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Social media as a Communication Channel, Control Tool and Labour Market Intermediate.
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Abstract

Over the past decades, flexibilization has significantly changed the Swedish labour market. Social media has during the same time period changed the way people share information, communicate and has in many ways become an arena of empowerment. The purpose of this article is to discuss emerging consequences for the practice of Human Resources Management (HRM) regarding social medias role in affecting labour market hierarchies on a flexible labour market. The article is based on empirical interview material with HR- and operations managers. The interviews were based on a discussion on possibilities and challenges related to digitalization on a flexible labour market from an employer’s perspective. In the material the increasing use of social media became evident. Discussing the research question How does the use of social media affect HRM on a flexible labour market? the article concludes the use of social media from three perspectives: as a communication channel, as a control tool and as a labour market intermediate. These three perspectives are connecting social media with the practice of HRM, creating challenges that has to be considered for long term employee resilience and a sustainable HRM on a flexible labour market.

Introduction - Challenges for HR on a changing labour market

Over the past decade the sharing of personal information on social media has increased and changed the way people communicate in all aspects of their daily lives (Arnaboldi and Coget, 2016). Employers can communicate with employees and possible employees via social media, for instance Facebook, but also largely access private information.
The ongoing flexibilization of the labour market consists of a growing amount of temporary employments, parallel part-time jobs, freelancers and staffing agencies, increasing short staff turnover and individuals switching between employers, branches, and professions. Since the end of the last millennium, the proportion of time-limited employments of the total number of employments has doubled from 8% in 1990 to 15% in 2015 on the Swedish labour market (SCB, 2015). During the same period, staffing companies have been established and taken over an increasingly large part of the labour market (Bemanningsföretagen, 2016; Bergström, Håkansson, Isidorsson, & Walter, 2007). Flexibilization of the labour market has been described as a consequence of the ongoing digitalization, globalization and individualization affecting practices of work, organizational processes and labour market structures (Crevani, Hallin, Lindell 2016). This shift has been described as a structural change due to the 2008 financial crisis. While low-wage countries gained an increasing share of the labour market, high-income countries were pushed back (Standing, 2011; Vosko, 2009). Changes due to the financial crisis has come to call for an additional framing of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices located in the notion of employee resilience (Bardoel, Pettit, De Cieri, & McMillan, 2014). This substantial change on the labour market has been described as a discursive shift in view of labour market relations, where the individual has come to be placed in the center of responsibility for her or his own employability (Fejes, 2010). But the shift in labour market structure has also been ascribed to the new generation entering the labour market with an individualized and restless relationship to labour (Schewe et al., 2013). With an increased turnover of employees in the Swedish labour market, the need to collect and survey relevant information becomes evident for employers to keep track of employees and possible employees.

Due to digitalization, social media has recently become an integral part of people’s private, social and professional lives. Social media has created possibilities for empowerment, cooperation and communication between employers, employees and possible employees, but has also created dilemmas regarding control and discipline. For HRM the access to information on social media and social media as a possible communication channel highlights the delicate balance between organizational priorities and coworkers rights and needs (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Jacobson & Tufts, 2013; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). This is not a new phenomenon, but HRs involvement in the use of social media tends to include policies for the use of social media by the employees themselves (Tufts, Jacobson, & Stevens, 2015). In Sweden the use of social media by employees, and the relation between publishing private information on work related issues, has been tested by the Labour court at two occasions. In one of the Labour court judgements (AD dom nr 25/12) an employee was terminated from his job due to inappropriate comments on Facebook, which was overruled by the judge. In the other Labour court judgement (AD dom 61/15) an employee’s footprints on Facebook rendered changed work duties and a reminder from the employer. Also in this case the employers claim was overruled by the judge. Hence employees’ rights to post private thoughts, opinions and habits are tolerably protected in Sweden. Many employers also struggle to adequately protect employees rights to privacy in stored communication, passwords etc. in the workplace (Jacobson & Tufts, 2013). In Sweden, as in many other countries, all processing of personal data that is collected and/or stored digital is legislated under several regulations and rules, for instance in the labour legislation and in regulations by the Swedish Work Environment Authority (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2017). According to information on the webpage by the Swedish Data Protection Agency organizations using social media such as Facebook are responsible also for private comments by others. The Swedish Data Protection Agency state that for instance data on employees private health should be seen as sensitive information and treated with extra care by employers. Further data on private information such as subjective judgements on personal behavior, personal profiles etc.
are not to be gathered without the employees expressed consent or with the use of standardized check boxes or scroll lists (Datainspektionen, 2017). However, recent research show that written policies regulating the employing organizations right to monitor employees’ social media activities still is rare (Tufts et al., 2015).

Human Resources (HR) traditionally concern the relation between employee and employer from attracting, recruiting, through the career within the organization, and to the exit from the organization. But due to the increasing flexibilization on the labour market we can no longer assume that the relationship between the person performing the job and the person paying for it is based on a long-term relationship between an employer and an employee (Bonet, Cappelli, & Hamori, 2013; Bredin, 2006; Bredin & Söderlund, 2011).

The flexibilization of the labour market as well as use of social media, are creating new conditions for career patterns and loyalties, but also changing the conditions for organizational governance, ways of organizing and leadership (Garsten, 1999). The generation that recently entered the labour market is the first generation of “digital natives”, the first generation to grow up with social technology as daily tools for communication (Junco & Mastrodicasa, 2007; Palfrey & Gasser, 2013). The net.generations (Junco & Mastrodicasa, 2007) establishment on the labour market ads to the need to investigate the escalating use of social media on the practice of HRM. The purpose of this article is to discuss consequences for HRM due to the increasing use of social media.

**Previous research on HRM and social media**

Social media stands for tools in which users collaborate, share information create networks and communities. Social media enables humans to communicate and engage in each other independent of time and space (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Schneckenberg, 2009a; Siegert, 2015). The social media sites mentioned in this text have a lot in common, hence this overview concludes use of social media, web 2.0 and social networking sites in HRM.

As already mentioned, in current research on the connection between HRM and social media, social media is described and defined with a number of terms, for instance: web 2.0 (Azeem, Azeem, Yasmin, & Yasmin, 2016; Kavanagh & Thite, 2009; Schneckenberg, 2009a, 2009b), social network sites (SNS or SNW) (Arnaboldi & Coget, 2016; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Caers et al., 2013) or the broader term social technology (Siegert, 2015). In literature on social media, web 2.0, SNS, SNW and social technology spans over a wide variety of social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), blogs, micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), and mobile applications (apps) that enable interaction online (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp) (Arnaboldi & Coget, 2016; Azeem et al., 2016; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Caers & Castelyn, 2011; Kavanagh & Thite, 2009; Kluemp, Mitra, & Wang, 2016; Linacre, 2017; Schneckenberg, 2009a, 2009b; Siegert, 2015). McAfee (2006) define what is known as SLATES (search, links, authoring, tags, extensions and signals) the now common use of new social software platforms within companies or between companies and their partners or customers. SLATES is linked to how organizations use Web 2.0, often referred to as Enterprise 2.0 or HR 2.0 (Azeem et al., 2016; Schneckenberg, 2009a). The social networking site Facebook was introduced in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his colleagues, at the time students at Harvard University. Initially limited to Harvard students, Facebook was soon distributes to other universities and eventually opened for users around the world (Farooq & Jan, 2012). Barry and Pearson (2015) estimate that users of social media to approximately 1,7 billion worldwide. The authors expect the number to enhance 2.6 billion
in the year 2017. The internet source Facebook Newsroom (2017) estimates the number of monthly users of Facebook alone to 1.8 billion in 2017. Even if these numbers might be slightly inaccurate and neutral information is difficult to access, one should agree that the size of this social media site is at least substantial and the growth rate impressive (Caers et al., 2013). Unlike many other channels for communication within and between organizations and their environment, Facebook allows for uncensored, unpredictable two-way communication (Champoux, Durgee, & McGlynn, 2012). And at the same time as Facebook provides free advertising and promotion towards customers, it can function as an efficient information source within organizations that enhances productivity as well as a problematic, unproductive waste of time in office work (Linacre, 2017).

Previous literature highlights Facebook as one of the most common social media channels to search for possible employees (Caers & Castelyns, 2011). Facebook can therefore be described as a great opportunity for recruiters to search the right candidates, to enhance collaborative learning and engage employees in joint organizational goals, but at the same time it can be a difficult platform that creates challenges such as time wastage, personal conflicts, threats of creating bulky information and losing information confidentiality (Azeem et al., 2016). Despite that, Facebook seems to a wider extent concern individuals private spheres rather than for instance LinkedIn that seems to mainly concern professional spheres (Caers & Castelyns, 2011). Hence the use of Facebook in the relation between the private and the professional seems interesting to further investigate.

Due to the extensive use of Facebook to gather information for private as well for organizational use, Facebook can be expected to affect HRM in current organizational development and decisions as well as in the future (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Caers & Castelyns, 2011; Holland, Cooper, & Hecker, 2016; Slovensky & Ross, 2012; Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Elving, 2014). The extensive everyday use of social media, such as Facebook, has come to impact organizations in a wide variety of ways and has come to play an increasing role in communication between individuals, groups and organizations, hence it is reasonable to expect Facebook as well as social media in general to affect various HRM decisions (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Champoux et al., 2012; Klumper et al., 2016; Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015; Linacre, 2017; Robertson & Kee, 2017; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). In the next two sections previous research on social media affecting HR is discussed under two headlines: Social media for information and communication, respectively Social media for empowerment.

Social media for information and communication
Social media has been described as one of the most powerful communication tools inside and outside of organizations (Holland et al., 2016). Social media today offer potential for employers to search for current and possible employees' experiences and competencies. Compared to previous generations there is a new openness of the younger generation to share private information, which can be traced to the increasing use of social media (Schewe et al., 2013). Even if social media use in HRM can have negative effects, the possibility to be able to voice concerns related to work has found to increase job satisfaction especially among young employees. (Holland et al., 2016). Various studies have been made recently on the use of social media, addressing different aspects of HRM outcomes and the relation between
employer and employee. Pervious research has described how social media has potential to support HRM towards sustainable, long term success in the communication between employee and employer. Linacre (2017) describe how the use of social media enables HR managers to maximize efficiency in four major functions of HRM: several new applications are advanced for training and development, performance can be measured through new techniques, information on health and safety can be disseminated quicker than ever around large organizations and the use of social media has come to revolutionized recruitment. According to Kavanagh and Thite (2009) the use of social media within the organization can be used to promote internal career planning, instead of employees looking for a career outside of the organization. Hence the prime reason of using social technology in HRM functions can be described as a cheap and powerful tool to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in communication with employees in key areas of HRM. Used in the right way, social media can help management inform and communicate to and with employees. Azeem et al. (2016) explain how social media can play a vital role in execution of HRM practices and processes in a secure, effective and efficient manner. Social media can according to the authors be used to perform HRM staffing functions, training and development and even help organizations transform their internal culture. Since social media can be accessed regardless of physical location, contact can be made between employers and employees over wide geographical distances. However, as many fruitful ways of using the benefits in social media as there is, there is also a number of risks for HR using social media.

On social media individuals tend to post private information, pictures and opinions not always shared in new social relations, hence the possibility to quickly and cost efficiently reach information on applicants is a useful tool for many hiring organizations. However for HRM there might be risks for bias when collecting private information without context. For instance pictures of using alcohol might relate to a few single occasions in a person’s life, but might be attributed to abuse of alcohol by the recruiter and result in a hasty rejection decision. Some applicants might select very stringent privacy settings for individuals not in their private network. This might lead recruiters to collect different amounts of material with different contexts for different applicants. Also private information on age, disabilities and ethnicity might be visible o social media, with a risk of affecting HRM decisions in biased ways (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Caers & Castelyns, 2011; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). To handle private information on social media in a sustainable, defendable way HR managers must be aware of these risks and must ensure fair and uniform procedures in selecting, recruiting as well as for searching for information on current employees.

Social media is a two way communication channel where both employers and employees might collect information on each other. But previous studies describe a risk that organizations might tend to display themselves with polished and highly embellished description of the company (Crevani & Hallin, 2009). This creates an uneven two-way communication where the individual tends to post private, and in many cases unpolished, information, while organizations tend to post corrective and embellished information. Hence social media is described as a possibility for two-way communication, however examples from previous studies above describe one-way communication problems occurring when either employees or employers collect and risk to misunderstand information.
Social media and empowerment

Both the external and internal use of social media in organizations can have the effect of empowering employees (Kavanagh & Thite, 2009; Schneckenberg, 2009a, 2009b). Social media derives from the idea that communication not only is based on one actor producing information, but that information is produced and owned by its users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The strength of, and the reason for masses to be attracted towards social media is due to the possibility of connecting people in a user friendly context, efficiently and effectively (McAfee, 2009). Social media not only encourages communication between employer and employees, social media also enables communication between employees and external stakeholders. Due to the great possibilities for learning, Karjaluoto, Huotari, Ulkuniemi, Saraniemi, and Mäläskä (2015) claim that organizations should encourage employees to create content and use social media instead of restricting it. Enhanced job satisfaction due to use of social media, creating the possibility to make ones voice heard in work related matters, can be seen as an indicator of employee engagement and involvement (Holland et al., 2016). As reciprocity can be considered the true driver in social websites, social networking can be used to replace traditional HRM methods in creating a knowledge culture and facilitating collaboration between employees. This highlights group interaction and has the possibility to enhance the feeling of ownership amongst employees (Schneckenberg, 2009a, 2009b). The Arabic Spring and Wikileaks are examples of social media as a tool that has empowered people beyond their traditional sphere of communication (Arnaboldi & Coget, 2016)

But in previous research there seems to be at least two ways of addressing power relations in relation to social media use: either social media use as a way of empowering users, or social media as an increase of control, monitoring and surveillance, hence social media can both distribute and consolidate power (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). The possibility to communicate on social media might enable employees to speak freely (Schoneboom, 2008). However, at the same time social media use in HR highlights problems with individual privacy and integrity (Caers & Castelyns, 2011). Through the use of social media the individual becomes visible, hence putting itself at the risk of surveillance. The visibility on Facebook can be understood through Foucault’s architectural structuring of visibility in the Panopticon. However unlike the Panopticon, Facebook is not to be understood as a threat of constant visibility but at the same time as visible, the individual is under the constant threat of disappearing and becoming obsolete (Bucher, 2012). Social media is blurring boundaries between working and private space and under the risk of being monitored by peers or managers, individuals might start using boundary tactics to avoid surveillance (Siegert, 2015).

Aim

Even if a relative overview of the relation between technology, work and organization studies is problematic, the importance of digging into their prevalence is necessary (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Social media, especially Facebook, has been described by several researchers over the past years, however there are still several gaps to be filled in our understating of organizational consequences (Caers et al., 2013; Charoensookmongkol, 2014). There especially seems to be a knowledge gap on how information and communication over social media should be managed by organizations (Azeem et al., 2016; Jacobson & Tufts, 2013; Tufts et al., 2015). This gap is bridging and the use of social media with the practice of HRM, which makes consequences for HRM functions particularly interesting to study. The purpose of this paper is to discuss emerging consequences for the practice of HRM regarding social medias role in affecting labour market hierarchies on a flexible labour market. Flexibilization on the labour
market can be seen as a transition where old notions of stability and the individual's loyalty to a single employer is challenged and new creative opportunities and risks in the relationship between employers and employees opens up. The shift in labour relations has even been described as on the point of a paradigm break for sustainable HRM (Bonet et al., 2013). The changing structure on the labour market is calling for new ways for HRM to engage in organizational and employee resilience, creating means for employees as well as organizations to adapt positively to change for instance by empowering employees to a sense of control through involvement in decision-making and helping employees find strategies and cope with multiple work (Bardoel et al., 2014; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012; Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge, 2013). Hence, the research question that this article is based on can be formulated: How does the use of social media affect HRM on a flexible labour market? The article concludes in the use of social media from three perspectives: as a communication channel, as a control tool and as a labour market intermediate. These three perspectives are connecting social media with the practice of HRM, creating challenges that has to be considered for long term employee resilience and a sustainable HRM on a flexible labour market.

Methodological remarks
To reach a wider understanding on the use of social media affecting HRM, ten semi-structured interviews with employer representatives (Operations Managers or Directors of Human Resources) in the regions Västmanland, Södermanland and Dalarna were conducted during the fall and winter of 2016-2017. Västmanland, Södermanland and Dalarna broadly follows the distribution of the number of employees by industry as Sweden in general. In the region, as well as in the country as a whole, more women are working in the public sector and more men in the private sector such as manufacturing and construction. In the food industry and in retail, gender distribution is more evenly distributed, hence reducing the risk of genderbias in the material.

For the sample of respondents ten of the region's largest employers with employees about 200-7000 were selected. Four of the respondents represented different industry companies, one the food industry, one the retail industry, two public sector counties and two private sector temporary employment agencies. The aim was to explore challenges and opportunities for employers on a flexible labour market. The interviewees were guaranteed anonytness.

The interviews were conducted at the managers offices, lasted 50-90 minutes, were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview material was manually sorted on thematic context, selecting sentences or sequences related to employer-employee relations which where coded on content (Basit, 2003). With this qualitative, thematic analysis of the interview material, the problematic use of social media became evident. Swedish was the language used for the interviews, translation to English in the citations used in the paper was made by the author.

Employers about social media use on a flexible labour market
The following part of this paper contains material from interviews with employers: HR managers and operations managers. In the interview material the use of social media, especially Facebook, became evident. In the light of the ongoing flexibilization on the labour market, three emerging practices due to the use of social media were described in the interview material: social media as a communication channel, as a control tool and as a labour market intermediate.
Social media as a communication channel

In the interview material the statement is repeated that the younger generation is moving quicker than previous generations between employers, trades and professions. This increased turnover is problematic for the employers since it enhances costs for attracting, selecting and recruitment, as well as training new employees. At the same time the turnover and move between trades and professions gives the hiring organization new competences that employees have not had before. This highlights the need to detect and document competences.

Especially young employees can invite, and expect, their manager to be friends on Facebook. This is described in a positive way by the respondents in the interview material. There are no descriptions in the material that describes being friends with employees as stepping over the managers own private boundaries. Instead being friends and sharing information is described as a way to enhance communication between employer and employee. One operations manager describes how he puts in many hours every week to keep in touch with his employees over Facebook. For him this is an important part of being manager and he describes a specific case with sexual insult between two employees that could be detected and solved with the help of his close communication over social media with the exposed employee. His overview of employees’ habits, interests and family issues over their social media profiles helps him in his daily communication and in conducting a close leadership. This manager is working in a sector with a large share of part-time and short term employments. Social media creates a way for management in this sector to stay in touch with possible employees in between periods of employment. Being friends on social media and communicating about private issues on a daily bases is, by the employer, described as an open-door-policy vis a vi the employees.

“I’m in the Facebook group and I like things and I am in and I praise people, so it is not, it’s not that I in reality talk to the other managers, I talk to all the employees. So it’s not that I talk to the head of department here, that I only communicate with her and she can take the rest. No, we broaden. I mean we broaden our leadership and we try to tell our employees that you are welcome to us anytime, so it’s an open-door-policy.”

But as well as communication over social media can be a way of connecting people, it can be a way of disconnecting. One operations manager describes the use of Facebook in the coffee room at his plant. Today, he says, both young and old employees use their smartphones during the coffee break. Over social media they communicate with their friends over wide geographical distances, but not necessarily with their fellow colleagues drinking coffee next to them. In some teams, this communication over especially Facebook has created stronger bonds between members of the team, with past and present colleagues, sharing pictures and comments both at work and on their free time. For other teams this has come to divide team members that do not communicate over coffee at all. The operations manager describes how this has become a problem especially for employees without private smart phones, for various reasons. Hence the use of social media within teams can enhance communication, but at the same time exclude team members without the right private technical equipment, if smart phones is not provided by the employer.

“They (one of the teams) have their own group on Facebook where they can run all their communication. And it is smooth, of course, but it is not... they simply own it themselves, there is no initiative from the company to have it that way, it is just for
These quotes show how social media, i.e. Facebook, is described as a powerful tool to enhance close communication both vertical and horizontal in organizations in its widest definition. On a flexible labour market the need to be able to communicate with employees and possible employees both when hired and in between hiring has increased. Social media is in the interview material described as a communication tool that enables both managers and colleagues to communicate at work, on private time and in between hiring’s. At the same time this possibility to communicate requires a smart phone and social media accounts. Even if most adults in Sweden own a smart phone, this is obviously not the case for everybody. Nor does everybody have accounts on social media.

Social media is in the first quote described as a two-way channel that enables managers, employees and possible employees to communicate in a sense on equal terms. In the second quote new structures in relation to this communication possibility are described where communication is decreasing between colleagues on a daily basis and even being an obstacle hard to overcome for individuals without smart phones or Facebook accounts.

Social media as a control tool

In the interview material ethical dilemmas on visibility of private information on Facebook is described. In a few parts of the interviews HR managers describe how being in good physical and psychological shape can be important to endure stressful work. When employees invite, and expect, their manager to be friends on Facebook they also come to share private and family related information. But then one HR manager asks; how is she allowed to use the information that is visible on an employee’s Facebook profile? If the employee explicitly seems to conduct a not healthy lifestyle, how is she to use that information? Can she take legal action if information is revealed that over time can endanger the employee’s possibility to perform his or her daily work? The use of social media as a control tool therefore highlights questions regarding private integrity as well as concerning practical labour law.

At employees private social media accounts there might also be information about that the employee is doing work at another employer. With an increase in part-time jobs, some of the employers say in the interviews that they accept, or even expect, their employees to work for several employers. Even though there might be problems with information sharing. Some of the employers share information on work related information on closed Facebook accounts. There is always a risk that organization specific information can be shared outside of the closed group by employees. Facebook can hence be used as a control tool by the employer, getting a peek at the employees’ private life outside of work or at work for other employers.

But also as a control tool social media is constructed as a two way communication tool. In the material young employees are described as being eager to share sloppy, unintended or inappropriate comments and texts by stressed managers to their friends outside of the organization. One operations manager describes the frequent use of Facebook in his communication with employees as dangerous.

“Social media, that is very positive, great, it helps us communicate. But at the same time it is dangerous. You can take down an organization through it.”
Another HR manager describe how the internal social network used to be connected to external social webpages and constructed as two-way communication, but had to close down due to employees sharing comments about named managers around the organization and outside of the organization.

“There where personal attacks and such, so we did not want that anymore. So it is one-way really, there are no longer any communication forums (...) there might be so much bullshit on those (social media), and there are so many gnalwebpages and such."

Social media, i. e. Facebook, as a control tool is described in the material as an ethical grey area both for the employer and for the employee. For the employee posting information, such as eating or exercising habits, that seems harmless in a private setting can easily become visible for possible or current employers. Legally this is still a grey area for HR. On a flexible labour market loyalty between employer and employee and vice versa is less likely. This shift in labour market structure is putting both employees and employers at risk when posting sensitive or unintended information. For employers updates once posted on social media is visible and can be shares in seconds. When using social media for communication on a daily bases this puts both managers and employees in a vulnerable position.

**Social media as a labour market intermediate**

Most employers today accept, or prefer, applications from job seekers over the internet. The case is usually the employer posting a job opening with a link to a web page for application. But in the interview material social media is described as emerging a new way of communicating that puts the employee, or potential employee, in the center of action instead of the employer.

In the interview material one operations manager at a staffing agency describes how many young individuals today tend to post job related information about themselves on social media sites, possibly with links to personal webpages, and after that do not bother to apply for specific jobs. They instead expect their public information and webpages to be found. She describes how she and her coworkers today have to muddle through the internet to search for potential applicants with job related information or CVs on display in order to get in contact with certain groups of applicants. This is a new way of job search that, at least this experienced manager, has not witnessed only a few years ago.

“We see how people tend to seek jobs differently nowadays, they don’t apply for jobs in the same way today as they used to. Today you want to be sought for.” Another example that is defined in the interview material is a description of a young employee with several parallel employers that writes on his Facebook account when he is ill and can’t go to work. This specific case is not only a way of communicating to the employer, instead the employee has found a way to communicate to several employers and possible employers at the same time, due to labour market flexibilization. The employer describes frustration over this, but says that this is symptomatic for younger social media users.

“But you and I are not friends on Facebook. No, but I have an open profile so you see. But I can’t look up 1200 people on Facebook every day. Well, but this was
These two descriptions are two examples of an emerging use of social media as a labour market intermediate. In the material social media as a labour market intermediate is defined as an arena connecting the interest of the individual employee with the labour market. In these quotes the job seeker or employee is communicating private information to the labour market, expected to be searched for, found and reacted upon by possible or current employers.

Discussion
Through the use of social media the boundaries between what should be considered as private and what should be considered as public or work-related is blurred (Siegert, 2015). From a management perspective, when HRM is conveyed in a uniform manner employees are likely to perceive HRM as distinctive, with a shared understanding within the organization on behaviors expected, supported and rewarded. In the empirical material there are several examples of the use of social media blurring boundaries between private and organizational spheres: the manager becoming friends with employees and colleagues sharing both private and work-related information on social media as well as job seekers and employees in parallel employments sharing work-related information such as CV or calling in sick over social media websites. Hence the use of social media as a communication channel, control tool and as a labour market intermediate in the interview material is creating challenges as well as opportunities for HRM distinctiveness. New information channels between employees and management, uncontrolled by the management, create challenges. However, organizations that dare to embrace these new communication channels, and integrate them with other ways of communicating, can reach and interact with employees and possible employees both at work and in between employments. This is shown for instance in the example of detecting and reacting upon sexual harassment through knowledge emerging from previous communication over Facebook.

HRM affects the relation between employee and employer from attracting, recruiting, through the career within the organization, and to the exit from the organization. One of the prime reason of using social technology in HRM functions as a cheap and powerful tool to enhance efficiency and effectiveness that can help management communicate to and with employees (Kavanagh & Thite, 2009). The three practices described in the interview material all concern social media as information, communication and empowerment. This is also described in previous research where social media such as Facebook allows for uncensored, unpredictable two-way communication, unlike many other channels for communication within and between organizations and their environment (Champoux et al., 2012). The empirical descriptions in the interviews are not necessarily those of enhanced communication. Even if social media is described as a way to communicate on an intimate manner between employees and between management and employees, this communication is conditional on employees owning the right private technical equipment and the right, private social media account, in the interview material this is defined as a private account on Facebook. In the three practices described in the interview material traditional one-way communication channels emerging from the employer are abandoned in favor of interactive interfaces with two active parties or communication emerging from the employee, as is shown in the example of the job seekers posting their CV and expecting to be found or posting information on being ill and not coming to work at various employers during the week.
Flexibility and flexibilization both from the employer’s and the employees view of what is a desirable work, is described as a gradual change in the Swedish labour market, as well as in the rest of the Western world (Garsten, 1999; Zhang, Bartram, McNeil, & Dowling, 2015). The Swedish labour generally show a lower loyalty to a single employer, compared with other Nordic countries, for instance Finland (Turunen, 2014). If HRM traditionally has affected the relation between employee and employer from attracting, recruiting, through the career within the organization, and to the exit from the organization, this emerging labour market structure is calling for new ways to communicate with employees and possible employees in between hiring’s on an equal manner. This communication requires a shared arena that is conditional to the employee (as well as the employer) being able to and wanting to buy or in other ways access the right technical equipment as well as register on social media, in this case Facebook. The interview material shows that the same time as a Facebook account connects employees and employees with management, it might exclude individuals without smartphone or Facebook account both within a workgroup, within an organization and on the labour market.

With social media new possibilities are created for HR regarding cooperation between employer, employees and possible employees, but at the same time dilemmas are created regarding exclusion, exposure, control and an a risk of overload of employee related information that needs to be found and handled by managers and HR. Because of flexibilization of the labour market and increased staff turnover, the need to find ways to survey employee competence, monitor performance, and behavior, as well as to follow the employee in between jobs become a cumbersome task. Deriving from the idea that communication is owned by its users, social media becomes a way to empower individuals, creating an arena and a way of making ones voice heard (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media enables managers to know and take into account employees and possible employees individual preferences. This might be attractive to a younger generation likely to be part of the flexible labour market, by choice or by demand (Schewe et al., 2013). The blurring of boundaries between private and work related information also turns up in the interview material, for instance on the possibility or organizational need to survey private health among employees and possible employees. This discussion touches on integrity issues in working life.

On a flexible labour market we can no longer assume that the relationship between the person performing the job and the person paying for it is based on a long-term relationship between an employer and an employee (Bonet et al., 2013). Bredin (2006) describe a shift in HR's role on a flexible labour market in which a new relationship between HR and employees could be described as agents for artists rather than traditional management. One of HR's tasks would therefore be to follow individuals over time, within and between organizations. It would mean to follow and possibly document what individuals do when they are not in their own organization. The metaphor in the description of HR as an agent for artists moves the focus from the employer to the presumed employee as an artist and thus with loyalty primarily to his or her own performance. The employee or possible employee in the center of attention and the employer as the party that has to search for information such as the job seekers CV or the employee refusing to call in sick and instead posting information on being ill on social media are examples related to this metaphor. The individual makes his or her performances at different employers as "gigs" (which coined the concept of "gig-economy" in relation to the new labour market) and shows up as the artist in the center of attention. At the same time, labour market flexibility has been described as a shift towards increasingly vulnerable positions for more and more people. Through the use of social media the individual becomes visible, hence exposing herself to surveillance. At the same time as social media is to be understood as a threat of constant visibility, the individual is under the constant threat of disappearing and becoming
obsolete (Bucher, 2012). Integrity in relation to recruitment and the labour market becomes particularly relevant when responsibility for labour market issues has changed discursively and shifted from a responsibility of the state or of the employers to the individual's responsibility for her or his own employability, putting job seekers in a precarious position on the labour market (Fejes, 2010; Standing, 2011; Vosko, 2009). Personal integrity in relation to private information that is shared on social media therefore needs to be addressed and discussed further.

Conclusions

To answer to the research question: How does the use of social media affect HRM on a flexible labour market? this article contributes with a discussion on the use of social media in relation to HRM from three perspectives: social media as a communication channel, as a control tool and as a labour market intermediate. These three perspectives are connecting social media with the practice of HRM, creating challenges that has to be considered for long term employee resilience and sustainable HRM on a flexible labour market. For the HR function, the use of social media on a flexible labour market create new possibilities regarding cooperation between employer, employees and possible employees, but at the same time dilemmas are created regarding exposure, control and information hard to find in the infinite space of internet. With a new generation on the labour market the use of social media to attract, retain and develop the relation between employer and possible and current employees is important for long term sustainable HRM that meets current and possible employees in social arenas and handles accessible information in an ethical and legally correct manner.

The empirical material shows practical examples of the individual placing herself in the center of labour market relations, for instance while job searching or when refusing to call in sick and instead expect the employer to search for the employee. At the same time there is an example of a group of workers communicating on a Facebook site without the employer’s involvement and there are examples of resistance when employees share managements comments that are inappropriate or otherwise blameworthy to a wider audience. Social media has been described as a way of revolutionizing communication between people and as creating new possibilities of empowering people beyond their traditional sphere of communication (Arnaboldi & Coget, 2016). Resilience for employees as well as for organizations on a changing labour market in turbulent times can be enhanced for instance by empowering employees to sense of control through involvement in decision-making and helping employees find strategies and cope with the challenges of multiple work (Bardoel et al., 2014; Shin et al., 2012; Truss et al., 2013). Continued research on issues of loyalty and dependence between employers and workers is required, as well as the impact of social media on HRM practices concerning individual, organizational and social perspectives.

References


