

# Human Resource Management in an International Context

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International human resource management is defined as a set of specific activities, functions and processes that are undertaken to attract, develop and retain human resources in a company whose business has a multinational character.<sup>6</sup> This definition suggests that the main factor that differentiates domestic from international human resources management is the character of the environment in which the company operates. Almost every country has its own peculiarities in terms of organizing the relations between capital and labour, which significantly influence the business strategy of the company. Comparative human resources management appears in this sense as a discipline. These complexities become even more accentuated in the context of international SHRM research, which considers the growing importance of multinational corporations (MNCs) and the influence of complex global strategic business decisions on the human resource activities of these MNCs (Sparrow and Braun, 2007). In this introduction to "Sustainability and Human Resource Management: Developing sustainable business organizations" we outline the content and structure of the book. In this book, our academic and practitioner authors explore the potential of sustainability as a new paradigm and Sustainable HRM as a concept for HRM.

**GROUP ACTIVITY** Find the Best International Human Resource Management Practices Project in the special issue of the Human Resource Management journal mentioned above. What are some of the methodological problems involved in such large-scale regional surveys? Kerr et al. firmly 52 — Human Resource Management in an International Context supported the argument that business practices around the world would converge towards the most efficient, namely the US model, as technology imposes similar structures and work organization (Holden 2001). As a "monothetic" social science approach (Brewster 2001, p. 256) the convergence approach looks for similarities in business, and for our purposes, in HRM, applications in different countries. Human resource management (HRM or HR) is the strategic approach to the effective management of people in a company or organization such that they help their business gain a competitive advantage. It is designed to maximize employee performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives. Human resource management is primarily concerned with the management of people within organizations, focusing on policies and systems. HR departments are responsible for overseeing employee-benefits design