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How institutions affect CSR practices in the Middle East and North Africa: A critical review

Dima Jamali[a,1], Tanusree Jain[b,1], Georges Samara[c,d,*,1], Edwina Zoghbi[d]

[a] Kamal Shair Endowed Chair in Responsible Leadership, American University of Beirut, Olayan School of Business, Bliss Street, PO Box 11-0236, Beirut, Lebanon
[b] Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin, 183 Pearse Street, Dublin D02 F6N2, The Republic of Ireland
[c] University of Sharjah, College of Business Administration, PO Box 27272, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
[d] American University of Beirut, Olayan School of Business, PO Box 11-0236, Riad El-Solh 1107, Beirut, Lebanon

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review integrates the Varieties of Institutional Systems (VIS) framework and Patchwork Institutions lens to unpack how institutional heterogeneity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) impacts the practice of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Our review of 154 articles published between 1995–2017 extracts the variegated nature of institutions in MENA countries and sheds light on how country-specific institutional forces affect CSR. Doing so, we take the first step to move away from a monolithic understanding of the institutional effects on CSR in MENA, acknowledging the role that collective actors play in shaping the institutional realities affecting CSR.

1. Introduction

Recent research has witnessed the proliferation of efforts focused on clustering countries according to different business and institutional systems (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Jackson & Deeg, 2008; Witt & Redding, 2013) to improve our understanding of how specific business practices, specifically Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) manifest across the world (Jamali, Karam, Yin, & Soundararajan, 2017; Matten & Moon, 2008). The original focus of these endeavors has been on developed countries (e.g., Matten & Moon, 2008; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010; Jackson & Bartosch, 2016; Jackson & Rathert, 2016) with a more recent impetus to document business systems and the concomitant variations in CSR across developing and emerging countries (Arora & De, 2020; Fayyaz et al., 2017; Jain & Jamali, 2016; Pisani, Kourula, Kolk, & Meijer, 2017). With this expansion, we have been able to gain a richer understanding of institutional influences on CSR in the USA, Europe, Asia, and Africa (Jain & Zaman, 2020; Kolk & Rivera-Santos, 2018). Yet, scholarship examining institutional effects on CSR in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), although growing rapidly in numbers, continues to be disorganized and fragmented across a wide variety of academic journals with no systematic efforts to synthesize past work. Such a lack of synthesis has resulted in existing research taking a one-size-fit-all approach towards MENA CSR by appropriating the findings from a single MENA country study to the entire MENA region (Jain & Jamali, 2016; Jamali & Sidani, 2012). This recursive trend has led to an over-simplification of the otherwise complex heterogeneous institutional effects on CSR in the MENA (e.g., Lythreatis, Mostafa, & Wang, 2019; Karam & Jamali, 2013; Koleva, 2018).

However, there is strong evidence to suggest that the MENA is characterized by unique institutional sub-environments and variegated social actors that can result in idiosyncratic effects on the practice of CSR. Economically and socially, while some countries in the MENA suffer from extreme and persistent poverty affecting one out of five people (UNDP, 2009), other countries serve as an important oil hub (constituting up to 65 % of the world's oil reserves), with Gulf Middle Eastern countries ranking amongst the richest in the world (AlNaimi, Hossain, & Momin, 2012; Arabian Business, 2015). The dominance of oil centric capitalism in these countries and their concomitant contribution to environmental degradation raise essential questions on how institutional pressures can shape the sustainable development agenda of companies operating in this sub-region (World Bank, 2016). Politically, the MENA region is diverse, with political regimes ranging from confessional political systems (e.g., Lebanon) to absolute monarchies (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Kuwait); that raises questions on how the state, through its diverse forms, can shape CSR practices over time. Moreover, the recent catastrophic conflicts in some countries in the region (e.g., Iraq, Syria, and Yemen) have impacted the lives of millions of people and have created a critical humanitarian crisis. While institutional

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: dj00@aub.edu.lb (D. Jamali), JainT@tcd.ie (T. Jain), gs50@aub.edu.lb (G. Samara).
[1] The first three authors equally contributed to the development of this manuscript.

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upheavals such as these have been documented in extant literature (e.g., Barakat, Pérez, & Ariza, 2015; Howard, 2016), the fragmented and unorganized state of this research has resulted in patchy knowledge about how institutional heterogeneity in the MENA affects CSR practices.

Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to unpack how institutional specificities of the countries comprising the MENA region influence the practice of CSR in the region. We do so by systematically reviewing the growing CSR scholarship contextualized in the MENA countries, with a focus on how institutions impact CSR. We specifically chose this approach because it helps us to assimilate existing knowledge (Gaur & Kumar, 2018) about different institutional descriptions and explanations woven intricately in the extant CSR literature conducted in MENA. This approach also permits us to flesh out the differential institutional patterns emerging within the MENA and their impact on CSR. We focus on 20 countries comprising the MENA that include Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia from the North Africa region and Yemen, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Palestine from the Middle East (ME) region.

To capture distinct patterns in the institutional makeup of these countries, we adopt a two-stage process where we begin by theoretically drawing on the Varieties of Institutional Systems (VIS) framework (Fainshmidt, Judge, Aguilera, & Smith, 2018). This framework allows us to identify country clusters within MENA based on salient institutions. In the second stage, and congruent with our aim to challenge and dismantle the prevalent monolithic understanding of institutions in the MENA region within the CSR literature, we integrate the patchwork institutions lens (Abdelnour, Hasselbladh, & Kallinikos, 2017) with the VIS framework to refine our understanding of how countries comprising the MENA region converge or diverge institutionally. This setup allows us to compare the institutional assumptions underlying each country comprising the MENA as described by the VIS with how research articles describe the institutional realities of the varied MENA contexts, thereby facilitating a careful exploration of how institutional heterogeneity in the MENA impacts CSR practices. For this endeavor, we employ Laasonen, Fougère, & Kourula (2012)'s problem setting approach that helps us to delve into the specificity of the context within which research has been conducted, hence allowing us to uncover and expose articulations on institutions and their impact on CSR.

We argue that such a review is both timely and essential for two reasons. First, our review takes a step forward towards disentangling country-specific institutional factors affecting CSR, thereby shedding light on the nested complexity of the institutional make-up of MENA countries and how they shape firm-level CSR practices. Second, we integrate the patchwork institutions lens with the VIS and review the CSR scholarship in MENA. Such a coupling of the VIS with the patchwork institutions lens (Abdelnour et al., 2017; Hirst & Humphreys, 2015; Labatut, Aggeri, & Girard, 2012) facilitates accounting for the role of collective actors that receive, interpret, and respond to institutional pressures (Buchanan & Marques, 2018; Miska, Szocs, & Schiffinger, 2018) thereby gleaning a finer-grained and nuanced description of how multiple and co-existing institutional orders affect CSR in MENA, a context that has thus far been glossed over by assumptions of institutional homogeneity and stability (Koleva, 2018). We believe it is particularly important to advance international business scholarship by emphasizing the heterogeneous, dynamic, and continuously changing aspect of institutions (Alon, Mersland, Musteen, & Randoy, 2020; Gaur & Kumar, 2018) and by adding new dimensions to existing knowledge frameworks (Fainshmidt et al., 2018), especially in our quest to better understand complex contexts with global geopolitical importance such as MENA (Abdelnour et al., 2017).

2. Theoretical underpinning

2.1. CSR in developing countries

In the last decade, research on CSR practices in developing countries has proliferated (Jain, Aguilera, & Jamali, 2017; Jamali, Samara, & Hossary, 2019; Lythreatis et al., 2019). Concomitantly, there are growing calls to step away from a blanket understanding of CSR often grounded in Western frames towards a more organic conception of CSR that considers the distinctive institutional context in which CSR as a practice is embedded (Arora & De, 2020; Jamali & Carroll, 2018; Jamali et al., 2019; Kolk, Dolen, & Ma, 2015). Building on conceptualizations of CSR used in research conducted in non-Western countries (Chang, Oh, Park, & Jang, 2017; Jain & Jamali, 2015; Jamali & Neville, 2011), we consider CSR to include all those activities that firms identify as responsibility towards improving the social state and well-being of their stakeholders including the environment, as well as build and maintain relationships with these stakeholders, whether undertaken voluntarily or mandated by rules, norms and/or customs. Such a broad definition of CSR is necessary to capture the various conceptualizations of CSR used by scholars conducting research in developing countries. For example, while philanthropy may be separated from CSR in developed countries (Porter & Kramer., 2002), philanthropy in developing countries is often understood as a prominent form of CSR. In addition, we conceptualize CSR as an umbrella term that encompasses policies, processes, and specific practices including reporting and disclosures (Jain & Jamali, 2016; Jamali & Neville, 2011), hereinafter termed as CSR practices, as it allows us to capture and review a broader literature contextualized within the MENA region.

Theoretically, while stakeholder theory is considered one of the prominent paradigms in the last three decades of global CSR research (Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016; Luo, Zheng, & Maksimov, 2015), research contextualized in non-Western geographies has emphasized the importance of coupling stakeholder theory with institutional theory to explain how distinctive institutional pressures influence CSR practices (Jamali & Karam, 2018; Jamali et al., 2019). Indeed, stakeholder identities, expectations, and interests vary cross-nationally (Jain, 2017; Obara & Peattie, 2018), and an institutional theory approach permits a comparative examination of CSR practices across different national and cultural contexts (Brammer, Jackson, & Matten, 2012; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010; Jamali & Carroll, 2018; Miska et al., 2018). Institutions specify the rules of the game by defining rights and responsibilities and by prescribing accepted and legitimized social roles, therefore shaping the identities of social actors in ways that are enduring over time (Brammer et al., 2012; Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010). Adopting this view, we recognize the usefulness and importance of institutional theory in explaining the heterogeneity in CSR practices in the MENA region.

2.1.1. The varieties of institutional systems framework and patchwork institutions

We argue that the Varieties of Institutional Systems (VIS) framework (Fainshmidt et al., 2018;) is a particularly relevant point of demarcation to categorize institutional effects on CSR in MENA as it "captures the diverse and unique institutional contexts of understudied economies in Africa, Middle East, East Europe, Latin America, and Asia." VIS identifies five institutional antecedents affecting firm practices in non-Western contexts, namely (1) the role of the state, (2) the role of financial markets, (3) the role of human capital, (4) the role of social capital, and (5) the role of corporate governance institutions. Through this framework, Fainshmidt et al. (2018) inductively analyze qualitative data collected from experts in the region to cluster understudied economies based on their institutional profiles.

Within the role of the state, the VIS framework differentiates between direct as well as indirect state intervention in a country's economic system. While governments may directly participate in the economy through state ownership of business enterprises, indirect state participation could be in the form of capital provision, involvement in corporate boards, as well as state-supported corruption. In addition, there may be qualitative differences in how states govern economies. Regulatory states specify the rules of the game (North, 1991) and do not ordinarily participate in economic activity. Welfare states emphasize the redistribution of wealth to promote economic and social equality and well-being in society (Carney & Witt, 2012). Developmental states engage with businesses for integrating long term national interests in policymaking; and predatory states are governed by powerful elites who monopolize decision-making through the adoption of non-transparent procedures, thereby weakening institutions (Carney & Witt, 2012).

Concerning the role of financial markets, whereas equity and credit markets operate as the main channels of capital acquisition in contexts where financial markets are well developed (Jackson & Deeg, 2008), economies characterized by relatively underdeveloped financial markets showcase a tendency to rely on family accumulated wealth as well as state-provided capital (Schneider, 2009).

The role of human capital relates to how labor markets are coordinated and the extent to which societies exhibit high levels of knowledge capital. In developing country contexts, there is a higher likelihood that labor markets are fragmented and inefficient (Witt & Redding, 2013). Therefore, the organizing principle is often based on political and/or family ties (Aguilera & Judge, 2014), where it is not uncommon for families to be the main provider of the managerial workforce (Samara & Arenas, 2017; Samara & Paul, 2019).

Social capital refers to the extent of trust that is prevalent between members of a society and the level of generalized trust within a society (Inglehart, 1999; Putnam, 1993). Trust is an important organizing principle that determines how stakeholders perceive CSR practices.

Finally, the role of corporate governance (CG) is viewed as an important pillar in the VIS framework as it pertains to how firms are managed and controlled. Developing countries are often dominated by family businesses that have distinctive attributes, making them a unique form of organization. Specifically, families tend to invest their wealth in the business, dominate the board, and are influential in decision making both on financial and on non-financial matters, including CSR (Jain & Jamali, 2016; Jain & Zaman, 2020).

Based on the institutional make-up of countries in MENA, Fainshmidt et al. (2018) suggest that the MENA region can be classified into 4 clusters namely, Fragmented with Fragile State, Family Led, Centralized Tribe and Hierarchically Coordinated. These clusters advance our understanding of institutions embedded in understudied economies and provide a useful lens to move beyond Western-centric categorizations based on national business systems (NBS) and varieties of capital (VOC) frameworks.

Although the VIS framework provides an improved categorization of the MENA region, an underlying assumption of this framework is that institutions within each cluster are homogeneous across countries, monolithic, and stable. While at first glance such an assumption may seem unproblematic; the historical, geopolitical, and socio-cultural differences among countries in MENA, and the upheavals in them in the recent past, including the Arab Spring (Frederick Littrell & Bertsch, 2013; Zahra, 2011), are likely to make institutions fluid and heterogeneous, even among countries clustered together.

In this context, we argue that the patchwork institutions lens becomes relevant as it emphasizes the heterogeneous, dynamic, and continuously changing aspect of institutions (Abdelnour et al., 2017). This lens emphasizes that institutions are not necessarily static and monolithic, but altering and transitional as they are exposed to various internal and external disruptions (Scott, 2008) that occur over time. Hence, it becomes necessary to distinguish institutions that may indeed be static, rigid, monolithic, and typically prevalent within the entire MENA region or its specific country clusters, from those institutions that are country (not cluster) specific, fluid, and subject to continuous disruptions (Abdelnour et al., 2017; Scott, 2008).

We contend that this is particularly relevant for a deeper understanding of MENA, wherein different colonization histories, state forms, traditions, norms, and routines embedded within countries comprising the region, and disruptions therein, are likely to combine together to form a thick patchwork that will uniquely shape institutional effects on CSR practices (Abdelnour et al., 2017). To integrate the VIS framework with patchwork institutions, we begin by making refinements to the countries included in the MENA sub-clusters as identified by Fainshmidt et al. (2018).

At the outset, several countries are omitted by the VIS, namely, Oman, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Palestine. This omission presents a substantial limitation of the VIS because the aforementioned countries are widely recognized as Arab countries, part of the Arab League (except for the recent omission of Syria) and the MENA region (El-Erian & Fischer, 2000; Zahra, 2011).

To overcome this limitation, we draw on the concept of region (El-Erian & Fischer, 2000; Schmitt-Egner, 2002) that is defined not only by geography, but also by the commonality of culture, that in turn is shaped by a shared strand of history, traditions, values, and religion (El-Erian & Fischer, 2000). The concept of region justifies the inclusion of Oman, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Palestine that were previously omitted from the VIS framework. At the same time, the concept of region also warrants the exclusion of Israel and Angola from the MENA, that were previously included in the VIS framework. We find that Angola and Israel represent a context that is historically, culturally, and linguistically distinct from the rest of the MENA. Specifically, although about 20 % of Israeli citizens are of Palestinian origin, comprising both Muslims and Christians, and Arabic was an official language in Israel until recently; Israel was established in 1948 and represents a significantly different historical, religious and cultural context than the rest of the MENA. Similarly, Angola, that is predominantly Catholic and a member of the African Union, is situated on the Western coast of south-central Africa, falling outside the MENA categorization geographically, while also representing a context that is historically, culturally and linguistically distinct from the rest of the MENA.

Further to the geographical refinement of the VIS, we add a fifth cluster to the framework, which we name the “Conflict-Affected Cluster.” Following Kolk and Lenfant (2015), the Conflict-Affected cluster includes countries experiencing continuous violence, hostility and political turmoil. Within the MENA, we include Syria, Palestine, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq in this cluster because all these countries have been witnessing substantive institutional upheavals, causing both political and societal instability (Abdelnour et al., 2017). The “Conflict-Affected” characterization is particularly useful for the MENA sub-region to investigate the impact of institutional disruptions (prior and pursuant to the Arab Spring period) on CSR practices. Table 1 illustrates the expanded make-up of MENA clusters integrating VIS and patchwork institutions, along with their prevalent institutional assumptions.

Finally, we rename the Centralized Tribe Cluster as the Centralized Kinship Cluster, which in our view better reflects the close-knit familial relationships present in this cluster. Tribe is a contested term that can sometimes be associated with a myth of primitiveness of associated societies, having racialized and/or colonial roots (Lowe, 2001).

In the following section, we compare and contrast how extant research contextualized within the MENA region describes the effect of institutions embedded in MENA countries on CSR practices with the institutional assumptions underlying VIS. Through an inductive process, this review facilitates a careful exploration and mapping of differential institutional patterns and their impact on CSR practices in MENA, adding nuances to the VIS as well as expanding this framework wherever warranted.

3. Review methodology

In setting the scope of our review, we consider 20 countries

Table 1
The MENA Sub-Regional Clusters.
Source: Building on Fainshmidt et al. (2018)

Cluster Classification	Countries	Institutional description*
Fragmented with Fragile State	Egypt Sudan	- High direct and indirect state intervention; - Prevalence of institutional voids; - Developmental state; - Absent or underdeveloped; - Equity and credit markets, family wealth as capital, state capital absent; - Low level of labor coordination; - Low level of generalized trust; - Concentrated family ownership in corporate governance.
Family Led	Algeria Morocco Tunisia	- Low state intervention; - Developmental state; - Low level of labor coordination; high level of generalized trust; - Family wealth prominent in resource allocation, ownership and management of companies.
Centralized Kinship	Iran Bahrain Kuwait Qatar Saudi Arabia UAE Oman	- High direct and indirect state intervention, welfare state; - Low level of labor coordination; - Low level of generalized trust; - Concentrated family ownership and paternalistic system of corporate governance.
Hierarchically Coordinated	Turkey Jordan Lebanon	- Developmental state; - Developed credit market; family wealth as capital (except Turkey); - Low level of generalized trust (except Turkey); - Concentrated family ownership, family control in corporate governance (except Jordan and Lebanon).
Conflict-Affected Region	Syria Palestine Libya Iraq Yemen	Not described by VIS

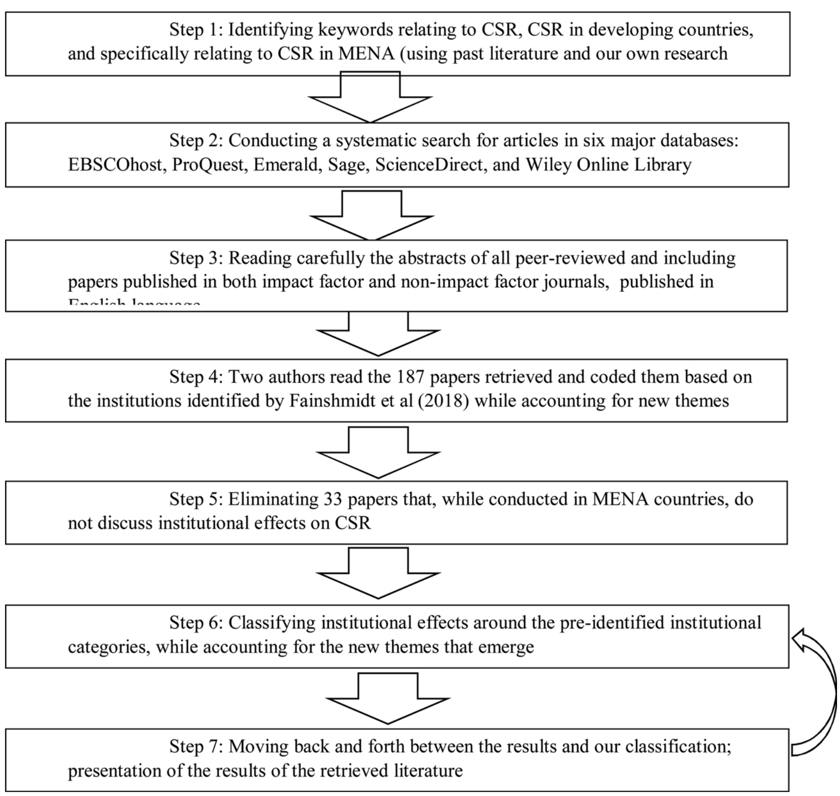

Fig. 1. Method.

comprising the MENA, as fleshed out in Table 1. The steps that were followed to conduct the review are summarized in Fig. 1.

We selected the keywords carefully to reduce the biases of Western-centric CSR literature. Accordingly, we included keywords used in past literature reviews on CSR, particularly in developing countries (Jamali & Karam, 2018). More importantly, based on our collective research experience in the MENA region as well as reviewers' suggestions[2], we

[2] The authors are extremely grateful to reviewers and the Associate Editor, Ans Kolk, for highlighting some of the keywords that helped uncover additional

also include keywords that potentially capture the changing institutional realities of MENA and the practice of CSR. Truncations containing an asterix (*) were used to return all hits beginning with and associated with the respective terms. Our search string included: *(Corporate Social Responsib* OR Social Responsib* OR Sustainab* OR (Sustainab*Development) OR Environment*Responsib* OR Environment* Sustainab* OR Corporate Social Performanc* OR* (*CSR) OR (CR) OR (SR of Business) OR (CEP) OR "Philanthrop* OR Corporate Philanthrop* OR (Donation*) OR (Charit*) OR (Religio*) OR (Consumer Responsib*) OR (Welfare) OR (Employee Responsib*) OR (Citizenship) OR (Zakat) OR (Islam*) OR (Sharia) OR (Islam*Ethic*) OR (Accountab*) OR (Transparency) OR (Inequalit*) OR (Conflict*) OR (Divers*Manag*) OR (Migration) OR (Refuge*) OR (Muslim Brotherhood) OR (Peace through Commerce*) OR (*Internation*Develop*) OR (GRI*)* ***AND*** combined this with search strings *namely, (Developing Nation*) OR (Developing Countr*) OR (Developing Econom*) OR (Emerging Market*) OR (Emerging Countr*) OR (Islamic Countr*) OR (MENA) OR (Arab*countr*) OR (GCC) OR (GULF) OR (Bottom of the Pyramid)* and each of the 20 countries identified in the MENA. Our search strings were inserted into each of six databases[3] to maintain the reliability of our systematic review approach. We included all peer-reviewed papers published in both impact factor and non-impact factor journals and published in the English language, and excluded conference papers, book chapters, dissertations, book reviews, and editorial materials and briefings.

We find that the first article on CSR in MENA was published in 1995 and accordingly our review of research is limited to articles published from 1995 to 2017. After screening all the published scholarship, we found a total number of 187 relevant articles. Table 2 presents the list of journals where these articles were published, and Tables 3 and 4 provide a breakdown of these articles per country and per sub-regional clusters of the MENA.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of articles related to CSR in MENA were published in Social Responsibility Journal (n = 19) and the Journal of Business Ethics (n = 18). A limited number of high impact publications are also visible in Business Ethics Quarterly, Business & Society, Business Ethics: A European Review, Corporate Governance: An International Review, and Human Resource Management Journal. Our review (Table 3) finds fewer conceptual pieces (8.6 %), and a relatively equal distribution of quantitative (46 %) and qualitative methods (41.6 %) being employed in MENA CSR studies. In terms of cluster and country distributions (Table 4), there are striking individual countrywide variances visible, the centralized kinship (n = 80, 37.91 %) and the hierarchically coordinated (n = 75, 35.07 %) clusters have received the most research attention, with the family led cluster trailing far behind (n = 9, 4.26 %) in research. In terms of individual countries comprising MENA, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, and Jordan continue to remain most researched, with Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq lagging behind.

Although for understanding CSR in the MENA region we draw on all the 187 articles, given the purpose of this review, we focus in-depth on papers that discuss institutional effects on CSR practices within individual MENA countries. To ensure the reliability of this process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), two authors of this paper independently scrutinized each of the 187 articles and examined their relevance for this review. This filtering process resulted in the removal of 33 articles that did not account for institutions in their discussion of CSR practices in MENA. The final count amounted to 154 articles that are listed in Appendix 1 (available online) and comprise 82.35 % of all the articles on CSR in MENA. Notably, we find an increasing trend in the number of articles published since the Arab Spring (2011), especially in the family led cluster (100 %) and the conflict-affected cluster (84 %) (Table 5). Indeed, articles on CSR in the MENA have more than doubled since 2011 in all clusters, except for the hierarchically coordinated cluster where research increased by 59 % in the post 2011 period. This further supports the importance of conducting a systematic review of institutional effects on CSR in MENA to take stock of how institutional upheavals and changes in the MENA, reinforced by the consequences of the Arab Spring, affect CSR practices in the region. Please see Appendix 1 for a complete list of these 154 articles.

Our systematic review (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008) is based on data extracted from these 154 journal articles. Although for the purpose of fleshing out differential institutional patterns and their impact on CSR practices, we do not differentiate between the nature of CSR performance (namely, social, environmental, and employee-oriented) as well as the type of CSR activity namely, CSR reporting/disclosures, philanthropy (Jain & Jamali, 2016), we code the papers for such specificities wherever possible to discern any findings specific to a particular CSR practice. Given the patchy details provided in the papers reviewed, we were unable to differentiate between types of firms that practice CSR. However, we do articulate these differences in our descriptive analysis of sub-regional clusters, wherever data is available and applicable.

For analyzing the articles, we employ an inductive approach that allows us to develop new theoretical insights that are firmly rooted in practice (Ciulli, Kolk, & Boe-Lillegraven, 2019; Langley & Abdallah, 2011). Although this approach involves an initial screening of the existing literature to set the theoretical ground for the study, it also requires suspending judgment about the conclusions of the existing literature (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). Such a process enables us to refine and chalk out new insights from the reviewed papers (Ciulli et al., 2019) and hence contribute to a finer-grained understanding of institutional forces affecting CSR practices within MENA countries.

Following this approach, we first draw on salient institutions identified by experts that are likely to affect firms' CSR practices in understudied economies (Fainshmidt et al., 2018). Drawing on the patchwork institutions lens, that argues for the fluidity of institutions, and their continuously changing nature (Abdelnour et al., 2017) especially in the MENA region (Zahra, 2011), we inductively extract how the institutional context of MENA countries impacts CSR practices from the reviewed papers. In doing so, we purposefully dismiss the detailed institutional assumptions of the VIS so that we can extract new and potentially contrasting institutional descriptions (Ciulli et al., 2019; Gioia et al., 2013). Such an approach enables us to utilize the richness of the context (Laasonen, Fougère, & Kourula, 2012), hence complementing and facilitating a more critical application as well as potential refinement of the VIS country clusters and their institutions, wherever deemed relevant.

Our coding framework consisted of tracking the timeline of articles published, categorizing the regional jurisdiction of the context of the study, extracting descriptions of the institutions embedded in the context of the study, and analyzing how such institutions affect CSR practices. To maintain the reliability during the coding process, all 154 articles were independently coded by two of the authors of this paper, followed by extensive discussions to resolve any discrepancies.

4. Findings

In this section, we discuss in detail the findings of our review. Please refer to Appendix 2 (available online) for a summarized version of our findings juxtaposing institutions identified by the VIS framework with the Patchwork Institutions approach.

4.1. CSR in the fragmented with fragile state cluster

Egypt and Sudan from the North Africa region comprise the fragmented with fragile state cluster in the VIS framework. We focus on the Egyptian context, as independent CSR studies in Sudan are absent. Our

(*footnote continued*)
relevant scholarship on MENA.

[3] EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Emerald, Sage, ScienceDirect, and Wiley Online Library.

Table 2
Frequency of sample articles published by journals.

Journals	Frequency
Social Responsibility Journal	19
Journal of Business Ethics	18
Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society	5
African Journal of Business Management; International Journal of Business and Management; Journal of Global Responsibility; Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies	3
Business & Society; Business Ethics: A European Review ; International Business Research; International Journal of Business and Social Science; Advances in International Accounting; International Journal of Business and Social Science; International Migration Review; Journal of Islamic Marketing; Journal of Sustainable Tourism; Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal; Managerial Auditing Journal; World of Accounting Science; International Journal of Bank Marketing; World Journal of Entrepreneurship; Management and Sustainable Development; Jordan Journal of Business Administration; Issues in Social & Environmental Accounting	2
Business Ethics Quarterly; Corporate Governance: An International Review; Enterprise & Society; Human Resource Management Journal; Journal of Corporate Citizenship; Corporate Governance; IZA Journal of Labor Policy; Migration Letters; Actual Problems of Economics; African Journal of Business and Economic Research; African Journal of Economic and Management Studies; Annales Universitatis Apulensis Series Oeconomica; Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review; Asian Economic and Financial Review; Business and Society Review; Business Strategy Series; Canadian Social Science; Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal; Foresight; Global Business and Management Research: An International Journal; Global Business and Organizational Excellence; Sustainability; Global Media Journal: Turkish Edition; Innovations in Education and Teaching International; International Journal of Academic Research; International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences; International Journal of Consumer Studies; International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues; International Journal of Education and Management Studies; International Journal of Education and Management Studies; International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management; International Journal of Management; International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management; International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management; Journal of Business Research; International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy; Journal of Applied Accounting Research; Journal of Asia Business Studies; Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research; Journal of Leadership; Accountability and Ethics; Journal of Management Research; Journal of Managerial Issues; Tourism Management; Management Research Review; Middle East Policy; Muhasebe ve Vergi Uygulamalari Dergisi (MUVU) ; Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies; SAM Advanced Management Journal; Suleyman Demirel University Journal of Faculty of Economics & Administrative Sciences; The Journal of Accounting and Finance; The MENA Journal of Business Case Studies; The Quality Management Journal; Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes; Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting; Journal of Business Strategy; Built Environment Project and Asset Management; Accounting and Management Information Systems; Meditari Accountancy Research; ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance; International Journal of Disclosure and Governance; International Journal of Organizational Analysis; Journal of Finance & Banking Studies; International Journal of Law and Management; EuroMed Journal of Business; Society and Business Review; International Journal of Social Economics; SAGE Open; Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research; International Journal of Accounting Research; Corporate Ownership and Control; Environmental Economics; International Journal of Business Administration; International Journal of Accounting and economics Studies; Advances in Accounting; Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews; Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews; Public Relations Review; Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion; American Business Law Journal; Review of Managerial Science; International Journal of Social Sciences and Management; Asian Journal of Business & Accounting; Universal Journal of Accounting and Finance; Global Review of Accounting and Finance; The Journal of Finance and Data Science; Abacus; Social and Environmental Accountability Journal; Journal of Business and Policy Research; Energy Research Journal; Intangible Capital; Business and Politics; Emerging Markets Finance and Trade; Global Journal of Business Research; International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications; Journal of Reviews on Global Economics; International Journal of Economics and Finance Studies; International Journal of Economics and Finance; Accounting and the Public Interest; Applied Economics; Review of Integrative Business & Economics Research; European Scientific Journal; Problems and Perspectives in Management	1

Table 3
Summary of Findings.

Summary of Literature on CSR in MENA by Publication Year and Nature of the Articles

Publication Year	Empirical n (%)			Review n (%)	Conceptual n (%)	Total n (%)
	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed			
1995	01	–	–	–	–	01 (0.5 %)
1999	01	–	–	–	–	01 (0.5 %)
2000	–	01	–	–	–	01 (0.5 %)
2003	01	–	–	–	–	01 (0.5 %)
2006	02	–	–	–	01	03 (1.60 %)
2007	03	02	–		01	06 (3.20 %)
2008	03	03	–	–	–	06 (3.20 %)
2009	06	07	–	–	01	14 (7.48 %)
2010	08	04	–	–	–	12 (6.41 %)
2011	06	06	01	–	02	15 (8.02 %)
2012	08	16	02	–	–	26 (13.90 %)
2013	07	11	–	–	08	26 (13.90 %)
2014	09	07	–	01	01	18 (9.62 %)
2015	06	10	01	–	–	17 (9.1 %)
2016	09	10	–	01	–	20 (10.69 %)
2017	08	09	01	–	02	20 (10.69 %)
TOTAL	**78** (41.7 %)	**86** (46 %)	**5** (2.7 %)	**2** **(1%)**	**16** (8.6 %)	**187**

review confirms that as per the VIS, the role of the state in this cluster is developmental in nature and impacts CSR practice. Specifically, the Egyptian government exhibits direct intervention and control over some industries by enforcing the Islamic notion of community-centered responsibility through philanthropy (Rizk, Dixon, & Woodhead, 2008). In addition, the state indirectly intervenes through regulatory reforms such as aligning with the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), establishing stock market indices aligned with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) parameters and adopting integrated reporting frameworks (Hammad & Kolkailah, 2012) in line with the demands of

Table 4
Country-Wide Distribution of Reviewed Articles.

Countries	Frequency	Countries	Frequency
Sudan	1	Iran	24
Egypt	19	Bahrain	7
Fragmented with Fragile State Cluster: TOTAL	**20** (9.47 %)	Kuwait	8
Algeria	0	Qatar	6
Morocco	3		
Tunisia	6	Saudi Arabia	15
Family Led Cluster TOTAL	**9** (4.26 %)	United Arab Emirates	16
Turkey	41	Oman	4
Jordan	14	**Centralized Kinship Cluster TOTAL**	**80** (37.91 %)
Lebanon	19	Yemen	3
Hierarchically Coordinated Cluster TOTAL	**74** (35.07 %)	Syria	2
		Iraq	1
		Palestine	7
		Libya	15
		Conflict Region Cluster TOTAL	**28** (13.27 %)
TOTAL 211			

Note: Some studies included multiple countries and these were counted separately for each country. This explains the difference between the number of studies included in the review (187) and the frequency of countries captured in the literature review (211). In addition, 8 studies were concentrated on regions defined as GCC, Arab countries, and Islamic countries without specifying the countries investigated. These have been excluded from the above frequency table.

Table 5
Distribution of Studies Reviewed by Year.

Cluster Classification	Countries	1995 – 2005	2005 – 2011	2011 – 2017
Fragmented with Fragile State	Egypt Sudan		3 (17 %)	15 (83 %)
Family Led	Algeria Morocco Tunisia			10 (100 %)
Centralized Kinship	Iran Bahrain Kuwait Qatar Saudi Arabia UAE Oman	2 (3%)	9 (15 %)	50 (82 %)
Hierarchically Coordinated	Turkey Jordan Lebanon	1 (2%)	20 (39 %)	30 (59 %)
Conflict-Affected	Syria Palestine Libya Iraq Yemen		2 (16 %)	10 (84 %)

Note: There were 2 studies that described their context as the Middle East. These 2 studies have been excluded from the above frequency table.

international development and financial institutions (Kolkailah, Aish, & El-Bassiouny, 2012; Lagoarde-Segot, 2011; Tantawi & Youssef, 2012). These reforms have resulted in streamlining CSR practices among private enterprises toward customers and the environment.

With respect to the role of financial markets, the VIS framework suggests severely underdeveloped or even absent equity and credit markets in the fragmented with fragile state cluster and emphasizes the importance of family wealth as a channel for capital infusion in firms. While our review echoes some of these observations, it captures a rather complicated and unique setting in Egypt. We note substantial reformations in Egyptian institutions over a long period of history, including post the Arab Spring (Barsoum & Refaat, 2015). While there is evidence of private firms being financed through concentrated family ownership, we also find that the prevalence of an evolving and growing equity market. The emergence of equity markets influence how firms engage in CSR, specifically moving their CSR practices from traditional philanthropic endeavors towards satisfying ESG parameters fueled by the desire to gain global competitiveness and to attract foreign investors (Eldomiaty, Soliman, Fikri, & Anis, 2016; Kamel & Awadallah, 2017; Lagoarde-Segot, 2011; Valente, 2015).

Regarding the role of social capital, as per the VIS, the fragmented with fragile state cluster exhibits a low level of generalized trust between members of the society. Within Egypt, this is reflected through skepticism towards CSR practices, especially when these practices are decoupled from a religious obligation or discourse. Such practices are perceived as an inferior Westernized version of CSR (Darrag & E-Bassiouny, 2013; Dief & Font, 2010; Hammad, El-Bassiouny, Paul, & Mukhopadhyay, 2014), one that is utilitarian, not altruistic, and viewed as “bad development,” as a means of public relations.

Furthermore, the VIS suggests that the labor market is fragmented and knowledge capital is low in this cluster. We find that labor market fragmentation permits a discretionary influence of elite family actors in shaping the coordination of labor markets. More specifically, our findings reveal a dominating influence of family owners along with the absence of a formal framework that protects the interests and rights of employees, creating challenges for internal CSR practices within this cluster. Additionally, given that knowledge capital is generally low, there are instances of multinational corporations (MNCs) strategically including the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) communities into their value chain activities in Egypt (El Ebrashi & Aziz, 2017), evidencing the shared value approach to CSR (Visser & Kymal, 2015). At the same time, MNCs are found to hire a more elite workforce that is sensitized to CSR not only to accumulate legitimacy in the Egyptian context but also to gain competitive advantage internationally.

On the role of corporate governance, the VIS framework suggests that the fragmented with fragile state cluster exhibits the prevalence of concentrated ownership and multi-family businesses. We find some evidence that Egyptian firms exhibit this characteristic that impacts how governance structures are organized (Rizk et al., 2008) with potential consequences for CSR practices. This is a promising area of research, where investigations are currently lacking.

4.2. CSR in the family led cluster

As per VIS, this cluster comprises Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia from North Africa, and Yemen from the ME, the latter we propose should be included in the conflict-affected cluster. VIS suggests that the role of the state in the family led cluster is developmental, and state intervention takes both direct (Morocco) and indirect forms (Tunisia). In Morocco, our review echoes the VIS findings, showing that the state promotes the adoption of CSR policies that seek to improve the competitive strength of local businesses. Contrary to the VIS, our review points to direct state intervention in Tunisia, where the state is actively in interfering in business affairs. Particularly, although the recent political upheavals have weakened the state’s capacity to enforce laws including those related to disclosure of CSR activities (Chakroun, Matoussi, & Mbirki, 2017; Garoui, Chakroun, & Ezzeddine, 2017), the state has been attempting to shape CSR by undertaking direct ownership in private companies (Chakroun et al., 2017; Khemir & Baccouche, 2010).

VIS suggests that the coordination of labor in the family led cluster is low, which translates into the absence of regulatory bodies that can protect the right of employees, creating internal CSR challenges for companies. Our review corroborates this view. In Morocco, patriarchy has led to a low labor force participation rate among women (Hennekam, Tahssain-Gay, & Syed, 2017). Furthermore, the absence of regulatory bodies that coordinate labor has widened the power gap between employees and controlling owners (Khlif, Guidara, & Souissi, 2015), creating internal CSR challenges for companies.

As for corporate governance, VIS indicates the presence of wealthy families in this cluster that have a substantial footprint in the economy in terms of resource allocation, ownership concentration, and management of firms. Our review confirms this view. We find that Morocco is characterized by a relationship-based as opposed to a rule-based governance system. Such a system sets the financial interests of families as a priority, negatively impacting CSR practices. Within family-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs), CSR is often perceived as a financial cost. Such firms adopt CSR practices in a limited fashion, either in response to stakeholder pressures or when CSR practices are necessary for business operations, such as gaining legitimacy in foreign markets. At the same time, MNCs are driving the CSR agenda in Morocco in line with international benchmarks and reporting frameworks (El Baz, Laguir, Marais, & Staglianò, 2016; Lagoarde-Segot, 2011).

We do not find research on generalized trust and the role of financial markets in this cluster. Furthermore, we found no CSR research contextualized in Algeria.

4.3. CSR in the centralized kinship cluster

Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE are the Middle Eastern countries that form the centralized kinship cluster in the VIS framework. We also include Oman, originally omitted by VIS, in this cluster because it reveals a similar trend in human development, governance, and voice attributes as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and UAE (World Bank, 2016) and is an integral part of the Gulf cooperation cluster (GCC). According to the VIS, the family is at the center of all social, economic, and political activity in the centralized kinship cluster. The state, where powerful family elites hold political power, intervenes in business affairs directly through ownership and control of companies and indirectly through the legislation of laws and policies (Fainshmidt et al., 2018).

Our review captures evident sub-regional differences among countries in this cluster on various parameters (Khasharmeh & Desoky, 2013). Research in Saudi Arabia and the UAE confirms that the state, where family elites hold political power, directly intervenes in business affairs and shapes CSR practices such that they resonate with the state's political agenda, showing evidence of a predatory character. In Saudi Arabia, the Saudi regime actively intervenes in business affairs, leading business practices to conform to the state's global posturing. Political and military ties between the Saudi regime and the West, particularly the U.S., has resulted in a Western influence on the state's economic and social priorities. Accordingly, the ruling family is actively involved in public-private partnerships with large domestic companies, directing the latter towards ESG goals set by the West, such as contributing to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reducing carbon emissions, and preserving the natural environment (Ali & Al-Aali, 2012; El-Garaihy, Mobarak, & Albahussain, 2014; Nalband & Al-Amri, 2013; Habbash, 2016; Khan, Al-Maimani, & Al-Yafi, 2013; Robertson, Al-Khatib, & Rasheed, 2013).

Within the UAE and Bahrain, states take on welfare and developmental roles. In the UAE, state-owned companies heavily engage in CSR through tackling environmental challenges peculiar to the Gulf countries, such as reducing carbon emissions, adopting renewable energy sources, and minimizing energy waste (Anadol, Youssef, & Thiruvattal, 2015; Kolsi, 2017; Mezher, Tabbara, & Hosani, 2010), thereby setting an example for others to follow. In Bahrain, given the weaker economic situation, the state partners with the private sector to meet its national development agenda (Mouzughi, Bryde, & Al-Shaer, 2014).

Contrary to Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain, the Iranian state has progressively withdrawn from assuming a role that can proactively shape the CSR agenda. The Iranian government has engaged in an aggressive privatization of state-owned firms resulting in the delegation of the state's responsibility for societal welfare to the private sector (Valmohammadi, 2011; Yaftian, Wise, Cooper, & Mirshekary, 2013). An unintended consequence of such a move has been the lack of interest on the part of foreign MNCs on progressing global CSR practices within Iran (Soltani, Syed, Liao, & Iqbal, 2015).

In the centralized kinship cluster, the VIS signals a more prominent role of credit markets over equity markets on the one hand, and the presence of family wealth and state-provided capital on the other hand. Here, again, our review brings to light substantial sub-regional variations. For example, research in Saudi Arabia confirms that state-provided capital plays an important role in financing startups and companies, while in Iran, the state does not provide such support (Mezher et al., 2010; Nalband & Al-Amri, 2013). These practices are likely to influence firm-level CSR choices, although scholars are yet to investigate this phenomenon.

With respect to the role of financial markets, we find that, in Iran, listed companies mostly report on their internal CSR practices, although they are not legally compelled to do so (Yaftian, Wise, Cooper, & Mirshekary, 2012). Furthermore, banks constitute the largest service sector in the country (Kahreh, Mirmehdi, & Eram, 2013). This importance of credit markets as opposed to state-provided capital and equity markets plausibly explains why CSR research in Iran is heavily contextualized in the banking sector (Kahreh et al., 2013; Khodaparasti, Forouzanfar, & Forouzanfar, 2015). Contrary to the claims of VIS, research in Qatar indicates the existence of equity markets, although supportive governance systems relating to social and financial audits are absent (Hossain & Hammami, 2009; Naser, Al-Hussaini, Al-Kwari, & Nuseibeh, 2006). It needs to be investigated whether the absence of governance mechanisms could result in low accountability on CSR practices.

With respect to human capital, the VIS describes the labor market in the centralized kinship cluster as being poorly organized while having high levels of knowledge capital (Fainshmidt et al., 2018). Our review confirms that employees in Saudi Arabia and UAE have high levels of knowledge of different CSR dimensions, which is a consequence of a nation-wide effort to promote CSR awareness (Ali & Al-Aali, 2012; Goby & Nickerson, 2012; Khan et al., 2013). For example, in Saudi Arabia, managers do not only understand CSR in terms of charitable donations and philanthropic practices but acknowledge the role of companies in meeting ESG challenges and contributing to SDGs (Ali & Al-Aali, 2012). Similarly, in Dubai, managers do not view CSR as a religious obligation to Zakat. Instead, managers understand the difference between CSR and philanthropy, reflecting high levels of knowledge capital (Goby & Nickerson, 2016).

However, contrary to claims of VIS suggesting the poor organization of the labor market, recent institutional changes in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman have resulted in labor markets being organized and monitored by the state. There is a gradual shift in the labor market dynamics due to state-enforced employment nationalization policies such as Saudization, Emiratization, Omanization, Qatarization, and Kuwaitization (Goby & Nickerson, 2012; Jain & Jamali, 2015; Katsioloudes & Brodtkorb, 2007; Lythreatis et al., 2019; Martin & Malit, 2017; Minnee, Shanka, Taylor, & Handley, 2013). These policies result in the rapid displacement of foreign workers, which once comprised a significant part of the labor market in this cluster, presenting critical challenges for equal employment opportunities and diversity management that should be investigated by CSR scholars.

According to the VIS, the level of generalized trust in the centralized kinship cluster is low (Fainshmidt et al., 2018). Our review of CSR research in the cluster reveals that firms are able to gain legitimacy and societal acceptance in high religiosity societies namely, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, and Qatar, by compliance with Islamic ethics, and religious and societal prescriptions on CSR (Maali, Casson, & Napier, 2006; Minnee et al., 2013; Mostafa & ElSahn, 2016; Zubairu, Sakariyau,

& Dauda, 2011). Such an alignment in CSR helps firms gain consumer trust (Mostafa & ElSahn, 2016). However, the route through which consumer trust is gained is different in Dubai (UAE), where the perceived legitimacy of CSR practices is associated with the economic benefits of CSR. Therefore, firms that bundle together CSR practices with their market orientation (Brik, Rettab, & Mellahi, 2011; Rettab, Brik, & Mellahi, 2009) rather than basing them on Islamic philanthropy (Goby & Nickerson, 2014; Nobanee & Ellili, 2016) can secure trust in the society in which they operate.

In Iran, given a history of political chaos and the low level of generalized trust of the international community in the Iranian government (Esmaeelinezhad, Boerhannoeddin, & Singaravelloo, 2015), firms are compelled to use CSR as a tool to gain trust, legitimacy, and competitive advantage by adhering to international CSR standards (Abdelrehim, Maltby, & Toms, 2011; Chapardar & Khanlari, 2011; Farivar & Scott-Ladd, 2016; Ghasemi, Nazemi, & Hajirahimian, 2014; Hanzaee & Sadeghian, 2014; Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi, & Saaeidi, 2015; Salehi & Azary, 2009; Yeganeh & Barzegar, 2014). In this context, Iranian managers tend to demonstrate an instrumental mindset toward CSR practices for legitimacy and reputational benefits, falling short of core Islamic ethics and values (Soltani et al., 2015). In this manner, our review indicates that, depending on the country context, CSR practices can help augment the low levels of generalized trust in the centralized kinship cluster at the internal (local societal) and external (international societal) levels. There is an opportunity for future research, both within international business and the CSR literatures, to further explore these dimensions of generalized trust.

With respect to corporate governance, the VIS emphasizes the prominent role that family coalitions play in shaping CSR practices, as families are heavily involved in ownership, control, and management of companies in the centralized kinship cluster. Broadly speaking, the presence of specific governance structures, such as the Sharia supervisory boards, is seen to have a positive influence on CSR practices in Oman, UAE, and Iran (Raman & Bukair, 2013). In addition, in Oman, the adoption of international best practices on governance positively influence CSR (Sangeetha & Pria, 2011). In UAE, Jenkins and Karanikola (2014) report that MNCs (i.e., international chain hotels) report more on CSR practices than local businesses. In Iran, studies have documented the path dependence between corporate desires to obtain international certifications and the adoption of governance structures that, in turn, catalyze socially responsible practices (Shahin & Zairi, 2007; Valmohammadi, 2014).

In Saudi Arabia, our review finds that family involvement in companies creates commitment and responsibility towards the communities in which the business operates, leading to improved CSR disclosures. In the latter case, the presence of independent directors and CEO duality do not have a significant impact on CSR disclosures (Alotaibi & Hussainey, 2016; Habbash, 2016). At the same time, other research reports that in the absence of an independent board, family involvement in SMEs leads to low attention towards societal stakeholders (Ali & Al-Ali, 2012). Therefore, while research has confirmed the influence of CG mechanisms as a determinant of CSR practices in this cluster, advanced CG research in this cluster is currently lacking to resolve conflicting empirical findings.

4.4. *CSR in the hierarchically coordinated cluster*

Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey are the Middle Eastern countries that comprise the hierarchically coordinated cluster in the VIS framework. Our review of research conducted in this cluster reveals the existence of a developmental state in line with the VIS but also exposes signs of a predatory state.

In Lebanon, the developmental role of the state is diluted due to weaknesses in its law enforcement capacity, that create gaps in firms' compliance towards CSR, especially for reducing negative externalities (Jamali & Mirshak, 2008). Yet, our review also informs that collective actors can transcend these institutional weaknesses when they have higher affinities toward CSR. Specifically, firm leaders that have a strong sense of social responsibility are likely to overcome institutional weaknesses by adopting internal control measures that increase transparency and prevent irresponsible practices (Jamali & Sidani, 2008; Jamali, Safieddine, & Rabbath, 2008).

Within Jordan, research reveals direct state intervention in business through public ownership in companies as well as by legislating laws that mandate CSR disclosures. The objective behind state ownership of companies is directed both towards control of the private sector and towards increasing CSR reporting among Jordanian companies (Al-Shubiri, Al-abedallat, & Orabi, 2012; Ibrahim & Hanefah, 2016; Ismail & Ibrahim, 2008; Jamali, Sidani, & El-Asmar, 2009):

Turkey, which was historically considered as a state-dependent business system, went through massive liberalization since the 1980s. Turkey suffered from two banking crises in 1994 and 2001 that adversely impacted employment and led to corporate bankruptcies constraining the ability of companies to be involved in CSR (Yüksel and Özsari, 2017). After a period of financial stability, the state has introduced several institutional reforms primarily to facilitate Turkey's inclusion into the European Union (Altintas, Adiloglu, & Altintas, 2007; Ararat, 2008; Bulut & Yumrukaya, 2009; Duman, Giritli, & McDermott, 2016; Özdemir & Dinçer, 2013; Polonsky et al., 2013). However, political interference, red-tapism, and judicial corruption give the state a predatory character (Cetindamar & Hopkins, 2008; Dincer & Dincer, 2007; Michael, 2009; Robertson, 2009). Our review indicates that while the aforementioned institutional changes drove firms to adopt Western CSR practices to align and compete in European markets (Elçi & Alpkan, 2009), SMEs have continued to embark on philanthropy in a limited way (Dincer & Dincer, 2010, 2013). That is, Turkish companies are driven to match the legitimacy requirements of their respective institutional environmental (Atakan-Duman & Ozdora-Aksak, 2014) such that business-to-consumer (B2C) companies focus on philanthropic initiatives preferred by their key local stakeholders whereas business-to-business (B2B) companies give importance to strategic forms of CSR oriented toward stockholder and legal concerns (Ozdora-Aksak & Atakan-Duman, 2016).

Mirroring the VIS, our review finds the prevalence of nascent financial markets in the hierarchically coordinated cluster, and a greater reliance on credit markets and internal sources of finance. In Lebanon, the weak and inefficient financial markets, nurtured by a long history of political conflicts and economic instability, have led companies to rely on internal sources of funding, particularly on existing shareholders' (usually family members) wealth. Hence, CSR practices are reflective of dominant shareholder values and desires, particularly of the family owners (Menassa, 2010), which translates into a preferential concern for internal stakeholders over environmental issues.

Similarly, Turkey has a relatively nascent equity market. There is a substantial presence of individual and internally funded family-owned businesses that impacts local CSR, which often takes the form of charitable philanthropy aligned with the collective values of family shareholders to contribute towards society (Nuhoglu & Wan, 2012). At the same time, as foreign direct investment (FDI) increases, there is a transfer of CSR practices from the headquarters of subsidiaries of MNCs as well as those supported by international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

With respect to the role of human capital, the VIS framework emphasizes the informal organization of the labor market in this cluster and the presence of high levels of knowledge capital. In Lebanon, managers come from different sects and religious groups and exhibit different cultural and regional backgrounds. Religious diversity mitigates a religious-based discourse when it comes to CSR. In this scenario, knowledge of globalized CSR practices imported by MNCs substitute personal desires and religious values underlying CSR (Charbaji, 2009; Dawkins, Jamali, Karam, Lin, & Zhao, 2016).

The lack of organization of the labor market in Lebanon, coupled with the growing number of Syrian refugees, has led to a shift in the Lebanese labor markets, resulting in a trend of replacing the more expensive local labor with the cheaper Syrian counterpart. These practices raise critical questions around whether the displacement of expensive legal workforce with cheaper but illegal migrant workers could be viewed through the lens of social responsibility (Lythreatis et al., 2019).

As per the VIS, the hierarchically coordinated cluster has a lower spectrum of internal generalized trust except in the case of Turkey. Lebanon is a religiously diverse country, having 18 different religious sects. Therefore, companies, especially MNCs, seek to gain trust and social legitimacy through CSR practices that are not exclusively or necessarily adopted to conform to Islamic norms (Jamali & Mirshak, 2008; Jamali, 2010; Khalil & O'sullivan, 2017). Whereas in Jordan, companies disclose their CSR practices that conform with Islamic teachings to gain internal societal trust in an otherwise conservative religious environment (Al-Shubiri et al., 2012; Di Bella & Al-Fayoumi, 2016).

VIS suggests that since the coordination of economic activities takes place mostly among concentrated family owners and the state in the hierarchically coordinated cluster, the latter is also likely to influence corporate governance and CSR practices. Within Lebanon, our review finds that families play a prominent role in management teams and on the board of directors. In this manner, families become key decision-makers concerning when, where, and how CSR is practiced. In large family businesses, the domination of families over decision making leads to inefficient governance structures, which may facilitate self-interest seeking with guile and opportunism. However, in small family-owned enterprises, family dominance over the management team leads to more CSR awareness, although the understanding of CSR remains limited to philanthropic giving (Charbaji, 2009; Gali, Hajjar, & Jamali, 2016; Jamali et al., 2008; Jamali, 2010; Jamali, Hallal, & Abdallah, 2010). In Jordan, the adoption of sound corporate governance practices, such as more independent and gender diverse boards, leads to an increase in CSR disclosures (Ibrahim & Hanefah, 2016).

In Turkey, similar to Lebanon, corporate boards are often not independent, particularly in family-owned firms, yet the increasing amount of FDI has triggered the state to lay down corporate governance norms based on OECD guidelines. This has promoted the adoption of stakeholder-oriented CSR practices in line with those deemed legitimate by the international community, impacting the governance of listed family firms as well (Kılıç et al., 2015; Kiliç, 2016; Meral, 2013; Robertson, 2009; Sahin, Basfirinci, & Ozsalih, 2011; Uyar, Kilic, & Bayyurt, 2013).

4.5. CSR in the conflict-affected cluster

The conflict-affected cluster in MENA includes Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. We cluster these countries together as they have been witnessing ongoing political and societal unrest, causing massive institutional disruptions both within and outside the cluster (Bais & Huijser, 2017). For example, the violence experienced by countries in this cluster has led to an ongoing conflict adversely affecting the lives of ordinary citizens who desire economic opportunities and transparent governance systems (Howard, 2016). The conflict in Syria alone has left more than half a million people dead, with more than half of the population in a severely vulnerable state, requiring humanitarian assistance both in the form of refuge and asylum from neighboring MENA countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey as well as opportunities for livelihood from firms. Similarly, in Palestine, the besieged Gaza territory suffers from persistent aggressions, with commercial centers being destroyed by Israeli attacks. Furthermore, indigenous businesses in the West bank continuously operate under military occupation (Khoury & Prasad, 2016).

Notably, we find only a few CSR studies contextualized in these countries, mostly concentrated in Palestine and Libya. With respect to the role of the state, studies in Palestine suggest two kinds of conflicts taking place affecting how the state shapes CSR practices: one, the Israeli occupation, and two, persistent internal divisions (Barakat et al., 2015). Amidst this conflict, the weak legal system, as well as the compromised economic situation of the Palestinian government, the state has limited capacity to contribute to the welfare of citizens.

Our review finds an increasing emphasis on the urgency of the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza, and that contributing to social work is being framed as a national obligation (Barakat et al., 2015). Although businesses can play an important role in improving the lives of the Palestinian population, the existing levels of CSR practices remain low. In this context, studies also find that the geopolitical space can sometimes constrain the ability of businesses to improve the lives of people through CSR. For example, the presence of Islamic banks in Palestine can help in uplifting societal wellbeing through the funding of SMEs, creating employment opportunities, and training and development of the Palestinian workforce. However, ongoing conflicts as well as political instability limit their ability to do so (Kidder, 2006; Migdad, 2017).

In Libya, the revolution led by Muammar al Gaddafi in 1969 brought Islamic rule to the country (Ahmad & Gao, 2005; Bayoud, 2013). Generally, the Libyan population is predominantly Muslim and highly religious (Ahmad & Ishwerf, 2014; Bayoud & Kavanagh, 2012; Bayoud, Kavanagh, & Slaughter, 2012; Bayoud, Kavanagh, & Slaughter, 2012; Pratten & Abdulhamid Mashat, 2009). Accordingly, Islamic rule mandated by the state coupled with high religiosity among the Libyan population together make religion the primary driver for CSR.

The environmental law mandated in 2003 and the establishment of the Libyan stock market in 2007 have incentivized companies to practice and disclose CSR (Abdo & al-Drug, 2012; Bayoud & Kavanagh, 2012; Saleh Mohamad Ahmad and Ramadan Mousa, 2011). Although the Libyan authorities did not enforce the 2003 law, firms in Libya are more likely to disclose their CSR practices to attract foreign investors (Bayoud & Kavanagh, 2012; Bayoud et al., 2012a). Moreover, extended wealthy families, that hold the majority of business ownership in the Libyan economy (Bayoud, 2013), have led to a dual effect on internal and external CSR. Internally, hiring practices based on family status and social ties rather than meritocracy increase inequality and nepotism; and externally, the interconnectedness of families with their social environment increases CSR contributions toward the communities in which businesses are embedded (Bayoud & Kavanagh, 2012).

These are but a few examples that emphasize that more institutional CSR research is needed in the conflict-affected cluster to understand the implications of political and social turmoil on the functioning of businesses and their sense-making on CSR practices.

5. Discussion

Although research exploring the impact of institutions on CSR practices in the MENA has grown in the last two decades, we are not aware of any systematic effort that takes stock of and synthesizes this work. This is unfortunate given that existing research has thus far advanced a one-size-fit-all approach when discussing the institutional antecedents of CSR practices in MENA by appropriating and extrapolating findings from single-country studies to the entire MENA region. Such presumptions lead to a rather simplified and naive understanding of the institutional heterogeneity and reality of the region, and its subsequent impact on CSR. For example, there is an underlying consensus in the existing literature that MENA CSR practices are highly influenced by Islamic philosophy and Sharia Laws (Jain & Jamali, 2015; Jamali & Sidani, 2012). Yet, our review uncovers critical differences in the importance of religion driven CSR practices across the region (Karam & Jamali, 2013). Similarly, recent studies examining the Arab Spring and its various socio-political ramifications (Karam & Jamali, 2013; Sidani & Thornberry, 2013) generally assume its blanket effect over the MENA region, while the movement diffused unequally and partially across MENA, having unique ramifications for CSR across countries.

Such sweeping generalizations are problematic since they tend to underplay the critical role played by individualistic and collective agency in shaping institutional effects and undermine our understanding of how and under what conditions do institutions embedded within various MENA countries affect CSR practices. Indeed, institutional heterogeneity provides a space for social actors to interpret norms and rules, exercise agency, and respond to institutional pressures in a manner that generates and/or restrains institutional changes (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Scott, 2008). A lack of assimilation between institutional heterogeneity and a multitude of social actors engaging with them over time has resulted in broad and loose generalized perceptions on how institutional forces embedded within the MENA region affect CSR practices, that can be described as "boxed in an environment" (Abdelnour et al., 2017: pp 1785) and glossed over by simplified assumptions of institutional homogeneity and stability.

Through this review, we take stock of the growing research addressing the effect of prevalent institutions in MENA on the practice of CSR. By categorizing and organizing extant research across MENA countries in sub-regional clusters, we can expose the variegated nature of institutions affecting CSR practices in the MENA region. To do so, we use an inductive approach to review the last 22 years of scholarship discussing the institutions affecting CSR in MENA. We begin by drawing on the VIS framework that uses a panel of regional experts to cluster countries in understudied economies based on salient institutions that are likely to affect firm activities (Fainshmidt et al., 2018). Acknowledging the limitation of the VIS that assumes within-cluster homogeneity and stability of institutions, we integrate the VIS framework with the patchwork institutions lens (Abdelnour et al., 2017) that permits us to employ an inductive approach to refine and add to the VIS by unraveling how social actors within the MENA region, through their collective actions, respond and adapt to institutional disruptions, and become catalysts for institutional change. Using Laasonen et al.'s (2012) problem setting approach, we review how existing research in MENA has described institutional effects on CSR that include, but are not restricted to, institutions identified by the VIS. In this manner, we comprehensively assess how institutions along with their altered realities, materialize in different countries of MENA toward shaping CSR practices. Our specific methodological approach for this review constitutes a critical exercise because as social changes surface and multiple configurations of institutional orders emerge, conceptualizing the diversity and flux while empirically studying it represents a challenge for researchers (Abdelnour et al., 2017). Our systematic review of research, as well as the rich descriptive assessment of the context within which research was embedded, enables us to simultaneously and effectively progress a finer-grained understanding of institutions functioning in MENA countries and their effect on CSR practices. It also helps us to put a spotlight on countries that are part of MENA but not included by the generally accepted mainstream frameworks such as the VIS, countries where institutional research is lacking, and highlight important understudied institutions and research themes that deserve more attention in future scholarship.

In this vein, foremost, it is critical to note that no independent research inquiries have addressed the impact of institutions on corporate responsibilities in Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, and Algeria. We do not find any study on CSR in these countries. While this may not be surprising given limited access to empirical data in many of these countries, we call on researchers to investigate how exogenous and endogenous factors can help drive the business responsibility agenda in countries that are subject to continuous political turmoil, institutional weaknesses, and disruptions. Below, we discuss the findings from our review, highlighting the refinements and additions we make to the VIS while also providing a future research agenda. Specifically, our inductive approach allows us to flesh out institutions that have been described as prevalent by regional MENA scholars but have been overlooked or underemphasized by existing theoretical frameworks.

5.1. A socioemotional wealth approach to the role of families in MENA

Socioemotional wealth refers to the stock of affect-related value that families derive from leading their businesses (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007; Samara, Jamali, Sierra, & Parada, 2018). Socioemotional wealth dimensions include the intention of the family to transfer the business to future generations, the long-term vision for value creation along with the interconnectedness of the family name with the business reputation (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007; Samara & Arenas, 2017). In countries where research was available in the MENA, except for Iran, there is clear identification of socioemotional wealth being a centerpiece affecting family firms' activities (e.g., Bayoud & Kavanagh, 2012; El Baz et al., 2016). However, the family firm's pursuit of socioemotional wealth has a differential impact on CSR practices, contingent on its nested interaction with other national institutional forces.

In Egypt, although the family has been recognized as an important stakeholder capable of significantly affecting CSR practices, we know little about the motivations behind them. In Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and UAE, family businesses practice CSR as a reflection of their reputation and legacy. Families influence CSR through their political power and sway over governmental legislations and policies impacting CSR practices (Nalband & Al-Amri, 2013). Research in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan shows that family businesses are highly concerned about the welfare of their internal and external stakeholders. CSR towards internal stakeholders is mainly fueled by family values (Menassa, 2010) where employees are treated like family members, contrary to Libya, where family-non-family biases are salient. Furthermore, in all these countries, family values often extend and translate into a long-term orientation where families desire to contribute to environmental sustainability through charitable contributions to communities in which they operate (Nuhoglu & Wan, 2012). At the same time, in Morocco, wealthy families perceive CSR as a net cost and as a constraint for the accumulation of family wealth (El Baz et al., 2016).

When we contrast the prominent role of families as proposed by the VIS within the family led cluster with our review of research of the MENA, we uncover a significant influence of families across all clusters of the region. We also find that research has focused on the structural aspect of a family business (i.e., governance structures) with less emphasis on the impact of family socioemotional wealth on CSR practices. This lack of focus on the family's socioemotional wealth is unfortunate since the mainstream family business literature has shown that for every story of a well-run and socially responsible family firm, there are corresponding stories of corporate irresponsibility (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2016). Research suggests that family involvement in business can promote a stewardship attitude among business employees (Charbel, Elie, & Georges, 2013) and can result in adopting a long-term orientation (Samara et al., 2018) towards forging strong partnerships with external stakeholders (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2016) through community-centered CSR. Yet, the desire to achieve family-centric objectives can also create a challenge in terms of internal CSR such as the formation of closed in-groups (Samara & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2018) and biases towards non-family employees (Samara & Arenas, 2017). Furthermore, socioemotional wealth in family firms can exhibit a dark side with family firms adopting a short-term view of amassing resources within the family at the expense of longer-term investments for the welfare of external stakeholders and the environment (Samara et al., 2018). In addition, relationship conflicts between family members with equal power but divergent goals can restrict a firm's ability to contribute towards CSR (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2016).

Overall, the domination of family businesses in MENA and lack of research of family business scholarship in the region is indicative of a pressing need to explore how different socioemotional wealth dimensions (i.e., long-term vision, values, and interactions among family members) are anchored within MENA countries and how they affect internal and external CSR practices.

5.2. The differential impact of religion

Despite the uncontested prevalence of Islam across most countries in MENA, our review uncovers that it is manifested differently and in different degrees across countries. This is mainly due to other institutions combining and sometimes competing with religious motivations behind CSR practices. For example, there is evidence that international trade reduces the influence of religion on CSR in UAE and Saudi Arabia. In the free trade zones in Saudi Arabia, CSR is practiced in line with international standards and norms, while in the conservative non-free trade zones, CSR showcases more religious philanthropic flavors and orientations (Anadol et al., 2015; Katsioloudes & Brodtkorb, 2007). In Jordan and Egypt, religion-based CSR enables MNCs to overcome the low level of generalized trust present in society (Darrag & E-Bassiouny, 2013; Hammad et al., 2014). In Lebanon, Morocco, and UAE religion plays a less prominent role. For example, religious diversity within Lebanon leads to the tempering of the role of Islam in shaping CSR practices. Instead, companies adhere to Westernized practices of CSR that are likely to resonate with the religiously diverse collective workforce (Jamali & Mirshak, 2008). Similarly, in UAE a religious-based discourse is substituted with the business case for CSR (Lythreatis et al., 2019).

Although descriptive differences across countries are well captured in the existing scholarship, the reasons *why* these differences exist within and across MENA have not yet been fully explored. We suggest that future research should examine differences in the institutional effects of religion on CSR practices (Amaeshi, Adegbite, & Rajwani, 2016; Marano, Tashman, & Kostova, 2017) across countries. More investigation is needed to uncover the role played by religion when instrumental and normative drivers of CSR interact. Moreover, in some countries, religious-based CSR practices are enforced by law (Ali & Al-Aali, 2012; Khan et al., 2013). The impact of enforcing CSR practices on how these practices are perceived and on other voluntary CSR practices is still a black box and deserves more attention in future research (Jain et al., 2017). Narrative analysis could be particularly useful here (Gartner, 2010) to allow for in-depth exploration into multiple forces that formulate individual perceptions. Narratives allow researchers to get closer to the phenomenon under study (Bansal & Corley, 2011), therefore building plausible explanations on the diverse forces that make religion and religiosity unique across MENA countries.

5.3. Geopolitics and the role of the state

Our review confirms a prominent role played by the state in shaping CSR practices. While we find that as per the VIS, the state takes on a regulatory, developmental as well as a predatory character in different regions of the MENA, sub-regional differences not captured by the VIS are also exposed. In Egypt, the state adorned a developmental and reformist role due to the influence of exogenous actors such as international financial institutions and the UN's sustainable development agenda. Here, the state shaped market institutions that promoted the adoption of CSR such as stock market indices aligned with ESG and integrated reporting frameworks (Lagoarde-Segot, 2011). In the Gulf states, the monarchies' ambitions to maintain their political, military and economic ties with Western countries drove them to promote the adherence to a Western CSR agenda to gain legitimacy. This took the form of the state actively engaging with the private sector through participating in ownership and control and promoting the SDGs (Ali & Al-Ali, 2012). In Bahrain, the state actively engages with the private sector through public-private partnerships; the motivations differ from that of its economically developed neighbors. Due to economic constraints encountered in Bahrain, partly reinforced by civil war and foreign military interventions, the Bahraini government partnered with the private sector to meet its development goals, while avoiding the financial and bureaucratic burdens associated with state-owned enterprises (Mouzughi et al., 2014). In Morocco, the state is directly involved in promoting CSR as a national strategy to gain legitimacy and to improve competitiveness in international markets (El Baz et al., 2016). In Lebanon, the role of the state is diluted due to weak law enforcement capacities, thus not having a significant impact on CSR (Jamali & Mirshak, 2008). In Iran, where the economy is largely dominated by state-owned oil and gas production companies, the exogenous challenge in terms of U.S. led sanctions on Iran since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, and the more recent pressures of climate change, have not only brought economic difficulties for the country's oil-dominated economy but also led to Islam versus West polarization in some parts, causing catastrophic humanitarian repercussions (Soltani et al., 2015). In this context, the Iranian state exhibits withdrawal from welfare activities by delegating them to the private sector (Valmohammadi, 2011).

From the above, it is evident that the responses of the collective state actors towards enacting institutional structures for CSR are contingent on the economic and political context within which they are embedded (Abdelnour et al., 2017; Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Scott, 2008). The lack of emphasis on geopolitics i.e., the relationship between the economic and political context of the countries and their geographical location, and CSR (Jamali & Karam, 2018) is therefore surprising. Such invesitgation is especially relevant for the MENA region where Western colonization has been historically prevalent and where current political instabilities are at their peak, leading to continuous changes in state laws and regulations and in the capacity for law enforcement. In addition, some regions are characterized by political corruption, and others demonstrate a contested form of foreign occupation, discrimination based on ethnicities, religion, and gender, resulting in an asymmetric form of justice (Risse, 2011). Hence, it would be important to explore how the geopolitical histories and the present socio-political turmoil affect CSR within and across different sub-regions of MENA.

5.4. Western influence and corporate governance

Although there is considerable flux in institutions in the MENA region, there are some aspects of social organization that remain stable over time (Abdelnour et al., 2017). In this regard, the prevalence of family involvement in ownership and management and on boards has been noticeably homogenous across the MENA region. Our review of existing research reflects this pattern suggested by VIS. However, we find that the structural nature of family business in itself differs across MENA countries. While multi-family businesses exist in Egypt, where at least two unrelated families share ownerships (Fainshmidt et al., 2018; Rizk et al., 2008), in Gulf countries, single families hold business ownership (Alotaibi & Hussainey, 2016; Habbash, 2016).

While the different organization of family businesses and its impact on CG structures and CSR remain to be studied, our review uncovers some mixed findings that connect family businesses with corporate governance structures and CSR practices across MENA. For example, independent directors are seldom present on the boards of Saudi Arabian small family businesses that portray a concomitant lack of CSR practices (Ali & Al-Aali, 2012). In Iran, the lack of trust in the government has led firms to exhibit agency and actively adopt globally accepted CG standards, such as appointing independent directors on boards and adopting other internal control mechanisms (Valmohammadi, 2014). Oman showcases the adoption of CG practices as emphasized by Western systems, and correspondingly demonstrates considerable attention to CSR practices (Sangeetha and Pria, 2011). In Lebanon, concentrated family-owned businesses exhibit poor CG and yet reveal higher investments in CSR (Charbaji, 2009). Turkey, on the other hand, has seen the adoption of pro-stakeholder practices among MNCs based on OECD guidelines, due to the legitimacy requirements set by foreign capital investors (Ilhan-Nas, Koparan, & Okan, 2015).

More generally, given the prevalence of wealthy and influential family businesses in MENA with different levels and forms of family control and associated governance structures, it is argued that there exists a "business-ethics glass ceiling" (Bishara, 2011, pp. 227) created by weak CG and associated legal systems. It is worth according particular attention to these factors that may catalyze CSR differentially across the MENA sub-regional clusters. Towards this end, research in MENA needs to progress beyond the assumption of independence amongst explanatory factors (such as in case of linear regression models), to more innovative methods such as fuzzy sets (Jain & Jamali, 2016; Ragin, 2008; Samara & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2018) that capture the complex interactive relationships that we uncover in our review. Although fuzzy sets have become mainstream in the CSR literature contextualized in developed countries (Aguilera & Williams, 2009), the idea of equifinality—implying that there is no one best pareto optimal structure of CG that could improve CSR performance—could be harnessed very effectively in the MENA region. Moreover, the presence of women in management teams and on corporate boards and their effect on CSR has been absent in existing research in MENA. This is especially interesting given that career opportunities for women in the MENA region have been gradually increasing (Murray & Zhang-Zhang, 2018) and there is some evidence that women may have a higher affinity toward CSR investments than men (Özdemir & Dinçer, 2013), especially in family firms (Samara, Jamali, & Lapeira, 2019). In a context where women have historically encountered constraints in terms of their active participation in social and business life, it would be interesting to investigate whether there are patterns of distinctive traits exhibited by MENA women leaders and how those shape their advocacy on CSR.

5.5. Nationalization and human capital

Our review uncovers that the effect of human capital on CSR is differentiated across countries of MENA and is often amplified by institutional disruptions caused by recent conflicts in the region. In Morocco, congruent with VIS, our review confirms that labor coordination is low, which paves the way for businesses to shape the labor market, thus having full discretion over how they treat their internal stakeholders (El Baz et al., 2016). In Saudi Arabia and UAE, knowledge capital is high mainly due to the Westernization of the education sector that has promoted the development of mandatory business and society courses. This has contributed to the Westernized view of CSR held by the educated workforce (Goby & Nickerson, 2012; 2016). In Egypt, however, there is a low level of knowledge capital, which translates into collective actors favoring religion-based CSR practices, while Westernized CSR practices are skeptically viewed (Darrag & E-Bassiouny, 2013; Hammad et al., 2014).

In Oman, Iran, Bahrain, Qatar, Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, there is no research on labor coordination and knowledge capital affecting CSR. However, research also uncovers two institutional disruptions that are creating new challenges for business and society in this context: (1) a nationalistic trend in employment, and (2) migrations and its ramifications on labor market dynamics. In Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait, affirmative actions to employ nationals—also labeled as Saudization, Emiratization, Omanization, Qatarization and Kuwaitization of jobs (e.g., Goby & Nickerson, 2012)—are growing. The juxtaposing of institutionalized efforts towards the nationalization of the workforce against notions of internal CSR towards existing employees is likely to aggravate challenges related to equal employment opportunities and diversity management (Katsioloudes & Brodtkorb, 2007). In a related trend, our results also put into spotlight the massive migrations of Syrian nationals to neighboring countries, particularly Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan (Darrag & E-Bassiouny, 2013; Lythreatis et al., 2019). Refugees are not legally permitted to work, but they are often absorbed into the informal labor market. This creates tension and dilemmas around the humanitarian but illegal employment of refugees. Employers could view workforce replacement of nationals by cheaper migrant labor from an economical lens, albeit illegal, while relieving the social stress of a large unemployed population. These are important yet unaddressed questions that deserve to be delved into both theoretically and empirically.

5.6. Internal and external generalized trust

Our review uncovers the low level of generalized trust amongst most countries of MENA, similar to the VIS, but also points to important distinctions. First, it is important to highlight the distinction between generalized trust at the local societal level and at the international societal level. In Turkey, although the VIS emphasizes high generalized trust at the local level, our review corroborates that the state is taking measures to conform with international CSR standards, with the objective of gaining trust of the international community and facilitating access to the European Union (Altintas et al., 2007; Polonsky et al., 2013; Robertson, 2009). In Iran, the VIS suggests a low level of generalized trust at the local level, yet our review shows that this lack of trust affects the legitimacy of firms in international markets. In this vein, firms in Iran conform to Westernized CSR conceptions as a means to obtain legitimacy and gain the necessary trust to compete at the global level (Esmaeelinezhad et al., 2015; Ghasemi et al., 2014; Soltani et al., 2015). In Egypt and Jordan, a low level of generalized trust in society has led collective actors to view Westernized CSR practices with skepticism and an inferior version of a long-standing religious tradition. Hence, businesses that seek to gain the trust of collective actors in these countries resort to Islamic philanthropic donations (Al-Shubiri et al., 2012; Hammad & Kolkailah, 2012). Besides calling for more research on the role of generalized trust in understudied countries, our review points to the importance of differentiating between local and international generalized societal trust and the diverging and competing forces these might create with respect to the type and form of CSR practiced by firms in MENA.

6. Concluding remarks

Through this review, we seek to gain a finer-grained understanding of how institutions affect CSR practices in a largely misunderstood region of the MENA. We began our review by asserting that recent research has emphasized the importance of understanding organizational practices such as CSR in the context of the national business systems in which they are embedded (Fainshmidt et al., 2018; Matten & Moon, 2008; Witt & Redding, 2013). Yet, this scholarship has not extended to the MENA region that comprises a complex, fascinating, and diversified region presenting several institutional idiosyncrasies (Pisani et al., 2017). Countries in MENA exhibit different historical experiences of political systems and financial markets, ownership, and management traditions, and human capital organization. When juxtaposed with an environment of political, economic and social flux on the one hand, and popularized Western standards of best practices on the other, the combination of institutional forces can create unique CSR opportunities and challenges facing businesses functioning in MENA.

Our review makes three important contributions to scholarship. First, we show how the combination of institutional histories such as state forms, financial markets, religious norms, business routines, social and human capital, governance structures and disruptions within them are likely to form a thick patchwork (Abdelnour et al., 2017), reflected in the variegated effect of institutions on CSR practices across MENA countries. With respect to the role of the state, our review exhibits the importance of geopolitics in MENA in shaping whether and in what form the state actively affects the CSR agenda (Eberlein, 2019). We highlight the importance of acknowledging the difference between generalized trust at the local and at the international societal level that can influence the outcomes related to CG structures and CSR practices across countries in MENA. In addition, we add to the VIS by demonstrating how the coordination of labor is idiosyncratically shaped across MENA countries. Particularly, our review uncovers how the nationalization of jobs creates internal CSR challenges in Gulf countries and the continuous political flux in conflict regions impacts labor market dynamics of neighboring countries.

Second, our inductive approach allows us to uncover two important but omitted institutions in the VIS framework that are likely to impact CSR in MENA. One, family socioemotional wealth, which reflects the non-economic goals that families pursue; and two, religion—its uncontested prevalence but differentiated manifestation across MENA. We construe that these two institutions may not be unique to MENA countries but may shape CSR practices, as well as potentially other forms of economic activities, in other understudied economies as well.

Third, our review points to the urgent need for research in understudied countries particularly those in the conflict affected region. Scarcity of data in this part of the world should not be viewed as a stumbling block for research; rather, it should be harnessed as an opportunity and motivation for concerted action to develop reliable and quality databases. In this spirit, we call on scholars to take the bull by its horns and investigate how institutional disruptions can shape CSR sensemaking for businesses operating in the MENA region. Concurrently, we also call upon mainstream management and CSR journals to encourage developmental special issues and provide more voice to scholarship emerging from understudied contexts.

7. Limitations

Although our research design was carefully thought through and implemented, our review suffers from limitations typically associated with interpretive research studies. First, we restricted our review to scholarship published in the English language. Therefore, potentially, we did not capture the full spectrum of articles published in Arabic and/or French that are typical languages used in some parts of the MENA region. Second, while we identified a set of countries comprising the MENA, there are other understandings of MENA that include Israel and Angola (Fainshmidt et al., 2018). The different categorizations of countries that belong to the MENA invoke a discussion on the boundaries of the MENA itself. Third, given our focus on the practice of CSR in MENA, our discussion of institutional effects was limited to published CSR scholarship and did not investigate how the MENA institutional context has been described in the broader management field. Overall, our findings and observations are limited to the studies included in our review and should be viewed in the light of these limitations.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

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