

Unearthing Sedimentation Dynamics in Political CSR: The Case of Colombia

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Received: 18 August 2016 / Accepted: 9 March 2017
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Abstract The stream on political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) argues that companies have recently assumed state-like roles to influence global governance. However, following emerging calls for greater contextualization of CSR, we trace the historic evolution of PCSR in the case of Colombia and argue that such political engagement by firms is not new. Looking beyond a linear chronological account, we reveal the sedimentation process behind PCSR by exploring the archetypical political roles businesses have taken on in providing public goods and acting as regulators, and chart their transformation. Our findings allow us to make two main contributions. First, by unearthing different strata of business and society relations, we enrich the research on PCSR, highlighting its historical sedimentation dynamics. By integrating institutional and historical perspectives, we respond to calls for complementary accounts of one of the premises found in the literature that considers globalization as the starting point of PCSR. Second, our exploration of the past and present of PCSR in Colombia provides scholars and practitioners with an overview of the complex state and stakes of CSR in that country. We also discuss the implications of sedimentation for PCSR theory and future research directions.

Keywords Political corporate social responsibility · Colombia · History of CSR · Sedimentation

Introduction

The study of business and society relationships is not new, and research has proliferated in recent decades, particularly on corporate social responsibility (CSR), i.e., the attention given to conducting business in a socially acceptable fashion (Carroll 2015; Jamali and Karam 2016). Adopting Matten and Crane's (2005) umbrella term, we view CSR as a meta-concept including multiple conceptions of business–society relations that may differ according to institutional contexts (Matten and Moon 2008).

A rather recent addition to the CSR literature is the political CSR stream (PCSR) (Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Palazzo 2011; Scherer et al. 2016), which looks at CSR beyond its business dimension, particularly in the context of changing global governance in which private actors extend their activities from the economic realm to the political (Scherer and Palazzo 2007, 2011; Schrempf-Stirling 2016). Indeed, globalization has challenged traditional approaches to CSR (Scherer et al. 2009) by expanding its scope beyond an organization's immediate environment. Organizations participate in a globalized arena, providing public goods and shaping global regulations (Frynas and Stephens 2015; Scherer et al. 2016). The general premise underpinning this stream is that the reconfiguration of roles and changes in global governance constitute a new phenomenon driven by globalization and that this has prompted the paradigm shift toward PCSR (Scherer and Palazzo 2007), which also involves other actors such as NGOs and civil society (Schrempf-Stirling and Wettstein 2015).

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However, recent studies have challenged this starting point, arguing for a greater contextualization of PCSR, such as a more nuanced view of the role of governments, which, far from disappearing from a globalized multi-stakeholder governance scene, continue to set the regulatory and operational context within which businesses operate (Schrempf-Stirling 2016). Others contest the division of labor between governments and businesses (Mäkinen and Kasanen 2016; Mäkinen and Kourula 2012), calling for more attention to be paid to institutional specificities shaping CSR and PCSR (Detomasi 2015; Moog et al. 2015).

The purpose of this paper is to deepen our understanding of PCSR along these lines through increased historical sensitivity. In addition to considering multiple actors' roles and institutional contextualization, we contribute by unearthing the neglected historical dimension of PCSR. Indeed, the line between private business activities and the delivery of public goods has long been blurred, difficult to grasp in terms of its theoretical relevance and its practical realities. Contrary to Whelan's assertion that PCSR is "notable for its conceptual novelty" (2012, p. 709), we contend that business involvement in society has historically been concomitant with the provision of public goods and regulation of activities, now grouped under the PCSR label. We join recent denunciations of the frequent ahistorical bias and lack of attention given to historical and evolving symbolic processes that shape the form, meaning and legitimacy of CSR (Brammer et al. 2012; Djelic and Etchanchu-Schneider 2015; Schrempf-Stirling et al. 2016). We thus join a wider movement advocating a more serious consideration of historical processes in organization and management studies in general (Bucheli and Wadhvani 2014; Mills et al. 2016; Suddaby 2016).

Greater historical contextualization allows us to discuss one of the major premises of the PCSR literature, namely the assumption that globalization constitutes its starting point. Contrary to this premise that PCSR is a recent outcome of globalization (Scherer and Palazzo 2011), we argue that PCSR is a phenomenon that has existed in different forms across time, and explore it by constructing a framework of sedimentation dynamics. We develop the geological metaphor of sedimentation introduced by Clegg (1981) and pursued by Cooper et al. (1996) and Chandler and Foster (2015) to study two interrelated dimensions that shape PCSR: a synchronic perspective with institutional contextualization where PCSR unfolds in a particular national business system and a diachronic perspective with historical contextualization. The historical context shows that PCSR is not a new phenomenon stemming from globalization. Globalization is merely one factor that currently influences it, engendering a form of PCSR that adds a new layer to prior forms of business involvement in

society that have been set down through a process of sedimentation. In this dynamic process, each layer is never completely forgotten, replaced or surpassed, but can resurface, transform and blend with current practices.

To illustrate the dynamics of this sedimentation process, we present the longitudinal case of the sugar industry in Colombia, from the early twentieth century to the present. This focus on Colombia is warranted because, although the literature on CSR in Colombia is underdeveloped, there is a long-standing history of private sector contributions to social services (Rojas and Morales 2006). We describe three historical forms of PCSR, all of which subsist today. In addition to mapping the current situation of PCSR in Colombia, we show that each stratum has been set down in a complex sedimentation process of reinterpretation, transformation and appropriation by different actors for different purposes.

We begin by reviewing the literature on PCSR and underline the need to integrate both the historical dimension and local institutional embeddedness to answer the call for greater contextualization. We then outline our sedimentation framework. The third section provides an overview of CSR in Colombia. Fourth, we present our data, method and results. We unearth sedimented layers from the past to highlight how different coexisting forms of PCSR are related to changes in the meaning of business responsibility. We conclude by discussing the relevance of the sedimentation model for understanding PCSR and avenues for further research.

Literature Review

Political CSR

As corporations have become social institutions and powerful global and political actors, calls for a new understanding of their role in society have emerged to include political considerations in the CSR debate ((Matten and Crane 2005; Palazzo and Scherer 2008; Scherer et al. 2016). Firms can be considered political actors because they reach beyond the economic realm and tackle public problems in cooperation with state actors and civil society (Scherer and Palazzo 2011; Schrempf-Stirling and Wettstein 2015). We adopt Scherer et al.'s definition of PCSR:

those responsible business activities that turn corporations into political actors, by engaging in public deliberations, collective decisions, and the provision of public goods or the restriction of public bads in cases where public authorities are unable or unwilling to fulfill this role. This includes, but is not limited to,

corporate contributions to different areas of governance, such as public health, education, public infrastructure, the enforcement of social and environmental standards along supply chains or the fight against global warming, corruption, discrimination or inequality. These corporate engagements are responsible because they are directed to the effective resolution of public issues in a legitimate manner, often with the (explicit) aim of contributing to society or enhancing social welfare, and are thus not limited to economic motivations (Scherer et al. 2016, p. 2).

This phenomenon includes, following Whelan (2012), the streams of extended corporate citizenship (Matten and Crane 2005), a politicized concept of corporate social responsibility (Scherer and Palazzo 2011) and corporations as governments (Crane et al. 2008). This recent ‘political turn’ of CSR includes a variety of activities (Schrempf-Stirling 2016), ranging from the development of soft regulations to defining and assessing social and environmental responsibility (Scherer and Palazzo 2011; Scherer et al. 2013; Nyberg et al. 2013), and the proliferation of certifications, codes of conduct and multi-stakeholder initiatives, particularly by companies. The development of private sector regulation has been prominent across global supply chains (Acosta et al. 2014; Kobrin 2009; Vogel 2010), and multinational enterprises (MNEs) are being held responsible for what their suppliers have done.

Here, we focus on one of the major assumptions in the PCSR literature: That globalization is the starting point for the reconfiguration of global governance and hence corporations’ role in it. Indeed, PCSR can be viewed as an extended model of governance, where firms contribute to shaping global regulations and provide public goods through CSR (Scherer and Palazzo 2011, p. 901). This stream advocates a role for businesses that acknowledges the declining power of national governments owing to globalization and the ensuing regulatory void (Crane et al. 2008; Matten and Crane 2005; Palazzo and Scherer 2008; Scherer et al. 2016). The “de-territorialization of social, political and economic interactions” causes countries to lose agency (Matten and Crane 2005, p. 171). This blurs the boundaries of who is responsible for what (Scherer and Palazzo 2011), with other stakeholders coming into play such as NGOs, international organizations and MNEs, which can tackle global problems ranging from social conditions to environmental challenges (Detomasi 2007; Nyberg et al. 2013).

Calls for Greater Contextualization in PCSR

Challenging this assumption can deepen our understanding of PCSR phenomena in three ways. First, some authors

question globalization as the starting point of PCSR. Whelan (2012) contends that PCSR should be viewed as a globalized model rather than as a consequence of globalization. He argues that there is little evidence of the diminished power of national governments owing to globalization and that PCSR could be better understood as a global spread of institutional forms such as transnational, multi-constituent, self-regulatory initiatives (e.g., UN Global Compact, AA1000) that constitute institutionalized ways of improving MNEs’ behavior. Indeed, de-territorialization and the blurring of responsibility at the transnational level do not preclude local territories’ influencing corporate activity or the existence of a current or past form of structuring the embeddedness of such activities.

Second, scholars have warned not to underestimate the “location and scope of ‘politics’” (Moog et al. 2015, p. 485) and recommend “paying closer attention to the ‘political economy’” (2005, p. 471). Indeed, the role of countries and governments remains inescapable and must be fully taken into account since they continue to set the regulatory and operational context within which businesses operate and evolve (Schrempf-Stirling 2016).

Third, increasing criticism is being leveled against an enduring ahistorical bias in CSR research in general and against the scant attention given to historical and evolving symbolic processes that shape both the meaning of CSR and its manifestations (Brammer et al. 2012). Exceptions exist and are evidence of the need for a greater exploration of this dimension (see Scherer et al. (2012) who develop a typology of five corporate governance structures linked to the historical development of capitalism). Mäkinen and Kourula (2012) point to the prior existence of underlying PCSR theories. To contextualize the recent political turn in CSR, they evaluate three key periods of PCSR: classical, instrumental and new political CSR. They also identify two gaps in this new political turn: (1) the lack of historical depth and (2) the need to combine multiple theoretical perspectives (such as comparative political economy) to perform “a more in-depth analysis of CSR in different institutional contexts” (Mäkinen and Kourula 2012, p. 670). Schrempf-Stirling and Palazzo (2013) note that in 30 years the upstream CSR debate evolved “from a narrow focus on violations of worker rights in contractors’ factories to a broader concern with ... social and environmental impacts along the complete corporate supply chain upstream” (2013, p. 4). This historical analysis reveals a shift from “contract responsibility,” mostly in emerging and developing countries, to “full producer responsibility,” carrying broader managerial and political implications. More recently, Djelic and Etchanchu-Schneider (2015) refute the validity of the globalization hypothesis, comparing how two ideal types—nineteenth-century paternalism in Europe and American corporate trusteeship in the

1920s—already implied a PCSR role for corporations. Schrempf-Stirling et al. (2016) advance the notion of “historic corporate social responsibility,” i.e., how charges of past harm-doing may be linked to current accountability, raise questions of legitimacy and provoke organizational responses to engage with an inconvenient past.

We see these papers as calls for greater contextualization in PCSR research and seek to address them. As Scherer et al. state, “PCSR has to take the institutional context into account in which business activities and their relations to society are embedded” (2016, p. 18). We would argue that this is a bi-dimensional endeavor: We must consider both institutional contextualization (particularly at the national level since it shapes the political space within which PCSR occurs (cf. Detomasi 2015; Moog et al. 2015) and historical contextualization. In the next section, we propose a theoretical framework to address these two dimensions together.

Sedimentation Dynamics: A Framework for Studying Historically Embedded PCSR

We wish to contribute to PCSR research by greater contextualization and particularly by unearthing its neglected historical dimension. While PCSR is mostly depicted as a recent outcome of globalization (Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Palazzo 2011), we draw on recent contestations of this theory (Mäkinen and Kourula 2012; Brammer et al. 2012; Djelic and Etchanchu-Schneider 2015) and suggest that it is a phenomenon that has existed in different forms across time. Indeed, although the term CSR is fairly recent, the underlying realities have a deeper history (Acquier et al. 2011). As Logsdon et al. (2006) contend, based on the case of Mexico, business involvement in society in developing countries is not new and does not concern multinational companies exclusively: Practices have historically addressed local needs.

We propose to contextualize PCSR by looking at two interrelated dimensions, inspired by Chandler and Foster (2015): a synchronic perspective for institutional contextualization and a diachronic perspective for historical contextualization. The former refers to the overall context of “political economy” (Moog et al. 2015) or the arena where PCSR unfolds, i.e., the politically constructed space of interconnected events, meanings and actions that eventually work as a “system.” In our case, the national business system (NBS) of Colombia will constitute the institutional context. As for the diachronic perspective, we look beyond its literal sense as a linear chronology of events and understand it as a constructed temporal frame.

Together, these two dimensions constitute our framework for understanding the sedimentation dynamics of PCSR.

Institutional Contextualization

Despite calls to pay more attention to socioeconomic contexts, the PCSR literature has yet to fully acknowledge institutional contexts (Moog et al. 2015). In addition to considering it at the transnational level and exploring its macro implications, researchers can shed much needed light on PCSR by examining its manifestation in a particular NBS (Tengblad and Ohlsson 2009). An NBS comprises “distinct and stable ways of organizing market economies in terms of their patterns of authoritative coordination and control of economic activities” (Whitley 2007, p. 13). Research has been primarily concerned with liberal market economies (e.g., USA, UK) and coordinated market economies in Europe (e.g., Jackson and Apostolou 2010). However, research on CSR in emerging economies can be considered a distinctive domain of study with particular NBSs (Jamali and Karam 2016).

Matten and Moon (2008) use the NBS approach to show how CSR may be country specific and culturally embedded, explaining differences in CSR in terms of institutional settings. Societies develop different forms of economic organization that reflect their institutions. The specificity of the NBS in each country arises from differences in governmental and legal frameworks, ownership structures, governance practices, capital markets and labor relations (Whitley 1999), which lead to different economic rules that shape firms’ strategies (Morgan 2007). Matten and Moon (2008) use Whitley’s (1999) four key features to characterize the institutional framework: the political system, the financial system, the education and labor system, and the cultural system. The political system indicates the degree of state intervention in the economic system, versus the degree of corporate discretion. It refers to the power of the state and its engagement in economic and social activities. The financial system relates to the central source of financing, e.g., a shareholder model, more common in the USA, versus a stakeholder model, more developed in Europe. The education and labor system affects the degree to which unions or coalitions influence policy-making. Finally, the cultural system traces assumptions about society, business and government, such as traditions of individualism, moralism, utilitarianism or pluralism. We consider the NBS approach to be a particularly relevant tool for understanding and theorizing about the institutional context of PCSR, because research has shown a link between the globalization of NBS (i.e., the global spread of individualistic business systems based in liberal market economies) and how CSR is framed (Tengblad and Ohlsson 2009).

In Chandler and Foster's (2015) integrated model applied to institutional theory, this corresponds to the synchronic dimension, applied to structured nested hierarchies in their case. Here, we will use the NBS approach to take into account this synchronic dimension of PCSR.

Historical Contextualization

The institutional context is not static, of course, and to take the temporal dimension into account we need to shed light on the historical configurations between markets and firms. Indeed, greater historical awareness or consciousness is key to understanding social and symbolic interactions (Suddaby 2016), yet studying how such historical processes shape CSR has been neglected (Brammer et al. 2012). Following the emerging historic turn in management scholarship (Bucheli and Wadhvani 2014; Mills et al. 2016), scholars are criticizing the lack of historical embeddedness in organization theories (Suddaby 2016). Indeed, one cannot ignore the weight of history in organizational phenomena since social meanings and forces are constructed over the long run. We argue that this historical dimension is all the more relevant when CSR, particularly political CSR, is involved as recent papers suggest (Mäkinen and Kourula 2012; Schrempf-Stirling and Palazzo 2013; Djelic and Etchanchu-Schneider 2015; Schrempf-Stirling et al. 2016).

However, as Chandler and Foster point out, the past is not to be taken literally, "as a path-dependent sequence of linear events," but instead is a "'malleable' resource" subject to repeated reinterpretation in the present (2015, p. 2). Awareness of chronology is important, but the past and its theorization as history allow a far richer engagement with past events and their implications for present organizing. They put forward the notion of "present past" as a dynamic construct for current interpretations of past events. Institutions are the evolving result of the accumulation and sedimentation of an unstable and malleable past. The past is therefore more than just the past: It is a present resource that can be drawn upon today.

In this respect, the geological metaphor of sedimentation is particularly interesting. Cooper et al. (1996) argue that sedimentation allows us to conceive change as dialectical, rather than linear. In other words, in sedimentation, change does not occur through a shift from one state to another, but a layering of one over the other. They reprise this metaphor from Clegg (1981) to explain organizational change:

what is exposed at the surface of the organization is the result of a complex and historical process of faults and disruptions (for example from local crisis and conflicts, rather than the plate movements of geology), erosions (from technical market forces, rather

than water) and strengths of archetype (the coherence and ideological strength of practices, rather than the physical character of the rock) (Cooper et al. 1996, p. 624).

Most importantly, they suggest that all these movements cause several organizational archetypes "to be simultaneously present on the surface of organizational life" (p. 635). Chandler and Foster further develop the concept of erosion: "in addition to forming layers, past sediment is occasionally washed away or redistributed in different forms, removing some parts of the residue while leaving others" (2015, p. 18). This constitutes the diachronic perspective, where the past acquires new significance in the effort to understand and theorize the present of PCSR in a given environment.

To sum up, we propose to frame PCSR in terms of sedimentation dynamics, i.e., as both synchronically embedded in a particular NBS and diachronically embedded in history. This sedimentation framework offers several advantages. First, by increasing our historical and institutional sensitivity, we shed new light on the indistinct boundaries between the political and economic spheres. The study of our empirical setting will show how private actors have maintained the provision of public goods across time, despite variations in the way it is done. We can therefore account for the endurance of traditions as "institutionalized practices [that] are rarely ever completely extinguished" (Dacin and Dacin 2008, p. 327).

Second, sedimentation allows us to conceive PCSR as "structure-in-process" (Clegg 1981). Indeed, despite its (misleading) static appearance, sedimentation is dynamic: If we pursue the geological metaphor, it includes movements of erosion, resurfacing and irruption of some strata at different moments in time. Not limited to a chronology of PCSR, sedimentation allows us to understand its historical embeddedness through the connections between strata and between micro and macro phenomena simultaneously (Clegg 1981), answering a pressing call in PCSR theory to encompass both the effects of globalization and local practices (Scherer et al. 2016). None of the strata exist independently; they structure and transform each other in the sedimentation process.

Third, the language of sedimentation highlights the neglected processual dimension of political CSR. Linear transformation owing to globalization is one possibility, but we believe it leaves out key issues that are essential to understanding PCSR phenomena. Sedimentation brings historical depth not only to actors, but also to the different forms of PCSR currently coevolving, revealing oscillations back and forth between different types, hesitations of actors and renegotiations of meaning that are only temporarily stabilized.

Overview of Colombian CSR¹

Common Latin American Features

Schneider (2013) identifies four distinctive features of Latin American capitalism and its typical NBS in relation to what he calls hierarchical market economies (HME). First, the prevalence of large, domestic, usually family-owned, diversified groups, leading to a coercive hierarchy in relation to suppliers, competitors and clients. Second, MNEs play a predominant role in investments, technology transfer and trade in the Latin American business system. Third, hierarchy also prevails in labor relations: Companies and associations unilaterally determine on-the-job training; employees lack formal and effective mechanisms of representation and guarantees of long-term employment. Further, labor conditions such as benefits, job tenure, skills and labor regulation are unevenly distributed across the population. Fourth, the quality and access to education remain low. Productivity per worker is also low, and private investment in education is weak.

Regarding CSR, Latin America can also be viewed as a homogeneous geographical area (Gutiérrez and Jones 2004; Perez-Batres et al. 2010), as suggested by overviews of neighboring countries (see Griesse 2007 on Brazil; Logsdon et al. 2006 on Mexico) that identify two main features of Latin American CSR: Catholic religious underpinnings and the fact that most activities in this realm are privately run, as later described for the case of Colombia.

Zooming in on Colombia

The focus on Colombia is warranted because, although the literature on CSR in Colombia is underdeveloped, there is a long-standing history of private sector contributions to social services (Rojas and Morales 2006). Moreover, the Colombian case can be considered as representative of developing countries commonly characterized by a long history of philanthropic CSR (Visser 2008), meaningful corporate engagement in development, and a mix of formal and informal governance systems (Jamali and Karam 2016).

Under-researched in management studies despite being the fourth largest Latin American economy, Colombia

constitutes an interesting setting to study CSR because of its long-lasting tradition of corporate philanthropy (Gutiérrez et al. 2006) and business involvement in public activities (Rojas and Morales 2006).

Three models characterize Colombia's recent economic history. The agro-export model in the early twentieth century was mainly based on coffee exports (Bejarano Ávila 2007) and the production of some industrial goods for internal consumption. During this period, infrastructure was expanded (transportation, communications and electricity) and the state developed regulations for economic and social activities. In the 1930s, successive governments developed labor and agrarian reforms, but these had moderate results in terms of the population covered, the percentage of unionized workers and income increases for urban and rural workers (Ocampo Gaviria 1987).

The second model of industrialization, led by the state under strong corporate pressure (Urrea and Arango 2000), combined import substitution with the promotion of exports from the 1930s until it faded after the oil crisis in 1974. During this period, the contribution of agriculture to the Colombian economy decreased by half, while manufacturing and services industries gained importance (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 2007a). The government strengthened regulations on monetary policies, exports and agriculture. It also expanded its public services (education, health care, electricity and infrastructure) through both legislation and the creation of new organizations (e.g., National Health Service) as well as state-owned companies.

The last era of economic liberalization progressively began in the 1970s and fully materialized in 1991 with official economic liberalization, strengthening market forces and social investments. Overall, this created a mixed model where private and public actors coexist in the provision of health care, social security and public services (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 2007b).

Family capitalism has historically dominated the local business world, with elite families occupying public positions (Mayor Mora 1989) and promoting private interests (Dávila 1992). The business world has been historically linked to the government (Sáenz Rovner 2002), supporting both dictatorships and democracies as long as they do not interfere with regular business activities. This points to a substantial symbiosis between economic policies and the interests of economic associations (Urrea and Arango 2000), as in the case of the import substitution policy mentioned above and the recurrent integration after World War II of businessmen in the public sector to facilitate public/private communications and negotiate social and economic reforms (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 2007b).

Poverty and inequality remain pressing issues in Colombia, with a GINI index of 53 and 30% of the

¹ These and the following paragraphs are not meant to be exhaustive, but serve to introduce the key features of Latin-American and Colombian CSR necessary for our case development, and are therefore limited. References are provided in "Appendix" and in References section for readers wishing to know more.

population below the poverty line.² From the 1930s, industrialization led to a large unoccupied workforce in rural areas, intense violence, economic policies oriented toward urban areas, inequality in land distribution and huge gaps in income distribution (Ocampo Gaviria 1987). Consequently, distrust and distance have historically permeated relations between communities and businesses (Gutiérrez and Jones 2004) with land distribution, corruption and transparency as key issues. The country also faces social and environmental problems related to armed conflict, cocaine production and drug trade (Pinilla Urzola 2010).

Colombian CSR

Following the Latin American pattern, Colombian CSR is rooted in the Catholic tradition inherited from Spanish colonialism and has a long history of charity and philanthropy (Gutiérrez et al. 2006; Gutiérrez and Jones 2004; Rojas and Morales 2006; Sanborn 2006). Since the colonial period, the Catholic Church has played a pivotal role as a provider of education, health care and social welfare services (Castro Carvajal 2009; Sanborn 2006). Indeed, between 1873 and 1960 the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church was based on legal, contractual arrangements in which the state delegated social care (hospitals, orphanages and asylums) to Catholic religious orders that managed them in exchange for monthly salaries and on-site housing (Castro Carvajal 2011). In 1930, half the schools were managed by religious orders (Castro Carvajal 2007). Catholic principles permeated factory management through a paternalistic, protective, moralizing and disciplinary attitude toward the workforce (Urrea and Arango 2000).

Another feature is that several public services remain largely privately run. In the early twentieth century, social welfare was developed by private and public actors in the context of an inexperienced state that lacked resources to fully engage in health care for poor citizens, education for children, craftsmen and workers, the management of donations (food, clothing, etc.), housing, savings accounts and employment services (Castro Carvajal 2011). Today, high rates of exclusion, inequality and violence make private involvement in public issues a pressing need where the state alone cannot satisfy basic requirements (Rojas and Morales 2006). Such private intervention takes three main forms: (1) nonprofit associations and assistance organizations (mostly Catholic-inspired, not discussed here), (2) a welfare model applied to companies and (3) corporate foundations.

Colombian businesses have historically operated under the “welfare” model. The welfare company fulfills the

social functions of the welfare state: providing housing, education, health care and jobs for employees, their families and nearby communities. Welfare companies are typically enterprises with a large workforce, located on the outskirts of major cities, in regions whose economies depend heavily on the company. Examples include the textile industry around Medellín and the sugar industry around Cali, which serves as our empirical case, but also state-owned companies (Urrea and Arango 2000).

Corporate philanthropy is manifested in direct giving and corporate foundations (Sanborn 2006), mainly promoted by CEOs and family founders (Promigas and DIS 2012). Today, welfare models and philanthropy coexist with initiatives aimed at improving corporate reputation, reducing risks, complying with legislation and fostering the development of local communities in line with globalized CSR tendencies (Agüero 2006; Lindgreen et al. 2010). With or without corporate foundations, companies are still providing public goods (Lindgreen et al. 2010) and trying to regulate public actors. However, the development of global value chains has created new regulatory roles: As local companies enter global markets, they must meet several new requirements regarding CSR, under pressure from MNEs. The question then arises: How do these different forms of business and society relations coexist in order to fulfill public needs today?

Unearthing the Strata of PCSR in Colombia

Data

We draw on multiple sources to develop a narrative of business involvement in Colombian society and illustrate the political roles private firms have assumed over time. In order to capture the historical and institutional evolution of PCSR in Colombia (outlined in the previous section), we triangulated extensive secondary data, including a combination of multiple and dispersed sources such as scholarly works on management, economic issues and regional history, books on corporate history, and corporate reports (cf. “Appendix”). We identified useful references iteratively using local libraries’ search engines and through recommendations of local academics interviewed, and followed up additional references cited in the books or reports gathered.

Table 1 details the 33 interviews we conducted with local CSR experts and company managers. Interviews lasted between 45 and 120 min and were recorded and transcribed. We used a semi-structured interview protocol to develop a rich account of the evolution of social and environmental practices, the role of international actors and other forces in that evolution, the changes made in

² <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>.

Table 1 Overview of the interviews

No.	Detail	Organization	Duration
1	Head of sustainability	Company 1: Large company with a business unit in the sugar industry	1 h 08
2	Head of environmental department		58 min
3	Head of CSR and communications		56 min
4	Head of human resources		57 min
5	Manager in charge of client audits		1 h 35
6	Social worker	Company 2: Large company in the sugar industry	2 h 12
7	Head of management systems		57 min
8	Head of corporate foundation		1 h 35
9	Head of marketing		1 h 09
10	Head of industrial relations	Company 3: Large company in the sugar industry	1 h 47
11	Head of human resources	Company 4: Large company with a business unit in the sugar industry	2 h
12	Manager in charge of CSR		2 h
13	Manager in the marketing department		45 min
14	Social worker	Company 5: Medium company in the sugar industry	2 h 20
15	Employee in the field area		1 h 28
16	Manager in charge of health and safety and CSR		2 h 05
17	General manager		
18	School teacher		57 min
19	Head of quality management		2 h 02
20	General manager	Supplier of several sugar companies (small company)	28 min
21	Manager in charge of commercial activities	Supplier of several sugar companies (medium company)	2 h 26
22	Manager in charge of commercial activities	Supplier of several sugar companies (small company)	50 min
23	Expert	University	1 h 35
24	Expert	Industry association	1 h 08
25	Expert	Multilateral organization	1 h 23
26	Expert	Organization in the services industry	1 h 42
27	Expert	University	53 min
28	Expert	University	2 h
29	Expert	University	1 h 02
30	Expert	University	1 h 35
31	Expert	Entrepreneur	2 h 01
32	Expert	Consultancy	45 min
33	Expert	Independent historian	1 h 20

response to such pressures and their related benefits and difficulties. In the interviews with experts, we paid particular attention to financial, political, educational, economic and cultural changes.

Interviews with industry members concern the agro-food industry, specifically sugar production, which is mainly located in one region because social structures differ significantly by region (Urrea and Mejía 1999). Research has shown that institutional pressures on firms to adopt CSR are manifested at the industry level (Jackson and Apostolou 2010; cf. Clegg 1981). We chose the sugar industry in Colombia for three major reasons. First, the industry has driven economic development as it represents 0.5% of

national GDP and accounts for 265,000 jobs (Arbeláez et al. 2010). The second reason is linked to its history of philanthropic activities for employees and surrounding communities that have been the norm in Latin America (Reficco and Ogliastrì 2009; Schmidheiny 2006). Third, the industry recently started participating in global value chains and trade with MNEs, allowing us to capture the evolution of PCSR from mainly local welfare-based approaches toward globalized CSR. However, in order to confirm our findings, we also included national experts and consulted scholarly works beyond this particular region and industry. We started by interviewing industry experts and followed a snowball strategy to reach experts in other organizations.

Method

Part of the data, consisting of internal documents and interviews at companies (see Table 1), was collected over a 3-year period by the first author as part of in-depth qualitative research for her PhD on CSR in Colombia. Later, both authors revisited part of the material, to focus more on the history of CSR. Looking back in time, we realized that the historical perspective clearly shed light on the political dimension and how the evolution of firms' political roles matters in today's CSR configuration in Colombia. Additional material and interviews were then collected iteratively in a second phase until saturation was achieved, including nine additional experts.

The analysis consisted of two main phases. First, we classified both primary and secondary sources to capture the longitudinal evolution of PCSR forms, paying attention to their specificities within the Colombian NBS and reprising Whitley's (1999) features (cf. Matten and Moon 2008) as well as features related to corporate governance (Morgan 2007). We also identified civil, social and political rights and the development of private regulations (Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Palazzo 2011). This classification is synthesized in Table 2, which characterizes each of the major forms of local PCSR involvement. We realized that constructing a linear chronology with distinct phases succeeding each other was both impossible and erroneous: Previous forms were not replaced by new ones. This realization led us to develop the idea of sedimentation to tackle the complexity of the phenomenon. Beyond a mere chronological account, our historical approach to PCSR strives to understand socioeconomic transformations and how dominant institutions and firms decline or prosper, accumulating in layers of sediment (Whitley 2007; Chandler and Foster 2015).

In the second phase, we constructed a narrative (next section) of the sedimentation dynamics of PCSR in Colombia by identifying common features in our interviews of how each form was transformed and kept doing its "political work" as time went by. As new PCSR forms emerged, tasks such as providing public goods or influencing regulation gave rise to new actors, labels and activities, but remained largely in private hands. Such transformations did not, however, lead to the disappearance of previous forms, which continued to linger and resurface not only as practices of the past on which to build new forms, but as simultaneous coexisting features that compose the sedimented stratification of current PCSR, summarized in Fig. 1.

Findings

PCSR Through Welfare Companies

In the 1930s, education and health care were primarily provided by Catholic orders, in the context of a state

lacking the resources to create a network of secular schools (Castro Carvajal 2007). Organizations, particularly in rural areas, became providers of social protection, health services, housing and education (Gutiérrez et al. 2006), establishing local forms of welfare capitalism such as the welfare company (Arango 1991; Urrea and Arango 2000), characterized by the provision of public goods and the regulation of behavior both at the individual and collective levels. Today, these two characteristics remain and permeate daily life in companies.

First, we note that companies are still the main providers of public goods and services and that Catholic influence remains strong. At almost all the companies visited during this study, the grounds contain houses, a school, facilities for recreational activities, a church, food stores and health facilities—all clear signs of the welfare company.

At every company, employees mentioned activities in the areas of education. During the first half of the twentieth century, it was mostly provided by Catholic orders close to or inside production sites: "[that school] was managed by the Lasallian order The Vicentian sisters had another school [inside the mill], only for girls" (interview 18).

Today, most of these schools have become secular organizations and some are still operating in or near company mills: "The school [located inside the mill] cost us some money, but tuition fees and income generated by the school is for the school. The company pays the teachers" (interview 17).

Health care followed a similar trend, depending on private contributions (companies and Catholic orders) during the first half of the twentieth century. The national social security system (ICSS) did not exist until 1946, and its creation was not universally well received by employers (Rojas and Morales 2006; Sáenz Rovner 2002). The ANDI (national association of industrial producers) complained that the ICSS demanded too much of companies in terms of tax contributions, argued that medical attention should be provided by the private sector, and published several articles questioning social legislation (Urrea and Arango 2000). The ANDI also launched the first private social security system (*Cajas de compensación familiar*), aimed at giving family subsidies in housing, education and recreational activities. In 1957, the government made this contribution compulsory (Villar 2001). Today, different *Cajas* provide education, housing, recreation and cultural activities to at least 20% of the population (Gutiérrez et al. 2006). Yet some companies remain providers of health care: "We have two rural doctors paid by our company and we deliver some medicines" (interview 17).

We see the same pattern around family issues: Child-care services were provided within companies and factories, and inspired the creation of the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Colombian Institute for family well-being) in 1968.

Table 2 Types of PCSR

PCSR through...	Description	Political system	Financial system	Education and labor system	Cultural system	Form of corporate governance
Welfare company ~ 1930s	Companies are like villages where the owner regulates all aspects of social and professional life.	Creation of administrative and territorial divisions. Private financing of infrastructure (roads, railways, ports, etc.) Elite families commonly occupy governmental positions	Economic growth based on agriculture exports Industrialization through protectionist schemes Companies managed by elite families who drive the economy	Education provided by Catholic orders Foundation of the national social security system Development of national labor legislation	Strong Catholic influence Paternalism Disciplinary and moralizing actions	Small land owners displaced by industrialization Development of agro-industry Family businesses
Corporate foundations ~ 1950s	Corporate reluctance to accept governmental social policies Corporate foundations appeared as a means to reduce the communist threat and provide social goods such as education	Multiple short-term governments Improvement of national infrastructure <i>La Violencia</i> (civil war 1948–1951) Guerrillas and social turmoil Rural exodus State interventionism	Development of financial corporations to foster industrial development Industrialization Interventionism	High rates of illiteracy Strengthening of the state and development of different social policies inspired by corporate activities New labor policies to protect employees Nationalization of primary and secondary education	Rejection of communism Union strikes	Growth of local companies Arrival of MNEs and reduced proportion of individual owners Development of business associations
Globalized CSR ~ 1980s	CSR-related demands from multinational clients and regulation of CSR activities through codes of conduct, standards and audit schemes	Attempts to solve guerrilla conflicts New constitution (1991) High levels of corruption Privatization of several state-owned companies Public services legislation (1993)	Liberalization in three areas: control of exchange rates, foreign investment and trade Development of the financial sector Expansion of communications and transportation sectors	High rates of informal employment Low levels of education and vocational skills Low job tenure	Internationalization Increased awareness of environmental problems Development of civil society	Development of global value chains Diversified business groups MNEs participate in the CSR agenda

Furthermore, companies provided basic services and infrastructure. They built facilities inside their mills, adapted to employees' labor and family situation, often providing free housing and meeting other employee needs:

We used to have a drug store here and a place where people could buy products like appliances The company gave you a subsidy to buy medication When I arrived [in 1975] we had a permanent

doctor... who lived at the mill ... and a slaughterhouse that operated twice a week, where people could buy meat and it was deducted from their salary (interview 15).

Second, the regulation of individual and collective behavior is still largely in the hands of company owners and managers in a paternalistic fashion: “You could not take down one single branch or a tree without his [owner’s] permission” (interview 18).

Companies were traditionally managed by the owners (Rojas 1983). Owners usually came from elite families and most had studied abroad. They often held public functions in the local or national government and abroad in diplomatic positions (Rojas 1983). Social relations in the welfare company grew around paternalist schemes. Owners of family companies usually lived near production sites and regulated diverse behaviors around the company concerning all aspects of life. Influenced by the Catholic tradition and colonial heritage, companies were thought of as extended families, with workers viewed as children and employers as their protectors (Rojas and Morales 2006). Relationships between employers and workers were based on dependency, paternalism and charity schemes (Arango 1991; Rojas and Morales 2006); employees were treated with contempt and were subject to disciplinary and moralizing actions (Urrea and Arango 2000).

PCSR Through Corporate Foundations

Corporate foundations, which began to flourish during the second half of the twentieth century, are defined as legal entities pursuing the public good and come under a special tax regime because they contribute to the state’s social duties. They operate with material goods donated by the parent company or the owning family (Rojas and Morales 2006; Villar 2001). Foundations focus on three main areas that overlap with the state’s activities: (1) assistance to the poor, (2) public governance and (3) developmental philanthropy (Rojas and Morales 2006).

First, corporate foundations appear as a complementary element to the welfare model through their role as assistance providers. The private sector welfare model was challenged as the state developed, creating a new wave of national entities and laws to improve social well-being and worker benefits. Such policies were not always well received by businesses, because the state was usurping their role. Businesses in the meantime were concentrating production around several major firms, a process that intensified with the development of vertically and horizontally integrated conglomerates in the 1960s (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 1987). Notwithstanding the persistence of the welfare company model, some corporations created

foundations during the 1960s as extensions of their companies (Rojas and Morales 2006) to tackle social problems in their immediate environment, as the Web site of one of the first foundations created in Colombia attests:

The foundation... was originally intended to promote the holistic development of communities within the area of influence of the Corona factories. At that time the foundation directly offered assistance programs primarily in education, housing, and health (http://www.fundacioncorona.org.co/#/fundacion/origen_eng).

Again following Catholic principles, corporate foundations initially aimed to assist the needy living near factories (Rojas and Morales 2006) and focused on providing education and social services (Urrea and Arango 2000) as well as addressing unemployment. Created in 1957, the Caicedo Gonzalez Foundation built Catholic centers under the motto “whoever serves the poor, serves God” (Urrea and Mejía 1999). The Carvajal Foundation was created in 1977 in association with the Archdiocese of Cali and even newly created foundations, like the Mac Foundation created in 1991, rest on Catholic imprints (Paz Rueda 2007).

Second, corporate foundations began to influence regulations and public governance. They conduct social interventions in the public sphere and seek to resolve problems in deficient social systems (Paz Rueda 2007). They thus “express very well the concept of private goods for public ends” (Promigas and DIS 2012, p. 19).

Endeavoring to control regulations and behavior also became the scene of an ideological battle led by corporate foundations. Although this was a protectionist period, government policies allowed machinery imports and foreign investments, following North American economic policies (Sáenz Rovner 2002). The strong influence of the USA was also tangible through the Alliance for Progress, a social program created by the Kennedy administration to deter a Cuban-style revolution—given the impoverished rural areas and fragile economic situation—by improving economic development, fighting inequality, reducing illiteracy, increasing affordable housing and facilitating access to international markets (Rojas 2010).

Such interventionism arose amidst the intensification of armed conflict in Colombia (Rojas and Morales 2006) and is still maintained today. Corporate foundations expanded their efforts, building private–public alliances and seeking to improve public policies. Some foundations created programs to reduce violence (Paz Rueda 2007) or promote citizens’ participation in monitoring governmental action (Rojas and Morales 2006):

[Today we are working] on the impact and interaction with public policy to develop the legitimate tools of

power and public management for effective access to rights. Because, although I accept that as a company my role is not to replace the state, I do have a role as an economic actor: to create the conditions so that my fellow citizens have effective access to their rights (interview 8).

Third, corporate foundations' "developmental philanthropy" became another means of regulating individual behavior. In the context of sociopolitical tensions and massive rural exodus, corporate foundations were established in areas prone to communist influence (Rojas and Morales 2006), and it was common to find training programs in companies addressing dilemmas of communism–Christianity or capitalism–communism (Urrea and Arango 2000). This resonates with the Catholic actions of the early 1900s aimed at maintaining faith and healthy traditions, and developing a Catholic presence in factories and unions out of fear of socialism (Castro Carvajal 2011). Later, corporate foundations sought to develop new sources of income for communities. This model, based on the promotion of micro-entrepreneurship projects, emerged in the context of the social and economic crises of the 1980s³ and 1990s. However, the power of companies increased as their foundations gained resources. While scattered individual improvements could be noted, citizens were marginalized and no major collective transformations could be observed (Paz Rueda 2007).

PCSR Through Globalized CSR

After the 1980s, Latin America experienced an intense era of liberalization, reinforcing the primacy of the private sector in the provision of public goods (Reficco and Ogliastri 2009). Today, corporate involvement in Colombian society covers diverse actions, targeted populations and problems (Gutiérrez et al. 2006). However, welfare companies, with or without corporate foundations, continue to exist amidst new forms of PCSR: Several companies continue to provide public goods such as health and education and maintain strong ties with religious bodies.

The arrival of international capital brought new management techniques, spawning a mix of paternalistic relations, combined with authoritative management styles, and some techniques of participatory management (Urrea and Arango 2000). Far from disappearing, paternalism took a new shape, with management characterized by a duty of

protection, relatively submissive employees and personal relations (Urrea and Mejía 1999). This did not go uncontested however, and we see an increase in social movements and union mobilizations (Rojas and Morales 2006), partly in opposition to the US imperialist model after the 1950s.

Contrary to the two previous dominant PCSR forms, which had developed locally, globalized CSR arrived on the scene as an outside imposition from MNEs. In order for local suppliers to keep MNEs as clients, they had to accept new CSR standards, which brought about a shift in vocabulary and also in the meaning of corporate responsibility. The following quote is characteristic of this shift, with the introduction of the "sustainability" concept, now used to cover the previous mix of responsibilities pertaining to the provision of public goods: "If we want to be sustainable, we need people to feel they are working in an excellent place, that their basic needs are satisfied... and help them with housing, better education and better healthcare" (interview 3).

The regulation of public entities and the influence on governments largely led by corporate foundations also remains, as seen in the expression "Businessmen are managers of public wealth" (interview 8). Indeed, it is assumed that it is the state's duty to provide public goods, but paradoxically private intervention is seen as a necessity and is even requested by local communities:

We have to participate and influence public policy. If you pay taxes but do not participate, then [communities] ask you again because [taxes] are mishandled [by the state]. Actively participating in public management has been a company policy for a few years now (interview 8).

Companies and corporate foundations continue to exert pressure on local government officials, pushing them to fulfill their role: "We won't build public street lighting. That is the state's role, but there is something we can do, we can talk to the mayor" (interview 11).

However, they acknowledge a certain incapacity of the state to properly fulfill this role and take action:

We participate when there are workshops for regional development plans. There is a committee to support the secretary of education. We know that is where the future lies. The quality of education in these cities is very low. For the corporate level, the main social objective is education. There are different spaces and we try to participate to influence the mayor's office, the secretary of education ... We are waiting for the news that a program we created and currently reaches 1680 children could reach 15,000 with support from the ministry of education (interview 3).

³ The 1980s, called the "lost decade" in Colombia and Latin America, was marked by financial crisis, deterioration of social conditions, high levels of poverty and reduction of social policies owing to government debt. Concomitantly, informal employment rose, armed groups grew stronger, kidnappings intensified and state illegitimacy increased (Villar 2001), prompting a new rural exodus and emigration (Ocampo Gaviria et al. 2007b).

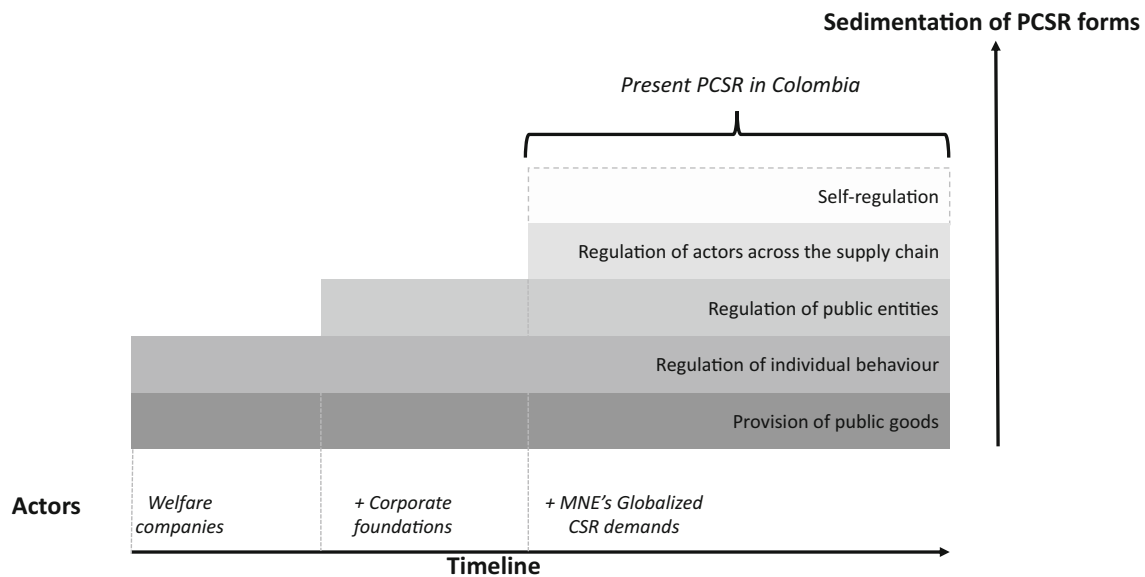


Fig. 1 Sedimentation of PCSR forms

In addition to the persistence and transformation of previous political roles, new roles and new practices have appeared since the early 2000s in the context of the globalized CSR era, namely the regulation of actors across the supply chain and self-regulation activities. Every company interviewed experienced an increase in their clients' demands, particularly MNEs, asking them to fulfill global CSR-related conditions:

Subsidiaries, companies with their head office in another country, have been the most active in setting [new] conditions for the sugar industry (interview 32).

Today the world is more demanding in terms of CSR ... looking at how we make sugar. Do we do it with child labor, forced labor, in compliance with the law? (interview 11).

Demands range from environmental issues to health and food safety, child labor, compliance with human rights and business ethics. Interviewees confirm a paradigm shift from a simple manufacturing company to the "food industry," which requires investments in process and product upgrading: "To be a supplier of [that] company you have to be certified in terms of both quality and CSR" (interview 5).

Unilever, Nestlé and Kraft have asked their Colombian suppliers to use the Sedex platform⁴ to report on key CSR areas. Coca Cola has established third-party audits to monitor suppliers' CSR compliance. Other MNEs are trying to push local companies to introduce the Bonsucro certification system, a multi-stakeholder self-regulatory

scheme.⁵ This regulatory trend has led some local companies to monitor their own suppliers (interviews 16, 5, 32).

To meet such demands and to integrate CSR into their strategy, some companies have internalized CSR-related activities and established functional areas to manage it, weakening the role of corporate foundations and human resources departments as the main actors in PCSR: "One thing is clear, but no one says it: power. Internal fights start over power, because the issue [CSR] has become so important, everyone wants the label ... and there are strategic issues and you solve them with a sustainability area, but it isn't easy, because those internal fights over power are brutal" (interview 8).

Liberalization has given rise to a new hierarchy through global CSR, placing MNEs on top and prompting a redistribution of governance in PCSR. Local companies aim to provide public goods and regulate state actors, whereas MNEs focus on regulating CSR through audits and codes of conduct. However, the former concerns have long existed in previous forms and under different labels, leading to dynamic sedimentation where all forms resurface and persist:

We have several activities for communities. The first one, very basic, very philanthropic, is helping them with the infrastructure in their healthcare centers, and fixing the roads. But there are two special programs. First, we go to a different community every month with a health brigade Second, we have IPS

⁴ <http://www.sedexglobal.com/>.

⁵ Bonsucro is a global nonprofit, multi-stakeholder organization fostering the sustainability of the sugarcane sector through its leading metric-based certification scheme (<http://www.bonsucro.com/en/>).

(healthcare provider) Our company has one school and is building another school ... throughout our history, education has been a priority, the heart of our CSR policy So we were doing a lot of things, but we didn't have anyone recognizing that, so we decided to enter these international issues, Global Compact, human rights, which allow us to access international support in our social management. Several of those activities have been introduced by clients (interview 10).

Our interviews show that, far from shifting from one type to another, as the indicative chronology in Table 2 seems to suggest, we currently see all types resurfacing in the current map of PCSR in Colombia. The provision of public goods, the regulation of individual and collective behavior as well as the regulation of the state are persistent forms of PCSR that influence daily life today. At the same time, liberalization has opened the door to self-regulation and the regulation of supply chains to fill the void of transnational public regulation. Figure 1 illustrates the interplay between different strata, reinterpretation, transformation and appropriation by different actors for different purposes and the changes in terms of the division of labor between governments and companies and the main private actors driving such forms of political roles.

Discussion

Understanding the Sedimentation Dynamics of PCSR in Colombia

Our case shows that Colombian PCSR today combines an array of possibilities, legacies of previous approaches in the provision of public goods and the regulation of public and private actors (see Fig. 1). In the early twentieth century, in the context of a limited state, companies and their leading families were responsible for providing literally everything. They also regulated behavior through faith-based paternalist caring for their employees, reflecting the Christ-inspired metaphor of the shepherd tending his sheep, in a context of an inexperienced state with limited resources. Yet such provisions and regulations continue to exist in the current Colombian CSR landscape.

As the state developed new social welfare legislation, companies resisted such policies and, again under Catholic influence, kept their political roles through the structure of corporate foundations, maintaining the provision of public goods and becoming stronger vehicles of ideological diffusion in turbulent times.

More recently, spurred by international actors in the context of market liberalization and globalization,

companies have developed new CSR-related activities. The arrival of the CSR label, influenced by agencies like the Inter-American Development Bank or the ANDI, spawned a second wave of corporate foundations in the 1990s (Promigas and DIS 2012). These new activities include a regulatory approach to the supply chain and participation in self-regulatory schemes as part of their newly understood “full producer responsibility” (Schrempf-Stirling and Palazzo 2013). As our interviews reveal, criteria like food safety and environmental conditions have created a new paradigm in the industry: the evolution from pure manufacturing toward food processing. However, most companies also continue to shape behaviors and provide health care, education and recreational activities for their employees and the surrounding communities. Today both private and public actors provide public goods.

In this sense, the political impacts of CSR are multiple, ranging from the provision of public goods, the rise of self-regulation to the exercise of political pressure on governments and should be further integrated (Frynas and Stephens 2015). Our study thus confirms that the landscape of Colombian CSR reflects the practices of global CSR alongside relevant local issues (Lindgreen et al. 2010). Each of the three types of PCSR—welfare companies, corporate foundations and globalized CSR—is archetypes (in the sense of Cooper et al. 1996) that are useful for analytical purposes and reveal the sedimentation dynamics at work in Colombian PCSR. The appearance of a new stratum is not triggered by a particular event (such as a revolution, or an earthquake if we follow the geological metaphor) that one can locate on a timeline. Nor does it replace previous strata. The progressive sedimentation described here is specific to the historic transformations of the Colombian state and can only be fully grasped within the big picture of a historical perspective.

The integration of institutional and historical contextualization in our case shows that state-like activities (Matten and Crane 2005; Scherer and Palazzo 2011) are neither new, nor do they concern multinational companies exclusively, through the imposition of a universal CSR norm trickling along the supply chain. On the contrary, and following other studies in Latin America (e.g., Logsdon et al. 2006), we show that such practices involve local elites and local practices to address local needs according to local moral societal standards (in our case, Catholic traditions). We thus extend the discourse of PCSR to neglected types of business organizations (Scherer et al. 2016), i.e., small and medium companies and corporate foundations. We thus provide a complementary account of the roots of the political turn in CSR by depicting the

complex, intertwined roles of private and public actors (Schneider 2013).

As these findings are based on a single case study, there are of course limitations to external validity and generalizability that can only be resolved through further research. Nevertheless, we believe this paper constitutes a significant starting point: By exploring certain neglected dimensions, we have unearthed a long-term dynamic in PCSR that had been hidden by the assumption that PCSR is a recent phenomenon caused by globalization. While the specific PCSR sedimentation process exposed here is unique to Colombia, we believe further research might find similar sedimentation dynamics in other contexts that could be studied through our proposed framework, particularly in emerging countries (Jamali and Karam 2016) where CSR has been traditionally more philanthropic (Visser 2008). In Brazil, for instance, charity remains a driver, but is combined with initiatives aimed at building a joint social agenda with the government (Raufflet 2008). Furthermore, we contend that sedimentation processes might also affect other phenomena beyond PCSR, opening new avenues for research with enhanced historical sensitivity, as detailed below.

The Theoretical Relevance of Sedimentation

While attempting to construct a historical account of PCSR in Colombia we realized the scope of this undertaking was larger than merely providing a chronology. PCSR requires an in-depth process approach, which led to our use of the language of sedimentation (Clegg 1981). We unearthed various strata of PCSR some of which have a long history, and whose heritage can even be traced to colonial times, for instance, the influence of Catholicism, paternalism and the predominant role of elite families. New actors (the welfare company, corporate foundations) and labels (CSR standards, sustainability) appeared on the scene to pursue this work, becoming institutionalized, though never completely supplanting previous ones (Chandler and Foster 2015).

We have contextualized PCSR by considering it as synchronically situated within a particular NBS and as diachronically evolving in sedimented layers. We argue for a “cumulative socially constructed view of the past” (Chandler and Foster 2015, p. 4) in which “institutions rarely (if ever) die ... however far they recede into the depths of the past, they always exist in varying degrees, forming part of a layer of sediment in the geology of life.” (Cooper et al. 1996, p. 30). Erosion may indeed alter them, but they continue to subsist “in substance (if not in exact form) throughout the ages” (Chandler and Foster 2015, p. 30). We therefore argue that historical embeddedness is more than just part of a long-needed contextualization in

PCSR theory: It has clear theoretical relevance. Increasing historical awareness (Suddaby 2016) helps to understand transformations in politically embedded processes, such as evolutions in the meaning of CSR and why issues have been addressed at various moments in time, in several ways and by several actors in parallel.

In addition to identifying these forms in an indicative chronology in Table 2, offering simplification and clarity, we have uncovered a more complex picture: persistent, interrelated, amalgamated strata of political roles assumed by private actors. Combining institutional complexity (Scherer et al. 2016) and historical depth (Suddaby 2016), using the language of sedimentation (Clegg 1981; Cooper et al. 1996; Chandler and Foster 2015) allows us to see PCSR as an amalgamation of different practices, values and ideas that remain available. Only a historical approach can help us understand why some practices and actors have become so meaningful over time (e.g., Catholicism). Sedimentation indeed “points to the persistence of values, ideas and practices, even when the formal structures and processes seem to change, and even when there may be incoherence” (Cooper et al. 1996, p. 624). Local actors construct their integrated PCSR approaches based on such values, ideas and practices, and this hybridized PCSR is found elsewhere, particularly in developing countries (Jamali and Karam 2016) as future studies may explore further.

More specifically, studying PCSR through the lens of sedimentation dynamics allows us to contribute to PCSR theory by introducing a complementary perspective on one of its main assumptions (Scherer and Palazzo 2011), discussed hereafter.

Contesting Globalization as the Starting Point of PCSR

Our study concurs with previous papers that refute the theory of PCSR having originated in globalization (Djelic and Etchanchu-Schneider 2015; Mäkinen and Kasanen 2016; Mäkinen and Kourula 2012; Whelan 2012). We illustrate how the latest wave of globalization has reconfigured PCSR, rather than create it. Globalization adds a stratum to preexisting practices and values, but does not replace them. Instead, it coevolves with them, in their subsisting manifestations.

New political roles, namely regulation and self-regulation activities, constitute just *one* type of PCSR. Our study calls for an acknowledgment of the “residual influence” (Chandler and Foster 2015) of traditional political roles (provision of education, health care, housing and recreation) and actors (religious orders, elite families). These constitute “institutional remnants” (Dacin and Dacin 2008, p. 349), which are now interacting with new global actors, political roles and issues, such as traceability across global production

networks, climate change, human rights and child labor (Kobrin 2009; Vogel 2010). This is particularly visible in changes in language to refer to PCSR activities, and “*language crucially constitutes organization* [emphasis in original]” (Cooper et al. 1996, p. 644). Our study takes this argument one step further: Sedimentation conceptualizes PCSR as a persistent, yet multilayered concept, constructed with the accumulation of different layers of political roles that remain available (Chandler and Foster 2015).

The globalization hypothesis also carries temporal assumptions that our paper highlights. Schrempf-Stirling et al. (2016) argue that just as extended global value chains used to be outside an organization’s spatial boundaries of responsibility, so was their past—yet they are now held unavoidably accountable. Indeed, whereas welfare companies and corporate foundations focused on assisting nearby communities, employees and local society, MNEs are shifting business involvement in society toward managerial issues and distant populations with activities defined at the international level. We refine this approach by considering the history of PCSR not only as a battle for legitimacy (Schrempf-Stirling et al. 2016) or as a “place” from which to extract resources that remain available (Chandler and Foster 2015), but as an integral part of the present of PCSR.

Conclusion and Perspectives

We assert that PCSR is not a new concept, as others have acknowledged (Whelan 2012), nor is it a new phenomenon brought on by the last wave of globalization (Scherer and Palazzo 2011). Our paper acknowledges the potential of PCSR theory to frame business responsibilities and enriches it with a more contextual approach by connecting the opportunities of a particular national business system (synchronic perspective) and its historical evolution (diachronic perspective) (Chandler and Foster 2015). We argue that PCSR is a “structure-in-process,” i.e., a “historically produced object” (Clegg 1981, p. 546) of inquiry, and more specifically the result of actors’ continuous attempts to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct the historical sediment of earlier forms of business and society relationships, their tensions and articulations. Each has had their moment of emergence and dominance. Some forms may subsist as residues (Chandler and Foster 2015) or more intensely in particular parts of organizations (Cooper et al. 1996). Yet they are all visible today, superimposed over each other, constituting a “record of historically evolved structure” (Clegg 1981, p. 552).

We hope our work opens avenues for research in terms of better understanding the nature of the firm (Scherer et al. 2014), its political dimensions and effects. Particularly, we suggest that the sedimentation framework may also provide

greater contextualization to PCSR theory by examining other assumptions related to that of globalization. For instance, PCSR theory largely regards deliberative democracy as a way of compensating for the deficit created by the retreat of the state and an opportunity for ‘democratization’ (Palazzo and Scherer 2008; Scherer and Palazzo 2007, 2011). However, other researchers (De Bry 2006; Djelic and Etchanchu-Schneider 2015; Mäkinen and Kasanen 2016) show that the provision of public goods in this way hardly constitutes a step forward in terms of autonomy and political freedom. Rather, economic power is transformed into power over people’s lives, depending on the company, which is actually closer to a libertarian *laissez-faire* political approach on the part of national governments that risks undermining individual freedoms (Mäkinen and Kasanen 2016) as companies assume control. Future studies could therefore adopt a relational perspective to clarify the complementary roles of private companies and states in emerging contexts and seek different patterns in the sedimented evolution and effectiveness of PCSR. Such studies might not only adopt the perspective of governance mechanisms in global value chains to understand efficiency (Scherer et al. 2016), but also explore the extent to which long-lasting political roles of private actors have influenced the promotion of some interests.

These reconfigurations in the distribution of labor between the state and non-state actors (Mäkinen and Kasanen 2016) shape different political practices and roles companies undertake in a given NBS (Matten and Moon 2008; Tengblad and Ohlsson 2009) and therefore change what it means to conduct business in a responsible way. Indeed, the fact that MNEs are now establishing new regulatory roles introduces a new hierarchy in the definition of what responsible behavior is or should be. In this definition, there is no room for jointly established CSR, nor are different groups represented in issues of public concern. On the contrary, relations are vertical, often directive, and companies continue to unilaterally define what is best, as they did in the golden age of the welfare company, simply on a global scale. Sedimentation allows a fine-grained analysis of how such levels interact and whether power is maintained or redistributed (Clegg 1981).

We would like to shift the debate toward understanding the outcomes of PCSR. Studies could then focus more on the outcomes of such different political roles and the institutional settings that reify existing forms of power distribution in a neocolonial fashion (Banerjee 2008, 2010; Edward and Willmott 2008; Khan and Lund-Thomsen 2011; Moog et al. 2015): An approach that we believe would be worth pursuing through the lens of sedimentation.

Acknowledgments We wish to acknowledge the constructive comments of our editor, Robert Phillips, and two anonymous reviewers.

We thank our interviewees who have participated in this study for sharing their time and insights with us. We also thank participants at EGOS 2014, particularly Roy Suddaby, David Chandler and Sebastian Picard, EGOS 2015 and LAEMOS 2016, where earlier versions of this paper were presented. We are also grateful to Aurélien Acquier, Olivier Delbard and Adrian Zicari for their helpful suggestions. Funding was provided by ESCP Europe and its Ph.D programme.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest Pilar Acosta and Mar Pérezts declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Human and Animal Rights All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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