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What We Know and Don't Know About Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review and Research Agenda

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The authors review the corporate social responsibility (CSR) literature based on 588 journal articles and 102 books and book chapters. They offer a multilevel and multidisciplinary theoretical framework that synthesizes and integrates the literature at the institutional, organizational, and individual levels of analysis. The framework includes reactive and proactive predictors of CSR actions and policies and the outcomes of such actions and policies, which they classify as primarily affecting internal (i.e., internal outcomes) or external (i.e., external outcomes) stakeholders. The framework includes variables that explain underlying mechanisms (i.e., relationship- and value-based mediator variables) of CSR–outcomes relationships and contingency effects (i.e., people-, place-, price-, and profile-based moderator variables) that explain conditions under which the relationship between CSR and its outcomes change. The authors' review reveals important knowledge gaps related to the adoption of different theoretical orientations by researchers studying CSR at different levels of analysis, the need to understand underlying mechanisms linking CSR with outcomes, the need for research at micro levels of analysis (i.e., individuals and teams), and the need for methodological approaches that will help address these substantive knowledge gaps. Accordingly, they offer a detailed research agenda for the future, based on a multilevel perspective that aims to integrate diverse theoretical frameworks as well as develop an understanding of underlying mechanisms and microfoundations of CSR (i.e., foundations based on individual action and interactions). The authors also provide specific suggestions regarding research design, measurement, and data-analytic approaches that will be instrumental in carrying out their proposed research agenda.

Keywords: *corporate social responsibility; sustainability; microfoundations of corporate social responsibility; corporate citizenship; corporate social performance*

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Scholars have studied firms' social concerns for many decades (e.g., Berle, 1931; Bowen, 1953; Davis, 1960; Dodd, 1932; Frederick, 1960). However, it is only recently that interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become more widespread (Serenko & Bontis, 2009; Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009). To avoid confusion given the different conceptualizations available (Carroll, 1999; Peloza, 2009; Waddock, 2004), we use the definition of CSR as offered by Aguinis (2011: 855) and adopted by others (e.g., Rupp, 2011; Rupp, Williams, & Aguilera, 2010): "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance." Although the definition of CSR refers to policies and actions by organizations, such policies and actions are influenced and implemented by actors at all levels of analysis (e.g., institutional, organizational, and individual).

As the field of CSR has evolved, scholars have written literature reviews addressing important yet specific research questions. For example, Peloza (2009) focused on how to measure the impact of CSR on financial performance, Carroll (1999) and Waddock (2004) explored the operationalization of CSR as well as differences and sometimes confusing overlaps between CSR and similar constructs, Wood (2010) reviewed the literature on how to measure CSR, and Peloza and Shang (2011) conducted a review of how CSR can create value for stakeholders. In addition, other reviews of the CSR literature have focused on specific disciplines such as marketing (Enderle & Murphy, 2009; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004); organizational behavior (OB), human resource management (HRM), and industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology (Aguinis, 2011); operations (Brammer, Hoejmose, & Millington, 2011); and information systems (Elliot, 2011).

In spite of the reviews published thus far, the CSR literature remains highly fragmented. As noted by Waddock, "Parallel and sometimes confusing universes exist" (2004: 5). One reason for this fragmentation is that scholars study CSR through different disciplinary and conceptual lenses (Carroll, 1999; Garriga & Melé, 2004; Waddock, 2004). Moreover, the CSR literature is fragmented regarding levels of analysis. First, CSR is usually studied from one level of analysis at a time. Second, CSR is primarily studied at the macro level (i.e., institutional or organizational level) compared to the micro level (i.e., individual level). Accordingly, there is a need for a multilevel and multidisciplinary review in which the vast and diverse extant literature can be integrated and synthesized in a coherent and comprehensive manner.

In contrast to previously published reviews, our article provides an integration of the large and highly heterogeneous CSR literature originating in such fields as environmental studies, OB, HRM, marketing, organizational theory, and strategy, among others. We offer a general model to synthesize previously published work at the institutional, organizational, and individual levels of analysis. Building upon this general model, we provide a critical analysis of what we know (i.e., where we have been) and what we do not know (i.e., where we need to go) about CSR. Accordingly, our review makes the following value-added contributions. First, we address the need for multilevel models of CSR (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010). Second, because of our multilevel approach, our review also helps bridge the much lamented micro–macro divide in the field of management (Aguinis, Boyd, Pierce, & Short, 2011). Third, our integrative model incorporates

mediators and moderators that will enable future research to clarify the various possible roles for key constructs and improve our understanding of underlying processes (i.e., mediating effects) and conditions under which (i.e., moderating effects) CSR leads to specific outcomes. Finally, our review uncovers critical knowledge gaps and provides clear and specific directions for future research as well as suggestions regarding methodological approaches—an informative road map in terms of future research.

Scope of the Review

Our review relies on information extracted from 588 journal articles and 102 books and book chapters (please see the appendix for a description of our literature search procedures). We modeled the scope and structure of our review on others published in the *Journal of Management* (e.g., Laplume, Sonpar, & Litz, 2008; Nicholls-Nixon, Castilla, Garcia, & Pesquera, 2011). In conducting our literature review, we systematically focused on two issues. First, in each source we identified predictors of CSR, outcomes of CSR, and mediators and moderators of CSR–outcomes relationships. Predictors in our model are antecedents of CSR actions and policies (i.e., CSR initiatives). Outcomes are those that result from CSR initiatives. Mediators are those variables that explain the underlying processes and mechanisms of why CSR initiatives are related to an outcome, while moderators describe the conditions under which CSR initiatives influence outcomes. Second, in each source we focused on identifying relationships among variables at the institutional, organizational, and individual levels of analysis.

Although no review is completely inclusive, the aforementioned two principles allowed us to synthesize and integrate the vast and diverse extant CSR literature. Our intent is not to provide an exhaustive historical review that summarizes all of the valuable contributions from CSR scholars over the past century (for a historical review, see Carroll, 2008). Rather, we offer a general theoretical framework that is broad and that allows for the inclusion of more variables in the future, thereby opening the possibility that knowledge regarding CSR will continue to accumulate in a more systematic fashion.

Results of our literature search, summarized in Tables 1 and 2, reveal the following. First, in the entire set of 588 articles, there are slightly more conceptual (i.e., 53%) than empirical (i.e., 47%) articles (see Table 1). Second, a content analysis based on the subset of 181 articles published in 17 journals that do not specialize in CSR revealed an increased interest in the topic over time (see Table 2). In the 1970s, there were 23 articles published, which then dropped to 16 in the 1980s. From 1990 to 2005, the number of articles published per year doubled. Since 2005, the number of publications has greatly accelerated, and almost half (43%) of the CSR articles have been published since 2005. Third, regarding level-of-analysis issues, 33% of the articles focused on the institutional level, 57% on the organizational level, 4% on the individual level, and 5% addressed two or more levels. In short, our literature search revealed that there is a balance between the number of conceptual and empirical articles. However, there is a clear imbalance in terms of levels of analysis; the vast majority of articles address the institutional and organizational levels of analysis, and there is very little research adopting an individual or multilevel approach.

Table 1
Summary of Literature Search Results Including Journals Specializing in Corporate Social Responsibility and Related Topics, *n* (%)

Journal	Empirical	Conceptual	Total
Academy of Management Journal	32 (86)	5 (14)	37 (6)
Academy of Management Review	2 (4)	45 (96)	47 (8)
Administrative Science Quarterly	3 (75)	1 (25)	4 (1)
Business & Society	12 (44)	15 (56)	27 (5)
Business Ethics Quarterly		11 (100)	11 (2)
International Journal of Management Reviews		9 (100)	9 (2)
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	8 (57)	6 (43)	14 (2)
Journal of Applied Psychology			0 (0)
Journal of Business Ethics	154 (45)	188 (55)	342 (58)
Journal of International Business Studies	6 (86)	1 (14)	7 (1)
Journal of Management	6 (55)	5 (45)	11 (2)
Journal of Management Studies	11 (65)	6 (35)	17 (3)
Journal of Marketing	5 (100)		5 (1)
Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology	2 (100)		2 (0)
Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes			0 (0)
Journal of Organizational Behavior		1 (100)	1 (0)
Organization Science	1 (50)	1 (50)	2 (0)
Organization Studies	6 (75)	2 (25)	8 (1)
Personnel Psychology	1 (100)		1 (0)
Strategic Management Journal	15 (94)	1 (6)	16 (3)
Other journals	7 (47)	8 (53)	27 (5)
Total	271 (47)	305 (53)	588

Table 2
Summary of Literature Search Results Excluding Journals Specializing in Corporate Social Responsibility and Related Topics, *n* (%)

Years and Level of Analysis	Empirical	Conceptual	Total
Publication years			
1970-1979	9 (39)	14 (61)	23 (13)
1980-1989	9 (56)	7 (44)	16 (9)
1990-1999	26 (62)	16 (38)	42 (23)
2000-2004	16 (70)	7 (30)	23 (13)
2005-2011	38 (49)	39 (51)	77 (43)
Total	98	83	181
Level of analysis			
Institutional	36 (60)	24 (40)	60 (33)
Organizational	50 (48)	54 (52)	104 (57)
Individual	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	8 (4)
Multilevel: institutional and organizational	3 (75)	1 (25)	4 (2)
Multilevel: organizational and individual	3 (100)	0	3 (2)
Multilevel: institutional, organizational, and individual	1 (50)	1 (50)	2 (1)
Total	98	83	181

Note: These results refer to the 17 journals included in the content analysis as described in the appendix.

What We Know About Corporate Social Responsibility: Institutional, Organizational, and Individual Levels of Analysis

In the following sections, we critically review the CSR literature at each level of analysis (i.e., institutional, organizational, and individual). Each of the sections includes a summary table in which predictors, outcomes, mediators, and moderators are listed at each specific level. Also, although we will not describe in the text all of the studies summarized in the tables, these tables provide a fast and accessible way to locate sources addressing various types of relationships at different levels of analysis. Later in our article, we will refer back to these tables when we discuss specific future research directions in the context of describing what we do not know about CSR—knowledge gaps that should be addressed in the future. Note that the tables represent variables as they were studied in the published sources, so some of the variables were studied in multiple roles (e.g., as a predictor in one study and as a moderator in another study).

Institutional Level of Analysis

Articles focusing on the institutional level of analysis address at least one of Scott's (1995) three pillars of institutions: normative, cultural-cognitive, and regulative elements. So, for example, articles addressing laws and standards, which are regulative elements (Scott, 1995), are classified as addressing CSR at the institutional level of analysis. Similarly, articles addressing constructs that are shaped by society, consumers, and stakeholders external to the firm, which are cultural-cognitive and normative elements (Scott, 1995), are also classified as focusing on the institutional level of analysis.

Predictors. As shown in Table 3, firms engage in CSR due to institutional pressures, particularly from stakeholders (e.g., Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Boal & Peery, 1985; Sharma & Henriques, 2005; Stevens, Steensma, Harrison, & Cochran, 2005). Over three decades ago, Grunig (1979) found that different stakeholders have different expectations regarding a firm's CSR. More recent work has revealed that stakeholders take on different roles and engage in different activities while attempting to influence firms to engage in CSR. Specifically, stakeholders can be shareholders (David, Bloom, & Hillman, 2007), consumers (Christmann & Taylor, 2006; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), the media (Davidson & Worrell, 1988; Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999a, 1999b), the local community (Marquis, Glynn, & Davis, 2007), and interest groups (Greening & Gray, 1994). Regardless of their specific role, Aguilera et al. (2007) theorized that stakeholders have three main motives for pressuring firms to engage in CSR: (1) instrumental (i.e., self-interest driven), (2) relational (i.e., based on a concern with relationships among group members), and (3) moral (i.e., based on a concern with ethical standards and moral principles).

The ways in which stakeholders can serve as catalysts for CSR initiatives are quite diverse. For example, Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) found that customers influence firms through their evaluations and product purchasing, and Christmann and Taylor (2006) ascertained that customers also exert influence through customer monitoring and expected sanctions. Also,

Table 3
Summary of Conceptual and Empirical Research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the Institutional Level of Analysis

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
Conceptual papers Activist group pressures (den Hond & de Bakker, 2007) Economic conditions (Campbell, 2007) Stakeholder instrumental, relational, and moral motives (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007) Stakeholder psychological needs (Aguilera et al., 2007) **Empirical papers** Institutional and stakeholder pressure • Stakeholder influence/pressure (Boal & Peery, 1985; Brammer & Millington, 2008; Greening & Gray, 1994; Henriques & Sadorsky, 1999; Sharma & Henriques, 2005; Stevens, Steensma, Harrison, & Cochran, 2005) • Shareholder activism (–) (David, Bloom, & Hillman, 2007) • Mimetic forces (Nikolaeva & Bicho, 2011) • Trade-related pressures (Boal & Peery, 1985; Muller & Kolk, 2010) • Media pressure (Davidson & Worrell, 1988; Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999a, 1999b)	**Empirical Papers** Firm reputation and goodwill with external stakeholders (Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003) Customers • Customer satisfaction (Lev, Petrovits, & Radhakrishnan, 2010; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006) • Customer–organization fit (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) • Consumer trust (Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulus, & Avramidis, 2009)	**Conceptual Papers** Stakeholders • Consumer information intensity (Schuler & Cording, 2006) • Public perception of firm CSR (Lev et al., 2010) Other • National and transnational frameworks such as culture, politics, financial, labor, education systems, and practices (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003) • Institutional conditions: regulation, monitoring, norms, and stakeholder dialogue (Campbell, 2007) **Empirical Papers** Customers • Consumer beliefs and support for CSR (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) • Sensitivity to consumer perceptions (Lev et al., 2010) • Consumer perceptions of need of cause, reputation of firm, and firm motives of cause (Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000)	**Empirical Papers** Reputation of firm (Brammer & Pavelin, 2006; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Turban & Greening, 1997; Verschoor, 1998; Waddock & Graves, 1997b) Consumer evaluation of product/company (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Ellen et al., 2000; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) Consumer choice of company/product (Arora & Henderson, 2007; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) Customer loyalty (Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999)

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
• Customer evaluation and purchasing decisions (Christmann & Taylor, 2006; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) • Customer monitoring of firm (Christmann & Taylor, 2006) • Stakeholder power, legitimacy, and urgency (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999) • Local community pressure (Marquis, Glynn, & Davis, 2007) • Shareholder activism (Rehbein, Waddock, & Graves, 2004) • Management of quality relationships with stakeholders (Hillman & Keim, 2001) • Influence of organizational field (i.e., group of organizations to which the firm is aligned) (Hoffman, 1999) Regulations and standards • Regulations/compliance (Buehler & Shetty, 1974; Fineman & Clarke, 1996) • Standards and certification (Christmann & Taylor, 2006; Tenbrunsel, Wade-Benzoni, Messick, & Bazerman, 2000) • Expectations from public at large (Grunig, 1979) • Perceived CSR by consumers (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) Third-party evaluations • Addition/deletion to social index (Doh, Howton, Howton, & Siegel, 2010) • Environmental ratings (Chatterji & Toffel, 2010)		Other stakeholders • Salience of shareholder to firm (David et al., 2007) • Stakeholder familiarity with firm (Turban & Greening, 1997) • Stakeholder genuine concern attributes (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006) • Activism of owners of large investment funds (Neubaum & Zahra, 2006) • Cohesion with organizational field, which is a group of organizations to which the firm is aligned (Bansal & Roth, 2000) • Firm visibility to stakeholders (Chiu & Sharfman, 2011) • Salience of stakeholder to firm (Agle et al., 1999) • Firm reputation and goodwill with external stakeholders (Orlitzky et al., 2003) • Institutional owners' coordinated activism (Neubaum & Zahra, 2006) Third-party evaluations • Awards—only first time that it is received (Klassen & McLaughlin, 1996)	

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
Context/climate • Country-specific corporate governance structures (Williams & Aguilera, 2008) • Country context (Brammer, Pavelin, & Porter, 2009) • Sociocultural environment (Victor & Cullen, 1988)		Environment/context • Country contextual variables that influence CSR (Arya & Zhang, 2009) • Industry type (Brammer & Millington, 2004; Brammer & Pavelin, 2006; Brammer et al., 2009; Buehler & Shetty, 1974, 1976; Chatterji & Toffel, 2010; Chiu & Sharfman, 2011; Holmes, 1977; Klassen & McLaughlin, 1996; Strike, Gao, & Bansal, 2006; Waddock & Graves, 1997a, 1997b) • Industry growth (Russo & Fouts, 1997) • Level of differentiation within industry (Hull & Rothenberg, 2008) Other • Organizational culture (Bansal & Roth, 2000)	

Note: All relationships are positive unless marked by (–).

interest groups exert influence using public statements that, as Greening and Gray (1994) found, influence firms to change policies to be more focused on societal issues. In short, stakeholders apply pressure primarily through impacting potential revenues and resources and the reputation of the firm.

Our review revealed additional institutional-level predictors of CSR actions and policies. These include regulation (Buehler & Shetty, 1974; Fineman & Clarke, 1996) and standards and certification (Christmann & Taylor, 2006). An interesting finding regarding the effects of standards and certification is that they might actually diminish the focus on substantive CSR because management may become principally concerned with symbolic activities that serve to minimally comply with requirements (Tenbrunsel, Wade-Benzoni, Messick, & Bazerman, 2000).

Outcomes. A consistent finding regarding the institutional-level outcomes of CSR initiatives is an improvement in a firm's reputation (Brammer & Pavelin, 2006; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Turban & Greening, 1997; Verschoor, 1998; Waddock & Graves, 1997b). Such a positive effect has been found, for example, on the part of consumers (Arora & Henderson, 2007; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), who respond to CSR through favorable evaluations of the company and its products (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) as well as through increased loyalty (Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999).

Mediators. In a meta-analysis of CSR–outcomes relationships, CSR was found to improve a firm's reputation and goodwill with external stakeholders, which resulted in increased financial performance (Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). A few studies have found that the relationship with customers is an important mediator of the CSR–outcomes relationship, specifically customer satisfaction (Lev, Petrovits, & Radhakrishnan, 2010; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006), consumer–organization fit (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), and consumer trust (Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulus, & Avramidis, 2009). Besides these five studies, our review revealed that there seems to be a black box regarding the relationship between predictors and outcomes of CSR at the institutional level of analysis. Specifically, not much is known about institutional-level variables that may serve as mediators. In other words, underlying mechanisms between predictors and outcomes of CSR are rarely, if ever, investigated at this particular level of analysis. As we discuss later in our article, this knowledge gap will serve as an important springboard for future multilevel CSR research.

Moderators. The relationship between CSR and outcomes at the institutional level of analysis varies primarily due to moderating effects related to stakeholders, firm environment, and industry. Regarding stakeholders, David et al. (2007) found that the relationship between CSR initiatives and outcomes is stronger as stakeholder salience increases—defined as those stakeholders who have power, legitimacy, and urgency. Regarding firm environment, increased regulation (Chatterji & Toffel, 2010) was found to strengthen the CSR–outcome relationship. Regarding industry, Chiu and Sharfman (2011) found that the relationship between CSR initiatives and outcomes was stronger in industries that were more visible to stakeholders, and Russo and Fouts (1997) found that growth of industry strengthens the CSR–outcome relationship.

Summary. We can briefly summarize the results of our review of CSR at the institutional level of analysis around the following six major conclusions (please refer to Table 3 for more detailed information and relevant sources). First, although they may have different motives, as well as ways of doing so, the actions and influence of stakeholders serve as an important predictor of CSR actions and policies—they affect whether firms choose to engage in CSR and the types of CSR initiatives firms pursue. Second, institutional forces including regulation, standards, and certification also affect the extent of and types of CSR actions and policies firms choose to implement. Third, institutional forces can often lead to symbolic rather than genuine CSR actions and policies whereby firms may appear to engage in CSR, but these initiatives are simply intended to appease stakeholder demands or meet the minimum requirements of standards. Fourth, in terms of outcomes of CSR actions and policies, firms that engage in CSR are likely to improve their reputations and improve customer loyalty and evaluations of products. Fifth, regarding moderating effects, the relationship between CSR initiatives and outcomes changes depending on several institutional-level variables. For example, the CSR–outcomes relationship is stronger when stakeholders have more power and legitimacy and in the presence of increased regulation. Finally, the institutional-level literature is virtually silent regarding mediators, or underlying mechanisms, of the CSR–outcomes relationships.

Organizational Level of Analysis

The majority of CSR articles published in the 17 journals included in the content analysis focus on the organizational level of analysis (i.e., 57% of articles). Note that our discussion of the organizational level of analysis also includes research on individuals when they are treated conceptually at a macro level. For example, we include research on boards and top management teams when they are based on macro theories such as those from the fields of strategy (e.g., corporate governance research).

Predictors. A predictor of CSR engagement is a firm's instrumental motivation—the perception that CSR is good for business and likely to lead to increased competitiveness (Bansal & Roth, 2000) and legitimacy (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Sharma, 2000). In addition, firms are motivated by normative reasons such as a sense of responsibility and duty (Bansal & Roth, 2000), following a higher order or morals (Aguilera et al., 2007), and a sense of stewardship (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). Firm-specific variables are also influential in affecting CSR initiatives. An alignment of CSR with firm mission and values is an important predictor of CSR (Bansal, 2003; Maignan et al., 1999; Marcus & Anderson, 2006). Moreover, long-term institutional ownership (Neubaum & Zahra, 2006) and top management equity (Johnson & Greening, 1999) also positively influence CSR engagement. As for structure, firms are more likely to engage in CSR when their structures are more open to relationships with society. For example, Johnson and Greening (1999) found that corporate governance structures such as the inclusion of outside directors broadened the focus of the firm to go beyond the exclusive interest of shareholders.

Outcomes. Peloza (2009) reviewed 128 studies that explored the CSR–financial outcomes relationship and reported that 59% found a positive relationship, 27% a mixed or neutral relationship, and 14% a negative relationship. However, the fluctuation of results across studies may be due in part to sampling error (Aguinis, Pierce, Bosco, Dalton, & Dalton, 2011), an issue that does not negatively affect results of a meta-analytic review. A meta-analysis of 52 studies by Orlitzky et al. (2003) found a positive relationship between CSR and financial outcomes, especially when reputation was used as a proxy for corporate social/environmental responsibility. The mean observed correlation (r_{obs}) based on $N = 33{,}878$ was .18 with a variance of .06. Furthermore, when firm financial survey measures and CSR reputation measures were removed from the analysis, many of the negative findings were shown to be the result of methodological and statistical artifacts. Specifically, much of the cross-study variation of r_{obs} was shown to be a function of sampling and measurement error. Margolis, Elfenbein, and Walsh (2009) conducted another meta-analysis and found a mean weighted observed effect size of $r = .105$ (median: $r = .085$).

These apparently inconsistent meta-analytic results should be interpreted taking into account that there are important differences in how CSR is defined (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009; Peloza, 2009). Peloza (2009) uncovered that 36 different metrics have been used to assess CSR, and 39 different measures have been used to assess financial performance. The difference in measurement often goes beyond semantics to deeper construct-level differences shown through operationalizations of CSR, ranging from philanthropy to ethics to safety issues to more composite measures assessed by external rating agencies such as KLD Research & Analytics, Inc. Moreover, Margolis et al. (2009) and Orlitzky et al. (2003) used different sets of primary-level effect sizes in their meta-analyses: Margolis et al. (2009) relied on 192 effects reported in 166 studies, whereas Orlitzky et al. (2003) relied on 388 effects reported in 52 studies. Thus, given that these studies meta-analyzed nonoverlapping samples of effect sizes, and given differences in how CSR is defined and measured across primary-level studies, we should not be surprised that results are not consistent.

A few studies explored the relationship between CSR and nonfinancial outcomes such as improved competitive advantage (Greening & Turban, 2000) and attractiveness to institutional investors (Graves & Waddock, 1994). Also, firm capabilities were found to improve as a result of CSR actions and policies, such as management practices (Waddock & Graves, 1997a), operational efficiencies (Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998), product quality (Agle et al., 1999; Johnson & Greening, 1999), and perceived quality of management (Waddock & Graves, 1997b). Furthermore, CSR initiatives have resulted in improved demographic diversity, especially regarding women and minorities (Johnson & Greening, 1999).

Mediators. Only 7% of the studies in the 17 journals included in our content analysis explored mediation effects. However, a few studies do provide insight into such underlying processes. For example, Surroca, Tribo, and Waddock (2010) did not find a direct relationship between CSR and financial performance in a sample of 599 companies in 28 countries; rather, the authors demonstrated that the CSR–outcome relationship was fully mediated by a firm's intangible resources. Also, Sharma (2000) found that managerial interpretations of CSR as an opportunity mediates the CSR–outcome relationship.

Moderators. Scholars have investigated moderators, including financial performance (Brammer & Millington, 2004; Johnson & Greening, 1999; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988; Turban & Greening, 1997), slack resources (Bansal, 2003; Graves & Waddock, 1994; Waddock & Graves, 1997a), and lower debt levels (Graves & Waddock, 1994; Waddock & Graves, 1997a, 1997b), showing that when firms have more available financial resources, the relationship between CSR and outcomes is strengthened.

Visibility of the firm and relationships with the public have also been studied as moderators at the organizational level of analysis. For example, Fry, Keim, and Meiners (1982) found that as firms have a higher degree of public contact, the relationship between CSR engagement and outcomes is stronger. Also, a commonly investigated moderator at the organizational level is firm size (e.g., Buehler & Shetty, 1974, 1976; Godfrey et al., 2009; Graves & Waddock, 1994; Greening & Gray, 1994; Sharma, 2000; Waddock & Graves, 1997a, 1997b) such that as firm size increases, additional resources and visibility of the firm strengthen the relationship between CSR and outcomes.

Summary. We summarize the results of our review of CSR at the organizational level of analysis around the following five major conclusions (please refer to Table 4 for more detailed information as well as relevant sources). First, firms engage in CSR primarily due to instrumental reasons such as expected financial outcomes. Second, firms also engage in CSR due to normative reasons that lie in the firm's values (i.e., doing the right thing). Third, there is a small but positive relationship between CSR actions and policies and financial outcomes. In addition, despite the inconclusiveness regarding the actual size of the CSR–financial outcomes relationship, there are several nonfinancial outcomes that result from CSR such as improved management practices, product quality, operational efficiencies, attractiveness to investors, and enhanced demographic diversity (e.g., women and ethnic minorities). Fourth, only 7% of the studies in our content analysis explored mediators of the CSR–outcomes relationship. Underlying mechanisms identified thus far include a firm's intangible resources and managerial interpretations of CSR as an opportunity. Finally, regarding moderators, the CSR–outcomes relationship is strengthened when level of exposure and visibility are high and size of the company is large.

Individual Level of Analysis

As described earlier, and summarized in Table 1, our review revealed that CSR research is virtually absent from journals devoted to micro OB, micro HRM, and I-O psychology. For example, we found that the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* have published zero articles on the topic, while *Personnel Psychology* and the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* have published only one each. Overall, only 4% of the articles in the 17 journals included in our content analysis focused on the individual level of analysis. Nevertheless, these few studies at the individual level of analysis shed light on important issues regarding CSR.

Predictors. Commitment from supervisors to CSR is an important predictor of CSR engagement (e.g., Greening & Gray, 1994; Muller & Kolk, 2010; Weaver et al., 1999a,

Table 4
Summary of Conceptual and Empirical Research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the Organizational Level of Analysis

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
Conceptual papers Corporate governance practices (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003) Organizational identity orientation: individualistic, relational, collectivist (Brickson, 2007) Reporting/disclosure of firm CSR (Ullmann, 1985) Firm motives • Long-term self-interest (Davis, 1973) • Moral (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007) • Public image (Davis, 1973) **Empirical Papers** Firm motives • Competitiveness (Bansal & Roth, 2000) • Seeking legitimacy (Bansal & Roth, 2000; Sharma, 2000) • Sense of stewardship (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997) • Sense of responsibility, duty (Bansal & Roth, 2000) • Social reasoning, justice (Boal & Peery, 1985) • Organizational benefits (Buehler & Shetty, 1974; Stevens, Steensma, Harrison, & Cochran, 2005; Waddock & Graves, 1997a)	**Empirical papers** Firm's intangible resources (Surroca, Tribo, & Waddock, 2010) Managerial interpretations of CSR as an opportunity (Sharma, 2000)	**Conceptual papers** Awareness of fallacies that CSR costs too much (Narver, 1971) Concern with efficiency and misappropriation (Margolis & Walsh, 2003) **Empirical papers** Firm size (e.g., Adams & Hardwick, 1998; Brammer & Millington, 2004; Bammer, Pavelin, & Porter, 2009; Buehler & Shetty, 1974, 1976; Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009; Graves & Waddock, 1994; Greening & Gray, 1994; Johnson & Greening, 1999; Rehbein, Waddock, & Graves, 2004; Sharma, 2000; Strike et al., 2006; Waddock, 2004; Waddock & Graves, 1997a, 1997b; Waldman, Siegel, & Javidan, 2006) Research and development investment (e.g., Strike et al., 2006; Waldman et al., 2006) Risk to firm (Ingram, 1978; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988)	**Conceptual papers** Long-term wealth maximization (Narver, 1971) Moral capital (Godfrey, 2005) Perceived future regulatory costs (Richardson, Welker, & Hutchinson, 1999) **Empirical papers** Financial performance: mutual fund returns, return on assets, return on equity, sales, share price (e.g., Arya & Zhang, 2009; Barnett & Salomon, 2006; Brammer & Millington, 2008; Cochran & Wood, 1984; Davidson & Worrell, 1988; Doh, Howton, Howton, & Siegel, 2010; Hillman & Keim, 2001; Hull & Rothenberg, 2008; Klassen & McLaughlin, 1996; Lev, Petrovits, & Radhakrishnan, 2010; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006; Maignan et al., 1999; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McGuire et al., 1988; McWilliams & Siegel, 2000; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003; Waddock & Graves, 1997a)

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
Mission and values • Firm mission (Marcus & Anderson, 2006) • Firm values (Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999) • Alignment of CSR issues with organizational values (Bansal, 2003) Shareholders/ownership • Top management equity (Johnson & Greening, 1999) • Social screening of mutual funds (Barnett & Salomon, 2006) • Long-term institutional ownership (Neubaum & Zahra, 2006) Structure and governance • International diversification (Strike, Gao, & Bansal, 2006) • Product and operations technologies (Klassen & McLaughlin, 1996) • Technology portfolio allocated to pollution prevention technologies (Klassen & Whybark, 1999) • Outside directors (Johnson & Greening, 1999) • Public affairs department and internal influence/integration of public affairs (Bhambri & Sonnenfeld, 1988) • Organizational form (Victor & Cullen, 1988) • CEO pay structure (Deckop, Merriman, & Gupta, 2006)		Finances/slack • Financial performance/profitability (e.g., Brammer & Millington, 2004; Johnson & Greening, 1999; McGuire et al., 1988; Turban & Greening, 1997) • Slack resources (e.g., Bansal, 2003; Graves & Waddock, 1994; Waddock & Graves, 1997a) • Debt levels (–) (Graves & Waddock, 1994; Waddock & Graves, 1997a, 1997b) Contact/visibility with public • CSR task visibility (Jiang & Bansal, 2003) • Degree of public contact (Fry, Keim, & Meiners, 1982) • Opacity of firm environmental impact (Jiang & Bansal, 2003) • Proximity of firm to CSR issue (Buehler & Shetty, 1974) Other • Firm asset age (–) (Cochran & Wood, 1984; Strike et al., 2006) • Level of innovation in firm (Hull & Rothenberg, 2008; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006) • Adoption stage of CSR (Arya & Zhang, 2009)	Other market-related outcomes • Reduced firm risk (Bansal & Clelland, 2004; Godfrey et al., 2009; McGuire et al., 1988) • Competitive advantage (Greening & Turban, 2000) • Attractiveness to investors (Graves & Waddock, 1994) Capabilities • Good management practices (Waddock & Graves, 1997a) • Operational efficiencies (Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998) • Product quality (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Johnson & Greening, 1999) • Perceived quality of management (Waddock & Graves, 1997b) Other • Enhanced demographic diversity—women and minorities (Johnson & Greening, 1999)

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
Other • Environmental management systems (Klassen & McLaughlin, 1996) • Social issue participation (–) (Hillman & Keim, 2001) • Organizational encouragement of CSR (Ramus & Steger, 2000) • Resource dependencies (Greening & Gray, 1994) • CSR profile/approach: reactive, defensive, accommodative, proactive (Henriques & Sadorsky, 1999) • Firm leverage or debt–equity ratio (Adams & Hardwick, 1998) • Organization-specific history (Victor & Cullen, 1988) • Ability to seek technical assistance (Marcus & Anderson, 2006)		• Product quality (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006) • Perceived CSR effort of company (Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000)	

Note: All relationships are positive unless marked by (–).

1999b). For example, Ramus and Steger (2000) found that employees who perceive strong signals of encouragement from their supervisors are more likely to develop and implement creative ideas that positively affect the natural environment. Related to these findings, two studies found that organizations that engage in CSR due to institutional forces but without management commitment engage in "decoupled CSR activities," which are those that are disconnected from normal and ongoing activities seen as part of a firm's core business (Weaver et al., 1999a, 1999b).

Given the findings regarding supervisor commitment to CSR, some researchers have found that its antecedents include values (Mudrack, 2007), congruence of individual values with organizational values (Bansal, 2003), and individual concern with certain issues (Bansal, 2003; Bansal & Roth, 2000; Mudrack, 2007). Personal values are part of the decision-making processes whether individuals realize it or not, so it is important to understand how values influence engagement in CSR (Hay & Gray, 1974; Swanson, 1999). Other predictors of individual commitment to CSR include pragmatic aspects, such as awareness of CSR guidelines (Weaver et al., 1999b), CSR training (Stevens et al., 2005), and attendance of CSR conferences (Johnson & Greening, 1999; Weaver et al., 1999a, 1999b).

The literature at the individual level of analysis has explored additional predictors of CSR. For example, Aguilera et al. (2007) put forward a conceptual framework that outlines how employee psychological needs drive engagement in CSR. In addition, Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981) proposed that CSR engagement is affected by developmental needs, such as physiological, safety, affiliative, esteem, and self-actualization. Also, Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, and Williams (2006) offered a framework further developed by Rupp (2011) in which a more contemporary view of organizational justice explains why employees are driven by motives other than self-interest such as relational and moral. Related to this work, Rupp et al. (2010) used self-determination theory to explain that decisional contexts within organizations that foster employee competence, relatedness, and autonomy may also drive CSR engagement.

Outcomes. Working for socially responsible companies leads to increased organizational identification (Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007), employee engagement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009), retention (Jones, 2010), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Jones, 2010; Lin, Lyau, Tsai, Chen, & Chiu, 2010; Sully de Luque, Washburn, Waldman, & House, 2008), employee commitment (Maignan et al., 1999), in-role performance (Jones, 2010), employee creative involvement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009), and improved employee relations (Agle et al., 1999; Glavas & Piderit, 2009). In addition, Turban and Greening (1997) found that CSR increases firm attractiveness to prospective employees.

Mediators. Sully de Luque et al. (2008) found that managers' emphasis on CSR values was associated with followers' perceptions of visionary leadership, which positively influenced employees' extra effort, which in turn positively influenced firm performance. Other mediators of the CSR–outcomes relationship are organizational identity (Carmeli et al., 2007; Jones; 2010) and organizational pride (Jones, 2010).

Moderators. Two variables that moderated the CSR–outcomes relationship at the individual level of analysis are the influence of supervisors, including their commitment to

ethics (Muller & Kolk, 2010) and their equity sensitivity (Mudrack, Mason, & Stepanski, 1999)—the higher the commitment and sensitivity, the stronger the CSR–outcomes relationship. Also, individual employee discretion (Bansal, 2003) and salience of issues to employees (Bansal & Roth, 2000) were found to be moderators of the CSR–outcomes relationship such that the relationship becomes stronger as the values of these variables increase.

Summary. Although only a small minority of CSR research has focused on the individual level of analysis, we can summarize the results of our review at this level around the following four major conclusions (please refer to Table 5 for more detailed information as well as relevant sources). First, research at the individual level of analysis suggests that several normative motives influence CSR engagement, such as alignment to personal values and individual concern with issues. Second, regarding outcomes, involvement in CSR activities and policies positively influences employee performance, behaviors, and attitudes. Specifically, CSR increases employee engagement, identification with the firm, OCB, retention, in-role performance, and commitment; also, CSR positively impacts firm attractiveness to prospective employees. Third, mediators of the CSR–outcomes relationship at the individual level of analysis are followers' perceptions of visionary leadership, organizational identity, and organizational pride. Finally, the CSR–outcomes relationship is stronger as values for each of the following variables increase: supervisor commitment to ethics, equity sensitivity of managers, individual employee discretion, and salience of issues to employees.

Integration of What We Know About Corporate Social Responsibility Across Levels of Analysis

Most of what we know about CSR is highly fragmented given that 95% of the 181 articles published in the 17 journals included in the content analysis focused on a single level of analysis. Moreover, this fragmentation is exacerbated by the use of the different theoretical frameworks that guide research at each level. For example, scholars studying CSR at the institutional level of analysis usually use institutional theory as the conceptual background (e.g., Bansal & Clelland, 2004; Hoffman, 1999). Alternatively, researchers focusing on the organizational level of analysis rely on different theoretical frameworks such as the resource-based view of the firm (e.g., Barney, Ketchen, & Wright, 2011; Hart, 1995; Surroca et al., 2010). Finally, researchers investigating CSR at the individual level of analysis rely on yet a different set of theoretical frameworks such as organizational justice, social influence, needs, and self-determination theories (e.g., Aguinis, 2011; Rupp, 2011; Rupp et al., 2006; Rupp & Williams, 2011; Rupp et al., 2010). In short, our review revealed not only that CSR research focuses on one level of analysis at a time but that this level-of-analysis choice is accompanied by a reliance on different theoretical orientations.

As a first step in terms of guiding future research, we now offer an inclusive framework that can be used to investigate CSR regardless of a researcher's preference for a given level of analysis. To do so, we first provide a novel classification of predictors of CSR, outcomes of CSR, mediators of the predictors–CSR relationship, and moderators of the CSR–outcomes relationship. This classification provides a common language that future CSR research can

Table 5
Summary of Conceptual and Empirical Research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the Individual Level of Analysis

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
Conceptual papers Leaders' moral development and character (Snell, 2000) Employee perceptions • Employee perceptions of CSR (Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006) • Employee perceptions of organizational justice (Rupp et al., 2006; Rupp, Williams, & Aguilera, 2010) Organizational members' needs • Employee psychological needs (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Rupp, 2011; Rupp et al., 2010; Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006) • Employee developmental needs: physiological, safety, affiliative, esteem, self-actualization (Tuzzolino & Armandi, 1981) **Empirical papers** Supervisor support • Supervisor commitment to CSR (Buehler & Shetty, 1976; Greening & Gray, 1994; Muller & Kolk, 2010; Ramus & Steger, 2000) • Management commitment (Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999a, 1999b)	**Empirical papers** Followers' perceptions of visionary leadership (Sully de Luque et al., 2008) Organizational identity (Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007; Jones, 2010) Organizational pride (Jones, 2010)	**Conceptual papers** Effective social accounts (Rupp et al., 2006) **Empirical papers** Management attitudes • Equity sensitivity of supervisors (Mudrack, Mason, & Stepanski, 1999) • Supervisor commitment to ethics (Muller & Kolk, 2010) Other • Individual employee discretion (Bansal, 2003) • Salience of CSR issue to employee (Bansal & Roth, 2000)	**Empirical papers** Employee identification with the organization (Carmeli et al., 2007) Organizational citizenship behavior (Jones, 2010; Lin, Lyau, Tsai, Chen, & Chiu, 2010; Sully de Luque et al., 2008) Retention (Jones, 2010) Employee engagement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009) In-role performance (Jones, 2010) Employee commitment (Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999) Employee creative involvement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009) Firm attractiveness to prospective employees (Greening & Turban, 2000; Turban & Greening, 1997) Improved employee relations (Agle et al., 1999; Glavas & Piderit, 2009)

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

Predictors of CSR	Mediators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Moderators of CSR–Outcomes Relationship	Outcomes of CSR
• Supervisor encouragement of CSR (Ramus & Steger, 2000) • Presence of internal champions of CSR (Crane, 2000; Drumwright, 1994)			
<u>CSR knowledge and expertise</u> • CSR training (Stevens, Steensma, Harrison, & Cochran, 2005) • Management awareness of guidelines (Weaver et al., 1999b) • Attendance at CSR conferences (Johnson & Greening, 1999; Weaver et al., 1999a, 1999b)			
<u>Values</u> • CEO values (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999) • CEO emphasis on stakeholder values (Sully de Luque, Washburn, Waldman, & House, 2008) • Employee values (Mudrack, 2007) • Congruence of individual values with organizational values (Bansal, 2003)			
<u>Other</u> • Individual employee concern with CSR issues (Bansal, 2003; Bansal & Roth, 2000; Mudrack, 2007) • Personality traits and attitudes (Mudrack, 2007) • CEO intellectual stimulation (Waldman, Siegel, & Javidan, 2006) • CEO embeddedness in local community (Galaskiewicz, 1997) • Individual concern, attitudes, and thought processes (Mudrack, 2007)			

adopt regardless of the level of analysis chosen and the theoretical perspective that is developed or tested.

We group the predictors of CSR actions and policies in Tables 3–5 into two categories: (1) *reactive* (i.e., reasons why firms feel they must engage in CSR—mostly unwillingly) and (2) *proactive* (i.e., reasons why firms choose to engage in CSR—mostly willingly). Examples of reactive predictors are stakeholder and coercive pressures. Examples of proactive predictors are the desire to fulfill individuals' psychological needs as well as enhance organizational–employee fit in terms of values. Note that proactive predictors can be instrumental (e.g., create business value) and/or normative (e.g., sense of duty, justice).

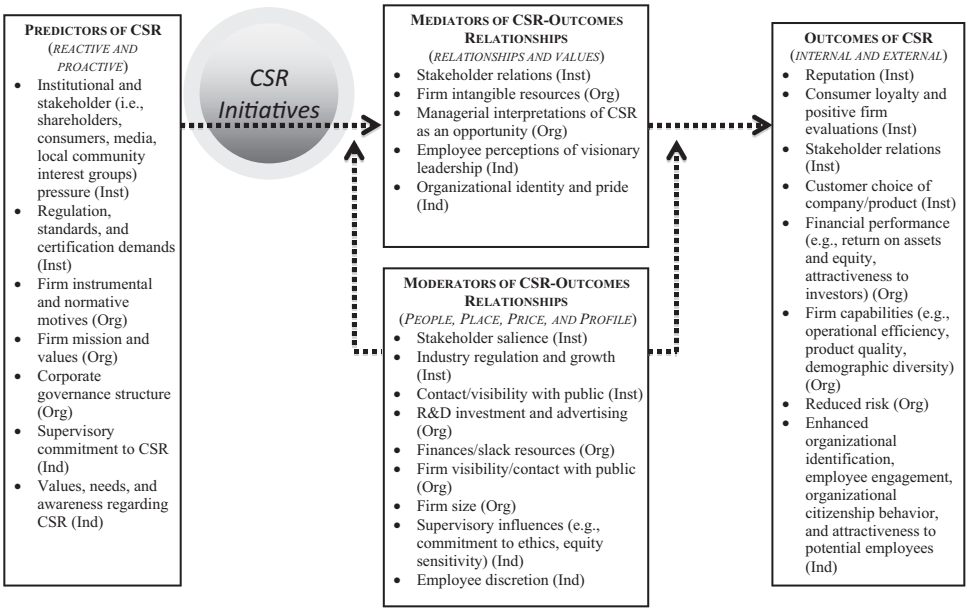
We classify outcomes of CSR actions and policies as being primarily *external outcomes* or *internal outcomes* based on whether they affect primarily external or internal stakeholders. For example, external outcomes include reputation of the firm (Brammer & Pavelin, 2006) and consumer choice of firm or product (Arora & Henderson, 2007). Examples of internal outcomes include improved perceptions of the quality of management (Waddock & Graves, 1997b) and enhanced demographic diversity (Johnson & Greening, 1999).

We group the mediator variables in Tables 3–5, which provide insights into why CSR initiatives lead to certain outcomes, around two categories: *relationships* (i.e., associations between parties such as a firm and its internal and external stakeholders or between employees and their supervisors) and *values* (i.e., principles or standards held by individuals, firms as a whole, or internal and external stakeholders). For example, mediators in the relationships category are based on interpretations of CSR as an opportunity (Sharma, 2000) and followers' perceptions of visionary leadership (Sully de Luque et al., 2008). Examples of mediators in the values category are organizational identity (Carmeli et al., 2007) and organizational pride (Jones, 2010).

We classify the moderators of the CSR–outcomes relationships included in Tables 3–5 into the "four Ps:" *people* (i.e., moderators that focus on top management, supervisors, or employees), *place* (i.e., moderators that focus on location), *price* (i.e., moderators that focus on the perceived cost of CSR), and *profile* (i.e., moderators that focus on organizational and contextual characteristics). Moderators in the people category include, for example, management and employee commitment (e.g., Ramus & Steger, 2000), CSR awareness (e.g., Weaver et al., 1999b), and discretion (e.g., Bansal, 2003). Moderators in the place category include variables such as the particular community (e.g., Buehler & Shetty, 1974), the country where the firm is located (e.g., Arya & Zhang, 2009), and the extent of international diversification (e.g., Strike, Gao, & Bansal, 2006). Moderators in the price group are any costs invested in CSR such as in research and development or advertising (e.g., McWilliams & Siegel, 2000). Finally, the profile category refers to moderator variables such as firm size (e.g., Waddock & Graves, 1997a), industry (e.g., Klassen & Whybark, 1999), and slack resources (e.g., McWilliams & Siegel, 2000).

The model in Figure 1 uses information derived from our literature review and our classification of predictors, outcomes, mediators, and moderators in CSR research to integrate and synthesize key findings regarding what we know about CSR. We include a selected set of reactive and proactive predictors of CSR; internal and external outcomes resulting from CSR; relationship and value-based mediators of the relationship between predictors and outcomes of CSR; and people, place, profit, and profile variables that moderate the relationship

Figure 1
Multilevel and Multidisciplinary Model of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Predictors, Outcomes, Mediators, and Moderators



Note: Inst = institutional level of analysis; Org = organizational level of analysis; Ind = individual level of analysis.

between CSR and its outcomes. Figure 1 is not an exhaustive model but rather meant as a multilevel lens and guiding framework to which other variables can be added in the future. Moreover, Figure 1 provides an integrative framework for understanding the vast and diverse body of CSR literature because it subsumes all levels of analysis, theoretical frameworks, and disciplinary idiosyncrasies so typical of the CSR literature. Such an integration offered in Figure 1 can serve as a building block to guide future CSR research efforts in a more systematic fashion.

What We Do Not Know About Corporate Social Responsibility: Knowledge Gaps

Using the information included in Figure 1 and Tables 3–5, we are now able to identify important knowledge gaps in the CSR literature. We describe these gaps in this section, and in the next section we offer specific suggestions—a road map for future research—to address each of these knowledge gaps.

First, studies at the individual level of analysis generally draw upon psychological theories and focus on normative motives such as alignment to personal values, commitment, and

awareness of CSR. On the other hand, studies at the institutional and organizational levels focus more on instrumental motives and theories related to institutional theory, stakeholder theory, and the resource-based view of the firm (e.g., financial outcomes, reputation, risk, reacting to stakeholder pressure, complying with regulations and standards). Thus, the first knowledge gap is the need to produce multilevel research that is capable of integrating these separate conceptual streams.

Second, there seems to be a lack of understanding of the underlying mechanisms linking CSR with outcomes—namely, mediation effects. Only 13 of the 181 (i.e., 7%) articles in the 17 journals included in our content analysis explored mediation effects. A perusal of Figure 1 and Tables 3–5 indicates that the CSR literature thus far has been much more focused on predictors, outcomes, and moderators than on mediators. In other words, we seem to know quite a bit about the reasons why organizations engage in CSR, what happens as a result, and the conditions under which these results are more or less likely to be observed. In short, this second knowledge gap refers to the need to conduct research that can help us understand the processes and underlying mechanisms through which CSR actions and policies lead to particular outcomes.

Third, related to the need to study mediation mechanisms, not much is known about CSR from the perspective of the individual level of analysis. We found that only 8 (i.e., 4%) of the articles in the 17 journals included in the content analysis focused on this level. Despite promising results in reporting micro-level nonfinancial outcomes of CSR, such as firm attractiveness to prospective employees (Turban & Greening, 1997), retention (Jones, 2010), and engagement (Glavas & Piderit, 2009), we need a better understanding of the predictors that influence individuals to carry out CSR activities. Moreover, although CSR takes place at the organizational level of analysis, individual actors are those who actually strategize, make decisions, and execute CSR initiatives. Also, individual actors perceive such initiatives and take action as a result (e.g., purchase products, invest in firms). In short, the third knowledge gap refers to the need to conduct micro OB, HRM, and I-O psychology research on CSR and particularly address underlying mechanisms—at the individual level of analysis—that link CSR with outcomes.

Finally, the previous gaps related to conceptual and substantive issues point to knowledge gaps regarding methodological issues. First, our review revealed a lack of congruence between the nature of the CSR construct and many research design, measurement, and data-analytic tools used to study CSR empirically. Methodological approaches to CSR tend to be primarily cross-sectional, to focus on unidimensional aspects of CSR, and to occur at one level of analysis at a time. The pervasive use of cross-sectional, single-level designs is not particular to the CSR literature but is a common feature across management subfields (Aguinis, Pierce, Bosco, & Muslin, 2009). Our review uncovered that only 9 of the 181 (i.e., 5%) studies included in the content analysis explored CSR at multiple levels of analysis. Yet CSR actions and policies permeate levels of analysis and, moreover, usually involve processes that unfold over time. Specifically related to the general need for multilevel and longitudinal research methodologies, there is very little knowledge on which higher level predictors (e.g., institutional pressure) affect lower order outcomes (e.g., firm capabilities), and vice versa. In addition, there is a need for novel methodologies that would allow for an improved

understanding of cross-level interaction effects such as the possible moderating effect of ownership structure (i.e., organizational level) on the relationship between the psychological needs of managers (i.e., individual level) and employee OCBs (i.e., individual level). Finally, more qualitative studies are needed to improve our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of CSR. Results of our review indicate that only 20 (i.e., 11%) of the studies in the content analysis employed qualitative methodologies, with over half of the qualitative studies being case studies or interviews that set up quantitative studies. In sum, there is a need to expand the methodological repertoire used by CSR research; the use of additional methodological approaches will be instrumental in addressing each of the aforementioned knowledge gaps.

An Agenda for Future Corporate Social Responsibility Research

In this section, we offer a road map for future CSR research. In particular, we provide specific suggestions on how to address each of the knowledge gaps identified in the previous section.

Theoretical and Multilevel Integration

Macro-level researchers have investigated how to manage relationships such that the resulting outcomes are beneficial to external stakeholders as well as to the firm (e.g., Davis et al., 1997; Freeman, 1984). Alternatively, micro-level scholars have explored the mechanisms through which firms can best align with the values of individuals (e.g., Kristof, 1996). Using our proposed model in Figure 1 to combine these two theoretical streams, future research could explore whether employees find greater alignment with firms that take care of the well-being of stakeholders. Therefore, Figure 1 can be used as a guide to design studies that include hypotheses derived from more than one theoretical approach. For example, CSR could be used to integrate theories that have previously been studied separately, such as exchange theory and organizational justice. As an example, in the context of CSR, Cropanzano and Rupp (2008) proposed that when employees hold positive perceptions of organizational justice, they might also be driven to engage in social exchanges through a moral lens (i.e., not just asking "What's in it for me?").

Using Figure 1 as a general framework, future research can assess relationships at more than one level of analysis—for example, while a reactive predictor and an external outcome both may be at the macro level, a value mediator could be at the individual level. Using a multilevel model as an organizing conceptual lens will also allow for the exploration of potential effects across levels. Specifically, which higher level variables affect individual-level variables (e.g., how context affects individual behavior)? How do lower level variables affect higher order variables (e.g., how individual CEO values and employee needs affect firm strategic priorities)? In other words, a clear future research direction involves the integration of conceptual models that reside primarily on one or another level of analysis and that currently are tested independently from one another, clearly reflecting the much lamented micro–macro chasm in the field of management (see Aguinis, Boyd, et al., 2011).

Through a multilevel lens, future research could also engage in theory pruning, which is the process of integrating theories as well as testing competing theories against each other. It seems that the theory-pruning process has begun. Scholars have previously argued against prevailing theories that assume that self-interest is the main motivator of human behavior (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986; Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). To test this theoretical proposition, CSR was used for theory pruning by Cropanzano and Rupp (2002) and by Korsgaard and Sapienza (2002), who tested organizational justice against the notion that agency theory and self-interest are the only motivators of behavior. These authors proposed that employees are also motivated by procedural justice and doing the right thing.

Not only CSR can benefit from the contribution of existing theories, but other theories and research domains might also benefit by applying them in the context of our multilevel model of CSR. For example, CSR could contribute to a better understanding of work. Morgeson, Dierdorff, and Hmurovic stated that "despite nearly 100 years of scientific study, comparatively little attention has been given to articulating how the broader occupational and organizational context might impact work" (2010: 351). One such context that is affecting work is CSR. For example, what can we learn about employees who are motivated by factors in addition to making money? Through a multilevel perspective, do employees that perceive their organization to be contributing to society beyond making money (i.e., the organization is socially responsible) find greater alignment with the organization, and how does this perception influence their motivation, commitment, satisfaction, perceived work meaningfulness, and subjective well-being? Consequently, what is the impact of organizational-level CSR activities and policies on employee performance, OCB, and innovation and creativity? What other theories besides agency theory can explain worker attitudes and behaviors in the context of CSR?

Underlying Mechanisms and Microfoundations of CSR

Several scholars have called for the need to improve our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of CSR (Aguilera et al., 2007; Aguinis, 2011; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Wood, 2010). However, our review makes a value-added contribution because it provides evidence that a likely reason for the knowledge gap regarding underlying mechanisms is the predominance of organizational- and institutional-level research compared with individual-level research.

In general, fields of study focusing on macro-level issues have developed without giving a prominent role to their microfoundations—which are the foundations of a field that are based on individual action and interactions (Foss, 2011). CSR is a field that originally focused on the institutional level, while in the past few decades it has heavily focused on the organizational level of analysis (Lee, 2008). The dearth of micro-level research on CSR is a trend found in other fields and areas of study. For example, the field of economics was originally dominated by macro theories, and it is only recently that behavioral theory has been increasingly explored to understand underlying processes (Akerlof, 2002). In institutional theory, almost two decades ago scholars called for an understanding of microfoundations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Zucker, 1991), but it was not until recently

that micro-level processes have been explored as a way of understanding macro-level events and relationships (Powell & Colyvas, 2008). Similarly, in strategy, micro-level processes have only recently been explored (Foss, 2011; Powell, Lovallo, & Fox, 2011).

The knowledge gaps regarding underlying processes and insufficient work at the individual level of analysis point to research that, drawing on the strategic management literature (Foss, 2011), we label *microfoundations of CSR* (i.e., foundations of CSR that are based on individual action and interactions). Theories and methodological approaches from OB, HRM, and I-O psychology can make an important contribution in guiding CSR research in such areas as culture change and leadership and in numerous human capital systems that have been developed to understand individual motivation, performance, and psychological processes in general (e.g., Aguinis, 2009, 2011). For example, what are the psychological foundations of CSR? Do emotions such as anger, excitement, and guilt mediate the relationship between CSR initiatives and outcomes? Is there a construct that we can label "CSR emotions"? If yes, what are the CSR emotions that internal and external stakeholders experience as a consequence of CSR initiatives (or lack thereof)? What is the role of such microfoundations in helping us understand the underlying processes linking CSR with a firm's financial performance? Are there differences regarding CSR-related values and attitudes based on age such that younger generations are interested in CSR because of firm reputation? Are perhaps older generations interested in CSR for different reasons such as leaving a legacy? What is the impact of these generational differences on the types of CSR actions and policies that a firm may choose to initiate? What are the motivating traits and attitudes that predict employee engagement in CSR? How do the sense-making processes proposed by Basu and Palazzo (2008) affect the way managers think, discuss, and act in the context of CSR? There are encouraging signs that some of these questions may be addressed in the near future given recent announcements of forthcoming special issues devoted to CSR and related topics in such journals as *Management and Organization Review* (Rupp, Wright, Aryee, & Luo, 2011) and *Personnel Psychology* (Morgeson, Aguinis, Waldman, & Siegel, 2011). We foresee many interesting and potentially groundbreaking research directions related to each of these questions.

Research on the microfoundations of CSR can produce important insights that would allow us to improve our knowledge base that can build upon the model shown in Figure 1. Consider the following additional specific research directions. First, studying micro-level variables as mediators of relationships involving higher level variables (i.e., organizational and institutional) would allow us to understand why and how macro-level reactive and proactive predictors lead to return on assets, return on equity, and other internal and external financial outcomes. Second, additional research could explore how to measure CSR implementation at the employee and team levels of analysis as well as the corresponding impact on workplace performance. Related to the knowledge gap about different ways of conceptualizing and measuring CSR, current measures of CSR are usually aggregated at the organizational level and do not capture individual-level scores. Third, although we know that supervisor commitment (Buehler & Shetty, 1976; Muller & Kolk, 2010), training (Stevens et al., 2005; Weaver et al., 1999b), and recruitment (Greening & Turban, 2000; Turban & Greening, 1997) are important for CSR engagement, we know little about the "how"—for example, the content and messaging of training, recruitment, and supervisor communication

that would best foster employee engagement in CSR. Fourth, research on the microfoundations of CSR can help us understand how CSR might be built into already demanding workloads and perhaps even enhance work. One future avenue for understanding how CSR might enhance work is to build upon research such as the meaningfulness literature (e.g., Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), which can further our understanding of how CSR can serve as an important conduit to enhance employee engagement.

Finally, we emphasize that research on the microfoundations of CSR does not mean that macro-level variables are excluded. On the contrary, micro-level research should explore individual-level variables (e.g., attitudes, personality) through multilevel studies. Precisely, as noted in the previous section, it will be the integration of variables at different levels of analysis that has the greatest potential to move the field forward.

Methodological Issues

Implementing an agenda for future CSR research aimed at theoretical and multilevel integration and at improving our understanding of the underlying processes and microfoundations of CSR is now possible given recent advancements regarding research design, measurement, and data-analytic approaches. We describe these methodological issues in this section.

The type of research needed to advance our knowledge of CSR is multilevel in nature. In other words, for future research to be most informative, it will require the inclusion of variables from more than one level of analysis. When conducting research that includes variables at different levels, researchers explicitly recognize that lower level entities such as individuals are nested within higher level collectives such as teams, which in turn are nested within organizations, which in turn are nested within industries. Higher levels of analysis relevant for CSR research also include countries as well as economic blocks and geographic regions. Regardless of the specific definition of entities and the collectives within which they reside, the multilevel nature of such research designs requires that nonindependence be considered both conceptually and analytically (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). For example, individual employees' reactions to their firm's CSR initiatives may be influenced not only by their own individual-level values but also by certain characteristics of the firm in question. In other words, an organizational-level variable may covary with relevant individual-level variables, and individuals within organizations are likely to be more similar regarding certain variables compared with individuals across organizations (e.g., due to a common organizational culture and attraction-selection-attrition processes). Covariation between organizational variables and individual outcomes will lead to gross errors of prediction if a researcher uses statistical approaches, such as ordinary least squares regression, that are not designed to model data structures that include nonindependence due to clustering of entities (Maas & Hox, 2004).

Advances regarding our knowledge of CSR using the model in Figure 1 as a starting point can take place by implementing multilevel research designs and analysis to assess three distinct types of relationships. First, hypotheses may involve *same-level direct influences,* such as the effect of individual-level values on individual-level OCB (i.e., Level

1 predictor → Level 1 criterion), the effect of organizational-level firm motives on organizational-level firm financial performance (i.e., Level 2 predictor → Level 2 criterion), or the effect of institutional-level regulations on institutional-level stakeholder relations (i.e., Level 3 predictor → Level 3 criterion). Second, hypotheses may involve *different-level direct influences,* such as the effect of certification demands on managerial interpretations of CSR as an opportunity (i.e., Level 3 predictor → Level 2 criterion) or supervisory commitment to CSR on organizational efficiency (i.e., Level 1 predictor → Level 2 criterion). Third, hypotheses may involve *cross-level interactions* whereby the relationships between lower level predictors and outcomes differ as a function of higher level factors. For example, the relationship between individual awareness regarding CSR (i.e., Level 1 predictor) and employee engagement (i.e., Level 1 criterion) may be moderated by slack resources (i.e., Level 2 moderator) such that the awareness–engagement relationship is stronger in firms with more compared with fewer resources. A technical description of how to design multilevel studies and analyze the resulting data with the purpose of testing one or more of these three different types of effects is beyond the scope of our article. However, there are several sources that address these issues in detail, including Bliese, Chan, and Ployhart (2007); Croon and Van Veldhoven (2007); Mathieu and Chen (2011); Mathieu, Aguinis, Culpepper, and Chen (2012); and Preacher, Zhang, and Zyphur (2011). Taken together, these sources provide useful information regarding how to design multilevel studies (e.g., consideration of statistical power issues, requirements regarding sample size for each level of analysis) and analyze the resulting data (e.g., decisions about the centering of variables, tests of hypotheses involving mediator and/or moderator variables, differential treatment of outcome variables residing at lower or higher levels of analysis).

Rethinking CSR as a multilevel field of study will also require rethinking measurement approaches. For example, issues of aggregation are not frequently discussed in CSR research, but they take center stage in the multilevel investigation of the microfoundations of CSR. For example, research focusing on organizational- and institutional-level variables usually relies on large databases such as the S&P 500 to aggregate information at the firm level, thereby not taking into account information at lower levels of analysis—most notably individuals and teams within those organizations. A multilevel approach points to the need to measure variables based on individuals within larger units (e.g., organizations) because such individual-level variables are key to understanding the underlying mechanisms of CSR. Others have noted a need for measurement reform regarding CSR (Peloza, 2009; Wood, 2010), mainly due to the use of different definitions and conceptualizations of CSR. However, a value-added contribution of our literature review is that it leads to the conclusion that, to be successful, this measurement reform must also include the creation of measurement tools that assess CSR at different levels—once again, fields such as OB, HRM, and I-O psychology can provide valuable theories and approaches to do just that (Aguinis, 2011).

A multilevel research agenda for CSR also implies that data can be nested not only within hierarchies (i.e., individuals within organizations and organizations within industries) but also across time. Specifically, CSR initiatives take place over time—and so do CSR outcomes. Thus, future CSR research would benefit from using data collection approaches that allow for the study of processes as they unfold over time. Although data of a longitudinal nature are often available to researchers interested in macro-level phenomena, novel methodological

approaches are needed to collect longitudinal data at the individual level of analysis. For example, one-time surveys assessing employee values or attitudes toward CSR are not very informative in terms of answering questions such as "How does employee engagement improve over time after employees see, over and over again, the commitment of their supervisors toward CSR initiatives?" In contrast, experience sampling methodology (ESM) is a methodological approach aimed at gathering information about people's daily experiences over time and capturing the ebb and flow of these experiences as they occur in situ (i.e., in the natural environment; Uy, Foo, & Aguinis, 2010). In an ESM study, research participants provide data on an ongoing basis—for example, by entering information using their mobile phones. Research participants can provide responses regarding their attitudes, opinions, and emotions at predetermined intervals (e.g., every hour) or at the same time daily (i.e., interval-contingent protocol), when the event of interest takes place (i.e., event-contingent protocol), or when they are prompted to respond by a signaling device at randomly selected time points in the day (i.e., signal-contingent protocol).

A multilevel CSR agenda is not limited to the use of quantitative data. In fact, a multilevel approach to CSR is able to also accommodate qualitative studies. Similar to trends in the field of management in general (e.g., Aguinis et al., 2009), only about 11% of the articles in the 17 journals included in our content analysis used qualitative methodologies. However, there are excellent illustrations of how qualitative approaches can inform the field of CSR, including how managers' CSR perceptions and attitudes differ depending on organizational context and form (Athanasopoulou, 2011) and how contextual conditions and motivations influence firm engagement in CSR (Bansal & Roth, 2000). Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches can be particularly fruitful in light of our proposed multilevel research agenda. Specifically, quantitative approaches can be used to collect data at higher levels of analysis (e.g., organizational and institutional levels) and qualitative approaches can be used to collect data at lower levels (e.g., individual and team). It is beyond the scope of our article to provide a technical description of how to conduct qualitative research within our proposed multilevel model. However, we refer readers to the following sources, which provide state-of-the-science information regarding design, measurement, and analysis issues: Cunliffe (2011); Easterby-Smith, Golden-Biddle, and Locke (2008); Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010); Pollach (in press).

Concluding Remarks

Our review comes at a time when interest in CSR is accelerating rapidly. As organizations are increasingly involved in CSR, scholars have an important opportunity to engage in CSR research. To serve as a catalyst for this process, one of the two primary goals of this review is to make what we know about CSR more accessible to a broader audience of scholars by synthesizing and integrating the vast and heterogeneous CSR literature into a single state-of-the-science review. Our second goal is to identify key opportunity areas that would allow us to improve our knowledge of CSR. Thus, based on the knowledge gaps identified by our review, we offer a research agenda for the future focused on a multilevel approach that aims to understand the microfoundations of CSR (i.e., foundations based on individual action and

interactions) as well as the methodological approaches that will make these advances possible. While we discuss what management scholars can do for CSR, it is important to also understand what CSR can do for us—management scholars and the field in general. By using CSR as a conduit to test management theories in the context of society, CSR research may help us leave the world a better place than we found it. In his 2006 Academy of Management presidential address, Tom Cummings asserted that

> the future vitality and success of our profession depends on making sure our research-based knowledge is relevant and useful. This will require the Academy of Management . . . to be far more engaged with the real world than has traditionally been the case. (2007: 355)

CSR research offers a golden opportunity to do just that.

Appendix

Literature Search Procedures

We conducted a systematic literature search that involved six sequential steps, and each of the steps led to uncovering additional relevant sources. Our final sample included 588 journal articles and 102 books and book chapters. The complete list is available from the authors upon request.

As the first step, we focused on the following 16 journals (cf. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Bachrach, 2008): *Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Administrative Science Quarterly, Business & Society, Business Ethics Quarterly, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Organization Science, Organization Studies, Personnel Psychology,* and *Strategic Management Journal*. We used the databases EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and PsycINFO to access our targeted journals and searched for relevant articles including the phrase "corporate social responsibility" in titles, abstracts, subjects, or keywords. We focused on articles and excluded book reviews, replies, and introductions to special issues. As a second step, we compared our resulting sample of articles with those identified in previous reviews of the CSR literature (e.g., Carroll, 1999, 2008; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Etzion, 2007; Garriga & Melé, 2004; Gond & Crane, 2010; Laplume, Sonpar, & Litz, 2008; Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2010; Noland & Phillips, 2010; Peloza, 2009; Waddock, 2004; Wood, 2010). As a third step, we identified authors with at least two articles in our sample and searched all the works by each of these authors to identify additional sources related to CSR. As a fourth step, and given the multidisciplinary nature of CSR research, we searched additional journals (e.g., *International Journal of Management Reviews, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Marketing*). As a fifth step, we conducted a search including "corporate social responsibility," "corporate social performance," and "corporate citizenship" using the Web of Science.

Finally, we included key books (e.g., Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon, & Siegel, 2008; Gilliland, Steiner, & Skarlicki, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008) and book chapters (e.g., Aguinis, 2011; Rupp, Williams, & Aguilera, 2010), some of which were recommended by two *Journal of Management* anonymous reviewers.

Our review focused on the full range of extant research on CSR. However, the content analysis focused on the following 17 journals, which are not specialized in CSR or related topics: *Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Administrative Science Quarterly, International Journal of Management Reviews, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Organization Science, Organization Studies, Personnel Psychology,* and *Strategic Management Journal*.

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