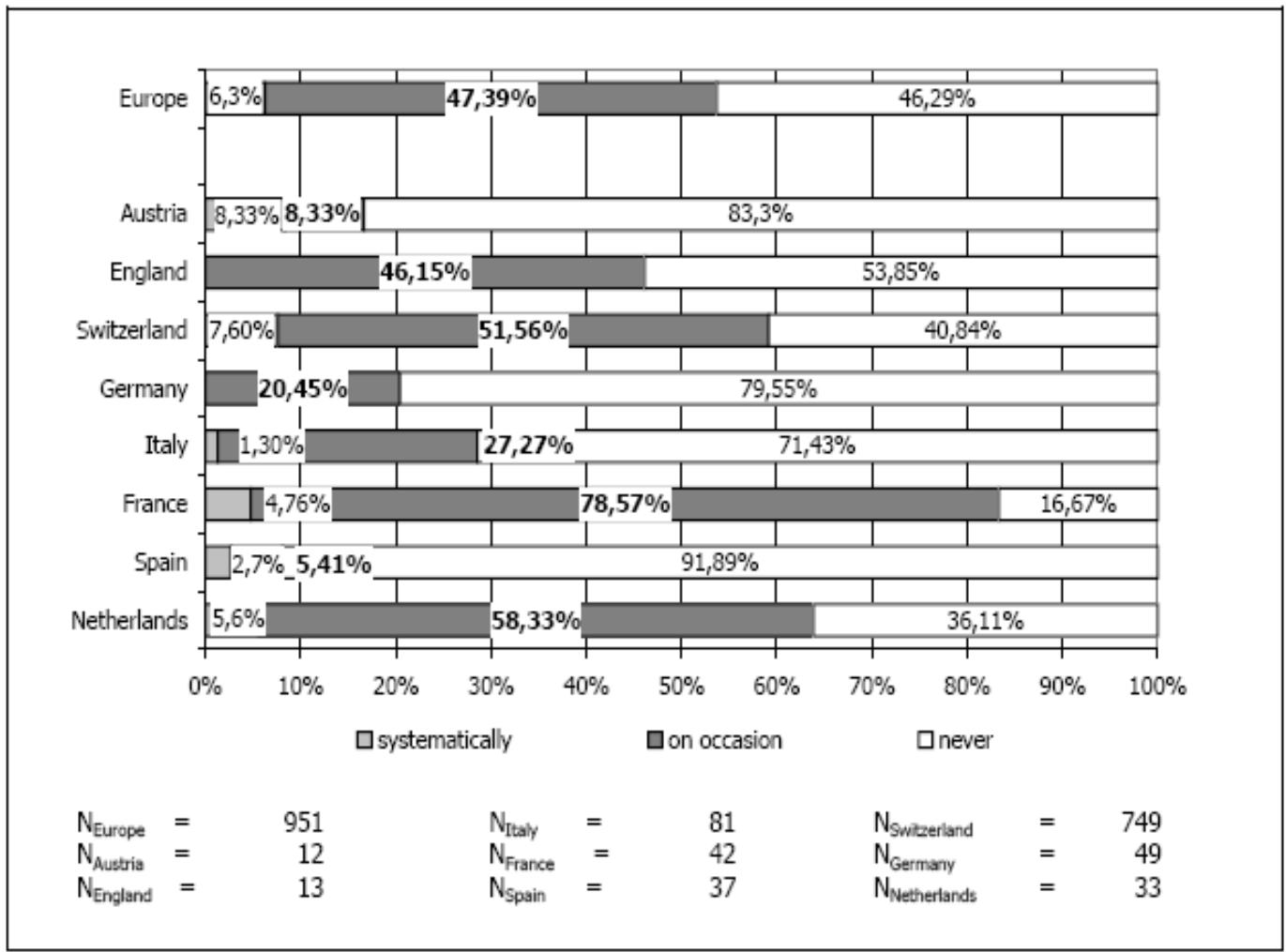
Less than 5% of questioned companies indicate that they have recognised and made efficient use of the potential of older employees!

Advanced working-time schemes in European companies

- 6.1 Flexible working hours (core working hours and flexible blocks). (N_{6,1}=1002)
- 6.2 Job sharing (two or more persons sharing the tasks of one position). (N_{6,2}=996)
- 6.3 Annual work quota (fixed number of hours to be worked per annum). (N_{6,3}=989)
- 6.4 Sabbaticals (long-term leave). (N_{6,4}=998)
- 6.5 Flexible/gradual retirement combined with the introduction of a younger employee (relay model). (N_{6,5}=984)
- 6.6 Extension of working life (employment may be continued after official retiring age). (N_{6,6}=987)
- 6.7 Shortening of working life (early retirement). (N_{6,7}=994)
- 6.8 Various forms of teleworking. (N_{6,8}=976)
- 6.9 Long-term accounts or lifetime work models (surplus working time may be accumulated and used up over several periods of years). (N_{6,9}=979)
- 6.10 Other. (N_{6,10}=626)



Sabbaticals (long-term leaves)



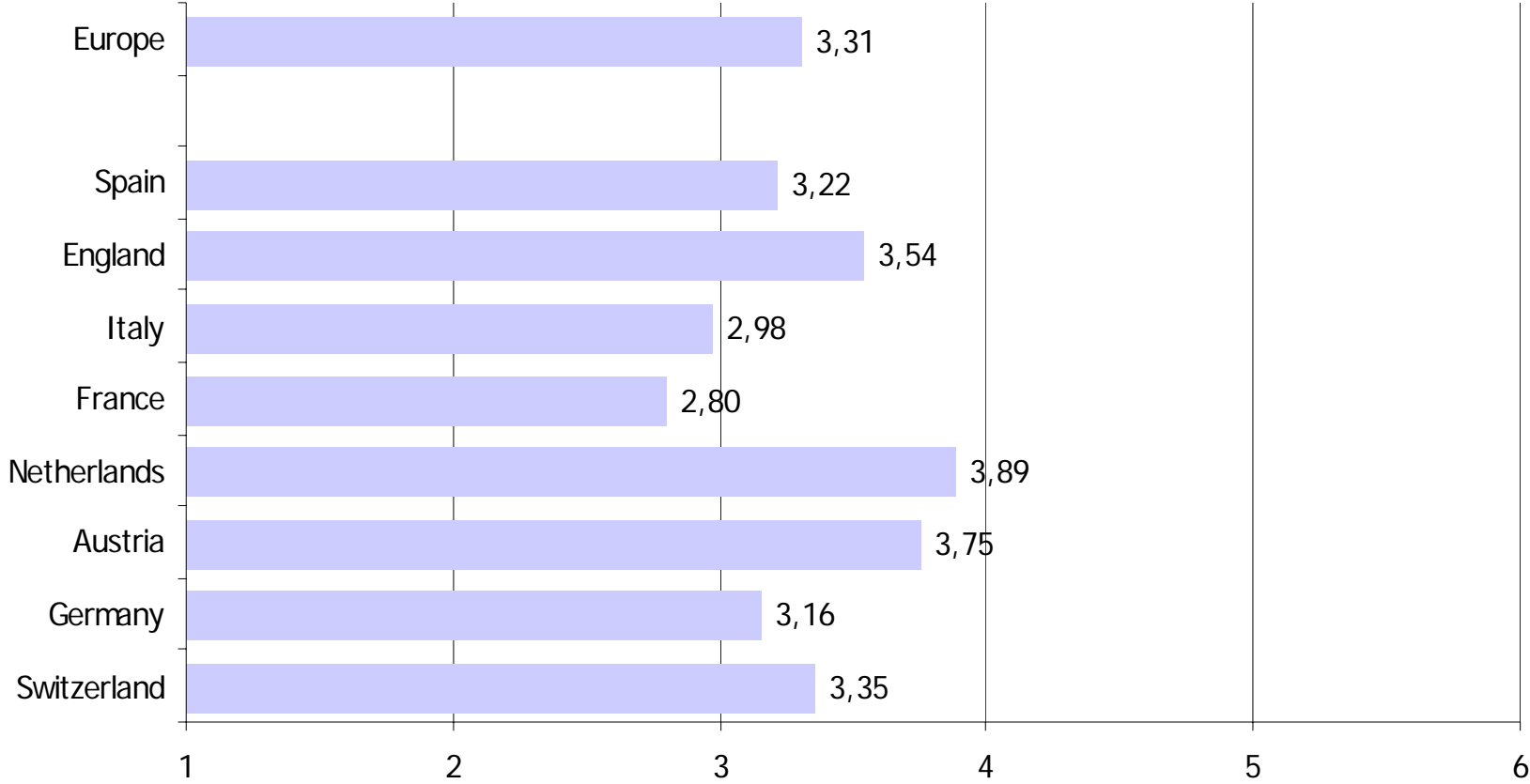
Personnel development: promoting individual responsibility

Participation and/or autonomy in decision-making and is a crucial feature of sustainable HR development.

Around half of the companies interviewed report that their employees can directly participate in important decisions. Also roughly half claim to promote individual responsibility & partial autonomy of their employees.

Individual responsibility

In our company we specifically encourage our employees to develop a sense of responsibility (e.g. by providing them with course budgets that they can administer themselves).



Personnel retention

Attractive non-material incentives are an essential element of sustainable HRM.

While around four fifths of the companies questioned claim to offer generous material incentives to their employees (compensation, fringe benefits, bonuses), 40% believe that non-material incentives are "rather not" or "not at all" attractive for employees.

Conclusions

- Sustainability in Human Resource Management is an issue in companies throughout Europe, though with local differences.
- A considerable variety of specific instruments supportive of sustainable HRM is in use. However,

these instruments so far have been implemented only with hesitation and unsystematically. Much more could and will have to be done to ensure and enhance employability, individual responsibility and a work-life-balance that does justice to the societal changes of recent decades among European workforces.

Sustainable HRM concerns both the employee and her or his employer as equal partners: it is not simply a question of better satisfying the individual needs of employees, but stands in the service of corporate competitiveness – fully in agreement with the central purpose of HRM to support the achievement of the company's economic objectives.

3

SWITZERLAND

"e" for "electronic"

Two IOP studies – PhD projects in progress

Daniel Zimmermann: Participative eHRM in Swiss Companies

Renato C. Müller: eLeadership – New Media in Personnel Management

Two IOP studies in progress

eHRM

Aims

To compile a comprehensive and systematic overview of the use of *HR portals* and *self service systems* in German Switzerland, with a focus on the design of portals and their determinants and success factors.

Two IOP studies in progress eHRM

Data collection

	Quantitative, descriptive-explorative approach	
	<i>Company survey</i>	<i>HR Bern</i>
Sample	> Layered random sampling (companies in German Switzerland, >=50 employees)	> Census (97.2% of members with registered e-mail address)
Addressees	> Top personnel managers (1 person per company)	> Club members
Approached	> By letter	> By e-mail
Processing	> Online (SSL), electronic	> Online (SSL), electronic
Response rate	> 457 (30.5%) von 1'500	> 298 (59.0%) von 500
Responses used	> 375 (25.0%)	> 230 (45.5%)

Zimmermann 2006: 8 ff.

Two IOP studies in progress eHRM

A HR portal, used as a B2E platform, is

- a *successor of the intranet*, the primordial internal electronic information medium;
- a *personalised communication and interaction platform* for employees;
- in technical terms, a *web-based application* using the internet browser to bundle corporate information, processes and applications on a common and uniform interface so as to make them available to all employees in personalised form;
- a platform that allows for web-based, timesaving and slim *processes*;
- an instrument for *decision-making* on the basis of up-to-date information.

cf. Müller 2002: 61 ff.

Two IOP studies in progress

eHRM

Self service systems

HR self service systems are HR tools based on internet technology that allow personnel departments to have employees and line managers participate in HR processes by leaving it to the employees to *administrate and update employee data*, by enabling *personnel-related workflows* to proceed interactively, and by *offering comprehensive information* from the HR department.

Two IOP studies in progress eHRM

Agents

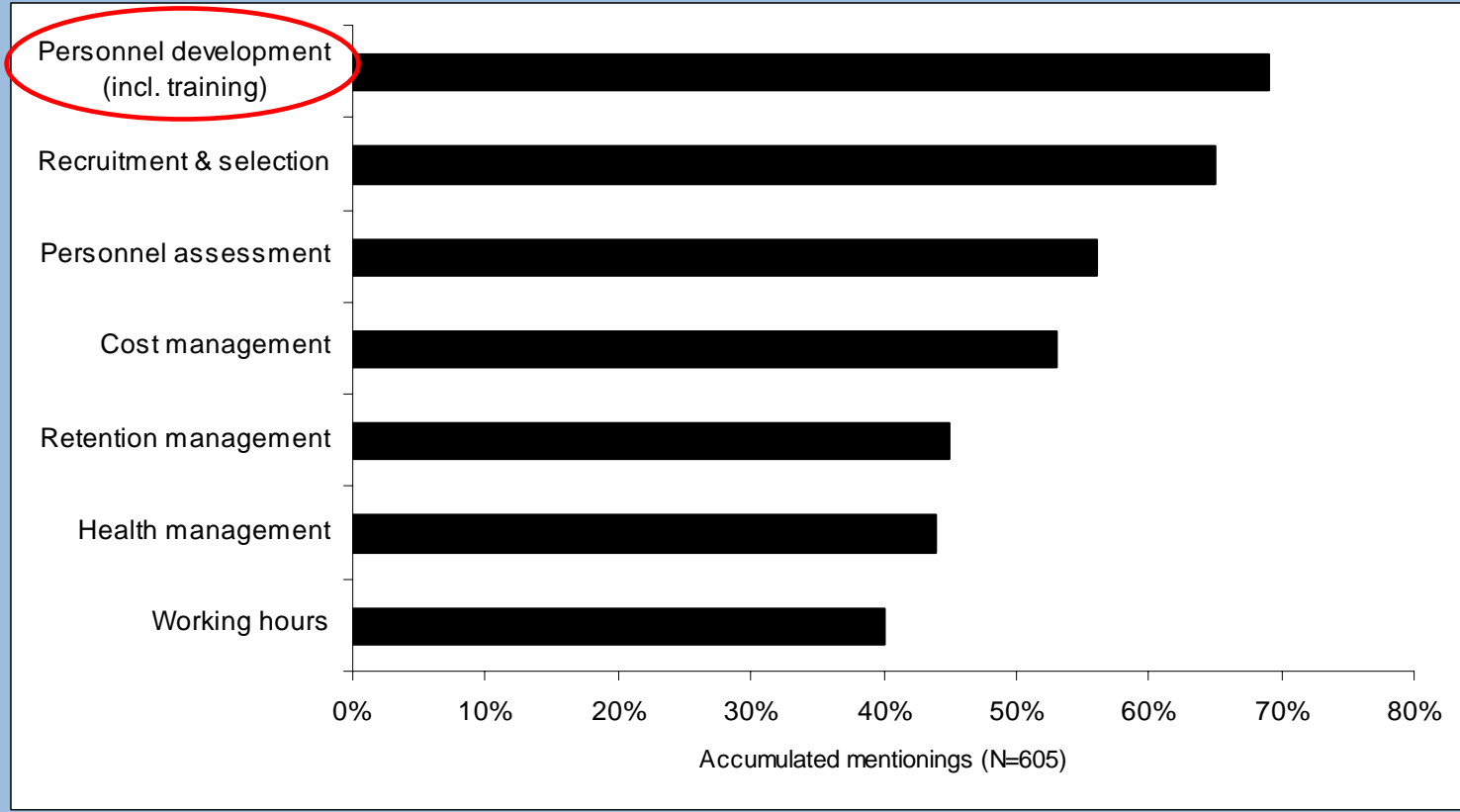
Given how labour is newly divided, the picture of a *dual responsibility* of personnel and line managers for personnel management tasks must be expanded to that of a *trilateral responsibility* shared by personnel and line managers *and the workforce* (cf. Zaugg 2005: 448).

Conclusion

Implementing self service systems and HR portals as interactive communication platforms to optimise internal processes presupposes a participative approach in HR management.

IOP eHRM study

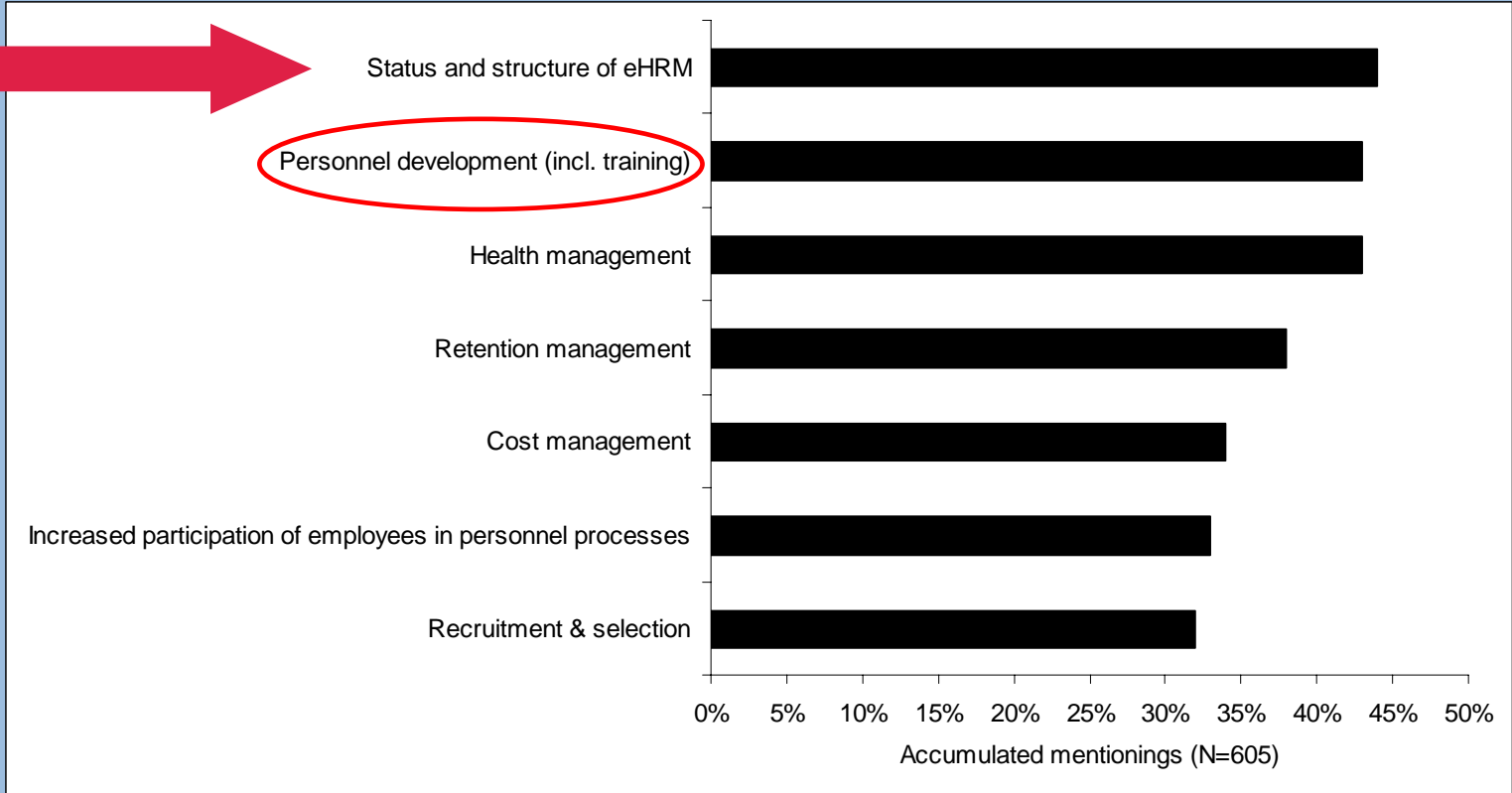
Current challenges in personnel management



(cf. Zimmermann 2006)

IOP eHRM study

Future challenges in personnel management



(cf. Zimmermann 2006)

Impact of company size on HR portal

(results of company survey only)

- A total of 69 companies (19.1 %) have a HR portal (N=361).
- 26.9 % of the surveyed large companies (> 250 employees) have HR portals, the figure for medium-sized companies (50-250 employees) is 11.1 %.

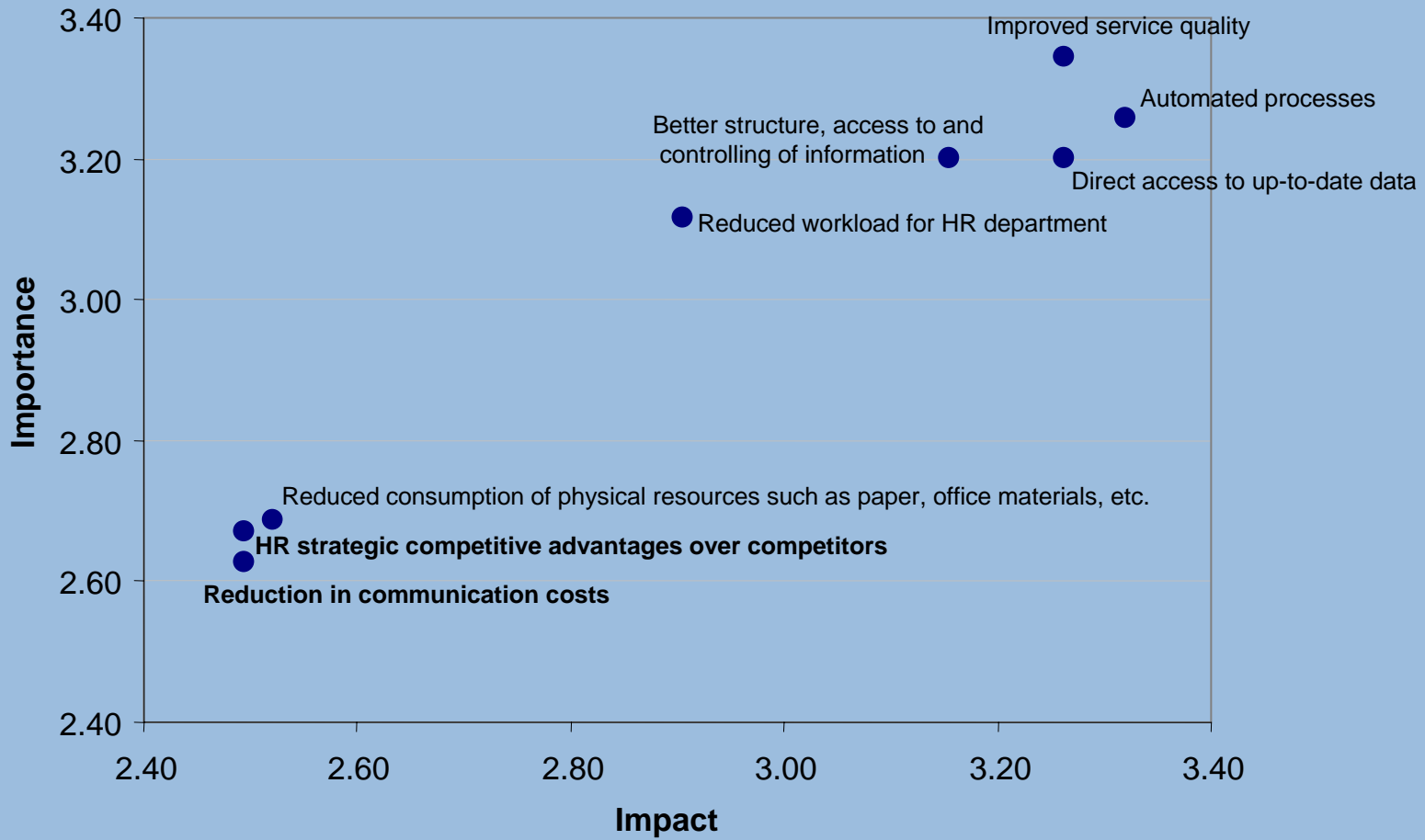
Implemented components of HR portal

(results of company survey only)

Interaction ↓	Download of forms (with maximally predefined entries)	82.4%
	Online catalogue of training & education offered	67.7%
	Internal posting of vacant jobs	65.7%
	FAQ, glossaries of jargon and abbreviations, etc.	52.9%
	Holiday management (online requests for leave, remaining holidays)	52.0%
	Working hour management (accounting, credit, sick notes)	50.0%
	Booking of training, applying for continuous education, online validation by superior, monitoring applications in process, etc.	41.2%
	Information on employment contracts and remuneration	39.2%
	Negotiation and control of objectives	37.3%
	Updating of personal data	35.3%
	Business travel (planning, application, approval, accounting)	28.4%
	E-Learning	28.4%

> N=102 (portals in use [69] + planned portals [33])

Positive effects of employee portals on HR departments and their comparative importance (averages)



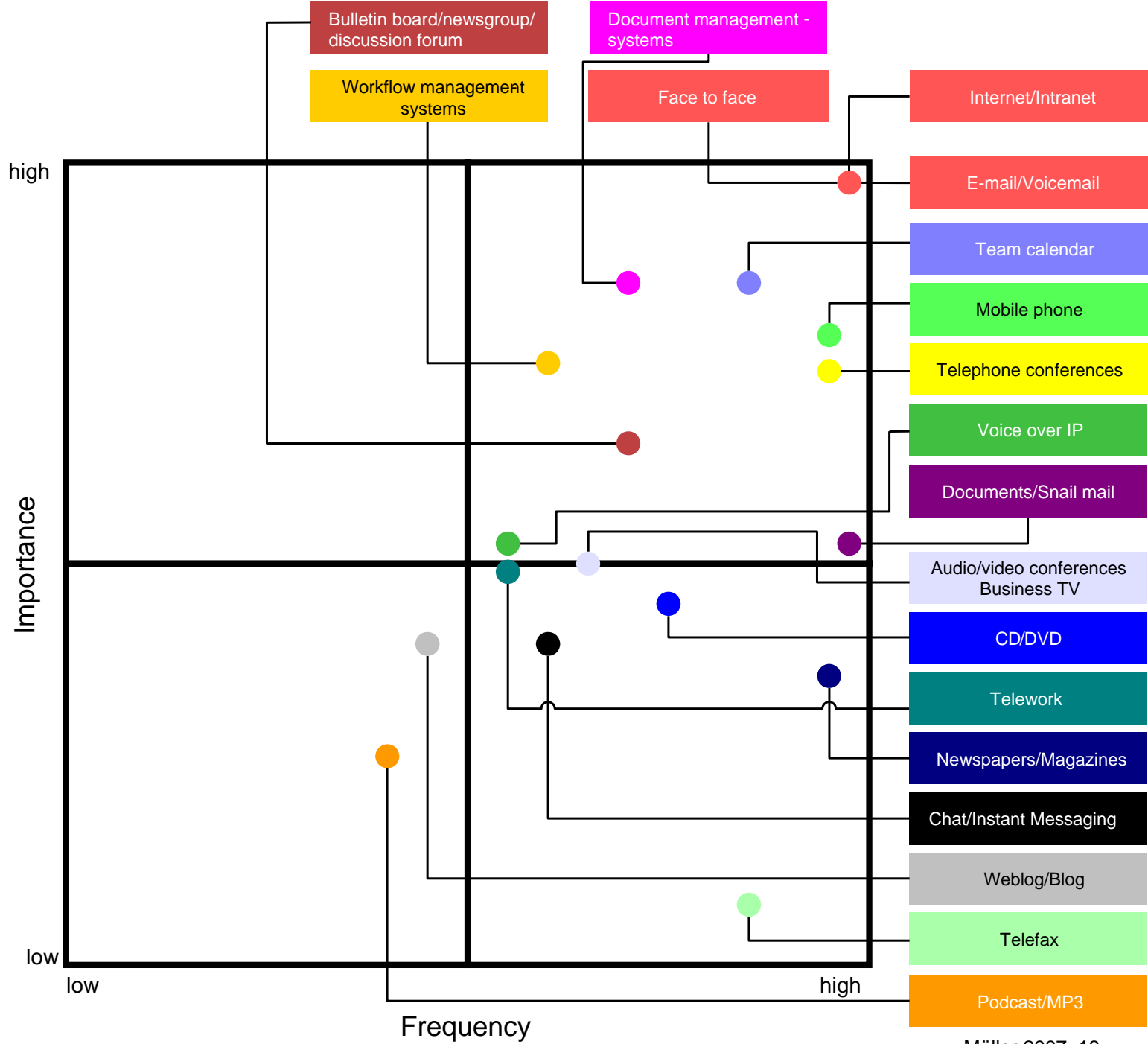
Two IOP studies in progress

eLeadership

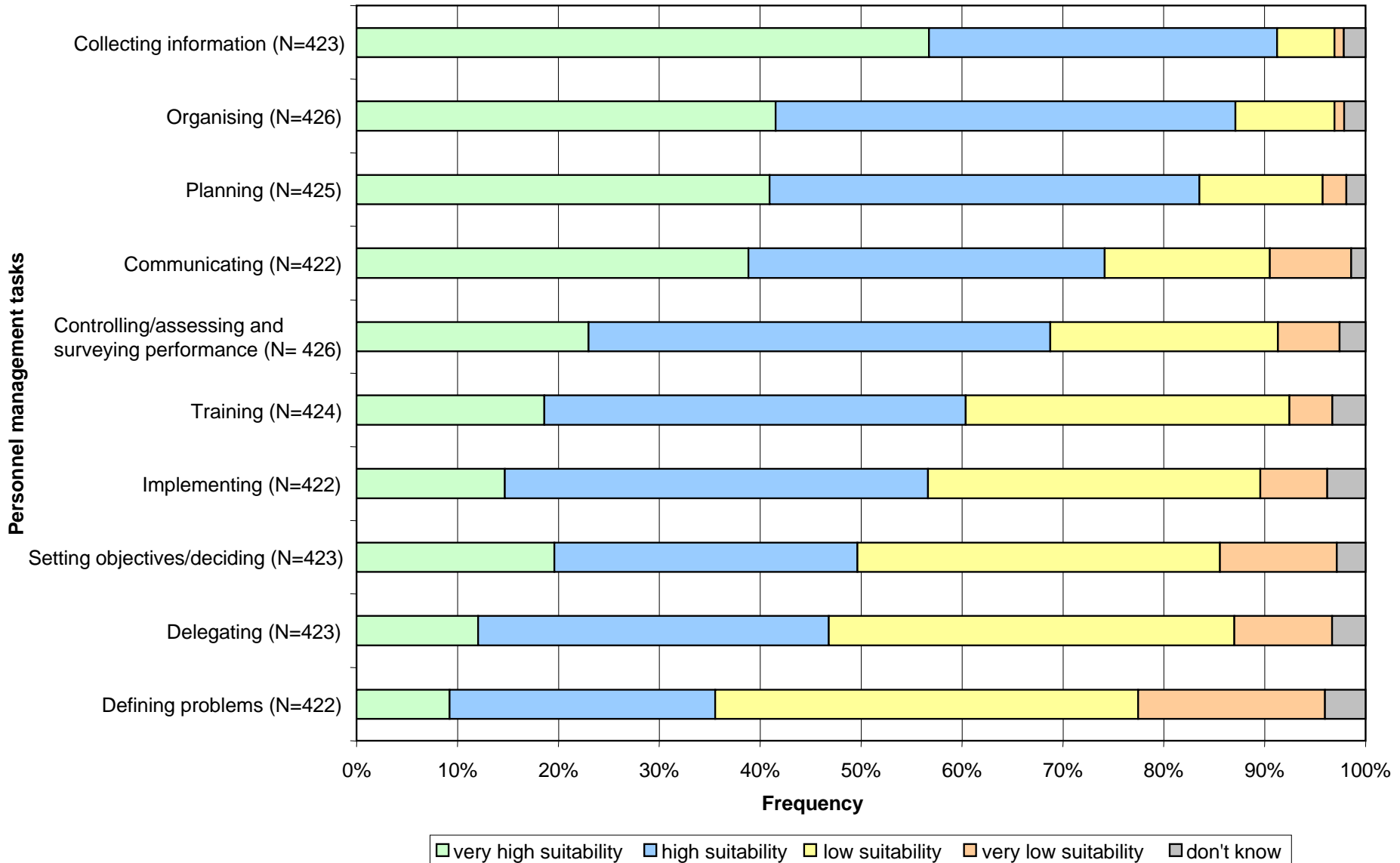
Aims

Overview on (new) media in personnel management

- Which *(new) media* are used in personnel management?
- What are the views on their *current and future importance*?
- In what areas of personnel management are new media particularly likely to be used with success?



“e”-suitability of HRM tasks



cf. Müller 2007: 27

Theses (1/2)

1. The new technologies lead to a *profound reorganisation* of personnel management (trilateral responsibility).
2. *Development and design of eHRM* is growing into a *fundamental challenge* for personnel managers.
3. The *reasons* adduced against introducing eHRM (technology, costs, company size) are *losing validity*.
4. *Interactive components* of employee portals will *grow in significance*.
5. *Personnel strategic competitive advantages* have *not yet been recognised as such or are perceived as impossible to realise*.

Theses (2/2)

6. With regard to popularity and importance, *face-to-face communication is still unmatched*. Internet/intranet and e-mail/voicemail so far are the only electronic media of similar popularity and significance.
7. For some core management functions (e.g. organisation and planning), the advantages of new media are already widely acknowledged. With regard to *genuine leadership activities* (delegating, social contacts, motivating), however, there is much less enthusiasm about electronic instruments.

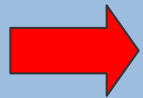
4

THE SWISS PUBLIC SECTOR

Personnel Development

IOP study on the Swiss public sector

Over the last ten years, reform projects have been launched on various administrative levels of Switzerland (confederation, cantons, municipalities).



New Public Management

In these projects, personnel development has come to play an increasingly important role, as is shown by an IOP survey that questioned 62 reform project leaders (Thom/Ritz 2000 & Thom/Ritz 2006)

Personnel development in Swiss public management projects

	Very important	Rather important	Rather unimportant	Not important	No response
Importance of PD before project launch	8.1	27.4	43.5	9.7	11.3
Importance during project	27.4	48.4	8.1	3.2	12.9
Expected importance after project completion	54.8	29.0	0.0	1.6	14.5

Percentages; n = 62 reform project leaders

(cf. Thom/Ritz 2000: 47)

Personnel development in the Swiss public sector

	Implemented	Planned	Not envisaged
Appraisal interview (n=54)	94	6	0
Assessment Center (n=45)	4	20	76
Career talk & advice (n=47)	47	32	21
Continuous education and training scheme (n=51)	76	24	0
Job enlargement (n=45)	62	25	13
Job rotation (n=44)	18	25	57
Job enrichment (n=44)	57	23	20
Specialist career (n=46)	46	28	26
Trainee programs (n=43)	16	14	70

Percentages

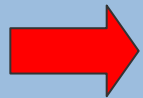
(cf. Thom/Ritz 2006: 362)

Thus...

No modernisation of public administration without sophisticated personnel development!

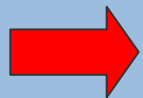
Overall conclusions (1/2)

1. Personnel development is the red thread pervading the mentioned studies.



Huge significance of PD today and in the future!

2. The instruments vary greatly in development and sophistication.



There is need for catching up in the area of instrument mastery if ambitious HR objectives are to be reached.

Overall conclusions (2/2)

3. Recommendations for future research:
 - a) *International comparisons* offer: (1) insights into different management philosophies; (2) benchmarks for the implementation and development of instruments.
 - b) *Broad surveys* (questionnaires) are not enough.
 - c) *In-depth case studies* in selected companies/public administration bodies provide a better understanding of the interconnections between VALUES, APPROACHES, and INSTRUMENTS.

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