

Unlocking organizational transformation: Why political liberal CEOs are essential champions for the greater good?

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Abstract

In this article, we explore how the CEO's political ideology affects the firm propensity to engage in transformative initiatives associated with Profit, People, and the Planet. And how can this accelerate or slow the Greater Good transformation? Drawing on Upper Echelon's Theory, political psychology research, Laughlin's framework, and Elkington approach we propose that the more liberal the CEO's political ideology, the more the firm can initiate transformations that reflect an 'evolution' or 'colonisation' of the firm's interpretive schemes, ensuring a 'balance/coherence' between the 3Ps, thereby maximising the Greater Good. Furthermore, we argue that this impact is moderated by the political ideology of critical internal and external stakeholders: the Board of Directors, the TMT, and the State where the firm is headquartered. Our discussion of the impact exerted by the CEO's political ideology on (a) opportunistic Profit-driven transformative efforts, and (b) transformative efforts with large-scale moral impact, highlights three possible categories of the CEO's profile (role): "Shareholder Guardian" (incremental impact), "Symbolic Progressive" (artificial impact), and "Greater Good Change Champion" (substantial impact). We contribute by proposing a multi-level conceptual model regarding the impact of CEOs on transformative organizational initiatives for the Greater Good, considering their political ideologies. In doing so, we contribute to the United Nation's urgent call for a more nuanced approach to studying the role of leaders in transforming the world.

Keywords: Political ideology, CEO, Transformation, Sustainable development, Interpretive schemes

INTRODUCTION

" Transforming our world " within 15 years "This is a promise made by leaders to everyone on the planet," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (United Nations, 2015).

" Doing less harm than before is no longer enough. We need to change the system, and not just optimise a system that no longer works ", argues Paul Polman, Unilever's CEO until 2019.

In recent years, businesses, societies, and governments have become increasingly confronted with an extraordinarily complex set of challenges from multiple directions (United Nations, 2022). The realities were daunting, with global scales of famine, a changing climate, broader political developments, and other forms of global disruption (United Nations, 2022). In short, the world was in a critical and chaotic crisis at both micro and macro levels, accompanied by intense global competition, digitisation of work, hybrid work, and skills challenges. In light of this context, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was introduced in 2015, setting a stirring commitment to 17 sustainable development goals, reflecting global awareness. This unprecedented agreement (Agenda 2030, "Transforming our world") results from countless acts of restorative leadership, which call for a radical change in tackling social, economic, and ecological challenges for a balanced future where all life thrives. Such a transformation relies on establishing a framework and systematic approach that prioritizes humanity and sets the world on a distinct path towards a strategically beneficial future (Dierksmeier, 2016). That said, the question of how to drive effective, and sustainable transformation has become urgent in the face of opportunity and uncertainty, requiring firms to move from a relatively passive to a proactive and dynamic attitude (Baptista et al., 2020). The need for change is inevitable, whether from the firm's external (socio-political) environment, which Laughlin (1991) refers to as 'environmental disruption', or a kick/shove, taking the form of institutional pressure from NGOs or regulators.

In recent years, the notion of 'transformation' has increasingly taken centre stage in global sustainability research (Patterson et al., 2017; Jibril et al., 2024). A sustainable transformation involves long-term work, "a multidirectional approach," which aspires to change and review almost all dimensions of focal firms (De Matos and Clegg, 2013). From this perspective, an effective, and sustainable transformation strategy must involve a wide variety of stakeholders and interests, including investors, employees, customers, governments, NGOs and society at

large (Eccles et al., 2012; Markard et al., 2012), while focusing on solutions that help humanity achieve normative goals towards sustainability (Schaltegger et al., 2023; Meuer et al., 2020). As far as the SDGs are concerned, many challenges must be overcome for an effective and accelerated transformation to achieve the Greater good (Lessem, 2016). For example, companies are called upon to integrate social factors, such as equality and diversity, working conditions and safety, and environmental issues, with the utmost care. Internal stakeholders need to feel that sustainable transformation is not just about business performance; it is about the Greater Good, which refers to what is beneficial for society (Schoenmaker and Schramade, 2019).

Bearing in mind that although the imperative to develop an effective and sustainable strategy seems clear, the process often needs to be revised, and only some companies are born with a real commitment to sustainable development (Eccles et al., 2012). As the academic literature testifies, the focus has been more on unsustainability than on how potential transformation processes would improve the situation (Salomaa and Juhola, 2020), leading to Greater good (Lessem, 2016). To transform businesses into sustainable forms while being effective, firms need leadership commitment and the ability to engage with multiple stakeholders along the value chain (Eccles et al., 2012). Transformations in corporate sustainability do not just happen; they result from individuals and groups taking deliberate action in favour of sustainability. It is the managers and employees of an organisation - referred to as 'change agents for sustainability'-who play a crucial role in promoting corporate sustainability, as they are responsible for launching initiatives, making decisions, and implementing actions (Lahtinen and Yrjölä, 2019). In particular, CEOs, who are the architects of strategy, organisational culture, and structure (Wheelen et al., 2018), thanks to their considerable discretionary power (Finkelstein et al., 2009), exert influence through their collective role in promoting internal and external change (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hambrick and Quigley, 2014). As organisation public face (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985), they thus reach a wider audience. CEOs can, therefore, radically change the firm's strategic direction for moral or ethical reasons (Margolis and Walsh, 2003; Waldman and Siegel, 2008), reflecting "the new political role of companies in a globalised world" (Scherer and Palazzo, 2007). CEOs as corporate representatives and decision-makers who act on behalf of the firm and respond to socio-political challenges, draw attention to and raise awareness of social issues (Cycyota, 2022), even to the point of becoming political leaders (Maak et al., 2016). They are, therefore, called upon to integrate sustainable transformation considerations as a key strategic pillar. In

order to respond to the call for business leaders to act as responsible citizens and statesmen (Chin et al., 2013), a key aspect lies in designing a holistic and personalised approach for each firm, which also involves the back-office, mid-office, and front-office.

Upper echelon theory has shown that companies' strategic choices and their ultimate consequences reflect the beliefs and values of their leaders (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Hambrick and Mason, 1984). These personal values include CEOs' interpretations of right and wrong for themselves, their firm and society (Cycyota, 2022). Previous work has focused on the different characteristics of CEOs (e.g., age, education, work experience, international background) and the individual competencies that CEOs need to have to identify and solve sustainability challenges (Beer and Walton, 1990). By way of illustration, it has been shown that the achievements of transformative leaders such as Leymah Gbowee, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Blackwell did not happen by chance. On the contrary, all these CEOs already possessed and exercised "peace goods" for generations to come, including critical thinking, courage, conflict resolution, and collaboration. However, as Hambrick and Mason (1984) argue, managers have unique skills and varied perspectives (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Hambrick and Mason, 1984). Organisational outcomes are likely to be shaped by "the values and cognitive bases of powerful actors in the organisation" (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; p. 193). Everyone has their representations and knowledge of sustainable development (Byrch et al., 2015; Ortiz-de-Mandojana et al., 2019; Arena et al., 2018) which depend on their personal beliefs (Gond and Moser, 2021; Gond et al., 2017; Söderbaum, 2007). For CEOs, in particular, their personal opinions have a profound influence on their decisions and behaviours (Wowak et al., 2017), such as their propensity to innovate (Bantel and Jackson, 1989) and to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies (Huang et al., 2023; Hemingway and MacLagan, 2004). Thus, due to his considerable influence on organisational decisions, his beliefs and political ideologies shape organisational outcomes (Chin et al., 2013). Recently, some researchers have focused on the political ideologies of CEOs as individuals (Chin et al., 2021; Chin et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2019; Gupta and Wowak, 2017; Gupta et al., 2018; Chin and Semadeni, 2017; Hambrick and Wowak, 2021). They have argued that senior managers' political ideologies consider individuals' core beliefs and values and that their political beliefs shape decisions to adopt or resist their firm's CSR commitment (Chin et al., 2013). Their positioning on the conservatism-liberalism dimension not only directly anticipates ultimate strategic choices such as commitment to CSR (e.g., Chin et al., 2013; Christensen et al., 2014), or pay egalitarianism for management teams (e.g., Chin and

Semadeni, 2017), but also provides second-order effects on external stakeholders. Individual values are reflected in the senior executive's political behaviour, as evidenced by Layman, (1997) and Barnea and Schwartz (1998), who find a significant link between individuals' values and political views.

Since leaders' particularities influence how they absorb and interpret information, describe, and implement potential decisions, corporate strategies are likely to be altered. Although in recent years, CEOs have shown an increasing tendency to speak out on socio-political issues (Hambrick and Wowak, 2021), their political philosophies have rarely been secret. Even if conventional wisdom implies that CEOs should be reluctant to participate in social debates (Hambrick and Wowak, 2021), CEOs increasingly ignore this dictum, taking public positions on socially controversial issues (Hambrick and Wowak, 2021). Considering the above, a deep understanding of the role of the CEO's political orientations on how he or she responds to the critical objectives of the 2030 Agenda "*Transforming our world*" by transforming the genetic code of the firm he or she leads towards and with internal and external stakeholders, is ultimate. In the same way, fresh thinking and a multidisciplinary perspective to traditional approaches and theories are needed about the challenges facing companies. In these turbulent times, a comprehensive framework and roadmap for effective and sustainable transformation (Chofreh and Goni, 2017), which positions the individual beliefs of key decision-makers, including CEOs, as a critical antecedent (catalyst or barrier), seems paramount. Such a framework can help open the black (or at least grey) box of how the CEO can contribute to developing, implementing, and improving transformative strategies (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012), towards sustainable development. Consequently, the personal political ideologies of key decision-makers, such as CEOs, may also influence how firms engage with and transform to address the manifest challenges facing firms in this chaotic period. On this basis, we raise a theoretically and practically important research question, namely: *How can the CEOs political ideologies accelerate (catalyst) or retard (obstacle) the transformation that maximises the Greater Good (sustainability and continuity) in these times of uncertainty? Moreover, what are the contingency factors?*

This paper enriches research on the UE perspective (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick and Mason, 1984) and political psychology about organisational initiatives involving Greater Good transformation, by proposing that a firm's propensity (efforts) to engage in accelerated transformation and favour of sustainable development may be influenced by the preferences and priorities of leaders, a result of their values and personalities (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick

and Mason, 1984; Gerstner et al., 2013; Arena et al., 2018) particularly their political orientations. Two reasons can be raised for considering transformative initiatives that maximise the Greater good, such as providing a particularly relevant domain for explaining the effect of the CEO's political ideology. Firstly, Greater good transformation is a value-laden initiative, an essentially social and relational phenomenon that promotes some social good, involving value-sensitive audiences and media attention. This offers a variety of ways to change the status quo, providing continuity and variety to the opportunity CEOs have to show themselves to a responsive audience. Secondly, Greater good transformation presents significant uncertainty for leaders in exploiting and exploring opportunities. Change is messy, non-linear and often unpredictable (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2005), affecting organisational participants' behaviours, beliefs, and values (Laughlin, 1991). Moreover, uncertainty management is at the heart of political philosophy, which derives from the psychological orientations of individuals to manage uncertainty in all areas of life (Jost et al., 2003; Thorisdottir et al., 2007).

This paper seeks to extend research on the political ideology of CEOs (Briscoe and Joshi, 2017; Francis et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2013; Gupta and Wowak, 2017; Elnahas and Kim, 2017) and aims to shift the idea of voluntary corporate engagement in sustainability programmes from being motivated by: risk management (e.g. compliance), corporate image enhancement (e.g. ethical, charitable, and philanthropic), or by competitive advantages (e.g. customer loyalty), to an absolute commitment that involves transformational change, being much more complex and challenging, involving People, Planet, and Profit. We develop a multi-level conceptual framework according to (Elkington, 1997) holistic "Cannibals with Forks" approach, addressing the issue of organisational transformation that maximises the Greater good as second-order morphogenetic change, according to Laughlin's (1991) framework while introducing the individual political ideology of the vital decision-maker "CEO", as a critical antecedent. More specifically, we assume that the CEO's political ideology, as reflected in the extent to which he is politically liberal or conservative, reflects the organisational propensity to engage in transformations associated with People, Planet and Profit, and which involve changes that penetrate so deeply into the firm's 'genetic code' (Smith, 1982). By Greater good transformation, we go beyond first-order change (morphostatic change), which propagates through the organisation without affecting the organisation's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991). We aim for second-order change (morphogenetic change), involving changes not only in the elements altered by first-order

change but also in interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991, p. 212). The CEO must first draw on an appreciation of self (personal beliefs and philosophies) and a relational perspective (relationship management) of the world to work effectively with stakeholders to bring about transformation and sustainable change while adapting to the resulting tensions. A transformation involves changing the shared values, beliefs, group norms, culture and traditions that guide the behaviour of group members (Ouchi, 1980; Laughlin, 1991), thus facilitating a significant change in the organisation's underlying philosophy (Laughlin, 1991).

A fundamental tenet of liberal ideology is that an actor's behaviours and outcomes can be understood as dependent on that actor's social environment; in other words, liberals tend to see more interdependence in the behaviours and outcomes of individuals and groups (Carroll et al., 1987; Skitka and Tetlock, 1993; Tetlock et al., 2013). Therefore, CEOs with liberal leanings are more likely to foster the Greater Good transformation, by initiating deep transformations associated with the 3Ps (Person, Planet and Profit) at the corporate level, as they are more open to economic, social and environmental changes, and can act as Greater Good Change Champions. Conversely, because of a conservative tendency to consider the behaviours and results of a given actor as more independent of his environment (Skitka and Tetlock, 1992; Zucker and Weiner, 1993; Weiner et al., 2011). CEOs with conservative leanings are more likely to delay the Greater Good transformation, by acting as 'Shareholder Guardians' or showing symbolic interest to sustainability aspects during the company's interpretive schemes transformation. They tend to adhere primarily to operational efficiency, and firmly to the existing social order. To this end, companies whose CEOs hold predominantly conservative beliefs should see the firm's responsibility to the world as limited, except where the tactics of these constituents directly impinge on the firm's short-term effectiveness and performance (Tetlock, 2000). CEOs who do not translate their political beliefs, acting as 'Symbolic Progressives' and making transformative efforts with large-scale impact may be a unique but genuine case. In contrast, their underlying political beliefs may be politically conservative, for example.

In addition to conceptualizing the effect of the CEO's political ideology on the fundamental pillars of organisational transformation (continuous/sustainable), we include as contingency factors the political ideology of other parties involved with the CEO. We argue that the influence of individual political ideology will be systematically strengthened as a function of the firm's internal and external stakeholders. For example, the impact of the CEO's political ideology may also depend on his or her ideological alignment or misalignment with the

external environment, notably the state in which the firm is anchored, and the internal environment, notably the board of directors and the management team. Since the nature of transformation varies across cultures, societies, and firms, fostering a diversity of drivers and moderating obstacles to the implementation of change, we investigate several contingent factors that may strengthen or weaken the main effect, including the political ideology of the board of directors, the political ideology of the TMT, and the ideology of the state in which the firm is headquartered. Specifically, the proposed effect is more substantial where there is ideological fit and vice versa. We allow for these contingencies, as they can alter the extent to which a politically liberal or conservative CEO is aware of the future of humanity and our planet, in addition to the future of the firm they lead and the extent to which they can act on their influence, being a real change agent or a symbolic representative without a real commitment to the world.

This paper makes two significant contributions. First, our theoretical conceptualization responds to the recent call for a more nuanced approach to studying the role of leaders in transforming the world. In contrast to previous work suggesting external factors such as institutional requirements (DiMaggio and Powell, 2000; Meyer and Rowan, 1977), we suggest that CEOs' philosophies may influence how they perceive the external environment and make critical decisions as a result (Finkelstein et al., 2009). Specifically, we extend research on the individual antecedents of organisational transformation by exploring the effect of the CEO's political ideology. By clarifying how CEO' political ideology directly shapes the firm's inclination for 3P-oriented interpretative schema transformation, and indirectly impacts the Greater Good transformation, we contribute to addressing sustainability challenges encompassing economic, organizational, and personal growth on a global scale, from a psychopolitical perspective. Second, our paper enriches the research on CEO' political ideology, developing propositions about how liberal CEOs as active agents of change can effectively contribute to sustainable transformations by being 'Greater Good Change Champions'. Previous research assumes that political ideology can affect CSR (Chin et al., 2013), acquisition decisions (Elnahas and Kim, 2017), tax shelters (Francis et al., 2016), CEO-employee pay disparity (Weng and Yang, 2023), susceptibility to external influences (Gupta et al., 2019), the gender pay gap (Briscoe and Joshi, 2017), and on pay egalitarianism within management teams (Chin and Semadeni, 2017). Here, we postulate that whether a CEO is politically liberal, or conservative will influence their motivation and commitment to transforming the world that maximises the Greater Good. Given that a CEO needs to work

closely with the Board and the executive team to make strategic decisions, our paper complements previous work by extending the implications of the political philosophy of the CEO (key antecedent), the Board, the TMT, and the institutional environment of the state (moderators) to a new outcome with more complexity and challenges, having a global impact. Together, this paper takes a pioneering step in considering the transformation that maximises the Greater Good, locating the political ideology of CEOs as a significant antecedent (obstacle or catalyst) while including the political ideology of the Board, the TMT and the institutional environment of the state as moderating factors. This partly responds to the United Nations' urgent calls for a radical change in how we address social, economic, and ecological challenges for a balanced future.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSITIONS

1. BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS

Continuous and sustainable organisational transformation. According to Laughlin's framework, "transitions" or "transformations" are triggered within the firm in response to "environmental disturbances", "jolts", "kicks", or "noise" (Laughlin, 1991). On the one hand, a first-order change (morphostatic change) will spread throughout the organisation without altering internal patterns of interpretation. The "refutation" and "reorientation" paths are reactions to morphostatic change and are therefore called "transitions" (Laughlin, 1991). On the other hand, a second-order change (morphogenetic change) will result in changes not only in the aspects directly affected by the morphostatic changes but also in the organisation's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991, p. 212). The 'colonisation' and 'evolution' pathways are reactions to morphogenetic change called 'transformations'. However, what is organisational transformation? Cummings and Worley (2005) suggest that it encompasses significant alterations in individuals' perceptions, cognition, and behavior. It involves reshaping the design elements of the firm (Beer and Walton, 1990) beyond simply 'improving the organisation or fine-tuning the status quo' (Cummings and Worley, 1997, p. 476) by redefining the essential elements of culture, including the norms and values by which the firm operates (Burke and Noumair, 2015; French and Bell, 1995). This involves moving from 'doing less harm' to creating shared value and 'doing good by doing new things' (Adams et al., 2016), which is, therefore, an essential way of addressing challenges and delivering more comprehensive benefits to society (Voegtlin and Scherer, 2017; Bealt and Shaw, 2024).

Compared to transactional change, the key to transformational change is to create a new organisational reality that requires a process that is cyclical and non-linear, from which the firm can continuously adjust and adapt in a turbulent environment and gain resilience necessary for successful change initiatives (Conner, 1992). So, what is effective and sustainable organisational transformation?

Effective transformation involves moving from a price-oriented approach to one of maximising operational resilience through effective and flexible integrated management processes, to an obstacle or enabler-oriented framework in the context of operational excellence (e.g. Sutton, 2012). The facilitating factors analysed in previous work for the successful implementation of operational excellence, enabling companies to adapt and promptly react to changes in their business environment, have mainly been: Organisational agility which helps to identify changes in its environment, and provide its stakeholders with targeted and rapid responses, by reorganising its resources, processes and strategies, continuous improvement and organisational capabilities (Santhiapillai and Ratnayake, 2023; Thüerer et al., 2018), and management leadership. That said, an effective transformation in favour of sustainable development reflects the firm's 'responsibility' to society (Bansal, 2005), aimed at reducing or eliminating a business's adverse effects. How companies can transform themselves while actively meeting the SDGs and combining responsibility and opportunity is an unavoidable question (Shrivastava and Hart, 1995; Hall and Vredenburg, 2003). It is not a question of "making things different while remaining fundamentally the same as they have always been" (Smith, 1982, p. 318), but a form of change "that penetrates so deeply into the 'genetic code' that all future generations acquire and reflect these changes" (Smith, 1982, p. 318). Sustainable transformation involves fundamental societal, economic, technical and cultural changes that lead to "new patterns of interactions and outcomes" (Patterson et al., 2017, p. 2). This may require integrating sustainability aspects into a firm's planning, processes and activities, i.e. including the following levels in management: (1) normative, (2) strategic and (3) operational (Baumgartner, 2014). (1) The firm's vision, mission, and the fit between the commitment to sustainability and the organisational culture are part of normative management. The normative component aims to ensure and strengthen the legitimacy of organisational activities by stakeholders and society (Baumgartner, 2014). Justice, equity and ethics are at the heart of the normative interpretation of sustainable development. (2) Developing an effective corporate sustainability strategy is part of the strategic level. The aim of the strategic level is effectiveness, i.e. the determination of long-term objectives. (3)

Implementing the sustainable development strategy in the firm's different functions is at the heart of the operational level. The operational level aims to implement the normative and strategic objectives within all the firm's activities (Ulrich and Beatty, 2001). An effective and sustainable transformation, therefore, implies that sustainability values do not necessarily have to compromise the dominant 'socio-economic paradigm' of financial success; on the contrary, sustainability can broaden the base and generate opportunities for future success, thus contributing to financial (Profit), environmental (Planet), and social (People) success. To achieve this triple aim, companies need to revolutionise how they think and act (Elkington, 1997), which requires the commitment and involvement of senior management. Thus, "The worst thing that blind business leaders suffer from is that corporate activity is focused on creating economic value, not social or ethical values. Companies are moving toward triple bottom line values" (Elkington, 1997). A growing body of research supports senior management's role in designing and implementing pro-environmental strategies (Nadeem et al., 2020). A firm's attitude towards sustainable development depends on the gender diversity of the management team (Nadeem et al., 2020), age (Fabrizi et al., 2014), whose diversity of perspectives enables diversity in organisational action (He and Jiang, 2019). Managers' characteristics determine their behaviour and strategic choices, affecting the firm's objectives, behaviours and results. This makes the prism of UET (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) a logical choice for this paper, which aims to examine how the adoption of interpretive schemes transformative initiatives at the broader organisational level depend on the CEO and his psychological attributes, in particular his political orientations in terms of liberalism or conservatism.

Role of the CEO's political ideology. Prior research has shown a notable relationship between top management commitment and strategic change in the firm, deploying the UET paradigm (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). Hambrick and Mason (1984) set out their point of view, proposing that leaders make choices through highly individualised lenses formed by experiences, personalities, and values (Chin et al., 2013; Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hambrick, 2007). Particularly in complex and ambiguous decision-making contexts, outcomes at the organisational level thus reflect the leaders themselves (Mischel, 1977). That said, CEOs' beliefs, including their political ideologies, shape organisational decisions and outcomes (Chin et al., 2013; Briscoe and Joshi, 2017; Francis et al., 2016; Hambrick and Wowak, 2021; Gupta and Wowak, 2017; Elnahas and Kim, 2017). In what follows, we extend the upper echelon theory by addressing this managerial characteristic reflecting CEOs'

underlying attitudes towards uncertainty, namely personal political orientation in a context requiring transformation of the world, maximising the Greater Good while balancing efficiency and sustainability. Ideology translates as "a set of beliefs about the good order of society and how to achieve it" (Erikson and Tedin, 2003, p. 64). Political ideology is defined as "an interdependent set of moral and political attitudes that has cognitive, affective and motivational components... [which] organises [people's] values and beliefs and leads to political behaviour" (Jost, 2006, p. 653). Political orientation not only "explains why people do what they do" (Jost, 2006, p. 653) but also influences "how people think, feel, and behave... even if they do not express their ideological leanings perfectly" (Jost et al., 2003, p. 127). Political ideology is essential because it implies idealised government objectives and designates the means of achieving them (Aguilera et al., 2007). It forms the basis of most economic policies (e.g. Dutt and Mitra, 2002). It is associated with decision-making processes (Jost, 2006). Given these considerations, we refer to previous research in various disciplines, including psychopolitical and organisational studies (Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2009 ; Gupta and Wowak, 2017; Chin et al., 2013; Godos-Díez et al., 2011), using the liberalism-conservatism continuum to assess the impact of CEOs' political orientations, on the initiatives of the companies they lead in terms of (1) transformative efforts with large-scale impact associated primarily with the 2Ps of sustainability namely: People, and Planet, and (2) opportunistic transformative efforts associated with Profit, thus impacting the transformation that maximises the Greater Good.

As political scientists and psychologists concluded, the liberal-conservative spectrum is the most robust and parsimonious way of classifying societal political ideologies (Poole and Rosenthal, 1984). The conventional liberal-conservative continuum is a compelling way of understanding and characterising people's beliefs and values (Jost et al., 2009). Liberals are more open to progressive ideas, attach less importance to tradition and are more willing to try new methods (Jost et al., 2003). Conservatives, on the other hand, place greater emphasis on respect for authority and stability. Regarding the functioning of the market, liberals see the potential limitations of the market, but conservatives believe that the market is highly efficient and, therefore, opposes any action (Carmines and D'Amico, 2015). Therefore, the CEO's political ideology reflected by the liberal-conservative spectrum as a reflection of personal values and beliefs can also affect organisational strategies and should be considered an essential factor in understanding Greater Good organisational transformation. Based on the above, we propose that the extent to which a CEO is politically more liberal or conservative

affects their tendency to initiate major transformations penetrating the firm's genetic code, going beyond the simple objective of making money "Profit" and integrating 2 of the 5 Ps of the 17 SDGs namely: "People", and "Planet" (United Nations, 2015), into the firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991). This translates the "triple bottom line" (Elkington, 1997, p. 1), which integrates the social, economic and environmental value created, including a tangible and intangible dimension, from which everyone will benefit if *the cannibals adopt the fork*: the companies themselves, their shareholders, stakeholders, society and the environment (Elkington, 1997).

2. TOWARD AN EXTENDED THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Companies are key players in society. For a CEO, assuming a multifaceted role means considering the influence of operations on various stakeholders. By integrating social and environmental responsibility into their core strategies, companies can strengthen their long-term sustainability and resilience (Roblek et al., 2020). Although CEOs of these companies operate under constraints (e.g. Lieberman and O'Connor, 1972; Hannan and Freeman, 1977), they often have considerable discretion in their actions (Hambrick and Finkelstein, 1987; Finkelstein and Boyd, 1998). The extent to which CEOs are more politically liberal or conservative influences their behaviour and motivation to address specific issues or problems (Swigart et al., 2020). Cognitive and behavioural mechanisms encourage CEOs to 'see what they want to see' and 'hear what they want to hear' (England, 1967, p. 55), thus affecting transformational organisational efforts. A CEO's level of cognitive flexibility, or their tendency to adapt thinking, emotions and behaviours to changing conditions (Martin and Rubin, 1995), may be an essential factor in successfully pursuing organizational ambidexterity (Kiss et al., 2020). To this end, we link the transformative reorientations of CEOs as agents of change (Schaltegger et al., 2023) for the Greater Good of society, in terms of Profit, People, and Planet to the three sub-dimensions that distinguish the two opposing modes of political thought (liberalism/conservatism) namely (1) preference for equality over acceptance of inequality, (2) desire for social change over maintenance of norms, and (3) emphasis on shared responsibility over personal responsibility (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993). These contrasting beliefs - about the preference or otherwise for equality, the desire for social change, and shared responsibility - can make corporate transformation in favour of sustainable development a fat subject to explore. This involves whether or not to integrate social and

environmental sustainability into the firm's interpretive schemes - "how people should act in different situations" (Laughlin, 1991, p. 212) - within the firm, as reflected in (1) the shared values, beliefs, group norms, culture and traditions that guide the behaviour of group members (Ouchi, 1980), and expressed through (2) social interactions (Dekker, 2004) with stakeholders, since participation is essential to sustainable development. We assume that the CEO's political ideology reflects a binary view that oversimplifies the complex relationship between social (1) and societal well-being and (2) business success (3). On this basis: First, we discuss how the CEO's political ideology translates how the firm can initiate (morphogenetic) transformations in the firm's interpretive schemes (i.e. the fundamental values, norms, culture, beliefs of the organisation's participants), which are associated with People (Proposition (1a)), Planet (Proposition (1b)) and Profit (Proposition (1c)) while deducing the global proposition (Proposition 1). Secondly, we discuss how the different stakeholders (internal and external), namely the Board of Directors (Proposition 2), the TMT (Proposition 3), and the State in which the firm is based (Proposition 4), moderate the different associations proposed (See Figure 1).

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1. People:

Given their personalised perspectives, CEOs with their political ideologies reflect their values through the prism they use to interpret social equity situations (e.g. human rights, fair labour practices and the general well-being of employees and communities) and translate their interpretation into organisational transformation. More specifically, the extent to which a CEO is politically more liberal or conservative influences how he or she brings about morphogenetic (second-order) changes in the firm's interpretive schemes, which are expressed through the relational aspect with and towards stakeholders, beyond the simple objective of making money, by integrating one of the 5 Ps of the 17 SDGs, namely People, into the firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991). Liberals are more aware of the issue of inequality, are more open to ideas of social change and stipulate that the labour market is not optimal (Jost et al., 2003). Politically conservative individuals are less open to change because they psychologically adhere to the existing social order (Jost et al., 2003). They oppose change and avoid any action that might disrupt the firm's operations (Weng and Yang, 2023). For

example, CEOs with a conservative political philosophy tend to support relatively high pay disparity within the firm, assuming that a pay gap motivates employees to work to climb the ladder and improve their well-being (Connelly et al., 2014). In contrast, politically liberal individuals tend to value egalitarianism and rapid change (Briscoe et al., 2014; McDonnell and Cobb, 2020), allowing a firm to form a more cohesive group while improving long-term prospects, although such measures may cause short-term turbulence (Weng and Yang, 2023). CEO's political liberalism, or the extent to which CEOs are more politically liberal than conservative, affects companies' support for LGBT employees by implementing LGBT-friendly policies (Weng and Yang, 2023). Politically liberal CEOs tend to reduce pay dispersion among non-CEO executives and reduce pay gaps between CEOs and non-CEOs (Chin et al., 2021). Firms with Republican-leaning CEOs engage generously in lobbying efforts and lobby on more bills (Unsal et al., 2016). Therefore, they can consider that social sustainability ensures that the industry makes a profit and that industrial activities do not cause social degradation (Dey et al., 2020).

On this basis, we can argue that politically liberal CEOs can actively support sustainable initiatives towards (internal/external) stakeholders to solve systemic problems and contribute to the general well-being of communities while moving away from the status quo.

Specifically, we suggest that a CEO with a liberal political philosophy is inclined to consider more socially progressive measures for interpretive schemes transformation with large-scale impact. A CEO with a liberal political orientation is likely to handle most of the internal and external communication regarding social sustainability (Trittin-Ulbrich, 2023), and to take a stand on socio-political issues (Hambrick and Wowak, 2021). As companies face global transformation issues, liberal CEOs are likely to view the responsibilities of the firm they lead to stakeholders in a more inclusive way, leading them to propose, promote and endorse a range of interpretive schemes transformative initiatives. Depending on their liberal political orientation, stakeholders can act as an early warning system for shocks, such as a change in regulation or a strike (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016). They help them to identify changes in the environment, such as new technologies or changes in relative prices (Harrison et al., 2010; Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016), thereby stimulating creativity and problem-solving skills (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016). This is particularly true when strategic change is transformative, i.e. when it is characterised by "constant, evolving and cumulative" changes (Weick and Quinn, 1999, p. 366) that lead to radical organisational transformation over time (e.g. Girod and Whittington, 2015; Dalpiaz and Di Stefano, 2018).

Thanks to their motivated cognition, compared to their politically conservative counterparts, politically liberal CEOs tend to perceive that practices that reduce inequalities and improve working practices are worthwhile and will support them. By emphasising novelty at the expense of familiarity (Dalpiaz and Stefano, 2018), they can trigger tragic interpretations of the consequences of change among the audiences concerned (Brown and Humphreys, 2003). They will tend to 'colonise' or 'evolve' patterns of corporate interpretation (Laughlin, 1991) - the firm's underlying philosophy - in ways that ensure the overall well-being of employees and communities. They will tend to find meaning in negotiating the sustainability agenda in their attempts to drive change (Mitra and Buzzanell, 2017).

Organisational change processes towards sustainability require different leadership skills at different stages (Lueneburger and Goleman, 2010). Through systems thinking and an ability to collaborate with stakeholders (Hesselbarth and Schaltegger, 2014), politically liberal CEOs will tend to implement strategies to involve other actors in the firm, for example, by creating 'formal networks of sustainability ambassadors' (e.g. Risi and Wickert, 2017). Conversely, conservative CEOs will tend to favour practices that fit with their dominant preferences, including less support for organisational practices in favour of social sustainability. Conservative CEOs will generally tend to disfavour policies aimed at social change. Their conservative philosophy will not only hinder them from receiving proposals to transform the firm in favour of sustainability but also create normative pressure to maintain the social status quo. Thus:

Proposition (1a). The more liberal the CEO's political ideology, the more the firm can initiate People-related interpretative schemes transformations.

2. Planet:

Given their personalised viewpoints, CEOs with political ideologies reflect their values through the prism they use to interpret situations with an environmental impact and decide on organisational transformation. More precisely, the extent to which a CEO is politically more liberal or conservative influences how he morphogenetically changes the firm's *raison d'être* by integrating one of the 5 Ps of the 17 SDGs, namely the Planet, into the firm's interpretation schemes (Laughlin, 1991). Liberals are more sensitive to "the environment" (Schwartz, 1996). Politically liberal individuals are more likely to view environmental change as a heightened level of risk (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009) and engage more in innovations (Kashmiri and

Mahajan, 2017) and the adoption of energy-efficient technologies (Gromet et al., 2013). Political ideology towards liberalism positively affects individuals' perceived risk of climate change (Hu et al., 2017). A company's process-based environmental management initiatives/practices and climate change objectives can be substantial and reflect its real intentions/incentives to reduce GHG emissions (Orazalin et al., 2024). Climate change, for example, is a social problem requiring higher degrees of self-efficacy and responsibility towards future generations (Kellstedt et al., 2008). On this basis, the more politically liberal an individual is, the more they will perceive climate change risk (Hu et al., 2017).

That said, politically liberal decision-makers will even tend to prefer to act on environmental change by promoting actions (e.g. green product development, green design, green procurement, green manufacturing/operations, green logistics, green marketing (Dey et al., 2020), to improve global social justice (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). At the same time, their politically conservative counterparts will tend to maintain the existing social order (Jost et al., 2009; Jost et al., 2003), and oppose any disruptive changes to firm operations (Weng and Yang, 2023). Liberal CEOs tend to be much more likely to support CSR initiatives than their conservative counterparts (Gupta et al., 2021). Therefore, the CSR actions of conservative CEOs tend to be incongruent with the expectations of observers and generate greater salience and situational (i.e. instrumental) attributions regarding their causes, both of which lead to imitation (Gupta et al., 2021). CEOs, by their conservative political philosophy, may find it challenging to reconcile business objectives with sustainability objectives; in order to reinforce organisational legitimacy, they may often use business jargon (Carollo and Guerri, 2018; Risi and Wickert, 2017), rely on broader sustainability discourses in society to promote sustainability within their businesses (Soderstrom and Weber, 2020), and do so with little or no engagement in transforming the purpose and the interpretive schemes of the business they lead, by making a large-scale impact on the Planet.

On this basis, we suggest that the CEO's political philosophy is likely to transform the firm by bringing about radical changes in the effective use of natural resources, optimising production processes, and investing in research and development to create and adopt green technologies, environmentally friendly products and innovative solutions that make a positive and tangible contribution to the environment. Because of their openness to new and progressive ideas, CEOs with a liberal political orientation will tend to fundamentally change interpretive schemes business, integrating responsible and environmentally friendly practices into their operations. By including a vision of environmental sustainability in the exploration and

exploitation of new opportunities, by (1) supporting the development of new value propositions, (2) addressing new customer segments that existing value propositions have traditionally neglected, and (3) entering entirely new industries, politically liberal CEOs can significantly contribute to preserving the planet for current and future generations. Thus:

Proposition (1b). The more liberal the CEO's political ideology, the more the firm can initiate Planet-related interpretative schemes transformations.

3. Profit:

CEOs' political ideologies reflect their values through the prism they use to interpret situations that have an economic impact and decide on organisational transformation. In addition to the social dimension (e.g. poverty reduction, social justice, equality, well-being, labour standards and practices, pay, career development, safety and diversity) and the environmental dimension (e.g. use of resources at a rate at which they can be renewed, climate change), the transformation in favour of sustainable development must above all be effective (economic benefit, return on investment, financial resilience, viability, long-term stability of the firm). More specifically, the extent to which a CEO is politically more liberal or conservative influences how he or she brings about changes that penetrate so deeply into the firm's genetic code while simultaneously seeking profit and profitability in a way aligned with ethical and sustainable practices. Profit, because of its transformative impact, enables companies to have the financial means to grow (Dey et al., 2020), and reinvest in innovation and sustainability.

Knowing that conservative political ideology prescribes individualism and efficiency as the primary criterion for decision-making (Tetlock, 2000) and resistance to change (Jost et al., 2009) motivated by psychological needs to manage uncertainty and threat (Jost et al., 2003). Politically conservative CEOs tend to pursue CSR initiatives only as far as performance allows (Chin et al., 2013). According to their reflection, investments in environmental innovation could be viewed as less profitable, and their returns materialise over extended periods (Arena et al., 2018). Sustainability is expensive and may require a reconfiguration of the supply chain. Consumers may not be willing to pay more for sustainable products, and companies must, therefore, choose between the social benefits of sustainability and its costs (Jibril et al., 2024). The conservative ideology of CEOs implies that a focus on shareholder wealth enables the most efficient use of resources. Conservatives tend to favour the

shareholder governance model over the stakeholder model (Chin et al., 2013). In terms of Greater Good transformation, CEOs with a conservative ideology tend to be concerned with creating and protecting shareholder value (Elnahas and Kim, 2017). Due to their narrow focus on economic issues, politically conservative CEOs may neglect or under-prioritise Greater Good initiatives or consider them out of necessity as far as economic profit allows. In contrast, politically liberal CEOs have a more holistic perspective on firm-society interaction and endorse the firm's social commitment and pluralistic responsibility to multiple stakeholders (Chin et al., 2013). The CEO's political ideology is likely to influence how transformative organisational initiatives can create value for shareholders and other stakeholders, society and the natural environment, and how this value is captured or distributed to this wide range of stakeholders. Politically liberal CEOs emphasise CSR even when recent financial performance has been weak (Chin et al., 2013). Given the uncertainty related to environmental innovation and the level of managerial discretion involved in such decisions (Arena et al., 2018), the CEO's political liberalism may be a crucial factor in tolerating such risks. According to their reflection, economic sustainability is achieved through joint investment in R&D and technology, optimised inventories, improved product and service quality and reduced waste throughout the supply chain (Inman and Green, 2018; Dey et al., 2020). That said, politically liberal CEOs will tend to 'evolve' or fundamentally change 'colonise' the firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991), integrating economic profit and concepts, principles, or goals that address sustainability, into their value proposition, value creation and value capture mechanisms. CEOs with a liberal political orientation will tend to recognise the importance of balancing the interests of different stakeholders, including employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers and the community. While in the early stages of change towards sustainability, a liberal CEO's ability to communicate a clear vision is important, in the later stages, their commercial awareness and ability to define and achieve business objectives becomes paramount. Moreover, as a result, a positive association seems to exist between the degree of CEO's liberal political ideology and the firm's propensity for sustainable and effective transformative organizational initiatives in terms of profit. Thus:

Proposition (1c). The more liberal the CEO's political ideology, the more the firm can initiate Profit-related interpretative schemes transformations.

In the light of the above considerations and the propositions set out, we can assume that a liberalist CEO's political ideology makes Greater Good transformation, such as (1) shared

rather than individual responsibility, (2) a desire for social change rather than a preference for maintaining the status quo, and (3) a preference for equality. Sustainability-minded owner-managers transfer their values to their company (Gagnon, 2012), contributing to organisational identity and culture. Owner-managers with a sustainable development mindset also often use their company to undertake sustainable development initiatives that positively impact the environment or society (Gagnon, 2012). By focusing on sustainable development objectives, they can develop unique dynamic capabilities geared towards sustainable development, enabling them to be more successful in introducing product and process innovations (Jibril et al., 2024). This being said, politically liberal CEOs, compared to their politically conservative counterparts, are inclined toward progressing strategies that transform the firm's genetic code in effective and sustainable ways. More concretely, politically liberal CEOs will lean more towards decision-making that realigns 'balance/coherence' 'Profit' strategic priorities and incentives with 'People' and 'Planet' sustainability goals, thus requiring a second-order (morphogenetic) change in the firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991). This means achieving zero trauma and creating shared value for the company and society (Elkington, 1997) (Porter and Kramer, 2011). As it has been proven, social and environmental practices lead to less financial volatility, higher growth rates and better survival rates over the long term (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016). Companies with high social and environmental practices are less likely to face social and environmental risks, which contributes to organisational legitimacy and leads to less monitoring and unsystematic market risks compared to their peers (Bansal and Clelland, 2004). Moreover, it makes it easier to notice and correct maladaptive trends (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016). The most marginalised stakeholders—known as marginal stakeholders—can provide the most in-depth information about changes in the organisational environment (Hart and Sharma, 2004). Conflict and dissonance cost time and money yet often generate the most creative ideas (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016). On the other hand, CEOs with a conservative bias will tend to be more accepting of inequality, preferring a locus of responsibility rooted in the individual and seeing fewer problems with the social status quo, which is likely to slow down the project of world transformation. More concretely, the patterns of interpretation within firms led by politically conservative CEOs will result more in opportunistic or mercantilist efforts motivated by 'Profit' strategic priorities, which are consistent with the dominant interests or preferences of the firm's owners, than in efforts that have a moral impact on the world 'imbalance/inconsistency'. CEOs in the middle of the liberalism-conservatism spectrum have moderate ideological positioning due to their ambiguous stance on progressive ideas,

impartial acknowledgment of both liberal and conservative perspectives, and their perception of the labor market as moderately efficient. It is, therefore, unlikely that moderately conservative or liberal CEOs significantly promote or hinder advancements in transforming the interpretive schemes of the firm they lead to align with SDGs. We are talking here about a 'coherence' or 'common direction' between the organisational transformation initiatives associated with Profit, People and Planet. Such an image is not intended to minimise the conflicts and disagreements about these transformative efforts that permeate organisational life. Instead, the assumption is that a liberal CEO's political ideology promotes the integration of the interconnected elements of sustainability's 3 Ps in changing interpretive schemes, forming a coherent whole, despite inherent disagreements. Once such balance and coherence are achieved at a certain level, both effective and sustainable – Greater Good transformation becomes the norm. Thus:

Proposition (1). The more liberal the CEO's political ideology, the more the firm can initiate interpretative schemes transformations that maximise the Greater Good.

CONTINGENCY FACTORS

Our proposal postulates that the more politically liberal CEOs are, the more likely they are to initiate transformations that maximise the Greater Good, due to their openness to social change, thus addressing potential problems of inequality. Firms are political arenas whose CEOs enter into negotiations with stakeholders (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985) since their decisions may be subject to the influence of influential actors, who may affect or be affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). In order to improve the prospects of the firm they lead, it is ultimately essential for CEOs to maintain and develop mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders. Building on this central argument, we include internal and external contingent factors that may strengthen or weaken the main effect. Internally, Boards of Directors and TMTs are crucial stakeholders. Since they collaborate closely with the CEO, their contribution is crucial to the CEO's leadership. So, their political orientation (Gupta and Wowak, 2017; McDonnell and Cobb, 2020; Gupta et al., 2021) could change the CEO's awareness of issues associated with Profit, People and the Planet. We consider that the degree to which they position themselves as politically liberal or conservative catalyses or blocks the effect of CEOs' political liberalism on transforming the firm's philosophy towards the world. Externally, the institutional environment at the state

level is also relevant. As institutional theory states, normative pressure compels actors to behave in socially appropriate and morally correct ways (Scott, 2014). In what follows, we discuss how these different parties moderate the impact of the CEO's political ideology on the extent to which the firm initiates ongoing and sustainable transformations for the Greater Good.

Board of Directors' political liberalism

The board of directors is part of the corporate elite (Finkelstein et al., 2009). Historically, the board of directors was perceived as primarily supervising senior executives, defending shareholder interests, and essentially 'being the CEO's boss' (Krause, 2017, p. 697). However, effective board governance can empower board committees to take an active role in promoting environmental and social responsibility. By encouraging environmentally friendly activities and engagement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, these committees can efficiently and effectively manage environmental risks and concerns (Harjoto et al., 2015). Their crucial role in implementing environmental initiatives and introducing best practices in sustainability management can promote stakeholder engagement, address environmental problems, and enhance corporate performance (Orazalin et al., 2024). Given its oversight and advisory functions (Johnson et al., 1993), the board can help improve the CEO's decisions (McDonough and Braungart, 2010; Johnson et al., 1996), influencing the response to organizational misbehaviour (PARK et al., 2020). Companies with a specific set of governance arrangements at the board level (e.g., a more giant, more independent board, with a CSR committee of the board and a higher proportion of women on boards where directors are frequent) are better equipped to reduce irresponsible behaviour, both in terms of the number of irresponsible incidents and their economic costs to the company (Jain and Zaman, 2020). Fundamentally, boards, like CEOs, have their political orientations and beliefs. Board political liberalism refers to the extent to which a firm's board is politically more liberal or conservative. The political orientation of the board influences CEO remuneration decisions (Gupta and Wowak, 2017) and may alter decisions to retain or remove a CEO (PARK et al., 2020). Conservative board members, whose political psychology research suggests that they tend to have a stronger propensity for unambiguous hierarchical structures with clear lines of authority, could prefer and, therefore, be more likely to diffuse solitary structures (Gupta et al., 2021). On the other hand, liberal board members could play a more influential role in the diffusion of the CEO-chairman separation, which corresponds more closely to liberal beliefs about reducing power differentials and flattening the social hierarchy (Gupta et al., 2021).

Conservative and liberal board members differ fundamentally in their beliefs about power and hierarchy in ways that inform their views on how a board should be structured, particularly about the relative authority of the CEO vis-à-vis others (Gupta et al., 2021). To this end, we suggest that the association between CEO political liberalism and organisational commitment to Greater Good transformation is moderated by the degree of Board political liberalism. In essence, a CEO's strategic decisions are influenced by the support or otherwise of the board, and a more politically liberal board is likely to share a similar 'ideological fit' on shared responsibility, the desire for social change, and issues of egalitarianism and social justice. Under these conditions, the Board is more likely to support “mirror effect” or “complementary effect” the CEO's initiatives in terms of sustainable development strategies. With the support of the Board, the CEO would be in a better position to initiate and put into practice strategies and processes linked to the implementation of sustainable development in the firm.

Conversely, a more liberal CEO may find implementing effective strategies favourable to sustainable development challenging when his Board is more politically conservative. Conservatives stipulate that the labour market is very efficient and are less motivated to tackle inequalities and accept change. As a result, a more conservative board does not see the need to take additional steps to address potential inequalities employees and communities face. Furthermore, a more conservative Board may see the initiation of transformative actions that maximise the Greater Good as unnecessary and risky. While a liberal CEO may actively negotiate with the politically conservative Board to support organisational initiatives that help 'colonise' or 'evolve' the firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991) for Greater Good transformation, the conservative Board may ignore, reject, or even refuse these transformational initiatives. Thus:

Proposition (2). The Board's political liberalism is likely to reinforce the relationship between the CEO's political liberalism and organizational initiatives aimed at transforming interpretive schemes for maximizing the Greater Good.

TMT political liberalism

TMTs, as internal stakeholders, in close collaboration with CEOs (Boada-Cuerva et al., 2019; Christensen et al., 2015; Wan et al., 2023; Patzelt et al., 2008), are ultimate organisational leaders responsible for implementing decisions (Finkelstein et al., 2009). Intra-group

dynamics within the TMT are a crucial determinant of managerial latitude of action within the firm. Despite his leadership role, a CEO needs to implement strategic decisions. Fundamentally, TMTs, like CEOs, have their own ideologies and political beliefs (Christensen et al., 2015). TMT political liberalism refers to the extent to which a firm's management team is politically more liberal or conservative. To this end, we suggest that the association between CEO political liberalism and organisational commitment to Greater Good transformation is moderated by the TMT degree of political liberalism. More specifically, when the TMT has a liberal political orientation, a politically liberal CEO can express himself more freely on the issues associated with the 17 SDGs, which go beyond the simple objective of making money "Profit". With a political ideological fit, the liberal CEO can collaborate more effectively with his liberal TMT. Together, with a similar political vision, the CEO and his TMT will be able to transform the firm by integrating (social/environmental) sustainability into the firm's interpretation schemes (Laughlin, 1991), as expressed through social interactions (Dekker, 2004) with other stakeholders, since collaboration is essential to sustainable development. Thus, the CEO will be better able to allocate firm resources to support the transformation that maximises the Greater Good, without resistance from management, reinforcing the effect of the CEO's political liberalism. On the other hand, where the TMT is more politically conservative, a CEO with a more liberal political ideology may find it challenging to pursue the firm's holistic sustainability orientation. A political ideological mismatch between the CEO and his TMT reflects cognitive gaps, i.e. different understandings of equality, social change and the extent of responsibility. On this basis, divergent political thinking will lead to reluctance on the part of the TMT to lead or actively pursue organisational initiatives involving the morphogenetic transformation of its genetic code for the greater good, and vice versa. Thus:

Proposition (3). The TMT's political liberalism is likely to reinforce the relationship between the TMT's political liberalism and organizational initiatives aimed at transforming interpretive schemes for maximizing the Greater Good.

State political liberalism

The institutional environment at the level of the State in which a firm's head office is located is essential to the development of companies' strategic decisions (Briscoe et al., 2014). Walker

et al's (2019) empirical results confirm the mirror effect, in which a company's CSR profile reflects institutional factors at the national level rather than substituting for a lack of government action and regulation (Campbell, 2007; Ioannou and Serafeim, 2012; Gjølborg, 2009). Institutions can strongly influence how companies interact with stakeholders, as formal or informal institutional factors shape and constrain their behaviours (Walker et al., 2019). In the CSR literature, it has been stipulated that CSR requires certain institutional conditions and arrangements to work - i.e. a strong government, market and civil society. According to institutional theory, normative pressure encourages actors to adopt socially appropriate and morally correct behaviour (Scott, 2014). For example, in some Western countries, the idea of maximising profits is widely accepted socially as a business practice, whereas in some Asian nations, prioritising individual interests over social interests may conflict with notions of harmony and unity within society (Hofstede, 2001). Fundamentally, both the State and CEOs are equally liberal or conservative. Conservative States believe that the role of government should be limited exclusively to the provision of public services (Tavares, 2004). In fiscal terms, politically conservative States put forward the idea that companies should channel their profits towards shareholders rather than invest them in social initiatives (Rubin, 2008). In contrast, the social norm in liberal States is to promote and be more concerned with issues associated with social equality, economic equity, climate change, worker unionisation programmes, and social security. In essence, sustainable development issues tend to be addressed more proactively in more liberal and socially progressive States than in conservative States (Rubin, 2008; Deng et al., 2013).

Differences in degrees of conservatism at the State level impact companies' propensity to internationalise their boards (Thürer et al., 2018). Companies headquartered in liberal States engage in fewer leveraged buyouts than those headquartered in conservative States (Pe'er and Gottschalg, 2011). Aligning initiatives to transform the firm's genetic code towards sustainability with the norms and values around its headquarters can be an effective way to gain legitimacy. The extent to which political ideology at the State level is conservative or liberal can catalyse or block socially appropriate corporate transformation initiatives. For a radical transformation towards sustainability at the organisational level, firms' institutional logic and interpretive schemes should fundamentally transform (Gray et al., 1995), as this can be a precursor to transformations in organisational practices. Therefore, where companies are headquartered in liberal states, the liberal CEO's initiatives to fundamentally alter (colonise) or bring about an accepted metamorphosis (evolve) of interpretive schemes within the firm to

maximise the Greater Good may be perceived as aligning with the local institutional norm, thereby reinforcing the impact of the CEO's political ideology. On the other hand, when these companies are headquartered in conservative states, the liberal CEO's Greater Good transformative initiatives may be perceived negatively as not conforming to the social norms or expectations of conservative States. Overall, a state-CEO political ideological convergence is likely to reinforce the impact of the CEO's political ideology on initiatives involving the morphogenetic transformation of the firm's genetic code for the Greater Good, and vice versa. Thus:

Proposition (4). The State's political liberalism where the firm's head office is located is likely to reinforce the relationship between the CEO's political liberalism and organizational initiatives aimed at transforming interpretive schemes for maximizing the Greater Good.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the impact of the CEO's political ideology on the commitment of the firm he leads to initiatives involving Greater Good transformation highlights a degree of heterogeneity in the impact exerted by the CEO on (A) efforts (reflections) with large-scale moral impact, and (B) opportunistic or mercantile Profit-driven efforts (reflections). Reflections with a large-scale moral impact refer to social and environmental causes affecting the community, whose degree of political liberalism (conservatism) of the CEO reflects the degree of initiating interpretive schemes transformations within the firm associated with People and Planet. This perspective reflects a role that is partly driven by the CEO's desire to fundamentally 'colonise' or 'evolve' the firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991) by having a socio-economic and environmental large-scale impact, explained by (1) the preference for equality, (2) the desire for social change, and (3) the emphasis on shared responsibility (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993). Profit- focused opportunistic or mercantilist perspective refers to causes with an economic impact, where the degree of political liberalism (conservatism) of the CEO reflects the degree to which he or she initiates interpretive schemes transformations within the firm, primarily associated with Profit. This reflection reflects a role that is partly driven by the CEO's interest in changing corporate interpretation patterns primarily for the sake of his firm's scalability, explained by (1) an acceptance of

inequality, (2) a desire to maintain norms, and (3) an emphasis on personal responsibility (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993). Figure 2 captures the intersection between the CEO's political ideology as reflected by his or her level of political conservatism or liberalism (horizontal axis) and the two main dimensions of organisational commitment to Greater Good transformation (vertical axis), reflecting a significant shift in interpretive schemes involving a shift from (a) opportunistic or mercantilist profit-driven efforts to (b) efforts with large-scale moral impact. These two dimensions reflect the firm's efforts at transformation, reflecting the CEO's willingness to adopt a moral stance as either a 'catalyst' or an 'obstacle' to the broader world. The intersection of these dimensions with the CEO's political ideology leads to 3 qualitatively distinct forms of the CEO's profile (role): "Symbolic Progressive" (artificial impact), "Shareholder Guardian" (differential impact) and "Greater Good Change Champion" (substantial impact).

----- Insert Figure 2 about here -----

"Shareholder Guardian CEO". This profile arises in circumstances where the CEO's political ideology is conservative, and the efforts of the firm he leads towards transformation with large-scale moral impact are relatively weak or absent. Here, the scope of transformation is linked primarily to the focal firm's core business (efficiency), and efforts to transform the firm's key *raison d'être* are opportunistic or profit-driven mercantilism. In this scenario, the CEO reflects the simple promotion of corporate shareholders' interests in the name of morality, and the content and direction of organisational efforts at transformation are strongly associated with causes/problems that damage the firm's interests. Given that individuals' political orientations influence their cognitions and behaviours (Malcom et al., 2023). Following this categorisation "Shareholder Guardian" CEOs emphasise individual responsibility and the desire to maintain stability and the status quo (Malcom et al., 2023). They believe that the market is highly efficient and therefore oppose any intervention (Carmines and D'Amico, 2015), especially transformation with large-scale impact. With their conservative ideologies, such world support can jeopardise the stability of corporate resources. Thus, rather than focusing on a preference for equality, a desire for social change, and an emphasis on shared responsibility (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993), the strategic role of a "Shareholder Guardian CEO" is underpinned by more orthodox business logic (Skitka and

Tetlock, 1993). They believe "they have more pressing issues to deal with, including growth, productivity and profits" (Elkington, 1997), resulting in minimal commitments to the broader world. Such passive commitments to Greater Good transformation can be particularly evident when there is political-ideological alignment among critical internal and external stakeholders (e.g., board of directors, TMT team, state-level institutional environment). This alignment supports the manifestation of the CEO's actual cognitive and behavioural reflection of political conservatism. In this scenario, the perceived fiduciary duty to the firm's owners (Maak et al., 2016) provides the ability to pursue transformative initiatives that align with the shareholders' dominant interests or preferences.

A "Shareholder Guardian CEO's" belief about Greater Good transformation is based on assumptions inherent in the economic theory of the firm (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). The scope of such transformation may block or limit the shareholder good of value maximisation, an element of their psychological employment contract. By this logic, a "Shareholder Guardian CEO" who has, according to our categorisation, a conservative political orientation and an opportunistic transformative organisational commitment will respond and engage for the world, including the planet and stakeholders other than shareholders only if it is beneficial to satisfy the shareholders' interests, and reflects their perceived psychological contract with the firm's owners. A "Shareholder Guardian CEO" carries risks for himself and the firm he leads, for as Paul Polman, former CEO of Unilever, states:

"We need to change neoliberalism to make it more inclusive. It's the only way to save capitalism. In other words, we need to "return to pre-Milton Friedman capitalism, for whom the sole purpose of a firm is to serve its shareholders". However, "given the scale of the climate emergency, the imperative need to curb inequalities and the changing nature of financial markets, betting everything on quarterly results and shareholder interest is a recipe for failure" (2021).

"Symbolic Progressive CEO". This profile arises when the CEO's political ideology is liberal (conservative). However, the efforts of the firm he leads in transformation with large-scale moral impact could be more vital or more present (strong). The CEO in this scenario may have a more holistic personal belief about firm-society interaction; his philosophy endorses the firm's pluralistic responsibility to multiple stakeholders (Chin et al., 2013). Nevertheless, his political beliefs do not reflect the firm's commitments to the world since he is without substantial power or a meaningful voice in decision-making, and vice versa. This category may primarily concern politically liberal (conservative) CEOs appointed for symbolic or representational reasons rather than for their ability to run the focal firm by a very

conservative (liberal) board. Moreover, other stakeholders with a conservative (liberal) political orientation and a desire to maintain the status quo (change) (e.g. shareholders, TMT team, the institutional environment at the state level) limit the accurate reflection of their political liberalism (conservatism). A "Symbolic Progressive CEO" has minimal power and influence in decision-making, particularly regarding the Greater Good transformation. He, therefore, finds himself in a difficult position where he must juggle his values with the convictions and expectations or restrictions imposed by the Board of Directors, the TMT, or the corporate culture. The symbolism of his role (Kanter, 1977) limits his ability to act independently or to pursue interpretive schemes transformative initiatives that run counter to the dominant interests or preferences within the firm. While a politically liberal (conservative) 'Symbolic Progressive CEO' may actively persuade a conservative (liberal) board to consider supporting (challenging) transformative initiatives with large-scale moral impact, the politically conservative (liberal) board may ignore, or even reject, such initiatives. In practice, a "Symbolic Progressive" profile may become a signatory to a collective letter relating to a problem affecting the community but not committing one's firm to transformation with a large-scale moral impact, depending on the underlying political beliefs. His symbolic role often concerns causes that have matured in the social context so that the broad social consensus is well understood. Therefore, this profile carries minimal risk for the firm concerned and is likely to have little or no impact on broader social and societal moral change processes. In terms of transforming for the Greater Good, these CEOs cannot act as the world's social/political advocates, as this may not align with the views of critical stakeholders. With their conservative ideologies, the latter may pressure them to adopt conservative positions or make a weak commitment to the transformation that maximises the Greater Good. Alternatively, these CEOs may act as social/political advocates for the world and artificially support the transformation of their interpretive schemes firm for the Greater Good since this corresponds to the political beliefs of important stakeholders. However, they do so primarily for representational or symbolic purposes rather than through concrete, substantive actions reflecting their underlying political beliefs.

"Greater Good Change Champion CEO". This profile arises in circumstances where the CEO's political ideology is liberal, and the efforts of the firm he leads in transformation with a large-scale moral impact are relatively significant. Here, the extent of the transformation exceeds the profit expected by the focal firm (efficiency), substantially including the SDGs (sustainability) and giving back to society (Young, 2011). The CEO in this scenario appears

to have a moral obligation (Agle et al., 1999; Waldman and Siegel, 2008), a pro-social cost-benefit analysis (Miller et al., 2012), serving the social and societal interest in addition to the interest of the focal firm (Hernandez, 2012), and concretising the perceived social contract between the firm and society (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Often positioning himself as a Greater Good protector or advocate of broader interests, the strong commitment of the firm he leads to world-focused transformation is presented as being driven by his liberal values and personal beliefs, in line with Hambrick and Wowak (in press). The role of the CEO in this zone appears to be highly personalised and links transformation with large-scale impact to the CEO's liberal values, fostering change and acceptance of inequality. As global citizens, Greater Good Change CEOs believe in justice and fairness. They prioritise the equal treatment of all stakeholders and place justice and fairness at the heart of their decision-making. As such, they enjoy social power, enabling them to contribute to the community by being essential and progressive agents of change about a range of social and environmental issues. His liberal belief in Greater Good transformation lead him to behave as an ambassador of Greater Good transformation, integrating moral issues seriously and continuously. He can bring about significant (morphogenetic) changes in the firm's interpretive schemes, even engaging with issues on which there is yet to be a broad consensus. The function of such a role must be to create ongoing value for the economy, society, the environment and all stakeholders. A leader cannot quickly achieve this; the role of 'citizen catalyst' is only possible when the CEO presents a sustainable vision based on accumulated trust (Choi, 2021), in which the members of an organisation work together. Trust reduces the costs and delays in developing processes (Elkington, 1997). "No one can succeed alone," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (United Nations, 2015), adds Marc Benioff, President, and CEO of Salesforce:

"Every country, business, community and individual has a responsibility to act now - the cost of failing to address this global threat will be catastrophic. Our generation will be judged by the actions we take today to tackle climate change" (World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, 2020).

More remarkable Good Change Champion CEOs are more open to progressive ideas and attach less importance to tradition (Jost et al., 2003). They are agents who look for ways to increase the pie size rather than fight competitors for a fixed pie. They are more willing to try new methods and less bound by existing rules. To this end, political ideological alignment on the part of critical stakeholders reinforces the civic role of this profile. Such a role can be risky for the CEO who commits to it and for the firm: a Greater Good Change Champion

CEO, who is by nature an activist, will be subject to significant social scrutiny and is constrained by the fiduciary responsibilities he primarily represents. However, the corollary of this risk is that such a role may also have significant social importance in traditional and social media. This implies that the risks associated with transformative efforts focused on the Greater Good, including that of the firm, will be accompanied by the potential for significant returns, most notably in the form of an expansion of CEO power beyond the traditional boundaries of the economic sphere. When CEOs engage through substantive action in morally controversial or unresolved issues in 'colonisations' or 'evolutions' of their firm's interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991), they may assume the role of quasi-politicians or publicly moral figures seeking to shape public opinion. In turn, this would reinforce the CEO's public legitimacy and firm citizenship (Miller, 1982; Wagner, 2001) while defending the capitalist market system in which they operate. Although "capitalism and sustainability do not mix" (Laughlin, 1991), "capitalism can be as much the solution to the current sustainability crisis as it is the cause of it", said Paul Polman, former head of Unilever. This is the (non-confrontational) win-win-win scenario required by the triple aim of sustainability (Elkington, 1997), in which moral and economic interests are aligned. This allows CEOs to colonise (fundamentally alter) or evolve interpretive schemes (Laughlin, 1991), including the underlying ethos of the organisation and accepted by its members, by integrating high moral principles without facing the wrath of profit-driven shareholders. Such a role implies a symbiotic relationship with the planet and its various stakeholders, assuming social and environmental responsibilities while seeking economic profit. Here, the cannibal adopts the fork (Elkington, 1997), and everyone benefits.

The proposed framework is part of a relational ontology approach, in which there is no conceptual separation between humans and the natural environment; humans, and coefficients in particular, are part of nature. This is a far cry from the linear approach that isolates the environmental and social problems to be resolved by organisations. Similarly, the interdisciplinary perspective incorporating political psychology in an attempt to tackle such complex research questions can offer a positive touch towards discovering solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. It can help better understand both the contextual basis of morphosyntactic changes in the organisation's interpretive schemes and CEOs' political ideology's fundamental and compelling role. By contrasting CEOs 'new roles with traditional forms, we highlight the complexity of the personal identity embodied in political ideology and its implications for transformative initiatives. This paper demonstrates that the relationship

between the CEO's political ideology and the extent of organisational commitment to transforming for the Greater Good is heterogeneous, with significant variations likely to have far-reaching consequences for the CEO's role in wider moral change. Based on this paper, a more refined understanding of the nature of the CEO's impact on Greater Good transformation, depending on his or her political beliefs, was developed. This led us to categorise its forms and critically reflect on the wider impacts of individualised moral perceptions on important social and environmental issues. Our discussion, in particular, the emphasis on the variety of forms of the CEO's role as "catalyst vs obstacle", indicates that it is important to examine, with more precision and rigour, the explanations for such interactions which extend beyond the exercise of personal morality. CEOs are embedded in the morality of the societies in which they live and constrained by the fiduciary responsibilities they primarily represent. CEOs act as partially constrained decision-makers, shaping and managing their firms (Miller, 1983; Hambrick and Mason, 1984). As we have shown, the role of CEOs towards the world is largely reactive and the idea that it reflects the moral leadership of a corporate elite is simplistic in its falsity. Because 'Cannibals with Forks' have perceptions, "different people see the world differently. The way we see the game, and the way we think others see the game influence the moves we make" (Elkington, 1997). The positive effect of political ideology may be indirect, yet it remains present.

Through the proposed conceptual framework, we highlight the role and responsibilities of companies (their CEOs) and related stakeholders (TMT, Board, state) through their political ideologies in orchestrating efforts for morphosyntactic changes in the organisation's interpretive schemes in the face of significant challenges. We question the point of view based on the belief that companies and their leaders cannot contribute to transforming the world and meeting significant challenges. Moreover, only governments can orchestrate innovative and transformative solutions on the desired scale and with the desired impact. From our non-reductionist perspective, we recognise the CEO-owned company with specific political convictions as an emergent entity or as a complex adaptive system (Williams, 2018), which must sustain itself in a precarious economic, societal and natural environment, characterised by a potentially unlimited number of observation perspectives (Roth et al., 2020). As an emergent system, the company is considered here as irreducible to the individuals affiliated with it, notably the CEOs, for better or for worse, the political convictions of the face of the company, i.e. the leader, are and will be reflected.

The conceptual framework encourages a reevaluation of the role of leadership in organisational transformation and offers practical insights for boards and stakeholders in strategic planning and leadership selection processes. Boards play a vital role in balancing shareholders' short-term interests with long-term goals for societal benefit. This can be achieved by recruiting CEOs whose values and political beliefs are liberal and aligned with the company's vision. Similarly, companies looking for a new CEO can initiate second-order morphogenetic changes by not limiting the search to external candidates; internal candidates may also be viable options if they possess the most compatible political convictions.

The different challenges emanating from transformational efforts in terms of price, people, and planet may differ in importance and variance within each underlying structure. These differences imply that researchers should pay rigorous attention to questions such as for whom, by whom, how and when large-scale organisational transformations are delivered. Explicit recognition of these differences opens up the study of whether and how politically liberal CEOs can frame their preferences as being in the public interest to create perceived urgency. That said, companies are being asked to rethink their business models and governments to change institutions to incentivise specific directions (for example, favouring organic farming and moving away from GM food). Companies must, therefore, choose the appropriate level of transformation according to their characteristics and face different degrees of large-scale problems depending on the heterogeneity of the regions and industries in which they operate. The government should accelerate the reform and optimisation of institutional measures that may hinder business transformation and create an external environment conducive to the synergistic development of large-scale organisational transformation. At the same time, in order to incentivise companies to initiate large-scale, high-impact transformations that transcend company boundaries, the government should also implement appropriate environmental subsidies and preferential lending. Public agencies are encouraged to set agendas, prioritise missions, and provide funding to leaders with liberal political ideologies (e.g. the creation of ARPA-E and ARPA-H for selected energy and health priorities).

By drawing possible profiles of politically conservative or liberal CEOs based on (A) efforts (reflections) with large-scale moral impact and (B) opportunistic or mercantile Profit-driven efforts (reflections). The paper helps to overcome reductionist orientations, explaining why we are at odds with business ethics and sustainability studies (Roth et al., 2020; Pies et al., 2021). It is unreasonable to continue prioritising the entirely legitimate objectives of profit maximisation when the very practices that support it—such as the relentless pursuit of

economic growth driven by unceasing resource extraction and indiscriminate consumption—pose significant threats to the survival of both humanity and the planet. Even with its much-vaunted green credentials, corporate capitalism cannot create a sustainable, liveable world (Pies et al., 2021). That said, this paper responds to the call for management specialists concerned about environmental and social disasters to contribute to efforts that challenge "the conceptual blockages that keep our minds closed to options for change" (Plumwood, 2007, p. 1) by considering political ideology as either an antecedent catalyst or an obstacle.

Given that current undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive education programmes cannot remain relevant in the face of urgent pressures to meet significant challenges. Management educators must, therefore, employ new approaches incorporating political psychology to develop the leadership skills and cognitive competencies (Urdan and Luoma, 2020; Córdoba-Pachón and Porter, 2009) needed to meet grand challenges. The ability to think and act across disciplinary, geographical, economic, socio-cultural and ecological boundaries must be developed (Shantz et al., 2023; Buckley et al., 2017). Finally, educators at all higher education institutions must foster champions of the transformation needed to collectively address the Grand Challenges (Kanashiro et al., 2020; Solitander et al., 2012).

Limitations and avenues for future reflection

Given that no synthesis or review of a body of literature can achieve perfection and be completely free of limitations, ours is no exception:

Limiting ourselves to the CEO's political ideology, and related stakeholders (TMT, State, Board), presents a major limitation. The focus on the CEO's political ideology might risk overemphasising the individual's influence at the expense of acknowledging other factors that also play critical roles in organisational transformation. Other internal and external factors, such as organisational resilience, market pressures and government regulations, can also play an important role. Organisational resilience for example to disasters and war, by: (1) processing and responding rapidly to environmental signals (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003) and (2) Creating adaptable resources that can be used for a variety of different options (Sanchez, 1995), is to be seriously considered, in conjunction with second-order morphogenetic changes. Market uncertainty, which measures the extent to which a company's external environment is unstable and unpredictable (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), has not been included in the proposed model. As market uncertainty increases, making it harder for companies to perform well, with market demands harder to anticipate and recipes for success that used to

work for them no longer work (Keats and Hitt, 1988; Henderson et al., 2006), a liberal political ideology is called for.

In light of the above, it should also be noted that firms also depend on sustained government support for access to critical information, favourable policies and regulations, and other resources (Hillman and Hitt, 1999) to initiate second-order morphogenetic changes. CEOs will seek to persuade the government by performing more good deeds and avoiding bad ones. Similarly, when companies face higher competition in the market, they become more dependent on various stakeholders for their resources. The social environment can influence how politically conservative and liberal CEOs process information. Increasing political segregation has led individuals to hold polarised and entrenched beliefs (Howard et al., 2022), which has implications for transformative efforts. Future research could explore how the social environment of a political group, such as perceived levels of polarization and socio-cultural context (e.g. urban or rural), differentially impact how politically conservative and liberal CEOs process critical information necessary for morphogenetic change.

Initiating second-order morphogenetic changes is an investment with high knowledge and technology requirements, requiring higher global capabilities beyond the CEO's political ideology. Digital technologies can help politically liberal CEOs overcome internal resource constraints and transform their organisational and technological processes by facilitating their integration into circular economy models and ethical supply chains (Jibril et al., 2024).

Similarly, numerous other organizational constraints arise, such as coordination costs among stakeholders, conflicting goals and incentives within the management team, information asymmetry, and transaction costs among partner companies in a large-scale transformation effort. Grand challenges affect large populations, and their impacts extend beyond the boundaries of a single organisation or community (Ferraro et al., 2015, p.364). The related challenge is to decide who bears the cost of globally-focused transformation and how these costs are shared in a multi-stakeholder, multi-commitment model over time.

The paper's reliance on conceptual and theoretical arguments without empirical evidence presents a significant limitation. Future research could address this gap by employing quantitative or qualitative methodologies to test the proposed model and its implications in real-world settings. Further empirical research is encouraged to validate and expand upon the findings, potentially offering more concrete guidance for achieving transformative change towards the greater good within organisations. Deductive, inductive or abductive studies using quantitative or qualitative data are welcomed and may provide richer insights into the role of CEO political ideology in morphogenetic organisational transformation. Also, future

longitudinal empirical investigations across multiple units of analysis may provide academic rigour for managerial and political implications.

Of course, in-depth case studies via semi-structured interviews with executives, middle managers and key employees involved in second-order transformational initiatives in relevant companies that have demonstrated a commitment to effective and sustainable transformation can contextualise the results of the quantitative analyses and provide more nuanced insights. This may be the case for agri-food firms that adopt regenerative farming practices (e.g. agroforestry), improving productivity while preserving local ecosystems, promoting soil health, biodiversity and resilience in climate change, and ensuring long-term financial profitability. As for the balance between the three pillars (profit, people, planet), developing indices incorporating critical measures for each pillar and calculating an overall balance score seems relevant. Similarly, multi-criteria analysis methods could be considered for weighting and aggregating performance indicators in each dimension.

The complexity of assessing and categorising a CEO's political ideology may pose practical challenges. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of political ideologies and their influence on leadership behaviours could complicate the application of the proposed framework. Previous work has materialised individual political ideology through four indicators: behavioural commitment, financial commitment, persistence of commitment, and extent of commitment to a political ideology (Chin et al., 2013). Despite the widespread adoption and recent validation of a measure of political ideology¹ by other researchers (Lee et al., 2013), finding an ideal measure of a subjective value such as political ideology is not easy (PARK et al., 2020). Measures of political ideology can be subjective and may not fully capture the complexity of CEOs' political beliefs. Similarly, actors' preferences could be more stable but instead evolving. Much of the work on decision-making under ambiguous conditions has studied how inconsistency in our preferences affects how we think about the future. These limitations are an area of potential methodological progress in the future if well-defined information on political ideologies can be validated via larger-scale data initiatives, including textual analyses of individual statements (PARK et al., 2020).

Thus, although the fundamental aspects of liberal and conservative belief systems are remarkably similar worldwide (Duckitt, 2001; Ashton et al., 2005), different governance and

¹ From previous empirical studies, the calculation of the CEO's political ideology is done by taking into consideration (a) the number of donations to Republicans divided by the number of donations to recipients in both parties, (b) the dollar amount of donations to Republicans divided by donations to both parties; (c) the number of years the CEO donated to Republicans divided by the number of years the CEO donated to either party; and (d) the number of separate Republican recipients to whom the CEO donated divided by the total number of separate recipients in both parties (Chin et al., 2013, p.202).

political structures can moderate the power dynamics of CEOs in different countries. In the US, conservatism is often associated with maintaining the current socio-economic order, while in China, right-wing ideology is associated with openness to change and left-wing ideology with preserving the existing socio-economic structure (Beattie et al., 2022). Future research studies can test the proposed model in different economies and sectors over a long period, as the willingness and level of adoption of effective and sustainable transformative efforts may evolve. Thus, grand challenges are dynamic and non-linear, composed of an evolving set of nested problems and constraints (Hansen et al., 2020), subject to feedback loops, phase shifts and other tipping points (Lichtenstein et al., 2007). Given the long-term horizon that major challenges require, transformative architectures need to facilitate the engagement of diverse stakeholders in a series of interconnected events in time and space, setting a continuous process in motion.

Finally, political ideologies are not limited to a simple dichotomy between liberalism and conservatism. Although the liberal-conservative spectrum has been considered the most valuable and parsimonious way of categorising political ideology for over 200 years worldwide (Jost, 2006), CEOs may hold nuanced and complex political beliefs that cannot always be categorised. Ideologies can encompass a broader range of values than liberalism or conservatism, such as Marxism to fascism, feminism and environmentalism (PARK et al., 2020). Future research should explore the influence of more nuanced and contextualised ideologies on organisations. Particularly in the context of the shareholder corporations that dominate our lives today, recent research has emphasised the need to develop organisational good and CSR ideas from a feminist perspective (Spence and Taylor, 2024). We are all inevitably part of a social fabric, as are the parties involved (owners, managers, employees, consumers, researchers). We all have intellectual and practical obligations to explore the possibilities of business, management and organisation (Spence and Taylor, 2024) from different ideologies.

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Figure 1. CEO's liberal political ideology and transformation for the Greater Good

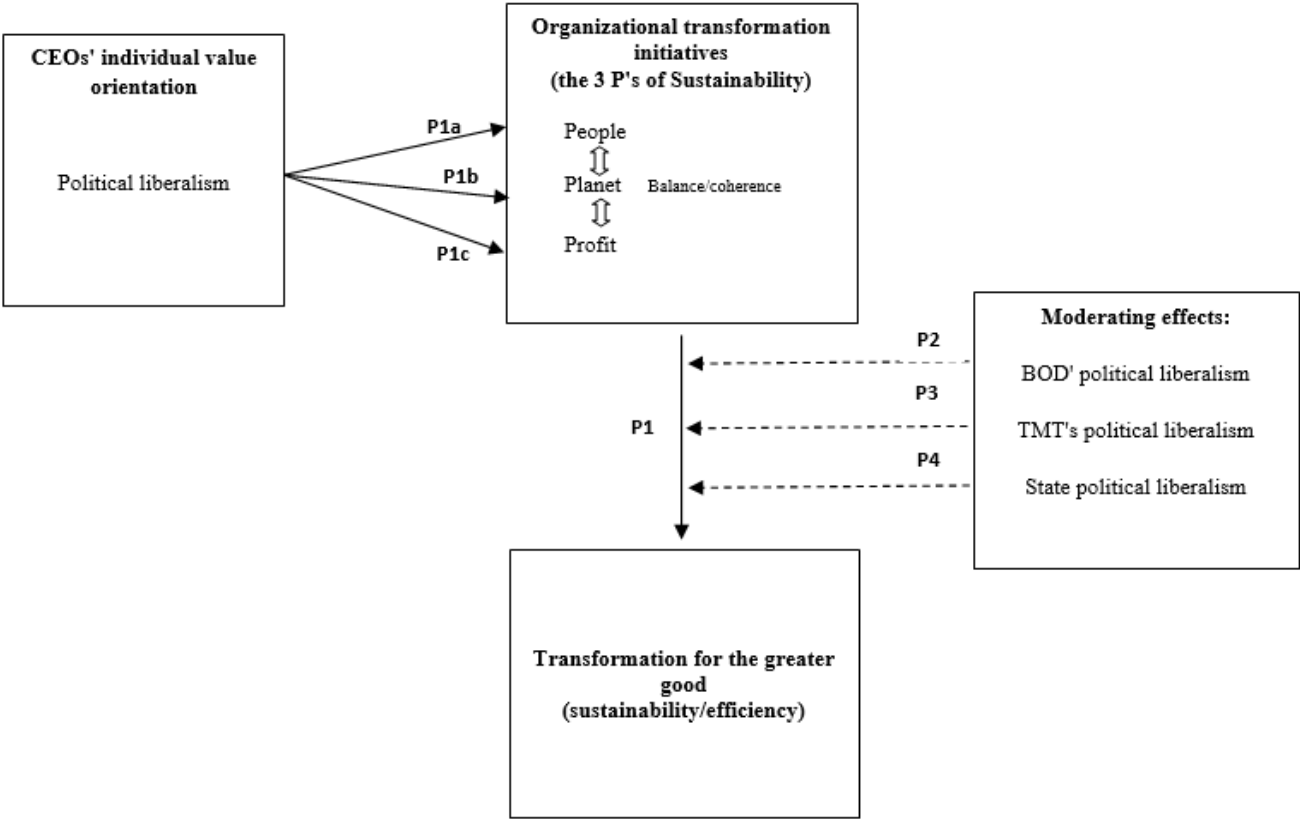
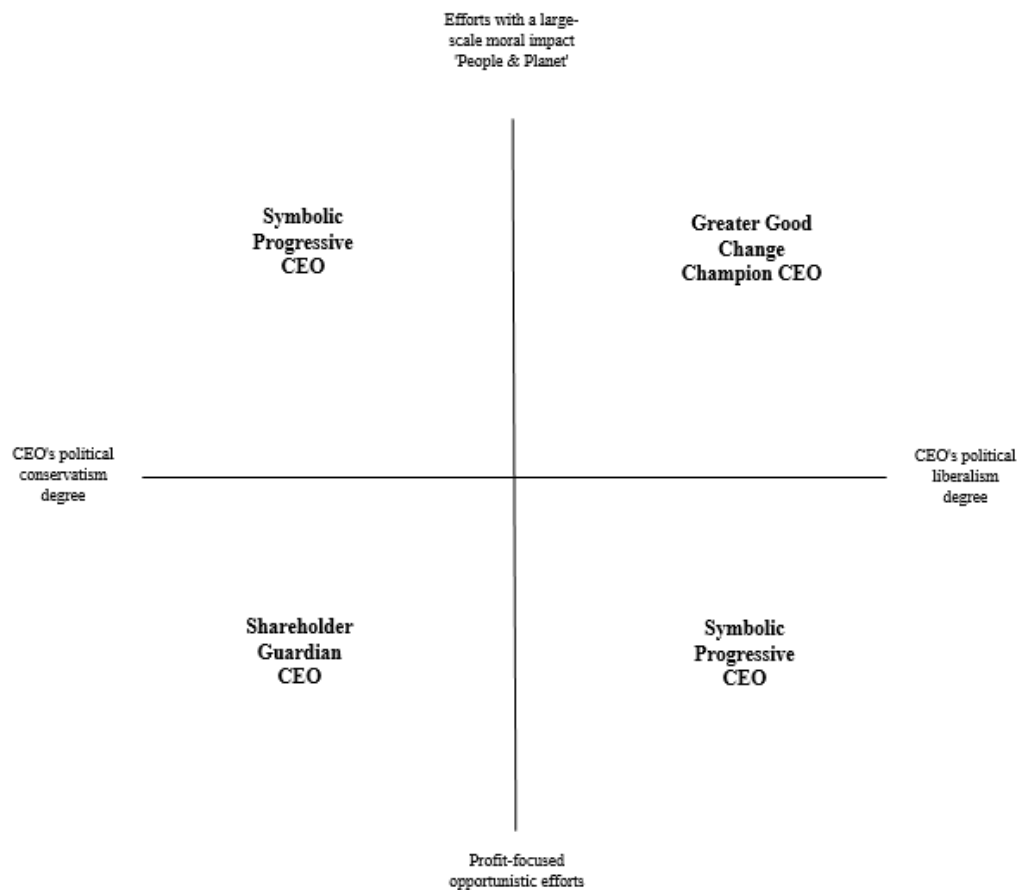


Figure 2. CEO Profiles: Political Ideology and Transformation Propensity for the Greater Good



Note:

- Horizontal axis illustrates CEO's political ideology, with middle spectrum indicating CEO with unknown political ideology.
- Vertical axis illustrates firm's efforts in transformation for the greater good. Higher propensity signifies efforts surpassing profit-driven transformation (effective transformation) and committing to efforts benefiting: People and Planet (effective and sustainable transformation).