

# Corporate Humanistic Responsibility: Social Performance Through Managerial Discretion of the HRM

Stéphanie Arnaud · David M. Wasieleski

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**Abstract** The Corporate Social Performance (CSP) model (Wood, *Acad Manag Rev* 164:691–718, 1991) assesses a firm’s social responsibility at three levels of analysis—institutional, organizational and individual—and measures the resulting social outcomes. In this paper, we focus on the individual level of CSP, manifested in the managerial discretion of a firm’s principles, processes, and policies regarding social responsibilities. Specifically, we address the human resources management of employees as a way of promoting CSR values and producing socially minded outcomes. We show that applying the humanist philosophy to the managerial discretion of a business organization leads to the creation of an “autonomy supportive work environment”—as defined by the self-determination theory—which in turn, facilitates the internalization of social values, citizenship behaviors, and cooperation. The objective of promoting self-determination at work (i.e., the core of a humanist management) fits well with the ontology of social responsibility since autonomy and consideration of individuals as moral actors are central tenets. Furthermore, we show that applying humanistic management philosophy to the discretion of managers can lead to socially responsible outcomes. First, intra-organizational stakeholders (e.g., employees) are treated with respect and focus is put on their well-being, satisfaction, and self-actualization at work. Second, as employees’ need of self-determination is addressed by managers, it is likely

that pro-social behaviors toward other stakeholders of the organization will be adopted, leading to socially responsible outcomes for extra-organizational stakeholders (Gagné, *Motiv Emot* 77:58–75, 2003). Thus, this paper ultimately posits that humanistic management applied to the HRM can be a solution for developing and maintaining socially responsible outcomes as determined at the individual level of the CSP model, through managerial discretion.

**Keywords** Corporate social performance · Corporate social responsibility · Humanist philosophy · HRM · Managerial discretion · Self-determination

## Introduction

In the wake of disasters plaguing the financial and housing markets worldwide, socially responsible decision-making continues to be a much discussed topic in the business and society fields. Of profound importance for understanding how strong corporate social performance (CSP) is achieved is the role of the decision-makers themselves (Hambrick and Mason 1984; Thomas and Simerly 1994; Wood 1991). However, the individual dimension has largely been ignored in the literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR). Generally, CSR studies “have ignored the role of corporate leaders in formulating and implementing CSR initiatives” (Waldman and Siegel 2008, p. 117). While it is acknowledged that corporate managers may impact exemplary social performance through their discretion (Manner 2010), *how* managers may utilize and expand their discretion to promote socially responsible strategies and achieve pro-social outcomes is rarely addressed. Given the current business environment which emphasizes the importance of corporations behaving responsibly, it is

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S. Arnaud · D. M. Wasieleski  
CEREFIGE-ICN Business School, Nancy-Metz, France  
e-mail: stephanie.arnaud@icn-groupe.fr

D. M. Wasieleski (✉)  
Duquesne University, 918 Rockwell Hall, 600 Forbes Avenue,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15282, USA  
e-mail: wasieleski@duq.edu

critical for research on CSR to be grounded in strategically useful, and normatively productive principles in order to address society's problems caused by individual and corporate excess and abuses.

The idea behind social responsibility is that managers should act to address business and society issues (Windsor 2006). CSR is basically thought of as “corporate choices and behaviors that go beyond firm-specific economic benefit or focus” (Berry 2010, p. 34). Many of these choices take the form of voluntary initiatives for the promotion of positive social impacts (Tashman and Rivera 2010). These initiatives are normally subject to an individual manager's discretion, unlike policy-driven mandates for specific levels of social performance. The CSP model (Wood 1991) evaluates a firm's social responsibility at three levels of analysis—institutional, organizational, and individual—and to assess the resulting social outcomes (Swanson 1995). The CSP framework “proposes measurement of all corporate impacts on general welfare” (Windsor 2006, p. 99). For this present paper, we focus particularly on the individual level of CSP on which Wood (1991) attaches the principle of managerial discretion, and investigate an alternative way to achieve social performance.

Since Wood's seminal piece, scholars in the field have acknowledged the importance of enhancing organizational knowledge about discretion in order to help firms improve individual decision-making about ethics and responsibility. Discretion “may be a construct of theoretical importance in explaining several phenomena of interest to organization and strategy scholars” (Finkelstein and Boyd 1998, p. 180). It is the individual agents of the organization who make the decisions regarding strategic social responsibility. In short, managerial discretion warrants attention because it affects firm performance (Thomas and Peyerefitte 1996). Moreover, the “abuse of managerial discretion and the failure of managers to exercise discretion can be very costly to organizations” (Key 2002, p. 218). In this paper, we address a call for further research on the development of new metrics for the creation of a better understanding of the effects of managerial discretion on firm outcomes (Key 2002). As a field, business and society has “not built a concept of discretion, or discretionary social responsibility” (Wood 1991, p. 690). We find her statement to still reign true today.

How should managers exercise their discretion to manage intra-organizational stakeholder relationships, to meet CSR objectives, and to produce effective social outcomes involving extra-organizational stakeholders? What managerial practices and policies will satisfy these objectives? These kinds of questions are largely unexplored in the CSR literature. To date, most studies that focus on managerial discretion examine how varying *levels* of managerial

choice affect strategic outcomes (Finkelstein and Hambrick 1990; Keegan and Kabanoff 2008). We take a different approach here and examine how managerial discretion, exercised in a humanistic manner toward employees, may positively affect intra and extra-organizational social outcomes. Our research also responds to a call to explore the role ethics play in encouraging discretionary interest in the collective good (Elms et al. 2010). Our approach to this informs the individual level of the CSP model with the practice of a humanist ethic of management, in accordance with the humanist philosophy applied to the HRM (Acevedo 2012; Arnaud 2008; Melé 2003). We wish to formulate a corporate humanistic responsibility for firms.

In order to promote a humanistic socially responsible agenda for a company, it is necessary to reframe how social responsibility is viewed by the individual decision-makers within the organization, so that both intra-organizational and extra-organizational CSR outcomes can be achieved (Berry 2010). Managers are challenged to balance the expectations of a variety of stakeholders despite fiscal and market constraints (p. 34). Since socially responsible outcomes are a product of the shared values and principles of the managers of an organization and the network of stakeholders to which the manager is accountable, the management of the human capital associated with the organization goes beyond the intra-organizational members. To achieve this cooperation between the firm and its internal and external stakeholders toward a socially responsible managerial agenda, we turn to humanist philosophy, and apply it to the managerial discretion level of a business firm.

Humanistic management has been an underdeveloped notion in the human resource management (HRM) and business ethics literatures (Acevedo 2012). Management can be considered “humanistic” when “its outlook emphasizes common human needs and is oriented to the development of human virtue” (Melé 2003, p. 77). We use humanist philosophy to address the guiding principles of managerial discretion with the goal of increasing the likelihood of pro-social outcomes that would be considered, socially responsible. Our thesis is: *Through the fostering of employee self-determination, humanistic management may lead to social responsibility at the individual level (i.e., managerial discretion) and the achievement of social goals, inside the workplace and outside the firm, toward external stakeholders.* Organization theory “does not offer clear guidance for HRM” in terms of the effects of increased managerial discretion (Caza 2011, p. 10). Our paper looks at how a humanist HRM may enable corporate humanistic responsibility.

Humanism is concerned with the autonomy of individuals and their proper treatment. It should be mentioned at the outset that therein lies a fundamental terminological

irony with the pursuit of a humanistic HRM. The term, human resource management, implies that employees are a source of capital for employers (Cascio 2010). In fact, some suggest that the “term human resources may result in encouraging a depersonalized and dehumanized view of the employment relationship” (de Gama et al. 2012, p. 97). However, our paper argues that employees normatively should not be treated as means to an end in organizations. Thus, we work within the accepted and widely used label (HRM) for the proper management of the humans working in an organization, but advocate that this treatment entail an approach that envisions the employees as ends in themselves (Jackson 2002). By doing so, managers will create value for the organization and are more likely to promote social responsibility. Thus, our paper also addresses a need for a critical ethical examination of HRM (Islam 2012). The management of human resources needs to focus on re-emphasizing human dignity (Honneth 2008). Moreover, we agree with de Gama et al. (2012) that the human resources terminology is not the real problem. Rather, it indicates that there lacks an ethical standard in HRM. Humanism may indeed provide that standard.

The promotion of self-determination and self-actualization of each human being is at the core of our humanist approach. We show that managers who choose to adopt a humanistic management style are likely to create and maintain an autonomy supportive work environment (Deci and Ryan 2000) which facilitates the internalization of moral values, social norms, and fosters the adoption of pro-social behaviors (Gagné 2003). Our approach offers a potentially significant advancement for the CSR field in that we provide an extended or prospective view of the managerial discretion level. We contend that this humanistic frame for CSR refines the principles of CSR at the individual level so that it will lead decision-makers within the organization to promote new processes for the achievement of socially desirable outcomes. Our paper also responds to a call for the need “for a more humanistic and holistic vision of business and management...” resulting in a new “humanistic synthesis for business” (Melé et al. 2011, p. 2). While humanism has been the subject of business ethics discussions recently, there is still a need for a more meaningful understanding of what it entails and how it is pragmatically employed in organizations (Melé 2003). In a broader academic sense, a humanistic approach to HRM may have implications for the general field of business ethics in terms of offering a “practical science that aims at procuring man’s unqualified good” (Maritain 1931/2005, p. 196). Indeed, the relationship between human beings and society has an ethical dimension (Melé 2009).

This theoretical project is organized as follows:

First, we provide a brief review of the CSP model (Wood 1991) in terms of its usefulness as a framework for

analyzing pro-social outcomes. Because our focus is on the individual level of CSP, we present a short literature review of managerial discretion in organizations. Next, we outline the basic philosophy of humanism and discuss how it translates to humanistic management. Toward this goal, we introduce the self-determination theory (SDT, Deci and Ryan 2000) and integrate its basic tenets with the principles derived from humanism. The humanistic conception of the business enterprise is described, as well as its application for the management of human resources. We strive to demonstrate that humanistic management is compatible with the social responsibility principles of the company, as defined by managerial choices. Our arguments are structured with respect to Wood’s framework. At the managerial discretion level, we propose the integration of the principles, processes and outcomes of a humanist HRM. Specifically, we show how the adoption of humanistic principles and the implementation of humanist HRM processes inside the organization can lead to intra and extra-organizational pro-social outcomes, as measured by the CSP model, leading to corporate humanistic responsibility. These resulting pro-social behaviors are outlined and explained in light of the humanist principles adopted by individual managers within the firm. Finally, we offer practical managerial implications of adopting humanist philosophy, and give future avenues of empirical research.

## Corporate Social Performance

### CSR Concept

McWilliams and Siegel (2001) define CSR as the company’s engagement in “actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law” (p. 1). We view CSR as involving the consideration of the social, environmental and economic impacts of potential business decisions. According to a definition by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, “CSR, in broad summary, is the *ethical* behavior of a company towards society” (1999, p. 6). This is consistent with Preston and Post’s (1975) classic perspective, which described the interpenetrating systems of business, society, and government. They suggested that businesses have primary and secondary obligations, which include a concern for human rights both inside and external to the organization. The “human” component is a recurring theme of CSR, which is an important point for this present paper. As a considerable amount of literature has been devoted to CSR, and its measurement, we will attempt to discuss the links between CSR and CSP, which is used as the model with which we address managerial discretion for socially responsible behavior.

## CSP Model

The first main conceptual modeling of the CSP concept originated with Carroll's (1979) pyramid-structured model, which described business as having a fundamental economic basis with legal, ethical, and finally discretionary expectations layered above it. Carroll, furthermore, described these four societal expectations as the social responsibilities of business. This model integrated the three dimensions of social responsibility, social issues and social responsiveness into an initial CSP framework. In Carroll's three-dimensional framework, we see the acknowledgement that employee issues need to be addressed. However, what it means to exercise managerial discretion toward the employees was not yet clarified (Enderle 2010). Wartick and Cochran (1985) made the next major conceptual development of CSP. They defined CSP as the "underlying interaction among the principles of social responsibility, the processes of social responsiveness, and the policies developed to address social issues" (p. 758). The Wartick and Cochran model went beyond the three dimensions developed by Carroll (1979) in that it positioned the model in the context of principles, processes, and policies. Here there was an emphasis on rectifying the differences between responsibility and responsiveness, so as to not lose sight of ethical values when implementing social policies. Thus, the proper treatment of individuals both internal and external to the company is implied.

With Wood's (1991) integrative framework, the field saw a consolidation of these building blocks into the defining article for the CSP concept. Wood articulated the CSP concept in terms of a definitional framework that built on the earlier works of Carroll and Wartick and Cochran. She defines CSP as "a business organization's configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes, of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm's societal relationships" (1991, p. 693). Under the principles of social responsibility, Wood relates the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations of Carroll's (1979) CSP framework to the CSR principles of social legitimacy at the institutional level, public responsibility at the organizational level, and managerial discretion at the individual levels of analyses. The latter is our focus in this current paper. Here we have a legitimate way of evaluating how employees and other stakeholders are treated. This framework is still relevant today and is still the most frequently applied model for the measurement of CSR (Manner 2010; Wood 2010). It serves as a useful mechanism by which we can examine humanistic principles to guide managerial decision-making.

For firms to meet long-range socially responsible goals a carefully developed approach is needed, originating at the

managerial discretion level (Corbett and Van Wassenhove 1993). Organizations must internalize social and environmental issues in order to achieve responsible outcomes. Internalization involves making social concerns an inherent part of the organizational culture. At the individual level "it is managerial discretion that determines how firms act... As they [managers] too are moral actors, they are expected to use the discretion available to them toward socially responsible outcomes" (p. 117). The managers exercise discretion over what principles are emphasized in the firm's strategic plans for CSR. Moreover, how particular policies are chosen and implemented also falls under this managerial discretion. It is the individual agent of the organization who makes the decisions regarding strategic social responsibility. The individual-level principle of CSR is to recognize that managers are moral actors, who possess free choice in the decisions they make. "Within every domain of CSR, they are obliged to exercise such discretion as is available to them, toward socially responsible outcomes" (p. 696). Russell (2010) also underlines that "strategic decisions are being made not by faceless legal entities, as by organizations, but by individuals comprising these organizations" (p. 32). This is where we turn our attention next.

## Managerial Discretion

Managerial discretion refers to the latitude of options managers garner when making strategic choices (Hambrick and Finkelstein 1987). In decision-making, discretion is based on the assumption that persons have responses available to them that can affect the environment (Thompson 1981). Work on managerial discretion essentially originated with Hambrick and Finkelstein (1987). Here the construct was first presented in the strategic management literature as being potentially useful for explaining circumstances in organizations. Their theory of managerial discretion is built upon work by Lieberman and O'Connor (1972) who stated that CEOs have varying degrees of discretion depending upon the domain or context. Hambrick and Finkelstein (1987) posited that leaders in organizations will have more discretion over what to do when the means for achieving organizational goals are not clear. They argued that discretion involves the extent to which the environment permits a change from the status quo and the degree to which the organization empowers the decision maker to implement change. It is also constrained by the individual manager's vision and abilities (Finkelstein and Hambrick 1990; Hambrick and Abrahamson 1995). More recently, a fourth source of managerial discretion has been identified. Depending on a manager's particular work task, the activity itself could affect how much leverage a



manager possesses (Finkelstein and Peteraf 2007). The activity is defined as “a discrete managerial function or task involving a course of action that could be configured in a variety of ways” (p. 239). For the purposes of our present paper, we wish to ‘configure’ managerial functions in terms of a humanistic style of management. The possible effects of the discretion are discussed next.

Strategic choice theory makes the assumption that managers will utilize their discretion to benefit the firm (Hrebiniak 1974). “This perspective has dominated HRM research and is premised on the assumption that...managers will make situationally appropriate responses to dynamic challenges...” facing the organization (Caza 2011, p. 13). In part, organizational success in terms of CSR depends on the discretionary role of managers (Buchholtz et al. 1999). “The greater the level of discretion, the greater the potential impact of a CEO on a firm...” (Finkelstein and Boyd 1998, p. 181). Oliver Williamson (1963) was one of the first organizational scholars to acknowledge the importance of managerial choice and its impact on business behavior. The leverage that individual managers have over the use and allocation of corporate resources significantly affects organizational goals. Williamson even recognized that managers are pressured to allocate firm resources to interest groups beyond only shareholders. This implies the need for a *balanced* approach to the management of these interest groups’ needs.

But it also identifies an age-old challenge facing managers: individual preference for managing organizational goals is constrained by multiple demands and organizational expectations. Managers deal with a wide range of internal and external market and non-market factors that may affect the extent to which the adoption of personal preferences is permitted. Executive effects are limited or enhanced by industry and market factors (Finkelstein and Hambrick 1990), but also affected by social norms and legal rules (Crossland and Hambrick 2011). Regardless, “responsible conduct may be necessary even under circumstances of economic losses...” (Spitzeck 2011, p. 52). This underlines the importance of understanding their “discretion” in decision-making. A manager’s discretion is indeed critical in individual ethical decision-making in terms of a firm’s strategy for achieving social responsibility (Key 2002).

Next, we aim to show what a manager’s discretion nurtured by a humanist philosophy of management can achieve for the social environment despite the numerous challenges and restraints on the organization. This style of management promotes the unconditional respect for human dignity regardless of the constraints facing managers (Spitzeck 2011).

### Exercising Responsible Managerial Discretion

Among the discretionary choices a manager can make, socially responsible actions hold particular importance to

this present paper. The idea of discretionary social responsibility has its roots in the early models of CSR. It includes a manager’s decision to be involved in efforts that benefit society (Swanson 1999). A “company’s social responsibilities are not met by some abstract organizational actors; they are met by individual human actors who constantly make decisions and choices...which have great consequences” (Wood 1991, p. 699). Managers may “be able to exercise the greatest latitude with this component of social responsibility (Goll and Rasheed 2004, p. 43). Buchholtz et al. (1999) claims that discretionary social responsibility is related to top management values. We believe in this current project that these values should include humanism. Managers are given a certain degree of “latitude to decide” how to implement social policies (p. 172). However, studies on this level are still scant despite the fact the construct does seem to have explanatory potential of organizational phenomena (Finkelstein and Boyd 1998; Keegan and Kabanoff 2008; Thomas and Simerly 1994). They “may choose to limit their discretion to create a credible commitment to a course of action” (Finkelstein and Peteraf 2007, p. 243). In other words, managers are given enough leeway to decide to focus their company’s efforts on a specific venture and in the process choose to ignore other ventures.

Stakeholder management “tries to integrate groups with a stake in the firm into managerial decision-making” (Garriga and Melé 2004, p. 59). The belief that balancing the needs of internal and external stakeholders of the organization leads to competitive advantage (Donaldson and Preston 1995; Jones 1995) is partially related to the financial benefits that can accrue to a firm through socially responsible actions. Managing stakeholders may allow managers to expand their discretion in spite of restrictions placed on their decision-making (Cennamo et al. 2009). Since the management of stakeholder interests is a moral imperative (Sharma 2000), it is in a manager’s best interests to broaden his/her discretion over intra and extra-organizational stakeholders. Managerial discretion to be socially responsible often garners support from external stakeholder groups as well (Goll and Rasheed 2004).

For example, a manager with “high discretion has a wide range of strategic actions from which to select, and a wide range of options for implementing strategic actions” (Crossland and Hambrick 2011, p. 805). To increase a manager’s discretion on strategic actions may lead to more innovations and possibilities for a firm. Given the greater social demand for socially responsible organizations, we feel that an individual manager’s latitude of action should include strategies for pro-social outcomes. Humanistic managerial discretion can help enable these pro-social outcomes. But how do managers exercise their discretion? With the adoption of a humanistic managerial perspective,

we feel we bring moral substance to this concept. The normative difficulties related to moral justification of managerial action and the clarification of duties (Swanson 1995) are addressed with a humanistic HRM of intra-organizational stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of generating socially responsible outcomes.

As mentioned above, socially responsible goals of a corporation can be realized through the proper management of stakeholder relations (Brickson 2007). Waddock and Bodwell (2004) define CSR “as the way in which a company’s operating practices...affect its stakeholders and natural environment” (p. 25). Thus, we find it is important to consider CSP in terms of stakeholder relationships. However, more theoretical groundwork needs to be laid that analyzes the rationale behind the maintenance of the quality of the relationships (Jamali 2008). Our current piece takes a step in that direction by analyzing the rationale behind the managerial–employee relationship. Despite efforts to understand the proper treatment of stakeholders by an organization, there are still elements not thoroughly studied and explored by researchers, specifically at an individual level. At this level, the role played by human resources management is one of the points of emphasis. Employment should be viewed as “a relationship rooted in a web of social dependencies, and considers that ‘thick’ relations produce valuable ethical surpluses that represent mutuality and human flourishing” (Bolton et al. 2012, p. 121).

In her reoriented CSP model, Swanson (1995) formulates decision-making about social responsibility in terms of processes linked to three levels of analysis. The individual level (this present paper’s focus) involves both executive and employee decision-making, as regulated by a firm’s corporate culture. Both positive and negative duties related to this stakeholder relationship are derived in part by executive philosophy. Swanson claims that when a firm’s culture is viewed in terms of normative processes, there is more likely a link with corporate social responsiveness and ultimately, social impacts. Vitell and Paolillo’s (2004) cross-cultural study of the antecedents of the perceived role of social responsibility in the decision-making process of managers from Spain, Turkey, Great Britain, and the U.S. shows that managerial CSR decisions and likelihood of implementation are shaped by the managers’ individual ethical perspective and their organizational culture. On the other hand, constraints on a manager’s discretion are often a function of internalized norms—both at the individual (cognitive) level and the organizational level (Hambrick and Mason 1984), thereby emphasizing the fact that the principles regulating an organization’s decision-making processes are of great importance.

There is also evidence that employees have a growing concern for social problems (Greening and Turban 2000).

Individual employees “are concerned about, contribute to, and react to an organization’s evolving social consciousness...” (Rupp et al. 2006, p. 537). In fact, it is predicted that employee perceptions of their firm’s CSR will positively affect individually relevant outcomes like citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ 1988) are discretionary actions that go above and beyond expected role functions of a job, and often involve a concern for the community (Ribeiro and Rego 2009). Individuals “are united by actions connected with the actions of other people within an organization” (Melé 2012, p. 95).

Moreover, studies have been conducted which conceptually justify that managerial values and attitudes toward CSR in a given organizational context are likely to have a strong influence on firm-level CSR outcomes (e.g., Hay and Gray 1974; Hemingway 2005; Hemingway and Maclagan 2004; Williams and Aguilera 2007). Strong social performance is often seen as being driven in large part by managerial beliefs (McGuire 2003). Thus, the principles behind their beliefs are of great importance to the firm’s ultimate social performance strategies and outcomes. There are multiple motivations that impact the extent to which a firm engages in good social performance. Positive CSP, in particular, may be more likely driven by managerial discretion than by the avoidance of poor social performance. Managers are often motivated to avoid bad social performance by negative financial consequences related to government regulations or lawsuits (Manner 2010). But to strive for exemplary CSP requires a manager’s motivation which may be tied more closely to deeply held personal beliefs. We examine positive social performance in relation to the employee stakeholder group in this present paper. Thus, we next focus our attention on human resource systems in organizations.

#### Intra-organizational Discretion of Human Resource Systems

Human resource systems affect corporate performance through the management and control of employee behaviors (Jackson et al. 1989). Through human resources systems “organizations can influence employees’ actions and can build social capital” (Mossholder et al. 2011, p. 34). The management of a company’s CSR has profound implications for HRM. Ranging from the proper management of stakeholders through the implementation of ethical standards “through employment practices that attract employees to social involvement in the form of employee volunteering, the HRM role is awash with CSR-related tasks” (Preuss et al. 2009, p. 954). Critical to effectively engaging the global organizations “in CSR initiatives lies in adopting appropriate IHRM policies and practices...” (Shen 2011, p. 1353). However, there is

reluctance among HRM scholars to address CSR-related issues (Royle 2005).

There is a growing body of evidence regarding the positive relationship between HRM and firm performance (see Combs et al. 2006). Included in this research is the awareness that HR practices affect organizational performance through “their effect on workers’ attitudes and behaviour” (Guest and Woodrow 2012, p. 112). A more ethical HRM can be imagined if managers expand their discretion to include a concern for workers’ needs. Performance, in terms of meeting external stakeholders’ interests *and* employee well-being can be achieved simultaneously “if practices are applied with due concern for workers’ interests” (p. 113). A ‘good life’ (i.e., one defined by the freedom to achieve one’s work-related goals) for employees in an organization involves managers trying to “achieve work related goals that are considered valuable in a community of relationships” (Islam 2012, p. 39). Related to social responsibility, employees may be motivated to care that their managers are using their discretion to address organizational effects on people and the community. A concern for these external stakeholders may indicate a compassion for the internal stakeholder needs as well (Rupp et al. 2006).

This is interesting given the positive relationship often found between social performance and financial performance (Allouche and Laroche 2005; Vilanova et al. 2009). HRM practices that encourage CSR engagement should positively affect employee behaviors and will likely increase overall organizational performance (Shen 2011). Given the current dearth of literature specifying HRM practices that facilitate socially responsible outcomes, we address “what catalyzes organizations to engage in increasingly robust CSR initiatives and consequently impart social change” (Aguilera et al. 2007, p. 837). Next, we propose that applying humanism to HRM offers an answer to this question.

### The Humanist Philosophy

Humanism is being examined to a greater extent in modern management and economics literatures in order to provide a stronger moral foundation for the development of businesses (Melé et al. 2011). In this section, we first briefly describe the main principles of “humanist philosophy,” which we then interpret in terms of HRM practices in order to explain what it means to follow a “humanist HRM.” To start, we emphasize a reinterpretation of the “R” in HRM, as humans are not to be treated as instrumental resources for the manager to meet his/her objectives, but rather as valued partners in the process where intrinsic benefits accrue to the employees as well. Scholars often view the rhetoric of HRM

to have implicit economic views of human beings (Thompson 2011), thereby offering contradictory notions of how humans as employees are viewed (Bolton et al. 2012). A value-laden framework for human resources addresses the “missing human in HRM” (see Sayer 2007).

Our first goal is to extract and identify the main *principles* from humanist philosophy in order to propose individual level principles of a humanist CSP (keeping within the framework of Wood’s model). Then, we operationalize these principles into *processes* by offering concrete programs, tools and practices of a humanistic HRM in order to illustrate what it means “to practice managerial discretion in a humanistic way.” The expected social *outcomes* of such an HRM will be detailed in the section following. Before this, it is necessary and prudent to show the similarities we discover between a humanistic HRM and the recommendations of the SDT (Deci and Ryan 2000) in terms of an autonomy supportive work environment. This step in our reasoning will help to demonstrate how humanistic HRM can be translated into socially responsible work behaviors.

### The Main Principles of Humanistic Thinking

During the Renaissance, humanistic thinking began to develop with the writings of Petrarque, Erasmus, Rabelais, and Pic de la Mirandole, among others. According to these authors, “we are not born Human, we *become* Human” (Erasmus), thanks to education, the acquisition of knowledge, the development of our capacity to use rightly our liberty and to distinguish Good from Evil. This notion of liberty, which characterizes human beings, is highlighted by Pic de la Mirandole in his *Discourse on the Dignity of Man* (1993). In this text, the author imagines what God would say about the Human Being: “All other creatures have a defined nature contained by laws laid down by us. You alone, free of all hindrance, following your own free decision that I have given you, you will decide on your own nature (...) following your own will and for your own merit, as modeller and sculptor of your own self, create yourself in your own chosen form” (p. 23). As is evident in this quotation, the idea of *creation of oneself by oneself* is central to the humanistic conception of human being. Persons can decide to embrace their liberty and capacity of reflexion in order to develop some personality aspects and to become the author of their own life. A person possesses “self-conscience, self-determination, and consequently, a subject of moral acts (Melé 2012, p. 96). In other words, according to the humanists, human beings are not predetermined, and by consequence, they can choose to develop their own self-determination.

After the Renaissance, the Enlightenment philosophers detailed the humanist way of thought. They promoted

individual civil liberties, human rights and participatory democracy. Kant focuses on the concept of *moral autonomy* and his *categorical requirement*: “Always treat others as an end and never just as a means” (Kant 1783/1954). From this era, humanism is commonly defined as, “a philosophical attitude which holds the human being in the highest esteem and which claims for each human being the possibility to develop his own humanity and his human faculties, to make them flourish” (The “Treasure of the French Language” 1840). Following the humanists, moral autonomy is to be understood through human faculties—exercising one’s liberty and the capacity to create oneself by oneself. Humanist philosophers reject the medieval vision of human beings as weak creatures dominated by nature, destiny, God, or a king. They propose a conception of human beings as individuals who are able to take responsibility for their own lives by exploring new opportunities and developing all their capabilities with the use of reason and education. de Montaigne emphasizes the ability to “metamorphose” by developing one’s talents, which, to him, characterizes human nature (2004). Thus, with the insights from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, we decipher the humanist principles as: autonomy, liberty, dignity, equality between people, and the right to develop our human potential. We will address how these principles are realized through HRM processes within the organization in a later section.

### Personalist Principles

More recently, the philosophy of personalism has also received increased attention in the business ethics literature (Acevedo 2012; Fontrodona and Sison 2006; Leroux 1999; Melé 2003). However, personalism has not been completely integrated conceptually with business ethics or humanistic management (Acevedo 2012). Personalism’s central statement revolves around “the existence of free and creative persons” (Mounier 1949, p. 4). By consequence, according to this author, this statement introduces “a principle of unpredictability which disperses any desire for definitive systematization” (1949, p. 4). Personalist philosophy states that unlike other animals, the human being has a sphere of liberty, an ability to be self-determined, and the will to give a meaning to her life (Leroux 1999, p. 18). “[The person] is an activity born of self-creation, communication and adhesion, who takes hold of herself and recognizes herself in his act, as a personalization movement” (Mounier 1949, pp. 5–6). In this quotation, we can recognize the principle of self-determination, of *creation of oneself by oneself*, highlighted five centuries earlier, by Pic de la Mirandole. It is consistent with the notion that humanism “tends essentially to render the human being more human, and to manifest his original

greatness by having him participate in all that which can enrich him in nature and in history” (Maritain 1936/1996, p. 153).

Humanism requires a specific definition in order to hold conceptual significance (Melé 2003). In fact, personalism contributes an important principle to the humanist ontology of the human being: “the need to be recognized by others”; stated differently, the need to be socially integrated. Personalist principles are thought to be good clear guidelines for behavior in which deontological principles from Kant are significant and useful (Melé 2009). Kant’s universal maxims focus on the treatment of other persons, which has particular relevance for organizational contexts (i.e., workers’ well-being). The source of the categorical imperative is derived “from the moral autonomy of the agent” (Guest and Woodrow 2012, p. 111). Each person’s uniqueness and inviolability is emphasized, along with each’s relational and communitarian tendencies (see Whetstone 2002 for a discussion). [The SDT (described in the next section) refers to this social aspect as “the fundamental need of relatedness” (Deci and Ryan 2000)]. Leroux (1999) makes a distinction between the “personality” and the “person”. The “personality” encompasses a person’s potential and latent talents. If the person decides to develop and realize his/her talents and express the personality, the person is required to engage with other people in order to obtain the recognition about *who one is*. The human being can really become a “person” and have a complete feeling of existence when that person receives the recognition from referent others about who s/he is and what s/he creates and achieves. “The person also appears to us as a presence directed towards the world (...) other persons do not limit her presence, they bring her into being and make it grow. She only exists toward others, she only recognizes herself through others, she only finds herself in others” (Mounier 1949, p. 33).

Following personalist philosophers, we detect a recurring theme: the need to call for the participation of a third person in order to receive evaluation of an act and what it reveals. Judgment about the self and one’s achievements requires positive affirmation from others (Leroux 1999). According to Todorov (1995), each time the person meets others, that person will try to obtain recognition from them, in order to have the feeling of existing in their eyes: “I am being seen, therefore I exist” (Todorov 1995, p. 38). A person does not exist without the acknowledgment by others. This is consistent with the major tenets of recognition theory (Honneth 1995). For HRM, it argues that a good life at work involves a managerial concern for facilitating ethical relations between employees and other members of the community (Islam 2012). In other words, the work-related goals are to be viewed as valuable among a variety of internal and external stakeholders of the organization. One comes into being as a human by developing his/her talents and potential; the best of



his/her personality, moral autonomy, and self-determination. This is a person's self-actualization (Maslow 1954). One becomes a "person" by inviting the benevolent regard of another in order to hold the attention required for obtaining recognition of who one is and what one creates. In other words, one becomes a "person" through the obtained regard of others, which allows for "existence" and "recognition." This conception of human beings is illustrated with the figure of *homo faber* from Henri Bergson, who believes "it is the essence of Man to create materially and morally, to make things and to make himself" (Bergson 1993, p. 73).

### Common Good Principle

Rooted in Aristotelian philosophy and closely related to personalist principles is the common good principle, which is an important element of our approach since it addresses the proper treatment of the community. Common good "entails cooperation to promote conditions which enhance the opportunity for the human flourishing of all people within a community" (Melé 2009, p. 232). If we operate from the premise that the purpose of organizations is to work for the good of human beings, then a guiding principle for managing an organization may involve satisfying the common good interests of stakeholders (Argandoña 1998). Building on notions of personalism, common good is achieved by affording employees in an organization the freedom to form and sustain solidarity among a community of persons (Whetstone 2002). Since humans are not isolated in society, but rather, are integrated into a social community, mutual relationships with stakeholders inside and outside the organization need to be acknowledged. In fact, a major tenet of CSR assumes that business is a member of the community in which it operates (i.e., a corporate citizen) (Logsdon and Wood 2002). Being a member of the community projects a responsibility on business to serving the community to achieve social purposes (Solomon 2003). Helping behavior, for instance, is an interpersonal organizational citizenship activity that is generated out of cooperation and affiliation, and is directed to other persons (Settoon and Mossholder 2002). Due to its role and position in society, business is obligated to work toward the common good (Melé 2009). We assume that businesses are intimately involved in the interests of various stakeholder networks (Freeman and Liedtka 1991).

Later we translate these principles into organizational processes for realizing social performance.

### Summary of the Ontology of the Person

In summary, generated from the discussion above, the main elements allowing us to understand the humanist conception of the ontology of human being are:

- the principles of liberty and non-predetermination, which allow self-determination, associated with the right for everyone to develop one's human potential;
- the principles of moral autonomy, dignity and equality between people;
- the need to be socially integrated, recognized and considered by others as a unique and singular person; and,
- the care for others and a concern for the common good.

To answer the fundamental question humanist philosophers ask—"How to become a person?" (i.e., develop our humanity)—we posit that individuals must be involved in a process of *creation of oneself by oneself, in order to develop their human potential and their personality and singularity*. But, even if persons are able to feel autonomous and meet opportunities to develop their talents and potential, they will not feel like a complete person if they are not treated with respect and dignity. Employees are treated as ends in themselves, which includes (but is not limited to) receiving recognition as singular human beings. By consequence, we can conclude that to become more and more a person, it is necessary that all the humanist principles be satisfied within one's environmental surroundings. Referring back to Kant, there is an implicit promotion of the principle of free will in the process of autonomy-creation.

At this point of our reasoning, we find the strongest similarities between the humanist principles and the fundamental needs of human beings outlined by the SDT (Deci and Ryan 2000). In our efforts to develop a humanist mode of management, we show next that recommendations offered by the SDT about what is called an "autonomy supportive work environment" share common links with processes associated with a humanist HRM. We also evaluate the effectiveness of this type of management by surveying the main empirical studies developed in the field of SDT.

### The SDT and its Principles

According to the SDT (Deci and Ryan 2000), all human beings want to be self-determinate. To become self-determinate requires the satisfaction of three innate psychological needs: (1) feelings of competence (feeling of self-efficacy, the sense that they are effectively coping with challenges), (2) autonomy (self-organizing experience, to feel in control of initiating their own actions) and, (3) relatedness (social relations based on mutual respect, as well as having a sense of being socially integrated). Self-determination deals with the degree to which a person "feels a sense of choice in one's life" and the degree to which the person "feels like

him or herself”.<sup>1</sup> These three basic fundamental needs related to self-determination are consistent with the principles contained in the humanist philosophy (outlined in the previous section). Recall that, according to the humanist ontology, to become a person, humans need to become creators of their own selves (self-determinate), to develop their autonomy, talents and potentials, and to invite the benevolent regard of others so as to obtain recognition. “For, as an end in himself, he [man] is destined to be legislative in the realm of ends, free from all laws of nature and obedient only to those which he himself gives” (Kant 1785/1959, p. 54). From humanism, we see an established list of conditions which nurture and enable the growth and development of each human being to become more and more a “person”. The SDT theory provides a psychological manifestation of the philosophical concept of *creation of oneself by oneself*. Consequently, we posit that SDT shares with the humanist philosophy the same ontology of human beings. Humanistic management models “which take the firm as a community of persons, persons are seen as conscious and free beings who make decisions on their own and who are owners of their own destiny” (Melé 2012, p. 99).

Following SDT, the satisfaction of the three fundamental needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) enhances the feeling of self-determination, which in turn permits self-regulated motivation, also called “autonomous motivation” (Gagné and Deci 2005). The self-motivated person acts on his/her own volition and not through external forces. The person has an internal locus of causality (de Charm 1968). Intrinsic motivation results when a person engages in an activity for pleasure, interest, or curiosity because s/he enjoys the activity by its own rite, and not due to any external control or obligations (Amabile 1993). “Intrinsically motivated activities were defined as those that individuals find interesting and would do in the absence of operationally separable consequences” (Deci and Ryan 2000, p. 233). This is an expression of self-determination. Intrinsic concerns also “deal with humanistic pursuits such as personal growth, fostering meaningful relationships, and contributing to society” (Bauer et al. 2005, p. 204). The latter pursuit is particularly relevant to this present paper’s approach to corporate humanistic responsibility.

Conversely, extrinsically motivated activities are defined as those that individuals would do only for their related consequences (i.e., in order to obtain rewards, compensation, or avoid punishment). They feel obligated or controlled by external contingencies (Gagné 2003). Extrinsic motivation represents an external locus of

causality. Behavior is controlled by these external contingencies and is not self-determinate. Rather, it relates to incentive systems for motivation, which are true to the standard neoclassical economics models of human nature (Frey and Jegen 2001). “External regulation, which is evident when no internalization has occurred, represents the most controlled form of extrinsic motivation, for people’s behavior is regulated by others’ administration of contingencies” (Gagné 2003, p. 203).

#### Toward an Integrated Regulation of the Self

In the SDT model, between extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation, there exists a continuum of different levels of regulation: introjection, identification, and integration. These three types of motivation are categorized as “extrinsic internalized motivation”. They represent different levels of internalization (in the self) of the external regulations, varying from the more controlled type to the more autonomous type (Deci and Ryan 2000; Gagné 2003; Gagné and Deci 2005). For our argument that humanistic HRM (supporting the need to be self-determined for employees) will generate pro-social behaviors toward intra and extra stakeholders, ultimately producing socially responsible outcomes, we need to outline these mechanisms of motivation and self-regulation. Once again we remind the reader that we do not intend for employees to be thought of as instrumental “resources” for the firm, but rather, as valued partners of the firm’s objectives. Nevertheless, this is how we envision corporate humanistic responsibility can be achieved.

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), Gagné (2003) and Gagné and Deci (2005), the satisfaction of the three basic needs—allowing for the self-determination—facilitates the internalization of values, norms, and requirements of the environment in which the individual is located. The exercise of autonomy, accountability, and enhancement of oneself promotes a feeling of self-regulation (self-control), which in turns allows the self-subordination to the collective interest of the organization or society—depending on the social group to which the individual refers. In other words, these authors explain that the need to feel self-determinate creates a dynamic that leads to the internalization of external regulations. This phenomenon of internalization of social rules and environmental constraints is presented in the literature as a prerequisite for building a coherent and unified self and for guaranteeing the creation of oneself that is socially integrated (Deci and Ryan 2000). We briefly outline the stages of internalization of external regulations next.

Introjection characterizes the first stage of the internalization of external regulations. At this level, the regulation of motives and ultimately of the behavior is controlled by a part of the self, but this regulation is still subject to social

<sup>1</sup> Words inspired by <http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/index.html>.

rules. The individual obliges oneself to comply with this rule in order to avoid a feeling of guilt caused by a violation, and to increase or maintain self-esteem and self-approval. So, when a person is driven by an introjected motivation to realize an activity, s/he is ego-involved (Deci et al. 1994; Plant and Ryan 1985; Ryan et al. 1991). One's reason to comply with some social or moral values and to achieve some goal is to protect one's own self-esteem. According to Perls (1973), there is introjection when the individual consumes but cannot digest and integrate values and norms into her deep self; that is, make the rules part of one's self-identification. Consequently, a conflict can occur between the different parts of the self, causing internal tensions and dissonance (Ehrenberg 1999). The self is not unified in the case of introjection. A part of the self wants to follow a rule, to realize an activity or to adopt a behavior in order to avoid guilt and to improve self-esteem. Nevertheless, another part of the self lacks the desire to carry out this rule, activity or behavior. Therefore, the avoidance of guilt and the need for self-esteem will function merely as a monitoring device for the other part of the self.

Next on this continuum is the identified regulation. Here internalization is higher or more developed. A person driven by an identified motivation refers to the importance of the goals achieved and values expressed by an activity to stay involved in its realization. For example, if we feel that benevolence and care for others are highly important in our society, we might volunteer our time to the community, or engage in some stewardship activity. In the case of identified regulation, we recognize that these values and activities are important and we want to participate in their promotion. "People will experience greater ownership of the behavior and feel less [internal] conflict about behaving in accord with the regulation" (Deci and Ryan 2000, p. 236). Here the self is less divided than in the case of introjection, and motivation is more autonomous.

In the next stage, with an integrated regulation the process of internalization of external regulations is the most complete and effective (Deci and Ryan 2000). The motivation is autonomous. The person is not motivated by the activity for itself (e.g., for enjoyment or curiosity)—as in the case of intrinsic motivation—but by the goals and values satisfied by the realization of the activity. That is why the integrated regulation still belongs within the continuum of extrinsic motivation. The integration characterizes the final stage of the internalization of the external regulation of the self, when the person includes the external rule in the definition of one's innermost self. Integration guarantees a stable and unified self, without internal conflict. The person performs an activity because it is intrinsically important, it makes sense, and is desirable. This is an expression of one's self, free will and is not considered an obligation. The person is task-involved (Deci et al. 1994).

For example, individuals are involved in social activities like charities, because among individuals, there is a natural tendency is to be altruistic (Dewey 1978), not only because of the belief that benevolence and care for others are important in society. Individuals are interested in balancing other peoples' needs with their own needs (Pirson and Turnbull 2011). With integration, a person recognizes herself as characterized by these values and feels that realizing these activities (charities) will allow that person to express his/her deep personality. The 'self' is congruent with the values and goals followed (i.e., care for others). "Human beings in the humanistic view...are intrinsically motivated to self-actualize and service humanity through what they do" (p. 103). This, we believe, can be achieved through socially responsible actions.

Identified, integrated and intrinsic motivations are self-regulated and generate volitional engagement in action, with an internal locus of causality (de Charm 1968). As previously stated, individuals perceive a certain degree of control over their work environment which is partially due to the culture created by the managers. "An individual's locus of control may account for identifiable differences in...discretionary behavior" (Key 2002, p. 224). With the extrinsic internalized motivation, the activity illustrates or permits the achievement of social or moral values. The activity is realized not only for the pleasure and enjoyment that could be felt intrinsically, but also for its goals, its consequences, and its perceived importance. The motivation is extrinsic to the task (unlike with intrinsic motivation) *and* internalized by the person. The extrinsic internalized motivation is fundamental for explaining volunteering, humanitarian ventures, environmental and civic conduct, citizenship in organizations, and moral and pro-social behaviors (that is, toward others and society, in general). We claim that this type of motivation is essential for managers and employees to foster behaviors oriented toward the production of social outcomes and the satisfaction of CSR principles. A humanist HRM can generate high levels of self-regulated motivation, and by effect, produce social outcomes. The processes and tools of a humanist HRM are revealed next.

### Processes, Tools and Practices for a Humanist HRM

Humanistic management gives a clear direction for responsible management—"to foster human dignity" (Spitzeck 2011, p. 51). We argue this may be facilitated through self-determination. Following the humanist philosophy, in order to develop one's self-determination, the organizational environment must satisfy all the humanist principles. Consequently, each employee should work in a workplace environment characterized by:

- (1) a large sphere of autonomy at work, enabling her to exercise her liberty;
- (2) the opportunity for stimulating challenges to develop her talents and potentials; and
- (3) a culture of trust, in order to have feelings of recognition and acceptance; to be considered as an end and not only as a means for the organization.

A main contribution of this present paper is to develop the concept of humanistic management, and realize how it can be pragmatically translated into organizational processes for external stakeholder needs. “Properly conceived humanistic management is inherently personalistic” and should be rooted in humanistic principles (Acevedo 2012, p. 213). Management can be called “humanistic” when “its outlook emphasizes common human needs and is oriented to the development of human virtue” (Melé 2003, p. 77). From this definition, the author identifies three approaches to humanistic management, citing the history of the development of the concept in organizational research, which we integrate here. Melé describes the first approach of humanistic management as one that takes into account intrinsic motivation factors as the primary concern. The second approach involves a vision which promotes an organizational culture committed to the development of people. Finally, the third approach combines aspects of the first two “considers a business enterprise as a real community of persons” (p. 77).

So, this integrated vision of the firm regards human needs and factors leading to motivation as having profound importance. To be qualified as “humanist,” the work organization has to be supportive of the employee’s liberty and the development of her moral autonomy. For humanistic management, firm resources are “administered, and organizational activities led and coordinated, in ways affirmative of human dignity and favorable for the expression and furtherance of natural law-based personal values and the common good” (Acevedo 2012, p. 213). Management should facilitate the development of employee talents and potential by instilling stimulating challenges for the employee. This is part of their managerial discretion. Moreover, management should nurture social relations based on trust, mutual respect, and recognition. Finally, each person must be considered as an end and not just as a means.

Similarly, SDT qualifies an “autonomy supportive” social context (e.g., work organization) or person as one that facilitates and supports the satisfaction of the three basic needs of employees (Deci and Ryan 2000; Gagné 2003). Recall that this satisfaction is predicted to open the door to the process of self-determination, the internalization of external regulations, and to the creation of high levels of intrinsic motivations for employees. Following

SDT, “autonomy supportive” contexts and persons within those contexts give opportunities for choice, encourage employees’ initiatives, and provide the rationale and meaning for a work activity. These contexts also give constructive feedback and enhance their subordinates’ confidence to improve their competences. Employees’ opinions regarding their feelings toward an activity or a situation are acknowledged. Employers treat them with respect and grant them recognition (Gagné 2003).

Next, consistent with the aforementioned principles and processes, we offer the following strategies and tools for generating a “humanist” work environment. We posit that these strategies should be used in concert to help facilitate a humanistic management.

- (a) Managers can choose to practice and promote a participative or a delegative management, in order to satisfy the need for autonomy. The possibilities to make decisions and take initiatives in one’s employment and to participate in developing the objectives of the company must be fostered.
- (b) A variety of tools and practices can be implemented to satisfy the employee’s needs to develop her talents and abilities at work. For example, tools and practices can involve granting more on-the-job responsibility, job enrichment opportunities and empowerment, providing continuing education and vocational training, and offering regular feedback from supervisors. Tasks should challenge the worker by corresponding to the level of the employee’s abilities. Work tasks that are too easy do not stimulate and develop abilities (Locke and Latham 2005). Conversely, challenges that are too difficult do not allow the employee to be successful in her task (Gagné and Deci 2005), and may cause frustration and dissonance.
- (c) Work relationships must be based on trust and mutual respect. When supervisors give recognition and are constantly attentive, their subordinates are more likely to trust them and thus, are also likely to develop personal feelings of being understood and supported. A regular dialog between supervisors and their subordinates including an appraisal performance and compensation system (perceived as fair by employees), and intrinsic reward inducements (e.g., words of encouragement) are likely to allow the need for recognition and mutual respect to be satisfied (see Peretti 2004, 2005). Timberland is one company known for its individual managers employing a style of management that respects human dignity in business without condition. They do so by creating a dialog about these values within the organization which helps to educate the managers that business has a humanistic purpose (Spitzeck 2011).



(d) A humanist management should also respect the self-determination logic (i.e., the singularity of the person). For instance, quite simply, discrimination at the recruitment stage and during the work contract must be forbidden. More broadly conceived, a humanist management strategy stresses that each employee must be respected in his/her singularity *and* subjectivity. Humanist principles imply the consideration of each person as a dignified individual who has the freedom to make decisions. A personalized HRM could realize this objective. For example, Google has demonstrated a unique HRM by giving its employees the freedom to manage their tasks as they see fit. The managers make certain their employees are treated as valuable partners in the company and make each of them feel an integral part of the realization of Google's vision. So while they are essential for meeting the goals of the company, Google's management attempts to show the employees that they are important in and of themselves. Although the work environment is competitive, knowledge-workers strive to achieve and be recognized by the management (Sharma 2009). Of course we acknowledge that they are recognized through the distribution of extrinsic rewards, but also they are rewarded by factors that address intrinsic needs. Managers at Google create an autonomous work environment which motivates employees to be creative and realize their own goals (Pink 2010). There is an ethical imperative that followers of a particular construction of reality (as dictated by the manager constructing that reality) are granted a similar sense of autonomy (Krippendorff 1989). Underlying this notion is an inherent freedom of choice. Presenting people with the opportunity to take responsibility for their own behavior can lead those individuals to be "that self who one really is..." (Rogers 1959, p. 171). In other words, this permits the self-actualization of the individual.

These four tools should be combined to realize humanistic management of the HRM. While each by themselves is somewhat established as legitimate management strategies, we feel that a humanist HRM is more likely to be achieved when they are utilized together within a single manager's discretion. Each practice and tool of management should be designed using as its starting point the singularity and the subjectivity of the employee. A manager who takes into account the motivations, the personality and the competencies of an employee in order to adapt his/her style of management to the workplace environment, practices "situational management" (Hersey 1985; Hersey and Blanchard 1972). Situational management is a tool for practicing

humanist management and utilizing these four tools. To help managers develop their abilities to practice situational management, the firm can offer them specific training and coaching on the topic, even involving mentoring by more experienced managers. This can constitute a program for the HRM of a firm.

We hope that with all these tools and practices we give a concrete description of how it is possible to practice a humanist HRM and how this may lead to corporate humanistic responsibility. Following our thesis, the managerial discretion corresponding to the individual level of the Wood's CSP model should be employed by managers to promote the integration of these four processes, tools and practices of HRM in order to apply the humanist principles. It is important to note that the role of the top management is essential to promote values and strategies both inside and outside a firm, and to help middle managers practice a humanistic type of management. The top direction in an organization is of primary importance. Top management must support a humanist conception of the firm, and more broadly, must acknowledge its importance to the business and society relationship. While a discussion of leader characteristics is beyond the scope of this present paper, we recognize that it is necessary for the leaders of the organization to promote humanist values, principles, and tools, and ultimately, socially responsible enterprises. Next, we discuss the role of the organization in society before describing how humanist management strategies are translated into socially responsible outcomes for the firm.

#### The Humanist Conception of the Firm's Role in Society

Using humanism involves the consideration that the well being and self-determination of the individual (either inside or outside of the firm) is the finality, or end goal of the decision-making of the manager. The humanist conception of business proposes to promote the well being and accomplishment of human beings under the constraints of realizing profits in order to stay competitive. We envision the firm as a "community of persons" (Melé 2012) whose interests must be realized and balanced as much as possible. Managers should be aware of various stakeholder needs, but in order to conceive of a "humanist social responsibility," the maximization of the utility function of these stakeholders is not emphasized because it is counter to the epistemological position of humanism. Rather, managers need to use their discretion to evaluate the subjective and dynamic conception of well being across a multitude of competing stakeholder claims. A concern for the flourishing of internal and external stakeholders is necessary to realize a firm's humanistic social responsibilities. However, pragmatically, as the stakeholders'

interests may collide, a balanced approach becomes necessary. This approach would fall in line with a recent observation that there exists an emerging movement “towards a values-driven perspective of the organization” which is translated into managers’ business strategies and decisions (Schoemaker et al. 2006).

Through managerial discretion, firms work toward the common good by “helping to create conditions in which the common good of the company can develop...” (Argandoña 1998, p. 1099). The conditions can only be fostered by creating an environment within the company that close the expectations gap for employees. In other words, the company provides for the employee what the employee at least perceives to be fair in terms of that person’s contribution at work. Managers and employees both must do whatever is required to support the situational needs of the business (Melé 2009). The assumption implicit in this statement involves the belief that employees are willing to cooperate with others in the community toward a common goal, and may forego self-interest in the process of helping (Melé 2012). Recently, Melo (2012) examined financial and social data of 295 American Fortune-500 firms from the year 2000 to 2005 to study the effects of internal organizational culture on external measures of financial and social performance. The author found that managers who fostered a humanistic organizational culture “perform well in CSP because their internal cultural values and beliefs drive them to establish a good relationship with stakeholders” (p. 33). This is consistent with findings from a study conducted by Wood and Vilkinas (2005) on CEOs’ assessment of their own success in business. One of the keys to success cited among CEOs interviewed was the use of a humanistic approach to management of employees.

We posit that CSR is promoted at the individual level by humanism, as manifested through managerial discretion in the CSP framework. To reiterate, we have shown that a humanistic style of management leads to the creation of an autonomy supportive work environment, which in turn, leads to corporate humanistic responsibility—our goal. This concept is also a major outcome of SDT when this theory is applied to the workplace. One of the key values shared by SDT and humanist philosophy is the development of the “autonomy” of the manager and of each employee. When CSR is viewed at an individual level, “autonomy” for managers is considered to be demonstrated through their “managerial discretion.” Applying a humanistic management helps to create a work environment that fosters principles consistent with CSR at the managerial discretion level of analysis, as defined by Wood’s CSP model.

Now that we have provided the intuitive and philosophical basis for the relationship between humanist principles and the achievement of CSR through managerial

discretion, it is possible to consider the social outcomes of such an approach to CSR. Outcomes of a humanistic management in terms of the CSP model are realized both inside and outside the firm with all the stakeholders in the open system environment. We show here that the managerial discretion to foster a workplace environment that allows for the self-determination of employees and management of the firm is more likely to lead to socially responsible outcomes for other stakeholder groups.

### Humanistic Management and CSP Outcomes

Several experiments and field investigations demonstrate that an autonomy supportive work environment which facilitates the satisfaction of the three fundamental needs (as outlined by SDT) permits employees to develop their feeling of being self-determined, develop higher levels of self-regulated motivation, work performance, trust in their supervisors, and loyalty toward the firm (Baard et al. 2004; Blais and Brière 1992; Deci et al. 2001; Pajak and Glickman 1989). Constructive feedback and positive communication between supervisors and employees raises the workers’ intrinsic motivation by meeting their need for competence (Boggiano and Ruble 1979; Deci 1971; Deci and Cascio 1972). These experiences demonstrate also that the feeling of self-determination is effectively associated with greater levels of self-regulated motivation. The employee who works hard for his or her boss to reciprocate perceptions of fair treatment and compensation is driven by an extrinsic internalized motivation. Similarly, an employee may refuse to cheat the employer because it would be unfair and would hurt the stakeholders of the firm (Fehr and Fischbacher 2004). Employees form moral equity judgments about behaviors directed under managerial discretion. Persons tend to take part in discretionary behaviors that are deemed equitable, but will avoid behaviors perceived to be unfair (Gino et al. 2010). This suggests that managers may be motivated to use their discretion for socially responsible initiatives not necessarily limited to ones inside the firm. Consequently, we can conclude that with employees whose motives are self-regulated, incentives and monitoring are less necessary than with individuals who internalize the values and objectives of the company. Internalization of the external regulations promotes the harmonization of the interests of employees with those of the company.

Deci et al. (1994) reveals that even when an activity is initially uninteresting, managers who are autonomy supportive can still generate higher engagement in this activity (through the internalization by employees of the importance of doing this activity) by allowing their employees to feel intrinsic motivation. Gagné (2003) demonstrates in her empirical study that an autonomy supportive work

environment enhances the pro-social behaviors thanks to the satisfaction of the three fundamental basic needs of SDT. Inversely, several empirical studies reveal that pro-social behaviors are undermined by the use of external contingencies in a context which does not allow people to feel autonomous. If people feel obligated by strong external incentives, they lose their feeling of being self-determined (Fehr and Fischbacher 2004). Consequently, a low level of internalization of social and moral values like benevolence and care for others is observed in these situations, in comparison with situations in which people are placed in a work environment characterized by choice and autonomy (Clary 1999; Fabes et al. 1989; Kunda and Schwartz 1983; Sobus 1995; Stukas et al. 1999).

Numerous experiments and field investigations conducted in USA, Bulgaria, Canada, Japan, Russia and Australia show that self-regulated motivation enhances creativity, learning, flexibility, well-being, task involvement and enhanced performance at work (Benware and Deci 1984; Deci et al. 1981; Grolnick and Ryan 1987; Hayamizu 1997; Miserandino 1996; Valas and Sovik 1993; Vallerand and Bissonnette 1992; Yamauchi and Tanaka 1998). Moreover, the works of Amabile and her team (Amabile 1988, 1993; Amabile et al. 1996; Amabile and Gryskiewicz 1989) also reveal the fundamental importance of the employees' intrinsic motivation to guarantee creativity and innovation at work.

Based on our conception of humanism previously described in this present paper, a humanistic management program consists of providing employees with a supportive work environment, with autonomy, stimulating challenges, constructive feedback, acknowledgement, mutual respect and trust, which enables employees to achieve fulfilment (Arnaud 2008). Conceptually, we find strong similarities between what SDT calls "an autonomy supportive work environment" and what we call a "humanist mode of management." Needs of autonomy, competence, relatedness, recognition, and dignity are essential for the development of the human faculties of each human being (self-determination). Likewise, as we stress in this paper, humanists define human faculties by the *creation of oneself by oneself*. We share a belief the same ontology and recommend a similar type of work environment. Consequently, based on the several empirical studies briefly cited, we can deduce that a humanist management would permit the stimulation of the feeling of self-determination and, as a consequence, self-regulated motivation. Therefore, a humanist management should allow the generation of creativity, innovation, learning, flexibility, work involvement, loyalty, pro-social behaviors, and enhanced work performance.

#### Intra-organizational Social Outcomes for Employees

When humanist values are applied to HRM, certain social outcomes are anticipated for employees of the firm. The

well-being and self-determination of the person are expected from a humanist HRM, since they are the end states and core principles of a humanist conception of management. Humanist managers try to support these outcomes in their process of managing the relationships with their subordinates. The trust, mutual respect, recognition of the person, and respect of the human dignity of the person, which belong to the set of values supported by a humanist HRM, are social outcomes for employees in terms of the CSP model.

As mentioned previously, applying the humanist philosophy to the HRM consists of giving each human being an adequate sphere of autonomy to use one's liberty, in providing stimulating challenges to develop one's talents (self-actualization), and in surrounding one with other people whom can be trusted in order to have a feeling of recognition and acceptance (i.e., belongingness); thus, to be considered as an end and not only as a means. Such social outcomes inside the firm are some evidence of a humanist type of work environment. Mutual consideration, trust and esteem between managers and their subordinates are some outcomes of the style of management we advocate here. Given that individual needs are taken into account by managers, fairness and equity are more likely to be achieved in the workplace. New Belgium Brewery in Fort Collins, Colorado is renowned for their concern for their employees' well-being as evidenced by their fair and humanistic workplace environment. Recently, the employees voted unanimously to sacrifice their end-of-year bonuses so that the organization could invest in sustainable energy initiatives that benefit the environment (Rupp et al. 2006). This example demonstrates a connection between the managerial discretion to create a humanist work environment for internal stakeholders and the pro-social outcome for external stakeholders.

The creation of an autonomy supportive work environment has been empirically shown (Baard et al. 2004; Blais and Brière 1992; Deci et al. 1994, 2001; Pajak and Glickman 1989) to lead to the facilitation of the satisfaction of the three fundamental basic needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy of employees. This satisfaction, in turn, is likely to cause higher levels of self-determination at work for employees and managers, which implies personal development, accomplishment and self-actualization of employees at work. SDT studies also demonstrate that an autonomy supportive work environment allows the reduction of stress, anxiety and suffering at work, with an improvement of employees' well-being at work (Baard et al. 2004; Deci et al. 1994, 2001). We can speculate that these outcomes will lead to a reduction of stress and burnout at work, as well.

Moreover, as we have explained previously through the process of internalization of external regulations, the more

employees are self-determinate the more they have very high levels of extrinsic internalized motivations and the more likely they will adopt pro-social behaviors (Gagné 2003). The outcomes of this process are the development of corporate citizenship behaviors among employees, managers, and other stakeholders. The alignment of the interests of these agents leads to the pursuit of social goals (e.g., involvement in benevolence, altruism, etc.). Taken together, the social outcomes for employees of humanistic management positively affect the treatment toward other stakeholder groups of the firm, both internally and externally related. The extra-organizational outcomes are discussed next.

#### Extra-Organizational Social Outcomes: For External Stakeholder Groups

Thus, the more a work environment is autonomy supportive the more likely employees are to internalize the values of the firm (Deci et al. 1994; Deci and Ryan 2000; Eghrari and Deci 1988). We posit that the humanist philosophy applied to HRM processes is a way to create an autonomy supportive work environment. So, if the firm adopts a humanist culture and vision, employees and managers are more likely to adopt a humanistic vision of their activity. Applying humanist philosophy to managerial practice can lead to the creation of the *conditions* needed to foster the internalization of the values and visions of the organization by employees. By the same token, the application of humanist philosophy to the goals and values of the organization allows the employees to seek and propose humanistic *ends* both inside and outside the firm. In other words, they would be empowered to promote their activities toward this goal, if they internalize the organizational culture of the firm. “An ideal citizenship interpretation restates ethical responsibility into voluntarism language intended to influence managerial discretion concerning universal human rights” (Windsor 2006, p. 93). There also exists some evidence from industry of the benefits of this type of approach. For example, Walgreens prides itself as an organization whose management focuses on the respectful treatment of their employees as well as stakeholders external to the organization. “Integral human development of individuals and communities” is the company’s goal (Melé and Mammoser 2011, p. 582). Their approach is believed to lead to a humanistic community involvement.

Deci and Ryan (2000) discuss the need for each human being to be socially and mentally integrated as part of the self-determination process. In order to be socially integrated, each human being is encouraged to adopt the norms, values, and rules of behavior of the community to which that person belongs. But as the human being also

needs to be mentally integrated, this adoption of the norms, values and rules of behaviors of the community must culminate in a real integration in the self. Otherwise, the person could feel an internal conflict between hi/her deep desires (of one’s real self) and the necessities of that person’s social self (conflict between what one wants and what one has to do). This could lead to a low level of self-control, as emphasized by Eghrari and Deci (1988) and Deci et al. (1994). The implication is that the self-determination process does not lead to individualism, but toward cooperation between members of a same community. People have a natural tendency—reinforced and affirmed by the process of self-determination—to integrate the norms and values of our society (Frederick 1995). The more people are self-determinate, the more they will freely choose to care about common norms and values (i.e., the common good). This process can explain the production of pro-social behaviors. Thus, there is no contradiction between the promotion of personal liberty, dignity and self-determination, and the cooperation of people and the care for others. Thus, allowing high levels of autonomy is not supposed to lead to more individualism, but inversely, to lead to high levels of acceptance of the community’s values and rules (internalization of the external regulations such as social norms and moral values). In essence, this is what Gagné (2003) refers to as “pro-social behaviors” (e.g., benevolent work, altruistic action, etc.).

We emphasize that when the environment is autonomy supportive, internalization of the constraints and rules are facilitated. Ehrenberg (1999) explains that it is easier to be in conflict against a salient authority, for instance, a chief, than to be against an internal source of obligation that is mentally constructed by the individuals themselves. Allowing autonomy makes external sources of authority less salient to the individual, causing her to become more responsible for her actions and decisions. This point associated with the need to be integrated in an environment and not experience internal conflicts, leads to a very high level of internalization of the rules and values of one’s community. So we can conclude that people who are self-determinate are more pro-social than those who are not. They do not need to exercise excessive or illegitimate power; they are charismatic leaders who hold other-regarding values. Self-determinate people are oriented toward growth and personal development. They likely feel high levels of empathy and consider the interests of others, since they experience high levels of internalization of social norms, moral values and environmental constraints.

Due in part to perceptions of fairness, equity, and the mechanism of social exchange and reciprocity, a humanist HRM will produce other-regarding responses by workers, positive reciprocity, and citizenship behavior. Employees will view their firm’s internal and external social



performance and will form normative judgments about the firm based on these observations. “Most individuals share a basic respect for human dignity and worth—and this morality-based concern for justice drives our...dealings with, and reactions to, organizations” (Aguilera et al. 2007, p. 842). Employees have a great capacity to be *concerned about* the social impacts of the firm and possess a *willingness to* contribute to their organization’s social consciousness (Rupp et al. 2006). It takes a managerial discretion grounded in HRM principles to elicit this response from employees. If simple acts of fairness by managers are perceived (by employees) to be contributions to the social exchange relationship workers will be more motivated to reciprocate with their own voluntary pro-social behaviors (Masterson et al. 2000). Logically, it is reasonable to presume that acts which promote employee well-being will elicit a similar “other-regarding” response by workers. When managers adhere to justice principles, it is “likely to trigger norms of reciprocity in employees, motivating them to engage in behaviors valued by their managers” (Scott et al. 2009, p. 759). These studies support our contention that the generation of pro-social behaviors is a necessary condition to generate positive actions to satisfy interests of external stakeholders.

## Discussion and Implications

Research in humanistic management is still relatively new and is in its early stages of development (Spitzeck 2011). One of the goals of the research in this area, in general, is to reinterpret the strategic management of business and offer a new vision for managers that includes “serving the societies in which business operates...” (p. 51). Society is where individuals, groups, and businesses interact. Humanism applied to management is achieved if persons in an organization can nurture social virtues within themselves and promote them to society (Melé and Mammoser 2011). Humanistic management involves finding more effective ways to conduct business, especially in a troubled economy (Melé et al. 2011). In response to calls for a more humanistic synthesis in business, we feel that our present project adds to the humanistic management field by offering a strategy for achieving positive social performance through a humanist style of the HRM.

Our purpose in this theoretical paper is to demonstrate that the adoption of humanistic management—through an autonomy supportive work environment— can lead to the achievement of social goals and the development and maintenance of a sense of responsibility directed to stakeholders inside and outside of the firm. Working within the framework of Wood’s (1991) CSP model, we have focused here on the individual level of analysis where the

principle of managerial discretion is defined in terms of the values of social betterment and duty to stakeholders. We argued that a humanistic management nurtures the individual level of social responsibility by defining the principle of managerial discretion clearly, so managers can achieve pro-social outcomes. This is a potentially significant advance for CSR research.

CSR is still considered a contestable concept (Windsor 2006). One reason for this may be the fact that through decades of research on the concept, both empirical and theoretical, there remain different ways of conceiving what social responsibility is. Returning to our earlier discussion about the development of the CSR paradigm, we are hoping that the application of humanist principles of management to the principles of social responsibility serves as a unifying theme for future research in CSR. The disparate streams of research characterizing CSR debates could potentially be unified by a humanist management philosophy, at the level of managerial discretion. Windsor (2006) identifies two main approaches. The economic responsibility approach promotes wealth generation in the markets subject only to minimal government regulation and very culturally relativistic ethics (Jensen 2000). The rational self-interest of individual managers is generally a key underlying assumption of this perspective. Using humanism as the underlying doctrine of socially responsible managerial choices involves inverting the logic of the profit maximization principle and proposes another ontology for the actor leading to an alternate conception of the motivations in the economic sphere of activity.

Another approach to CSR involves an understanding that managers should use their discretion to work for social betterment. This approach is more stakeholder-oriented and substantially different in its purpose than the approach focusing on the objective reality of human beings. This view of CSR “advocates strong corporate self-restraint and altruism duties and expansive public policy strengthening stakeholder rights” (Windsor 2006, p. 93). Individual human rights are emphasized in the decision-making processes of managers, and philanthropic ventures are considered a “discretionary” transfer of wealth from shareholders to non-fiduciary stakeholders. The shortcoming of this approach is that there is no useful process for balancing the needs and addressing the human rights of the stakeholders. The fiduciary view lacks the normative base. This ethical view lacks the operational practicality. Humanistic management provides a normative foundation for the first view, and also offers processes by which managers can achieve the socially responsible goals through SDT.

Windsor (2006) interprets responsibility in terms of an “ideal citizenship”, which is based in the ethical theory of responsibility. He expands the concept by utilizing a freedom of choice lexicon that is meant to influence

managerial discretion over decisions regarding the natural entitlements of human beings. In this present paper, we address his point and provide a solution for creating that language for ideal citizenship—humanist principles. We offer that by creating a work environment that allows for managers and employees to self-determine; humanistic management can lead to pro-social goals. In our literature review of CSR, we find that very little research has focused on the managerial discretion principle. Thus, our paper addresses an underdeveloped aspect of social responsibility—the individual manager’s choice to satisfy and balance the needs of multiple stakeholders, particularly employees.

It should be acknowledged that key decision-makers’ personal values and psychological biases affect how they perceive social responsibility and how they make strategic choices (Hambrick and Mason 1984). Since the discretion of managers is in part a function of individual characteristics, it is possible that those managers with a humanities background will be less likely to focus only on the profits of the organization and will be more willing to take into account the needs of others (Manner 2010). Managers versed in the humanities may also have a positive inclination about the cooperative nature of persons. Rivera and de Leon (2004) found that CEOs in the hotel industry who went above-and-beyond mere compliance and focused on the well-being of other stakeholders (including employees) were educated in the humanities. These factors are beyond the scope of the present paper, but we encourage future research to account for varying manager’s perceptions of CSR due to differences in individual experience, personal characteristics, and background.

For a humanistic theory to be useful in terms of its predictive potential and explanatory value, it should meet certain conditions. Among those conditions are a *clarification of values* and the *reform of society* (Griffin 1994). This is also a condition identified by Swanson’s (1995) revised CSP model. A useful humanistic theory facilitates the reform of society in that it generates a change of thinking. We aspire to have our approach “raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life...” and to “generate fresh alternatives for social action” (Gergen 1982, p. 109). Thus, another value of our efforts in this paper is the potential for the generation of future research in CSR, using our humanistic approach. Pragmatically, future research should consider empirically testing whether the humanist principles lead to a significant amount of socially responsible actions. Of course, this can be done in field experiments and in examinations of company “best practices”, but we contend that there is potential in operationalizing humanist principles and self-determination with the variables developed in the MSCI ESG Research database.<sup>2</sup> Updated every year, the MSCI database evaluates and rates companies across different

stakeholder groups for their attention to those relationships. For 20 years, the database has been used to determine socially responsible investing, and more recently has been used to determine annual corporate citizenship rankings. The social ratings include: community, corporate governance, diversity, employee relations, environment, product, and human rights. We believe there is an opportunity with this database to evaluate whether humanist principles lead companies to achieve CSP and corporate financial performance. In social audits, managers could explore their strengths and weaknesses related to employee self-determination, pro-social choice, and human rights.

There is little satisfactory theoretical synthesis of the work in CSR and corporate citizenship (Windsor 2006). Any such systematic cohesion “must discover some unknown subset of ethical principles also yielding corporate competitive advantage” (pp. 93–94). We agree with Acevedo (2012) and strongly believe that humanism serves this purpose. Humanist principles offer a potential solution for CSR by creating a work environment that stimulates managers and employees to choose socially responsible outcomes for the stakeholders within the firm, and in society. In this paper, we pursue this line of thought very modestly and cautiously, by only focusing on the individual level of analysis in the CSP framework. We see this as an additional step in a research stream which applies humanistic management to the organizational and societal levels. Future research should continue on this line of inquiry.

## Conclusion

In his award-winning book (Social Issues in Management Division of the Academy of Management, Best Book Award 2009), Sumner Marcus Award-winning author, William C. Frederick writes about the history of CSR and the challenges facing scholars in the field in the future (Frederick 2006). One of these main challenges is to find common values on which all future research can be based. He calls on researchers to identify clear principles that would give clarity of meaning and purpose to CSR, in order to bring some unity to the field. We hope our paper partially addresses Frederick’s call to action. Ironically, even more recently, similar pleas for new interpretations of what constitutes socially responsible leadership at the managerial level are still being issued. In 2012, the Management

<sup>2</sup> MSCI ESG Research is the successor to KLD, Innovent, and IRRIC, which were acquired through the completion of MSCI’s June 1, 2010 acquisition of RiskMetrics. The MSCI ESG Indices use ratings and other data, analysis and information supplied by MSCI ESG Research which is therefore the successor of KLD Research Analytics (MSCI ESG Indices 2010).

History Division at the Academy of Management awarded the best paper to Humphreys et al. for work on the importance of micro-level initiatives that benefit the greater society (CEBC Halloran Prize). By utilizing a humanistic approach to the HRM, we contribute to the development of a new vision for business management fields that integrate normative considerations of business' role in society (Grassl and Habisch 2011; Melé et al. 2011). The future of CSR research should include a humanistic synthesis for business. This is not a far-fetched goal. Real world cases referred to in this paper, among others, are evidence that a humanistic management is feasible. We take this a step further to claim that it is also feasible for a humanist HRM to lead to corporate humanistic responsibility.

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