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Existing theoretical and empirical research on the diffusion of social responsibility in family businesses (FBs) has largely focused on the differences in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities between family firms and nonfamily firms. But the differences in CSR activities and perceptions among different types of family businesses has not yet been researched, even if there are important differences in family businesses. Drawing on the evolution of CSR approach from positive to post positive and to Habermasian approach, and integrating it with a view of family firms as systems made of three different subsystems that over the course of time can be differently preponderant, we identify a typology of family firms. Our typology supports a fine-tuned understanding of the dynamics of CSR and family businesses in different configurations and facilitates envisioning the futures of family businesses in the development of CSR through the different types but also beyond. With this work we contribute to the literature by suggesting that patterns of CSR can be conceived by drawing on the evolving political conception of CSR. Specifically, we show that family firms can represent an ideal laboratory to depict the possible evolution of family firms CSR behaviors and test the tenets of the Habermasian approaches in addition to other approaches.

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