Manuscript Title: Toward a model of managers' ideology driven information interpretation system for CSR enactment

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ABSTRACT

There are contrasting stances by firms toward corporate social responsibility (CSR). Earlier research has emphasized that external institutional and organizational pressures drive firms to address these variations in CSR decisions. However, little attention has been paid to the possibility that such strategic decisions may stem from individuals' personal values. Personal values can influence the process by which perceptions about the internal-external environment are formed. This paper explores managers' political liberal-conservative proclivities in terms of their personal values likely to drive their information interpretation processes for CSR engagement. To examine this process at the individual-level, this study employs Upper Echelons Theory which underlines the significance of individuals' values in strategic decisions, and the Enactment Theory, which maintains that firms' strategic decisions result from the way managers make sense of the internal-external environment. To explain further, data sources and acquisition (scanning of information), and data equivocality, assembly rules and information cycles (interpretation of information) are considered. In exploring, *how* managers' political ideologies drive their information interpretation systems, implications for academics and practitioners are outlined. Finally, we present a proposed conceptual framework and offer propositions to support future research.

Keywords

"all of what each organization---as well as of each market, audience, and public---does and says becomes meaningful because of interpretations that people place on those actions and statements" (Heath, 2001, p. 32, p. 32).

How significant are political ideologies in terms of values in strategic decision making? (Briscoe & Joshi, 2017; Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Chin, Hambrick, & Treviño, 2013; Gupta, Briscoe, & Hambrick, 2017). Firms address the concerns of various stakeholders when they make strategic decisions, where "the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll, 1991, p. 283). Research suggests that economic, environment, society, stakeholder, and voluntariness are the five most common dimensions in CSR definitions (Dahlsrud, 2008). CSR discussions often centre around these dimensions, towards where organizations have responsibilities. The CSR discussion fosters the debate about who and what organizations are responsible for. For example, Marrewijk (2003) reviewed CSR from both the shareholder and stakeholder perspectives.

To illustrate, the shareholder approach states that organizations are owned by shareholders not created by society (Hasnas, 1998). Therefore, organizations are responsible only to shareholders. The shareholder approach perceives organizations as profit seeking business entities. Since the only responsibility of business is to do business, utilise its resources and design the business activities in such a way to increase and ensure its profits (Friedman, 2007). However, stakeholder theorists criticize this approach by emphasizing organizations' obligations toward their stakeholders (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004). Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are affected or can affect organizations in achieving their objectives. As stakeholders have some stake in organizations, organizations should therefore take into account stakeholders' needs and hopes (Henriques & Sadorsky, 1999). Organizations may

show their responsibility towards shareholders but they are also responsible towards their stakeholders (Park & Ghauri, 2015).

Moreover, the Institutional Theory of CSR maintains that organizations tend to behave in a more socially responsible manner when they face certain pressures from stakeholders. These pressures are from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government regulations, industrial regulations, and independent accountability organizations. Normative pressures from the environment also drive their socially responsible behaviour (Campbell, 2007). Much of the early CSR literature adopted this viewpoint, suggesting that CSR decisions originate from externally driven factors and are merely implemented by CSR decision makers. In this way, CSR related decisions were seen as a consequence of primarily external and, to a lesser extent, internal stakeholder pressures and influences (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012), or "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance" (Aguinis, 2011, p. 855).

The exploitation of social concerns (Bowen, 1953) is critical to firms' legitimacy, financial performance, and positioning (Beddewela & Fairbrass, 2015; Hadjikhani, Joong Woo, & Sohee, 2016; Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017; Park & Ghauri, 2015). Consequently, the concept of CSR has emerged as a fundamental notion in various fields of research, including management (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Sharma, 2000), strategic management (Gupta et al., 2017), business ethics (Jiang, Zalan, Tse, & Shen, 2015; Wang, Gao, Hodgkinson, Rousseau, & Flood, 2015), marketing (Tasavori, Ghauri, & Zaefarian, 2016), and international business (Demirbag, Wood, Makhmadshoev, & Rymkevich, 2017). Stakeholder Theory has also pushed this agenda (El Akremi, Gond, Swaen, De Roeck, & Igalens, 2018; Freeman et al., 2004; Hah & Freeman, 2014; Park, Chidlow, & Choi, 2014; Park & Ghauri, 2015).

CSR policy is expected to build a self-regulating mechanism that supports the business to ensure compliance with the law, and ethical standard norms. For example, in a recent article by *The Economist* (2019), senator Elizabeth Ann Warren, a member of the American Democratic Party, expressed the hope that big American companies might apply for such charters that require them to show their responsibility towards all stakeholders.

CSR is the managerial commitment to take such actions that protect and improve societal welfare as a whole and also the interests of the organization (Tasavori et al., 2016). Moreover, it is believed that there is a positive relationship between a firm's CSR and its financial performance (Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017). While profit generation is critical for organizations, many organizations clearly adopt additional criteria regarding social responsibility (Voegtlin & Greenwood, 2016). This suggests that CSR works for business either by fulfilling compliance requirements or through financial gains. However, a change in focus to better understand how it works is critical (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019).

The progress we have made towards understanding the CSR concept and the driving forces behind CSR initiatives, suggests that the most likely influencers are institutional (i.e. government actions and regulations, NGOs) and organizational pressures (i.e. firm's policies and strategies) that together drive a firm's CSR initiatives (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Some assume that firms engage in CSR activities due to regulative, normative, and culturally cognitive pressures as mentioned by Scott (1995). Others believe in a positive correlation between a firm's CSR initiatives and its financial performance, known as the 'business case' for CSR (Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017). Investments and actions of an organization and its members should contribute towards its competitiveness (Greenwood & Van Buren, 2017). However, recent research extended this agenda by focusing on the notion that a firm's emphasis on CSR may stem from their own decision makers' values and preferences (Chin et al., 2013; Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, & Babu, 2017; Gupta & Briscoe, 2019).

This nascent view, posits that firms are involved in CSR activities not because they are coerced to do so, but because their decision makers thoughtfully desire to do so (Gupta & Briscoe, 2019). For instance, in the past few years, studies have expounded upon the significant role of an executive's values (i.e. in terms of political liberal-conservative ideologies) in strategic decision making (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018). Some assume that firms with ideologically liberal CEOs have stronger CSR inclinations than firms headed by conservative CEOs (Chin et al., 2013). Others assume that not just firms' CEOs, but entire firms can have liberal-conservative proclivities that enter into CSR decision making termed as "organizational political ideology" (Gupta et al., 2017, p. 1019).

For example, The Business Roundtable (BRT), an association of America's leading companies' CEOs, seek to support the US economy through sound public policy to inflate opportunities for Americans. The BRT recently issued a statement about corporations' purpose. Almost two hundred company CEOs signed the 'purpose of a corporation' statement. These CEOs adopted a courageous moral stance by endorsing their main objective to no longer only worry about shareholder values. The shareholder primacy is traced back to Milton Friedman's (1970) article titled 'the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits' in which he argued against business managers' views. It has taken the BRT forty-nine years to recant Friedman' arguments about businesses' purpose (Brown, 2019).

According to the BRT, for the future success of a country, communities, and companies, stakeholder views are essential. The BRT has made a commitment to deliver value to customers, fair compensation to employees, fair and ethical dealing with suppliers, respecting and supporting the community at large, and environmental protection. As an illustration, Table 1 shows some recent examples of the BRT's signatory and non-signatory CEOs along with their statements, which portrays their political liberal-conservative inclinations (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, Sulloway & Cooper, 2003). One inference is that CEOs who have liberal

ideological proclivities signed the BRT 'purpose of a corporation statement', while CEOs with conservative inclinations are non-signatories of the statement. Recent studies have similarly suggested that executives' values in terms of political liberal-conservative ideologies influence their strategic decision making such as CSR (Gupta & Briscoe, 2019; Johnson & Roberto, 2019).

The research focus to date has led to the relative neglect of an individual-level interpretive mechanism by which decision makers form, organize, and interpret their perceptions of CSR initiatives (Chin et al., 2013). Individuals engage in cognitive processes to collect, filter, and interpret information about the environment in which choices are made (Daft & Weick, 1984) and these interpretive processes can vary based on individuals' values (Jost, 2006), which can influence firms' strategic outcomes (Johnson & Roberto, 2019).

The aforementioned views imply that individuals develop their own meaning of CSR based on their values and perceptions towards the internal and external environment. The Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984) implies that strategy formation and enactment is the responsibility of strategic-level managers of firms. Members of firms' upper echelons view and interpret strategic possibilities based on their experiences, personalities and values (Hambrick, 2007). Whereas, less attention has been given to individual's values in strategic decision making (Johnson & Roberto, 2019). Correspondingly, an individual's values driven mechanism formulates their perceptions about strategic initiatives (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Chin et al., 2013). Therefore, this study integrates Enactment Theory (Weick, 1979). The Enactment Theory implies that strategic initiatives result from the way firm members make sense of the inter-external environment. Thus, this study aims to explore the following objective: *how do managers' political liberal-conservative ideologies in terms of their personal values influence their tendency for strategic engagement?*

Place Table 1 here

While exploring and identifying the importance of stakeholder pressures at the macro-level for firms' sustainability practices, such as CSR, few studies (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Chin et al., 2013; Elg, Ghauri, Child, & Collinson, 2017; Gupta et al., 2017; Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017; Jiang et al., 2015) acknowledge the importance of the decision maker's values in perceiving and interpreting stakeholder pressures for strategic engagements. It could be argued that the motivation behind CSR engagement is primarily self-interest (Moon, 2001), irrespective of firms' strategic purpose. As "…it is always difficult to tell whether behaving ethically towards external stakeholders is prompted by altruism or self-preservation" (Rollison & Broadfield, 2002, p. 44).

However, an established stream of psychology literature reveals that individuals usually form some beliefs not necessarily on the basis of evidence and available information, but rather due to more general worldviews, belief system, and ideologies (Jost, 2006; Jost, Kruglanski, Glaser, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008). Values are defined as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 1984, p. 19) and political ideology can be defined as "an interrelated set of attitudes and values about the proper goals of society and how they should be achieved" (Tedin, 1987, p. 65). Both play a significant role in decision making (Nebus & Chai, 2014). However, the current stream of CSR decision making literature is limited in acknowledging the role of manager's values in terms of their political ideologies when making CSR choices (Briscoe & Joshi, 2017; Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Elg et al., 2017).

Hemingway and Maclagan (2004) theorize managers' personal values as one of the drivers of CSR. They argue that managers' personal values are more likely to explain the formulations,

adaptation, and implementation of the firm's CSR policies and "that individual discretion is the route through which personal values impact on CSR policies, permitting individuals to use their judgement" (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004, p. 41). The question remains, however, how do managers inject their personal values when gathering, and interpreting information from internal and external stakeholders for CSR decisions (Chin et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2017; Jiang et al., 2015)? To address these limitations, this study adds to our understanding by exploring the following interrelated questions: *How do managers' political liberal-conservative ideologies affect their information interpretation system (i.e. information scanning and interpretation)? How does the political ideology driven information interpretation system affect their tendency towards CSR engagement?*

We pursue the following contributions: First, the need to address the significance of individuals' ideologies in strategic decision making (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Gond et al., 2017; Johnson & Roberto, 2019). Second, to emphasize the implications of individual-level analysis by integrating Upper Echelons and Enactment Theory. Third, offer a conceptual framework and propositions towards conceptualization of managerial ideology in interpreting information for CSR engagement.

This paper is organized in the following manner. First, we explore the theoretical foundations and concepts that relate to CSR and various definitions from the macro, meso, and micro perspective. We continue with a refined definition signifying managers' ideology driven information processing while making strategic decisions. We then highlight the CSR literature at multiple-levels (i.e. institutional, organizational, and individual) in various fields such as marketing, human resource management, organizational behaviour, and strategy.

The following section discusses CSR determinants at multi-levels and provides a discussion around firms' CSR engagement due to internal-external pressures. The paper highlights such

institutional pressures (regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive), and organizational pressures (instrumental motivation, and legitimacy) (Elg & Ghauri, 2015; Scott, 1995) to address, where we have been and where we need to go. Further, we will discuss the significance of managers' values in an information interpretation system for CSR decision making (Chin et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2017; Jiang et al., 2015). Finally, this will be followed by an overview of the proposed conceptual and associated theoretical framework.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AS VALUES IN CSR DECISION MAKING

In an early discussion on social responsibilities of the 'businessman', Bowen (1953) "refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (p. 6). In this early debate on the purpose of business organizations, the CSR concept was considered a step into the modern era of social responsibilities by corporations (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1999, 2008). CSR definitions of the 1950s and 1960s, expanded in the 1970s to include a 'multiplicity of interests' (i.e. accommodating interests of internal and external stakeholders along with shareholders) by accounting for a firm's managerial staff (Jonhson, 1971). Very few new definitions, however, were added since then. Instead, theoretical foundations and more empirical research began to develop in the 1990s. These alternative foundations included Stakeholder Theory, corporate social performance and Business Ethics Theory (Carroll, 1999; Maclagan, 1998; Mosley, Pietri, & Megginson, 1996).

CSR was presented across a broader-spectrum which incorporated societal well-being (Margolis & Walsh, 2003); a rational view where CSR contributed to "a calculated purchase of advertising services or goodwill" (Knauer, 1994, p. 11); and a negative view where CSR amounted to the misallocation of a firm's resources (Friedman, 2009). More recently, Aguinis (2011) defined firms' CSR decision making (as mentioned above) from a context specific

perspective incorporating firms' actions and policies as per stakeholders' expectations and firms' performance according to regulative, normative, and cognitive elements. However, understanding managers' moral values is important in order to understand their CSR decision making. As "social responsibility can only become reality if more managers become moral instead of amoral or immoral" (Carroll, 1991, p. 39). Significantly, this reference to CSR decision makers or managers addresses the fact that key individuals do play an instrumental role in the formulation and implementation of firms' CSR policies. It "may be viewed as a process in which managers take responsibility for identifying and accommodating the interests of those affected by the organization's action" (Maclagan, 1998, p. 147). Table 2 provides examples of definitions of CSR from macro, meso, and micro-levels.

Place Table 2 here

Although the above definitions of CSR denote the actions and policies by organizations, such actions and policies are implemented and influenced by actors at different levels (Elg & Ghauri, 2015; Hadjikhani et al., 2016; Hadjikhani, Lee, & Ghauri, 2008; Park & Ghauri, 2015). Firms do not decide on complex strategic decisions, individuals do. Although, firms provide an important context for decision making, in the end mangers are the decision makers (Nebus & Chai, 2014). Consequently, there is a need for individual-level analysis when exploring the micro-foundations of CSR (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Chin et al., 2013; Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017; Jiang et al., 2015).

Scant literature on executives' values is of course not the only reason to embark on such an inquiry. First, companies' executives normally act according to their owner's preferences, instead of their own (Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). Executives' values can be defined as ''a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others'' (Hofstede, 1984, p. 19). In the presence of agency mis-alignment, however,

executives' values direct them to take certain actions that otherwise would not have been taken by the company's owners. Second, executives' personalities and experiences have been central to the expansive debate on dynamic styles of decision making by upper echelons theorists (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Consequently, executives' personal values can trigger some unplanned initiatives. Third, there is a tendency that managers' personal values can be viewed through their actions as announced or unannounced intentions.

We propose that managers' political ideologies matter. More specifically their position on a liberal or conservative continuum. By liberal political ideology we mean - rejection of social inequality and justification of social change. By conservative political ideology we mean - acceptance of social inequality and justification of social status quo. Moreover, liberal-conservative political ideologies direct individual's choices and actions while making strategic decisions. According to values' theorists, the liberal-conservative continuum is among the key constructs when reflecting on individual beliefs (Feather & Hendrick, 1979; Schwartz, 2016). There is a possibility that values can cross into managers' actions via indirect channelling, when choices are indirectly affected by values (England, 1967; Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009). England (1967) termed this indirect channelling as the 'perceptual filtration' process. According to the perceptual filtration process, managers deliberately search, perceive, and interpret information that resonates with their values and maintains their value congruence. An understanding of the values driven perceptual filtration process explains where (i.e. internal and external stakeholders) managers seek information, and how they assign meaning to the collected information for their CSR engagement (Gupta et al., 2017). On the basis of this ideological motivation of CSR, our study adapts Maclagan (1998) primary definition of CSR and proposes the following extension:

> *Managers' ideology driven process of scanning and interpreting information aids in identifying and accommodating the interests of those affected by the organization's actions.*

THE LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL SPECTRUM

> *"The individual's pattern of thought, whatever its content, reflects his personality and is not merely an aggregate of opinions picked up helter-skelter from the ideological environment"* (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950, p. 176).

Jost (2006) posits that people do use and are motivated by their ideological dimensions such as the liberal-conservative continuum which constrain or guide their attitudes and behaviours. A well-known values scholar, Schwartz (1996), argued that the liberal-conservative (i.e. political ideologies) spectrum is fundamental when understanding core beliefs of individuals. Chin et al. (2013) and Gupta et al. (2017) regarded political ideologies in terms of values by incorporating Schwartz (1996) explanation. In this study, we use the political ideology definition in terms of values offered by Schwartz (1996) and adopted by Chin et al. (2013, p. 201): "Liberalism is concerned with civil rights and that people who are more liberal in political ideology are likely to be sensitive to social issues in general and to such specific issues as diversity, social change, human rights, and the environment". Mostly, in psychology and political science literature, political ideology is conceptualized in terms of an individual's relative position on the political liberal-conservative spectrum which covers two key aspects: (a) inequality rejection versus acceptance; and (b) justification for the societal status quo versus justification for social change (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, et al., 2003; Jost et al., 2008). The ideological differences between liberal-conservative are somewhat rooted in fundamental personality dispositions. Moreover, these ideological preferences reveal and highlight individual differences in core motives, psychological needs, and their orientations in how they view the world (Tomkins, 1963).

In a meta-analytical study, it is shown that there are prominent differences among individuals with a liberal ideology and individuals exhibiting a conservative ideology (Jost, Glaser, et al.,

2003). Liberal and conservative ideologies offer different moral foundations (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). For example, liberals have unconstrained vision, where theoretically perfection in society is possible (Sowell, 2007). Consequently, such a vision drives liberals to believe in social justice, change, and equal rights. On the contrary, conservatives have constrained vision, that pushes the imperfectability of human nature and the possibility that potential changes to the social system will have unanticipated negative outcomes that may aggravate social problems. As a result, constrained vision drives conservatives to give importance to stability, respect for autonomy, and tradition (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Tetlock, 2000). The liberal-conservative spectrum explicitly predicts preferences such as how to attain equality in society, and how to design social security and welfare policies. Table 3 presents the definition, conceptualization, and measurements of liberal-conservative political ideologies.

Place Table 3 here

These values are expected to enter into individuals' choices and decision making through "perceptual filtering" (England, 1967). " Under this process, the executive selectively searches for information that suits his or her values and then perceives and interprets information in a values-congruent way"(Chin et al., 2013, p. 199). Our study aims to explore how managers, based on their political beliefs (i.e. liberal-conservative spectrum), selectively collect information from multiple stakeholders and then give meaning to that information which affect their tendency for CSR engagement. The proposed theoretical framework in this study draws on the following theoretical foundations. First, Upper Echelons Theory as a core idea about the effects of executive's values on their decision making (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Second, Daft and Weick's (1984) model of information scanning and interpretation systems. Third, Weick's (1979) Enactment Theory as a process of information gathering and

interpretation from inter-external environment. The term internal-external environment may exist logically, but not empirically. There is a world inside the mind of the person which helps the organizational members to differentiate between inter-external environments to take sensible actions (Weick, 2000). Therefore, Weick (2000) stated: "the environment is located in the mind of the actor and is imposed by him on experience in order to make that experience more meaningful" (Weick, 2000, p. 185). Thus, the actor enacts with the environment instead of reacting to it. The enactment with the environment means " to create the appearance of an environment" or " to stimulate an environment for the sake of representation" (Weick, 2000, p. 188). The enacted environment is the output from the process of organizing the information.

To summarise these theoretical foundations in our conceptual framework, we first provide our theoretical underpinnings and follow this with our conceptual framework drawn from Hambrick and Mason's (1984) Upper Echelons Theory and Weick's (1979) Enactment Theory and Daft and Weick's (1984) model of organizations as interpretation systems. The following sections discuss the proposed conceptual framework in detail and offer propositions to support future research.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Our study draws primarily from Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984) and Enactment Theory (Weick, 1979). According to Upper Echelons Theory, strategic decisions are made through the personalized lenses of executives. These interpretive endeavours are formed by their personalities, experiences and values (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984), which implies there are human limitations in "accessing, processing, and using information" (Holmes, Bromiley, Devers, Holcomb, & McGuire, 2011, p. 1072). Hambrick and Mason (1984) posit that executives' cognitive base affects the direction of their focus, their perception (i.e. what they see and observe), and their interpretation (i.e. how they give meaning

to what they see and observe). Their cognitive base shapes their strategic decisions by influencing " their personalized interpretation of the strategic situations they face" (Hambrick, 2007, p. 334). For instance, Wanng, Holmes, Oh, and Zhu (2016) reviewed 308 studies which support the idea that executives characteristics such as formal education, positive self-concept, career experience and firm strategic actions are significantly associated. However, the role of values in managerial actions were significantly ignored, which has been stressed by Hambrick and Mason (1984) and acknowledges the important explanation of Upper Echelons Theory. Nevertheless, it is necessary to deepen our understanding around important questions posed by scholars as the CSR field is evolving rapidly. The underlying premise of Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984) offers a perspective, which supports the notion of substantial influence by key decision makers and proposes that there is a difference in decision makers' personal orientation when they make their choices and make decisions. However, how strategic decision makers organize, interpret, and enact the information from the inter-external environment when they evaluate different situations and alternatives through their personalized lenses, is answered by integrating Enactment Theory (Weick, 1979).

The Enactment Theory highlights the organizing process that firm members experience in their attempts to understand information in the internal-external environment. The main purpose of organizing the information is to reduce equivocality, which means information with two or more clear meanings (Weick, 1979). Therefore, equivocal information implies several options from which members of the firm need to choose before they make any strategic decision (Yudarwati, 2011). The fundamental theme of organizing is: "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Weick, 1979, p. 133). Beliefs signify causal maps that individuals execute in the part of the world they enact. In this study, the Upper Echelons Theory and Enactment Theory become the theoretical framework to comprehend how decision makers enact CSR based on their values.

Thus, if we aim to clarify how individuals make strategic decisions such as CSR, we must consider the value congruent preferences of key decision makers (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Our study draws on the three step process of information filtration offered by Daft and Weick (1984) and of the process by which managers' values influence their decisions by using Upper Echelons Theory: (1) field of vision (i.e. the direction decision makers look and listen to); (2) selective perception (i.e. what they want to see and hear); and (3) interpretation (i.e. how they give meaning to selected information) (Chin et al., 2013; Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). The need to explore the black box of managers' ideology driven CSR engagement is not merely an issue of scholarly inquiry; it is necessary to provide in-depth insights on key decision makers to overcome personal disposition laden decision making biases (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Elg et al., 2017). It is these aspects that Upper Echelons Theory is helpful to explain why individuals' decision making is dependent upon their personal values (Chin et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2017).

According to Carnahan and Greenwood (2018), future research should explore how ideology driven personal choices, for example information seeking from various stakeholders, and extracting meaning from this information can affect managers' tendency toward CSR engagement. Despite, the noticeable significance of mangers' values in decision making that drives them to see only what they want to see, and hear only what they want to hear, research is limited in this area (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Chin et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2017). In response to this call for further research, our study aims to advance our understanding of the influence of managers' political liberal-conservative ideologies when making strategic decisions. We suggest the likely existence of an asymmetrical perceptual filtration process of information which is driven by managers' ideology and influences their CSR engagement.

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MANAGERIAL IDEOLOGIES IN CSR

ENGAGEMENT

Theoretically, Upper Echelons Theory posits that there are differences in firms' actions due to the heterogeneity among their executives' characteristics. The main tenet of Upper Echelons Theory emphasizes the importance of executives' values in strategic decision making (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Since individuals make decisions through their personalized lenses based on their values (Hambrick, 2007) they see what they want to see and interpret accordingly (England, 1967). A key premise of Enactment Theory stresses the organizing, interpreting, and enactment of information gathered from the internal-external environment (Weick, 1979). We integrate micro and meso-level theoretical foundations and draw on Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984); Enactment Theory (Weick, 1979); and Daft and Weick (1984) model of organizations as interpretation systems to discuss and understand, scanning, interpretation, and learning from information at the individual-level while making strategic choices. Figure 1 exhibits the filtration process of information scanning, interpretation, and learning.

Place Figure 1 here

"As human beings, we are drawn to those beliefs and ideologies that match or resonate with our needs and interests, and we are repelled by those that violate them"(Jost, 2017, p. 168). We begin with the premise that political ideology is defined in terms of values (Schwartz, 1994, 1996). Political ideology was first "defined as an interrelated set of attitudes and values about the proper goals of society and how they should be achieved" (Tedin, 1987, p. 65). This is important as "ideology helps to explain why people do what they do; it organizes their values and beliefs" (Jost, 2006, p. 653). Political ideology offers a suitable marker of managers' attitudes and beliefs. Political ideology has been studied from multiple dimensions (such as

communism, egalitarianism, classical liberalism, fascism, communitarianism, right-ism, left-ism) (Hans, 2000). In this study, we follow two core aspects of the political liberal-conservative dimension that have been consistently used to capture meaningful and persistent differences (Chin et al., 2013; Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, et al., 2003). In particular, that which address "(a) attitudes toward inequality and (b) attitudes toward social change versus tradition" (Jost, 2006, p. 654). Figure 2 presents our conceptual framework, drawing from Upper Echelons Theory, Enactment Theory, and the model of organizations as interpretation systems as theoretical foundations, unpacking propositions of managers' liberal-conservative political ideologies, perceptual information processing, and their tendency towards CSR engagement.

Place Figure 2 here

The liberal-conservative distinction "has been the single most useful and parsimonious way to classify political attitudes for more than 200 years. It has found resonance in almost every cultural context" (Jost, 2006, p. 654). Schwartz (1996) in his extensive research argued that people with a liberal political ideology are likely to show sensitivity towards social issues, social change, the environment, and human rights. Similarly, liberals are characterized as individuals who seek to support social justice, change, and economic equality (Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, et al., 2003). Sowell (2007) categorized conservatives as individuals with more 'constrained vision' (i.e. believing that human nature is not perfect and changes in social order can lead to social problems). This perspective encourages individuals with conservative ideology to promote stability, tradition, and respect for authority (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Tetlock, 2000).

The above studies show the various manifestations of individual values on the political liberal-conservative spectrum. Accepting the logic of Upper Echelons Theory, we might argue that

differences in managers' political ideologies, which manifest their values, will be reflected in their CSR engagement. More recently, studies have examined the effect of political ideologies (liberal-conservative) on human behaviour (Briscoe & Joshi, 2017; Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018). These studies concluded that liberal males were more intent on hiring and promoting women associates (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018) to promote less wage gap disparity (Briscoe & Joshi, 2017) compared to conservative males. These studies suggest decision making variances among individuals is dependent on their political ideological differences.

As an illustration, a Pakistani clothing brand, 'Sapphire', has initiated a new CSR campaign which is focused on 'greening' the environment. From shopping bags to trees in just four steps, biodegradable shopping bags are infused with plant seeds, with the following instructions. First, tear the bag into pieces. Second, plant the torn small pieces into five-centimetre-deep soil. Third, water generously and regularly and the last most important fourth step, feel proud for making Pakistan beautiful. The initiative was announced by Manghi Communication Solutions (MCS)—Sapphire's creative agency (Zahid, 2018). Talking about the initiative, Mr. Muzaffar Manghi, CEO of MCS in his interview to 'the DAWN advertising agency' said, globally, the second major plastic polluter is fashion retail after oil and gas. "Therefore, rather than shy away from this glaring fact, we wanted to be honest in addressing it" (Zahid, 2018, p. 1). Since, political ideology reflects personal values, it is expected that it is likely to affect managers' tendency towards CSR engagement and thus, we propose our first proposition:

P1: Managers' liberal-conservative spectrum will drive their process of information scanning and interpretation towards CSR engagement.

PERCEPTUAL FILTRATION PROCESS

Daft and Weick (1984) viewed organizations as interpretation systems and argued that organizations and their members must scan and interpret events in their environment to take suitable actions. Therefore, Daft and Weick (1984) mentioned the following two factors that

influence interpretation systems: a) assumptions about the environment as analyzable and unanalyzable; and b) the extent of intruding into the environment to understand it. If organizations assume that events and processes in the environment are determinant and measurable then they will utilize linear thinking and will assume the environment as analyzable. On the contrary, if it is assumed that the environment is difficult to understand, and penetrate as it changes with time, organizations will find it unanalyzable (Duncan, 1972). Although, organizations offer an important context in decision making processes, nonetheless, we cannot ignore the fact that individuals/managers ultimately make strategic decision (Nebus & Chai, 2014; Sowell, 2007) based on their ideological beliefs (Jost, 2006).

Therefore, when the liberal-conservative aspect is combined with the manager's perceptual filtration process (i.e. seeking information from only those sources, which are congruent with one's values), we can observe how mangers' liberal or conservative political ideology drives their perceptual filtration process. We can observe how information coming from various internal and external sources/stakeholders (i.e. employees, suppliers, partnering NGO, government, and media) influences managers' CSR engagement. Managers with a liberal political ideology will tend to give value to all stakeholders for CSR engagement. This is primarily because, managers with a liberal ideology tend to hold more non-traditional beliefs about social justice and the social status quo (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Tetlock, 2000), making them more likely to believe in the possibility of social change and social equality (Sowell, 2007).

Research suggests managers with a liberal ideology are more creative, open-minded, novelty seeking, and curious (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008). We argue that one would expect such managers to perceive internal and external stakeholders' information as valuable, which will affect their attitudes toward CSR engagement. However, CSR research is rare about how managers collect and interpret information from internal and external stakeholders,

specifically, when making CSR decisions on the basis of their liberal-conservative political spectrum (Briscoe & Safford, 2008; Chin et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2017).

Perceptual filtering is the process of scanning (i.e. data sources and acquisition) and interpretation (i.e. equivocality reduction and assembly rules) of information. These perceptual filters are used by individuals in organizations to reduce environmental uncertainties as individuals seek information from internal and external sources and then base their actions on that information (Daft & Weick, 1984; England, 1967). Perceptual filtering suggests individuals' perceptions are influenced by the way individuals seek, acquire, and interpret information, about the social world. An individual "sees what he wants to see, he hears only what he already agrees with" (England, 1967, p. 55). Firms do not decide on complex strategic decisions, although, they provide an important context for decision making: in the end managers are the decision makers who sense, interpret, and respond to the environment (Daft & Weick, 1984; Nebus & Chai, 2014). Building on Daft and Weick's (1984) 'model of organizations as interpretation system' i.e. the interpretation processes that explain the events and information in the internal and external environment that managers pay attention to or ignore, our study links the political ideology driven strategic decision making process (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; El Akremi et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2017; Kashmiri & Mahajan, 2017) to the scanning and interpretation of information (Daft & Weick, 1984; England, 1967) process.

Scanning of information

Research acknowledges that individuals with liberal ideological stances will tend to believe in (a) inequality rejection; and (b) justification for social change (Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, et al., 2003). What individuals see and observe is inevitably linked to their perceptions as these perceptions depend upon one's interests and values (Daft & Weick, 1984). Scanning of information is defined as the "process of monitoring the environment and

providing environmental data to managers. Scanning is concerned with data collection. The organizations may use formal data collection systems, or managers may acquire data about the environment through personal contacts" (Daft & Weick, 1984, p. 286). By adopting Daft and Weick (1984) model of organizational interpretation, we highlight the following two key dimensions which are used to explain information scanning and interpretation differences among mangers on the liberal-conservative spectrum for strategic decision making: (1) beliefs in analyzing the environment, and (2) the extent of analyzing the environment.

A manager with a conservative political mindset will assume that the environment can be analyzed (i.e. prevailing processes and events in the environment are determinant, not intrusive, and measurable) through routine documents, publications, reports, and information systems – possibly over many years. He/she will then perceive the environment as benevolent and objective and will not take unusual steps to learn more about the dynamics of the environment before making strategic decisions. Hence, the conservatives' 'constrained' vision (Nebus & Chai, 2014; Sowell, 2007). Contrarily, a manager with an 'unconstrained' vision assumes that the environment is unanalyzable (i.e. prevailing processes and events in the environment are hard to determine and measure due to environmental dynamism). Thus, he/she will apply an entirely different strategy for data scanning, and interpretation (Chin et al., 2013; Daft & Weick, 1984; Sowell, 2007) and will not rely on hard, objective data as the environment is assumed unanalyzable. Therefore, liberal managers with unconstrained vision will seek a variety of cues about the unanalyzable environment from multiple sources and will acquire information through causal information encounters, personal contacts, and chance opportunities (Daft & Weick, 1984; Jost, 2017).

However, this liberal-conservative domain which explains these differences in managers beliefs about the information filtration process in terms of information scanning and interpretation for making strategic decisions, still lacks a solid theoretical research base

(Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Gond et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2017). Recent research suggest mangers' varying personal orientations will influence their strategic decisions according to the Upper Echelons Theory (Chin et al., 2013; Hambrick & Mason, 1984).

The Upper Echelons Theory posits that strategic decision making is an interpretive endeavour, and individuals perceive and analyze their environments, situations, and alternatives through a personalized lenses formed by their personalities, experiences, and values (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Drawn from the political psychology and political science literatures, individuals' political liberal-conservative ideologies reflect their values (Barnea & Schwartz, 1998; Jost, 2006; Schwartz, 1996). Individuals who believe that human nature is not perfect and that social order changes can lead to social problems, tend to hold constrained vision, and follows conservative ideological perspective. They mostly support environmental stability, tradition, respect for autonomy, and status-quo (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Tetlock, 2000). Individuals with unconstrained visions are classified as liberals and tend to believe in equal rights, social change, justice, and theoretically in the perfection of society (Sowell, 2007).

Data sources and acquisition

Environmental data can come to managers from different internal and external data sources. It can be done systematically by deploying staff and financial resources, to research recent trends and dynamics in the environment, and to find out what is required by customers, suppliers, government, and also the community at large (Daft & Weick, 1984). Chin et al. (2013) proposed that CEOs with liberal or conservative political beliefs would tend to interpret the environment through their ideology driven personal lens while making strategic decisions. They found that liberal CEOs are more likely to guide and appreciate the engagement with or use of CSR activities in strategic initiatives of a firm than conservatives (Chin et al., 2013). Based on this political ideology theory, Gupta et al. (2017) argued that organization as a whole may hold 'ideological leanings' that can affect strategic outcomes. They found that liberal

organizations show more support for engaging in CSR activities than organizations with conservative leanings. Another study found that senior partners of law firms with a liberal ideology were making less gender bias employment decisions by equally promoting and hiring women associates than conservative senior managers (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018).

Similarly, in the workplace, another study has shown that there is less wage gape disparity among men and women in firms who have more liberal partners than conservative (Briscoe & Joshi, 2017). Given that political ideology may guide individuals and firm level decisions, it is surprising that few studies have investigated the ideology driven psychological process or mechanism through which CEOs or managers will decide on where to seek information (i.e. either from multi-stakeholders or only preferred stakeholders) and what information to acquire (i.e. selective exposure to only desired information or more comprehensive exposure to required information) (Johnson & Roberto, 2019).

Jost (2017) posits that significant ideological asymmetries exist with respect to epistemic motivations. He has "confirmed that political conservatism was positively associated with intolerance of ambiguity, need for cognitive closure, personal needs for order and structure, cognitive/perceptual rigidity, and dogmatism", while "liberalism was positively associated with integrative complexity, uncertainty tolerance, cognitive refection, and need for cognition" (Jost, 2017, p. 179). Following the notion of ideological asymmetries Barberá, Jost, Nagler, Tucker, and Bonneau (2015) attempted to answer whether individuals holding liberal-conservative political beliefs are prone to scan information from social media which resonates with their beliefs and avoid that which does not. However, as conservatives are intolerant of ambiguity and show a higher need for cognitive closure, they are more likely to favour an 'echo chamber' environment.

For example, a telecom giant in Pakistan, 'Mobilink', has always been committed in its enduring CSR struggles. Among many others, 'the recycled schoolbags initiative' for

underprivileged children was a project which generated a positive sentiment in the telecom industry (Zeeshan, 2011). In an interview, Mr. Zohair Khaliq, the ex-CEO of Mobilink, explained how billboards' skins, which are made of non-biodegradable plastic materials, were converted into school bags for underprivileged children. He added, that these billboards might intrigue one to think, what happens to the displayed billboards when a marketing campaign is ended? Not only does Mobilink now reuse its pana-flex sheets to manufacture schoolbags for children, in their manufacturing process Mobilink has also begun employing marginalized women. Mr. Khaliq further added, that there are multiple benefits of such an effort such as: reuse of the materials that would otherwise be destined for landfills or burnt, which would release toxic fumes into the air; donation of 35,000 school bags to children in need; and the creation of new employment opportunities to empower women. Nonetheless, these efforts have created several challenges, such as the collection of billboards from far flung areas; the dismantling of skins from boards in a way that prevents tearing and wastage; power shortages; and efficient design challenges of bags to reduce the amount of waste. However, these challenges have been overcome due to the commitment of Mobilink's CSR team (Zeeshan, 2011). The question is what motivated Mobilink's decision makers to act beyond occasional philanthropy and to initiate such an ambitious CSR program? How did individuals within the organization gather the information related to the social problem and interpret it in such a way that resulted in a sustainable CSR initiative? Drawing on Daft and Weick's (1984) information scanning model with the premise of Hambrick and Mason (1984) Upper Echelons Theory, we propose the following proposition:

> **P2a:** Liberal leaning managers will tend to seek multiple data sources and thus acquire comprehensive data from the external and internal environment and will tend to show greater tendency towards CSR engagement than managers with a conservative political ideology.

Interpretation of information

Since politically conservative individuals maintain "what is traditional and familiar and the justification of hierarchical, unequal forms of social organization---promise certainty, simplicity, order, security" and liberals "emphasizes equality, progress, diversity, and tolerance of differences" (Jost, 2017, p. 169), it is noteworthy to explore whether individuals, using the political liberal-conservative domain, are equally prone to obtain information in a similar manner when making strategic choices (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Barberá et al., 2015).

Managers operate in complex environments and many of their decisions comprise trade-offs between competing interests such as their own interests and various stakeholders' interests when making strategic decisions (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019) according to their pre-existing beliefs and ideologies (Jost, 2017). Therefore, "interpretation pertains to the process by which managers translate data into knowledge and understanding about the environment" (Daft & Weick, 1984, p. 291). However, managers' ideology driven process of data interpretation will vary according to: the extent to which the data is ambiguous and insinuates several interpretations about the environment (i.e. data equivocality); and the guides and procedures used to process the data for collective interpretation (i.e. assembly rules and information cycles) (Daft & Weick, 1984).

Data equivocality

Managers with liberal ideological beliefs and unconstrained vision will seek a variety of cues about the unanalyzable environment from multiple sources such as personal contacts, causal information encounters, and chance opportunities before making strategic decisions, such as CSR. Thus, the collected data will more likely be equivocal in nature, since, personal nature and external cues are subject to multiple interpretations (Daft & Weick, 1984; Jost, 2017; Sowell, 2007). Therefore, managers will discuss external cues comprehensively until they reach a common interpretation and data equivocality is reduced with shared observations and

discussion to arrive at a mutual course of action (Daft & Weick, 1984). Contrarily, managers with conservative ideological beliefs and constrained vision will receive less equivocal data, since, the environment is assumed as analyzable, and data comes through routine reports, and documents. The data therefore offers a more uniform stimulus, and thus less discussion is required to arrive at a common interpretation.

As an illustration, the 'Thar Desert' is among the most backward areas of Pakistan facing several severe problems related to education, health, employment, drinking water, and children's malnutrition. In such a scenario, in 2017, the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) in Pakistan, as part of their CSR activities, launched the 'women dump truck driving program' in the Thar Desert to empower women in order to make them financially independent and to break-down rigid cultural barriers. SECMC hired and trained twenty-six women as dump truck drivers. Dump trucks weigh sixty tonnes and are used to clear dirt from the mining site to gain access to the coal. There were no negative outcomes in the women's ability to manage to drive such complex equipment (Samoon, 2017).

In an interview, Mr. Naseer Memon, the general manager of CSR at the SECMC, explained how the new and quite radical idea of the 'women dump truck driving program' was conceived. He added; I always knew how resilient Thar women are! Since they can be seen bringing water from four to five kilometres away from wells on foot in fifty-degree Celsius heat alongside other household chores - "They are tough!". The question is how Mr. Naseer Memon envisioned such an idea and managed to successfully challenge the status-quo in a society where women are considered suitable only for cleaning, washing, and cooking for their families? How do ideological preferences influence individuals' decision making? Since, political ideology reflects personal values, it is expected that it is likely to guide the way managers perceive their environments, and thus, we propose the following propositions:

P2b: Liberal leaning managers will tend to acknowledge environmental uncertainties and accept data with high equivocality as it comes from multiple sources.

P2c: Managers with conservative ideological stances will assume the environment as analyzable and seek data through routine reports, and documents with less equivocality.

Assembly rules and information cycles

Assembly rules are the guides and procedures used to process the data for collective interpretation. Generally, the number of rules to process the data for interpretation depends on data equivocality. The greater the data equivocality, the fewer the number of rules used to agree on a collective interpretation, since, there is uncertainty about more ambiguous information and what exactly it means. Conversely, if the data is less equivocal in nature, the greater the number of rules used for interpretation, as there is certainty about the information and how it should be handled (Daft & Weick, 1984). Assembly rules signify a broader paradigm. This includes how standard operating procedures are evaluated and carried out, alongside chain-of-command designations. By its nature, assembly rules explore protocol measures that are effective in handling ambiguous information, and also, how related processes might reveal. Therefore, to assemble the equivocal information inputs for the information interpretation process, fewer rather general rules are used to understand what the information delineates due to uncertainty factor and vice versa (Putnam & Sorenson, 1982).

Following a similar logic, the number of information cycles also depends on the nature of data equivocality. For example, if there is high equivocality in data, the data will be cycled numerous times among managers before they arrive at a common interpretation. Contrarily, the less the data equivocality, the fewer the number of information cycles among managers. Hence, the number of assembly rules and information cycles to process data for interpretation are inversely related (Daft & Weick, 1984). Managers with a liberal political stance, who perceive the environment as unanalyzable, and seek multiple sources for information gathering, will receive equivocal information, and will set fewer assembly rules for data interpretation

(due to uncertainty of data) but will require several information cycles before a mutual interpretation is reached (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Barberá et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2017). Thus, we propose:

> **P2d:** Managers with liberal ideological stances will set fewer assembly rules and numerous information cycles until they reach a common meaning/interpretation of equivocal data.
>
> **P2e:** Conservative leaning managers will set numerous assembly rules and fewer information cycles before they take any CSR initiative as they will tend to seek data through routine reports, and documents with less equivocality.

Next, we present the contribution of this conceptualization further and offer avenues for future research.

CONCLUSION

By highlighting the significant role of managers' political ideology in strategic decision making, we have sought to explore - how executives' strategic choices are influenced by their values? We have also explored, how do executives gather, and filter information based on their values when making such strategic choices? These questions are central to the strategic management field and have recently captured more attention (Carnahan & Greenwood, 2018; Hafenbrädl & Waeger, 2017). In order to understand strategic decision making at the individual-level, we have integrated the central premise of Upper Echelons Theory that executives' "experiences, values, and personalities… affect their choices" (Hambrick, 2007, p. 334) and the perspective of organizations as an interpretation system model in which internal and external information must be gathered, filtered, and processed before decisions are made. Political liberal-conservative ideologies offer diverse moral foundations (Graham et al., 2009). Thus, liberals have a tendency for unconstrained vision (Sowell, 2007). Consequently, such kinds of vision drive liberals to believe in social justice, change, and equal rights. On the contrary, conservatives have a more constrained vision, that suggests the imperfectability of

human nature and the possibility that potential changes to the social system will have unanticipated negative outcomes that may aggravate social problems (Sowell, 2007). As a result, a constrained vision drives conservatives to give priority and importance to stability, respect for autonomy, and tradition (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Tetlock, 2000).

We contribute by exploring politically liberal and conservative manager's values and their congruence with the information processing mechanism towards their CSR engagement. First, we suggest that managers with liberal political stances will have more tendency for CSR initiatives, as they seek comprehensive information from multiple sources to analyze the internal and external environment than managers with conservative political beliefs. Second, we advocate that managers with unconstrained vision will set fewer rules and several information cycles to process data with high equivocality received from multiple sources before arriving at a mutual interpretation. Conversely, we argue that managers with constrained vision will set many rules and fewer information cycles to process less equivocal data received from routine reports and documents.

Our propositions are supported by the findings of Briscoe and Joshi (2017), Carnahan and Greenwood (2018) and Johnson and Roberto (2019) that liberalism's pervasive view of social change, equality, and rejection of the status-quo foresee greater and continuous philanthropic engagements. On the contrary, conservative ideology's inclination for the pursuit of maintaining social order and respect for tradition may show their avoidance and deflect concerns of stakeholders in the internal and external environment.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our study recommends additional research avenues and offers some suggestions. Recent studies for example, confirm that ideologically liberal firms tend to engage more in CSR

activities than conservative firms and may accentuate diversity, shared responsibility and open-source innovation practices (Gupta et al., 2017). However, liberal and conservative-leaning firms may vary in their responses to multiple stakeholders such as social activist, regulatory bodies, shareholder activist, employees, and suppliers to the firm. Future research might explore, how firms develop their information processing mechanism differently when detecting and addressing trends, events, social problems, stakeholders and community requirements in the value congruent manner of their decision makers.

Future research questions to be explored include: How do these ideologically liberal or conservative firms interact with the external world to obtain, filter, and process information for strategic decision making? Scholars may explore how a politically liberal manager within a politically conservative firm will drive the information processing mechanism when making strategic choices. How might this process differ for a conservative manager within the same firm? Are decisions always predictable using such a framework? We suggest that future research takes into account the political ideologies driven information processing framework while examining the strategic decision making that can provide a novel avenue to explain managers' convergence processes (Jost, 2017). Since, strong political ideologies steer individuals to like-minded others, affecting their strategic choices, it would also be interesting to explore homophily among CSR managers. It is hoped that the insights provided in this paper will inspire future research on this important topic.

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Table 1: American CEOs' statements about the 'Business Roundtable' redefinition of corporations' purpose

Name, Designation, and Company	Point of view on social issues/ business responsibility towards shareholders/stakeholders	Ideological Proclivities	BRT Signatory or non-signatory
Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan CEO	"…there is a growing wealth gap in the United States and prioritizing all stakeholders will lead to a healthier economy. The American dream is alive, but fraying" (Dilts, 2019, p. 1)	Liberal tendency	Signatory
Ken Bertsch, executive director Council of Institutional Investors (CII)	"…It is not realistic…to expect that the Mark Zuckerbergs of the world are going to save us from a failure of politics (of governments, and of citizens in electing effective governments)" (Landy, 2019, p. 2)	Conservative tendency	Non-signatory
Miles White, Chairman and CEO Abbott	"…thinking ahead and being prepared for what may come next" …to invest in making things of lasting value and benefit to many" (Rogers, 2019, p. 3)	Liberal tendency	Signatory
Ginni Rometty, CEO IBM	"…Society gives each of us a license to operate" "…It's a question of whether society trusts you or not. We	Liberal tendency	Signatory

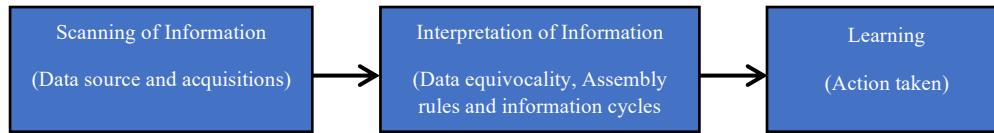|			
	need society to accept what it is that we do" (Murray, 2019, p. 3)		
Kenneth Frazier, CEO Merck	In response to Donald Trump's equivocal comments about the Charlottesville riots, Kenneth Frazier withdrew from advisory committee and said "…I felt a strong conviction that by not taking action I would be endorsing what had happened and what had been said. I asked my board for its endorsement, because I wanted to speak to the company's values as well as my own" (Ignatius & Frazier, 2018, p. 83)	Liberal tendency	Signatory
Larry Fink, Chairman and CEO BlackRock	"…Purpose is not the sole pursuit of profits but the animating force for achieving them," Fink wrote in his 2019 annual letter to shareholders. "As divisions continue to deepen, companies must demonstrate their commitment to the countries, regions, and communities where they operate, particularly on issues central to the world's future prosperity" (Fitzgerald, 2019, p. 3)	Liberal tendency	Signatory

Table 2: Summary of definitions of 'social' and 'corporate social' responsibility at macro, meso, and micro-levels

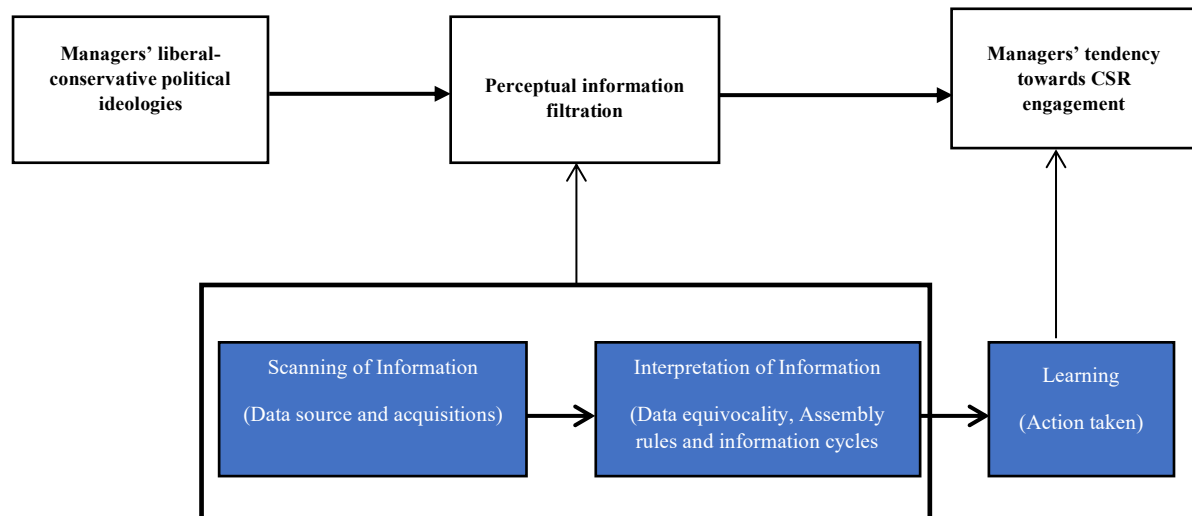|	Definition	Comment
1.	" refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (Bowen, 1953, p. 6)	This broader definition of 'social responsibility' of businessmen paved the ground for all CSR subsequent definitions.
2.	"A socially responsible firm is one whose managerial staff balances a multiplicity of interests. Instead of striving only for larger profits for its stakeholders, a responsible enterprise also takes into account employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities and the nation" (Jonhson, 1971, p. 50)	Incorporated the broader scope of responsibility, however, individuals' views on such arrangements were ignored.
3.	"A calculated purchase of advertising services or goodwill" (Knauer, 1994, p. 11)	Based on meso-level. Restricted to instrumental endeavours such as the business case for CSR (i.e. corporate social and financial performance have positive relationship) by organizations.
4.	"Context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance" (Aguinis, 2011, p. 855)	This definition referred to organizational policies and actions, therefore, it is meso in nature. However, we cannot ignore the significant role of decision makers who influence and implement such policies and actions.
5.	"Corporate social responsibility refers to managements' obligation to set policies, make decisions and follow courses of action beyond the requirements of the law that are desirable in terms of the values and objectives of society" (Mosley et al., 1996, p. 141)	Similar to (4), this definition is meso in its scope, yet broader, and less explicit.
6.	"A process in which managers take responsibility for identifying and accommodating the interests of those affected by the organization's action" (Maclagan, 1998, p. 147).	Focus on micro-level CSR decision making, however, on what grounds and how such decisions are made was left unaddressed (mechanism for such decisions is missing).

Table 3: Political ideologies definition, conceptualization, and measurement

Political Ideology	Liberal Ideology	Conservative Ideology
Definition "…an interrelated set of moral and political attitudes that possesses cognitive, affective, and motivational components. That is, ideology helps to explain why people do what they do" (Jost, 2006)	"…concerned with civil rights and that people who are more liberal in political ideology are likely to be sensitive to social issues in general and to such specific issues as diversity, social change, human rights, and the environment" (Schwartz, 1996) adopted by Chin et al. (2013, p. 201)	"…an ideological belief system that is significantly (but not completely) related to motivational concerns having to do with the psychological management of uncertainity and fear. Specifically, the avoidance of uncertainty (and the striving of certainity) may be particularly tied to one core dimension of conservative thought, resistance to change…. Similary, concerns with fear and threat may be linked to the second core dimension of conservatism, endorsement of inequality…" (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003, p. 369)
Conceptualization Acceptance versus rejection of inequality Preference for social change verses preservation of the societal status-quo	"… are usually described as liberals if they seek to advance such ideas as equality, aid to the disadvantaged, tolerance of dissenters, and social reform" (Jost, 2006, p. 654)	"…and as conservatives if they place particular emphasis on order, stability, the needs of business, differential economics rewards, and defense of the status quo" (Jost, 2006, p. 654)
Measurement Openness to experience, Open-minded Enthusiastic, creative Desire for novelty Closed-minded Conscientious, concerned with rules and norms, conventional	Openness to experience, Open-minded (Carney et al., 2008; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003) Enthusiastic, creative (Tomkins, 1963) Dsire for novelty (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Tomkins, 1963)	Closed-minded (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003) Conscientious, concerned with rules and norms, conventional (Capara, Barbaranelli, & Zimbardo, 1999; Carney et al., 2008; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003)

Inspired from Daft and Weick (1984).

Figure 1: Perceptual filtration process of information scanning, interpretation and learning.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the role of managerial ideologies and the perceptual filtration process of information in CSR engagement.

Inspired from key extant literature, including Briscoe and Joshi (2017), Chin et al. (2013), England (1967), Gupta et al. (2017) and Daft and Weick (1984).