



LUMSA
UNIVERSITÀ

DIPARTIMENTO
DI GIURISPRUDENZA
(PALERMO)

GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN ORGANIZATIONS: A CSR VIEW

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ME5 - CONFERENCE LAWGEM – GENDERING LAW: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

TODAY'S PRESENTATION AGENDA



1. Introduction (gender and CSR)



2. Aims of the study



3. Methodology
(systematic literature review: criteria for search and analysis)



4. Findings
(evolutionary path of inquiry, conceptual framework and research agenda)



5. Conclusion

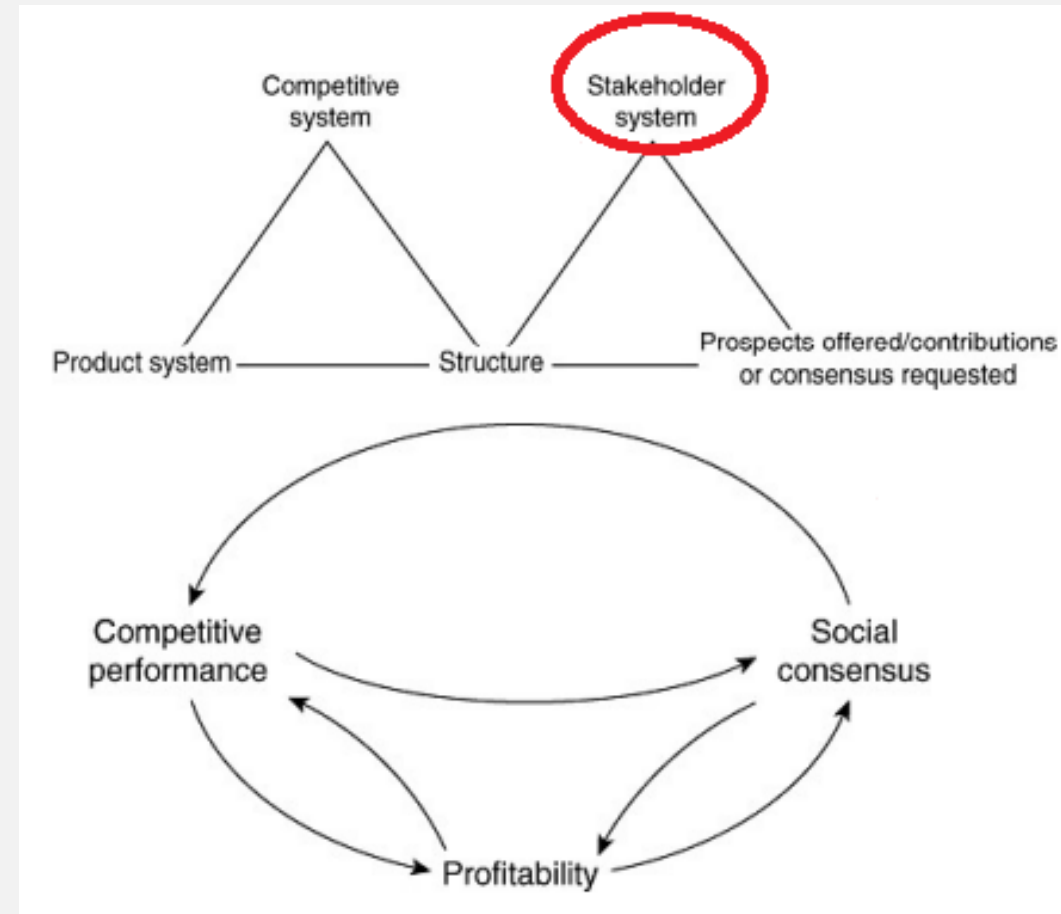
I. INTRODUCTION (A)

- Today's presentation will explore **gender equality in organizations** by adopting a **Corporate Social Responsibility** (or CSR) perspective, chosen for its generality and breadth application in organizations.
- In the last decades CSR has been gaining momentum between **scholars and policy makers** (e.g., CSR Green Book EU Commission, 2001; EU Commission Directive on CSR, 2002).



I. INTRODUCTION (B)

- CSR → company **commitment to be accountable** for the impacts of its activity (minimizing harmful effects and maximizing long-term benefits for the society).
- CSR → companies **integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations** and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.
- WHY CSR? Beside ethical reasons, **strategic lever source of competitive advantage**, boosting company reputation and purchase intentions.



Entrepreneurial formula. Source: Coda (2012)

I. INTRODUCTION (C)

- In parallel with the affirmation of CSR, a “gendered CSR”, or GCSR has been spreading.
- Gendered CSR, or GCSR is the inclusion of **gender equality** goals in firms’ **CSR** initiatives (Velasco *et al.*, 2013; 2014).
- GCSR literature is copious and fragmented → opportunity to assess the ‘state of the art’.

→ Our contribution to the debate:

- **Costanza, F. , Minà, A. and Paternostro, S. (2022).** Mapping the path of a gendered CSR: toward a specific framework for family SMEs. *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, 3, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14596/pisb.2890>.



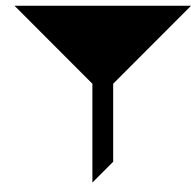
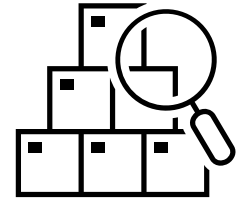
2. AIMS OF THE STUDY

- (a) To analyze the main features of **previous studies on GCSR.**
- (b) To detect **critical development phases** in research on GCSR.
- (c) To **reorganize** existing research on GCSR in order to **encourage further studies.**

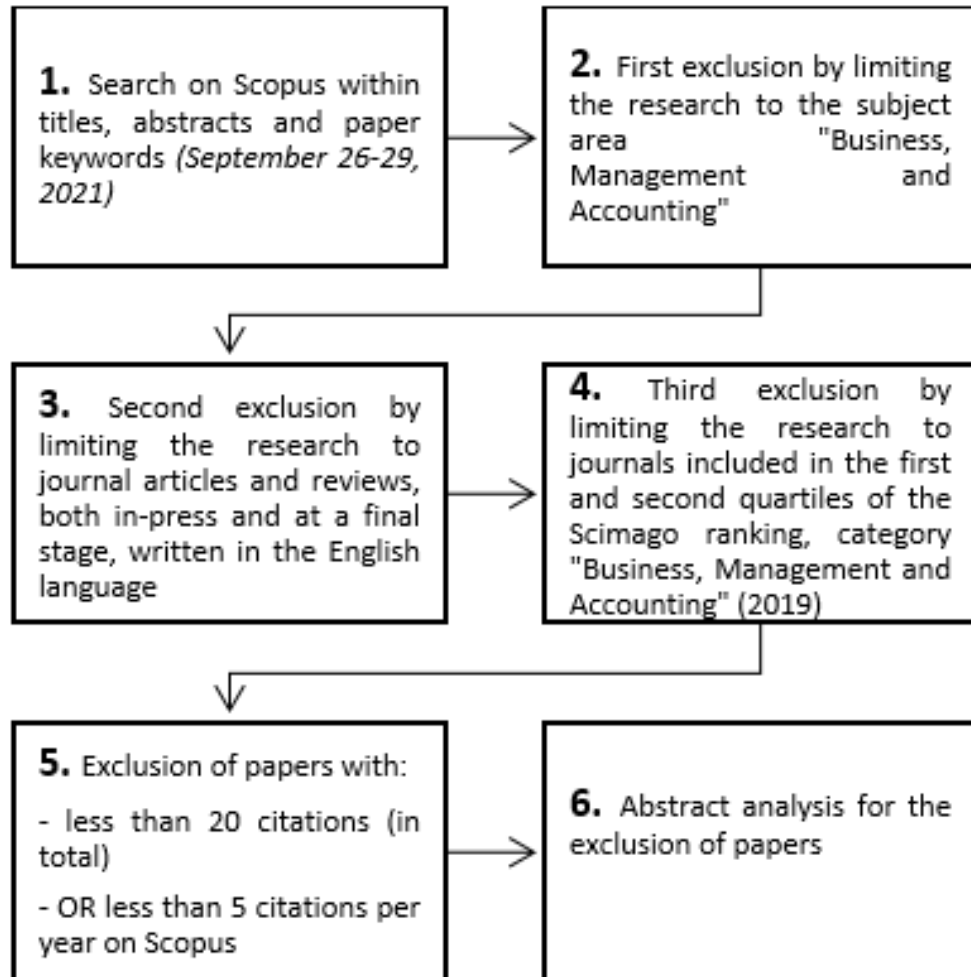
3. METHODOLOGY: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

MAIN STEPS

- 1) Search
- 2) Descriptive and thematic analyses
- 3) Identification of key phases of GCSR inquiry's evolutionary path
- 4) Building of a general conceptual framework on GCSR



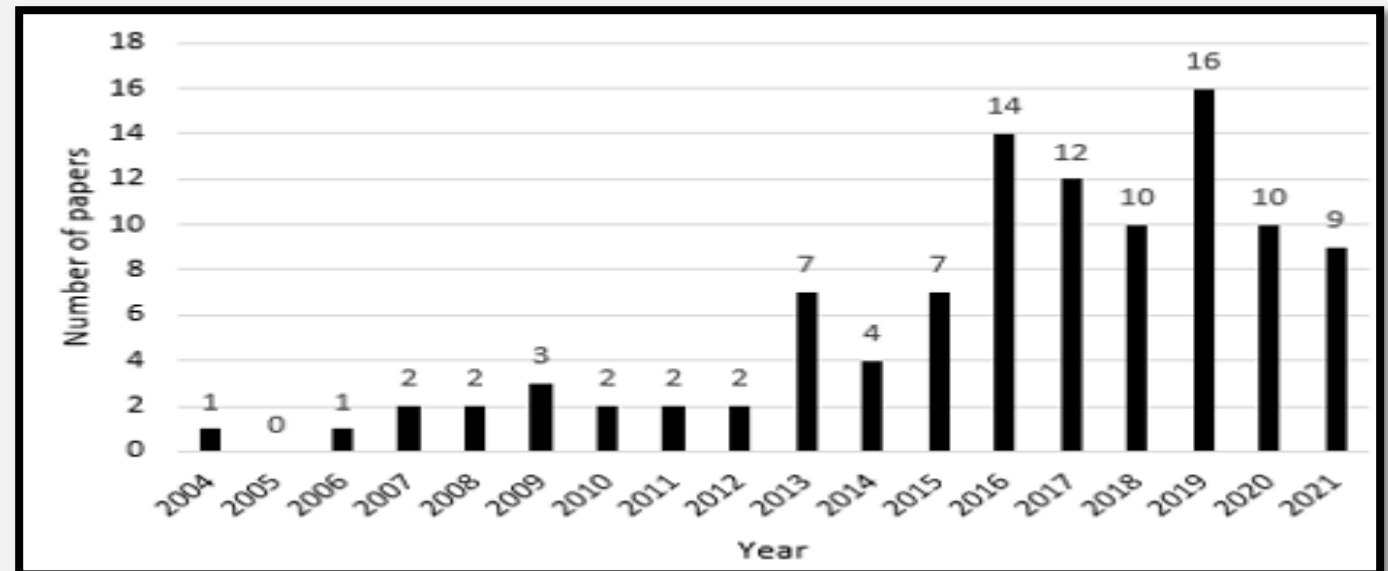
STEP I. SEARCH



SEARCH STRINGS ON SCOPUS

((gender OR women OR feminis*) AND (csr OR corporate social responsibility))
((gender OR women OR feminis*) AND (csr OR corporate social responsibility) AND (family firm OR family business))
(((gender OR women OR feminis*) AND (csr OR corporate social responsibility) AND ((sme OR small OR medium) compan* OR business* OR firm)))
((gender OR women OR feminis*) AND (csr OR corporate social responsibility) AND ((sme OR small OR medium) compan* OR business* OR firm*) AND (family firm OR family business))

Total number of papers, excluding duplications 104



STEP 2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS (CRITERIA)

FOCUS: (Karam & Jamali, 2017)

- **general** → large firms or CSR in general terms;
- **specific** → family firms, SMEs and family SMEs;

PERSPECTIVE: (Larrieta-Rubín de Celis et al., 2015; Arrive & Feng, 2018);

- **internal** → gender equality concerning inside-firm stakeholders (e.g., owners, managers, workers) and processes (e.g., human resource management, occupational health and safety, adaptation to change, and management of environmental);
- **external** → gender equality in out-of-the-company-borders stakeholders (e.g., local communities, business partners, suppliers, and consumers), human rights, and worldwide environmental issues.

METHODOLOGY:

- **qualitative** → including qualitative studies, conceptual papers, and literature reviews;
- **quantitative** → including mixed methods.

STEP 3. IDENTIFICATION OF KEY PHASES OF GCSR INQUIRY

- Enucleated **four phases** (based on the **metaphor of human development**) characterized by **homogeneous** patterns and regularities in embracing certain focuses, perspectives, or methodological approaches.
- In contrast, the **dividing lines** between one phase and another are represented **by the inclusion of new themes** (belonging respectively to different focus and/or perspectives) **and/or methodological approaches**.

ANALYTICAL MATRIX PHASES-CATEGORIES		Birth	Infancy	Adolescence	Youth	Subtotal per category
FOCUS	General GCSR	6	7	20	64	97
	Specific GCSR	0	0	0	7	7
PERSPECTIVE	Internal GCSR	6	7	15	54	82
	External GCSR	0	0	5	17	22
METHODOLOGY	Qualitative*	4	1	1	14	20
	Quantitative*	2	6	19	57	84
	Subtotal per phase	6	7	20	71	Tot. 104

* Including qualitative studies, conceptual papers, and literature reviews.

**Including mixed methods.

4. FINDINGS: KEY PHASES OF GCSR INQUIRY

<i>Phase</i>	<i>No. of articles</i>	<i>Key features</i>	<i>Prevalent methodological approaches</i>
Birth (2005-2008)	6	Early development of studies relating to gender and CSR, with a general focus, and adopting an internal perspective	Qualitative/conceptual
Childhood (2009-2011)	7	Emergence of quantitative studies on general and internal GCSR	Quantitative
Adolescence (2012-2015)	20	Consolidation of general and internal GCSR, and the emergence of studies on general GCSR adopting an external perspective	Quantitative
Youth (2016-2021)	71	Consolidation of general GCSR, adopting both internal and external perspectives, and the emergence of specific GCSR focuses	Quantitative

PHASE I. BIRTH (2005-2008)

- **Early development**. **Six studies** conceptualizing a relationship between gender and CSR, with a general focus and adopting an internal perspective.
- Methodology: qualitative/conceptual (4 out of 6 studies).
- **Starting point: seminal work of Grosser and Moon (2005)** about the potential compatibility of gender mainstreaming and CSR in reporting workplace issues → call for gender equality criteria within CSR tools, such as human capital management reporting.

MAIN THEMES

- 1) Weaknesses and shortcomings in CSR practices and information disclosure (CSR reports).
- 2) Inadequacy of gender equality information within CSR reports.
- 2) Gender as catalyst for organizational commitment to CSR .
- 3) Reflection of female-specific leadership styles.

PHASE 2. CHILDHOOD (2009-2011)

- **Emergence of quantitative studies (general/internal)**. Seven studies analyze the relationship between gender and CSR, with a general focus and adopting an internal perspective, with **quantitative methodologies** (6 out of 7 studies).
- **Beginning of the phase**: 2009, published works relating the feminine presence in corporate boards and companies' CSR performance (Huse et al., 2009; Rodriguez-Dominguez et al., 2009).

MAIN THEMES

Effect of **board** gender diversity on **CSR performance**:

→ board diversity affects impacts on the creation of **codes of ethics**;

→ female managers/entrepreneurs → stronger **ethical/environmental sensitivity** than male counterparts.

PHASE 3. ADOLESCENCE (2012-2015) (A)

Ambivalency: search for an identity in a **transition period** → **Consolidation** of general/internal GCSR and **emergence of an external perspective (in general GCSR)**, with **quantitative methodologies** (19 out of 20 studies).

MAIN THEMES ON CONSOLIDATION GENERAL/INTERNAL GCSR

Effect of gender diversity on CSR performance and disclosure

- ❑ **CSR performance** → gender diversity in boards positively related to CSR results and ratings, corporate reputation, financial performance, firm's value;
- ❑ **CSR disclosure:**
 - gender diversity among relevant factors in the dissemination of CSR information;
 - inclusion of at least 3 women in corporate boards → higher quality of CSR reporting.
- ❑ **Operational diversity**, implemented at management, employee, and supply chain levels.

PHASE 3. ADOLESCENCE (2012-2015) (B)

MAIN THEMES ON EMERGENCE GENERAL/EXTERNAL GCSR

The external perspective (in general GCSR) is defined in the last trait of the phase: “local communities, business partners, suppliers and consumers, human rights and worldwide environmental issues” (Larrieta-Rubín de Celis et al., 2015, p. 93).

- Impact of CSR initiatives on gender issues in **local communities** (inequalities, discriminations, disempowerment) (e.g., multinational oil companies’ action in Nigeria; Renouard & Lado, 2012).
- Effect of feminist and collectivist **societal values** on companies’ willingness to publish integrated reporting (García-Sánchez et al., 2013).
- Propensity of microfinance institutions with written **ethical codes** to serve disempowered women borrowers (Chakrabarty & Bass, 2014).

PHASE 4. YOUTH (2016-2021) (A)

Generativity. 71 studies embracing “traditional” and new themes:

1) With 49 articles general/internal GCSR continues to be appealing (since the birth phase!!!) and the **quantitative approach** is still prevalent.

2) General/external GCSR: experienced during the adolescence, here it is enforced (16 papers against 5 in the former phase).

3) **Emergence of the “specific GCSR”**, a nascent body of inquiry (7 studies) routed towards new focuses for GCSR, (i.e., family SMEs, SMEs, and family firms) and embracing both the internal and the external perspectives (but clear prevalence for the internal perspective 6 out of 7 studies).

PHASE 4. YOUTH (2016-2021) (B)

Beginning of the youth phase → 2016, corresponding to:

- Rao & Tilt (2016) critical literature review adopting general/internal GCSR and **calling for more qualitative studies** to understand the link between boards' gender diversity and CSR decision-making.
- Spence's work (Spence, 2016) proposing a **CSR theorization for small businesses** based on the feminist ethic of care.

Methodological approaches → clear preference for quantitative ones (57 out of 71 studies), routed to more sophisticated and broader statistical analyses, structural equation modelling, surveys.

The others → literature reviews (7), conceptualizations (3) and only in 4 cases are used qualitative methodologies *strictu sensu* (ethnographic research, interviews, participatory visual mapping).

THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH

In the Youth, 7 studies with new focuses (i.e., family SMEs, SMEs, and family firms).

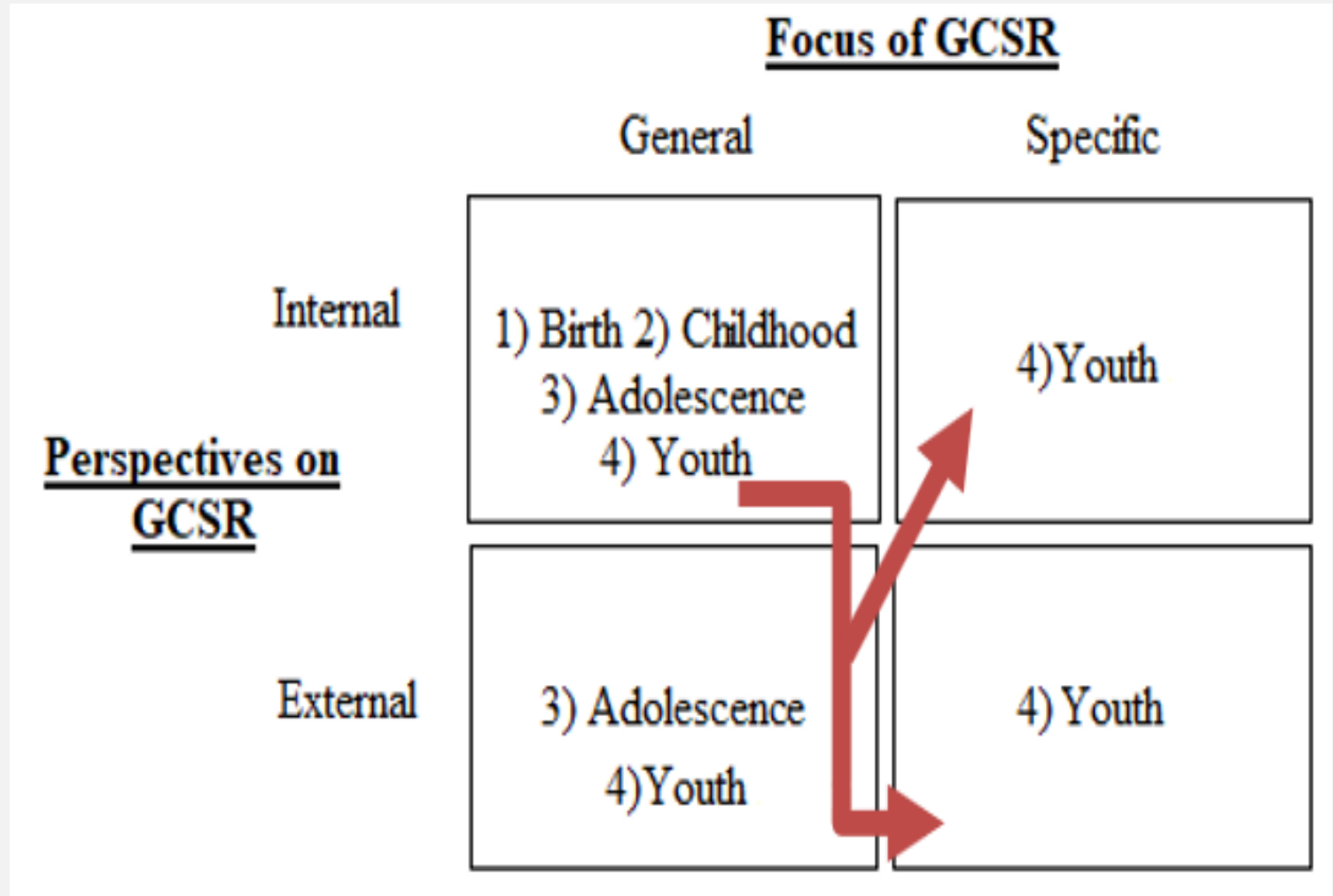
MAIN THEMES SPECIFIC/INTERNAL GCSR

→ Impacts of boards and management gender diversity on CSR behaviors

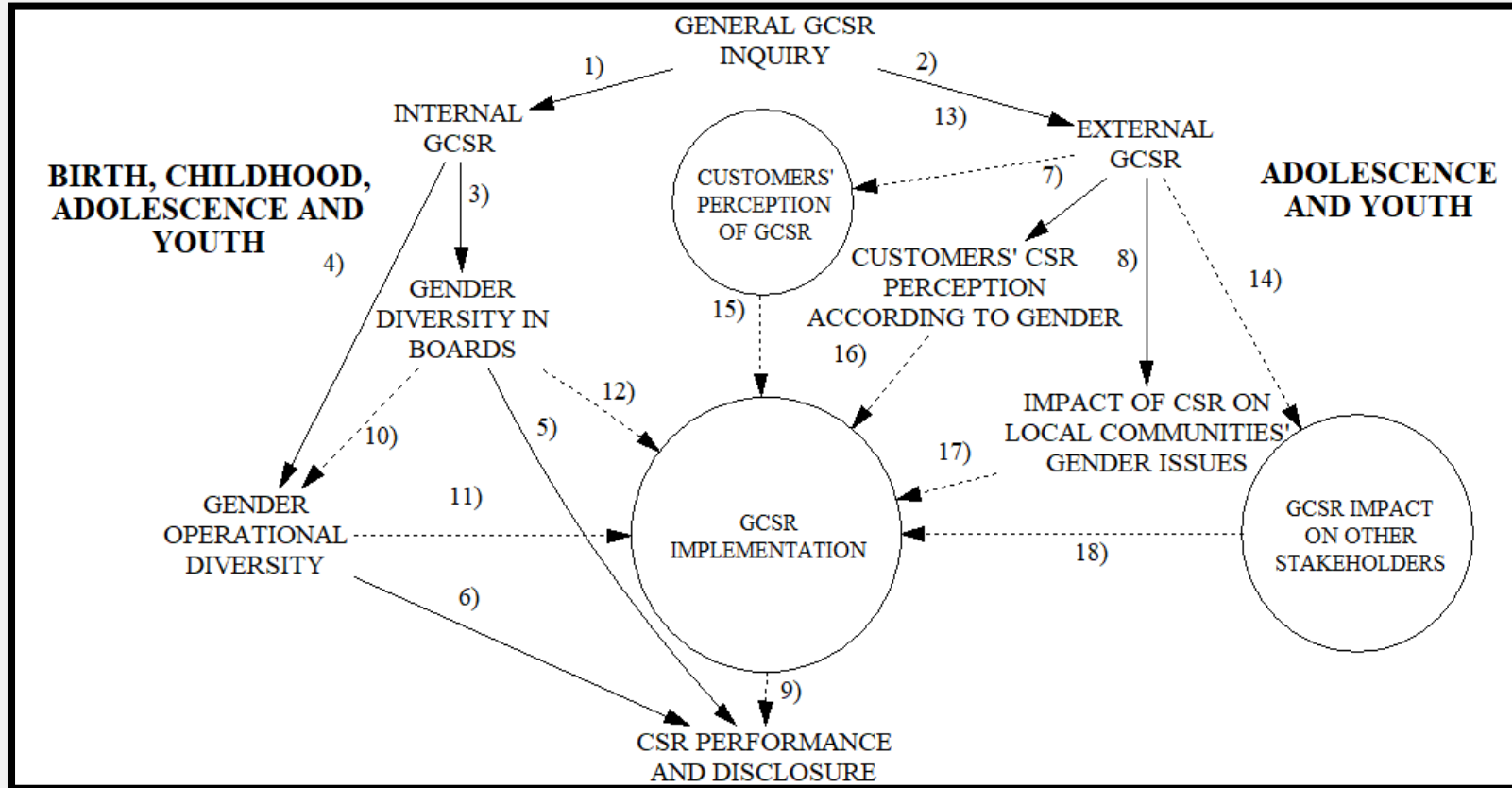
→ Interplay **gender/family issues** and family orientation to CSR practices

MAIN THEME SPECIFIC/EXTERNAL GCSR

→ Impact of CSR on **local communities'** **gender issues**: SMEs compared to MNCs.



4. FINDINGS: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENERAL GCSR INQUIRY



- Based on the thematic analysis of the sample papers, framework informed by stakeholder theory.

Legend – Unboxed labels: themes already covered by general GCSR. **Circular boxes:** potential research themes from our conceptualization. **Numbers:** links between themes. **Solid-line arrows:** existing links. **Dashed-line arrows:** potential links..

4. FINDINGS: RESEARCH AGENDA

ENVISIONING THE «MATURITY»

- call for **qualitative** studies;
- call for considering GCSR **implementation** features;
- considering **other stakeholders** than consumers and local communities;

- more studies with a **specific focus on SMEs and family SMEs**;
- considering qualifying factors for SMEs and family SMEs, such as:
 - gender diversity in boards **or gender of the owner/manager**;
 - **family** influence (family involvement, family cultural background, and family generation), caring for stakeholders, the importance of **relationships and reputation, flexibility, and informal mechanisms**.

Research avenues on the internal perspective	Research avenues on the external perspective
Effect of family features on SMEs' CSR orientation, and on gender diversity (managerial/operational)	Effect of family features on external GCSR
Conformation to stereotypes and feminist ethics of care in family SMEs	Effect of relational and reputational mechanisms in family SMEs on external GCSR
Leadership and feminist ethics of care in family SMEs (e.g., caring for internal stakeholders)	Feminist ethics of care and external GCSR (e.g., caring for close stakeholders)
Personal integrity of male/female owner-managers and GCSR	GCSR's impact on family SMEs' key stakeholders
Female owner-managers propensity to operational diversity	GCSR's impact on family members not directly involved in the SMEs family business'
Women's involvement in family SMEs and CSR implementation	GCSR's understanding of stakeholders
Effect of family SMEs' blurred roles and informality on GCSR	GCSR's use of stakeholder information and social ties for GCSR's implementation
GCSR's impact on formalization and communication	Consumer gender and perception of CSR in family SMEs
	Consumers' reactions to GCSR initiatives in family SMEs

5. CONCLUSIONS

- Main contributions of our research:
 - systematization of the fragmented knowledge combining gender and CSR in general terms;
 - identification of an evolutionary path of GCSR inquiry (birth, childhood, adolescence, youth phases);
 - reorganization of existing research on GCSR in order to encourage further studies.
- **CSR research** (in general terms, without including gender issues) initially privileged larger dimensions, and, in a second moment, paid attention to SMEs and family SMEs (Castejon & Lopez, 2016; Hsu & Cheng, 2012; Murillo & Lozano, 2006).
- Accordingly, it is possible **to envision a similar trend for GCSR inquiry**, under consideration as a relatively “immature”, close research field.

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Let's keep in touch!

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