The reconciliation of fraternal twins: Integrating the psychological and sociological approaches to 'micro' corporate social responsibility

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Abstract

Aguinis and Glavas' (2012) call for a deeper understanding of the microfoundations of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has spurred a growing number of empirical micro-CSR studies. Micro-CSR scholars share the common goal of developing a clear picture of the microfoundations of CSR—a holistic theoretical and empirical understanding of how individual actions and interactions drive CSR-related activity—but pursue this objective from a variety of angles. Our research suggests that although many scholars work under the same 'micro-CSR' banner, they approach their goal from a wide range of disciplines, use different methodologies, and study different phenomena. In this critical essay, we show that most micro-CSR research can be classified in one of two distinct sub-fields: 'psychological micro-CSR' and 'sociological micro-CSR'. We compare the differences between these orientations (including their distinct empirical approaches, and contributions of both fields of micro-CSR) and explore possible opportunities for cross-fertilization between the psychological and sociological approaches. Finally, we suggest ways in which micro-CSR scholars could exploit the complementarities and eliminate the blind spots common to the two dominant micro-CSR approaches.

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to both managerial practices focused on welfare creation (Barnett, 2007) and a field of scholarship that explores how businesses and societies interact (Crane et al., 2008; Gond and Moon, 2011). Since Bowen's (1953) landmark book defined business' social responsibility from the perspective of institutional economics (Acquier et al., 2011), CSR scholarship has moved from the margins to the mainstream of organizational and management theory (Mitnick, 2017).

Several core debates have nurtured the development of the CSR field, particularly discussions of the financial impact of CSR practices (Crane et al., 2008; Orlitzky and Swanson, 2008), the identification and management of corporate stakeholders (Crane and Matten, 2007; Harrison et al., 2019), the implications of CSR for corporate governance (Aras, 2016), the plurality of CSR ethical and normative foundations (Werhane et al., 2017), the communicative dynamics underlying CSR (Ihlen et al., 2011; Rasche et al., 2017; Schoeneborn et al. 2019), the influence of institutional and national factors on CSR (Habisch et al., 2005; Örtenblad, 2016), and the political role exercised by multinational corporations through their 'global corporate citizenship' (Scherer and Palazzo, 2008).

As a result of these debates, the notion of CSR has been extended to include a diversity of practices, policies and processes, and CSR scholarship has become a lively interdisciplinary field in its own right that borrows from at least eight disciplines (Cheit, 1978), including economics, philosophy, politics, psychology, sociology and history.[1] This

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[1] What is actually meant by CSR has evolved with changes of corporate practices and the development of CSR scholarship. For scholars, disciplines with different empirical foci have informed the various CSR debates. Earlier studies approached CSR as an organizational construct and thus referred to CSR strategy or policy at an aggregated level. More recent

interdisciplinary nature is both a strength and a weakness (Wood and Logsdon, 2016). On the one hand, it helps maintain pluralism (Gond and Moon, 2011) and enables the emergence of new concepts such as 'corporate social performance' (Wood, 1991) or 'political CSR' (Scherer and Palazzo, 2011). On the other hand, this interdisciplinarity frustrates scholars who would like to lock down tighter definitions that would make quantitative studies easier (Barnett, 2007; Lockett et al., 2006); the continuing import of concepts sometimes makes it difficult to maintain a clear definition of CSR (Wood and Logsdon, 2016).

In recent years, these interdisciplinary tensions have become even more salient as CSR scholarship shifted from its historically dominant interest in macro levels of analysis—i.e. the study of organizational CSR policies and actions and the institutions that shape them (Matten and Moon, 2008)—to micro levels of analysis closer to individuals and their actions, with the aim of providing CSR scholarship with the microfoundations it has lacked (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; McWilliams et al., 2019). The recurrent calls for the development of CSR research focused on individuals (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Frynas and Stephens, 2015;

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works tend to focus on one or several specific CSR practice(s), such as, for instance, employee volunteering with the local community, cause-related marketing, waste management, employee wellness programs, carbon emission reduction, 'green' behavior, eco-friendly product design, or energy efficiency programs. In line with this trend, we adopt in this paper an encompassing definition of CSR which covers a broad span of practices, use by default the expression 'CSR practice', and assume that a CSR strategy or policy is a set of CSR practices. We discuss differences in the content of practices only if they further our analytical goal of specifying two sub-streams of CSR studies. We invite our readers to consult the cited article if they wish to know the specific CSR practice/s to which a paper refers.

Glavas, 2016; Morgeson et al., 2013) have engendered at least two very distinct lines of research: one looks at the psychological foundations of CSR, and the other at the actual experiences of individuals involved in CSR practices.

Although these two streams share a common focus (the individual), a common purpose (understanding the individual actions and interactions underlying any CSR-related practices – the microfoundations of CSR), and a common label (micro-CSR), they are anchored in distinct disciplinary traditions, rely on contrasting conceptual and methodological assumptions, and focus on different CSR-related phenomena:

- *The psychological microfoundations of CSR* have become an identifiable field of study in just a few years. Mainly informed by organizational behavior and industrial psychology, this stream of research focuses on the psychological mechanisms by which individuals perceive, evaluate, and react to CSR in and out of the workplace (e.g. Gond et al., 2017; Jones and Rupp, 2018; Rupp et al., 2006).

- *The sociological microfoundations of CSR*, a more fragmented but no less dynamic stream of studies, has built on conceptual resources from institutional, practice, and/or critical theory to explore CSR microfoundations. Here, scholars regard CSR as an element of workplace transformations related to capitalism shifting towards neoliberalism (Hanlon and Fleming, 2009; Kourula and Delalieux, 2016) and investigate how individuals concretely experience and carry out CSR within organizations. These studies focus on the discursive, political, and identity aspects of this process, as experienced by CSR managers, practitioners, and other professionals (e.g. Ben Khaled and Gond, 2019; Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017; Wickert and De Bakker, 2018).

The differences between these two streams is illustrated by Table 1, which compares four key articles from each stream of research recommended by 10 micro-CSR scholars.

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Despite their common aims and the complementarity of the insights they generate about individual-level CSR, these two dominant micro-CSR perspectives have rarely been compared, bridged, or even clearly delineated. As well as making redundancies possible, this state of affairs creates a risk of micro-CSR 'knowledge balkanization' that could lead CSR scholars to lose the interdisciplinary freedom that has always been a core strength of CSR research (Cheit, 1978; Gond and Moon, 2011; Mitnick, 2017; Wood and Logsdon, 2016). Losing the interdisciplinary features of CSR could jeopardize the possible consolidation of the microfoundational pillars of CSR studies through mixed-methods or multi-methods studies (e.g. Sonenshein et al., 2014), which could benefit from the interpretative power of sociological micro-CSR (e.g. identification of new constructs and phenomena) and the rigorous theory-testing discipline of psychological micro-CSR (e.g. identification of contingencies, and generalizing findings across organizational settings).

In this essay, we seek to identify, categorize, and contrast both perspectives on micro-CSR, to clarify their common purpose as well as their distinctive assumptions. We first elucidate the differences between the two streams of micro-CSR research, and explain how each stream can benefit from the insights of the other. We then synthesize our efforts in a consolidated research agenda that integrates developments from both streams of studies and provides stepping stones for future research on micro-CSR. Finally, we discuss the limitations of our argument and its implications for future research.

In search of individual(s): Clarifying the microfoundations of CSR

Micro-CSR's fraternal twins each take a distinct approach to understanding individuals

During the last decade, scholars have started to pay attention to the role in CSR of individuals who are considered instrumental in fulfilling CSR promises (Fleming et al., 2013; Gond et al., 2017). While several empirical micro-CSR studies have focused on the psychological questions of individuals' motivations, attributes, cognitive processes, or evaluations (Gond et

al., 2017; Jones and Rupp, 2018; Morgeson et al., 2013; Rupp and Mallory, 2015), others have studied individuals' practices and processes in relation to CSR initiatives (Athanasopoulou and Selsky, 2015), or 'how CSR is developed, articulated and practiced' (Costas and Kärreman, 2013: 395). Instead of adopting a psychological lens to focus on individuals and their attitudes, practice-oriented studies typically conceive of the individual as a node embedded in a web of social relations (Bondy, 2008; Brès and Gond, 2014; Wickert and De Bakker, 2018), where practices are understood as dynamic processes that unfold over time (Haack et al., 2012). These sociological studies often focus on CSR implementation (e.g. Baumann-Pauly et al., 2013; Hunholdt et al., 2018) under the umbrella term of 'micro-level foundations' (Kourula and Delalieux, 2016) or 'micro-level CSR' (Vigneau et al., 2015).

However, despite their shared focus on individuals, differences in how scholars in each discipline consider individuals as well as their different conceptual approaches and core definitions contribute to the current bifurcation of the field. This dynamic can be seen particularly in studies focused on intra-organizational, inter-individual, and intra-individual CSR-related issues. First, studies on intra-organizational CSR focus on practices and processes of CSR implementation in the organization. Here, professionals are actively involved in the communicative constitution of CSR (e.g. Girschik, 2018) and aim to reach their objectives through CSR policies and programs (e.g. Sandhu and Kulik, 2018). Second, studies on inter-individual CSR put relations and interactions between different social actors at the centre of attention (e.g. Soderstrom and Weber, 2019). These actors are situated in groups and networks and carry out CSR-related practices (e.g. Risi and Wickert, 2017). Finally, a third set of substantial studies explicitly investigates intra-individual CSR. The focus is on behavioral antecedents of, and responses to, CSR, and their associated individual-level cognitive and affective processes (e.g. Peterson, 2004).

In the next section, we show how the field has developed in different directions. Roughly, we distinguish studies with a *relational* understanding of CSR (the sociological stream; intra-organizational and inter-individual) from studies with a *person-centric* understanding of CSR (the psychological stream; intra-individual). The former stream of studies focuses on actions *per se*, and the latter on person-centric processes that explain those actions. In the following section, we will substantiate this claim with a detailed analysis of micro-CSR studies from both traditions.

Fraternal or identical twins? Contrasting the underlying assumptions of psychological and sociological micro-CSR

Relying on our knowledge of the micro-CSR field complemented by a survey among experts in the field of micro-CSR who provided us with a list of 60 articles that best represent micro-CSR research (for details refer to the Appendices in the online supplementary information), we identified three criteria on which each of the two streams of studies can be clearly distinguished: foundations and epistemological orientations; empirical and conceptual focus; and contributions to the analysis of micro-CSR (see Table 2).

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Different foundations and epistemological orientations

The two streams of studies are clearly distinct in terms of their conceptualization of the individual and the meaning of CSR, their disciplinary background, ontological and temporal orientations, and methodological approaches. First, in psychological micro-CSR, which is grounded in organizational behavior (OB) and industrial, experimental, and social psychology, the focus is person-centric (Gond et al., 2017; Rupp and Mallory, 2015). This research focuses on how actors perceive, evaluate, and react to CSR (Rupp et al., 2006) without paying special attention to how individuals' interactions and interdependences can shape such perceptions. Micro-CSR is the study of (intra-)individual psychological

mechanisms (Gond et al., 2017). Its underlying ontology is best described as positivist, realist, or structuralist (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Hassard and Cox, 2013). Consistent with such an underlying orientation, methodological approaches in this stream typically include variance-based analyses, often using cross-sectional, large-scale surveys (e.g. De Roeck et al., 2016; Du et al., 2013), and, more recently, experiments (e.g. Bridoux et al., 2016; Häfenbradl and Waeger, 2017). As a result, the underlying frameworks of studies in this stream take the form of static 'variance models' (for variance-focused representations of the field, see, e.g. Aguinis and Glavas [2012: 952] or Gond et al. [2017: 227]).

Studies in the sociological tradition take a very different approach that focuses on individuals primarily as actors engaged in social relationships (Wickert and De Bakker, 2018). Consequently, they must be understood as interdependent, needing each other to accomplish their goals. Micro-CSR is seen as an inter-individual or intra-organizational set of mechanisms, and the focus is on micro-processes between social actors (e.g. Bondy, 2008; Kourula and Delalieux, 2016). The theoretical underpinnings of this stream are grounded in organization and management theory (Risi and Wickert, 2017), critical management studies (CMS; Costas and Kärreman, 2013), strategy-as-practice (Egels-Zanden and Rosen, 2015; Hengst et al., 2019), and sociology and communication studies (Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017; Morsing and Spence, 2019; Schoeneborn et al., 2019). In line with these theoretical underpinnings, the ontological orientation of sociological micro-CSR is to be found in constructivism (e.g. Gond et al., 2018) or post-structuralism (e.g. Banerjee and Jackson, 2017). Accordingly, methodological approaches include process and interpretative analyses based on interviews, case studies, field observations and in some cases ethnographic data. Sociological CSR studies are often process-oriented (e.g. Hengst et al., 2019), with CSR practices being approached as unfolding over time and being constituted and shaped by actors (e.g. Hunholdt et al., 2018).

Divergent empirical and conceptual foci

The second basis that we identified of a clear division between the two literature streams that we identified is their empirical and conceptual focus. Within the psychological stream, CSR is typically understood as 'green' behavior focused on responsible environmental stewardship (Dumont et al., 2017), community-based initiatives (Jones, 2010), or global perceptions of stakeholder treatment (De Roeck and Delobbe, 2012; El Akremi et al., 2018). The main units of analysis are typically individuals considered as members of specific employee categories such as job seekers (Jones et al., 2014), prospect employees (Turban and Greening, 1997), or executives (Chin et al., 2013). Some studies have considered different groups simultaneously (Groves and LaRocca, 2011) or surveyed different hierarchical levels to capture micro-CSR as a multilevel phenomenon (Kim et al., 2017). Key concepts include organizational commitment (Peterson, 2004), job satisfaction (Vlachos et al., 2013), or leadership (Pearce and Manz, 2011). Accordingly, the most salient theories in this stream of studies include social identity theory, social exchange theory, signalling theory, psychological need theory, and attribution theory (for a review and evaluation of the saliency of each theory, see Gond et al., 2017; for a framework combining multiple theories, see Jones and Rupp, 2018).

In contrast, sociological micro-CSR studies consider CSR as embodied in programs and policies. These studies focus on CSR strategy (Hengst et al, 2019), organizational structures supporting CSR deployment (Sandhu and Kulik, 2018), external and internal communications (Morsing and Spence, 2019), broad social and environmental issues that have to be sold to stakeholders (Wickert and De Bakker, 2018), and CSR reporting practices (Vigneau et al., 2015). Actors are regarded as acting interdependently, and their practices and activities as partially mirroring their membership in broader social groups (Athanasopoulou and Selsky, 2015). Individuals are often depicted as 'professionals' (e.g. CSR consultants, CSR managers, climate change managers, heads of sustainability departments) or as 'social

activists' (Girschik, 2018). In contrast to studies in the psychological stream, many studies focus on middle managers and take practices, processes, and discourses as the main unit of analysis. Key concepts of interest include institutions (Risi and Wickert, 2017), politics (Kourula and Delalieux, 2016), discourse (Costas and Kärreman, 2013), power (Bondy, 2008), meaning (Haack et al., 2012), identity (Ghadiri et al., 2015), and communication (Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017). Accordingly, the key theories of interest are institutional theory, strategy-as-practice (Gond et al., 2018), issue-selling (Wickert and De Bakker, 2018), and, less frequently, framing (Girschik, 2018), performativity (Christensen et al., 2013; Schoeneborn et al., 2019), or constitutive communication (Cooren, 2018).

Distinct contribution to the analysis of micro-CSR

Micro-CSR psychological and sociological perspectives make different contributions to the field. In the psychological micro-CSR literature, the conceptual development is often geared toward expanding our knowledge of individual drivers of CSR-related outcomes. Consequently, empirical contributions show how motivations, cognitive, and affective evaluative processes shape individuals' CSR engagement and reactions (e.g. Hafenbrädl and Waeger, 2017; Jones et al., 2014; Mudrack, 2007). Many studies have conceived of CSR as an 'independent variable', as being exposed to, or working on, CSR-related issues in the organization affects other person-centric variables (De Roeck et al., 2016). Distinct contributions of this stream of research include the identification of multiple workplace outcomes such as organizational commitment (Erdogan et al., 2015) or organizational attractiveness (Jones et al., 2014). Furthermore, studies have conceptualized and evaluated the role of social exchange (El Akremi et al., 2018 [Study 7]; Farooq et al., 2014), social identification (De Roeck et al., 2016) and signalling (Jones et al., 2014) in peoples' responses to CSR. Finally, a growing body of research is devoted to clarifying which personal

characteristics play a role in CSR (Mudrack, 2007), such as traits (Zhang and Gowan, 2012) or attitudes (Bissing-Olson et al., 2013).

Sociological micro-CSR studies, on the other hand, typically focus on CSR as a practice, an organizational if not an institutional outcome, or the result of specific and complex activities (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012: 953) between people and organizations (Bondy, 2008; Gond et al., 2018; Hengst et al., 2019). Special attention is often paid to issues that may explain why CSR implementation is lagging in many organizations. (e.g. Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017; Risi and Wickert, 2017). A distinct contribution of this stream of research is the clarification of the multiple contrasted narratives and discourses surrounding CSR in the workplace (e.g. Costas and Kärreman, 2013; Haack et al., 2012). Furthermore, studies from this stream highlight the complexities, tensions and contradictions that often arise in CSR (e.g. Frandsen et al., 2013; Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017). Finally, sociological micro-CSR studies shed light on the dark or difficult sides of CSR, such as studies on corporate irresponsibility or the role of power in CSR implementation (e.g. Bondy, 2008).

Next, we explore what psychological micro-CSR can learn from sociological micro-CSR and how psychological micro-CSR can help extend sociological micro-CSR, and argue that the differences in the contributions of the two streams offer unique opportunities for future studies that cross-fertilize their insights.

Exploiting differences: Opportunities for one-sided cross-fertilization

What can psychological micro-CSR learn from sociological micro-CSR?

Sociological insights could help 're-humanize' psychological micro-CSR (Glavas, 2016). In many micro-CSR psychological studies conducted in the organizational behavior tradition, respondents, variables, and contexts are often treated in an almost clinical manner. But while these efforts to conduct objective research clearly result in the identification of relationships between key constructs, do they fully capture their complex reality? As Wright and Nyberg

put it, such an approach may overlook 'a critical sociological understanding of emotionality in work settings' (2012: 1562). When neglecting context, emotionality, and the social network within which employees are embedded, we may miss some of the most informative bits and pieces that constitute micro-CSR. Capturing how the whole 'self' of individuals could be engaged in CSR may then be difficult (Glavas, 2016).

Second, we believe that enhancing critical perspectives on the psychological underpinnings of CSR may serve to deepen scholars' and practitioners' understanding of the potentially ambivalent, paradoxical, or even negative impact of CSR on employees that has been thus far overlooked. This could be done by acknowledging some of the difficult organizational issues that sometimes influence CSR practices, such as exaggerated managerial control (Costas and Kärreman, 2013), problematic use of power (Bondy, 2008), or a loss of authenticity (Morsing and Spence, 2019). Another possibility might be to better integrate CMS that are closely related to CSR, such as studies on microfinance which show that well intended policies such as microfinance can lead to negative outcomes (Banerjee and Jackson, 2017).

Third, psychological studies typically neglect groups and CSR practices and processes. In other words, we read these studies without gaining insights about who the CSR actors are, what do they do, and how they do it. Psychologically oriented micro-CSR studies typically investigate the individual in a more or less isolated fashion, focusing on generic categories such as 'employees'. By contrast, sociological micro-CSR studies trace processes and different hierarchical and professional groups, for example, when studying CSR translation (Brès and Gond, 2014; Vigneau et al., 2014), the negotiation of CSR meaning (Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017; Shamir, 2005) or CSR implementation (Baumann-Pauly et al., 2013; Maon et al., 2009; Soderstrom and Weber, 2019). Psychological micro-CSR studies might increase their value by incorporating, beyond identities, the attention sociological studies pay to the

differences between individuals engaging in CSR; individuals' embeddedness in different groups in the organization; and their relationship to unfolding CSR practices and processes.

Finally, we believe that psychological micro-CSR studies can profit from the sociologists' view of the dynamic nature of CSR. CSR-related aspects of organizations change continuously, and that change could be considered more systematically. For example, organizational culture and values that are acknowledged to be important in psychological micro-CSR (Aguinis and Glavas, 2019) are constantly in flux (Schein, 2010). Similarly, corporate strategies are increasingly understood as dynamic and socially constructed (Hengst et al., 2019). Instead of perceiving individuals and CSR as mostly static entities, psychological micro-CSR studies could develop a more comprehensive understanding of how CSR and the people involved in its organizational deployment change over time.

What can sociological micro-CSR learn from psychological micro-CSR?

The sociologists can also learn a lot from the psychologists. To begin with, psychological work has identified important boundary conditions for micro-CSR processes and practices. For example, personal beliefs (Peterson, 2004) or gender (Brammer et al., 2007) shape how people perceive CSR. A considerable body of literature has identified moderation effects (e.g. Bissing-Olson et al., 2013; Farooq et al., 2017; Rupp et al., 2013) and several studies have begun to theorize about mediation effects and to consider where those boundaries might lie (e.g. Farooq et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2012). In contrast, sociological studies seem to treat each case as unique with little attention to any possible overarching or structural influences. We believe that these mostly neglected questions of such boundary conditions could provide useful opportunities for cross-fertilization. For example, a comparison of cases across contexts with specific attention to boundary conditions might yield important insights.

A second line of inquiry might be to consider the role of personality and perceptions in CSR implementation. Psychological micro-CSR studies provide substantial evidence for the

important role of personality, for example, through personal incentives (Fabrizi et al., 2014). Yet, in the sociological stream of studies, personal values remain understudied (Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004). Some scholars have paid attention to related issues, such as Wright and Nyberg (2012) in their study of the emotionality of CSR managers, and Kourula and Delalieux (2016) with their account of managers' personal motivations. Still, by and large the focus is more on *how* individuals contribute to CSR rather than *why* they do so.

Finally, sociological micro-CSR studies could learn from consolidating explanations across multiple cases. Psychological studies, whether in the micro-CSR or any other field, often add to existing knowledge by testing moderating or mediating effects. In doing so, those studies contribute to an ever-growing and systematized consolidation of theories (Gond et al., 2017). Sociological micro-CSR studies, by contrast, often embrace an exploratory approach to theory-building or abduction. One way to further consolidate sensemaking around micro-CSR might be to investigate the process in a more systematic way, similar to the way psychologists have tended to organize their research. For instance, future research could build on available studies of the tensions that CSR professionals face, which seem to be similar across contexts (e.g. Carollo and Guerci, 2018 in Italy; Ghadiri et al., 2015 in Canada; or Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017 for a cross-country sample) and thus might benefit from more systematic analysis. Another way to achieve consolidation might be for the sociologists follow the lead of psychology scholars and carry out multiple studies on a similar topic. Such a strategy might help to identify patterns and common denominators, while leveraging the strengths of their sociological anchoring.

Addressing common blind spots and leveraging complementarities: An integrative research agenda for micro-CSR

Our analysis of micro-CSR also revealed deeper insights into the multiple meanings attached to CSR and gaps in knowledge that cannot be filled by simply 'borrowing' constructs or

theories from the other discipline (Oswick et al., 2011). Bridging the two streams will require more drastic remedies (Table 3), including coupling the levels of micro-CSR analyses (hierarchical integration); paying attention to pervasive phenomena such as power and meaningfulness (conceptual integration); embracing the opportunities offered by new methodologies (methodological integration); and engaging with practice (engaged integration).

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Hierarchical integration: Reconsidering and consolidating micro-CSR's levels of analysis

One clear opportunity that stands out when comparing the two approaches to micro-CSR is their complementarity at the level of the individual engagement. Table 4 provides an overview of the multiple meanings of micro-CSR that can be analytically organized alongside the intra-organizational, inter-individual, and intra-individual level of analysis. We then matched this to the kinds of questions that are typically asked in the different studies, showing the different ways that individuals have been studied within these three levels of analysis. For example, studies at the intra-organizational level typically pay attention to how people in the organization engage in and construct CSR-related processes and jobs. Studies that look at inter-individual micro-CSR focus instead on how people who engage in such activities relate to each other, and how these relationships influence outcomes. Finally, intra-individual micro-CSR studies are mostly person-centric and investigate peoples' perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and thoughts about CSR.

Although some levels are better covered than others in one of the two streams (e.g. CSR implementation in sociological micro-CSR, or individual perceptions of CSR in psychological micro-CSR), we argue that valuable conceptual developments could emerge from considering thus far under-theorized levels. For instance, psychological micro-CSR studies have rarely considered CSR as a potentially collective construct. And yet, one could

conceptualize a construct of a 'CSR climate' that captures collective rather than individual perceptions of CSR at the intra-organizational level of analysis, in the same way that prior OB studies have posited constructs such as 'ethical climate' (Victor and Cullen, 1988). In a similar fashion, processes related to CSR implementation (sociological micro-CSR) suggest focusing on how CSR unfolds over time from the perspectives of individual employees' perceptions and behaviors. In a similar fashion, sociological research could track how individuals become socialized to CSR, relying on psychological studies of socialization. Reciprocally, studies of intra-organizational dynamics of CSR implementation could be complemented by unpacking the individual-level psychological dynamics, and used to explain organizational resistance to CSR-related change.

This more nuanced approach to the foundations of micro-CSR could offer several practical advantages. First, specifying which micro-level is actually considered in a given study would avoid confusion in future micro-CSR research. Second, an explanatory mechanism that is at play at one level of analysis could be explained or altered by elements from other levels of analysis. Attending to multiple levels could be an important step for identifying micro-level factors that may matter for a given mechanism, or for ruling out alternative explanations. Third, considering simultaneously several micro-levels of analysis could help in developing new and promising domains of research. This could be achieved through the identification and conceptualization of mechanisms that operate across levels, and through the development of designs that could capture multiple temporal micro-CSR dynamics. For instance, asking whether and how CSR implementation progresses in relation to shifts in employees' perceptions and behaviors in a workplace might produce an insightful study. Table 4 offers a heuristic device to help position a study in one of these research streams and specify which other micro-level of analysis might be considered.

Conceptual integration: Power and meaningfulness as pervasive phenomena

Beyond hierarchical integration, sociological and psychological micro-CSR perspectives could be combined conceptually through meta-triangulation (Gioia and Pitre, 1999), which is a method 'for exploring complex phenomena from disparate theoretical and epistemological perspectives' (Lewis and Grimes, 1999: 672). In particular, the concepts of power and meaningfulness have been relatively neglected in prior micro-CSR studies and could be investigated in a new manner by combining both micro-CSR conceptual apparatuses.

In the case of power, psychological micro-CSR studies have suggested that executives' assertion of power and/or managers' Machiavellianism could drive CSR engagement (Pearce and Manz, 2011; Zhang and Gowan, 2012). However, prior studies have little to say about how managers and employees rely on power when implementing CSR. In fact, some micro-CSR studies that have focused on the organizational politics of CSR suggest that deliberative mechanisms within organizations sometimes shape the power dynamics of CSR implementation. As yet, scholars have rarely investigated how individuals operate in such processes (Frynas and Stephens, 2015). Future research could combine both conceptual resources to determine whether and how individuals' power positions and modes of engagement with power (e.g. their degree of Machiavellianism) shape CSR-related dynamics. Such research could explore more systematically the role of individuals confronted with potential tensions, paradoxes and dysfunctionalities inherent to some types of externally driven CSR policies (e.g. Morsing and Spence, 2019).

The concept of meaningfulness (see Bailey et al., 2019 for an overview) also offers a promising conceptual platform to further integrate sociological and psychological micro-CSR research. Both streams have recently focused on this concept yet provide divergent accounts of its role in relation to CSR and individuals. On the one hand, psychologically inspired studies regard meaningfulness as a positive and potentially manageable organizational element that is related to CSR initiatives. CSR is seen as helping workers gain a greater sense

of engagement with their work by infusing a greater sense of purpose in their activities (Aguinis and Glavas, 2019). On the other hand, some more critical sociological research regards meaningfulness as a potentially 'overflowing' if not 'overloaded' organizational element that could create dysfunctional effects (Florian et al., 2019). Integrating both perspectives could help explain why and how CSR professionals and other employees sometimes experience CSR-related forms of meaningfulness, and how these relate to organizational outcomes.

Methodological integration: Multilevel, mixed-methods, and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis

The joint development of both streams of micro-CSR studies offers unprecedented opportunities to develop research designs that simultaneously capture multiple micro-dimensions that complement each other. This can help consolidate multilevel designs that span several levels of analysis within and/or across the intra-individual, inter-individual and intra-organizational micro-levels distinguished in Table 4. For instance, one can envision longitudinal qualitative studies tracking the progress of the deployment of a CSR initiative at the executive, managerial, and employee levels; or quantitative designs considering through multi-wave surveys and secondary data individual as well as collective perceptions of CSR and related attitudes and behaviors.

Further integrating insights from both streams also offers opportunities to creatively combine the methodological strengths of both types of research. Future micro-CSR research designs might for instance combine longitudinal qualitative and quantitative data-collection. Through observations and interviews, such designs could track the political dynamics of CSR implementation as captured from the perspective of executives and middle managers. Simultaneously, shifts in managers' and employees' perceptions of CSR and related behavioral indicators could be evaluated over time. Similarly, mixed-methods designs could

also be used across multiple research stages, following the logic used in Elsbach's (1994) study of the cattle industry. For instance, in-depth focus groups and qualitative interviews could help trace how the legitimacy of CSR practices is framed by employees, while experiments conducted within the same organization might help test whether distinct frames influence specific reactions towards CSR practices. Sonenshein et al.'s (2014) study of the role played by self-evaluations of environmental issue supporters shows the potential of combining qualitative and quantitative studies to unpack unexpected insights, such as the profound importance of self-doubt for even the most dedicated environmental issue supporters in the workplace. In particular, given its intrinsic multi-level nature, hierarchically integrated micro-CSR research could benefit from recent methodological developments around the use of fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) (Misangyi et al., 2017; Ragin, 1987), a method that sits between purely qualitative and quantitative designs— and thus in between sociological and psychological micro-CSR. Although this method has been used sparingly in prior micro-CSR research (Crilly, 2013; Delmas and Pekovic, 2018), it has a lot of untapped potential to further develop integrative psycho-socio micro-CSR studies. We believe fsQCA could be a particularly useful tool to conceptualize and evaluate how explanatory mechanisms operate across levels of analysis, i.e. the intra-individual (e.g. individual identification to the organization), inter-individual (e.g. individual political engagement in the process of CSR deployment), and intra-organizational levels (e.g. specific mode of CSR implementation within a given business unit). These could then be combined into configurations of 'micro' characteristics that explain specific outcomes at different levels of analysis.

Engaged integration: Subversive functionalism and performative micro-CSR research

Bringing together psychological and sociological micro-CSR perspectives could also help scholars design research that would be more influential with practitioners. Both psycho-

oriented and socio-oriented scholars of micro-CSR have been engaged in discussions of enhancing their practical impact (see Aguinis and Lawal, 2013; Schaefer and Wickert, 2016), with limited success. Integrated micro-CSR studies, because they would involve direct engagement with corporations to approach individuals to be interviewed or surveyed, could offer a closer, more holistic view of a given CSR project and culture that could help influence and transform managerial practices.

On the one hand, sociological micro-CSR has conceptualized phenomena such as the aspirational nature of CSR (e.g. Christensen et al., 2013). This is because this stream has recognized the importance of materiality to make CSR 'performative' (see Gond et al., 2016), i.e. producing effects conforming to, and empirically confirming, CSR-related theoretical assumptions and theories (Marti and Gond, 2018) in the workplace context (Schaefer and Wickert, 2016). Such arguments have made us aware of the limits of CSR instrumentalization as a 'marketing' or strategy' tool (Costas and Kärreman, 2013), but have little to offer in terms of tools or frameworks to engage with corporations.

On the other hand, psychological micro-CSR has developed tools (e.g. El Akremi et al., 2018) that could advance CSR within organizations, for instance, by providing resources to support the business case for CSR or explaining how HR can contribute to designing CSR initiatives (e.g. Farooq et al., 2017). However, this stream has rarely considered the potentially problematic implications of such CSR instrumentalization. We argue that psychological approaches to micro-CSR offer templates for tool development that serve a broader set of managerial actors; while its rhetoric can equip actors who aim to engage 'progressive' forms of critical CSR performativity (Schaefer and Wickert, 2016) in the workplace. In so doing, we follow Hartmann's (2014: 621) argument:

Rather than dismissing mainstream business research on essentialist grounds, a

subversively functionalist approach would open CMS up to mainstream perspectives that

might facilitate a critique of managerialism and the modern organization and use these perspectives to engage in a closer dialogue with practitioners, students and other researchers. Such an expansion would articulate critique by combining political awareness, explicit normativity and a rhetoric that engages, rather than discounts.

We think that integrated micro-CSR research teams that combine the ethos, knowledge and methods of psychological and sociological micro-CSR would be best equipped to engage corporations in research projects that could have a transformative and socially positive impact on their organization.

Discussion

In this essay, we have argued that the two dominant and currently distinct streams of studies on micro-CSR, the sociological and psychological streams, can profit from learning more about each other's fundamental orientations, empirical approaches, and contributions to the field. Both streams operate under the micro-CSR banner, providing scholars with knowledge about CSR microfoundations, and both focus on individuals engaged with or exposed to CSR. However, we show that studies within the two streams depart from distinct disciplinary and methodological backgrounds and focus on different individual phenomena. In order to provide common ground for future cross-fertilization between the streams, we identified, categorized, and contrasted psychological micro-CSR with sociological micro-CSR. We offered a research agenda and argued that hierarchical, methodological, conceptual and engaged integration could and should stimulate future micro-CSR research. We think our essay demonstrates the importance for scholars to identify and specify, self-reflexively, their fundamental assumptions about their level of analysis, and we hope that our analysis can help them do so (see, in particular, Table 4).

Can we capture the macro through the micro?

Following a recent trend in CSR studies, our essay has focused on the micro-level of analysis, paying little attention to the macro levels of analysis that have traditionally dominated the CSR field (Aguinis and Glavas 2012; Gond et al., 2017). This does not mean, however, that micro-CSR is irrelevant or unrelated to the organizational, market, or institutional levels of analyses. These levels could be bridged in future research (see, e.g., Gond and Brès, 2019), and we are confident that micro-CSR studies will offer the opportunity to do this eventually, through studies that climb the hierarchical pyramid. Micro-CSR research will build on well-established traditions of sociological scholarships that have connected such levels, as well as on psychological methods to operationalize multi-level analyses. From a theoretical viewpoint, concepts and frameworks from sociologists who have engaged with the agency/structure tensions, such as Bourdieu (1977 [1972]) or Giddens (1984), could help clarify how individuals incorporate CSR through routinized behavior, and adopt dispositions that shape CSR organizational dynamics. Sociological analyses of networks (Granovetter, 1985; Elias, 2000 [1939]) could also help address important gaps in current micro-CSR studies by specifying how interactions between individuals shape the deployment of CSR practices within and across organizations. The economies of worth framework of Boltanski and Thévenot (2006 [1991]) could also help analyse how macro-social normative principles are engaged locally in actors micro-level CSR practices (Cloutier et al., 2017), as showed for instance, by Demers and Gond (2019).

From a methodological viewpoint, the focus on micro-CSR can be seen as a necessary step to develop more sophisticated multilevel analyses of how CSR operates at the organizational level, by unpacking micro-level behavioral processes and identifying cross-level effects (e.g. Jones et al., 2017), notably through multi-level analyses that remain rare in the field (e.g. Kim et al., 2017). For instance, the experiments relying on social psychology proposed by Shea and Hawn (2019) posit that individuals' reactions to CSR and corporate

social irresponsibility are shaped by individual perceptions of corporate warmth and competency. A reflexively interdisciplinary approach to micro-CSR can advance CSR research by combining psycho- and socio- theoretical and methodological insights, and ultimately consolidating multilevel CSR knowledge.

Do we need the 'micro-CSR' label at all?

While we hope that the main focus of this essay—the divide between the psychological and the sociological micro-CSR streams and suggesting hierarchical, conceptual, methodological, and engaged integration in future research—will inspire new and exciting studies, we would also like to discuss a number of questions that are clearly related to, but fall outside of the scope of, the current paper. First, our literature search has shown that many micro-CSR studies are not labelled as such. For example, one study that would now probably be labelled 'micro' is Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) account of the New York and New Jersey port authority's struggle with homeless people. The research design, concepts, and attention to individuals clearly place this study in the sociological micro-CSR tradition, although it was published long before micro-CSR became a hot topic. Likewise, a stream of marketing studies of customers' perception of and reaction to CSR (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003) also qualify as micro-CSR research. Some of these marketing studies suggest the importance of similar identification mechanism, like the psychological micro-CSR studies we reviewed here (e.g. Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Future research could further consolidate the micro-CSR field by making visible such studies from neighbouring disciplines by engaging in more systematic reviews or analyses of networks of citations to highlight how individuals, operating within or across multiple distinct types of stakeholder groups (shareholder, customer, local community) studied by different disciplines, engage with CSR.

We posit in this essay that there are many studies that are micro but not labelled as such; and others labelled as micro that are probably something else. This raises the question of

whether the micro-CSR label bring anything to the field. Our pragmatic take regarding the label's value is that it is already in use and stands for an emerging field of research. Rather than debate labels, we should take advantage of this current opportunity to consolidate the micro-foundations of CSR studies. Such consolidation should provide fertile ground for developing new research that can help solve conceptual, empirical, and practical puzzles that characterize CSR theory and engagement.

In addition, the micro-CSR label offers an interesting opportunity to develop a sound knowledge of how CSR operates across the micro-level and empirical settings, contexts, and organizational boundaries. Despite recurrent claims that micro-CSR should focus on individuals outside organizational borders (Gond et al., 2017; Jones and Rupp, 2018; Rupp and Mallory, 2015), micro-CSR studies have mainly focused on persons in actual or potential relation with corporations through the job market, for instance by considering 'prospective employees' (e.g. Turban and Greening, 1997) or 'job seekers' (e.g. Jones et al., 2014). In this regard, prior micro-CSR research remains highly corporate-centric. And yet one advantage of focusing on individuals and their behaviors or practices is the possibility to unpack mechanisms that explain reactions to CSR or the co-constitution of CSR practices from the standpoint of many other potential stakeholders. Often, the same individual can evaluate organizational CSR as a member of a local community, as a relative of an employee, as a beneficiary of a CSR program, as a shareholder, and as a customer. For instance, one could wonder whether and how employees from a given non-governmental organization (NGO) react to a given corporate CSR initiative, and whether such reactions differ from those of this organization's own employees. Both sets of reactions may help explain CSR-related NGO-corporate interactions. By encouraging studies that focus on individuals from stakeholder groups other than corporate employees, the micro-CSR umbrella could enhance its usefulness and its reach, providing more nuanced explanations of why and how CSR works, or not.

What is micro-CSR (not)?

Furthermore, we discuss which studies should fall under the micro-CSR umbrella—and which studies should not. In the current work, we restrict ourselves to identifying and describing the status of the micro-CSR field. In the future, it might be fruitful to add a normative or evaluative dimension to the discussion that defines the boundaries of micro-CSR. For example, are generic OB studies using CSR as a context rather than a set of practices, as well as extremely detailed and possibly idiosyncratic accounts, a meaningful contribution to the field? We believe that our cross-fertilization strategy offers a point of departure for the future development of the field with regards to the content that falls under the micro-CSR umbrella.

Is the search for microfoundations a macro-movement in management?

Next, we realize that the current work is part of an ongoing avalanche of micro research in many different fields. For example, institutional theory has paid attention to micro-phenomena with studies on institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Likewise, strategy scholars have embraced the notion of microfoundations through the analysis of strategy-as-practice (Vaara and Whittington, 2012). We also observe that fields such as organizational identity have for a long time experienced bifurcation between more psychological and sociological lines of research in ways that open up perspectives for cross-fertilization and research development (Brown, 2019). In contrast, the micro-psychological foundations of social movement dynamics are just starting to be studied (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017). Scholars in all of these fields are realizing that learning about their own and other streams' strengths and weaknesses can, if done systematically, lead to richer valuable insights. Micro-CSR is no exception.

Can inter-disciplinary micro-CSR make a difference to practice?

Finally, beyond clarifying a burgeoning field of research, distinguishing and bridging psychological and sociological micro-CSR can contribute to current CSR practices in at least two ways. Left alone, psychological micro-CSR may develop a focus on individual CSR perceptions and their manipulations through managerial tools with the sole aim of enhancing corporate rather than societal welfare (extreme functionalism). On the other hand, the reflexivity and sociological critiques of micro-CSR that have inspired some socio micro-CSR development, though crucial to illustrate the limitations of firms' CSR practices, may remain out of practitioners' reach. The multidisciplinary focus we are advocating may mitigate such potential pitfalls of exclusively psycho- or socio- micro-CSR scholarship. For instance, insights from psycho- and socio-micro-CSR approaches could be used to better document the 'dark side' and potential drawbacks of CSR, and explain whether individuals, through their multiple stakeholders roles (e.g. activists, citizens, customers, employees, shareholders) can actually reward and punish corporations in a transformative manner.

In relation to the field development, the focus we propose can support an integrative approach to CSR as a social phenomenon for academics, delivering on an early call from the founding father of the field (Acquier et al., 2011; Bowen, 1953). Interdisciplinary micro-CSR can help develop CSR studies that benefit from the best features of the sociological and psychological traditions, while developing directly actionable knowledge for managers. Indeed, the focus of CSR practices at a micro-level helps identifying how key components of CSR actions, programs, issues and strategy operate within organizations (see, e.g. What is Meant by CSR?, Table 2). This empirical focus on CSR 'as it happens on the ground' can promote CSR research that is within practitioners' reach, and that enables them to act upon CSR. Accordingly, such an approach may be better able to enable engaged forms of CSR scholarship than macro-focused CSR traditions.

Conclusion

By identifying, labelling and conceptualizing a new distinction between sociological and psychological micro-CSR studies, we hope in this critical essay to help scholars to position their work in an emerging tradition and engage in a larger, more stimulating conversation. Through the specification and comparison of the underlying epistemological orientations, empirical foci, and theoretical contributions of both streams of micro-CSR studies, we have identified opportunities for one-sided cross-fertilizations of both streams of studies and proposed a revised integrative research agenda for micro-CSR, which has the potential to make this promising and fast-growing research domain more useful to practitioners. We hope this essay will foster both cross-disciplinary and research-practice collaborations in order to better understand the dark side of micro-CSR and its influence on meaningfulness, and reveal new ways to unleash the potential power of CSR practices to transform individual behaviors within and across organizations.

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Table 1. Typical empirical studies from both streams of research*

Micro-CSR Study	Main empirical results	Core concept	Data collection	Data analysis	Respondents
Psychological anchoring					
El Akremi, Gond, Swaen, De Roeck and Igalens (2018)	Corporate stakeholder responsibility (CStR) relates positively and directly to organizational pride and perceived organizational support, and positively and indirectly to organizational identification, job satisfaction, and affective commitment.	Stakeholder theory, social exchange, social identity theory	Surveys	Multivariate	Employees, Executives MBA students
Farooq, Rupp and Farooq (2017)	CSR actions focusing on external stakeholders enhance perceived prestige whereas CSR actions focusing on employee welfare enhance perceived respect. Both differentially impact different forms of employee citizenship varying in strength due to social and cultural individual differences.	Social identity theory	Surveys	Multivariate	Employees
Jones, Willness and Madey (2014)	Corporate social performance (CSP), specifically community involvement practices, informs job seekers' three signal-based mechanisms that affect organizational attractiveness: anticipated pride [study 1] and organizational prestige [study 2], perceived value fit, and expectations about employee treatment.	Signalling theory	Survey, experiments	Multivariate	Job seekers
Rupp, Shao, Thornton and Skarlicki (2013)	First-party justice perceptions attenuated the positive relationship between employees' CSR perceptions and their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB); and the relationship between CSR perceptions and OCB was more pronounced among employees high (versus low) in moral identity.	Organizational justice	Surveys, experiments	Multivariate	Employees, job applicants
Sociological anchoring					
Costas and Kärreman (2013)	CSR discourses and practices serve to construct an idealized image of a socially, ecologically and ethically responsible corporate self. In this way, CSR works as a form of aspirational control that ties employees' aspirational identities and ethical conscience to the organization.	Discourse and control	Interviews, documents, observations	Interpretive analysis	CSR consultants
Mitra and Buzannell (2016)	Sustainability practitioners derived meaningfulness in tensional ways from circumstances and enabling and constraining factors. This occurred through ongoing negotiation, the perceived impact of work, and career positioning.	Meaningfulness, tensions, and negotiation	Interviews	Interpretive analysis	Environmental sustainability practitioners
Risi and Wickert (2017)	During CSR institutionalization, CSR managers are pushed to the organizational periphery, indicating that the relationship between professionalization and institutionalization can be 'asymmetric' under certain conditions.	Institutional theory	Interviews	Interpretive analysis	CSR managers
Wickert and De Bakker (2018)	Issue sellers leverage their weak organizational positions by accumulating internal influence and the support of others. They draw on the emotional and functional appeal of social issues when interacting with buyers and individually tailor their approach.	Issue selling	Interviews	Interpretive analysis	CSR managers

* For a detailed description of how we identified these illustrative papers, please see Appendix 1.

Table 2. Contrasting psychological and sociological micro-CSR

Characteristics	Psychological micro-CSR	Sociological micro-CSR
Foundations and epistemological orientations		
Conceptualization of the individual and corresponding meaning attached to 'micro-CSR'	Psychological and person-centric approach to individuals who perceive, evaluate and react to CSR in a large part independently from each other Micro-CSR as intra-individual psychological mechanisms, focus on cognitive and behavioral mechanisms	Social view on individuals approached as embedded in social networks and interdependent, and provided with consciousness and subjectivities Micro-CSR as inter-individual or intra-organizational mechanisms, focus on micro-processes between individuals
Disciplinary background	Organizational behavior, Industrial psychology, experimental psychology, social psychology	Organization theory, management theory, critical management studies, strategy-as-practice, sociology
Ontological orientations	Realist, positivism, structuralism	Constructivism, post-structuralism
Methodological approaches	Variance and explanatory focus Multivariate analysis, large-scale (self-report) surveys, experiments	Process and interpretative focus Case studies, interviews, ethnographic approaches
Temporal orientation	Static, cross-sectional, multi-waves yet variance-oriented	Dynamic, process-oriented, activities and practices as they unfold
Empirical and conceptual focus		
Type of CSR practices considered (what is CSR?)	Volunteering programs, eco-friendly behavior, community-based initiatives, global perceptions of stakeholder treatment	CSR programs and policies, CSR strategy, CSR external and internal communication, CSR reporting practices
Type of individuals studied and main unit of analysis	Individuals as exclusive category or type of employees – e.g.: Employees, prospect employees, job seekers, executives – focus on generic 'employees', bias towards white-collar Individuals as the main unit of analysis, group or multilevel studies less frequent	Individuals as inclusive 'social actors' or 'professionals' – e.g.: CSR consultants, CSR managers, climate change experts – focus on managers and middle-management Managers' practices and discourses or CSR implementation processes as the main unit of analysis
Key concepts of interest	Attractiveness, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, green behavior, leadership	Institutions, power, meaning, discourse, communication, politics, strategy
Key theory of interest	Social identity theory, social exchange theory, signalling theory, psychological need theory, attribution theory, deontic justice theory	Institutional theory, strategy-as-practice, issue-selling, framing, professionalization, performativity, constitutive communication
Contribution to the analysis of micro-CSR		
CSR-related conceptual development	Analysis of individual drivers of CSR and of CSR-related workplace outcomes, and of individuals' motivations for CSR engagement, cognitive and affective processes, reactions of actors – less developments about the mediating mechanisms Alternatively, a view on 'CSR as an independent variable' affecting individuals	Analysis of how CSR happens in practice through multiple processes – less developments about CSR differentiated organizational impacts Domination of a view on CSR 'as a dependent variable' CSR as an outcome or the result of specific activities and practices Practices of actors, implementation of CSR within organizations
Distinctive contribution	Importance of CSR perceptions as a foundation to CSR influence Identification of multiple workplace outcomes related to CSR Conceptualization and evaluation the role played by social exchange, signalling and social identification in individual response to CSR Role of personal characteristics in CSR	Clarification of the multiple contrasted narratives and discourses surrounding CSR in the workplace Role of tensions and contradictions in the actual deployment CSR practices Allowing for complexity, CSR structured by power dynamics within organization, potential 'perversion' of CSR

Table 3. A Research Agenda for Multidisciplinary Micro-CSR

Blind spots and complementarities	Possible research questions
Hierarchical integration: Reconsidering and consolidating levels of analysis	
'CSR climate' to capture intra-organizational and collective CSR	How do individuals' perceptions of CSR in organizations accumulate to a CSR climate? How do CSR climate shape employees' perceptions of CSR?
Socialization into CSR initiatives	How do employees become socialized into CSR initiatives? In what ways do socialization processes into CSR unfold over time? How do individual, group and network processes interact in CSR socialization?
Individual-level resistance to CSR change from an intra-organizational communication and implementation perspective	How do intra-organizational dynamics influence resistance toward CSR among employees? Which factors help or hinder CSR implementation from an individual perspective?
Multi-level analysis of micro-CSR	How does CSR implementation progress in relation to shifts in employees' perceptions and behaviors in a workplace?
Conceptual integration: Power and meaningfulness as pervasive phenomena	
Power positions and engagement with power	Do managers and employees use power when implementing CSR? How does individuals' power positions and engagement with power (e.g. degree of Machiavellianism) shape CSR-related dynamics? How do individuals deal with potential tensions, paradoxes and dysfunctionalities of CSR?
Integration of divergent understandings of meaningfulness	Why and how do CSR professionals and other employees experience CSR-related forms of meaningfulness? How does CSR meaningfulness relate to organizational outcomes?
Methodological integration: Multilevel, mixed-methods and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis	
Simultaneously capturing multiple complementary micro-dimensions through mixed method studies	How do individual and collective perceptions of CSR relate to attitudes and behaviors over time? How individuals' personal characteristics and emotional sensitivity shape the deployment of CSR initiatives over time?
Simultaneously analyse multiple levels (within and/or across the intra-individual, inter-individual and intra-organizational levels)	How do CSR initiatives unfold over time at the executive, managerial, and employee levels? How shifts at one level (e.g. employee perceptions of CSR) relate to change at other levels (e.g. stages of CSR initiatives deployment)?
Combine methodological strengths of both types of research	How do the political dynamics of CSR unfold over time, from both middle managers' and executives' perspectives? How do managers' and employees' perceptions of CSR and related behavioral indicators shift over time? How is the legitimacy of CSR practices framed by employees? What is the effect of distinct frames on specific reactions towards CSR practices?
fsQCA to conceptualize, evaluate, and combine results from multiple studies for generalization	How do explanatory mechanisms that operate across levels of analysis, i.e. the intra-individual (e.g. individual identification to the organization), inter-individual (e.g. individual political engagement in the process of CSR deployment) and intra-organizational level (e.g. specific mode of CSR implementation within a given business unit) combine into configurations of 'micro' characteristics? How can fsQCA be used to aggregate the potentially contradictory findings of micro-CSR studies conducted at distinct micro-levels?
Engaged integration: Subversive functionalism and critical performativity	
Integrate tool development and critical performativity	How can scholars of CSR engage corporations on research projects that could have a transformative and socially positive impact on their organization? How can scholars help practitioners design management tools that support managers' critical reflexivity about CSR practices' influence on employees?

Table 4. Clarifying and organizing the multiple meanings of Micro-CSR

Tacit / Explicit Meaning of Micro-CSR	Signification in terms of analysis of individuals formulated as a question	Illustrative studies
Intra-organizational micro-CSR		
▪ CSR as happening within organizations	How do individuals relate to CSR-related activities of their organization?	Humphreys and Brown (2008); Shamir (2005)
▪ Implementation and deployment of CSR policies and programs	How do individuals engage in the design, implementation, translation, deployment or construction of CSR policies and programs?	Frandsen, Morsing and Vallentin (2013); Soderstrom and Weber (2019)
▪ Constitution of CSR profession/als	How do individuals create, perform and are engaged in new CSR-related jobs?	Risi and Wickert (2017); Carollo and Guerci (2018)
▪ Communicative construction of CSR	How do individuals create or construct CSR through discourse and activities?	Mitra and Buzzanell (2017); Cooren (2018)
Inter-Individual micro-CSR		
▪ Relations and interactions	How do individuals influence each other about CSR?	Wickert and De Bakker (2018); Girschik (2018)
▪ Groups and networks	How do individuals /collectively engage in CSR-related behavior?	Jacobson, Hood and Van Buren III (2014); Kim et al. (2017)
▪ Practices and activities	How do individual concretely do CSR-related activities (e.g. CSR strategy or programs)?	Gond and Brès (2019); Gond et al. (2018); Egels-Zanden and Rosen (2015)
Intra-Individual micro-CSR		
▪ Individual engagement in CSR behavior	Why/how do individuals engage in CSR-related behaviors?	Crilly, Schneider, and Zollo (2008); Erdogan et al. (2018)
▪ Behavioral response to CSR perceptions	Why/how do perceptions of CSR influence workplace and attitudes and behaviors?	Farooq et al. (2017); Jones (2010); Peterson (2004)
▪ Cognitive and affective processes of CSR evaluation	How individuals do perceive and/or forms specific cognitions and emotions about CSR?	El Akremi et al. (2018); Nyberg and Wright (2013)
▪ CSR-based subjectivity, self and consciousness	How individuals are subjectively influenced or controlled by CSR?	Costas and Kärreman (2013)

Legend: cells that correspond to micro-levels typically covered by sociological CSR studies are white; cells that correspond to micro-levels typically covered by psychological CSR studies are dark grey; cells that correspond to micro-levels investigated by both streams of studies are light grey.