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Article Review

Voice and Participation in the Modern Workplace: Challenges and Prospects by Purcell and Hall (2012) is an attempt to explore and analyze the emerging issue of the growing representation gap in the contemporary context of British employment market. The authors argue that trade unions remain a strong force in the British economy, especially in the public sector in some specific private sector industries. Only one fourth of the employed population, however, has access to the union representation, and there are little alternatives to these people to fix their conditions through this coverage. The point that the authors are making in their work that the lack of the union coverage is not only seen in the representation of the employees in collective bargaining, but also in resolving such issues as disciplinary, training, management plans and other matters.

The document widely discusses the challenges in building on effective non-union representation committees. One of the critical elements is the ability to build on effective communication mechanism with little or no access to external advice due to privacy issues as the consultative committee representative generally have less authority and more restricted role than their counterparts in the union. The authors identify six primary requirements for active consultation and representative committees to be effective: management openness about the strategic plans, transparency of accounts, regularity of management participation in consultative committees, representative authority to develop a “ voice” of employees, clarity of the understanding of the role of the committee and its link with the workplace, trust and cooperative environment. Finally, the discussion around

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the organization of a direct representation is supported by a brief insight into the legislator base, which supports the establishment of good practices in the area of consultation and representation.

The article is well structured and allows the reader following the development of the thought and ideas of the authors. Each separate idea is clearly isolated in the respective chapter, which discloses the issue and summarizes the studies, previously conducted with regards to the question. It should be noted, however, that there is little link or clarity of such between the need for effective regulation and the alternative representation methods themselves. The chapter suggests that the authors will shed light on the requirements for law enforcement, but the content of the same is very descriptive and does not offer any analysis of the issue. Additionally, the style and language of this chapter seem to contradict with the overall level of the technical language of the article, which makes it difficult for a regular reader, not familiar with the issue.

One of the strongest elements of the article is the conclusion, which helps to bring all the parts together and covers the fallacies of the argument formulation at the beginning of the document. The Conclusion section drives very sharp and clear conclusions with regards to each of the chapters and topics, which were touched upon in the document. Overall, the article presents current and future value for both, academic and business circles and provides good ground for further research on alternative representation methods and the challenges of the consultative committees in the near and the long-term future.