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Influence of Political CSR & CSA on Purchase Intention & Communicative Action in Switzerland

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
<i>CSR</i>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<i>Political CSR</i>	Political Corporate Social Responsibility
<i>CSA</i>	Corporate Social Advocacy
<i>GLOBE</i>	Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness
<i>SM</i>	Social Media
<i>UA</i>	Uncertainty Avoidance

1. Introduction

The debate over immigration has intensified in the last few years in consequence of conflicts and more refugees crossing the sea to reach European shores. Reactions to the rising influx of refugees vary, from groups providing in a welcoming culture and demonstrating against restrictions on immigration laws, to the emergence of new groups engaging politically for the first time, demonstrating and demanding more restrictions on acceptance of refugees. Furthermore, in recent years, the number of companies taking different political actions has been on the rise. Be this in their own field of expertise or outside; they have voiced their opinion, promoted certain ideologies and taken action in various ways. From Mark Zuckerberg who decided to initiate a political campaign with the goal of liberalizing the US immigration and visa system to others who merely fund projects (Swaine, 2013). The onset of mobile devices used by the public at large has changed the dimension of frequency and usage. On the one hand, groups are capable of organizing themselves around a certain issue more efficiently and on the other hand to receive more information about companies' activities,. While volatile topics, like same-sex marriage, racial equality and immigration occupy the public sphere, activists and the public are more eager to take assistance from key players that can support their cause. At the same time, some corporations – represented by their leadership – find themselves obliged to comment or support a certain cause. The social pressure exerted by activist groups and the public in general, following the ever-changing political, environmental, technological and economic spheres, has encouraged many scholars to review and develop already existing concepts (Garriga & Melé, 2004). These concepts are Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Political Corporate

Social Responsibility (Political CSR), including the effects of each of these on organizations' financial performance (Ward & Smith, 2006).

This paper examines the influence of Political CSR and CSA messages on purchase-intention, information-sharing and information-seeking. In addition, this paper examines the influence of attitudes and subjective norms on behavioural intention of signing a petition, purchase-intention, information-sharing and information-seeking. More precisely, this study provides the vehicle of a fictitious company 'EcoTech' which disseminates information about supporting less restrictions on immigration in two forms: (A) in the form of a message that encourages consumers to support the cause by signing a petition to change legislation, which we identify as a Political CSR message or (B) in the form of a message that raises the public awareness about the immigration issue, promotes the company's social activities and asks other actors to follow its steps, which we identify as a CSA message.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Current Research

Various definitions and an overview of Political CSR, CSA, purchase-intention, information-seeking and information-sharing are provided in this section. In the following sub-sections some general terms and models are explored both in the realms of Political CSR and purchase-intention.

2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

The existing literature builds up upon a notion from Carroll (1991), which states that there are economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities with social, economic and environmental dimensions in which corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be contextualized. The organizations must go beyond the mere provision of services and goods, therefore being responsive to societal expectations.

The debate surrounding CSR has existed since the dawn of public relations literature (Carroll, 2008; Garriga & Melé, 2004; Hopkins, 2004; Whetten, Rands, & Godfrey, 2002; Werder, Ingenhoff, & Bachmann, 2016). E. Merrick Dodd argues that managers and corporates should behave responsibly toward their communities since the law permits them to operate precisely because these companies are of service to the community without being a source of profit to the owners (Dodd jr., 1932). Similarly, the stakeholder theory suggests that organizations are responsible for all stakeholders, they being anyone who has interacted with the company as it achieves its goals (Bartlett, 2011). In 1953, Howard Bowen published his book “Social Responsibilities of the Businessman”. The book initiated an era of serious writing on the topic. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, CSR attained the attention of many scholars driven mainly by the need to evaluate

corporate behaviour within society. The CSR field “*has grown significantly and today contains a great proliferation of theories, approaches and terminologies*” (Garriga & Melé, 2004). We can find many definitions for CSR within the academic literature: many view Social Responsibility through an ethical lens “*CSR is concerned with treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner (...) CSR therefore means the ethical behaviour of business towards its constituencies or stakeholders*” (Hopkins, 2004). Some view CSR as an obligation toward society in general; CSR is a “*commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources*” (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Conversely, the European Commission doesn’t view CSR as an ethical obligation but a voluntary action beyond profit maximization. The commission defines CSR as a “*concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*” (Comission, 2011).

Some regard CSR as purely philanthropic initiatives, translated into reality through instruments like Cause-Related Marketing (CRM), where a company donates money or products to a non-profit organization or runs its own social program to support a cause when customers purchase their products (Xiaoli & Kwangjun, 2007). CSR can be seen as Cause-Related Marketing from an economic standpoint. This economic view is based on three premises. The first sees a distinct division between business and politics. The second is that organizational leadership characterizes itself by displaying fiduciary responsibilities towards shareholders, because corporations are interested in maximising their profits. The third considers the long-term value of an organization. That value may be increased only if social responsibilities are presumed (Scherer & Palazzo, The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on

CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy, 2011). According to Scherer and Palazzo, economists would be interested in the value creation aspect of CSR activities and would not be reluctant to behave in a socially responsible manner in principle.

Under the umbrella of CSR, Political CSR and CSA activities can be included. The focus of Political CSR tends to be narrower than CSA. CSA can proceed both within and outside of the constitutional sphere. Congruent to this it seems that Political CSR cannot fully unite corporate social advocacy as per Wettstein and Baur. This further raises questions about the reconcilability of conceptual presumptions underlying the two conceptions. In particular, the concept of legitimacy needs further analysis (Wettstein & Baur, 2016).

2.1.1. Communicating CSR Activities

Cho, Furey and Mohr (2016), examined in their study the communication of CSR activities and the engagement with the public by reputable corporations on social media generally, but specifically on Facebook. Only a fifth of the online communications were about CSR activities whilst the majority of posted materials by these corporations were non-CSR related (Cho, Furey, & Mohr, 2016). The significance of CSR communication can be determined greatly by the public's perception and their usage of social media. Commonly, the stance towards the marketing of corporations on SM tends to be negative (Cohen, 2012), combined with the public's critical view of CSR. These are sufficient reasons for corporations to evade CSR communication in order not to damage their legitimacy (Cho, Furey, & Mohr, 2016), a consideration which shows the disparity between theory and practice.

On the one hand, theory suggests that interactions between organizations and the broad public should shift from a one-way to a two-way intercourse, whilst on the other hand corporations evade communicating their CSR activities over social media fearing public criticism. Nevertheless, CSR-specialized pages used two-way strategies frequently. The specialization of such pages lets companies exchange information with targeted audiences that are interested in learning more about the activities of a company, thus leading to more attention among these groups. Less fortunate for organizations, when not providing high-involvement content of various stakeholders, mistrust may be felt against companies' activities, which render the CSR communication self-serving and less trustworthy (Cho, Furey, & Mohr, 2016). The public, therefore, has the tendency to interact with non-CSR messages more than with CSR messages. These discoveries illustrate the unfavourable side of CSR communication today, namely the public disdain of CSR messages on SM and corporate reactivity to communicate CSR actions with publics (Cho, Furey, & Mohr, 2016).

2.1.2.

Political Corporate Social Responsibility

Many researchers have tried to develop the concept of Political CSR, and it is present in various fields of literature from business ethics to public relations (Weyzig, 2009; Reich, 2007; Norberg, 2003; Henderson, 2001; Friedman, 1970). However, not all scholars who added to the debate about this term managed to distinctly or uniformly endorse it (Moon, Crane, & Matten, 2005; Matten & Moon, 2008). Political CSR gained a significant amount of attention in the past decade as demonstrated by the dates of recent publications. When it comes to definitions, scholars haven't agreed on one definition of the term Political CSR; however, a number of authors have tried to include all aspects in one concept (Frynas & Stephens, 2015; Mäkinen & Kourula, 2012; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007;

2008; 2011; Matten & Crane 2008; Crane, Matten, & Moon, 2005). Through examining CSR debates that reflected upon the consequences of globalization, Scherer and Palazzo in 2007 suggested the new perspective they called 'Political CSR'. Their definition of Political CSR suggests *"an extended model of governance with business firms contributing to global regulation and providing public goods"* (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). In other words, Political CSR is seen as the corporations' engagement within the political sphere to address social and environmental issues such as *"human rights, global warming or deforestation"* (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). Similarly, Mäkinen and Kourula (2012) view corporations as political actors:

"based on a strong globalist transition process according to which business firms are seen as political actors in that they increasingly self-regulate and take over traditional responsibilities of the state as providers of citizenship rights and public goods."

While Political CSR activities have a political influence, whether they were intended or not, the socio-political sphere also influences CSR activities (Frynas & Stephens, 2015). Recently, businesses have gone beyond just corporate social responsibility known as CSR and have begun to get more involved in the production of public goods. Some have even begun to assume a state-like position in that they protect, enable and implement citizenship rights (Scherer & Palazzo, *The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy*, 2011). Various authors have concluded that this happens when the state fails, whether willingly or unwillingly.

On a global playing field, it is not possible to have only international institutions and organizations, but governments, firms and other civil society groups have to work in union (Scherer & Palazzo, *The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy*, 2011). This cooperation, described by Scherer and Palazzo, is an essential one and of high importance in globalized media and governance. However, states with weak justice institutions will witness the accumulation of economic power into the hands of the stakeholders and this economic power moves to become a political power (Mäkinen & Kourula, 2012). To sum up, Political CSR activities in this paper are viewed as the political role played by corporations in changing policies that might be of relevance or no relevance to their goals.

2.1.3. Corporate Social Advocacy

A concept related strongly to those of Political CSR, and CSR in general is corporate social advocacy, also known as CSA. CSA refers to an organization interacting with the public sphere by providing a statement on a certain political or social issue or taking a public stance towards it (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Wettstein and Baur provide a definition to the term Corporate Social Advocacy based on the etymology of the word advocacy: the act of “voicing or showing explicit and public support for certain individuals, groups or ideals with the aim of convincing and persuading others to do the same” (Wettstein & Baur, 2016). Wettstein and Baur, then, distinguish three specifications (or dimensions) important to the term of CSA: (1) Companies that practice CSA go beyond the economic interests and goals of the company; (2) the company understands such values and ideas as worth promoting separately of what the core business is - in other words, companies

would promote such ideals even when running a business in a different line of industry;

(3) CSA considers the new trait of this type of political engagement in society. Although the engagement is essentially political, it always takes place -to some degree- outside of the formal political channels, therefore reaching a larger audience. Stances taken by corporations can be either planned and communicated strategically, or not, as in the case of a CEO providing a remark on one issue in a journalistic interview or in the form of a social media post or in the case of a whistle-blower (Park & Berger, 2004). The result of both types of stances would be relatively the same, when the public perceives and views a stance as a link connecting the organization to the issue at hand (Park & Berger, 2004). However, strategic issue management (SIM) justifies organizational behaviour towards the impressions of stakeholders. Organizations engaging in CSA might not have an influence only on those who are in a function in relation with the organization, but it is possible that they will also affect the formation or change in the dynamic of the public. CSA often includes issues which are not entirely congruent with the business's core functions and advocate action to better society. Issue management, on the other hand, has undergone the evolution to become an opportunistic and offensive strategy for businesses (Park & Berger, 2004).

Especially social political issues - such as Immigration, LGBTQ rights and health care - can both isolate and attract new focus groups (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Regardless of how organizations perceive their social advocacy activities, Dodd and Supa have found that if CSA as a concept is applied extensively to the health-care reform, among other issues, it will influence the financial capacity of organizations. The fiscal impact might be positive or negative, but in some contexts, when the negative financial implications are balanced,

the company will have the freedom to advocate freely. This result is congruent with other studies that examined the financial impacts for more than 35 years (Dodd & Supa, 2014). This is supported by two main observations surrounding CSA activities: (1) social-political issues are not always related directly to the organisation; (2) many organizations consider engaging in the social-political issues to be controversial and might isolate certain stakeholders, attracting activist groups along the line. CEOs and organizations leaders are putting advocating social responsibility at a forefront, for example, CEO of salesforce.com argues that “*businesses [...] are great platforms for change in the world. They are the greatest platform for giving. They are the greatest platform to make a difference*” (Bort, 2015). Nevertheless, the government has not been voiceless either, and encouraged businesses to voice their opinions. In a 1996 corporate citizenship conference, President Clinton highlighted the importance of businesses transforming into a force of social change without legislative change (Krebel Chang, 2017).

To sum up, literature tends to focus on the financial impact of organizations’ activities within the public sphere and consider it as a useful measurement (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Accordingly, Dodd and Supa recognized the importance of CSA whilst utilizing purchase-intention to examine the impact of CSA on organizations. Purchase intention, which is typically a marketing and advertising measurement, was used as an aid to determine that CSA has financial consequences. After considering purchase-intention in their study as an indicator, Dodd & Suppa recommended: “*prior to involving an organization in a CSA message strategy, careful consideration of the potential impact of stances on a social-political issue is measured against organizational goals* (Dodd & Supa, 2014).”

2.2. Theories and Models

In order to explain the differences in results between the behavioural intentions of US and Swiss customers or lack thereof, the concept of Interest Groups will be reviewed and the functionality and the construct of these groups in Switzerland and the United States will be compared in this chapter. Additionally, there will be a review of the Hofstede Study and the GLOBE study. However, this paper's aim has shifted after difficulties in gaining results from the survey conducted on our behalf in the US. Following these reviews, the Integrated Model of Strategic Communication Messaging (IMSCM) (Werder & Schweickart, 2013) that is used in this paper to predict the public's behaviour will be presented. It will be explained how this model utilizes and connects the dependent and independent variables of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Problem Solving (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Finally, this Chapter introduces the variables derived from the two theories that are important to the research question of this study.

2.2.1.

Interest groups

Identified by Lijphart (2012), interest groups are one of the ten variables that make up a functioning democracy. In this section, the distinction between majoritarian and consensus democracies is provided based on Lijphart's typology of democracy (2012). The concept of interest groups is then briefly reviewed and a comparison is conducted between interest groups in the United States and Switzerland.

Lijphart presented a basic distinction between two types of democracy: the majoritarian and the consensus model of democracy. The majoritarian model "*concentrates the*

political power in the hands of a bare majority [...] whereas the consensus model tries to share, disperse and limit power in a variety of ways” (Lijphart, 2012). Lijphart’s consensus and majoritarian democracy differentiation serves as the major influential typology of today’s democracies (Mainwaring, 2011). This distinction is drawn upon ten differences or variables in terms of dichotomous division between the two models, and some democracies “*may be at either end of the continuum or anywhere in between*” (Lijphart, 2012).

Based on this typology of majoritarian and consensus, and according to Lijphart’s (1989) empirical study of 22 democratic regimes, the United States is classified as a majoritarian-federal democracy, whereas Switzerland is a consensus democracy (Lijphart, 1989).

Interest groups in the United States and Switzerland in Comparison

The purpose of this comparison is to describe and investigate the differences between interest groups in the United States and Switzerland. Lijphart provides a theoretical construct with ten variables that defines what a functioning democracy is. The political systems in the United States and Switzerland will be compared in terms of the fifth variable, the Interest Groups. The justification for this comparison is that Political CSR is seen as the movement of corporations into the political sphere. Corporations are among interest groups and the aim is to see whether the differences between US and Swiss customers’ attitudes towards CSA and Political CSR activities can be explained theoretically by examining the interest groups’ variable.

The involvement of corporations in politics is nothing new, but the interest here is in identifying the differences to determine if these have an impact on the way corporations publicize their involvement in the political sphere. Interest groups organise with the

motive of seeking, in part, favourable policies (Loomis, Francia, & Strolovitch, 2011). These groups might be organized around ethnical, religious, occupational, industrial or ideological commonalities (Grossmann, 2011). Corporatism – or concertation as labelled by Philippe C. Schmitter (1982) – in the policymaking context, refers to the incorporation of interest groups into the strategic decision-making process.

Lijphart suggests through empirical findings that there is a correlation between the types of cabinets and interest groups. “*Democracies that have more minimal winning one-party cabinet are also the countries that have more pluralist interest groups and democracies with greater multipartism tend to be less pluralist*” (Lijphart, 2012). That puts the United States and Switzerland near the pluralist and corporatist ends of the spectrum respectively. However, Lijphart states that the degree of corporatism in Switzerland is disputed among experts and that is because unions in Switzerland are not as powerful as businesses (Lijphart, 2012). In addition, due to historical factors along with institutional reasons, the political parties in Switzerland are not very strong and interest groups, especially economic ones, play a big role in the decision-making process (Kriesi, 1998; Ladner, 2006). This disagreement was resolved when a distinction was identified between Liberal Corporatism and Social Corporatism (Switzerland embodying the former and Germany and Sweden for instance embodying the latter) “*most clearly typifies the traits characteristics of Liberal Corporatism*” (Katzenstein, 1985). This suggests that interest groups in Switzerland such as organizations and corporations tend to strengthen their ties with certain political parties, the latter being dependent on interest groups’ financial and expert support (Kriesi, 1998; 1980). Based on constitutional provisions, a consultation process takes place in matters of internal and foreign politics. One highly important feature of this process is “*the existence of both the referendum and the initiative, which*

constitutes an element of the bargaining power of different association” (Sidjanski, 1974). The relation between interest groups and political parties in Switzerland is underrepresented in the research, but in their empirical contribution to this field, Fischer, Sciarini, & Traber (2009) concluded that interest groups are more influential than Swiss political parties.

By the year 2000, there were about 22,000 associations in the United States, representing various interests ranging from automobile makers to workers’ unions, doctors, engineers and others (Herrnson, 2011). This diversity was devised as a tool by the authors of the US constitution to make sure that power is not concentrated in the hand of a tyrant majority (Herrnson, 2011). Moreover, every major corporation that operates in the United States *“has lobbying representatives on their payroll”* (Kersch, 2011). The pluralist politics in the United States stresses competition and involves politicians – Presidents, Federal Agencies and Legislators – working together with interest groups in order to compete (Grossmann, 2011). This relationship is to some extent reciprocal. Interest groups endorse political candidates and that endorsement sends a signal to members of that interest group to vote for such candidates (Noel, 2014). More recently, that endorsement has come in the form of Political Action Committees or PACs that finance federal elections (Herrnson, 2011). This is the case for both the executive and legislative branch elections. Similarly, interest groups in the United States aim to influence the legislative proposals process conducted by the President. At the same time, the President and his advisors reach out to interest groups to seek their advice and solicit their support for presidential initiatives in Congress (Peterson, 2011).

The legislative process in the United States is very complex and interest groups play a major role on nearly all levels. For example, the statutes passed by congress and enforced

by the federal agencies are usually vague. The Congress leaves filling the loopholes to federal agencies, and that is where interest groups can exert their influence on a new law and shift its weight towards their preference (Peterson, 2011).

Cultural Studies

In this section, we examine the studies, which made cross-cultural analysis an important

2.2.2.
issue in the realm of international business. Hofstede, a ground breaking researcher in cross-national studies and in scholarly research, goes so far as to say that the “*business of international business is culture*” (Hofstede, 1994).

The original book by Hofstede written in 1980, exhibited the paradigm of “dimensions”, displaying that divergences between modern nations can be meaningfully scaled and ranked on a discrete set of dimensions, which depict different solutions to omnipresent difficulties of human societies (Hofstede, 2006). The measurements are obtained through survey instruments to produce a mean value for a certain collective of people which therefore creates a large proportion of the national culture attributes (Venaik & Brewer, 2010).

The following dimensions that Hofstede identified are (a) **Power Distance**, which is related to the problem of inequality, (b) **Uncertainty Avoidance**, which is related to the problem of coping with the foreign and unaccustomed, (c) **Individualism-Collectivism**, which is associated to the difficulty of interpersonal relations and (d) **Masculinity-Femininity**, which is tied to emotional gender roles (Hofstede, 1980). In a later version Hofstede added the fifth dimension (e) of **Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation**, which is linked to deferment of gratification to his set of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1991).

However popular Hofstede's research may be, there are several critics who argue, that insufficient aspects of culture have been analysed and identified by his work. His work in general and the nature of the data in particular is too focused on the United States and on IBM and thus those doubting Hofstede question the broad application of his work (Venaik & Brewer, 2010).

Another study is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness, or (as it is more commonly known) GLOBE research program. It is an extension of the study done by Geert Hofstede from five cultural dimensions to 18. Two major influences of the authors of the GLOBE study have been (A) the World Value Survey, which is the extension of the European Values Survey arranged by a US political scientist and (B) the Survey of Values, which is aligned and composed by psychologist Shalom H. Schwartz. Furthermore, these aforementioned four studies are the major cross-cultural projects conducted in the 1990's (Hofstede, 2006).

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness program has not only taken over the five dimensions of Hofstede but also extended them. They sustained the classification of **Power Distance** and **Uncertainty Avoidance** but have modified the meaning as Venaik and Brewer found in their studies. They discovered that, in the case of Uncertainty Avoidance which they focused on especially, both the GLOBE and the Hofstede studies have used closely related definitions but the large differences in how the concept was operationalized has made critics voice suspicions regarding the variety of research on either one (Venaik & Brewer, 2010). Venaik and Brewer recommend utilizing the different scores and indices of Hofstede and GLOBE to characterize different aspects of Uncertainty Avoidance. Specifically, the stress dimension, the orientation practices dimension and the rule orientations aspirations of societies should be measured through

the Hofstede UA index, the GLOBE UA practices score and the GLOBE UA values score respectively (Venaik & Brewer, 2010).

Due to the lack of finding compatible dimensions in the work of other researchers, the GLOBE project has been under scrutiny several times by researchers. In addition, there have been unexpected similarities between the Big Five theory of personality and the GLOBE study. In accordance with that, the dimensions used were notable correlations and grades of national stereotypes of the Big Five. Critics have thus dismissed the dimensions used in GLOBE as national stereotypes (Stankov, 2015).

Differences and Similarities between GLOBE and Hofstede

Since Hofstede was used as a basis for GLOBE's research, it is important to differentiate between them and to compare the two (Hofstede, 2006).

- (1) GLOBE collected new material from different organizations and in the analysed data Hofstede used pre-existing data from the international organization of IBM. Both data sets were collected from industry and from more than just a single study.
- (2) The GLOBE study was conducted by a team whilst Hofstede did his research alone.
- (3) In the GLOBE study, respondents were managers. The participants in the study of Hofstede were matched groups of employees, the majority were non-managerial.
- (4) The GLOBE study was theory-driven and based on statistical pre-tests and the existing literature incorporating the book of Hofstede published in 1980. Surveys were action-driven in Hofstede's research.

- (5) The authors of the GLOBE study made a conscious effort to free the behaviour of corporations from the control of the US and were aware of the threat of ethnocentrism bias. The project conducted at IBM engaged researchers of that company locally and was mainly US inspired.
- (6) The research done by GLOBE was conducted on two levels, with participants receiving either question about the culture in their organization or in their society. These two types of cultures were treated the same by the researchers and dimensions were closely correlated. Only societal cultures were focused upon by Hofstede, which meant that the different responses of IBM participants in different countries were compared. A second study was conducted with respondents being from several different organizations unrelated to IBM. A main conclusion Hofstede drew was that after both a cross-national study and a cross-organizational study, one could not equate the two cultures.
- (7) Though more than half of the dimension measures are correlated with national wealth, therefore influenced by economic factors. GLOBE is aware of the significance of wealth and is unbiased in interpreting the results on culture. Hofstede argues that diverging values that are able to be explained by economic factors do not have to be explained by cultural factors.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action presents a model that helps in predicting behaviour, by measuring attitudes, beliefs and intentions toward that behaviour.

As shown in Figure 1, the independent variables in this theory are attitude and subjective norm. There are various different ways to measure the concept commonly referred to as

“attitude” and a lot of concepts have been understood under the pretext of the label “attitude”, including but not limited to attraction, attribution and behavioural intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

According to researchers, the construct of attitude cannot be taken without context. Ajzen and Fishbein described attitude as “*a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object.*” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

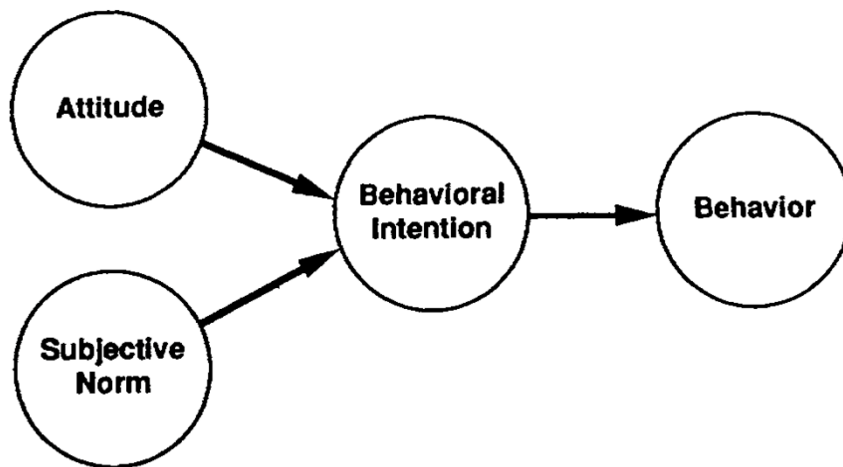


Figure 1- Path model of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Madden, Ajzen, & Ellen, 1992, p. 4)

When this common definition is further examined, vagueness is unravelled and three notions can be identified: (1) the notion that attitude is learned, (2) that it forecasts action and (3) that those actions are either favourable or unfavourable towards the object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Subjective norms are a person’s perception of what others think about a certain behaviour. In other words, the degree of a person’s readiness to comply with social pressure regarding performing or not performing a certain behaviour (Conner & Armitage, 1998).

The Theory of Reasoned Action supports the statement that behavioural intentions – which represent the dependent variable of the theory – are an operation of salient information of beliefs about the prospect that the action of a specific conduct will lead to a particular outcome (Madden, Ajzen, & Ellen, 1992). Such a particular outcome is specific to the theory of reasoned action in that all variables target the same behaviour (Werder & Schweickart, 2013). Fishbein and Ajzen separate the beliefs related to behavioural intentions into two sets, behavioural and normative. Normative beliefs affect the subjective norm of the individual connected with the performance of the behaviour. Behavioural beliefs are fundamental influences on an individual's attitude of acting out the behaviour. Therefore, salient beliefs or information affect intentions and subsequent behaviour either through attitude and/or through subjective norms. Any external variable only affects attitudes or subjective norms.

2.2.4. Situational Theory of Problem Solving

The situational theory of problem solving presents a model that explains and predicts people's communicative action in a problem-solving situation. The theory is based on Karl Popper's assumption that all life is problem solving and goes on to assume that human behaviour is motivated by problem solving (Popper, 1999). The theory states that (a) communicative action is determined by the situational motivation and referent criterion and (b) situational motivation in problem solving is determined by four perceptual antecedents which are the independent variables: (1) problem recognition, (2) constraint recognition, (3) involvement recognition and (4) referent criterion (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Problem recognition is one's perception that a problem exists and no immediate solution is available. Constraint recognition is one's perceived stumbling blocks that hinder one's ability to do something about the problem. Involvement

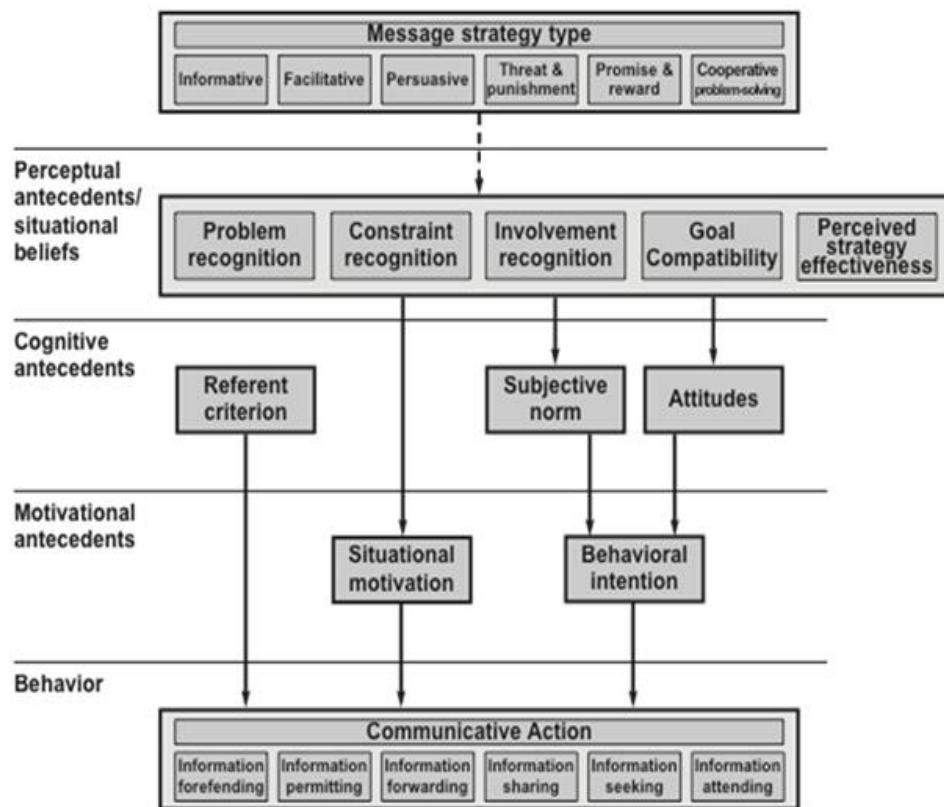
recognition is the perceived connection to the problem and goal compatibility. The three independent variables are associated with the situational beliefs, whilst referent criterion is a cognitive variable and refers to any form of knowledge or previous experiences that can influence one's approach to solving the problem (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Moreover, a situational motivation variable was introduced which mediates the effects of the three perceptual variables on the dependent communicative actions and refers to the cognitive and epistemic state of readiness to engage in problem solving behaviour (Kim & Grunig, 2011). The communicative action – the dependent variable – is the person's communicative activeness (Kim & Grunig, 2011). This activity was classified in three behaviours: (1) information taking, (2) information selecting and (3) information giving.

In the situational theory of problem solving, Grunig and Kim (2011) go beyond the original situational theory of publics, and address the limitations. Firstly, the referent criterion has not been used, secondly, active communication behaviour is narrowly explained, and thirdly, only perceptual variables as antecedents to communication behaviour are included and the theory in general has been underused.

2.2.5.

Integrated Model of Strategic Communication Messaging

Figure 2- Integrated Model of Strategic Communication Messaging (Werder & Schweickart, 2013)



As mentioned before, this study utilizes the Integrated Model of Strategic Communication Messaging. The model integrates the variables from Situational Theory of Problem Solving and the Theory of Reasoned Action and was used to examine message strategy effectiveness (Werder & Schweickart, 2013). Moreover, the study of Werder and Schweickart (2013) “sought to identify the perceptual, cognitive, and motivational antecedents most useful for predicting communication behaviour of publics (Werder & Schweickart, 2013)”. The integrated model puts the situational theory of problem-solving variables and the theory of reasoned action variables on the corresponding antecedent level that reflects its function as shown in Figure 2. An important aspect of this model is the inclusion of behavioural intention to the motivational antecedent that predicts the dependent variables of communicative action.

The results of Werder and Schweickart's (2013) study points out that an integrated approach is necessary in strategic messaging with the public. They realized however, that the message strategy manipulations are not clearly validated beyond several methodological contexts. They found that *"message strategies influence attitudes toward the issue, organization, and behaviour through their influence on perceived strategy effectiveness. Additionally, perceived strategy effectiveness was a significant contributor to situational motivation in problem solving"* (Werder (A), 2015).

Although it was used in multiple studies, the operationalization of the definitions remains unclear. Despite this, it is clear, that the integrated model has significant implications on the public relations sector in both theory and practice and a link may be established between the theory of public relations and communicative behaviour (Werder & Schweickart, 2013). Werder and Schweickart (2013) state that the particular conditions of their study are unique. The participants were all students and the context revolves around the particular political statements provided by the company Chick-fil-A, in the setting of a different corporation or non-profit organizations.

As mentioned before, the Integrated Model of Strategic Communication will be used as a theoretical framework. The model helps in identifying the most influential antecedents that predict communication behaviour. In this section, the following goal variables will subsequently be reviewed: Behavioural intentions, information-seeking and information-sharing.

In order to understand communicative actions, behavioural intentions should be considered. In particular, purchase-intention and other behaviours of publics, that have an influence on the actions and objectives of organizations (Werder, 2005).

The IMSCM utilizes the theory of reasoned action predictions and assumes that situational beliefs have an influence on attitude and subjective norms, which then predict intention to engage in behaviour. The integrated model – by combining variables – adds new relationships. For instance, behavioural intention is included within motivational antecedents along with situational motivation. New variables in turn may predict communicative action. Werder, for example, points out purchase-intention to be one of many things that could be predicted (Werder, 2015b).

Kim and Grunig (2011) argue that one's commitment to solve a problem increases the motivation to take information related to the problem with higher selectivity along with increased motivation to share information about the problem.

In the situational theory of problem solving, Grunig and Hunt (1984) state that information-seeking is predicted by problem recognition, level of involvement and constraint recognition. Information-seeking is classified by active communication behaviour, such as the planned searching of the environment for messages about the topic. The counterpart – information processing – is unplanned and thus passive.

Information-sharing is defined by the action of sharing details, data and facts with others. In this study, information-sharing implies sharing pertaining to CSA and Political CSR activities. Passive information-sharing refers to sharing information about the problem only when the person is requested to (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Meanwhile, active information-sharing is actively forwarding information even when the communicator is not asked to; who is motivated to inform others about her/his perception of a problem and the way she/he thinks it best to solve that problem. Thus Kim & Grunig (2011, p. 127)

state, “information outflow from an information forwarder is voluntary, premeditated, and self-propelled by heightened problem perception.”

Information-sharing in the age of social media changed greatly. It has become more multidirectional and less predictable. SM users can easily share, create and alter information (Friedmann, 2006).

In the following chapters of this paper, we will use this model as the cornerstone for our research. Our research question and the hypotheses are drawn relying on this model.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

2.2.6.

In this paper, we intend to find out how the communication of Political CSR activities differs from the communication of CSA activities in influencing the consumers’ intention to buy products from that company and their intention to engage with the communication efforts the company is conducting. In addition, the reasoned action theory model is investigated together with its predictability power of behavioural intentions and purchase-intention, whilst from the situational theory of problem solving the information-seeking and information-sharing variables are added as dependent information-sharing.

Based on IMSCM, this study predicts that Political CSR and CSA have an influence on purchase-intention and communicative actions. Hence, we propose the following research question:

RQ1: How are the consumers’ purchase-intention, the information-sharing and information-seeking influenced by Political CSR activities in comparison to CSA activities?

Behavioural Intentions, purchase Intention and communicative action

According to the theory of reasoned action, attitudes and subjective norms explain behavioural intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this paper, we are also investigating the model of the theory of reasoned action and its ability to predict not only behavioural intentions but also purchase-intention and communicative action. Therefore we provide the following research question:

RQ2: Do the attitude and subjective norms have an influence on behavioural intention, purchase-intention and communicative actions?

Hypotheses

As previously demonstrated, the public has a tendency to view non-CSR messages as more favourable than CSR messages. When comparing the CSA definition with the Political CSR definition, it can be assumed that CSA has a more indirect form of communication, and it may resemble a non-CSR message in comparison with Political CSR. Our assumption is that communicating about CSA activities has a more positive influence on consumers' intention to purchase products from Ecotech in comparison to Political CSR activities. We also predict that these communication efforts will have an influence on consumers' behaviours of sharing information and seeking information. Accordingly, the following three hypotheses are presented:

H1a: CSA messages have a greater positive influence on purchase-intention than Political CSR messages.

H1b: CSA messages have a greater positive influence on information-sharing than Political CSR messages.

H1c: CSA messages have a greater positive influence on information-seeking than Political CSR messages.

In the questionnaire used in this study, participants' attitude toward the fictitious company Ecotech, their attitude toward the issue presented by Ecotech, and their attitude toward involvement with the issue were measured. In addition, participants rated their agreement with statements that measured the subjective norms.

We are assuming that the attitudes mentioned above, in addition to the subjective norms, have an influence and the ability to predict purchase-intention, information-sharing and information-seeking. Behavioural intention of signing a petition in support of policy change and its relation to the same set of attitudes and subjective norms is also presented for comparison purposes. The following hypotheses will be tested:

H2a: Attitude toward the organization, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms have an influence on behavioural intention.

H2b: Attitude toward the organization, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms have an influence on purchase-intention.

H2c: Attitude toward the organization, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms have an influence on information-sharing.

H2d: Attitude toward the organization, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms have an influence on information-seeking.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design

The initial goal of this study was to explain how Political CSR influences purchase-intention and communicative actions of publics in the US in comparison to Switzerland. Since the US data proved to be unavailable, the research question was changed to accommodate the new situation. Now, this paper has the goal of comparing the influence of CSA and Political CSR on purchase-intention and communicative actions just in Switzerland within the context of Immigration. In addition, the relation between the independent variables from the theory of reasoned action, namely, attitudes and subjective norms, and the dependent variables of behavioural intention, purchase-intention, information-seeking and information-sharing is investigated.

In order to answer the research question, an experiment using a post-test only randomized design was conducted. The experiment utilized the fictitious company “Ecotech” that disseminates messages that support two social causes in the form of CSA messages and Political CSR messages. The first cause is the LGBTQ community’s rights. The second cause is immigration law-reform. In this study, we are focusing on the two messages that supported the immigration law-reform since immigration is a highly debated topic in Switzerland and Europe in general.

An advantage of the experimentally based approach is that cause-effect relationships are able to be identified and explained (Brosius, Haas, & Koschel, 2012).

Table 1

Different types of research designs (Diekmann, 2014)

		Zeitdimension	
		<i>statistisch</i>	<i>dynamisch</i>
Varianzkontrolle	<i>experimentell</i>	between-subject Design	within-subject Design
	<i>natürlich</i>	Querschnittsdesign	Pannel-, Trenddesign

The randomized experiment is the most ideal method to test causal hypotheses (Diekmann, 2014). A between-subjects design may be able to evade the carryover effects, which may occur in within-subjects designs.

Participants are either in the control group or in the treatment group receiving the stimulus but are not found in both. When several stimuli were tested, as is the case in this paper, different participants were required for each group. Randomization is used to achieve similar groups. Between-subject designs are of great advantage for researchers in avoiding influence of external factors. Confounding variables that may intervene and weaken the validity of the results are possible environmental factors, generalization, individual variability and assignment bias. (Shuttleworth , 2009).

3.2. Stimuli

The participants were randomly assigned to receive a text about Eco Tech of approximately the same length.

Table 2

Between subjects experimental design

Stimuli	Issue Type
Political CSR (Policy Reform)	Immigration
	LGBTQ Rights
Social Advocacy (No Policy Reform)	Immigration
	LGBTQ Rights

The text differed from group to group in CSR type and issue type as depicted in Table 2; In the beginning, some of the stimuli applied were promoting legislation and the others were against that legislation and should have been distributed to each group according to the variation type assigned to each group, but after testing the stimulus in the class, it was decided that the messages promoting against the legislation should be abandoned. The rationale was that, according to the first test results, participants were not able to make a clear distinction between a positive and negative stance of the corporation Eco Tech towards Immigration or LGBTQ.

The stimuli were tested to the full extent through several pre-tests conducted in advance of this study. The stimuli were to have comparatively the same length. The stimulus describing the CSA activity in the context of immigration having 766 characters and the stimulus describing the Political CSR activity in the context of immigration having 862 characters. The stimulus describing the CSA activity in the context of LGBTQ rights had 879 characters. The stimulus describing the Political CSR activity in the context of LGBTQ rights had 941 characters. Through a first pre-test with participants, technical

difficulties were found and resolved. Questions about wording were also raised and addressed, for instance the seminar group received questions about what LGBTQ means and thus an explanation was included in the final version.

It is important to note here, that the participants who tested the stimulus and the participants who answered the final questionnaire were not the same, to avoid rendering the stimuli as unusable.

Conceptual Differentiation between Political CSR and CSA stimulus

As mentioned in section 3.1, the study focuses on the immigration theme. A comparison is provided here between the two stimuli to illustrate the differences between a Political CSR message and a CSA message.

The Political CSR stimulus and the CSA stimulus distributed between the groups were intrinsically different but they shared the theme of immigration. The essential differentiation that can be noticed is that the CSA stimulus shows EcoTech advocating equal rights for refugees and promoting their integration within society. At the end, this stimulus encourages other companies to follow Ecotech's steps. On the other hand, the Political CSR stimulus is more direct in advancing EcoTech's vision and presents the company as an active social and political player that encourages publics to engage in social issues to achieve change, see in Table 3.

Table 3*Conceptual Differentiation between Political CSR and CSA stimuli*

Stimulus type	Texts	Conceptual Differences
CSA	EcoTech promotes the participation and integration of immigrants and refugees in Switzerland and, at the same time, use our practical experience to help them	Presenting convictions and areas of promotion
Political CSR	EcoTech promotes the participation and integration of immigrants and refugees in Switzerland and, at the same time, put our practical experience to use to help shape this field of activity.	Presenting convictions and areas of promotion
CSA	EcoTech offers jobs and internships to refugees and asylum seekers.	The Focus is on what EcoTech is doing to help refugees
Political CSR	we need to draw up concrete proposals that address current needs	The Focus is on the need for new legislation
CSA	we have high-qualified employees which take part in a mentoring project and provide knowledge for refugees and help them as well in their everyday life	Highlighting areas of social promotion
Political CSR	EcoTech takes an active part in the initiative "WE together" to develop Swiss refugee policy reform to urge the parliament to change immigration policy into one that is more inclusive and diverse	Highlighting areas of political activity
CSA	We hope that our example will also encourage other companies to do the same.	Invitation to other actors to follow EcoTech's steps
Political CSR	Please take action by signing here and support our demand to achieve change and equality for all.	Encouragement to sign a political petition that can lead to change in legislation.

3.3. Instrumentation

The questionnaire included 57 items that measured all the variables that are of interest to the seminar attendees. The items were adapted from the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the situational theory of problem solving (Kim & J. E. Grunig, 2011; Kim et al., 2012). Most of the items that were used in measuring variables of interest used a seven point Likert scale from 1 to 7. Attitude measurements utilized various semantic differential scales such as the following: *Bad* or *Good*, *Negative* or

Positive, it is an *opportunity* for Swiss society or it is a *threat* to Swiss society and *Unfavourable* or *Favourable*. Demographic measures were introduced at the end of the questionnaire and they included age, gender, education, citizenship and political affiliation.

For this paper, we introduce here the items that were of interest to our team. They are represented according to the antecedent levels described in the integrated model.

Cognitive variables: Subjective norms and attitudes.

Motivational variables: behavioural intention and purchase-intention.

Behaviour variables: Information-sharing and Information-seeking.

Cognitive Items:

Subjective norms

- 1- Most people I care about think I should be involved in solving this problem.
- 2- Generally, I do what people who are important to me think I should do.
- 3- This issue is important to people I care about.

Attitude

In this study different attitudes were measured. It consists of attitude toward the company, toward the issue, toward refugees and toward involving in solving the issue.

- 1- **Attitude toward the company:** My attitude toward EcoTech is.
- 2- **Attitude toward the issue:** My attitude about the issue EcoTech is advocating is.
- 3- **Attitude toward involvement:** My attitude about getting involved in this issue is.

Motivational Items:*Behavioural Intention*

I will sign a petition supporting policy change on this issue.

Purchase intention

I am likely to buy products from EcoTech.

Behaviour Items:*Information-sharing*

- 1- I share information about this issue on social media.
- 2- I frequently communicate about this issue.

Information-seeking

- 1- I actively seek information about this issue.
- 2- I search online for information about this issue.

3.4. Participants

As mentioned before in 3.1, we are interested in the immigration context. Participants' information who received a stimulus related to immigration is presented here. The recruitment was conducted randomly by the attendants of the research seminar through different channels. All the data from participants of nationalities other than the Swiss were dismissed. As there was no age restriction, the participants (N = 217) span an age range of 66 years, with an average age of 28.7. The youngest was 16 and the oldest was

82. Female respondents constituted 59.4% (129) of the total respondents and 40.6% (88) were male. 0.9% (2) of the participants finished primary school, 10.1% (22) finished secondary school, 30.4% (66) received the Matura degree, 19.4% (42) had a bachelor's degree, 0.5% (1) had a master's degree and 38.7% (84) had a doctoral degree. The number of participants who received a Political CSR message with an immigration theme was (n = 104) and number of participants who received a CSA message with an immigration theme was (n = 113).

A degree of anonymity was ensured through sending the questionnaire as a link through different channels. The participants were not asked to give their names. Nevertheless, they were asked to give the name of the seminar attendee who invited them to join the questionnaire, to ensure that all attendees had invited at least 30 participants.

3.5. Implementation:

The questionnaire was administrated via Qualtrics, and distributed through different channels by the attendees of the seminar. After clicking on the link, the participants read a text that described the fictitious company Eco Tech: "*the leading producer of digital innovation*" which has markets and employees around the world (America, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Pacific). Then, participants were presented with one of four texts, see **Table 2**. Each text was assigned randomly in order to reduce the possibility of a bias. According to each text, the participants rated their approval of statements about the topics Eco Tech was advocating.

3.6. Manipulation Check

As a manipulation check, participants were presented with a set of six items to check whether the stimuli had had an effect. The items covered aspects that are of big conceptual importance to the study. Those items were presented in class and went through phases of testing and adjustment in order to make sure they corresponded to the definitions used in the study.

3.7. Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics 23 was used to analyse the data. An alpha level of 0.05 was the significance level for all the conducted tests. Cronbach's Alpha was used in assessing the internal consistency of the scores derived from the multi-items scale used to measure the variables of interest. Accordingly, the following composite measures were created to test the hypotheses of interest through collapsing the scales that presented an internal consistency: attitude toward Ecotech, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward involvement in solving the issue, subjective norms, behavioural intention, information-sharing and information-seeking.

As the independent variable of message strategy (Political CSR or CSA) is a nominal variable, a parametric test would not be applicable since it assumes a scaled variable. In this study the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was utilized since it makes less assumptions of the sample size. To test hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c, multiple Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to determine whether the message type had an influence on the dependent variables purchase-intention, information-sharing and information-seeking respectively. For all the three Mann-Whitney U tests, a normality check was carried out

to determine whether the data was normally distributed. Conclusions were drawn for the first research question based on these tests.

For Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d, four linear regressions were conducted. Subjective norms, attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue and attitude toward the involvement in solving the issue were entered as predictors. For each test, one dependent variable was entered. To check whether the assumption of equality of variance was met, a Leven's Test was conducted.

The following section presents the results of the hypotheses, in addition to the reliability tests and descriptive statistics.

4. Results

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of CSR messages and Political CSR messages on consumers' intention to buy the products of a company and their intention to engage with the information communicated by that company. Moreover, this paper aims at testing the integrated model and its ability to predict behavioural intentions and communicative actions to further the research on strategic communication under the umbrella of corporate social and political responsibility utilizing the immigration topic as a theme. Accordingly, hypothesis 1a tested the influence of Ecotech's communicative efforts about their Political CSR activities and CSA activities on consumers' intention to buy products from Ecotech and H1b and H1c tested, respectively, the influence of the same two messages on the consumers' intention to share information about the issue addressed by Ecotech over social media and their intention to seek information about the issue presented by Ecotech. Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d tested the influence of attitude toward Ecotech, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward involvement in solving the issue and subjective norms on Behavioural intentions, purchase-intention, information-sharing and information-seeking respectively.

A random distribution resulted in an unbalanced cell frequency, see Message strategy type distribution.

Table 4*Message strategy type distribution*

Stimuli	Frequency	Percentage
Political CSR	113	52.1
CSA	104	47.9
Total	217	100.0

Analysis began with a thorough examination of descriptive statistics for all the items that measured variables of interest. The means and the standard deviations for cognitive antecedent variables are shown in Table 5. The means and the standard deviations for cognitive, motivational antecedents and behaviour variables and are shown in Tables 6, 7 and 8 respectively. Most of the items demonstrated a high internal consistency except for the subjective norms scale items that demonstrated an internal consistency that does not match the internal consistency of the other items. The multi-items scales were collapsed to create composite measures and were used in testing the hypotheses. The reliability coefficients (α) are also included in Tables 6 and 8.

Table 4*Means and Standard Deviation of Cognitive Variables*

Item	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Attitude toward Ecotech (composite)	217	5.31	1.311	.957
My attitude toward EcoTech is: Negative/Positive	217	5.35	1.347	
My attitude toward EcoTech is: Bad/Good	217	5.33	1.354	
My attitude toward EcoTech is: Unfavorable/Favorable	217	5.26	1.400	

Attitude toward the issue (composite)	217	5.24	1.431	.970
My attitude about the issue EcoTech is advocating is:	217	5.25	1.502	
Negative/Positive				
My attitude about the issue EcoTech is advocating is:	217	5.31	1.431	
Bad/Good				
My attitude about the issue EcoTech is advocating is:	217	5.18	1.489	
Unfavorable/Favorable				
Attitude toward getting involved in the issue (composite)	217	4.60	1.473	.963
My attitude about getting involved in this issue is:	217	4.57	1.562	
Negative/Positive				
My attitude about getting involved in this issue is:	217	4.65	1.474	
Bad/Good				
My attitude about getting involved in this issue is:	217	4.59	1.543	
Unfavorable/Favorable				
Subjective Norms (composite)	217	3.72	1.090	.624
Most people I care about think I should be involved in solving this problem.	217	3.53	1.475	
Generally, I do what people who are important to me think I should do.	217	3.30	1.474	
This issue is important to people I care about.	217	4.36	1.378	

Table 5*Means and Standard Deviation of Motivational Variables*

Item	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Behavioural Intention: I will sign a petition supporting policy change on this issue.	217	4.32	1.671
Purchase intention: I am likely to buy products from EcoTech.	217	3.40	1.447

Table 6*Means and Standard Deviation of Behaviour Variables*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
Information-sharing (composite)	217	3.35	1.377	.592
I share information about this issue on social media.	217	2.89	1.567	
I frequently communicate about this issue.	217	3.82	1.700	
Information-seeking (Composite)	217	3.85	1.643	.894
I actively seek information about this issue.	217	3.84	1.701	
I search online for information about this issue.	217	3.86	1.756	

Test of Hypothesis

H1a predicted that CSA messages would have a greater influence on purchase-intention than Political CSR messages. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicated a statistically significant difference in purchase-intention due to CSA and Political CSR

messages, $U = 4800$, $p = 0.016$, $Z = -2.42$, $n^2 = .027$. CSA had the mean rank of 119.35 and Political CSR messages had the mean rank of 99.48, which suggests that CSA had a greater positive influence on Purchase intention. H1b predicted that CSA messages would have a greater influence on information-sharing than Political CSR messages. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant difference in information-sharing due to CSA and Political CSR messages, $U = 5520.500$, $p = .438$, $Z = -.776$. H1c predicted that CSA messages would have greater influence on information-seeking than Political CSR messages. Mann-Whitney U test results indicated no significant difference in information-seeking due to CSA and Political CSR messages, $U = 5536$, $p = 0.459$, $Z = -0.74$.

H2a predicted that attitudes and subjective norms have an influence on behavioural intention to sign the petition. The results from the regression analysis suggested that 47.5% of the variance in signing a petition was due to the linear combination of attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms, $R^2 = .485$, $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .475$, $F(4, 212) = 49.85$, $p = .000$. These results are shown Table 7.

Table 7

Regression Analysis for Behaviour Intention Predicted by Attitudes and Subjective Norms

Predictors	β	df	t	α
Attitude toward Ecotech	.184	212	2.758	.006
Attitude toward the Issue	.249	212	3.719	.000
Attitude toward the involvement	.338	212	5.258	.000
Subjective Norm	.146	212	2.860	.005

H2b predicted that subjective norms and attitudes influence purchase-intention. Regression analysis indicated that 18.4% of the variance in purchase-intention was due to the linear combination of attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms, $R^2 = .199$, Adj. $R^2 = .184$, $F(4, 212) = 13.157$, $p = .000$. All predictors significantly contributed to unique item variance except for attitude toward the issue. These results, which support H2b, are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Regression Analysis for Purchase Intention Predicted by Attitudes and Subjective Norms

Predictors	β	df	t	α
Attitude toward Ecotech	.248	212	2.981	.003
Attitude toward the Issue	-.076	212	-.914	.362
Attitude toward the involvement	.190	212	2.369	.019
Subjective Norm	.256	212	4.027	.000

H2c predicted that subjective norms and attitudes influence communicative action of information-sharing. Regression analysis indicated that nearly 15% of the variance in information-sharing was due to the linear combination of attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms, $R^2 = .162$ Adj. $R^2 = .146$, $F(4, 212) = 10.251$, $p = .000$. Only subjective norms and attitude toward the involvement significantly contributed to unique item variance. These results, which partially support H2c, are shown in Table 10.

Table 9*Regression Analysis for Information-sharing Predicted by Attitudes and Subjective Norms*

Predictors	β	df	t	α
Attitude toward Ecotech	-.057	212	-.672	.502
Attitude toward the Issue	.055	212	.645	.520
Attitude toward the involvement	.183	212	2.233	.027
Subjective Norm	.315	212	4.846	.000

H2d predicted that subjective norms and attitudes influence communicative action of information-seeking. Regression analysis indicated that nearly 23% of the variance in information-seeking was due to the linear combination of attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms, $R^2 = .243$ Adj. $R^2 = .229$, $F(4, 212) = 17.015$, $p = .000$. Only subjective norms significantly contributed to unique item variance. These results, which partially support H2d, are shown in Table 11.

Table 10*Regression Analysis for information-seeking predicted by Attitudes and Subjective Norms*

Predictors	β	df	t	α
Attitude toward Ecotech	.131	212	1.623	.106
Attitude toward the Issue	.050	212	.612	.541
Attitude toward the involvement	.123	212	1.582	.115
Subjective Norm	.384	212	6.233	.000

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Limitations

5.1. Discussion

This study seeks to advance the research on corporate social advocacy and political corporate social responsibility within the field of strategic communication. More specifically, the influence of CSA and Political CSR messages on the behavioural intention of buying products from the fictitious company Ecotech and on communicative actions is examined. In addition to testing the model of reasoned action, ability to predict behavioural intentions, purchase-intention, information-sharing and information-seeking. H1a proposed that CSA messages would have a greater influence on purchase-intention than Political CSR messages. This hypothesis was supported by the study's findings but the effect size was rather minimal where only 2% of the variability in the ranks is accounted for by the independent variables. This suggests that other factors are influencing the participants' intention to buy from Ecotech. Nevertheless, these findings support the claim that CSA messages have a greater influence on Purchase intention than Political CSR messages.

H1b posited that CSA messages would have a greater influence on information-sharing than Political CSR messages. The findings did not support that claim. There was no significant difference in information-sharing that can be accounted for by the two messages. Similarly, H1c hypothesized that CSA messages would have a greater influence on information-seeking in comparison to Political CSR messages. This

hypothesis was rejected based on the findings. There was no significant difference in information-seeking that can be accounted for by the two messages.

Previous research (see 2.2.5) showed the effects of situational beliefs due to message strategy type. The results for the first research question contribute partially to that, but on a different antecedent level – the behaviour level – where message strategy type influenced the purchase-intention. This finding increases the external validity of the integrated model with a new kind of context and situation under which the model was tested. Nevertheless, message strategy type didn't demonstrate an influence on communicative behaviour. Nonetheless, this insignificant influence of message strategy type on communicative action might be due to one or other of the following reasons: (1) some participants didn't read the whole stimulus or didn't comprehend it fully, (2) It might be possible that the message design didn't achieve its goal of influencing participants' intention to share information about the issue over Facebook because not so many of them are Facebook users or they don't use Facebook to disseminate information about socio-political issues.

H2a predicted that attitudes and subjective norms influence behavioural intention of signing a petition. The regression analysis found that 47.5% of the variance in signing a petition was due to attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms. Attitude toward involvement in solving the issue was a significant predictor. In Europe in general and more specifically in Switzerland, immigration is a highly controversial and debated issue. That perception among participants, might have contributed in producing those results. This result also increases the external validity of the integrated model.

H2b postulates that attitudes and subjective norms influence purchase-intention. The regression analysis found that 18.4% of the variance in purchase-intention was due to attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms. Attitude toward the issue failed to show significant prediction capability. These findings support H2b, and provide an insight to the relationships proposed by the integrated model. H2c predicted that attitudes and subjective norms influence information-sharing. The regression analysis indicated that nearly 15% of the variance in information-sharing was due to attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms. Attitude toward the involvement and subjective norms were significant positive predictors of information-sharing. H2d predicted that attitude and subjective norms influence information-seeking. The regression analysis indicated that nearly 23% of the variance in information-seeking was due to attitude toward the company, attitude toward the issue, attitude toward getting involved in the issue and the subjective norms. Results of Hypotheses 2c and 2d show how subjective norms emerge as the solely salient positive predictor of information-seeking. None of the attitudes had a significant influence on the variance in information-seeking. This suggests that other factors are influencing the communicative action, supporting previous research results (as mentioned in section 2.2.4) that showed the relationship between referent criterion, subjective norm and situational motivations.

5.2. Conclusion

According to our results, the integrated model was not useful in explaining communicative actions of publics in relation to their attitudes toward the company, toward the issue and toward solving the issue. Previous research showed, however, a relation between cognitive and motivational antecedents on one side, and communicative action on the other. Similarly, this research showed that subjective norms are good predictors of behaviour and communicative actions, which supports the claim that an integrated approach is useful in understanding the influences of strategic messaging on publics.

The message design didn't achieve the influence intended on communicative action and this might be due to many design limitations which will be expanded upon below (see 5.3). A more encouraging result is that attitudes and subjective norms showed a positive correlation with participants' intention to sign a petition and, according to previous research, message strategy type influences situational beliefs which in turn influence subjective norms and attitudes. This suggests that the message design was successful in convincing participants to sign the petition. A similar claim can be presented about message strategy type relation to purchase-intention.

From a theoretical perspective, this study showed the importance of the integrated approach presented within the Integrated Model of Strategic Messaging, which links message strategies on the one hand, with attitudes, subjective norms and communicative behaviours on the other. Moreover, a clear distinction between Corporate Social Advocacy and Political Corporate Social Responsibility was presented theoretically in the literature overview and practically through the message design. The results

contributed to the understanding of strategic messaging effectiveness and its use in achieving organizational goals. Finally results of this study support the claim that the integrated model can be useful in predicting and explaining communicative behaviours of publics.

5.3. Limitations

The experiment was conducted online and the environment was not monitored while the participants were filling in the questionnaire. Furthermore, external validity is limited since a fictitious company was utilized. As mentioned before, the expected results from the US were unavailable since due to technical reasons the experiment was not conducted there. This original plan was the reason why the stimuli used in this study are in English. In the future, we recommend using the mother tongue of the participants in designing the stimuli, in order to increase the internal validity of the study.

There were no items in this study that checked whether participants had a Facebook account. Additionally there were no items that checked whether participants use their Facebook accounts to disseminate information about political and social issues.

6. Outlook and Further Research

Results of the study imply that Political CSR and CSA messages have an influence on consumer's intention to buy products from the company conducting communication efforts. It is important for a corporation, therefore, to review its goals and the potential implications of taking a social stance or promoting a policy change before engaging in the public sphere with a CSA or Political CSR message strategy. Nevertheless, in the study sample the findings demonstrate that the same messages had no significant influence on communicative actions.

According to the findings, subjective norms demonstrated good predictability of behavioural intentions, purchase-intention and communicative actions. Attitudes were not good predictors of communicative actions. Previous research (see research of Kim and Grunig in the appropriate section of 2.2.4) showed that communicative actions are best predicted by referent criterion, situational motivation, and behavioural intention (Werder, 2015b). Therefore, it is recommended for future research to focus on those three variables in order to test the integrated model and its predictability-power of communicative action, which in turn will help in accumulating knowledge about the behaviour of publics and their response to Political CSR and CSA messages. Moreover, conducting a research survey can target more diverse sample populations and increase the internal validity of future research.

We recommend that future research seize the benefits of conducting a controlled experiment in order to increase the internal validity of the experiment. In addition, using a real life situation would contribute to the external validity of the integrated model. In

other words, using a real firm and its adopted messaging strategy to promote change will increase both the internal and external validity of the experiment and of the integrated model.

Finally, the relation between attitudes and communicative actions should be further tested and new items developed to better understand the differences in publics' behaviours on social media when it comes to social and political issues.

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