Integrating CSR and Behavioral Ethics: CSR and Circles of Moral Regard

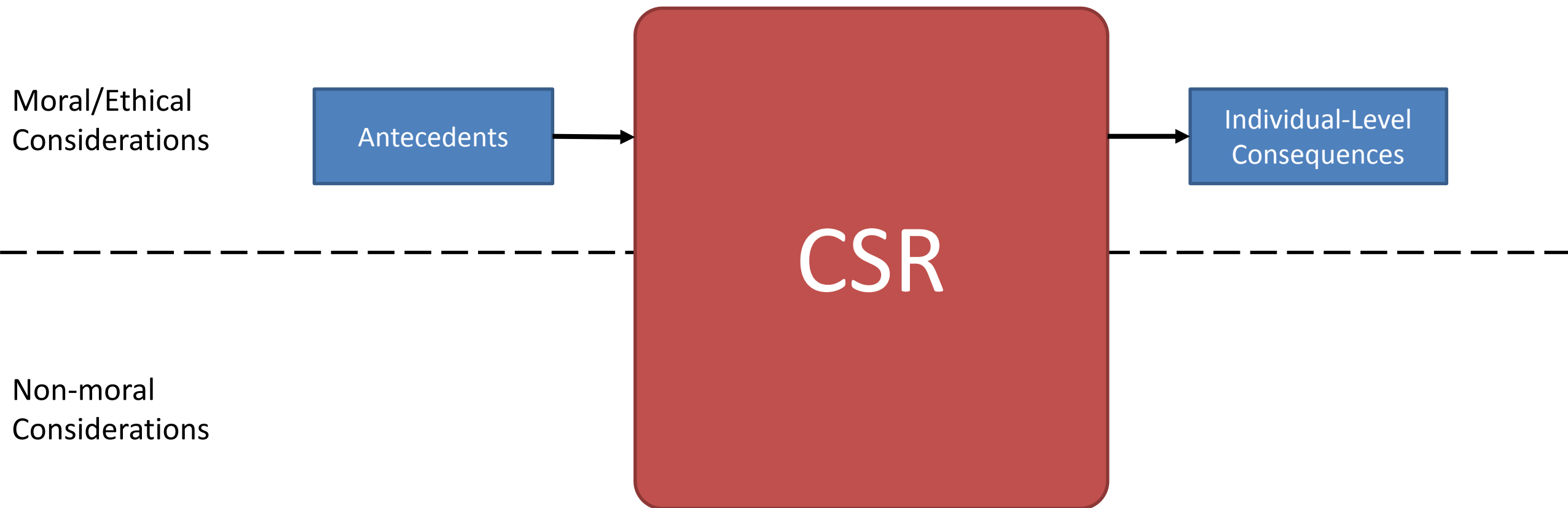Isaac H. Smith, Cornell University

Isaac H. Smith, Cornell University

The Corporate Social Responsibility Summit, SIOP

April 13, 2016 – Anaheim, CA

Setting Expectations

- I will primarily be *raising questions*, not providing answers

- My hope is to highlight a point of intersection between CSR and Behavioral Ethics research that might serve as a "primer" of sorts, encouraging more integration between the two literatures

CSR and Behavioral Ethics

Moral/Ethical
Considerations

Non-moral
Considerations

Antecedents

CSR

Individual-Level
Consequences

Circle of Moral Regard

The **circle of moral regard** refers to

"the psychological boundaries that people draw around all those people [and things] they deem worthy of moral consideration"
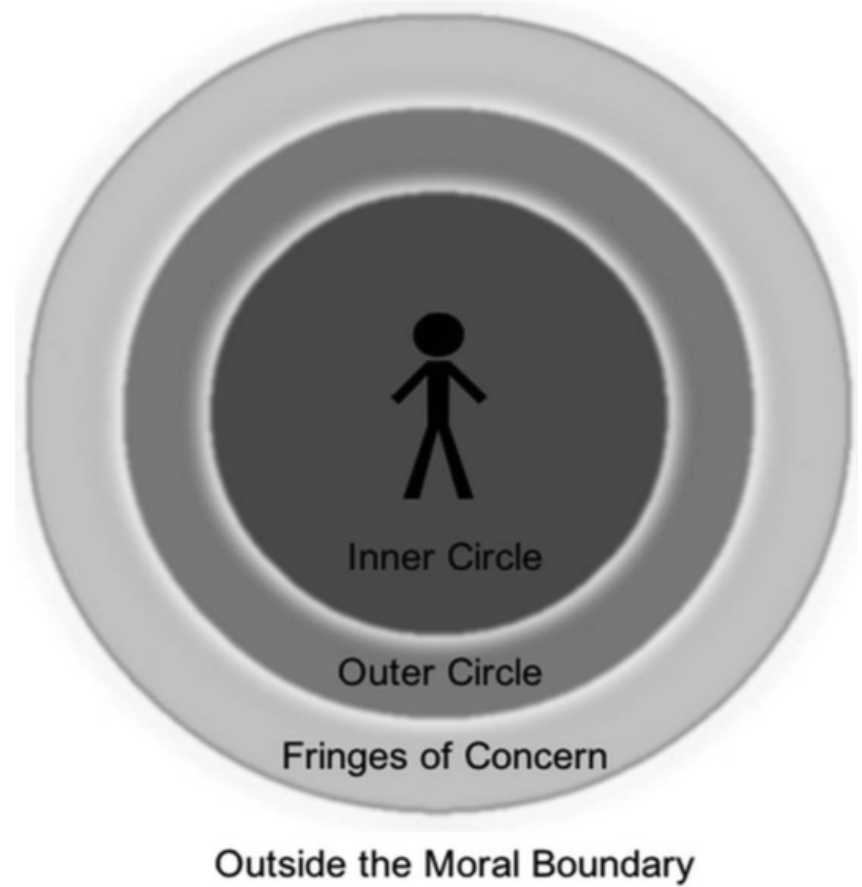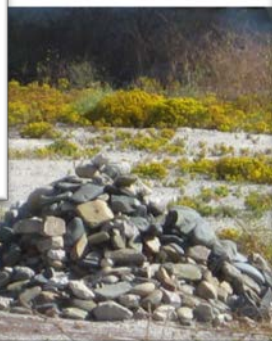
(Smith, Aquino, Graham, & Koleva, 2014)

- Scope of Justice (Opotow, 1996)
- The Moral Circle (Singer, 1981)
- Circle of Moral Regard (Reed & Aquino, 2003)
- Moral Expansiveness (Crimston et al., 2016)

Related but Distinct Constructs:

- Identification with all Humanity (Mcfarland et al., 2012)
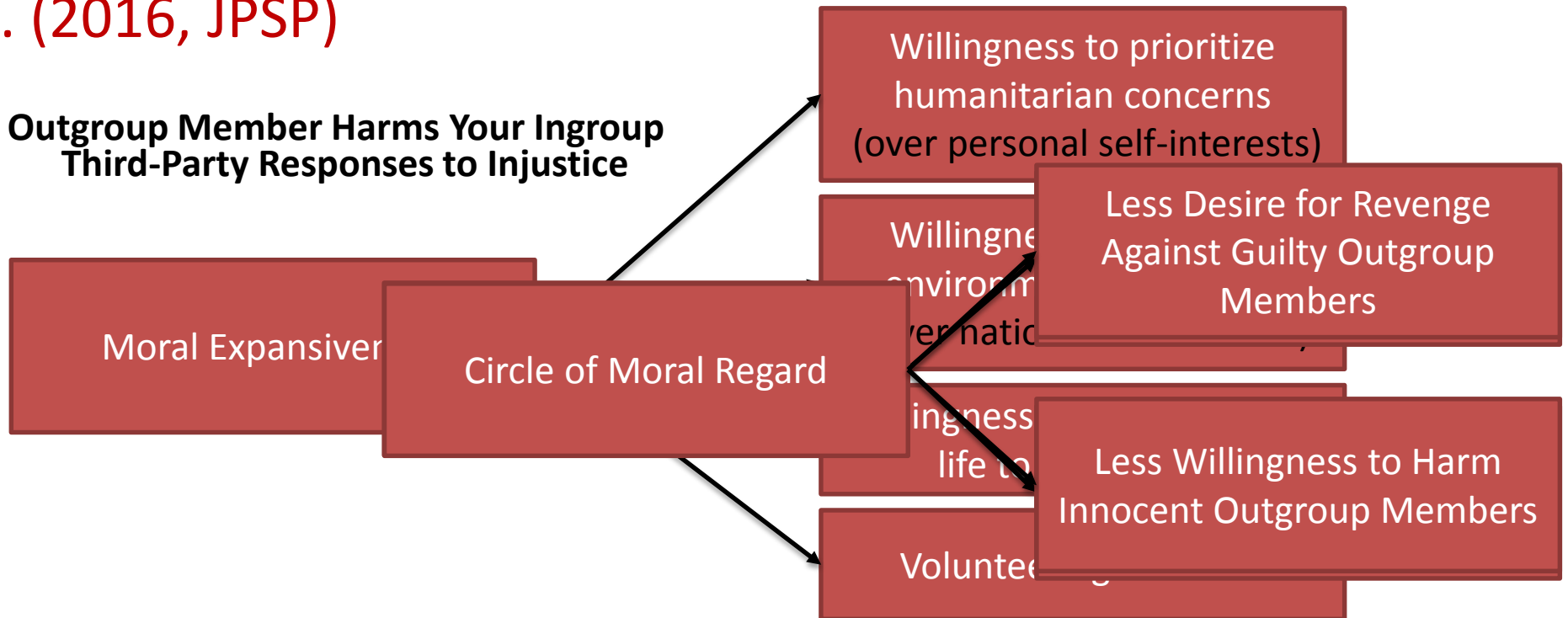- In-group/out-group (Social Identity Theory)

How Broad is Your Circle?
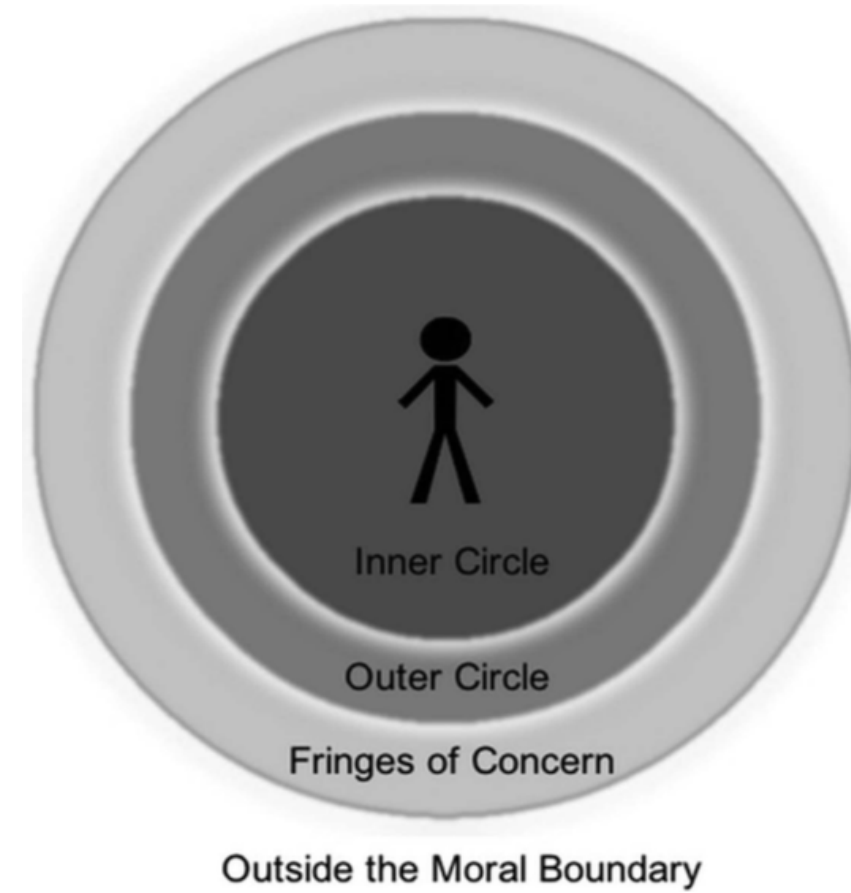
Examples in the Psychology Literature

- Reed & Aquino (2003, JPSP)
- Smith, O'Reilly, Aquino, & Freeman (unpublished manuscript)
- Crimston et al. (2016, JPSP)

When an Outgroup Member Harms Your Ingroup
Third-Party Responses to Injustice

Moral Expansiver...

Circle of Moral Regard

Willingness to prioritize humanitarian concerns (over personal self-interests)

Willingne... environm... ...r natio...

Less Desire for Revenge Against Guilty Outgroup Members

...ingness ... life to

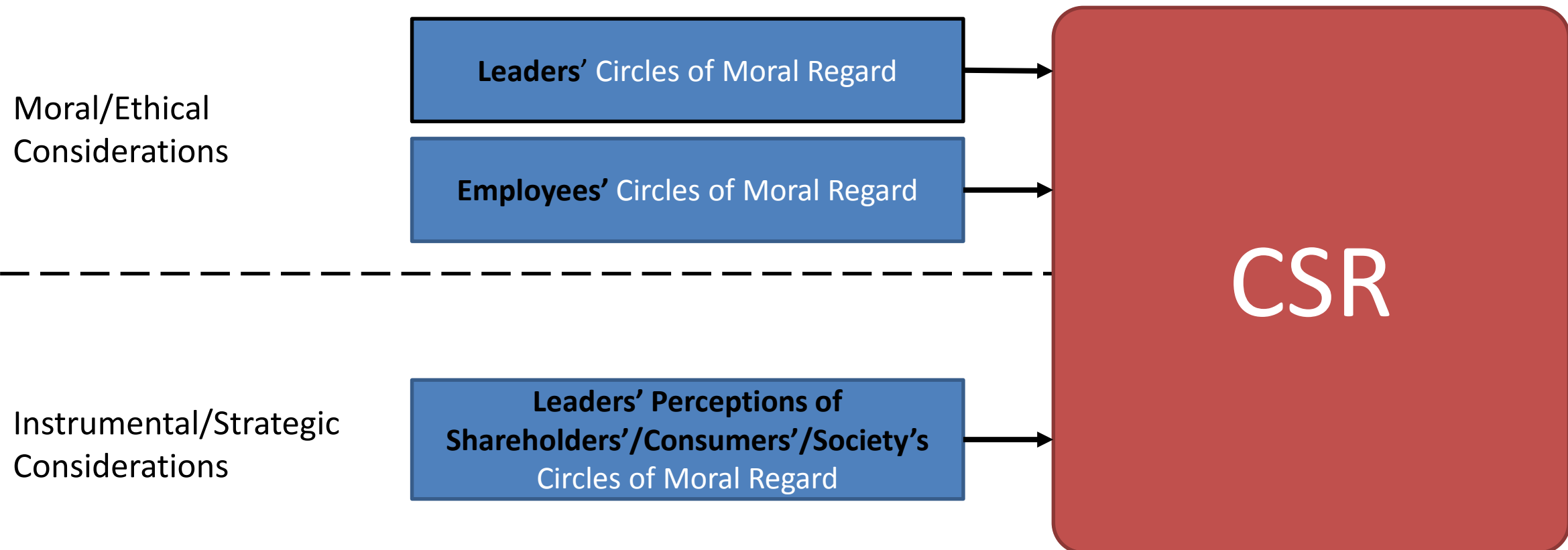Less Willingness to Harm Innocent Outgroup Members

Voluntee...

Stakeholder Theory

- Employees
- Customers
- Shareholders
- Local Community
- Society
- The Environment

Inner Circle

Outer Circle

Fringes of Concern

Outside the Moral Boundary

Antecedents of CSR

Moral/Ethical Considerations

Leaders' Circles of Moral Regard →

Employees' Circles of Moral Regard →

Instrumental/Strategic Considerations

Leaders' Perceptions of Shareholders'/Consumers'/Society's Circles of Moral Regard →

CSR
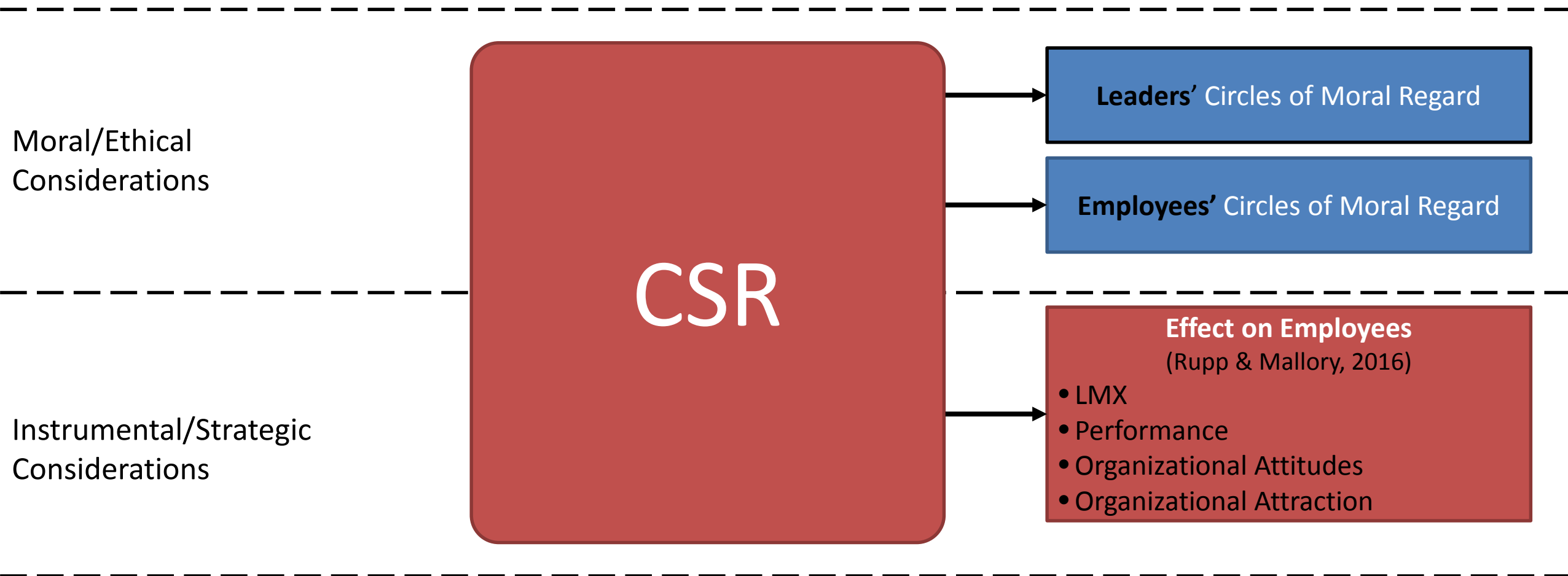
Consequences of CSR

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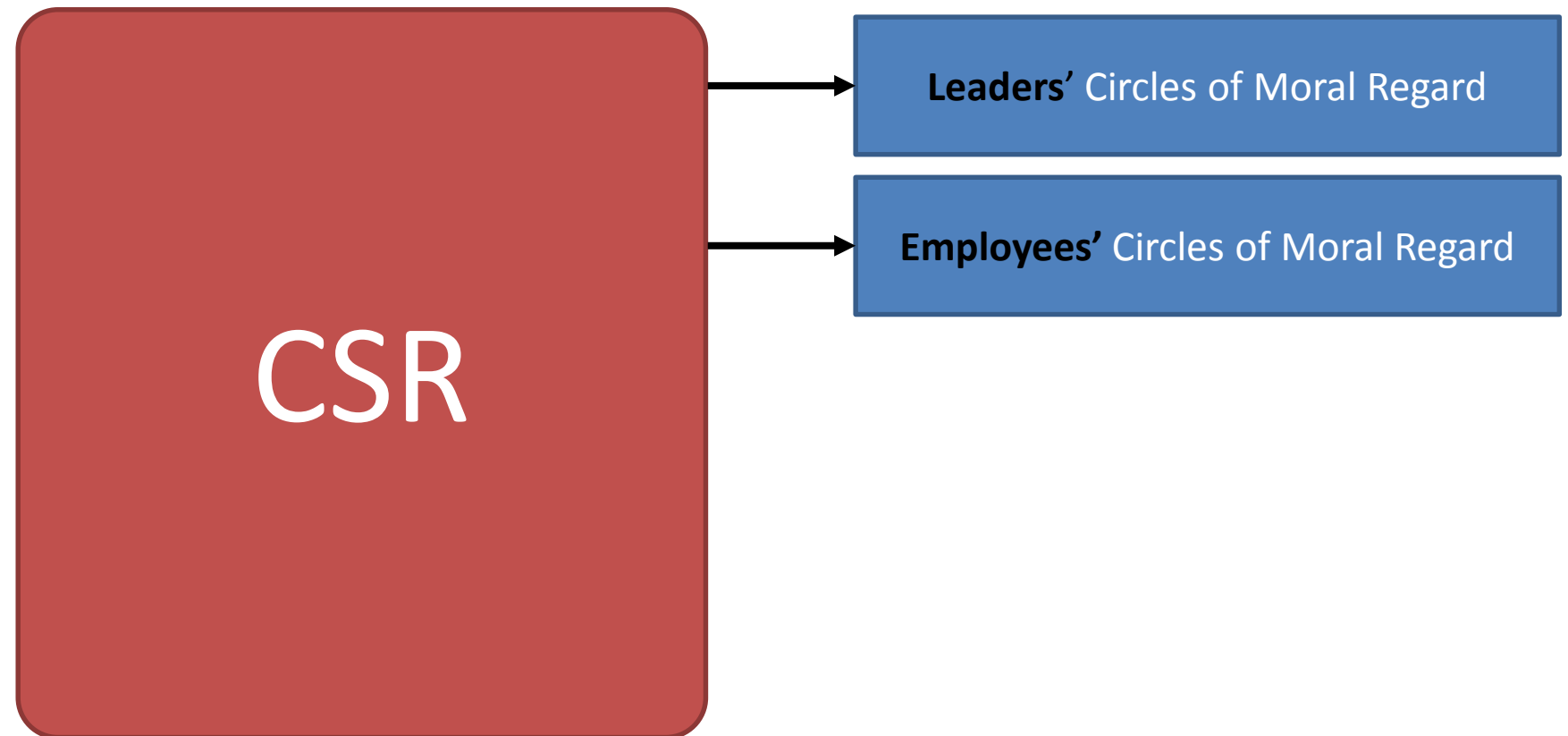
CSR

Leaders' Circles of Moral Regard

Employees' Circles of Moral Regard

Potential Research Questions

» How do work-related experiences shape our moral views? What are the processes? Over the course of a career…

» Does CSR expand (or restrict) the breadth of our circles of moral regard? If so, how?

Consequences of CSR

CSR

Leaders' Circles of Moral Regard

Employees' Circles of Moral Regard

Potentially Relevant Theories

» Motivated Reasoning, Cognitive Dissonance, Consistency

» Moral Disengagement

» ASA Model (Attraction, Selection, Attrition)

» Social Information Processing Theory

Concluding Thoughts

- Significant opportunities at the intersection of **CSR** and **behavioral ethics** research

- Seemingly natural fit between **stakeholder theory** and research on **circles of moral regard**

- Need to better understand the **role of work** in shaping people's moral beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors

Thank You!