CSR AND HRM: A REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Despite increasing focus on research and practice linking CSR and HRM (CSR-HRM), a comprehensive examination of the relationship between these two constructs is yet to be undertaken. Depictions of CSR-HRM in extant literature tend to fall into two broad categories: CSR enacted though HRM (HRM practices used to involve employees in the implementation of CSR); and HRM enacted through CSR (CSR practices used to attract, retain and motivate employees). However, CSR-HRM scholars rarely explicate how they understand the connection between CSR and HRM, and what assumptions they make when exploring it. As a result, CSR-HRM scholarship tends to be ad hoc and chaotic, with negligible theoretical or conceptual development of the CSR-HRM relationship. By means of a systematic review of past and current writings linking CSR and HRM, we expose the diversity of understandings of CSR-HRM and provide a conceptual map for navigating and planning further research.
CSR AND HRM: A REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Despite increasing focus on research and practice linking corporate social responsibility (CSR) and human resource management (HRM), a comprehensive examination of the relationship between these two constructs is yet to be undertaken. Recent academic attention to internally (employee) focused CSR and ethical aspects of HRM has been paralleled by increased practitioner focus on the CSR-HRM relationship (CSR-HRM), so it is not surprising that we observe an increase in scholarly literature addressing CSR-HRM nexus (e.g., Becker, Carbo, & Langella, 2010; Preuss, Haunschild, & Matten, 2009; Shen, 2011; Westermann-Behaylo, Van Buren, & Berman, 2012). What is surprising though, and perhaps more concerning, is an absence of theoretical anchoring, conceptual framing and epistemological awareness in many of these contributions. The purpose of this paper is to remedy this situation in two ways: first, by providing an overview of the CSR-HRM field, and second by building conceptualizations that specifically addresses the CSR-HRM nexus.

Depictions of CSR-HRM in extant literature appear to fall into two broad categories: CSR enacted though HRM (HRM practices used to involve employees in the implementation of CSR; see e.g., Garavan, Heraty, Rock, & Dalton, 2010); and HRM enacted through CSR (CSR practices used to attract, retain and motivate employees; see e.g., Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschun, 2008). We undertake a systematic review to explore the nature of these assumed interpretations of CSR-HRM both conceptually and empirically. We seek to not only fill in the detail but also to see if this is the complete story. What happens if, rather than assuming that one construct is the subset, mechanism or antecedent of the other, we understand CSR-HRM as an integrated phenomenon? What would be the possible theoretical and conceptual understandings of an integrated CSR-HRM and what future might future research entail?
In order to address these questions, our research will be explained in six stages. First, we will outline previous ideas about employee participation in organizations (a precursor of HRM for CSR) and the role of reputation and values in the employment relationship (a precursor of CSR for HRM). We will then provide our understanding of systematic review method, including why and how it is suitable for a conceptual investigation such as this, followed by the details of the analysis. Our findings will provide a descriptive overview of the CSR-HRM literature that we will subsequently discuss in order to develop a conceptual overview of CSR-HRM present and future research. We will conclude by highlighting the importance and limitation of our endeavor.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRM

The role of HRM in CSR can be understood in context of a long history of employee engagement in various aspects of the organization. Terms such as engagement, involvement, participation and empowerment have been used both interchangeably and in specific ways to refer to a variety of ideas about the elicitation employees’ contribution to the firm beyond the mere supply of labor up to, and including, their involvement in the governance of the organization (Guest, 1987; Paauwe, 2009). Four approaches to employee participation identified by Dachler and Wilpert (1978) provide different non-strategic and strategic rationales for employee participation: (1) a democratic approach suggests that individuals have the right to participate in institutions that govern them; (2) a socialistic approach advocates that workers become economically liberate by participating actively and creatively in the production process, and ultimately controlling it; (3) a human development approach advises that individuals experience self-actualization and well-being through participation; and (4) a productivity and efficiency approach proposes that individual (and therefore) organizational performance is enhanced through employee participation. It is manifest that the
engagement of employee does not equate to responsible treatment of employees; that is, employee participation can be sought for strategic or non-strategic reasons (Greenwood, 2007). The first three rationales (democracy, socialism and human development) have in common a focus on interests that are non-strategic vis-à-vis the firm (human or social well-being), whilst the fourth rationale (productivity) is concerned with the interests of the organization and therefore is strategic in nature.

Employee participation is commonly enacted through HR related practices such as training, job redesign and teamwork. Indeed, HR is implicated in a number of participation based organizational fads overtime including Total Quality Management, Knowledge Management, High Performance Work Systems. For example, the introduction of Japanese style lean production work practices in the automotive industry in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s involved the introduction of a number of HR practices – teams on the shop floor, redesign of workstations and jobs, training of team leaders, introduction of industry based training and accreditation qualifications – many of which was aimed at and involved workers in production decision making and quality improvements (Welikala & Sohal, 2008). A 21st century version of HR’s role in involving employees can be seen in the use of internet technologies, including social media sites, to attract and recruit potential employees, to communicate opportunities and encourage involvement from employees, and to gather employee feedback.

Employee involvement in CSR naturally flows from an understanding of CSR as process-orientated (Maclagan, 1999). It is not necessary to have agreement of specific purposes or outcomes of CSR in order to concur that CSR is a dynamic process involving multiple parties in contesting the role of business in society. Even the narrowest definitions of CSR (e.g. legal compliance, philanthropy) implicate the involvement of employees. There are, however, a variety of rationales for this involvement: respect for persons (that managers
should recognize and attend to employee’s concern about the organization); democratic principles (given the power of corporations, employee involvement is vital to maintain democratic governance of the organization); organizational performance (involvement in CSR leads to employee identification, commitment and higher performance).

Given the centrality of employees’ involvement in CSR, and the degree to which HRM is integral to employee participation, it seems logical that employee participation in CSR would be significant to conceptualizing the CSR-HRM relationship.

**THE ROLE OF REPUTATION AND VALUES IN ATTRACTING AND MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES**

The role of CSR in HRM can be understood in context of important HR objectives such as attracting, retaining and motivating employees. It was previously noted that one of the rationales for involving employees in CSR could be to elicit stronger employee – and subsequently organizational – performance. This idea can be traced back to the earliest developments in the human relations school suggesting that employee motivation is related to social and psychological factors (Legge, 1995).

Competition for high skilled/high demand employees has led employers to position themselves as “employers of choice” based on a range of organizational factors potentially directly or indirectly related to employment *per se* (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). For some employers and employees, provision of childcare or a gym might be the key ticket item in attraction and maintenance of employment. For others, the goals and values of the organization are more important. The Body Shop, under the stewardship of Anita Roddick, set the benchmark for values based organizations, attracting employees who support the stated environmental and humanitarian values of the organization (Roddick, 1991). Employees may be attracted or motivated by an organization’s values for a number of reasons: personal
benefit (they may believe a responsible firm will treat their employees well); fulfillment of personal or social identity goals (they may identify with or wish to be identified with a particular type of organization); ideological or moral congruence (they want to do a job or work for an organization in whose goals they believe).

Whilst much CSR research and practice has been oriented to external stakeholders, there is a growing interest in the internal CSR of companies (see e.g., Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Gond, Igalens, Swaen, & El Akremi, 2011). Internal CSR is often depicted, at least in part, in terms of responsible treatment of employees. Whether such responsibility is seen as compliance with or beyond the law, and whether such responsibility is acquitted for strategic or moral intent, it remains the case that many employees would wish to work for a company they believe will treat them “responsibly”. This notion is neither new nor radical (recall paternalistic early industrialists such as Cadbury or Wedgewood) but takes a novel twist where internal CSR is linked to external CSR; external CSR could be either an indication or a contra-indication of internal CSR.

The importance of work and workplace for self-identity construction is well noted (Dutton, Roberts, & Bendar, 2010). Within social identity theory, an individual’s view of themselves, their ‘self-concept’, is constructed from multiple private and social selves, and is influenced by their membership of social organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Cooley’s (1964) term the “looking-glass self” refers to how people shape ideas of self based on other people’s perceptions of them which leads the individual to reinforce other people’s perspectives on themselves. Thus, self-identity can be viewed as a collaborative effort whereby the audience shapes the identity performance of the individual (Goffman, 1959). For many individuals, the role of employee or organizational member contributes significantly to their constructed selves. Furthermore, the impact of common values is much stronger than that of common interests on group identity formation: values have a wider and deeper effects
on people’s behavior than interests alone (Provis, 1996). Hence, identification of employees with organizations’ values has been used as a foundation for unitarist HRM policies and practices such as employee engagement, organizational commitment, goal alignment and employee motivation. In the opinion of some, HRM in and of itself is an “identity-aligning project” (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007: 719).

Many individuals seek a broader meaning in their work that will let them feel that they are contributing to the broader community (O'Donohue & Nelson, 2009). Of the three forms of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) – affective (emotional), continuance (cognitive) and normative (moral) – it is affective commitment that has been examined with regard to employee self-concept and organizational values in the form of CSR (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007). However, the reputation and values of a firm may also impact the moral commitment experienced by employees. Individuals seek to reduce ideological or moral dissonance, in a similar ways to cognitive and emotional dissonance, by constructing themselves and their lives in ways that reduce or rationalize gaps between their ideal and their actual selves.

Individuals’ desire for social identity formation and values alignment are ripe for appropriation as a form of internalized organizational control (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007). Indeed, HRM systems are partly secured through the social psychology of self-serving biases and rationales, as exemplified by performance management systems (Hoedemaekers & Keegan, 2010). Hence, espoused and/or enacted CSR may form part of an ideological psychological contract and represent a distinct inducement to elicit employee contributions and commitment (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

Social values and reputation are playing an increasingly influential role in shaping the attitudes and behavior of individuals and organizations towards the employment relationship
(O'Donohue & Nelson, 2009). It would follow that CSR’s role in HRM would be significant to the conceptualization of CSR-HRM.

**METHOD**

The goals for undertaking a comprehensive and systematic literature review were twofold: to get an overview of current research combining the fields of CSR and HRM, and to develop a framework for the conceptualizations of CSR-HRM in order to provide a grounding for theoretical development and future research. Therefore, we undertook a conceptual exploration of CSR-HRM by means of a systematic review of academic literature that specifically includes these two constructs. Systematic reviews provide the opportunity to bring to secondary research the same principles and standards that are, or should be, applied to primary research (Denyer & Neely, 2004).

In this project we (re)interpret systematic review method for use in a conceptual analysis by drawing on the method’s foundational principles rather than slavishly transplanting the method by rote. Thus, we further extend the capabilities inherent in this method to embrace conceptual analyses and post-positivist epistemologies. This differs from the traditional use of systematic review method in positivist management and organizational studies to develop an overview or meta-analysis of a specific empirical phenomena (Briner & Denyer, 2012; Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

The principles underpinning science based systematic reviews, which have been adopted by positive management research, include (1) transparency, (2) comprehensiveness and (3) reproducibility (4) theoretical derived rationale (Briner & Denyer, 2012; Leseure, Bauer, Birdi, Neely, & Denyer, 2004). For the purposes of post-positive management research, being transparent (being explicit about methodological assumptions and methodology) and comprehensiveness (trying to find as out much as possible) pose little
problem, indeed such goals can only benefit research quality (and provide rebut to critical reviewers). However, reproducibility is not necessarily possible or desirable for some research/ers. Post-positivist ontological assumptions propose that subjectivity and participation of the researcher fundamentally changes “evidence” such that results cannot be impartial and that analysis cannot be reproduced.

Thus we posit that for the broad range of epistemologies associated with our main concepts of interest (HRM and CSR), but also often for management research in general (inclusive of post-positive research), systematic reviews should comprise the following features: clear research goals; a broad and inclusive search base; clear and theoretically driven search rationale; and clear and theoretically driven approach to organizing the literature. Because of the disparate nature of the “evidence” to be collected (lack of comparability) an interpretive approach (as opposed to an aggregation or “meta-analysis” approach) to systematic reviews is most suitable. By comparing key interpretations across conceptual and qualitative studies (not to the exclusion of quantitative studies) human experience and social phenomena can be captured in their contexts (Rousseau et al., 2008).

Thus, our method combined a systematic literature review with aspects of thematic content analysis and qualitative meta-synthesis (Rousseau et al., 2008; Tranfield et al., 2003). “Realist synthesis and metasynthesis challenge the positivistic orthodoxy that surrounds contemporary approaches to research reviews, demonstrating that a synthesis can be an interpretive, inductive, hermeneutic and eclectic process” (Tranfield et al., 2003: 218).

The review comprised four steps, first we did a comprehensive and systematic search to identify and extract all the relevant literature in relation to CSR-HRM published in peer-reviewed academic journals. Second, we developed a coding template to classify the articles. Third, a content analysis of the retrieved articles, based on the codebook, was used to extract
quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, the results were interpreted and the findings meaningfully synthesized.

**Identification of Research and Selection of Studies**

The initial step comprised the identification of the relevant research. To capture previously published research in refereed academic journals from 1975 to July 2012, we used 11 EBSCO online databases. We conducted a Boolean search of these, combining one of several “CSR-terms” with one of several “HRM-terms” and repeated the search for all possible combinations. We selected options provided by EBSCO to limit the search fields to title (TI), abstract (AB), or subject terms (SU) and to search only “scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals”. Further, we did not include terms belonging to the broader field of business ethics (sometimes associated with CSR) as we were not directly interested in the ethical aspects of HRM, which is an already established literature stream (2012; special issue of Journal of Business Ethics 111 (1), 2012 ; Greenwood, 2002), but rather wanted to uncover the new empirical and theoretical developments around the social responsibility of corporations and its relation to HRM.

In addition, we did not search for sustainability and environmental issues relating to HRM. We acknowledge that there are debates around the definition and scope of CSR and its relation to the term sustainability. Some scholars subsume sustainability under the term CSR and vice versa. However, sustainability (like CSR) is a complex developing and contested construct and the inclusion would add ambiguity to our research to the degree that would dilute our original research purpose and findings. We expect that there is likely to be some

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1 Databases included for the review: Business Source Premier; EconLit ; Regional Business News; SocINDEX; ERIC; Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts; Historical Abstracts; Communication & Mass Media Complete; GreenFILE; Political Science Complete; PsycBOOKS
overlap between CSR-HRM discourse and sustainability-HRM discourse but the examination of this overlap is beyond the scope of our research (see e.g., Ehnert & Harry, 2012).

Finally, we did not include terms related to specific HRM practices, like recruitment or career development, as we are interested in the more general role of HRM in relation to CSR and not in its particular implementation practices.

The initial search was augmented with conference proceeding and unpublished work. We announced a call for working papers and unpublished manuscripts through the International Association of Business and Society (IABS), Social Issues in Management Division (AOM) and the Human Resource Division (AOM) research networks. Overall, the searches resulted in an initial database of 209 articles.

This primary list of articles was refined to account for the “tension between the statistical benefits of including a large number of primary studies and conducting high-quality reviews of fewer studies with the use of more selective methodological criteria of inclusion and exclusion” (Tranfield et al., 2003: 215). Thus, in addition to limiting our search terms, we excluded all articles where one or both terms (CSR or HRM) were interpreted differently to general understanding or were absent from the study (even though they were named in the title/abstract/search terms). This judgment was made during the content analysis of the articles undertaken separately and independently by the study’s two authors. Articles that were not clearly identifiable as included or excluded were discussed between the two researchers and a consensual decision was made.

Overall, 91 articles (41%) were disqualified from the initial database of 209. This high number of excluded articles reflects that even though aspects of CSR and HRM were included

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3 Excluded articles included short biographies of authors, bibliographies or editorial letters with no substantial discussion of CSR or HRM. We further excluded articles where CSR was an abbreviation for customer service representatives, where the main focus of the paper was on areas in management or organization research not directly related to CSR or HRM (like leadership, CEO compensation, customer satisfaction in transportation systems, marketing, etc.), and papers where HRM or CSR was only marginally touched upon. A further three articles were excluded prior to content analysis as we were unable to retrieve them however, judging from their abstracts, they were unlikely to be highly relevant for our research.
in the titles, abstract or keywords, they were not the actual focus or research question of the article (perhaps indicating an early trend or “fashion” towards CSR-HRM). The final dataset of articles relating CSR and HRM consisted of 115 articles.

**Content Analysis**

After the initial step of creating the database, we did a content analysis to retrieve relevant information from the 115 papers with regard to bibliographical data, research process and research content. We developed a codebook that allowed us to extract descriptive data as well as narratives from the articles. The development of the codebook was an iterative process. We began with categories derived from prior templates of systematic reviews, selected articles in the fields of HRM and CSR, and the authors’ prior experience and expertise. The extracted categories were amended or adjusted inductively according to the findings. An iterative approach allowed us to build on existing knowledge by using this knowledge to guide our initial research, while at the same time identifying new findings that emerged. The final codebook was formalized and used as a template for the analysis of all the articles. This helped us to retrieve descriptive data and key emerging themes around CSR-HRM.

The reliability and interpretative validity of the systematic review and the analysis of the results was ensured though several steps: structured and systematic protocols for the search, a formalized codebook, and cross-referencing and multiple rounds of coding between the two study authors. Rounds of coding were always followed up by discussions that helped creating a common understanding of the relevant categories. Areas of difference or disagreement were used as opportunities for clarifying the codebook and ensuring inter-rater agreement.
DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

The results of our research are displayed in Tables 1 and 2. They clearly show an increasing interest in the topic over time (see also Figure 1). We separated the publications into an early incubation phase from 1975 to 2000 (8%), a phase of incremental growth from 2001 to 2008 (28%), and finally, a period of rapid growth in recent years (63% of the articles were published from 2009 till 2012). Surveying the shifts in publications over this 37 year period underscores first, the surging interest in the topic and the need for research in an underexplored field. Second it also highlights the changes in the understanding of CSR-HRM over time. While early publications treated the relationship narrowly in terms of social aspects of work or discussed it with regard to the “social responsibility of business [being] a totally new phenomenon” (Bergmann, 1975: 61), with an increase in the relevance of the CSR topic both in research and practice and the broadening scope of HRM’s responsibilities over time, the relationship between the two constructs has broadened to become an interesting and fruitful area of research.

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Insert Figure 1 about here
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The final database comprised mainly research articles (72%), but also practitioner accounts on HRM-CSR (12%), and review articles or comments (9%). It is interesting that there is an interest on connections between CSR and HRM from practitioners. This emphasizes the relevance of the topic for professionals and reveals the demand for addressing the connection more thoroughly from a scholarly perspective.

Most of the research articles were empirical research articles (62%), compared to only 33% of purely conceptual manuscripts. Judging also from the few conceptual manuscripts that really address the CSR-HRM relationship in depth (6%; see Table 2), we see room for further
theoretical work. It is interesting that there are already many empirical research studies before substantial and agreed upon conceptual work has been done that could guide empirical enquires. The use of qualitative and quantitative methods is equally distributed among the empirical studies (30% each). The qualitative studies are predominantly based on interviews/content analysis used as inductive and explorative research (e.g., Davies & Crane, 2010). Most of the quantitative articles are either descriptive (e.g., Vives, 2006), investigate already more established aspects of HRM and/or CSR (like commitment, job satisfaction, turnover, or corporate charitable contributions; see e.g., Brammer et al., 2007; Chen, Patten, & Roberts, 2008; Cheruiyot & Maru, 2011), or surveyed HRM as part of CSR operationalizations or CSR disclosure (most often when CSR was measured via the KLD Database, as was the case in over 10% of all articles in the database).

The articles appeared in almost equal parts in CSR or business ethics journals (26%), in HRM related journals (23%), as well as in general management (18%) or other management related journals (18%). The predominant unit of analysis was almost always the organization (94 of the 115 articles), followed by (and also often combined with) an emphasis on managers (25 articles) or employees (33 articles). Articles rarely addressed other stakeholder groups as the main unit of analysis. Thus, when investigating CSR and HRM, the main area of interest is still internal organizational processes and the employer-employee relationship.

Further, while 40% of the articles did not specify any geographical region, it is interesting that of those remaining 60% that focused on a specific country or region, this focus was almost exclusive on developed countries in North America, Europe or Australia (44%). Only 16% dealt with issues in Asia, South America, or Africa.

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4 We coded the organization as the unit of analysis when it was considered as an entity on its own (an indication was e.g. when the article spoke explicitly of how the organization implements CSR or treats its employees in a certain way, whereas in the latter case employees would have been regarded as an additional unit of analysis).
Finally, we analyzed and interpreted the often implicit relationship between CSR and HRM used in the different studies and synthesized the different conceptualizations into five categories (see also Table 2 and Table 3). It is this analysis to which we now turn.

CONCEPTUAL FINDINGS

Our systematic review confirms that the scholarly debate in CSR-HRM is dominated by two trends – HRM as a part of CSR and CSR as a part of HRM – with little research focused on either overview of the relationship or integration of the constructs (for a pictorial representation of the overview see Figure 2). By revealing philosophical assumptions hitherto implicit in much of this writing, our analysis provides a nuanced understanding of these two prevailing trends. It also provides an opportunity to explore the small number of papers that have taken seriously the integration of CSR and HRM. Both of these discussions advance the development of CSR-HRM as an integrated theoretical concept and indicate issues for further research.

HRM as part of CSR: HRM as antecedent or subset of CSR

Where HRM is discussed as an element of CSR, CSR is the focus of the research (see exemplary quotes in Table 3). The emphasis tends to be on the enabling of CSR and there are various (often unstated) assumptions made about the nature of CSR, the purpose of CSR and the desirability of CSR (for an overview of different approaches to CSR, see e.g., Garriga &
Melé, 2004; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). The concentration on CSR in this research is reflected by many (35%) of these studies being published in journals related to business ethics or CSR.

HRM is considered to be part of CSR in a number of ways that can be summarized into two categories. HRM as an antecedent to CSR focuses on the role of human resources (employees) and human resource management in enabling CSR in the organization. HRM as a subset of CSR would suggest that HRM is one of several factors that make up CSR. Figure 2 shows these relationships, antecedent (labeled 1) and subset (labeled 2), of HRM to CSR.

Depictions of *HRM as an antecedent of CSR* explored how various HRM practices that focused on employee participation could impact CSR policies and practices. These studies were based on either strategic or non-strategic rationale for employee participation: from a strategic perspective, participation could positively impact the achievement of performance related goals of CSR; or from a non-strategic perspective, participation could give employees their rightful voice and/or enhance the responsibility goals of CSR (see discussion of Dachler & Wilpert, 1978).

A minority of studies in this category were concerned with using HRM in order to achieve CSR for strategic reasons (e.g., Becker, 2011; Boesso & Michelon, 2010). More common was a concern for how HRM could impact CSR for non-strategic purposes: by respecting employees’ right to participate and/or ensuring more genuine and emancipatory CSR. For example, Chih et al (2010: 119) found that “corporations will be more likely to act in socially responsible ways if they are engaged in institutionalized dialog (sic) with unions, employees, community groups, investors and other stakeholders.”

We note that the discipline of human resource development (HRD) appears to be more focused on the responsibility aspect of CSR than their HRM counterparts (Fenwick & Bierema, 2008; Garavan & McGuire, 2010; MacKenzie, Garavan, & Carbery, 2012). In a leading example, Fenwick and Bierema, claim a role for HRD “that challenges a
straightforward focus on human performance and suggests greater attention to power relations, equity [and] social justice… in promoting CSR in humanistic as well as emancipatory activities; that is, activities focused on transforming socio-political structures to ensure sustainable, democratic workplaces for individuals” (Fenwick & Bierema, 2008: 26). These authors identify three key aspects of HRD – organizational development, employee learning and employee rights – to develop socially conscious HRD, as an alternative to performance-based HRD, to achieve the fullest development of CSR.

HRM was also considered as *subset of CSR* whereby HRM is seen as one of a number of elements that comprise CSR or as partial evidence to demonstrate the CSR of an organization. For example, in studies looking at CSR disclosure, HRM or employee relations were identified as a measure of CSR (e.g., Holder-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009) and, in some cases, implying “good” HRM is a feature of CSR (Cheruiyot & Maru, 2011). HRM and employee relations also featured in studies reporting CSR measurement, corporate social performance (CSP) such as the KLD (e.g., Boesso & Michelon, 2010; El Ghoul, Guedhami, Kwok, & Mishra, 2011). Few of CSR disclosure or CSP studies considered any difficulty involved in measuring HRM (see Power, 2004) and none questioned the notion of “good” HRM (see Greenwood, 2002; Jack, Greenwood, & Schapper, 2012).

**CSR as part of HRM: CSR as an antecedent for effective or responsible HRM**

Where CSR is assumed to be part of HRM, it is HRM that is the focus of the research (see Table 3). The majority of the research in this area considers CSR to be a strategic tool for enhancing the effectiveness of HRM. A smaller number of studies assume that CSR is concerned with acquitting responsible HRM. The notion that responsible HRM can be used as readily as effective HRM for strategic purposes (Shen, 2011; Shen & Jiuhua Zhu, 2011) blurs
the line between these two categories. Figure 2 shows this relationship, CSR as antecedent to
either effective or responsible HRM (labeled 3).

Using *CSR for effective HRM* provides the rationale for the majority of the studies
where HRM is the leading construct. The idea that is developed both conceptually and
empirically is that the CSR reputation and practices of a firm can be used to attract, retain and
motivate employees, that is “win the war for talent” (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). For example,
Brammer et al. (2007) find that the positive impact of external CSR on employees’
organizational commitment is mediated by employees’ social identity. In its most
sophisticated form, this idea is an enactment of unitarist philosophies of HRM where CSR
becomes a method to align the interest, values and goals of the employee with the
organization; a form of “high commitment” or “soft” HRM. Indeed, it could be argued that
CSR has become the basis of an “ideological psychological contract” between employer and

The interpretation of *CSR as responsible HRM* has been surfaced in several studies
(e.g., Ardichvili, 2011; McCabe, 2000). One view is that CSR is a form of soft law, a
substitute for legislation and/or regulation, suggests that responsible HRM can be achieved
through CSR. One can legitimately ask what value is gained in attaching the term CSR to
responsible HRM practices; that is, how the new “SRHRM” (or its variation SR-IHRM; Shen,
2011) differs from what may have been viewed as responsible or ethical employment for time
immemorial.

**Integrating CSR-HRM**

Rather than pursue narrow uni-directional depictions of the role of HRM in CSR or vice
versa, a small number of studies have considered CSR-HRM as a complex and rich
interactive phenomena (see examples in Table 3). These studies provide much to explore in
our understanding of the CSR-HRM relationship and many points of departure for future research.

A sharp, short study on employee orientation may help explain why we see some scholars assume HRM is part of CSR and others assume the “opposite” that CSR is part of HRM. De Bussy and Suprawan (2011) note that the construct of employee orientation has been imprecisely treated as synonymous with both CSR/CSP (employee orientation as a subset of stakeholder orientation) and HRM (employee orientation as a high performance HRM practice). But employee orientation (or the related employee engagement) not only suffers from a lack of conceptual clarity but also the “responsibility myth”, giving an aura of, consideration of interests and even sharing of power where non such intentions may exist (Greenwood, 2007). In response, the authors evoke a cocktail of Buber’s genuine dialogue, Kantian respect for individuals and Rawl’s contractual fairness as a basis for employee orientation, which (without acknowledgement) shadow well developed arguments of political CSR theorists for a Habermasian multi-actor discourse as a basis for norm setting (see amongst others, Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011).

A series of European cases presented by Preuss et al. (2009), showing the capacity of both HR and labour unions to shape corporate policy highlight two important features: that regional setting may entail focus on different aspects of CSR and be shaped by a different constellation of actors; and that employee representatives and trade unions can play a pivotal role in CSR.

Arising from death and tragedy, Hallin and Gustavsson’s (2009) story of a middle manager provides an opportunity for the rehumanising of HRM (not unlike the film by The HR Manager). By considering an act of “embodied generosity” (drawn from Hancock, 2008) of an individual qua manager as the intertwining of HRM and CSR, the authors ask (2009: 215): Should not the core values of CSR and HRM be the same? Based on this paper, we can
build an argument that the CSR turn in HRM provides a much needed antidote to the excessive managerialism and performance orientation of SHRM. CSR infused HRM can be an antidote to strategy infused HRM: a substitute for the lost welfare or person focus of HRM (Delbridge & Keenoy, 2010); a return to the original stakeholder focus of the early Harvard model (Beer et al., 1984); and a way to reclaim the social legitimacy of the HR profession (Kochan, 2007).

Perhaps the most comprehensive exploration of the CSR-HRM relationship to date sits within a systematic review of CSR-employment relations undertaken by Brammer (2011). Brammer’s study focuses more broadly than this present study on both sides of the equation: rather than HRM, the focus is on employment relations; and rather than CSR specifically, the focus is CSR and business ethics. Nevertheless, we take to heart his salient findings: that extant research is overly focused on issues at the expense of than conceptual foundations and theoretical development; that it places too much emphasis on problematizing HRM and its “dark side”; that existing research is highly fragmented; that there is a divide between research that is CSR oriented and research that is employment relations oriented (including where such research is published); and that much current research is organization rather than employee oriented. We thus move to our substantive contribution, a broad ranging conceptualization of CSR-HRM that sets the ground for both dialogue and disagreement across a range of ontological and epistemological perspectives.

DEPICTING DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF CSR-HRM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Several distinct ideas arise from the CSR-HRM literature that provide the basis for the conceptual development of CSR-HRM: (1) CSR and HRM are not equivalent but overlap, in
particular the goals of CSR and HRM are related, whether these are strategic or non-strategic.

(2) There are multiple legitimate actors in CSR-HRM including institutional actors and actors beyond the organization. (3) CSR-HRM implies that both CSR and HRM have a role in society beyond the organization. All of these aspects are important to get a full picture of what the CSR-HRM relationship means.

In order to summarize and structure the CSR-HRM research and map the territory for future research, we drawn on Garriga and Mele’s (2004) four approaches to CSR (strategic, integrative, ethical, political). We suggest that there are four possible approaches to CSR-HRM that comprise different conceptualizations of the relationship that can be distinguished by different philosophical assumptions. We acknowledge the diversity of these various approaches and their potential to contribute to different forms of knowledge around this link.

The combining of CSR and HRM for strategic purposes underpins the vast majority of research in CSR-HRM. This strategic take on CSR-HRM materializes in several forms, but the underlying premise is that the involvement of employees in CSR has potential for positive outcomes for the organization. There is some variation as to whether positive outcomes for employees, as a result of employee involvement in CSR, are a goal (rather than a default by-product) of CSR-HRM such that the research might be considered integrative.

Approaches that rely either explicitly or implicitly on a strategic view of CSR-HRM are be based on HRM used strategically to pursue practices of social responsibility and/or CSR as strategic in pursuing practices of HRM; either one being for the ultimate purpose of enhanced organizational performance outcomes and concomitant shareholder value. The theoretical underpinnings for the strategic perspective derive often from the neo-classical economics approach and “hard” or strategic models of HRM (Tichy, Fombrun, & Devanna, 1982). There is an implicit assumption of unitarism (Boselie, Brewster, & Paauwe, 2009; Van Buren, Greenwood, & Sheehan, 2011): that the interests between employer and
employee are shared, and that management holds the singular source of authority (Fox, 1974). The direct role of business, and subsequently the function of CSR or HRM, in society, is seen as passive and undertaken through market mechanisms. The focus is thereby most often on internal organizational mechanisms, the individual employees, and implementation of the strategic targets of the firm.

The integrative approach to CSR suggests that social demands should be integrated into businesses, as they are dependent on society for continuity and growth (Garriga & Melé, 2004). Similarly, the “soft” or relational view of HRM is based on integration of employee needs with organizational purposes. Therefore, from an integrative CSR-HRM perspective, involvement of employees in CSR practices and/or delivery of responsible employment is undertaken for the benefit of employees, the organization and other stakeholders. An integrative CSR-HRM incorporates issues of CSR in terms of employee commitment and satisfaction. The theoretical underpinnings of this perspective are integrative CSR theories, such as strategic stakeholder theory (e.g., Freeman, 1984) and theories of “soft” or relational HRM (e.g., Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills, & Walton, 1984). From the integrative perspective, CSR is seen as “license to operate”, organizational legitimacy and stakeholder management; preconditions for the continued flow of resources and the organizational acceptance within society. As an internal stakeholder, employees’ needs, such as job satisfaction, are considered and included as dependent and desirable outcome variables for both employee well-being and sustained organizational performance. It is assumed that what is good for the employee is also good for the employer; the unitarist assumption that employer and employee interests are the same or, if not, that they can be aligned. Within these categories, we find predominantly research that treats HR practices as antecedents to CSR and subsequently, as a way to enhanced financial performance or other outcomes considered important for an organization (like increasing commitment).
An ethical motivation for CSR-HRM may appear to be an obvious and commonly stated purpose, but surprisingly little research is focused on this goal. Behaving ethically is seen as a primary obligation that transcends other considerations including profit maximization. Similarly an ethical approach to HRM (Greenwood, 2002), ethical CSR-HRM emphasizes that the organization has ethical duties towards employees as well as society (e.g. providing acceptable work and working conditions). From an ethical CSR-HRM perspective, the ethical responsibility towards employees and other stakeholders can be acquitted through involvement of employees in CSR practices and/or delivery of responsible employment. Theoretical assumptions of this perspective are often based on ethical philosophies. Ethical approaches to HRM are based on respecting the various interests. Therefore one of the main differences to the two prior approaches to HRM is the explicit acknowledgment of the plurality of interests between employer and employees. There is some concern for employee involvement in CSR-HRM as a stakeholder right and to ensure the integrity and emancipatory capacity of CSR programs. But, as is often the case in business ethics, ethical arguments are often considered insufficient without a corresponding strategic business case argument (not just good for the employees but also good for the company) or political institution based argument (changes are needed to institutional arrangements to address structural inequities and capacity to influence). Especially with regard to the ethical dimension, future research on CSR-HRM should address more explicitly what makes this relationship different from ethical considerations in previous HRM research (e.g., Greenwood, 2002).

Of interest is the socio-political view of CSR-HRM. Given the conceptual development around political theories of CSR (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2012), and the unspoken socio-political implications of HRM in world of deregulated or deregulating labor markets (Edwards & Kuruvilla, 2005; Scherer & Voegtlin, 2011), this interpretation of CSR-HRM holds great potential for conceptual and empirical development. Political approaches to
CSR, according to Garriga and Melé (2004), address the power of corporations in society and concomitant responsibilities. Likewise, critical approaches to HRM are concerned with mainstream HRM approach’s obsession with organizational performance and its obliviousness to power relationship (Delbridge & Keenoy, 2010). Social-political CSR-HRM thus incorporates issues of CSR in terms of employee voice, power relationships and political activity. The focus of HRM is considerably widened by conceptualizing its socio-political role in society. Foremost for a socio-political CSR-HRM approach is an emancipatory research interest, i.e. approaches challenge given assumptions and aim at changing the status quo by emancipating the less powerful actors or demanding an enhanced responsibility of those more powerful. Connected to that is the demand for an exploration of the socio-political role for HRM such as the interrelation between HRM and legal standards (rule making and rule taking), or the socio-political aspects of HRM on the organizational, the societal and the global level. The pluralism of interests is acknowledged and regarded as immanent to the system. Employer and employees are seen as two parties with differing goals.

Socio-political CSR-HRM holds the possibility of exploring the social and political embeddedness of HRM – relationships between stakeholders in the management of “human resources” both internal and external to the firm; shifting institutional arrangements and balances of power between corporations, governments and civil society – in order to address hitherto hidden wicked questions of HRM including human trafficking, poverty, indigenous rights and income security. Future research in this domain could connect to comparative institutional research in IHRM (Preuss et al., 2009; Rowley & Warner, 2007) or incorporate considerations on global governance and proactive political responsibility (Young, 2006). While extant research in IHRM often takes the institutional environment as taken for granted and analyses the impact of different institutional settings on HRM, a proactive view of the organization in shaping institutional contexts alongside considerations of CSR-HRM, be it
e.g., improved working conditions, giving voice to employees, or educating employees as citizens, would provide a fruitful way to enrich CSR-HRM and untangle the responsibility of multinational corporations.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

We have undertaken the task of a systematic review of the relationship between two broad ranging and contested constructs CSR and HRM. Our motivation was the marked increase in research linking these two constructs in absences of overt conceptualization and theory building. We have provided the findings of our review and these, unsurprisingly, confirmed that this newly developing area of research is fragmented, \textit{ad hoc} and highly partial. Our study reveals important detail of the various lines of argument and perspectives perused and thus enabled us to move towards our goal of developing overarching conceptualizations of CSR-HRM: strategic, integrative, ethical and socio-political CSR-HRM.

Conceptualization of CSR-HRM holds promise for both theoretical and practice developments in both CSR and HRM. The strategic turn in HRM has paradoxically seen a shift in the discipline away from consideration of external stakeholders (Kochan, 2007). CSR-HRM provides a lens through which to view multiple internal and external stakeholder relationships within the HRM. A move towards consideration of internal stakeholders has been noted in the CSR literature (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). CSR-HRM can move fully develop notions of employees as stakeholders – the nature of their stake and their engagement with the organization – and their special role as constituting and representing the firm (Greenwood & Anderson, 2009).

Significantly, we seek to provide grounds for dialogue and plurality among multiple perspectives. Our own extensive and subjective research experiences bring both value and limitations to this analysis. As we note in discussing our methodological approach, we do not
aim for, indeed do not believe in, objectivity and reproducibility in the interpretation of conceptual data. Inevitably, there will be disagreement with our analyses and resultant theses; what we have wrong and what we have omitted. We are pleased for such dissensus and debate; rather than gather the field together as an integrated whole, we hold that the goal for a conceptual analysis such as this is to map territory, track less-explored paths and expose the terrain.
REFERENCES


Garavan, T.N. & McGuire, D. 2010. Human resource development and society: Human resource developments role in embedding corporate social responsibility,


FIGURE 1
Publications Over Time

Note. The figure displays publications till 2011. A further 12 articles were retrieved till the end of the research period in July 2012. From 1975 till 1998, each of the dots indicates the publication of one article per year.

FIGURE 2
Various Depictions of the Relationship Between CSR and HRM Arising From the Systematic Review

Note. This diagram provides schematic descriptions, not a causal model.
**TABLE 1**
Summary of Literature Search Results, n (%)  

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<th>General Management</th>
<th>Other Management Related Journals</th>
<th>Working paper</th>
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<th>CSR is Part of HRM</th>
<th>HRM and CSR Overlap</th>
<th>HRM and CSR Discussed but no Overlap</th>
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<td>29 (25)</td>
<td>16 (14)</td>
<td>6 (5)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. N=115; Focal Unit of Analysis: Articles were coded into more than one category hence add to >100%; Geographical Region adds up to 101% as one article was explicitly investigating Germany and Brazil and was coded for both geographical regions
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<tr>
<th>Type of Journal</th>
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<th>CSR is Part of HRM</th>
<th>HRM and CSR Overlap</th>
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<td>3 (3)</td>
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<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64 (56)</strong></td>
<td><strong>29 (25)</strong></td>
<td><strong>16 (14)</strong></td>
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<td>Indication</td>
<td>Exemplary Quotations</td>
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</table>
| HRM is part of CSR   | HRM is part/ an element/ evidence of CSR | "Ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) works at multiple levels in organizations, beginning at the individual level and the accountability of individual employees and managers, to the responsibility of corporations to their employees and the communities at large through CSR. One important theme we wanted to address in this special issue is the importance of considering the employee in an organization’s ethical and CSR assessment of stakeholders." (Berkley & Watson, 2009: 275)  
"The KLD analyzes corporate employee relations’ strengths and concerns based on an extensive evaluation of each company’s union relations, labor policy, employee benefit, employee involvement, and compliance with labor related regulations" (Chen et al., 2008: 136)  
"Employee CSR has been defined in terms of work environment, fairness of wages, employer CSR orientation and effective communication" (Cherouyot & Maru, 2011: 4)  
"In the light of the results of this research we could conclude that those savings banks that institutionalize a social responsiveness process — involving highcommitment HR practices in order to respond to their employees’ interests — experience greater profitability" (Déniz-Déniz & Saá-Pérez, 2003: 313)  
"Employee relations that describe the extent of the involvement of employees in CSR-related initiatives, such as the employee development program or the extent to which the company is concerned about employee-related issues" (Lehmann et al., 2010: 157)  
"This paper focuses on one particular area of CSR, human resource management (HRM)" (Vuontisjärvi, 2006: 332)  
"Hatcher (2000) and Bansal and Kandola (2004) stated that organizations could apply corporate social responsibility (CSR) not only to realize environmental and/or social values but also to help construct an ethical mind of employees in terms of honesty and trust. Prachachatdurakit (2006) believed that CSR can assist employees’ discipline and sympathy through CSR activity. This phenomenon is considered to be 'human resource development (HRD) in CSR activity’’” (Sukserrn & Takahashi, 2012: 9)  
"It is our argument here that HRD can make an important contribution to the processes that are utilized to embed CSR and CS in organizations" (Garavan et al., 2010: 599)  
"Understanding the sensemaking processes will illuminate how HRD professionals can contribute to the achievement of the triple bottom line CSR philosophy and ensure CSR goals and objectives are realistic and not rhetoric. We propose a conceptual model that elucidates the potential positive impact of HRD interventions" (MacKenzie et al. 2012: 1)  

| CSR is part of HRM | CSR is part/ a tool/ an enabler of HRM either instrumental or ethical | "[…] it is clear that CSR, or its dimension associated with the treatment of employees, overlaps with – and has the biggest impact on – human resource management" (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008: 276)  
"Yet concrete results of this process have so far been limited. This is particularly the case for the area we focus on here, the 'social' dimension of corporate responsibility and its role in promoting improvements in working conditions" (Deakin & Hobbs, 2007: 68)  
"This article investigates social responsibility (SR) and human resources management practices focused on internal stakeholders, namely employees" (Mankelow, 2008: 2171)  
"The study finds that corporate social strategy provides several benefits, among them attracting and retaining valuable human resources and enhancing company image and reputation" (Sousa Filho & Farache, 2011: 99)  
"Three major components of an SR-HRM system there emerge these discussions. They are labour law-related legal compliance HRM; employee-oriented HRM and general CSR facilitation HRM (Shen & Zhu, 2011: 3022)  
"Hence, four criteria have emerged to characterize SRIHRM. They are (1) legal compliance IHRM practices; (2) employee-oriented IHRM; (3) general CSR facilitator IHRM practices and (4) local sustainability contributor IHRM practices" (Shen, 2011: 1358-1359) |
| CSR and HRM overlap | CSR and HRM overlap/ should be integrated | "Two-way relationship between CSR and HRM" (Cooke & He, 2010: Figure 1, p. 358)  
"HR and CSR in micro and small organisations […] are far more interwoven than in large organisations, with the same groups or individuals being the decision makers for most business decisions" (Davies & Crane, 2010, p. 129)  
"Figure 2 represents the current trends observed through the comparative analysis of corporate situations. Each circle represents a domain seen either as HR, CSR or at the overlap of both areas. The overlap corresponds to what is regarded as ‘good HRM’; that is, a socially sensitive approach to HR. It also encompasses practices which are regarded as both HR and CSR, such as gender equity or policies targeting disabled employees" (Gond et al. 2011: 123)  
"The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework in order to analyse the relationship between corporate social responsibility and strategic human resource (HR) management. Thus far, both disciplines have advanced in isolation. Therefore, this paper aims to examine if a combination of these research lines can provide competitive advantages for enterprises. Specifically, we will analyse how a socially responsible orientation in the HR practices can contribute to the achievement of these advantages through performance variables, such as work environment and intellectual capital" (Barrena-Martinez et al., 2011: 173)  
"The present study, therefore, is an attempt to explore the engagement of human resource management professionals in undertaking Corporate Social Responsibility. It also suggests Human Resource Management to take a leading role in encouraging CSR activities at all levels. The combined impact of CSR and human resource activities, which reinforce desirable behavior, can make a major contribution in creating long term success in organizations" (Sharma et al., 2009: 205) |