

Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility in social media: Sense-making processes evolving with the development of virtual Communities of Practice

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Abstract

By integrating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Community of Practice (CoP) frameworks, this paper explores how CSR sense-making processes evolved in virtual CoPs on Facebook between enterprises (production vs. service) and stakeholders. Two different corporate Facebook pages were selected and the textual posts (N = 288) produced by communication management and stakeholders were analyzed. A mixed-methods approach to analysis was adopted. Posts were first qualitatively assessed using a coding scheme, and then quantitatively analyzed for the relationships between the dimensions of CSR and CoP. The results indicate that these communities continuously negotiated CSR on Facebook; in particular, CSR sense-making partially co-evolved with the development of CoPs. Further, the CSR dimensions were elicited differently in the two types of communities.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Communities of Practice, social media, sense-making, mixed-methods

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Introduction

For several years, both in the political arena and in ethics organizations, there has been discussion around how the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can completely redefine societal, social and organizational systems. According to Wempe and Kaptein (2002), CSR represents a new development model that can combine economic growth, the conservation of limited natural resources, and the equitable distribution of social resources.

Birch (2003) contends that the need for business to be socially responsible means being 'accountably communicative'. Thus, how enterprises organize and adopt communication strategies is central to the CSR practices of fostering relationships with stakeholders and maintaining ethical activities and transparency (Chaundri & Wang, 2007; Choi & Chung, 2013). In particular, CSR communication via social media has recently come to be regarded as an accountability mechanism that can modify the way enterprises relate both to stakeholders and society more broadly (Castellò, Morsing & Schultz, 2013; Kent & Taylor, 1998; White & Raman, 1999). Although scholars have recognized the crucial role of social media environments in mediating communicative interactions between enterprises and stakeholders, CSR communication in digitally interactive platforms remains relatively unexplored (Dawkins, 2004; Schultz, Utz & Göritz, 2011; Snider, Hill & Martin, 2003).

From a sociocultural perspective, the present study contributes to filling this gap by providing an in-depth understanding of how CSR's sense making processes evolve in social media. We conceive of corporate communication as a social activity through which a plurality of social agents – enterprises as well as stakeholders – develop, negotiate, and make meaning as a community about their lived reality (Feldman, 2002). We were thus interested in whether CSR's sense-making processes may develop alongside a community of practice (Wenger, 1998, 2000) in social media environments. To explore this, we focused particularly on virtual CoPs developed on Facebook, as this social network platform supports interactive, public, asynchronous, and largely text-based interaction between companies and their

stakeholders (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). These properties are aligned with the main purpose of this study.

This paper comprises three main sections. First, a conceptual framework is provided as the structural foundation of the study. Second, the method and results of analysis are described. Finally, the main theoretical and practical implications of the research are discussed.

Theoretical framework

Presently, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) serves as a developmental catalyst able to merge economic growth, conservation of limited natural resources, and equitable distribution of social resources in order to face the current economic crisis. Indeed, CSR involves business in the so-called Triple Bottom Line process (Elkington, 1997) in which economic, social and environmental dimensions are conceived as strictly linked to corporate social responsibility (Wempe & Kaptein, 2002).

While CSR is understood and approached in a range of ways in academic literature (D'Aprile & Talò, 2014), the concept of CSR is a clearly identifiable construct concerned with, "the extent to which businesses meet the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities placed on them by their various stakeholders" (Maignan, Ferrell & Hult, 1999, p. 457). Therefore, CSR describes the relationship among business and various stakeholders, which influence – or are influenced by – organizational activities (Snider et al., 2003). Such a conceptualization evokes the socio-relational dimension of CSR, involving the networks of business and multiple stakeholders (i.e., employees, other companies) simultaneously. To explain how CSR could be employed in organizational contexts to build trust relationships between an enterprise and different public audiences, some scholars (D'Aprile & Mannarini, 2012; D'Aprile & Talò, 2014) have recently re-conceptualized CSR. The authors have argued that far from being a pattern of corporate behaviors, CSR may be conceived as a multidimensional psychosocial construct based on cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions. The cognitive dimension refers to corporate capacity for adopting particular perspectives toward various

stakeholders; the affective dimension involves the corporate value of taking care of different stakeholders; and the behavioral dimension includes the sustainable and socially responsible practices actually or potentially performed by enterprises oriented to a multi-stakeholder perspective. These dimensions could support the construction of trust (van Marrewijk, 2003), thus contributing to creating space-time negotiation between the enterprise and stakeholders.

In this theoretical scenario, the need for business to be socially responsible also means being accountably communicative (Birch, 2003). Indeed, corporate communication is central to the practice of psychosocial CSR; fostering relationships with stakeholders and maintaining ethical activities and transparency provides support in periods of corporate crisis (Chaundri & Wang, 2007; Choi & Chung, 2013). Further, because CSR communication (on corporate websites and social media) influences the enterprise-stakeholder relationship, it has come to be regarded as a relevant accountability mechanism in recent times (Castellò, Morsing & Schultz, 2013; Kent & Taylor, 1998; White & Raman, 1999). Indeed, the interactive properties of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, allow companies to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue, which is a practical challenge for CSR communication (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Esrock & Leichty, 1999; Schultz et al., 2011). Thus, in contrast to static corporate reporting, the internet generally and social media specifically create possibilities for an ongoing interactive, dynamic and multi-voiced community (Antal, Dierkies, MacMillan & Marz, 2002). As a result, “the ability of organizations to act as authoritative gatekeepers of information that stakeholders want” (Esrock & Leichty, 1999, p. 466) has been reduced. Unlike traditional, offline communication, networking empowers stakeholders to co-produce and interact (Argenti, 2006; Ihator, 2001).

Despite the growing interest in how social media environments mediate communicative interactions between enterprises and stakeholders, CSR communication in digitally interactive platforms remains under-researched (Dawkins, 2004; Schultz et al., 2011; Snider et al., 2003). Indeed, academic literature has consistently focused more on social reporting activities (Aras & Crowther, 2009; Dawkins,

& Ngunjiri, 2008; Dayton, 2002) than on the dialogical processes between enterprises and their stakeholders in social media. CRS reporting explains how “the discourse structure of such reports directs and shapes audiences’ perception within a particular corporate ideological framework” (Mason & Mason, 2012, p. 481). However, the sense-making of CSR communication, informally shaped in social media spaces by enterprise and stakeholder communities, remains relatively unexplored.

Community of practice theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2000) is useful for understanding the interactive processes between enterprises and their stakeholders in social media through which CSR sense-making processes are co-constructed. By identifying social groupings in relation to shared practices (i.e., discursive practices and corporate communication) (Eckert, 2006), community of practice theory makes visible the social properties of the sense-making process (Weick, 1995). As such, corporate communication as well as discursive practices may be conceived as social activities, during which a plurality of social agents – enterprises as well as stakeholders – work as a community to develop, negotiate, and make meaning about their lived realities (Feldman, 2002). Thus, communication acts must account for individuals-in-interaction. In other words, an act of communication is the result of interpretative, constructive and situated sense-making processes, in which community members co-participate (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Each community develops communicative practices that reflect the key qualities of a community of practice (CoP): mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998, 2000). Mutual engagement is consistent with community members’ efforts to focus on a specific object to organize their reciprocal act of communicating, and enhances the ties that bind the members of the community together as a social entity. Joint enterprise refers to the negotiation process through which community members create a shared understanding of what binds them together as mutually engaged. Finally, shared repertoire refers to the set of communal resources – such as gestures, genres, actions, concepts, and so on – which community members use in the pursuit of their joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998).

As Wenger (1998) has highlighted, the sense-making processes in a CoP involve constant negotiation between the duality of participation and reification. Participation refers to the full involvement of social agents within a social initiative that belongs to a social sphere. Reification refers to the activity of solidifying ideas, values, approaches and knowledge from the interaction between members of a community. The continuous oscillation between these two processes – participation and reification – largely determines the ability of the community to constantly renew its cognitive assets in the form of shared repertoire, and to simultaneously insert the individual contribution into a path of collective enhancement and accumulation of knowledge, experience, and sense-making processes through communicative practices (Wenger, 2000).

Web 2.0 technologies and the ensuing evolution of vast social networks have facilitated the incorporation of these characteristics into virtual communities of practice. Social networks (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and so on) allow for the creation of clearly defined domains of interest in which dialogue and interactive conversations create communities with common and recorded histories. Social network tools allow members of virtual communities of practice to create and share knowledge and develop cultural historical processes (Gunawardena, Hermans, Sanchez, Richmond, Bohley & Tuttle, 2009). As a result, every virtual community of practice constructs specific ways of communicating over time, which are also continuously mediated by the use of different technological media (Gunawardena et al., 2009; Zucchermaglio, & Talamo, 2003).

Based on the theoretical approaches discussed above, it is suggested that CSR sense-making processes are interwoven with virtual CoP development (D'Aprile, Loperfido & Talò, 2014), whose members – employees as well as customers – continuously negotiate CSR meanings through ongoing participation. Moreover, Facebook mediates the CSR meanings developed in CoPs. Finally, we see CSR sense-making as deeply interconnected with the type of enterprise involved (production vs. service) and the relationships developed between enterprises and their stakeholders.

Research

Aims and research questions

The main purpose of this study was to explore how CSR sense-making processes evolved in two different virtual CoPs of enterprises and stakeholders. This aim was achieved in two ways. First, by looking at how the psychosocial CSR dimensions (i.e., organizational perspective-taking, care-taking of, and socially responsible practices performed toward a multi-stakeholder context) evolved and negotiated with CoP dimensions (i.e., mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire). Second, by exploring whether different CSR sense-making practices emerged consistently with the various types of communities, and also how Facebook mediated the CSR sense-making processes. The following three research questions guided analysis:

- How did CSR sense-making processes develop in the interaction between enterprises and their stakeholders on Facebook?
- How were these CSR sense-making processes consistent with the types of CoPs (production vs. service)?
- What is the role of Facebook in mediating the negotiation processes on CSR issues?

Before discussing our findings, the context and data corpus as well as the method of analysis are explained below.

Method

Context and data corpus

To explore CSR sense-making processes, data was collected step-by-step. First, the web sites of large enterprises were selected to explore links to CSR. Thus, explicit attention to CSR was the first criterion that allowed us to make an initial selection. As such, manufacturing and utilities companies were considered. Second, since corporate web pages are self-produced texts (Schultz et al., 2011), links to CSR on corporate Facebook pages were considered. Facebook pages support interactive, public, asynchronous, and largely text-based interaction

between social agents (Lillqvist & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). For these reasons, corporate Facebook pages were considered a relevant context for studying CSR sense-makings as interactive and ongoing processes of multi-voice communities, such as those of companies and their stakeholders. Third, companies were selected for specific focus by considering two parameters of screening: 1) the presence of explicit and implicit references to CSR in posts and comments on corporate Facebook pages; 2) the time span in which the posts and the comments were produced (from 1st April 2012 to 30th June 2012). Two Italian large enterprises aligned with these criteria: the manufacturing enterprise Ferrarelle (<http://www.ferrarelle.it/>) and the utilities enterprise ING Direct Italia (<https://www.ingdirect.it/>).

All textual posts and notes, collected from Ferrarelle's (<https://www.facebook.com/ferrarelle/?fref=ts>) and ING Direct Italia's (<https://www.facebook.com/INGDIRECTItalia/?fref=ts>) Facebook pages, were included in the data corpus. Each individual post comprised a unit of analysis, with a post defined as a text message published with the function of public opinion or comment posted in a common internet area (Champoux, Dugree & McGlynn, 2012). Any excessively long comments were divided into smaller segments for the purpose of clarity. In these instances, the completion semantics, syntax and pragmatics of each segment were considered a unit of analysis. When collection and segmentation of textual data was complete, the data corpus comprised 150 units of analysis for Ferrarelle and 138 units of analysis for ING Direct Italia; a total of 288 units of analysis.

Procedure and analysis

Consistent with a multi-phase process, a mixed-method approach was taken to data analysis. First, data was qualitatively segmented and classified into content categories. These content categories were identified *ex ante* based on the relevant literature and specified *ex post* based on the characteristics of each unit of data. Second, an analytic grid was developed. This grid reflects both CoP dimensions i.e., mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) and key aspects of CSR, such as perspective-taking, care-taking

and corporate social responsible practices (D'Aprile & Mannarini, 2012; D'Aprile & Talò, 2014). Table 1 shows the analysis grid. Some examples of Facebook posts are provided to illustrate how they were categorized (Table 1).

Table 1. The content categories: posts categorized as not mutually exclusive

CoP			
CSR	Joint enterprise	Mutual engagement	Shared repertoire
Perspective taking	ING DIRECT: "Hi Mirella, we are in contact with the colleagues of the client service. They call you asap"	ING DIRECT: Hi Matilde, the answer is NO. We are aware of the inefficiencies that some of you are experiencing and that we are working to solve them"	ING's client: passing 15th May, what are you going to do?? You have change the date! But don't you say that "OUR CLIENTS ARE OUR BEST ADVERTISING"
Sustainable practices	Ferrarelle: "We participate to VogliamoZERO, the UNICEF campaign. We will donate € 1 to UNICEF for every new fan of the page. Share and invite your friends!"	ING DIRECT: "Since even companies have the setting DIARY - Timeline – on Facebook, you have the possibility to send private messages. However, you should not write THE CUSTOMER CODE OR OTHER DATA ACCESS to your accounts even in private message"	ING DIRECT: "Teaching the value of saving money to kids with a fun project: nurture your dream, by ING DIRECT"
Care taking	Ferrarelle's client: "I love Ferrarelle (...) thanks for helping me in solving such a dilemma!!!"	Ferrarelle: "Hi Mary, many celebrities have chosen to support the campaign of VogliamoZERO and have recorded their testimony (...) To tell the UNICEF project on this page, we decided to use their voices, too"	Ferrarelle's employee: "Ferrarelle is my family. I was 17 when I start to work here (...) I was very lucky to drink a healthy water and natural effervescent always ☺"

After classifying the content categories, a data matrix consisting of 'cases per variables' was developed to synthesize variables in a quantitative manner. The content categories were considered as not mutually exclusive. Thus, the same unit of analysis was coded with the categories of both CoP and CSR constructs. Specifically, the values 1 and 0 were assigned when the CoP and CSR dimensions were in or were out respectively. Two researchers worked independently to classify each unit of analysis. They agreed on 90% of the frequencies between the categories analyzed as not mutually exclusive.

The data matrix was statistically analyzed to explore the distribution and relationships between the dimensions of the variables. The statistical analyses were divided into two parts: 1) relative and percentage frequencies; and 2) Chi-square tests. Specifically, the relative and percentage frequencies were used to describe how many times a particular value for a dimension occurred in relation to the total number of values for that dimension. The Chi-square test was used both to evaluate whether the observed frequencies were unequal among the CSR and CoP dimensions, and to assess the differential effects between the dimensions and the types of enterprise selected (Kurtz, 1999). When expected frequencies were less than five, Fisher's exact test was used instead of the Chi-square (Mehta, Patel & Senchaudhuri, 1992). The results of these analyses are reported below.

Results

Drawing on the total textual notes produced on Facebook (N = 288), the relative frequencies of CSR and CoP dimensions are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequencies distribution of CSR and CoP dimensions

Dimensions	CSR		Dimensions	CoP	
	Relative frequencies (f _i)	Percentage frequencies (f _%)		Relative frequencies (f _i)	Percentage frequencies (f _%)
Perspective taking	77	26.7	Joint enterprise	80	27.8
Care taking	88	30.6	Mutual engagement	134	46.5
Sustainable practice	123	42.7	Shared repertoire	74	25.7
χ^2 (df=4)		20.81*			

* Chi-square test statistically significant $p < .01$

The Chi-square test revealed a significant difference in the distribution of the frequencies of the variables analyzed ($\chi^2 (4) = 20.81$, $p < .01$). Overall, interactions between communication management and stakeholders stressed the importance of mutual engagement ($f_{\%} = 46.5$) with sustainable practices ($f_{\%} = 42.7$) and care-taking ($f_{\%} = 30.5$) as relevant components of CSR. Moreover, CSR perspective-taking ($f_{\%} = 26.7$) and CoP joint enterprise ($f_{\%} = 27.8$) and shared repertoire ($f_{\%} = 25.7$) were generally equivalent in frequency.

Further, the Chi-square test revealed the impact of the type of enterprise (production vs. service) on CSR sense-making processes. The relative frequencies between CSR and CoP dimensions and the type of enterprise are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Contingency Table and Chi-square (χ^2) between enterprises and dimensions of CSR and CoP

Type of enterprise	Values	CSR			CoP		
		Perspective taking	Care taking	Sustainable practice	Joint enterprise	Mutual engagement	Shared repertoire
Production (Ferrarelle)	f_r	18	54	78	42	69	39
	$f_{\%}$	6.2	18.8	27.1	14.6	24.0	13.5
Service (ING Direct)	f_r	59	34	45	38	65	35
	$f_{\%}$	20.5	11.8	15.6	13.2	22.6	12.1
Total	f_r	77	88	123	80	134	74
	$f_{\%}$	26.7	30.6	13.10	27.8	46.6	25.6
$\chi^2 (df = 2)$		34.79*			ns		

* Chi-square test statistically significant $p < .01$

Analysis indicates that the CSR dimensions produced were significantly different in frequency relative to the type of enterprise ($\chi^2 (2) = 34.79$, $p < .01$). In particular, the social media communication management of the manufacturing enterprise used sustainable practice ($f_{\%} = 27.1$) and care-taking oriented ($f_{\%} = 18.8$) communication strategies significantly more frequently than the utilities enterprise to promote interaction with their stakeholders. Additionally, a distinct difference in prevalence was observed for the dimension of perspective-taking

produced by communication management and stakeholders. Interestingly, CSR emerged through the use of the CSR cognitive dimension as frequently for the utilities as for the manufacturing enterprise; however, the distribution of frequencies relative to the CoP dimensions was not significant ($\chi^2 (2) = .04, p. > .05$).

The Chi-square test was also used to explore the CSR sense-making phenomena within each virtual CoP. The test showed that communication managers and stakeholders elicited CSR dimensions with a different prevalence of CoP processes (Production: $\chi^2 (4) = 17.13, p. < .01$; Service: $\chi^2 (4) = 12.90, p. < .05$) (Table 4).

Table 4. Contingency Table and Chi-square (χ^2) within enterprise (production vs. service)

Dimensions	Values	Manufacturing enterprise (Ferrarelle)			Utilities (ING Direct)		
		Joint enterprise	Mutual engagement	Shared repertoire	Joint enterprise	Mutual engagement	Shared repertoire
Perspective taking	f_r	-	9	9	17	27	15
	$f_{\%}$	-	6.0	6.0	12.3	19.6	10.9
Care taking	f_r	12	24	18	3	17	14
	$f_{\%}$	8.0	16.0	12.0	2.2	12.3	10.1
Sustainable practice	f_r	30	36	12	18	21	6
	$f_{\%}$	20.0	24.0	8.0	13.0	15.2	4.3
$\chi^2 (df=2)$		17.13**			12.90*		

Chi-square test statistically significant: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

In particular, the results showed that the social agents on Ferrarelle's Facebook page mainly constructed the CSR meanings, highlighting how sustainable practices co-evolved with joint enterprise ($f_{\%} = 20.0$) and mutual engagement ($f_{\%} = 24.0$) in the virtual community of practice. While the link between sustainable practice and mutual engagement seemed to follow the trend of the general overview, the first ones seemed to be peculiar to the manufacturing enterprise. Indeed, mutual engagement allowed different shared goals to be negotiated, flowing together in a community joint enterprise based on sus-

tainability and corporate social responsibility. Accordingly, the goals negotiated did not go missing or differentiate between sustainable practices; rather, they polarized around a single macro-goal.

In contrast, on ING Direct's Facebook page, social agents mainly sustained the CSR sense-making processes, merging the CSR-perspective taking, and CSR-sustainable practices with mutual engagement ($f_{\%} = 19.6$, $f_{\%} = 15.2$ respectively) in the community to which they belong.

Moreover, the results showed a significant difference in the distribution of the percentages relative to the type of the enterprise. For example, the community managers and stakeholders in ING Direct CoP (utilities) were significantly more likely to activate CSR perspective taking practices, which evolved with joint enterprise ($f_{\%} = 12.3$) and mutual engagement ($f_{\%} = 19.6$) more frequently than the social agents of Ferrarelle CoP (production) ($f_{\%} = 0.0$, $f_{\%} = 6.0$ respectively). Conversely, in the context of Ferrarelle, the social agents stressed the importance of sustainable practices being deeply rooted in the mutual engagement ($f_{\%} = 24.0$) of the community to which they belong significantly more frequently than the social agents of ING Direct CoP ($f_{\%} = 15.2$).

Discussion and conclusion

Based on a sociocultural perspective, the present study aimed at exploring how CSR sense-making processes evolved with the development of virtual communities of practice on Facebook. Specifically, we examined how CSR was negotiated in virtual CoPs depending on the type of enterprise (production vs. service) and how Facebook mediated the construction of meaning in relation to CSR.

Our analysis indicates that the psychosocial CSR dimensions were closely connected to the CoP dimensions. This makes visible several trends in CSR sense-making processes in virtual communities of practice. First, CSR meanings are generally constructed by social agents (communication managers and stakeholders) in virtual communities of practice through a process of collective, mutual engagement. As social agents engage with one another to define sustainable CSR prac-

tices, they attach positive or negative connotations to their own and one another's utterances. However, as Wenger (1998) suggested, attaching these qualitative connotations does not impair the CSR sense-making processes through which social agents negotiate their discursive and organizational practices. Rather, dialogical conflicts on social media can be conceived as legitimate participation in organizational practices. In this way, CSR can be continuously defined and redefined. Further, the cognitive process of perspective-taking and care-taking of stakeholders (D'Aprile & Talò, 2014; D'Aprile, Loperfido & Talò, 2014) makes it possible for multiple voices to be heard in the sustainable actions adopted. Moreover, shared repertoire enhanced this process of mutual engagement. By emphasizing the centrality of collectively constructed resources for negotiating CSR meanings, sustainable action becomes a product of the virtual community's joint enterprise. Second, the comparison between the two different virtual CoPs (production vs service) illustrates the important role of mutual engagement. The organizational tendency to understand stakeholders' perspectives as deeply interwoven with mutual engagement characteristic of communities of practice indicates that CSR sense-making processes generate mutual accountability. This accountability has its origins in the cognitive domain, but subsequently supports the negotiation of sustainable practices. Further, the link between shared repertoire and the organization's care-taking of stakeholders illustrates how sustainable communities of practice – while negotiating CSR meanings – structure a shared identity through memories and experiences within the community (Wenger, 2000). As such, a company's efforts to build an emotional bond with stakeholders could be understood as an attempt to strengthen community cohesion, thus illustrating the practice of socially responsible behavior.

Third, the absence of joint enterprise in the manufacturing CoP allowed us to reflect on the centrality and non-centrality of this dimension in constructing CSR meanings in the virtual communities of practice shaped on Facebook. We suggest that the structure of Facebook makes it difficult to involve social agents of virtual communities in a joint enterprise. Consistent with the idea that joint enterprise is not a static arrangement but a process in which people define the

issues central to the life of a community (Wenger, 1998) and foster relations of mutual accountability, we argue that the way Facebook is structured may limit the mutual negotiation of a joint enterprise. For example, Facebook posts are archived quickly as a result of the linear 'stream' structure, and thus social agents (such as communication managers as well as stakeholders) are more inclined to read the most recent posts than earlier, more remote interactions. For this reason, social agents may not be able to grasp the joint enterprise of the community as a whole (Champoux, Dugree & McGlynn, 2012).

Finally, analysis made visible some clear differences between the two virtual communities in the CSR sense-making processes. The virtual CoP based on production delivery seemed to focus on the CSR affective dimension, allowing the enterprise to create a deeper bond with its stakeholders. This contributed to a sense of community, which in turn supported the construction of a joint enterprise. The virtual community based on service delivery seemed to manage the stakeholders – especially customers – largely by responding to requests for practical help and technical support without trying to understand their needs and expectations. In addition, the manufacturing CoP achieved a stronger connection between mutual commitment and sustainable practices than the CoP based on service delivery. This caused us to consider whether such CSR sense-making processes were more driven by reification processes than by the dynamics of participation; that is, involving members in meaningful experiences and translating these into concrete, sustainable practices.

In summary, from a theoretical point of view, analysis of dialogue between enterprises and stakeholders on Facebook allowed the concept of CSR to be reconceived as a collective process of continuous negotiation and renegotiation across affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions.

Our analysis suggests that CSR sense-making processes co-evolved with two aspects of communities of practice in particular: shared repertoire, which enterprises and their stakeholders constructed during their interaction; and mutual engagement, which was necessary for recognizing and respecting community members to maintain a socially responsible and sustainable relationship. However, a co-ordination

of common goals, allowing the community to focus efforts and attention around a single pivot, could not take place. This could be linked to Facebook's linear structure, which allows people to chat – or not chat – so dynamically that participants do not have time to internalize a joint commitment.

Overall, supporting the previous studies in CSR communication field (Antal et al., 2002; Capriotti & Moreno, 2007; Esrock & Leichty, 1999; Schultz et al., 2011), this study allowed us to conceptualize CSR sense-making process as interactive, ongoing, and dynamic communication between companies and multi-stakeholders as co-members of a community of practice.

Such an approach opens up possibilities for identifying how CSR can be developed and managed in organizations rather than only identifying whether or not it exists.

In practice, the CSR sense-making processes made visible through our analysis of social media interactions highlights a set of integrated strategies that may enhance CSR communication efforts. For example, communication management has to work on the important processes of defining joint enterprises and constructing a shared repertoire. This integrates stakeholders into a community that is not simply a group of people with shared interests, but a sustainable community characterized by trust, communion and collective agency (van Marrewijk, 2003). Additionally, communication management must simultaneously activate the processes of participation and reification in social media. In so doing, stakeholders develop a greater sense of belonging; this may enhance inclusivity and help enterprises evolve from being mere economic organizations to sustainable communities for social and environmental capital development.

Although this research has been designed to fill both theoretical and empirical gaps in the academic literature, we acknowledge that it has some limitations, which could be overcome in future research.

First, data was collected from a small sample of two companies from Italian large enterprises. For this reason, we foregrounded the size of the enterprises we selected as well as the social and cultural aspects specific to Italy. Future research could explore CSR sense-making processes in small and medium enterprises. Second, to overcome

the cultural bias associated with the Italian context, analysis could be extended to other countries to test the content grid's applicability in different cultures. This would allow for the exploration of CSR meaning processes with a larger sample.

To conclude, the findings of the present study show that CSR may be viewed as a psychosocial process that is shaped by cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that are closely interwoven with the features of a community of practice. Specifically, the interactive way of negotiating CSR may be conceived as a process that encourages a multi-voice community. This community then self-cultivates through continuously mediated Facebook interactions. This psychosocial CSR meaning-making process presents new theoretical possibilities as well as some practical implications and limitations that can orient further investigations with a view to developing a model of CSR participation based on community and social theoretical frameworks.

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