



Department of Business and Management
Course of Language in Advertising

Beyond Borders: Exploring the Impact of Brand Activism on Immigration Issues in Shaping Consumer Perception and Establishing Corporate Leadership in a Polarised Landscape

SUPERVISOR
Prof. Paolo Peverini
CO- SUPERVISOR
Prof. Stella Romagnoli

CANDIDATE
Francesca Rubini
STUDENT NUMBER
749871

Academic Year: 2022/2023

INDEX

INTRODUCTION 6

CHAPTER 1: SOCIETY & IMMIGRATION

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>1.1 Immigrants and society</i> | 8 |
| 1.1.1 Cultural clash and integration challenges | 9 |
| 1.1.2 Sociopolitical and cultural context | 10 |
| 1.1.3 Politically polarized society | 10 |
| <i>1.2 How brands can address a polarized society</i> | 12 |
| 1.2.1 The role of brands in a polarized society: from CSR to brand activism | 12 |
| 1.2.2 Authenticity vs. Woke washing | 15 |
| <i>1.3 Social analysis in the context of immigration</i> | 18 |
| 1.3.1 Understanding the stakeholders | 19 |
| 1.3.2 Media coverage of immigration and public opinion | 20 |

CHAPTER 2: MARKETING SEMIOTICS & IMMIGRATION

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>2.1 Understanding Marketing Semiotics</i> | 21 |
| 2.1.1 Why marketing semiotics should address immigration | 22 |
| 2.1.2 The intersectionality of immigration and racism through semiotics | 24 |
| 2.1.3 Stereotypes in advertising | 24 |
| <i>2.2 Cultural branding and immigration</i> | 26 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 2.2.1 Crafting authentic campaigns: profit vs. non profit companies | 27 |
| <i>2.3. How do Brands Approach Immigration in their Advertising Strategies?</i> | 28 |
| <i>2.4 Research gap</i> | 32 |
| CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY | |
| <i>3.1 The Research Question</i> | 33 |
| <i>3.2. Synchronic Analysis</i> | 38 |
| <i>3.3 Diachronic Analysis</i> | 43 |
| <i>3.4 The Brandscape</i> | 48 |
| <i>3.5 Identification of codes</i> | 56 |
| 3.5.1 Dominant Code | 56 |
| 3.5.2 Residual Codes | 59 |
| 3.5.3 Emerging Code | 60 |
| 3.5.4 The Tension | 61 |
| <i>3.6 Semiotic Analysis of the Campaigns</i> | 62 |
| 3.6.1 Born the hard way - Budweiser | 64 |
| 3.6.2 Migrants - Benetton | 75 |
| 3.6.3 Global Art Street Project during Heritage Month - Smirnoff | 77 |
| 3.6.4. Love Immigration - Jigsaw | 79 |
| <i>3.7 The Semio-Narrative Level</i> | 82 |
| 3.7.1 Actantial Model | 82 |
| 3.6.2 The Canonical Narrative Scheme | 85 |

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

| | |
|--|------------|
| <i>4.1 Conclusions</i> | 88 |
| <i>4.2 Managerial Implications</i> | 90 |
| <i>4.3 Limitations and Future Research</i> | 94 |
| SUMMARY | 96 |
| APPENDIX | 100 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 110 |
| SITOGRAPHY | 126 |

*A mi abuela,
que se animó a cruzar el charco por primera vez
para que yo pueda volver 70 años después.*

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the intricate landscape of pro-immigration marketing campaigns, aiming to shed light into the existing research gap surrounding consumer responses to brand activism addressing immigration. The limited understanding of how such campaigns influence brand perception, loyalty, purchase intention, and sales presents a crucial void in marketing literature. This research aims to address this gap by exploring the intricate dynamics and interplay between marketing communication, brand messaging, and societal polarization in the context of immigration, and consequently provide meaningful managerial insights on this subject. Choosing to study immigration for my thesis is a decision close to my heart. I'm an immigrant myself, originally from Argentina, living in Italy. My family's background reflects the diversity of Argentina itself, as we come from different parts of the world.

Immigration for me is about understanding the experiences of individuals and families, their dreams, and the contributions they make to society. Beyond the conventional view dominated by political discourse, the lens of brand activism emerges as a compelling means to engage with immigration in a manner that is distinctive, intimate, and transcends the traditional paradigms associated with the subject.

In the contemporary socio-cultural landscape, brand activism stands as a powerful instrument. This shift away from traditional marketing methods represents a significant opportunity for brands. It allows them to use their influence to promote a more thoughtful and compassionate conversation about social and political issues as immigration.

By studying the key characteristics in brand discourse addressing pro-immigration issues, the study aims to illuminate the factors that play a fundamental role in influencing consumer attitudes and perceptions. In doing so, the research aspires to contribute valuable insights into the complex interplay between marketing strategies, brand messaging, and the broader societal context, concerning immigration.

Ultimately, my aim is also to offer practical insights that brands can leverage to foster a more empathetic and resonant connection with consumers in our polarized society, addressing how to navigate the pro-immigration discourse with authenticity and effectiveness.

The thesis is divided in 4 chapters, which will address the problem starting with the theoretical framework, then investigating selected cases more specifically.

In a society marked by cultural clashes, economic challenges, discrimination, and political polarization, brands find themselves at a crossroads where they must navigate the delicate balance between authenticity and the risk of "woke washing." Chapter 1, titled "Literature Review," comprehensively examines the sociopolitical and cultural context of immigration, discussing the challenges faced by immigrants and the broader societal impact. It explores the evolution of brands from traditional corporate social responsibility (CSR) to proactive brand activism, emphasizing the need for authenticity in navigating a polarized society.

Moving to Chapter 2, titled "Society and Immigration", the study delves into the intricate role of semiotics in marketing, specifically in the context of immigration. The chapter explores the intersectionality of immigration and racism, the impact of stereotypes in advertising, and the concept of cultural branding as a form of activism. Through a series of case studies, it starts to assess how brands address immigration in their marketing strategies. It concludes with the identification of the research gap.

Chapter 3 of the thesis explores how brands use marketing campaigns to impact consumer perceptions and establish corporate leadership through the lens of immigration. Utilizing Laura Oswald's Consumer Brandscape analysis, it examines campaigns from Benetton, Smirnoff, Budweiser, and Jigsaw, assessing how they navigate commercial, cultural, and social influences. The analysis includes both current and historical perspectives, identifying dominant, residual, and emerging codes that shape messaging on immigration. Through semiotic analysis of selected ads, the chapter reveals how brands craft narratives to resonate with audiences, highlighting their roles in influencing societal norms and consumer engagement with immigration issues.

Finally, Chapter 4, "Conclusions", synthesizes the findings, offering managerial implications for brands navigating immigration issues in their marketing campaigns. It also acknowledges the limitations of the study and suggests avenues for future research in this crucial and evolving field.

CHAPTER 1: SOCIETY & IMMIGRATION

1.1 Immigrants and society

The concept of “immigration” refers to the movement of individuals across national borders with the intent of establishing a new residence (Rees P., 2009). One prevalent perspective in the literature views immigration as a dynamic process that contributes to demographic, cultural, and economic changes in both sending and receiving countries (Joly et al., 2000). Research often explores the impact of immigration on labor markets, economic development, and social cohesion.

In contemporary societies, the dynamics surrounding immigration have become increasingly complex and multifaceted. The perceptions and attitudes of individuals toward immigrants play a crucial role in shaping the integration processes within these diverse communities.

One significant aspect explored is the perceived polarization of immigration attitudes and its impact on collective action within societies, particularly in the aftermath of the 2015 European migrant crisis. Individuals' perception of societal division on immigration issues significantly influences their engagement in collective action (Roblain et al., 2021).

Another important factor to consider is the influence of ethnic diversity and immigration on individual perceptions toward immigrants. According to the academic research of Eunsoo, Seulsam and Chan (2023), contemporary societies face the challenge of integrating immigrants by acknowledging their societal contributions, amidst varying waves of immigration. Authors

concluded that individuals in ethnically diverse countries generally view immigrants positively, but this perception can shift negatively with an influx of immigrants, a trend moderated by the level of community social capital which strengthens positive views and dampens negative ones. These findings offer insights into the dynamics of ethnic diversity and immigration, demonstrating the complexity of factors at stake when it comes to perceptions on immigration.

Moreover, to provide a comprehensive understanding of societal attitudes toward immigrants, it is interesting to analyze the “collective unconscious” in general, meaning the causal relationship between biased beliefs about immigrants and the attitudes of host countries toward immigration. An interesting finding regarding this last point is the fact that providing information about immigrants' size and characteristics reduces concerns about negative effects on the welfare state and immigration in general (Zhirkov, 2021). This finding is crucial because of the fact that a marketing campaign could have the potential to be a channel of information regarding this topic.

1.1.1 Cultural clash and integration challenges

The intersection of culture, immigration, and integration poses multifaceted challenges, particularly in the area of economy and discrimination. The dynamics of cultural clash and its implications for immigrants' integration, is a fundamental problem that highlights the link between economic factors and discriminatory practices.

In particular, it is important to recognize each economic challenge faced by immigrants during the integration process: economic disparities, job market access, and wage differentials contribute significantly to the struggles faced by immigrants, influencing their overall integration trajectory (Rumbaut, 2014).

Given that a critical facet of cultural integration revolves around economic factors, it has been proven that anti-immigrant sentiments have a strong influence and socio-political attitudes can act as barriers to economic integration of immigrants (De Coninck et al., 2021). Furthermore, the data gathered from the same authors underscores the importance of understanding these public attitudes towards immigration, as they are closely linked to discriminatory practices. Addressing discrimination requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses legal frameworks, societal attitudes, and targeted interventions to foster a more inclusive environment.

There are various factors influencing the economic integration of immigrants, but discrimination specifically is a significant factor affecting the native-immigrant wage gap (Giua et al., 2022). By acknowledging and mitigating economic disparities and discriminatory practices, societies can pave the way for a more inclusive and harmonious integration process, fostering a culture that embraces diversity and facilitates cultural cohesion. For societies to acknowledge the problem initially, information is key.

1.1.2 Sociopolitical and cultural context

Immigration stands as a contentious and politicized domain, marked by intense debates. Governments struggle with strong resistance from populist parties and media narratives, which often portray the issue negatively and hold the power to reshape citizens' perspectives on the matter (Demircioglu and Vivona, 2021).

The surge in immigration over the past decade has ignited political tensions across Europe, with debates often centering on issues of national identity, economic strain, and cultural cohesion. Populist parties, leveraging immigration-related anxieties, have gained prominence in countries such as France, Germany, and Italy, reshaping political landscapes (Downes and Loveless 2018).

Immigration is a contentious and politicized policy area, marked by strong opposition from populist parties and negative media narratives that shape public perceptions. An article from *The Economist*¹ discusses the challenges posed by illegal immigration on both sides of the Atlantic. The dangerous maritime route from west Africa to the Canary Islands, previously avoided, has seen a resurgence with around 30,000 attempts in 2023. Countries like Germany, once welcoming to asylum-seekers, are now reducing benefits and expediting deportations. Additionally, an increase in authorized migration is noted, with rich countries, according to an OECD report, accepting a record 6.1 million immigrants in the previous year. Factors influencing migration include conflict in Europe, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as economic considerations such as tight labor markets in wealthy countries. The aforementioned article highlights the increasing need for foreign workers in aging populations, with rich countries competing for immigrants. However, managing migration is challenging, especially distinguishing between refugees and other migrants. The asylum system, burdened and overwhelmed, is becoming a significant channel for entry, further complicating the delicate politics of immigration and asylum. In the United States a record number of migrants have been apprehended at the southern border, and asylum systems are struggling with backlogs. Europe, dealing with illegal immigration, has reinstated border checks, and governments are considering controversial measures like offshore processing. The difference with Europe is that it has a decentralized nature, that adds complexity, and common standards coexist with individual governments making asylum adjudications. Despite anti-migrant rhetoric, some European countries, like Poland, are experiencing significant immigration due to labor needs.

1.1.3 Politically polarized society

Contemporary society holds diverse opinions on immigration, creating a landscape of political polarization and societal tension.

The origins of the resistance to immigration can be traced studying cultural theory and realistic group conflict theory, providing a lens through which to understand divergent perspectives. Cultural theory posits that members of subordinate groups may challenge the dominant culture,

¹ "A New Wave of Mass Migration Has Begun." *The Economist*, 28 May 2023, www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2023/05/28/a-new-wave-of-mass-migration-has-begun.

leading to concerns about cultural shifts, while realistic group conflict theory suggests that economic competition between dominant and subordinate groups influences opinions on immigration policies (Mangum, 2019).

Regarding modern societies, research by Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010) highlights the divergence in public opinion regarding immigration policies, and underscores how political affiliations shape individuals' attitudes, with differences emerging between conservative and liberal perspectives. This ideological divide contributes to the creation of distinct narratives surrounding immigration, influencing public discourse and policy-making. Furthermore, Sniderman et al. (2014) argue that the polarization of society extends beyond political affiliations, encompassing broader socio-cultural factors. The study emphasizes how attitudes towards immigration are intertwined with perceptions of national identity, economic concerns, and cultural values. These divergent perspectives often manifest in heated debates and contentious discussions, creating a societal landscape marked by tension.

The divergent perspectives on immigration observed in politically polarized societies have profound implications for social cohesion. As explored by Hopkins et. al (2018), the alignment of immigration debates with political ideologies can lead to the consolidation of positions, hindering constructive dialogue and compromise. This polarization not only impedes the development of inclusive immigration policies but also fosters an environment of distrust and animosity among diverse segments of the population. Moreover, studies such as the one of Abrajano and Hajnal (2017) emphasize how these political and cultural divisions contribute to the fragmentation of communities, leading to social stratification based on attitudes towards immigration. This fragmentation poses challenges for fostering a sense of unity and shared national identity, as differing perspectives on immigration become emblematic of broader societal rifts.

Moreover in modern societies, the discourse surrounding immigration is significantly influenced by the dynamics of online environments. The advent of social media platforms has introduced a new dimension to public opinion. Unfortunately, the prevalence of "echo chambers", meaning environments characterized by exposure solely to perspectives that align with one's own opinions (Kiran, et al. 2018), and "filter bubbles" from personalized searches, recommendation systems, and algorithms (Spohr, 2017), has intensified the polarization within online communities. These digital spaces, designed to cater to individual preferences, inadvertently contribute to the segregation of ideologies, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives. As a consequence, the perception of immigration becomes entangled in the web of polarized viewpoints. The amplification of divisive narratives in online platforms may shape public attitudes and, consequently, impact policymaking and societal integration efforts related to immigration. Addressing this polarization is crucial for fostering a more nuanced and informed dialogue surrounding immigration in modern societies.

1.2 How brands can address a polarized society

In the midst of a politically polarized society, brands find themselves at the intersection of social discourse and consumer sentiment. This section explores the role of brands as potential

leaders in navigating the complexities of a polarized landscape through brand activism specifically with a focus on immigration.

The concept of brand activism refers to brands taking a proactive stance on societal issues, transcending their traditional role in commerce to become catalysts for positive change. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) argue that consumers increasingly expect brands to go beyond their product offerings and actively contribute to societal well-being. This proactive engagement enables brands to align with consumer values, fostering loyalty and positive brand perception. Sen and Bhattacharya's seminal work (2001) on corporate social responsibility (CSR) lays the foundation for understanding how brands can take on a leadership role in societal issues. As consumers increasingly seek alignment with brands that share their values, engaging in socially relevant topics becomes a powerful tool for brand differentiation. Brands that proactively address immigration-related concerns contribute to a positive social image, potentially earning consumer loyalty and fostering a sense of shared values.

Research by Korschun et al. (2021) highlights the impact of brand advocacy on social issues. Brands that actively engage with communities affected by immigration-related challenges can position themselves as leaders in fostering positive change. Moreover, studies by Licsandru and Cui (2019) highlight the importance of cultural intelligence in brand communication. Brands that demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives on immigration can navigate the nuanced landscape more effectively, avoiding potential pitfalls and resonating with a broader audience.

Brands that have successfully employed brand activism, such as Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick², can provide real-world examples of how brands can lead conversations on societal issues that represent a tension in society. By aligning with values associated with positive social change, these brands not only enhance their reputation but also contribute to shaping a more inclusive narrative.

1.2.1 The role of brands in a polarized society: from CSR to brand activism

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has conventionally involved businesses incorporating ethical, environmental, and social considerations into their operations, aiming to contribute positively to the broader community. While CSR is integral for a positive corporate image, it often involves a more passive, obligation-based approach (Schwartz and Carroll, 2003).

In contrast, Brand Activism represents a more proactive and engaged stance on social issues. Brand Activism goes beyond CSR by actively aligning with and promoting social causes. Unlike CSR, which may involve philanthropy without active advocacy, brand activism implies taking a clear position on societal issues and leveraging the brand's influence to effect positive change (Sanchez, 2006).

² Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-grjIUWkoBA>

Brand activism, as defined by marketing experts Philip Kotler and Saket Sarkar (2018), represents a paradigm shift from traditional performance-centric brand marketing to a more socially conscious approach. Historically, brands were positioned based on their product attributes, such as toothpaste's efficacy in teeth whitening or cavity prevention. However, in today's fiercely competitive markets, mere positioning is insufficient, particularly when targeting millennials—a demographic with heightened expectations for brands. Millennials, living amidst pervasive societal issues, demand that brands exhibit concern not only for profits but also for the broader communities they serve and the world at large. The concept of brand activism transcends the conventional profit-making motive, seeking to align businesses with social, political, economic, and environmental reforms. Kotler and Sarkar's framework distinguishes between progressive and regressive activism as we can observe on Image 1. Progressive activism is exemplified by companies addressing significant societal problems, driven by a larger purpose beyond profit-seeking. Brand activism, as an outgrowth of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) programs, has evolved beyond marketing-driven initiatives. It represents a values-driven agenda, driven by a sense of justice and fairness, positioning companies as socially responsible leaders committed to the future well-being of society and the planet.

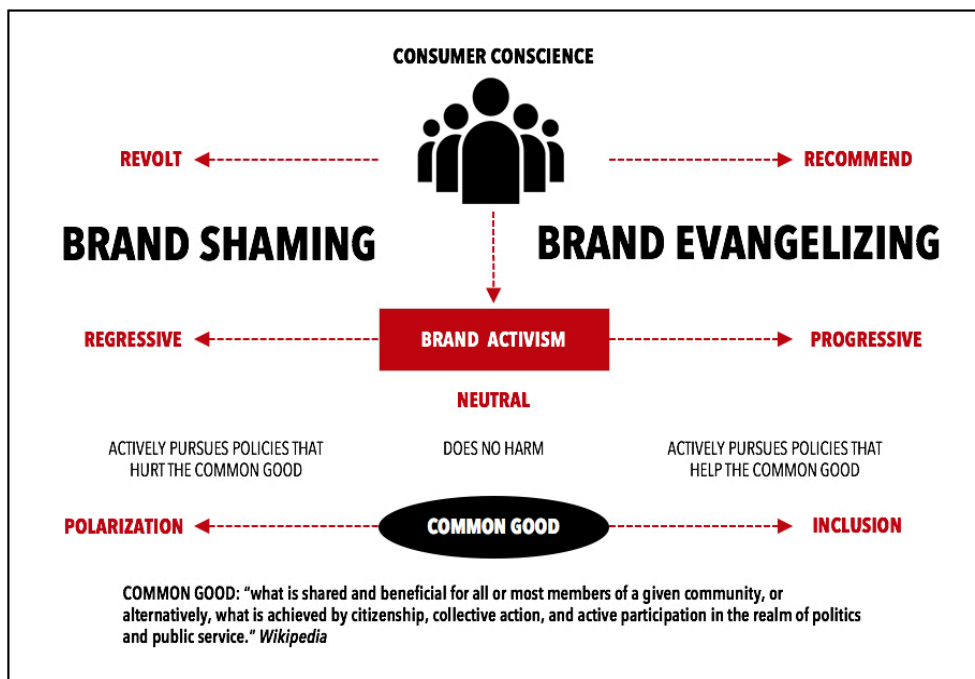


Image 1: Regressive vs. progressive brand activism according to Kotler and Sarkar³

The distinction between progressive and regressive branding, according to Kotler & Sarkar (2018), is contingent on consumer values. Their "brand shaming" project involved surveying consumers to identify brands perceived as regressive based on specific actions. A crucial determinant in this categorization is the existence of a value gap between the brand's stance on a particular issue and the consumers' perspectives. Consumers perceive brands as either progressive or regressive in alignment with their values and the greater good.

³ Source: <https://www.marketingjournal.org/brandshaming-philip-kotler-and-christian-sarkar/>

Perceptions of brand progressivism or regressivism are intrinsically tied to the common good and consumer values. Brands deemed regressive may face brand shaming, where consumers sense a misalignment in values, potentially leading to reputational damage. In contrast, brands aligned with progressive values tend to experience brand evangelizing, where consumers actively support and promote the brand based on shared values (Kotler and Sarkar, 2018). The interplay of consumer values and brand activism, encompassing both progressive and regressive dimensions, underscores the complex landscape in which brands navigate societal expectations and contribute to the ongoing discourse on corporate responsibility and ethical business practices.

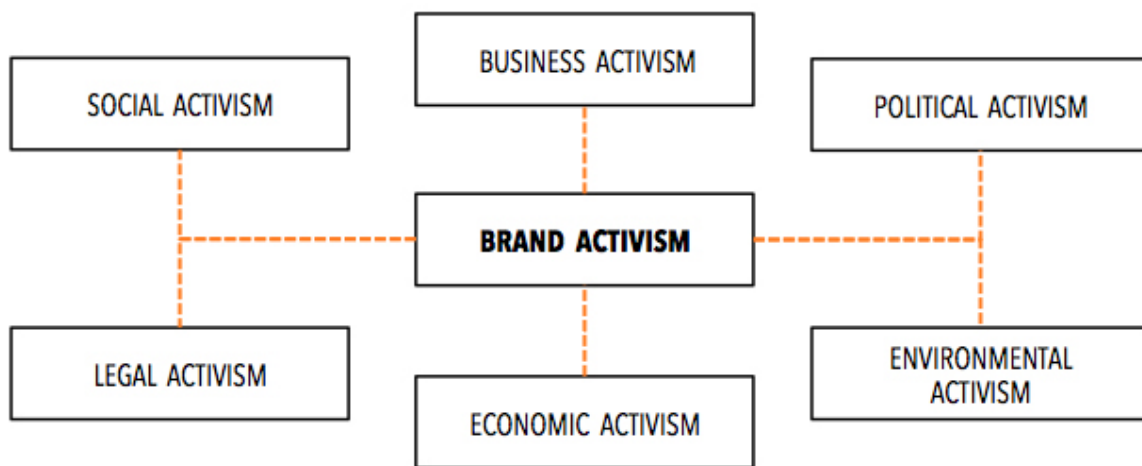


Image 2: Categories under the umbrella of brand activism⁴

This research on brand activism, particularly the distinction between progressive and regressive stances based on consumer values, holds significant implications for marketing in the context of immigration. Understanding that consumers perceive brands through the lens of their values and the common good, marketers addressing immigration-related issues should carefully align their strategies with prevailing societal sentiments. Brands advocating for inclusive, compassionate, and socially responsible immigration policies may be perceived as progressive and garner support from consumers who share these values. Conversely, those conveying regressive or exclusionary narratives risk brand shaming and potential consumer disapproval. This research underscores the importance of authenticity and ethical positioning in immigration-related marketing efforts, emphasizing the need for brands to authentically reflect societal values to foster positive engagement and resonance with their target audiences.

When applied to the sensitive and complex issue of immigration, the differences between CSR and Brand Activism become particularly salient. Research by Klein and Dawar (2004) suggests that while CSR initiatives related to immigration may involve supporting local communities or

⁴ Source: <https://www.marketingjournal.org/finally-brand-activism-philip-kotler-and-christian-sarkar/>

diverse workforce initiatives, brand activism requires a more explicit and vocal engagement with immigration-related challenges. Brand activism in the context of immigration goes beyond mere financial contributions or diversity programs. Brands actively participating in the discourse can use their influence to challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and foster open conversations. This approach, exemplified by the Nike "Dream Crazy" campaign, transcends traditional CSR boundaries by taking a clear and public stance on societal issues, contributing to a more profound impact on societal attitudes. While CSR remains crucial for establishing a positive corporate image, brand activism represents a paradigm shift towards active, vocal, and strategic engagement with societal issues. In the context of immigration, brand activism offers an opportunity for businesses to go beyond traditional CSR practices, actively shaping narratives, and contributing to positive change.

1.2.2 Authenticity vs. Woke washing

As brands increasingly engage in societal conversations, one of the most crucial aspects of doing so is their authenticity. It is important to recognize the difference between authenticity and 'woke washing,' wherein brands superficially engage with social issues without a genuine commitment.

Authentic brand activism involves a sincere commitment to societal issues, backed by tangible actions and a genuine alignment with brand values. Authenticity builds consumer trust and loyalty. Authentic brands not only speak out on societal issues but also integrate these values into their core business practices, contributing positively to societal change (Battocchio, 2020). Authenticity requires brands to take meaningful stands that might involve risk but ultimately resonate with consumers as credible and committed actors in societal progress. On the other side, woke washing refers to brands capitalizing on social issues for marketing purposes without substantive commitment. An example of this is the Pepsi advertisement featuring Kendall Jenner⁵ where there is an attempt to align the brand with social activism, portraying a scene where Jenner seemingly resolves a protest by handing a can of Pepsi to a police officer. However, the advertising faced severe backlash for trivializing serious social and political movements. Critics argued that Pepsi's attempt to capitalize on activism lacked authenticity, with the brand merely exploiting societal tensions for commercial gain.

Studies by Zineldin (2017) underscore the need for brands to move beyond symbolic gestures and engage in substantive actions that align with the values and expectations of relevant stakeholders. Impactful brand activism goes beyond mere rhetoric, involving tangible and measurable initiatives that contribute meaningfully to the resolution of immigration-related challenges. Research by Greenwood et al. (2017), highlight the importance of tailoring brand activism initiatives to specific immigration-related challenges. By considering the socio-cultural nuances and sensitivities associated with this complex issue, brands can develop strategies that resonate authentically with diverse stakeholders.

⁵ Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwvAgDCOdU4>

Academic work by Belz and Peattie (2010) delves into the dynamics of brand-consumer relationships. These studies emphasize the significance of authenticity in brand activism, underscoring that consumers respond positively when brands genuinely align with their values. The research suggests that an authentic connection between brands and consumers is crucial for successful brand activism initiatives. Brands that authentically embody values associated and aligned with consumer values can foster positive relationships with consumers who are increasingly attentive to authenticity.

Vredenburg et al. (2020), authentic brand activism contributes positively to societal tensions by fostering genuine dialogue and understanding. When brands authentically address sensitive topics like immigration, they not only align with consumer values but also play a role in mitigating tensions through meaningful contributions. Conversely, woke washing exacerbates societal tensions by commodifying social issues for profit. Brands that engage in inauthentic activism risk being perceived as opportunistic and may contribute to further polarization and skepticism. The authors argue that "woke washing" occurs when brands detach their activist messaging from their core purpose and values, resulting in inauthentic brand activism that risks misleading consumers and undermining both brand equity and potential societal impact. Furthermore their research sustains that the increasing polarization of society has propelled social good into the mainstream, prompting mainstream brands to address pivotal issues like the climate crisis, Black Lives Matter, and the #MeToo movement. An interesting finding in their research argues that, although authenticity stemming from aligned, values-driven messaging and practice is crucial for the sustained success of an activist brand, current theory and dynamic industry practices indicate that a strategic, moderate misalignment between brand and cause can enhance the impact of brand activism.

It is important to address this subject as the spotlight of expectations of consumers has shifted and grown stronger towards firms. Traditionally, stakeholders have sought corporate social responsibility (CSR) for societal benefits. However, a new trend, termed "corporate socio political activism" (CSA), sees stakeholders expecting firms to take public stances on partisan issues (Bhagwat et al., 2020).

Research by Ahmad et al. (2024) extends the theoretical understanding of the relationship between Construal Level Theory (CLT) and brand activism in three significant ways. First, it demonstrates that activism can be construed both abstractly and concretely, and this distinction significantly influences brand authenticity, particularly in addressing sociopolitical issues marked by high causal uncertainty, as can be the subject of immigration. While abstract messages are generally effective in such situations, this study argues that concrete messages, supported by diagnostic information, prove more effective in ensuring authenticity. Second, it indicates that consumers seek diagnostic information to gauge a brand's alignment with a cause. Lastly, the study contributes to the brand-cause fit literature by showcasing that brands can achieve a close fit by focusing on internal organizational changes, challenging the prevailing notion that fit is only attained through external causes or nonprofit organizations.

Furthermore, the research by Mukherjee et al. (2020) indicates that consumers who disagree with a brand's socio-political stance tend to view the brand more negatively, while those in agreement show no significant change in perception; however, a brand's withdrawal from its stance negatively impacts both supporters and detractors alike. Additionally, the negative effects of brand activism are lessened when consumers see the brand's connection to the issue as distant, suggesting a complex relationship between brand activism and consumer behavior.

Another interesting research discussing brand activism from a consumer perspective analyzing different cases is the one conducted by Mirzaei et al. (2022). It sustains that the increasing prevalence of woke brand activism, aligned with social movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too, has prompted brands to incorporate social and political issues into their marketing strategies, signaling responsibility towards critical societal concerns. Indeed, 62% of customers expect companies to take a stand on social issues, with potential repercussions for brands failing to meet these expectations (Accenture, 2018)⁶. This proactive approach, defined in this study as being "woke" to social issues, has seen brands like Delta Airlines and PayPal making bold decisions in response to issues such as gun control and LGBTQ+ rights (Hydock et al., 2020). However, as previously cited, this shift towards woke branding carries the risk of being labeled as "woke washing," potentially leading to consumer boycotts and damage to brand value (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Moorman (2020), sustains that consumer skepticism surrounding the authenticity of woke activism remains a challenge for brands entering this space. This challenging environment encourages marketing leaders to consider different roles for their brands, such as educators, problem solvers, or innovators. Such experimentation can open up strategic opportunities and reshape the way brands are perceived in the market. Furthermore, the experimentation mindset can be coupled with actual experiments, leveraging the opportunities presented by digital marketing to test the waters of various approaches on consumers and brand outcomes.

In conclusion, the realm of marketing, particularly concerning immigration issues, the insights gleaned from unearthing mental models and experimenting with brand political activism can significantly impact firms. Understanding and acknowledging implicit beliefs about brands and politics can guide firms in crafting authentic narratives around immigration. By adopting an experimental mindset and trying on different perspectives, companies may discover innovative ways to engage with consumers on immigration-related matters. The proposed woke activism authenticity framework, emphasizing dimensions such as social context, independence, inclusion, sacrifice, practice, fit, and motivation, offers a structured approach for brands to navigate the complexities of immigration issues. Applying these dimensions to marketing strategies can help build trust and credibility, addressing consumer skepticism. Moreover, conducting experiments to test different approaches on consumers allows firms to tailor their messaging effectively and respond authentically to societal concerns. As brands increasingly recognize the need to take a stand on social issues, the lessons drawn from this discourse can

⁶ Source:

<https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/2018/majority-of-consumers-buying-from-companies-that-take-a-stand-on-issues-they-care-about-and-ditching-those-that-dont-accenture-study-finds>

empower marketers to foster genuine connections, contribute positively to public discourse on immigration, and, in doing so, enhance their overall brand value.

1.3 Social analysis in the context of immigration

Exploring immigration as a societal issue necessitates an examination of the diverse stakeholders involved. There is a multiplicity of actors to consider when approaching the immigration subject, including policymakers, advocacy groups, local communities, and, notably, the migrants themselves. Each stakeholder group contributes distinct perspectives, interests, and challenges, collectively shaping the broader narrative on immigration (Gray, 2019).

Understanding the social dynamics of immigration involves delving into the intricate web of relationships among various stakeholders. Policymakers play a crucial role in shaping immigration laws and regulations, influencing the conditions under which migrants enter and integrate into the host society (D'Andreamatteo et al., 2023). The decisions made by policymakers have far-reaching consequences, impacting not only the migrants but also the broader societal fabric.

According to Bloemraad and Sheares (2017), advocacy groups constitute another essential facet of the social analysis surrounding immigration. These groups often act as intermediaries between migrants and the host society, working to address the diverse needs and concerns of immigrant communities. Their role in advocating for immigrant rights, social integration, and policy reforms significantly influences the reception and treatment of migrants within the host society. Examining the social context of immigration necessitates a nuanced understanding of the advocacy landscape, as highlighted by scholarly work such as that of local communities are integral components of the social fabric profoundly affected by immigration. Research indicates that the social cohesion and dynamics within local communities can be both positively and negatively influenced by the arrival of migrants (Parrado & Flippen, 2005). The interactions and relationships formed between migrants and established community members play a crucial role in shaping the overall social environment.

Crucially, the voices and experiences of migrants themselves are paramount in understanding the social dimensions of immigration. Migrants bring unique perspectives, aspirations, and challenges, contributing to the multicultural tapestry of the host society (Schiller et al., 1995). The mentioned research underscores the importance of adopting a migrant-centric approach in social analyses, recognizing their agency and resilience in navigating the complexities of immigration. This perspective sheds light on the individual narratives that collectively shape the broader discourse on immigration.

In conclusion, a comprehensive social analysis of immigration necessitates considering the multifaceted interactions among policymakers, advocacy groups, local communities, and migrants. A holistic understanding of immigration requires acknowledging the diverse perspectives, interests, and challenges posed by these stakeholders.

1.3.1 Understanding the stakeholders

I intend stakeholders in the context of immigration as individuals and groups with diverse interests find themselves invested in the immigration discourse, shaping and influenced by the ongoing narrative. It is important for brands that want to address this issue through activism to understand why and where this interest comes from, to know the target of the campaigns.

Many individuals are naturally drawn to the economic implications of immigration. Academics, sociologists, and cultural analysts explore how the arrival of new communities influences cultural diversity, societal norms, and community cohesion. Local residents may also be keenly interested in preserving or reshaping their cultural identity in the face of demographic changes. Moreover, immigration is inherently tied to political agendas and policy decisions. Policymakers, politicians, and advocacy groups are deeply invested in crafting, influencing, or challenging immigration policies. Public opinion on these matters can sway elections and influence government agendas.

Finally, activists and organizations concerned with human rights and social justice often focus on immigration issues. They advocate for the fair treatment of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, drawing attention to issues such as detention conditions, access to education, and protection from discrimination.

Other than stakeholders per se, an interesting research written by Graeme (2005) and supported by the Global Commission on International Migration⁷, identifies different variables playing different roles in the context of immigration and integration of immigrants in society:

- Social Morphology: This includes diasporas and networks that span borders, illustrating how social formations extend beyond geographical boundaries and play a crucial role in the dynamics of migration.
- Type of Consciousness: Many people that immigrate possess dual or multiple identifications, indicating a complex web of identities that migrants navigate, which can influence their interactions with both their home and host societies.
- Modes of Cultural Reproduction: The blending of cultures across different areas of life, facilitated by global media and communication, underscores the role of cultural exchange and transformation in the migration process.
- Avenue of Capital: Transnational corporations (TNCs), along with a class of globalizing bureaucrats, politicians, professionals, and consumerist elites, represent significant economic stakeholders in migration, with remittances being an important aspect of financial flows from migrants to their countries of origin.

⁷ Source: <https://www.iom.int/our-work>

- Site of Political Engagement: International NGOs, transnational social movement organizations, and ethnic diasporas engage in transnational political activities, highlighting the political dimensions of migration and the role of homeland politics.

- Reconstruction of Place and Locality: The creation of social fields that connect physical and virtual spaces illustrates the spatial dimensions of migration, where high mobility and technological advancements like the internet and telecommunications redefine the concept of place and locality.

1.3.2 Media coverage of immigration and public opinion

The framing of immigration in media coverage can profoundly shape public opinion. When the media frames immigration as a threat to national security for example, it tends to elicit more apprehensive responses from the public. On the other hand, framing immigration as an economic opportunity has been associated with more positive public perceptions (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Moreover, concrete instances, such as the portrayal of refugees in media coverage, can impact consumer sentiment. Media representations of refugees as victims of persecution or as contributors to the economy can significantly influence public attitudes towards immigration policies (Cooper et al., 2020).

An interesting research by Schneider-Strawczynski and Valette (2022) regarding media portrayal of immigration reveals that highlighting immigration issues doesn't inherently degrade the attitudes of native populations towards immigration. Instead, it intensifies polarization, driving those with moderate views towards either end of the spectrum based on their preliminary attitudes.

An example of the meaningful influence of media coverage on immigration on society is observed in the research by Maysa (2024) studies delves specifically into media portrayals, public sentiment, and legislative discussions during the 2013–2016 period in France, a time marked by heightened migration. This scrutiny reveals that both media representation and public opinion in France were predominantly negative towards immigrants from Southern Mediterranean countries, influencing and mirroring the legislative approach to migration.

In the context of media coverage, brands have to be right informed before addressing immigration, research by Weinzimmer et al. (2016), offers strategic guidance for brands engaging in immigration-related activism. This research emphasizes the need for brands to be informed, transparent, and accountable in their endeavors. The research suggests that responsible brand activism involves not only being well-informed about immigration issues but also transparently communicating the brand's stance and taking accountability for its actions. By doing so, brands can foster constructive dialogue and understanding among stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2: MARKETING SEMIOTICS & IMMIGRATION

2.1 Understanding Marketing Semiotics

Semiotics, as defined by Oswald (2012), is the discipline studying the articulation of signification, focusing on the creation and dissemination of meaning within a particular social and cultural context. This definition is in line with a sociosemiotic approach, focusing on the social dimension of discursiveness, which is concerned with analyzing the deep level of texts to detect their social implications⁸. The goal of sociosemiotics is to study how society represents itself in the texts it produces, thus investigating all phenomena in some way responsible for generating meaning (Landowski, 2014).

In the realm of marketing, semiotics plays a crucial role in analyzing how companies establish connections with their audience. Rather than merely examining symbols and narratives, the semiotic approach deals with analyzing the brand as a sign system, that “*by producing various meanings, generates pragmatic effects on subjects and objects: it identifies, transforms and gives them value(s)*” (Mangano & Marrone, 2015).

At the core, semiotics posits that meaning has a dialectical nature, stating that a sign derives from the relationship between a signifier (what is perceived by the five senses) and a signified (the concept) which is arbitrary in nature, thus dictated by culture (Oswald, 2012). Although this concept has currently been outdated, the role of culture is crucial to understanding the evolution of meanings over time. Each individual's cultural and personal background, in fact, can influence the interpretation of signs, implying that meaning is not fixed but continually shaped by cultural and societal perceptions.

The role of brands is integral to semiotics in marketing, viewing brands as an amalgamation of signals employed to convey a specific identity and set of values to consumers. To communicate effectively, brands utilize a repertoire of semiotic devices, including logos, colors, slogans, and packaging. Through these elements, brands not only establish a distinctive identity but also differentiate themselves from competitors (Holt, 2004).

A fundamental notion in semiotics is the concept of meaning consumption. Contrary to the idea of passive reception, consumers actively participate in the process of meaning production (Oswald, 2012). The interpretation of signs and symbols varies among individuals based on their unique experiences and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, the meaning associated with a brand or advertising campaign remains fluid as people interpret it in diverse ways.

Moreover, Oswald (2012) has as well underscored the significance of brand equity as the value attributed to a brand name or logo that transcends mere product attributes, establishing differentiation within the competitive landscape. The considerable contribution of brand meanings and perceptions to profitability, underscores the potency of symbolic representation in captivating consumers' hearts and minds through visual, audio, and verbal cues. This semiotic dimension proves instrumental in cultivating awareness, fostering positive associations, and engendering long-term customer loyalty, thereby conferring operational

⁸ Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/discourse-analysis>

advantages like trademark ownership and substantial influence in channels and media. Her study sustains that brand equity management is fundamentally semiotic, challenging the conventional framework that views brand semiotics as a supplementary aspect to the traditional marketing mix of product, price, promotion, and placement.

The Consumer Brandscape developed by Oswald (2012), and employed on this thesis, is another crucial element in marketing semiotics. Is an analysis approach tha sustains that a brand is an intricate ecosystem conformed by commercial, cultural and social influences.

In summary, semiotics in marketing offers a rich framework for understanding how meaning is created, consumed, and adapted in the ever-evolving landscape of consumer culture. By comprehending the nuances of semiotics, marketers can craft strategies that resonate authentically with diverse audiences, fostering meaningful connections between brands and consumers.

2.1.1 Why marketing semiotics should address immigration

The discipline of semiotics, as elucidated by Oswald (2012), plays a pivotal role in unraveling the intricate layers of meaning associated with immigration within the realm of marketing. Oswald's definition underscores the significance of analyzing the deep level of texts to discern their social implications, a perspective particularly pertinent when investigating immigration in the marketing discourse.

At the core, semiotics posits that meaning has a dialectical nature, stating that a sign derives from the relationship between a signifier (what is perceived by the five senses) and a signified (the concept) which is arbitrary in nature, thus dictated by culture (Oswald, 2012). The role of culture is crucial to understanding the evolution of meanings over time. Each individual's cultural and personal background, in fact, can influence the interpretation of signs, implying that meaning is not fixed but continually shaped by cultural and societal perceptions.

The role of brands is integral to semiotics in marketing, viewing brands as an amalgamation of signals employed to convey a specific identity and set of values to consumers (Holt, 2004). To communicate effectively, brands utilize a repertoire of semiotic devices, including logos, colors, slogans, and packaging. Through these elements, brands not only establish a distinctive identity but also differentiate themselves from competitors.

Oswald (2012) has as well underscored the significance of brand equity as the value attributed to a brand name or logo that transcends mere product attributes, establishing differentiation within the competitive landscape. The considerable contribution of brand meanings and perceptions to profitability, underscores the potency of symbolic representation in captivating consumers' hearts and minds through visual, audio, and verbal cues. This semiotic dimension proves instrumental in cultivating awareness, fostering positive associations, and engendering long-term customer loyalty, thereby conferring operational advantages like trademark

ownership and substantial influence in channels and media. Her study sustains that brand equity management is fundamentally semiotic, challenging the conventional framework that views brand semiotics as a supplementary aspect to the traditional marketing mix of product, price, promotion, and placement.

Semiotics extends beyond the examination of mere symbols and narratives. It positions the brand as a dynamic sign system, orchestrating an array of symbols and signifiers that generate pragmatic effects on both subjects and objects within society (Mangano & Marrone, 2015). This dynamic, dialectical relationship between the signifier (what is perceived by the senses) and the signified (the concept) is arbitrated by culture, shaping the evolving meanings associated with immigration. Oswald (2012) emphasizes that the role of culture is integral, recognizing that individual interpretations of signs are continually shaped by cultural and societal perceptions.

A fundamental tenet of semiotics, particularly affecting the context of immigration, is the concept of symbolic consumption as the “Use of the symbolic content of brands in order to express one's identity”. Contrary to the notion of passive reception, consumers actively engage in the process of meaning production (Oswald, 2012). The interpretation of semiotic elements, such as brand symbols, logos, and narratives related to immigration, is inherently influenced by individuals' unique experiences and cultural backgrounds. Immigration, as a multifaceted phenomenon, holds significant political and social weight, embodying diverse ideological perspectives and cultural narratives. Given its inherent complexity and the array of interpretations it elicits, discussions surrounding immigration often evoke divergent inclinations and modes of thought. Consequently, within the framework of immigration, it becomes imperative to recognize that brands must cater to consumers who identify with the values and symbolism associated with immigration, allowing individuals to align their consumption patterns with their identity expressions.

The importance for semiotics to address immigration in marketing is underscored by its unique capacity to decode and shape the multifaceted meanings associated with this complex societal issue. Notably, scholars such as Umberto Eco, a seminal figure in semiotic theory, have emphasized the power of signs and symbols in constructing cultural narratives. Eco's work, particularly in "A Theory of Semiotics"⁹, lays the foundation for understanding how semiotics can contribute to a nuanced and culturally sensitive marketing discourse. Semiotics serves as a potent tool to navigate cultural intricacies, challenge stereotypes, and foster inclusive narratives, thereby advancing a more responsible and impactful engagement with immigration in the dynamic landscape of marketing.

⁹ Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington, Ind. Indiana University Press, 1976.

2.1.2 The intersectionality of immigration and racism through semiotics

It is important to acknowledge that semiotics in marketing related to immigration are often positioned to address and counteract issues of racism as well. This connection arises from the intertwining nature of racism and immigration in modern societies. When brands speak about racism, they implicitly touch upon issues related to immigration due to the interconnectedness of these phenomena. In many cases, racial prejudice intersects with attitudes towards immigrants, reflecting broader societal biases and prejudices. Therefore, efforts to combat racism in marketing strategies can inadvertently address concerns surrounding immigration, as both issues are closely linked in the collective consciousness.

The intersection of immigration and racism demands a thoughtful examination within the realm of marketing. Racism, both overt and subtle, has been a persistent challenge that significantly influences the experiences of immigrants in host societies. As scholars such as Bonilla-Silva (2017) have extensively explored, racism is not merely an individual-level bias but is deeply ingrained in societal structures, policies, and cultural norms. Understanding the intersectionality of immigration and racism is crucial for marketers seeking to engage with these sensitive topics, as racism tends to receive significantly more attention in marketing discussions compared to immigration itself, likely due to the latter's inherent controversy, as it entails more direct involvement with political measures. Immigrants often face racial profiling, discriminatory practices, and negative stereotyping, which can impact their integration and overall experiences in a host country (Essed, 1991). Addressing these challenges requires marketing strategies that go beyond surface-level representations and actively challenge and dismantle racial prejudices.

In conclusion, semiotics, as a tool for decoding and encoding cultural meanings, plays a pivotal role in addressing racism in immigration marketing. Brands must be cognizant of the way they communicate and the meanings they produce, as signs and symbols can either reinforce harmful stereotypes or contribute to dismantling them. By using a semiotic approach, they can develop strategies that promote diversity, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity, and marketers can contribute to a more equitable representation of immigrants.

2.1.3 Stereotypes in advertising

Stereotypes, ingrained societal beliefs about certain groups, play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and attitudes. In the section titled “La società degli Ibridi”, of “Stereotipi e pregiudizi. Dalle Scienze sociali alla semiotica,” di Giovanna Cosenza¹⁰ explores the impact of stereotypes on various aspects of social sciences and semiotics. Stereotypes are not confined to specific social contexts; rather, they permeate various spheres, including advertising.

¹⁰ Cosenza, Giovanna. “La Società Degli Ibridi - “Stereotipi E Pregiudizi. Dalle Scienze Sociali Alla Semiotica.”” *Mimesis*, 2023, pp. 243–257.

Stereotypes are cognitive shortcuts that simplify complex information about social groups, often leading to biased judgments and perceptions. In advertising, these simplified perceptions are strategically employed to convey messages quickly and resonate with the target audience. Cosenza's exploration of stereotypes in social sciences underscores their pervasive nature and their ability to shape societal views. Understanding stereotypes is crucial for unraveling their implications in advertising, particularly when portraying diverse communities.

The portrayal of immigrants in advertising is a nuanced and crucial aspect of societal messaging. The Oxford article "Immigration and Redistribution"¹¹ sheds light on the widespread misperceptions surrounding immigrants. Respondents consistently overestimate the number of immigrants, perceive them as culturally distant, and harbor misconceptions about their economic status. Such stereotypes have profound implications for public opinion and policy support. An interesting observation of this paper is that when the immigrant is portrayed as a "hard working" individual is perceived more positively, as we saw for example previously on the Budweiser Superbowl campaign.

The paper emphasizes that stereotypes deeply influence public views on immigration. Respondents' beliefs that immigrants are economically weaker and more likely to exploit the welfare system strongly correlate with lower support for redistribution. This underscores the importance of the narrative in shaping community perspectives. The narrative plays a pivotal role in influencing public opinion and, consequently, support for immigration policies and redistribution.

Advertising serves as a powerful tool in perpetuating or challenging stereotypes, as it has the power to create a strong narrative, when the brand can create a myth around the immigrant's figure. The chapter explores how the narrative constructed in advertisements can either reinforce existing stereotypes or work to counteract them. By referencing the findings in "Immigration and Redistribution," we underscore the need for advertising narratives that challenge prevailing stereotypes, offering a more accurate and nuanced portrayal of immigrants.

Tiane L. Lee et al. (2006), reveal in their work "Not an outgroup, not yet an ingroup: Immigrants in the Stereotype Content Model"¹² that immigrants' stereotypes are shaped on

¹¹Alesina, Alberto, et al. "Immigration and Redistribution." *The Review of Economic Studies*, vol. 90, no. 1, 11 Mar. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdac011>.

¹² Lee, Tiane L., and Susan T. Fiske. "Not an Outgroup, Not yet an Ingroup: Immigrants in the Stereotype Content Model." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 30, no. 6, Nov. 2006, pp. 751–768, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.06.005>.

nationality, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status and that immigrants from diverse backgrounds are subject to varying degrees of competence and warmth attributions, influenced by societal power dynamics and historical contexts. For instance, Hispanic immigrants may be stereotyped as low in both competence and warmth, reflecting associations with migrant work roles. Conversely, Asian immigrants, perceived as successful, may be viewed as competent but lacking in warmth. African immigrants face complex stereotypes influenced by their success and media portrayals of their home countries. Middle Eastern immigrants, often associated with Arab background, may encounter average competence stereotypes coupled with low warmth perceptions due to strained Europe-Middle East relations.

2.2 Cultural branding and immigration

In the realm of immigration marketing, the concept of branding as cultural activism becomes paramount. Iconic brands are not merely products; they are cultural activists that navigate the complex landscape of societal values, identity, and political nuances (Holt, 2004). However, many companies, acting as cultural reactionaries, fall short of the necessary activism required for building iconic brands. This discrepancy often stems from a managerial perspective that views identity brands through mind-share models, neglecting the cultural content embedded in the brand's myth. To address this gap, companies must reinvent their marketing function, prioritizing cultural knowledge over a focus solely on individual consumers.

Cultural knowledge, in the context of immigration marketing, necessitates an exploration of major social changes impacting the nation. It involves a nuanced examination of the role of significant social categories such as class, gender, and ethnicity in the construction of identity, rejecting oversimplified "psychographics." The brand is seen as a historical actor in society, and people are viewed holistically, delving into what gives their lives meaning. Understanding the identity value of mass culture texts is crucial for brands aiming to engage authentically with diverse audiences in the context of immigration. Identity brands, particularly those navigating immigration-related narratives, possess malleable qualities. Success hinges on managers' understanding of the brand's historic equities, directing it toward the most advantageous future position. Iconic brands, in contrast, build reputations by developing narratives aligned with the identity desires of a particular constituency. As Holt (2004) stated, this reputation is built upon two complementary assets: cultural authority and political authority. When a brand authors valuable myths, it earns the authority to narrate similar kinds of myths in the future, addressing the desires of a similar constituency. In conventional branding models, consumer research seeks to unveil insights into how consumers think and behave. However, iconic brands, especially those engaging with immigration themes, require a different understanding. Successful iconic brands address existential issues beyond typical product benefits, touching the lives of a broad segment of society. To achieve this, brands need empathic antennae that connect them with critical identity issues, allowing them to create cultural texts embodying these concerns.

As sustained by Holt, for successful mythmaking in immigration marketing, brands must delve into the identity projects of prospects aligned with the political and cultural authority of the brand itself. This entails detaching from "feeders," consumers who utilize the brand for fashion, status, or community without being dedicated followers of the brand's myth. The preferences of feeders should play a limited role in guiding brand strategy. Instead, a deep understanding of the critical identity issues animating the lives of people is essential for creating authentic and impactful narratives. Understanding and aligning with the identity projects of constituencies, especially in the context of immigration, allows brands to authentically engage with cultural and political dimensions. This approach transcends traditional branding, transforming companies into cultural activists that contribute meaningfully to societal narratives surrounding immigration. By incorporating cultural knowledge and empathic understanding, brands can navigate the cultural tension inherent in immigration marketing, fostering connections that go beyond typical product attributes and resonate with diverse audiences.

Furthermore, Grant McCracken's theory of meaning transfer¹³ has been a pivotal contribution to understanding the cultural meaning of goods. According to McCracken, advertising serves as the instrument through which meaning constantly flows from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods. However, the hierarchy proposed by McCracken moves in one direction, from the cultural blueprint to goods to consumers, primarily through advertising. It fails to consider the reciprocal effects of consumer actions on culture.

Applying the theory of meaning transfer to immigration marketing involves recognizing that brands are not just symbols; they are active contributors to cultural discourse. Immigration campaigns can align with a brand's cultural authority, weaving narratives that resonate with diverse audiences, taking on account the different stakeholders described in chapter 1. By addressing the desires and anxieties surrounding immigration, brands can establish themselves as authentic voices in societal conversations.

2.2.1 Crafting authentic campaigns: profit vs. non profit companies

Implementing credible and authentic immigration marketing campaigns requires a nuanced understanding of the dynamics involved. Both profit and non-profit companies have distinct challenges and opportunities when addressing immigration issues. By adopting a dual approach, companies can navigate the complexities and contribute meaningfully to the discourse.

¹³ McCracken, Grant. "Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundation of the Endorsement Process." *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1989, pp. 310–321.

Profit-driven companies aiming for authenticity in immigration marketing must align their efforts with genuine corporate social responsibility (CSR). Merely capitalizing on immigration for profit without a sincere commitment to societal well-being risks backlash and perceived opportunism. CSR initiatives related to immigration should extend beyond token gestures, demonstrating a holistic commitment to positive social impact.

To enhance credibility, profit companies should focus on tangible actions rather than symbolic gestures (Yeonshin Kim, et al. 2023). Investing in initiatives that support immigrant communities, promoting diversity and inclusion within the company, and actively engaging in dialogue on immigration-related challenges contribute to authentic brand activism. Companies should be transparent about their efforts and progress, acknowledging both achievements and areas for improvement. Profit companies can play a crucial role as educators in immigration discourse. By providing accurate information, dispelling myths, and fostering understanding, they contribute to informed public discussions. Educational initiatives, such as workshops, webinars, or informative campaigns, position companies as responsible contributors to societal well-being.

On the other hand, the study previously mentioned finds that non-profit companies advocating for immigration causes can leverage their inherent commitment to social impact. Authenticity in this context lies in aligning advocacy efforts with the organization's core mission. Directly engaging with policymakers, supporting grassroots movements, and actively participating in legislative discussions contribute to a credible brand stance. Authenticity for non-profit organizations hinges on empowering immigrant communities. Beyond raising awareness, these companies should actively involve immigrants in shaping their campaigns and initiatives. Amplifying the voices of those directly affected by immigration policies fosters authenticity and ensures that the brand's activism is genuinely representative. Moreover, non-profit companies can enhance their impact by collaborating with other organizations, both within and outside their sector. Forming alliances with academic institutions, legal advocacy groups, or community organizations strengthens the credibility of their campaigns. Collaborative efforts also bring diverse perspectives to the forefront, enriching the discourse.

Thus, both profit and non-profit companies should approach immigration marketing with sensitivity, considering the evidence and studies conducted on the topic of activism. Crafting narratives that humanize the immigrant experience, emphasizing shared values, and celebrating diversity contribute to authentic storytelling. Avoiding stereotypes and showcasing individual stories build connections and credibility.

Continuing with the study, transparency is key to authenticity. Companies, regardless of their profit orientation, should communicate their stance on immigration clearly. Whether acknowledging challenges, expressing solidarity, or detailing concrete actions, transparent

communication builds trust with consumers who value authenticity. Moreover, authenticity requires sustained effort. Both profit and non-profit companies should commit to continuous engagement with immigration issues. This involves staying informed, adapting strategies based on evolving societal needs, and remaining actively involved in the discourse over the long term.

In conclusion, crafting credible and authentic immigration marketing campaigns demands a commitment to meaningful action, transparency, and sensitivity. By tailoring strategies to their unique contexts, profit and non-profit companies can contribute substantively to the immigration discourse, fostering positive change and building lasting connections with their audiences.

2.3 How do Brands Approach Immigration in their Advertising Strategies?

The intersection of immigration and marketing is a dynamic space where brands grapple with the complexities of societal values, cultural inclusivity, and responsible messaging. In this section, we delve into compelling case studies that demonstrate how diverse industries and brands have approached the delicate task of integrating immigration narratives into their marketing strategies.

Racism, an inherent concern in discussions around immigration, adds a layer of complexity. Examining how brands acknowledge and address racism becomes imperative in evaluating the authenticity and impact of their narratives. As we weave through the cases, we continually assess how each brand navigates the intricate terrain of racism while communicating its stance on immigration.

Moving beyond semiotics, this section progresses to the cultural dimensions of immigration in marketing. The analysis explores the concept of branding as cultural activism, unraveling the paradox wherein iconic brands act as cultural activists while many companies operate as reactionaries. To build iconic brands, companies must transform their marketing functions, assembling cultural knowledge and nurturing a holistic understanding of societal changes. The cases we analyze range from iconic missteps, such as the Benetton campaign, to success cases like Smirnoff's Immigrant Heritage Month celebration. Each case offers unique insights into the challenges and opportunities brands face when aligning with immigration narratives. Additionally, the Budweiser Super Bowl commercial and Jigsaw's bold campaign provide layers of understanding, showcasing how storytelling can bridge the gap between brands and societal values.

The lessons learned from these cases pave the way for a nuanced understanding of the symbiotic relationship between brands, immigration, and the evolving cultural landscape. The

next section will include a brief description of the cases that are going to be analyzed further in chapter 3.

Benetton Case

Benetton, renowned for its colorful knits and provocative advertising, attempted to delve into the sensitive and complex issue of migration with a recent campaign (2018). The company repurposed two photographs from migrant rescue operations conducted by staff members of SOS Méditerranée, a Franco-German charity. The images depicted scenes of charity workers providing life jackets to migrants on an overcrowded raft off the coast of Libya and migrant women with their children at an aid station in Italy. Published on Benetton's Twitter account and in the Italian daily La Repubblica, the ads bore the United Colors of Benetton logo.



Image 3: Image of the campaign “Migrants” by Benetton¹⁴

The campaign sparked immediate backlash, with accusations of insensitivity and exploitation. SOS Méditerranée disassociated itself from the campaign, emphasizing that the human tragedy in the Mediterranean should not be used for commercial purposes. Even Italy's interior minister, Matteo Salvini, known for his anti-immigrant stance, criticized Benetton, calling the campaign "despicable." The image from the raft was removed from Twitter following the outcry.

¹⁴ Source: Yeginsu, Ceylan. “Benetton “Migrants” Ads Draw Outrage for Using Photos of Real Migrants.” *The New York Times*, 21 June 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/world/europe/benetton-ad-migrants.html.

Benetton's campaign unfolded against the backdrop of Europe's heated debates on immigration. Italy's recent refusal to accept a rescue ship carrying migrants intensified the political climate. The controversy surrounding Benetton's campaign further amplified the sensitivity of addressing migration in marketing, especially in a polarized political landscape. Benetton's history of provocative advertising, led by photographer Oliviero Toscani, includes iconic but controversial images touching on issues like human rights, racism, and religion. While Toscani defends his work as a means of raising awareness, Benetton's recent foray into immigration-related marketing met considerable resistance. The company's attempt to align itself with the pressing issue of migration faced criticism for exploiting a humanitarian crisis for commercial gain¹⁵.

The Benetton case serves as a cautionary tale for marketers navigating sensitive societal issues. Addressing immigration in marketing requires a nuanced understanding of the political and humanitarian context. Companies must tread carefully, ensuring that their messages contribute positively to the discourse without exploiting human suffering. Authenticity and genuine commitment to social issues are essential; otherwise, brands risk severe backlash, damage to their reputation, and alienation of consumers.

Budweiser case

In February 2017, Budweiser released an advertisement for the Super Bowl that highlighted the brand's immigrant origins during a heated immigration debate, sparked by Donald Trump's inauguration at the time, by adopting the "Born the Hard Way" slogan. While the ad's narrative, celebrating the struggles and dignity of seeking a better life in a new country, was not inherently divisive, its timing encompassed subtle political undertones in a highly politicized and polarized environment.

Jigsaw Case

British fashion brand Jigsaw took a bold stance on immigration with its "Love Immigration" ad campaign in 2017, challenging the notion that immigration threatens "British values." Featured in a takeover of Oxford Circus Tube Station, the campaign comes with a manifesto, boldly asserting, "British Style is not 100 per cent British. In fact, there's no such thing as 100 per cent British". The campaign was conceived as a response to the tumultuous global climate. Peter Ruis, Chief Executive of Jigsaw, shared that, as a relatively small brand running one major marketing campaign annually, they aimed for a message that transcended the ordinary. With 45 nationalities working within Jigsaw, the brand celebrated Britain as a nation of immigrants, seeking to impart a positive perspective on immigration.

¹⁵ Source: Simons, Margaret . "Immigration and Advertising: Benetton and the Power of Provocation." *Journal of History of Design and Curatorial Studies*, The New School Parsons, 1 Jan. 2021, adht.parsons.edu/historyofdesign/objectives/immigration-and-advertising/.

Jigsaw's "Love Immigration" campaign stands as an exemplary case of bold brand activism. By taking a stand on a contentious issue, the brand not only showcased its commitment to diversity but also engaged with social and genetic aspects, reinforcing its message of a multicultural Britain.

Smirnoff case

In a bold move to celebrate Immigrant Heritage Month, the makers of Smirnoff vodka announced their support for the third-annual commemoration taking place throughout June. This initiative aimed to gather community organizations, elected officials, corporations, artists, and thought leaders to share inspirational stories of American immigration.

In line with its commitment to inclusivity, Smirnoff brought the Global Street Art Project to the United States. This project, initially launched in Tokyo in March 2016, assembled some of the most innovative names in street art to foster a dialogue around immigration and inclusivity

Smirnoff celebration of Immigrant Heritage Month through the Global Street Art Project exemplifies how a brand can align with societal values and contribute positively to cultural conversations. By merging art, inclusivity, and responsible messaging, Smirnoff demonstrated its commitment to fostering a united and diverse society. In the following sections, we'll delve into more case studies, each offering unique insights into how brands navigate the complex terrain of immigration and marketing.

2.4. Research gap

In the evolving discourse on brand activism, particularly in the realm of immigration, there exists a notable gap in academic literature. While extensive studies have been conducted on racism and inclusion within advertising and marketing broadly, the specific intersection of advertising's impact on immigration issues and its subsequent effect on consumer brand perception remains underexplored. This thesis aims to delve into the nuanced dynamics of brand activism related to immigration, examining how such marketing strategies influence consumer perceptions and contribute to the establishment of corporate leadership.

This research observed the extensive body of work examining inclusivity and racism within advertising. However, it highlights a significant gap: the scarcity of studies specifically focusing on immigration and its direct impact on brand perception.

Through a careful literature analysis in chapters 1 and 2, this research acknowledges the crucial role of cultural clashes, the impact of societal polarization, and the evolution of brand activism from corporate social responsibility to a more engaged, values-driven approach. Furthermore, it identifies the absence of a focused discourse on the effects of immigration-themed advertising on brand perception, highlighting an opportunity for brands to leverage this area to build successful marketing campaigns. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to offer insights into the strategic use of brand activism in navigating the complex landscape of immigration, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of its implications for consumer engagement and corporate identity.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. The research question

As previously stated, in today's globalized and interconnected world, the issue of immigration stands as a salient and pressing concern, shaping both public discourse and policy agendas across the globe. Immigration remains a sensitive and politically charged topic. Consequently, many brands are hesitant to engage with this issue in their marketing campaigns due to fear of potential backlash or alienating certain segments of their consumer base. However, it is essential to recognize the profound impact that marketing campaigns addressing immigration can have on consumer perceptions and societal attitudes.

Therefore, this thesis seeks to explore the significance of acknowledging the impact of marketing campaigns addressing immigration on consumers. Specifically, it aims to investigate how brands utilize brand activism on immigration to influence consumer perceptions and to establish corporate leadership. Through an examination of various marketing strategies and communication tactics employed by brands in addressing immigration-related issues, this research will shed light on the role of brands as agents of social change and their potential to shape public opinion and discourse on contentious societal issues. The research will follow the topic previously discussed trying to address the following research question:

“How brands use brand activism on immigration to influence consumer perceptions and to establish corporate leadership?”

Consumer Brandscape

To address the research question, this thesis will analyze a selection of advertisements and advertising campaigns employing the Consumer Brandscape analysis approach as developed by Laura Oswald. This method, previously mentioned in chapter 2 of this thesis, acknowledges the brand as more than a mere product or symbol; it recognizes the brand as an intricate

ecosystem composed of commercial, cultural, and social forces. According to Oswald, a brand is energized not solely by its heritage but by an array of intersecting influences that shape its existence in both physical and conceptual realms. This ecosystem, referred to as the Consumer Brandscape, acts as a process that integrates brand meanings across different business functions and markets. It serves as a blueprint that illustrates the network of intersecting codes and meanings that contribute to consumers' perceptions of a brand. It includes the codes that structure the cultural category of the brand, the emotional territories linked with that category, and the material signifiers, such as advertising employed to communicate these meanings. Oswald' proposes a symbolic system that weaves together the social, cultural, and semiotic dimensions of brands into a coherent entity.

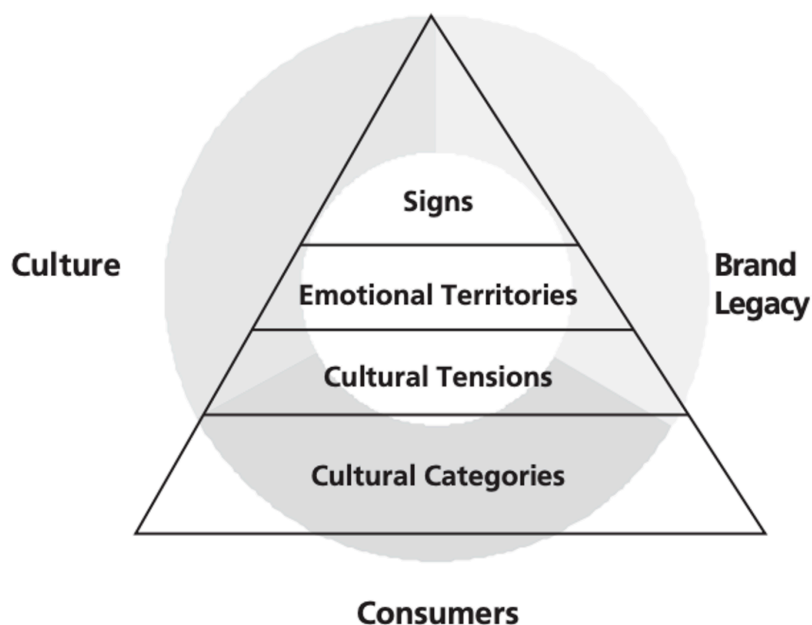


Image 4: Image of the Brandscape Pyramid

The brands selected for analysis are Benetton, Smirnoff, Budweiser, and Jigsaw. It is appropriate to use the Consumer Brandscape approach to analyze the advertising campaigns of these brands because their campaigns are instances of brand activism, addressing immigration. As stated previously in this thesis, brand activism involves companies taking stands on social and political issues, which makes it more than just about selling a product or service. These brands are engaging in conversations that matter to people and society at large, and their actions can influence public opinion and societal norms.

The Consumer Brandscape is a valuable framework for analyzing brand activism for several reasons:

1. *Integration of Multiple Influences*: Brand activism is not isolated, it reflects the company's values, the industry context, and the socio-political environment. The Consumer Brandscape approach takes into account the complex interplay of commercial, cultural, and social forces that are at work when a brand decides to take a stand on an issue.

2. *Cultural Codes and Emotional Territories*: Brands that engage in activism tap into existing cultural codes and emotional territories. They often aim to reshape or challenge these codes by aligning their brand with particular values or causes. The Brandscape approach helps to analyze how these brands navigate the cultural and emotional landscape.

3. *Material Signifiers*: In brand activism, the messages are communicated not just through words but through material signifiers. The Consumer Brandscape approach allows for an examination of these signifiers and how they contribute to the overall message and impact of the campaign.

4. *Public Discourse and Social Media Reaction*: The reactions that these campaigns elicit, especially on social media, are crucial for understanding their impact. The Brandscape approach considers the public discourse that surrounds these campaigns, including how consumers interpret and respond to them.

5. *Comparative Analysis*: Since these campaigns from different brands occur within the same socio-political context, the Consumer Brandscape approach enables a comparative analysis of how each brand engages with the issue of immigration, offering insights into the effectiveness and authenticity of their activism.

The Consumer Brandscape approach provides a comprehensive lens through which to study brand activism, adapt to the cases of the selected brands addressing immigration. It allows for a nuanced understanding of how brands that engage in activism are not only influencing consumer behavior but are also actively participating in the shaping of societal values and debates. This analysis will illuminate the motivations behind the brands' actions and the broader implications of their engagement with pressing social issues.

The initial phase of the analysis will adopt a two-fold methodology comprising both synchronic and diachronic study of the selected brands, for data collection. The synchronic analysis will focus on examining the current marketing campaigns and communications of the

brands, providing a snapshot of their current engagement with immigration-related issues. This analysis will involve an in-depth examination of recent advertisements, social media content, and corporate statements to identify the overarching themes, messaging strategies, and visual representations used by the brands in addressing immigration.

In contrast, the diachronic analysis will adopt a longitudinal perspective, tracing the evolution of the brands' engagement with immigration issues over time. By examining historical marketing campaigns and corporate initiatives, this analysis will seek to identify changes, continuities, and shifts in the brands' approach to immigration-related discourse. Through this longitudinal perspective, the research aims to uncover the underlying motivations, strategic considerations, and societal influences shaping the brands' engagement with immigration issues.

Following the synchronic and diachronic analysis, this research will proceed to identify and analyze specific codes embedded within the marketing communications of the selected brands. The research will identify recurring symbols, narratives, and rhetorical devices used by the brands to construct their messaging on immigration. These codes will be systematically analyzed to discern their meanings, associations, and implications for consumer perceptions and societal attitudes towards immigration.

Why immigration and not racism?

The decision of choosing immigration as the focal point of my thesis and not directly racism, even if both topics are highly connected, was driven by the observation that while racism is a topic more widely addressed by brands, it carries less political weight than immigration. The discourse around racism has evolved to a point where it is socially established that racism is unacceptable. Brands frequently engage with anti-racism narratives as part of their social responsibility initiatives, reflecting a consensus on the importance of combating racial prejudice (Markovitz et. al 2024). This widespread acknowledgment of racism's negativity does not equally extend to immigration. Supporting immigration involves navigating a more politically charged landscape. Immigration does not consist of bad or good social behavior, it is not that simple, it consists of the whole act of crossing national borders with the intent of establishing a new residence plays a major role, and all its social, political and economical implications. The decision to focus on immigration stems from the recognition that being against racism may not necessarily imply supporting immigration, while advocating for immigration inherently positions one against racism. This collective phenomenon was studied in Europe and North America.

The relationship between attitudes towards racism and immigration is nuanced and varies significantly across different demographic groups in the United States. Pew Research Center's

findings¹⁶ reveal that while there is substantial support for addressing racial inequality, opinions on immigration are more divided. Moreover, the Council on Foreign Relations highlights¹⁷ the complexities within the immigration debate itself, pointing out that while a majority of Americans regard immigration positively, concerns about illegal immigration persist. These insights indicate that the relationship between support for anti-racism and immigration is influenced by a variety of factors, including economic concerns, cultural and identity fears, and political ideologies, which can lead to diverse opinions even among those who generally oppose racism.

In Europe, the attitudes towards immigration are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including perceived threats, racial prejudices, and political framing. According to an Eurobarometer report¹⁸ (an official site of the European Union) intra-European immigration is generally more accepted compared to immigration from non-European or non-white countries, and Europeans in general view immigration from outside the EU not as an opportunity, but as a potential problem. This distinction illustrates how racial prejudice can contribute to negative attitudes towards immigration. According to an official report of the European Commission¹⁹ the complexity of public opinion in European countries reveals a nuanced landscape where individual declarations against racism might coexist with apprehensions or reservations about immigration policies and their societal impacts. This dichotomy underscores the intricate interplay between personal beliefs, societal values, and political ideologies shaping attitudes towards immigration across the continent.

The distinction between addressing immigration and racism is crucial for my thesis because I considered that addressing immigration directly tackles the root of certain forms of racism, making it a more comprehensive and bold form of brand activism. From my perspective, this approach embodies the essence of true brand activism—a willingness to engage with the more challenging and divisive issues at the heart of social tension.

Furthermore, the choice to center immigration in my thesis acknowledges the relative scarcity of advertising directly addressing this issue, as opposed to the more abundant literature and marketing efforts focused on combating racism. This disparity highlights a literature gap regarding advertisements that directly tackles immigration.

¹⁶ Pew Research Center. “Views on Race, Immigration and Discrimination.” *Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy*, 5 Oct. 2017, www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/4-race-immigration-and-discrimination/.

¹⁷ Klobucista, Claire, et al. “The U.S. Immigration Debate.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 6 June 2023, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-immigration-debate-0.

¹⁸ “Eurobarometer.” *Europa.eu*, europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2169.

¹⁹ Gonnot, Jerome. “Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe: Cross-Regional Differences.” *Europa.eu*, Open Research Europe - European Commission, 28 Apr. 2023, open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/articles/3-66#:~:text=URL%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fopen.

3.2 Synchronic analysis

The media's portrayal of immigration in Europe and North America has significantly influenced public discourse, particularly highlighting issues around 'moral panic' and societal tensions related to open borders and the movement of people. This framing has contributed to heightened anxieties and stereotypes, further complicating the immigration debate. Such media narratives have been instrumental in shaping perceptions of immigration as a crisis, underscoring the complex dynamics between media coverage, public opinion, and policy discussions on immigration (Demircioglu and Vivona, 2021).

In my thesis, I chose to analyze the brands Benetton, Smirnoff, Budweiser, and Jigsaw due to their direct address of immigration amidst the crisis in recent years. These brands made a bold choice by not only focusing on racism and inclusion but explicitly tackling immigration issues through their campaigns in the United States and Europe regions currently experiencing significant immigration-related social tensions. This geographical focus is pertinent as these areas are at the epicenter of public discourse and debate over immigration, reflecting a broader socio-political climate of urgency and contention around this issue.

Additionally, the selection of campaigns from Benetton, Smirnoff, Budweiser, and Jigsaw for this thesis was due to the substantial reactions they elicited on social media platforms, indicating their profound impact on public discourse. These campaigns were not only relevant for their content but also for their timing, as they all unfolded within the same historical period. This synchronicity means they were addressing the same immigration crisis, allowing for a comparative analysis of their approaches, strategies, and the public's reception to them.

The selection of campaigns for analysis was made to focus on those published within a similar time frame, encompassing Benetton's 2018 "Migrants" campaign, Smirnoff's 2016 project, Jigsaw's 2017 campaign, and Budweiser's 2017 commercial. This period was marked by significant waves of immigration both in Europe and North America, a socio-political context that each brand engaged with through their respective forms of brand activism. Despite addressing the same underlying issue, the methods and messages employed by each campaign varied significantly, offering a rich landscape for comparative analysis.

The Budweiser and Smirnoff campaigns emerged in a context where America's immigration system is under significant scrutiny and stress, reflecting decades of legislative inertia and contentious political debates. According to *The Economist*²⁰ the stark realities of immigration

²⁰ Source: "America's Immigration System Is Broken." *The Economist*, 30 June 2018, www.economist.com/united-states/2018/06/30/americas-immigration-system-is-broken.

were highlighted by contrasting scenes in McAllen, Texas: the Ursula facility, a warehouse holding children separated from their parents under a Trump administration policy, and the Catholic Charities Humanitarian Respite Centre, offering migrants rest and aid. These scenarios embody the polarized perspectives on immigration in the U.S.—with one side viewing such separations as cruel and unnecessary, and the other seeing stringent measures as essential for control. This backdrop of heightened tensions and the humanitarian implications of immigration policies provided a potent context for brand activism. Budweiser and Smirnoff, addressed this issue reflecting on societal conversations about identity, belonging, and the American dream amidst a system fraught with challenges and divisive politics.

Simultaneously, in Europe, Benetton and Jigsaw crafted their campaigns amidst a backdrop of escalating anti-immigrant sentiment, as populist and far-right political movements gained traction. As stated by *The Financial Times*²¹, this period saw a notable rise in authoritarian figures like Hungary's Viktor Orban, leveraging anti-immigration rhetoric to solidify their positions, particularly evident in election results across Slovenia, Italy, and Hungary. The European Union faced a critical dilemma in balancing the responsibility for refugees among member states, with proposals for a quota system being staunchly opposed by Central European countries, including Hungary and Slovenia. This resistance, coupled with proposals from figures like Italy's Matteo Salvini for more extreme measures against migrants, underscored a deepening crisis within the EU, challenging its foundational principles and igniting xenophobic attitudes. In this volatile context, Benetton and Jigsaw's campaigns addressed the migration issue, navigating through a continental discourse marked by fear, division, and a pressing need for solutions that reconcile security concerns with the core values of egalitarianism and inclusivity.

Benetton, Smirnoff, Budweiser, and Jigsaw have transcended conventional marketing approaches by incorporating immigration narratives into their brand identities, prompting a reevaluation of their motivations and the broader consequences of such integrations. The engagement of diverse brands, from fashion and alcohol to jewelry, with the intricate issue of immigration in their marketing strategies invites scrutiny into their underlying purposes and the impacts thereof.

To grasp the political legitimacy these brands hold in addressing immigration, it's essential to examine their current brand values, image, and positioning from a synchronic analysis perspective. Cultural branding, as described by Laura Oswald, involves navigating the dynamic interplay between culture and brands, where brands derive significance from prevailing cultural currents. Moreover, Grant McCracken's theory of meaning transfer illustrates how cultural

²¹ Source: "The Anti-Migrant Wave Rolls Onwards in EU Polls." *www.ft.com*, 5 June 2018, www.ft.com/content/97213cb8-68aa-11e8-8cf3-0c230fa67aec.

meanings are imbued in goods, emphasizing the role of brands in facilitating cultural expression and dialogue. Through this lens, the strategic inclusion of immigration narratives by these brands not only reflects their commitment to engaging with complex societal issues but also their capacity to influence and reflect contemporary cultural discourses.

Benetton

Benetton Group's core values and its historical commitment to innovation, social engagement, and cultural debate solidly position it as a brand with the authority to address global issues, including immigration. The company is renowned for its vibrant use of color, groundbreaking retail strategies, and a unique sales network, all underpinned by a commitment to quality, democratic pricing, and a passion for its craft. These attributes reflect in its dynamic brand personalities, United Colors of Benetton and Sisley, and are manifested through its significant investment in a global retail presence that emphasizes the centrality of collections, colors, and design. This blend of innovation, commitment to human dignity, and environmental awareness, coupled with its engagement in societal transformation, lays a robust foundation for its voice in the discourse on immigration and other pressing global challenges, as stated on the official webpage of the brand²².

Fabrica. The brand's authority to speak on political and social issues, particularly immigration, is further reinforced by its activities through Fabrica, Benetton's communication research center. Fabrica embodies the brand's challenge of blending culture with industry through innovative and international communication strategies that transcend traditional forms, aiming to become a conduit for the enterprise's "intelligence." This approach to communication, characterized by a diverse range of expressive means, positions Benetton as a leader in fostering cultural dialogue and debate. Additionally, the Group's deep-rooted connection to its origins in Treviso and the Veneto region, through cultural and sports-centered projects, underscores its commitment to local and global communities.

The balance of international scope and local engagement, paired with a history of provocative and culturally relevant campaigns, grants Benetton a unique position of political authority to engage in and influence the conversation around immigration, reflecting its enduring values of openness, inclusivity, and change.

Budweiser

²² Source: "Company Vision | Benetton Group." *W*ww.benettongroup.com, www.benettongroup.com/en/the-group/profile/company-vision/#:~:text=The%20Group%20has%20a%20consolidated.

Budweiser's authority to speak on immigration stems from its foundational values and the brand identity it has cultivated over more than a century. The brand's purpose, "to create a future with more cheers"²³, encapsulates a vision of inclusivity and unity, aiming to foster a world where opportunities are provided for all, communities are uplifted, and meaningful impacts are made globally. This forward-looking perspective, combined with a commitment to dreaming big and making every moment in life worthy of celebration, resonates with the narrative of immigration, which is inherently about seeking new opportunities, embracing community support, and contributing positively to society. Budweiser's dedication to creating a future that everyone can celebrate aligns with the principles of diversity and inclusion, making it a credible voice in discussions about immigration.

Furthermore, Budweiser's brand identity, characterized by tradition, quality, and authenticity, enhances its political authority on the subject. The brand's rich history and unwavering commitment to quality have not only built a loyal customer base but also established Budweiser as a staple of American culture. By leveraging its significant place in popular culture and engaging with current events through social media campaigns, Budweiser has demonstrated an ability to connect with a broad audience and spark meaningful conversations. This engagement with cultural and societal dynamics positions Budweiser as a brand that has the platform and respect to influence public discourse on the immigration topic.

Smirnoff

Smirnoff's strategic pivot in 2023 towards a more inclusive brand platform with its "We Do We" campaign grants it a unique authority to engage in discussions on immigration and broader social issues²⁴. By acknowledging the "joy recession" and the widespread feelings of alienation and disconnection exacerbated by the global health crisis, Smirnoff has positioned itself as a brand that not only recognizes the challenges of contemporary society but also actively seeks to address them. The campaign's focus on inclusivity, underscored by the collaboration with diverse casts and creative teams, reflects a deliberate effort to celebrate and embrace the variety of experiences and backgrounds that make up the global community. This inclusivity, aimed at fostering a sense of belonging and community, resonates deeply with the discourse on immigration, where the integration and acceptance of diverse individuals are central themes.

By promoting a message that "when our tastes are as diverse as our world, the world becomes a magical place," Smirnoff encapsulates a vision that aligns with the principles of immigration advocacy—valuing and celebrating diversity. The brand's shift towards inclusivity in the

²³ Source: "Our Culture | Budweiser Brewing Group UK&I." *Budweiserbrewinggroup.co.uk*, budweiserbrewinggroup.co.uk/our-culture.

²⁴ Source: Adams, Peter. "Smirnoff's Big Brand Strategy Shakeup Is All about Inclusion." *Marketing Dive*, 26 June 2023, www.marketingdive.com/news/smirnoff-vodka-brand-refresh-campaign-diversity-inclusion/653232/.

aftermath of mass protests for racial justice in 2020, and its proactive stance amidst growing societal divisions, imbues Smirnoff with the political authority to speak on immigration. It stands as a testament to the power of collective unity and the importance of embracing diverse perspectives, making Smirnoff a credible voice in the ongoing dialogue about creating a more inclusive and interconnected world.

Jigsaw

Jigsaw's stance and the authority to engage in discussions about immigration stem from its foundational philosophy and deliberate marketing choices that celebrate diversity and inclusivity. Established in 1970 in Hampstead, Jigsaw positioned itself as a brand that values timeless style over transient fashion trends, emphasizing the creation of beautiful, meaningful, and lasting pieces. This approach not only showcases their commitment to quality and sustainability but also mirrors the brand's broader perspective on social issues, including immigration. Jigsaw's emphasis on using the best fabrics from responsible sources and providing customers with genuine, knowledgeable advice in uniquely designed stores reflects a deeper commitment to thoughtful and ethical business practices.

Peter Ruis, Jigsaw's chief executive, articulated this commitment to social discourse through the brand's bold marketing campaign that celebrated Britain as a nation of immigrants, leveraging the diversity within its own team as a powerful statement²⁵. With 45 nationalities working within Jigsaw, the brand authentically represents the multicultural fabric that it champions. Opting to use this diversity as a cornerstone for its campaign, Jigsaw not only showcased its internal values but also positioned itself as a vocal advocate for the positive recognition of immigration. By choosing to deliver a message of inclusivity and celebration of diversity at a time when global narratives around immigration were increasingly fraught, Jigsaw demonstrated a willingness to engage with complex societal issues head-on.

²⁵ Source: Fiatherstone, Emma. "Jigsaw Just Released an Ad Celebrating Immigration after the Brexit-Vote." *The Independent*, 13 Oct. 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/jigsaw-immigration-new-campaign-celebration-british-values-style-high-street-fashion-brand-a7999256.html.



Image 5: Image of an ad from the campaign “<3 immigration” by Jigsaw²⁶

3.3 Diachronic analysis

The diachronic analysis of immigration in marketing campaigns and advertising history reveals a complex interplay between commercial objectives and societal issues. Over the past decades, the representation of immigration in advertising has evolved, reflecting changing societal attitudes, political climates, and the brands' own evolving identities.

Benetton

Benetton Group, under the creative direction of Oliviero Toscani and editorial guidance of Tibor Kalman for Colors magazine, has been at the forefront of using immigration as a central theme in its marketing strategies. In the early 1990s, the brand distinguished itself through its bold and often controversial media presence. Benetton utilized powerful imagery, such as the Associated Press photograph of Albanian refugees, to provoke thought and conversation around the politics of immigration. This approach was not without its risks, as the use of such charged imagery in a commercial context blurred the lines between artistic expression and the imperative to sell products. The reactions to these campaigns were mixed, with some praising the brand's courage in tackling such issues, while others criticized it for exploiting sensitive topics for commercial gain.

²⁶ Source: Wood, Zoe. “The Fashion World Speaks Out: “without Immigration, We’d Be Selling Potato Sacks.”” *The Guardian*, 14 Oct. 2017, www.theguardian.com/fashion/2017/oct/14/fashion-world-immigration-migrant-workers.

The early 1990s were a pivotal time for immigration in Europe, marked by significant movements of people from Eastern Bloc countries to Western European nations. The socioeconomic upheaval following the decline of communism led to mass emigration, with Italy being a major destination for refugees, particularly from Albania. Benetton's choice to highlight the plight of these refugees in its marketing material was a bold move that set it apart from its contemporaries. By adopting a narrative that emphasized the human aspect of immigration, Benetton positioned itself as a brand that was not only aware of global social issues but also willing to engage with them directly.

Budweiser

Budweiser's initiatives toward immigration and its narrative of inclusivity are deeply rooted in the personal history of its founder, Adolphus Busch, an immigrant whose life story embodies the brand's commitment to celebrating and supporting immigrant communities. Adolphus Busch's journey from Germany to the United States in 1857, settling in St. Louis and eventually marrying into the Anheuser family, is a testament to the immigrant dream of seeking opportunity and creating a lasting legacy in a new homeland. His involvement with the E. Anheuser & Co. Brewery, and the subsequent formation of the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association, not only highlights his entrepreneurial spirit but also underscores the significant impact immigrants have had on American industry and culture.

This foundational story is a cornerstone of Budweiser's identity, influencing the brand's initiatives and campaigns around immigration. The brand's marketing campaigns, such as "Born the Hard Way," which narratively explores Busch's challenges and triumphs as an immigrant, serve to highlight the perseverance and resilience inherent to the immigrant experience. Furthermore, Budweiser's commitment to immigration is not just historical but actively extends to supporting current immigrant communities through the Busch Family Foundation, aligning with the brand's overarching mission to create a future with more cheers. Through the years, companies have approached issues surrounding immigration demonstrating a genuine concern that extends beyond the realm of advertising into tangible action. Brands are increasingly investing not just in impactful advertising campaigns but also in concrete initiatives through programs, foundations, and donations to NGOs, illustrating a commitment to addressing the complexities of immigration with substantive support.

Other Brands Demonstrating Support for Immigration

LEVI'S

Levi's, a brand synonymous with denim and American heritage, extends its influence far beyond the realm of fashion through its philanthropic arm, the Levi Strauss Foundation. Demonstrating a deep commitment to social justice issues, Levi's supports various organizations devoted to assisting immigrants, an endeavor that reflects the brand's core values

of empathy, integrity, and courage. Among the beneficiaries of the Levi Strauss Foundation grants are United We Dream, an immigrant youth-led community, and the National Immigration Law Center, an organization that defends the rights of low-income immigrants²⁷.

United We Dream stands as the largest immigrant youth-led network in the country, advocating for the dignity and fairness for the millions of undocumented immigrants in the United States. By supporting United We Dream, Levi's contributes to empowering young immigrants to advocate for their rights and the rights of their families and communities. Similarly, the National Immigration Law Center works to ensure that low-income immigrants in the United States can realize their full potential and change their own lives through policy analysis, litigation, education, and advocacy. Levi's support for these organizations underscores the brand's recognition of the critical importance of immigration in shaping vibrant, diverse, and resilient communities. Through these grants, Levi's not only reinforces its historical legacy but also actively participates in the ongoing dialogue and action surrounding immigration, demonstrating how corporations can play a significant role in advancing social equity and justice.

IKEA

The IKEA Foundation, established in 1982, has taken significant steps towards aiding refugees in finding pathways towards economic self-reliance.. By collaborating with partners, the IKEA Foundation focuses on helping refugees and the new communities where they are in East Africa. The efforts are comprehensive, addressing needs in both urban and rural settings and considering the impacts of a changing climate, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other obstacles. This approach by IKEA and similar endeavors by other brands mark a pivotal evolution in corporate responsibility, showcasing a deepened engagement with social issues that goes beyond mere marketing to effect real change in the lives of those affected by immigration. Beyond traditional advertising campaigns, some brands and influential figures have chosen to address immigration through direct advocacy and product messaging, demonstrating a commitment to the issue in innovative ways.

Fenty

In 2019, Rihanna launched her second collection for *Fenty*, which served as a homage to immigrants around the world, including herself. By incorporating a T-shirt that prominently features the origin and definition of the word 'immigrant,' Rihanna leveraged her platform and brand to make a powerful statement on the topic.

²⁷ Source: "Levi Strauss Foundation." *Levi Strauss & Co*, www.levistrauss.com/values-in-action/levi-strauss-foundation/.



Image 6: Image of fenty t-shirt featuring the word “immigrant”²⁸

In an interview with *The Cut*²⁹ Rihanna expressed that the T-shirt was a "favorite" of her collection, highlighting the word 'immigrant' as one of pride and resilience. She shared her perspective on the word, stating, "For me, it's a prideful word. To know that you can come from humble beginnings and just take over whatever you want to, dominate at whatever you put your mind to. The world becomes your oyster, and there's no limit." This sentiment reflects a broader understanding and celebration of the immigrant experience, emphasizing empowerment and the potential for success despite challenges.

Rihanna's approach with Fenty, along with initiatives like the IKEA Foundation and others, illustrates the diverse ways in which brands and individuals can contribute to the dialogue on immigration, moving beyond traditional advertising to embody a genuine commitment to change and support for immigrant communities.

Kids of Immigrants

²⁸ Source: "Fenty Launches New Selection of Over-Sized T-Shirts." *Snobette.com*, 10 July 2019, snobette.com/2019/07/fenty-new-over-sized-shirts-immigrant-no-more-music/.

²⁹ Schneier, Matthew. "Rihanna Takes a Stand for Immigrants: "Everyone out Here Is Just like Me."" *The Cut*, 20 June 2019, www.thecut.com/2019/06/rihanna-takes-a-stand-for-immigrants.html.

One notable example of this trend is the brand Kids Of Immigrants, which was founded in 2016. This brand has successfully carved out a unique space in the market by positioning immigration not just as a background theme but as the central pillar of its brand personality and image. Leveraging a digital-first approach, Kids Of Immigrants has built a significant presence on social media, boasting 149k followers on Instagram, indicative of their resonant message and growing influence.

Kids Of Immigrants distinguishes itself through its multidimensional branding, which seeks to bridge diverse cultures and experiences, drawing strength from its immigrant roots. The brand's commitment to storytelling and its strategic use of products adorned with powerful phrases like "we are our parents wildest dreams" speak directly to a community of individuals whose identities are shaped by the immigrant journey. This approach not only fosters a strong emotional connection with its audience but also positions Kids Of Immigrants as a vocal advocate for the values of resilience, hope, and the pursuit of opportunity that often characterize the immigrant experience.



Image 7: Image of Kids of Immigrants' picture from social media³⁰

³⁰ Source: <https://www.instagram.com/kidsofimmigrants/?hl=en>

As the subject of immigration has gained more prominence in the social landscape over the years, new brands have emerged with a core identity deeply rooted in the immigrant experience, reflecting a broader societal shift towards embracing and celebrating diversity.

The intricate relationship between marketing and immigration, as discussed in the Harvard Business Review article "Diaspora Marketing" by Nirmalya Kumar and Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp³¹, underscores the potential for brands to navigate these tensions effectively. A key strategy highlighted is targeting diasporas - communities of emigrants and their descendants who maintain a connection with their homeland. This approach leverages the cultural and economic ties within these communities, offering a unique entry point for brands seeking to establish a presence in developed markets.

Marketing to diasporas capitalizes on the affinity these communities have for products from their homeland, while also navigating the complex identities that immigrants develop in their new countries. This strategy acknowledges the dual challenge immigrants face: maintaining their cultural distinctiveness and integrating into the host culture. As Kumar and Steenkamp note, immigrants often retain a strong sense of their home culture, which influences their consumption patterns, even as they adapt to the customs of their new environment. This duality presents both opportunities and challenges for marketers aiming to build global brands. By understanding the nuanced process of acculturation and the varying degrees to which immigrants assimilate, brands can more effectively target segments within diaspora communities that are receptive to their messaging.

The success of diaspora marketing hinges on a deep understanding of the immigrant mindset and the cultural psychology that underpins consumer behavior within these communities. Brands that successfully engage diasporas not only achieve growth in revenue and brand recognition but also contribute to a more inclusive global marketplace. This strategy requires a nuanced approach, recognizing the diversity within immigrant communities and the complex factors that influence their identities and consumption choices. As the global landscape continues to evolve, with immigration playing a pivotal role in shaping societies and economies, marketing strategies that embrace and understand the dynamics of diaspora communities will be increasingly crucial for brands looking to make a meaningful impact on a global scale.

3.4. The brandscape

The thematic brandscape on immigration synthesizes a comparative analysis across the selected advertising campaigns to map out a semiotic landscape of cultural categories, emotional territories, tensions, semiotic cues, and the common signs or cues observed in the selected campaigns by Budweiser, Benetton, Smirnoff, and Jigsaw. The intention behind

³¹ Kumar, Nirmalya, and Jan-benedict Steenkamp. "Diaspora Marketing." *Harvard Business Review*, Oct. 2013, hbr.org/2013/10/diaspora-marketing.

crafting a brandscape lies in understanding the connotations, narratives, and symbols that transcend individual campaigns to capture the collective brand approach to the topic of immigration.

As previously analyzed in Chapter 2, given the sensitivity and complexity of immigration as a topic, it offers a fertile ground for brands to engage in brand activism, signaling corporate leadership and value-driven positioning. This analysis facilitates an exploration of commonalities and differences in how brands across sectors – from apparel to beverages – employ immigration narratives, allowing us to assess the broader semiotic and cultural implications of such communications.

The brandscape

| Cultural category | Tension | Emotional territories | Semiotic cues by advertising / campaign | | | | Common Semiotic cues |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|----------------------|
| | | | Budweiser | Jigsaw | Benetton | Smirnoff | |
| Ideology | Inclusivity vs. Exclusivity | Feelings of belonging, acceptance, solidarity, | Man welcoming the protagonist in the new town, man inviting the protagonist a beer, rejection from locals | <i>“Fear, isolation, and intolerance will hold us back. Love, openness, and collaboration will take us forward”</i> statement | Inherent in the depiction of migrants | Use of public spaces inviting engagement from all societal segments | Unity, Openness |
| | | Rejection, pride, loneliness, hostility | | | | | |
| Humanity | Empathy vs. Apathy | Compassion, altruism, sensitivity, understanding | Man stitching the protagonist ' face | Presence of the heart symbol before the word “immigration” | Presence of rescuer | Artistic collaboration with personal connection to immigration | Assistance |
| | | Indifference, disinterest | | | | | |
| Ethics | Brand activism vs. Woke washing | Shock, authenticity, reality, bravery, urgency, chaos, call for attention, uncomfort | Fire in the boat | <i>“Without immigration, we'd be selling potato sacks.”</i> (shocking statement) | Real life imagery (not staged), Vibrant colors, sea, life vests | Real stories, artist known for his socially conscious art, use of public spaces, art format often used for activism and political, vibrant colors | Shocking imagery |
| | | Lack of real action | | | | | |
| Political ideology | Globalization vs. Nationalism | Open minded, adaptability | Presence of more immigrants arriving, contextual | <i>“Whatever your opinion, at some</i> | Contextual placement of the advertising (European | Contextual placement of the advertising (Heritage | Political context |
| | | Patriotism, tradition, | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| | | heritage, racism | placement of the commercial (Trump's immigration policies) | <i>point in your ancestry</i> <i>someone moved in and unsettled the neighbours.</i> ” statement, contextual placement of the commercial (Brexit) | immigration emergency, particularly italian) | month) | |
| Cultural identity | Cultural diversity vs. Cultural homogenization | Miscommunication, confrontation, sharing Same identity, shared values | Different languages, diverse ethnicities among immigrants, locals look similar between each other | Models with different ethnicities, same message but different visual ads, “ <i>British Style is not 100% British. In fact, there’s no such thing as ‘100% British’.</i> <i>Or 100% Dutch, French, American, Asian or European.</i> ” statement | The rescuer having a different color of skin than the people being rescued | Diverse messaging, visual diversity of colors | Representation of different ethnicities |
| Economic / Political ideology | Egalitarianism vs. Inequality | Hope, aspirations, dreams Insecurity, economic fear, competition, uncertainty | Companionship among immigrants, the myth of the “American dream”, foggy arrival | “ <i>Without immigration, we’d be selling potato sacks.</i> ” statement (implying economic development) | The immigrants don’t have anything other than themselves (no suitcases) | Textual messages like: “ <i>Our hope spans the miles between us</i> ” | Inspirational quotes, representation of traveling to a destination |
| Legal / Political context | Legal immigration vs. Undocumented immigration | Security, fairness, justice, accessibility, freedom Fear of legal repercussions, marginalization, uncertainty, danger, controversy | Presence of the officer tamping the protagonist’s passport | “(…) <i>we couldn’t do what we do</i> <i>if people weren’t free to move around.</i> ” | Precarious / emergency rubber boat, humanitarian assistance | Implicit | Evoking governmental authorities (explicitly or implicitly) |

We can discern that common signs evident across all selected campaigns embody a collective narrative strategy that resonates profoundly with audiences. These campaigns converge on several semiotic tools that amplify their impact on consumers.

Analyzing the common semiotic cues, I have discerned two distinct categories of semiotic elements, which I shall refer to as "soft cues" and "strong cues." This classification is based on the observed responses from society and the extent to which these signs lead to controversy or are widely accepted by the general public.

"Soft cues" are those semiotic elements that resonate with widespread societal norms and are more universally embraced within the collective consciousness. These signs are typically characterized by their subtler, more nuanced approach to addressing immigration, evoking sentiments and values that are commonly upheld and less likely to provoke discord.

On the other hand, "strong cues" denote those semiotic markers that directly engage with societal tensions and often catalyze more polarized reactions. These signs boldly confront and challenge immigration paradigms, inciting discourse that reflects societal division.

Soft cues

All campaigns emphasize the sign of unity, a message of coming together that transcends individual backgrounds and contributes to a larger, shared success. The signs of openness invite a conversation that is inclusive and accepting of all individuals, mirroring societies that value diversity. Assistance is another recurrent theme, it positions the brands as allies to the cause, offering a helping hand in the journey of immigrants. Diversity in representation is a consistent visual theme, reinforcing the message that immigration is a multifaceted phenomenon, and its narrative is incomplete without recognizing the spectrum of human experiences. The power of words is harnessed to inspire and uplift, as seen in Smirnoff's campaign or in Jigsaw's powerful affirmations on immigration.

Strong cues

Employed particularly by Benetton, the use of shocking imagery stands out as a tactic to jolt audiences into awareness, compelling them to confront the realities of immigration beyond the comfort of ignorance. Moreover, each campaign acknowledges the existing political context, either implicitly or explicitly. They connect the brand's narrative to the current socio-political dynamics, making the advertisements timely and relevant. Additionally we observed references to governmental roles, either as helpers or opponents, indicating the intricate relationship between policy and the personal journeys of immigrants.

This classification enables an analysis of the advertising campaigns through the lens of brand activism, distinguishing between brands that utilize more potent cues and those that opt for milder ones, resulting in varying degrees of shock and public reaction. This analysis tool, in

conjunction with our initial research of each brand's history and values, aids in discerning which brands are better positioned to adopt a brand activism strategy that acts as a "wake-up call" or a more direct "call to action," employing explicit and potentially shocking methods. Conversely, it also helps identify brands that are more suitably aligned with a "softer" approach to campaigns addressing the topic of immigration. This analysis will be elaborated upon in the conclusions of the research in the subsequent chapter.

Building on this analysis, I have categorized the brands under study according to the intensity of the strong cues employed in their campaigns. In addition, this categorization followed the synchronic analysis of the brands' core values, particularly how closely these values align with supporting the subject of immigration.

This process enabled the construction of a grid that visually maps the brands based on these determinants. By placing the brands within this grid, we can obtain a clear visual representation of their positioning relative to one another. This spatial arrangement facilitates a comparative assessment of the marketing strategies employed by the brands, in relation to their stance on immigration as revealed through both their campaign content and underlying brand philosophies.

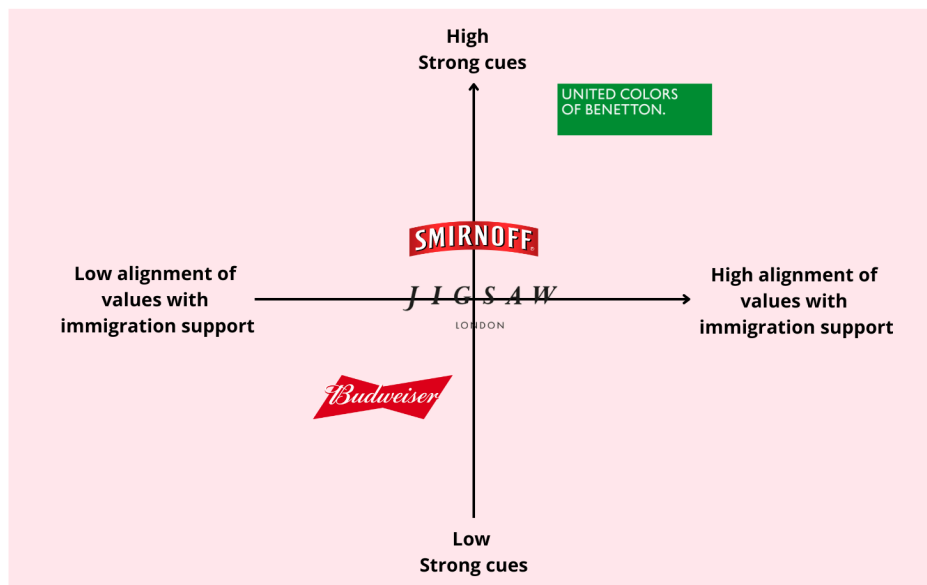


Image 8: Semiotic cues - Brand value grid

Benetton

Benetton is positioned at high alignment with immigration support and using strong cues. As repeatedly observed in the previous section, Benetton has a history of engaging in social issues and has used provocative imagery to ignite conversation around immigration. Among the campaigns analyzed in the thesis, Benetton's was particularly notable for its use of a real photograph featuring actual immigrants

The photo in Image 17, captured by Kenny Karpov during a rescue operation conducted by the French charity SOS Méditerranée, was subsequently tweeted by Benetton with the “United Colors of Benetton” logo, a move that generated substantial backlash. The Italian news agency ANSA, which was implicated in the photograph, condemned Benetton's use of the image³².

SOS Méditerranée publicly expressed their shock and disapproval over Benetton's appropriation of their efforts for what they perceived as commercial exploitation. In their statement, they distanced themselves from the campaign and criticized the photographer's decision to provide the photograph to Benetton. This controversy underscores the ethical considerations and potential pitfalls that brands may encounter when using real-life images, particularly those depicting humanitarian crises, to promote their products or brand image.

The use of such a powerful and authentic visual was an attempt by Benetton to maintain its legacy of provocative advertising. However, this approach raised questions regarding the intersection of commercial interests and the respectful representation of human suffering. As such, Benetton's campaign, while striving for impact, ended up inviting a more complex conversation about the responsibilities of brands in their quest for social commentary through advertising. This is why the ad is positioned higher at “Strong cues”.

Smirnoff

Smirnoff is placed towards high alignment with immigration support but uses slightly less strong cues compared to Benetton. The brand's shift towards inclusivity, especially with the "We're Open" campaign, focuses on celebrating diversity and bringing people together, aligning with immigration advocacy principles while maintaining a relatively moderate approach in their messaging. I positioned it higher than Jigsaw and Budweiser because their campaign is shocking in the sense that it follows an approach more similar to guerrilla marketing, that tends to be shocking and captures the attention of the consumer.

³² Source: Ritschel, Chelsea. “Benetton Migrant Rescue Advertising Campaign Faces Backlash from Charity.” *The Independent*, 20 June 2018, www.independent.co.uk/life-style/benetton-migrant-rescue-photos-advertising-twitter-sos-mediterranee-a8408666.html.

Smirnoff's marketing approach in the "Global Street Art Project" certainly contains elements that align with guerrilla marketing, notable for its surprise effect and unconventional strategy. By deploying art in public urban spaces, such as bus shelters throughout Los Angeles, Smirnoff leverages an element of surprise, transforming everyday locations into platforms for communication. This method is evocative of urban performances that disrupt the routine functionality of public spaces, compelling passersby to engage with unexpected narratives.

The emotive impact of Smirnoff's campaign is amplified by the strategic use of space, turning mundane experiences like waiting for a bus into opportunities for reflection on existential values. The brand capitalizes on the actantial role of space — places ordinarily devoid of narrative significance become rich texts that challenge observers to contemplate deeper societal messages³³. Smirnoff's posters, with their eye-catching designs and bold colors, don't just capture attention; they invite introspection and dialogue about hope, struggle, and unity, aligning perfectly with the concept of guerrilla marketing that seeks to rewrite the script of everyday urban experiences. The result is a form of guerrilla marketing that is not just seen but felt, provoking a sensory and intellectual response that transcends traditional advertising methods. This innovative tactic embodies the brand's creative and socially conscious ethos, while also maximizing the surprise element inherent in guerrilla marketing strategies.

Jigsaw

Jigsaw, located towards the center, indicates a balance between high alignment with immigration support and the strength of cues used. Their "Love Immigration" campaign is a direct response to post-Brexit sentiments and aims to reshape perceptions of immigration and its impact on British fashion, thus challenging negative attitudes while not employing as strong shock value as Benetton.

The campaign strategically steered clear of overt political statements, choosing instead to affirm the positive aspects of immigration. It used a measured tone that, while clear in its stance, refrained from aggressive rhetoric. This subtlety allowed Jigsaw to engage with the topic without becoming embroiled in the contentious debates that directly mentioning Brexit might have entailed.

Graphically, Jigsaw's campaign was less shocking when compared to Benetton or Smirnoff. It did not utilize real photographs of immigrants as Benetton had, nor did it employ guerrilla marketing tactics like Smirnoff's urban installations. The visual language of Jigsaw's campaign relied on the aesthetic appeal of its clothing line to symbolize the message of unity and diversity. By focusing on the products and the brand's ethos, Jigsaw managed to align its

³³ Source: Peverini, Paolo. "Environmental Issues in Unconventional Social Advertising: A Semiotic Perspective." *Semiotica*, no. 199, 2014, pp. 219–246.

campaign with its broader brand identity of elegance and thoughtful curation, which resonated with its consumer base.

Budweiser

Budweiser is placed lower in alignment with immigration support and uses strong cues. Its narrative is centered around the historical contributions of immigrants to American culture, with its "Born the Hard Way" ad focusing on the story of its founder. The brand leverages its significant place in American culture to make a statement about immigration, but it does not align its entire brand identity around this issue as centrally as Benetton or Smirnoff might.

Budweiser's Super Bowl commercial, which portrayed the immigration story of its co-founder Adolphus Busch, inadvertently tapped into the heated political debate on immigration due to its timing. Released shortly after a controversial executive order on immigration by then-President Trump, the ad was interpreted by some as a commentary on the present immigration policies, leading to a backlash from certain conservative groups, including a call from Trump supporters to boycott the brand.

The commercial, which was meant to celebrate the brand's heritage and the personal resolve of its founder, as stated by Anheuser-Busch InBev marketing VP³⁴, thus illustrates the delicate balance brands must maintain when navigating politically charged themes, even unintentionally. Budweiser's experience underscores the potential for narratives with historical or apolitical intent to be recontextualized against the backdrop of contemporary political developments, impacting public perception and reception in unforeseen ways.

These placements reflect the strategic decisions each brand has made in their advertising campaigns regarding immigration, taking into account their history, values, and the current socio-political climate. They highlight the balance brands attempt to strike between making an impact and staying true to their identity, as well as the varying degrees of risk they are willing to take in their brand activism efforts.

The map in Image 21 serves as a strategic tool, offering valuable managerial insights into the nuances of addressing the theme of immigration within advertising. It provides a basis for evaluating the potential impact and effectiveness of brand activism strategies, paving the way for more informed decision-making when it comes to crafting campaigns that resonate with

³⁴ Source: Legaspi, Althea. "See Controversial Immigration-Themed Budweiser Super Bowl Ad." *Rolling Stone*, 3 Feb. 2017, [www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/see-controversial-immigration-themed-budweiser-super-bowl-ad-105782/..](http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/see-controversial-immigration-themed-budweiser-super-bowl-ad-105782/)

both the brand's identity and the public discourse on immigration. In the next chapter, we will delve deeper into this grid-based analysis to extract actionable insights for brands considering engaging with the complex and sensitive topic of immigration in their advertising efforts.

3.5 Identification of codes

This section focuses on code theory in brand semiotics, focusing on the Consumer Brandscape model to dissect the semiotic codes that govern consumer behaviors and decision-making processes, specifically concerning the subject of immigration. Within the Brandscape, every interaction and choice made by consumers is subtly orchestrated by a network of codes, which influence an array of sign systems including language, gestures, colors, rituals, social behaviors, and even the structural organization of space and time. These codes dictate how social groups articulate and categorize the world into shared cultural constructs, and serve as the consensus-building mechanisms that facilitate communication within and between social groups, from the national codes evident in shared cultural practices to the local codes that infuse those practices with unique, community-specific nuances.

As we address the subject of immigration through the lens of brand semiotics, we will categorize and examine the residual, dominant, and emergent codes that have come to define brand perceptions and consumer behavior in this context. Emergent codes, on the other hand, are nascent symbols and meanings that are beginning to gain traction within society and the market. They represent evolving perspectives and progressive attitudes toward immigration, challenging traditional narratives and potentially reshaping future brand strategies. Through this lens, we can better understand the dynamics of change within the Brandscape as brands respond to and shape the evolving narrative of immigration in contemporary society, navigating between these three types of codes to engage with their audience in a meaningful way.

The methodology for decoding according to the Brandscape method follows a hierarchical progression. Coders begin with broad cultural categories that influence consumer perception, such as gender norms and mythological archetypes, and then distill this information down to the overarching messages conveyed. This process entails a meticulous examination of how each category contributes to the formation of brand identity and consumer understanding.

3.5.1 Dominant code

Dominant codes are those that currently hold the most power and visibility within the Brandscape, shaping mainstream narratives and consumer expectations. These codes reflect the prevailing attitudes, values, and norms regarding immigration, often reinforced through widespread media representation and brand messaging.

According to Oswald (2012), the dominant code is the one that becomes widely recognized and accepted within society; however, upon reaching a state of dominance, it sheds its novelty and originality. As detailed in the research and extensively discussed in Chapter 2, the *immigration emergency* has emerged as the dominant code.

In selecting the dominant code "immigration emergency," I recognized it as a concept that has consistently existed and continues to prevail, encapsulating both residual and emerging codes within its scope. By framing it as an "emergency," this dominant code reflects the ongoing urgency and relevance of immigration matters in contemporary discourse, not only incorporating historical attitudes and values associated with residual codes but also adapting to evolving perspectives and challenges represented by emerging codes. The dominant code "immigration emergency" allows for a nuanced analysis of how immigration is perceived and managed across different times and contexts.

Immigration in North America, especially in the United States, has consistently been treated as an urgent issue requiring attention, deeply rooted in the nation's history of benefiting from the diverse talents and ambitions of immigrants while grappling with the complexities of integration and citizenship. This historical backdrop, enriched by contributions and challenges alike, underscores the ongoing debate on who gets to be an American citizen and the terms involved. From the early Naturalization Acts to the post-September 11 emphasis on security, immigration policies have evolved, reflecting the nation's struggle to balance openness with security³⁵. Given the systemic challenges and the divisive politics surrounding the path to citizenship, immigration remains an ever-pressing emergency, embedding itself as a dominant code that encapsulates the nation's enduring struggle and its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

On the other hand, in Europe, the perception of immigration as an urgent issue to be addressed has been deeply ingrained. Specifically over the last decades, migration has escalated into a critical political issue, with the media's portrayal of an "invasion" and "crisis" intensifying public concern. This narrative is deeply connected to Europe's colonial past and its legacy of imperialism, which continues to influence contemporary attitudes towards immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. These individuals, fleeing poverty, political instability, wars, and climate crises, find themselves at the heart of a Eurocentric debate that often deems them a "problem" rather than acknowledging their potential contributions. Europe's response has been characterized by stringent anti-migrant policies and a resurgence of racism, echoing colonial justifications of racial superiority. The decade has witnessed increased

³⁵ Source: "America's Story: An Immigrant Story." *W*www.carnegie.org, www.carnegie.org/interactives/immigration-reform/#.

patrolling of borders, restrictive policies on NGO rescue operations, and agreements like Italy's with Libya to deter African migrants from European shores, resulting in numerous tragedies. Furthermore, the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers within Europe, marked by legal obstacles and societal exclusion, underscores a continuing crisis of perception and policy. This ongoing emergency reflects the continent's struggle with its identity and values in the face of global migration challenges.

To today immigration is still part of the forefront of societal discourse, as a crisis consisting of mass immigration primarily driven by the immigrants' quest for improved economic opportunities, in North America and Europe. According to *The Economist*³⁶, during 2022, Britain experienced an unprecedented influx of 1.2 million people, marking a historic peak in migration flows. Similarly, Australia, Spain, the United States, Canada, and Germany have all reported significant increases in net migration rates, with figures surpassing those recorded before the pandemic and, in some cases, exceeding previous records by substantial margins. This immigration boom across the wealthy nations of the world has contributed to a rapid rise in the foreign-born population, accelerating faster than at any previous point in history. This phenomenon raises critical questions about the implications for the global economy and the cultural and social fabric of host countries.

The resurgence of migration in the present period comes after a period of apparent resistance to mass migration in many affluent countries, highlighted by political movements and decisions such as Brexit in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the US, both characterized by strong anti-migrant sentiments. These political measures cause the rise of cultural tensions all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted migration, leading to a standstill or even a reversal of migration trends as borders closed and individuals returned to their home countries. However, the recent spike in migration has restored a sense of normality in places like Singapore, while in others, such as Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada, it has introduced significant demographic changes, showcasing the diverse origins of the new arrivals, including Ukrainians, Indians, and Nigerians, many of whom have family connections in richer countries and speak English.

The reasons behind this migration boom are multifaceted, encompassing the post-pandemic economic landscape, characterized by low unemployment rates and high demand for labor, currency fluctuations that favor the remittance of money home, and more welcoming government policies aimed at attracting new residents. Countries like Canada and Germany have set ambitious targets to welcome new migrants, while others have opened their doors to specific groups, such as Hong Kongers fleeing Chinese oppression and Ukrainians escaping the

³⁶ Source: "Why Migration Is in Such a Mess Once More." *The Economist*, 9 Nov. 2023, www.economist.com/international/2023/11/09/why-migration-is-in-such-a-mess-once-more

war. The influx of migrants not only contributes to the labor market and fosters innovation but also stimulates demand for goods and services, impacting housing markets and potentially influencing inflation rates. As migration continues to shape the world, the anti-immigrant sentiment of the late 2010s appears increasingly like an anomaly, pointing towards a future where high levels of new arrivals are normalized and integrated into the societal and economic landscape.

Immigration evokes significant tensions, reflecting the complexities of integration, economic impact, cultural shifts, and political discourse. As societies grapple with these tensions, the discourse around immigration continues to evolve, underscoring its significance as a pivotal and defining element of modern culture.

3.5.2 Residual codes

Residual codes refer to the longstanding cultural and brand symbols that continue to influence perceptions despite not being the forefront of current marketing strategies. These codes often stem from historical narratives or established brand identities that have been carried over through generations, embodying traditional values and beliefs about immigration.

Residual codes address older, more conservative views that emphasize national identity, security, and protectionism, prioritizing assimilation over multiculturalism. These codes are rooted in historical narratives and traditional brand identities that reflect a time when immigration was seen more as a security concern or a challenge to social order and cultural homogeneity. While these residual codes might still influence certain segments of society and consumer perceptions, they are increasingly perceived as outdated in the face of the emerging narrative that champions diversity, inclusion, and the economic benefits of a robust immigration policy. Residual codes include:

1. *National Identity and Patriotism*: This residual code emphasizes a strong sense of national pride and identity, often intertwined with a mono-cultural perspective. It may manifest in brand imagery and narratives that celebrate historical symbols, traditions, and values unique to a nation's heritage, subtly implying a preference for assimilation over multiculturalism.

2. *Security and Protectionism*: Another potential residual code focuses on immigration as a security concern, where brands in the past might have aligned themselves with messages emphasizing the need to protect borders and maintain social order. This code could be visible in marketing strategies that prioritize safety, stability, and the well-being of the native population, sometimes at the expense of a more open and inclusive approach to immigration.

3. *Assimilation Over Multiculturalism*: Reflecting a preference for immigrants to adapt and blend into the prevailing culture rather than maintaining their distinct identities, this residual code can be seen in brands that historically promoted a singular cultural narrative or aesthetic. It suggests a more homogenized society where diversity is acknowledged but not celebrated in its multifaceted forms.

5. *Charity Over Empowerment*: This residual code approaches immigration from a charitable perspective, where immigrants are seen as subjects needing aid rather than as equals contributing to society. Focus on philanthropy and aid, rather than empowerment and equal opportunity, subtly reinforcing a power imbalance between the native population and immigrants.

These residual codes, while not at the forefront of the current narrative that embraces immigration as an opportunity for inclusivity and diversity, still linger in certain consumer perceptions. Recognizing and understanding these codes is crucial for brands aiming to navigate the complex landscape of modern immigration, ensuring their messaging aligns with contemporary values.

3.5.3 Emerging code

The concept of an emergent code refers to a phenomenon that arises and develops in response to shifts in the social and cultural fabric of society. In this context, I considered *egalitarianism* as an emerging code. Egalitarianism, as an emergent code, reflects a growing commitment to equality and inclusivity, mirroring the shifting attitudes and norms derived from immigration. It signifies a broader societal move towards recognizing and valuing the inherent worth and rights of all individuals, irrespective of their background.

In the contemporary discourse on immigration, the view on immigration has shifted significantly towards it as an opportunity for growth, innovation, and cultural enrichment. This paradigm shift reflects a broader societal embrace of inclusivity that transcends mere racial diversity to encompass individuals from various backgrounds, including different sexual orientations and capabilities. Dominant codes, as Oswald articulates, gain widespread recognition and acceptance within society, shaping the mainstream narratives and consumer expectations. While previously immigration might have been framed as a crisis, the current narrative celebrates it as a catalyst for positive change, but always with the immigration emergency as an issue to be addressed and with a long way to go in order to be solved.

Egalitarianism is a belief or principle centered on the idea that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities. It stands in direct opposition to racism, which involves prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior. Egalitarianism advocates for the equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their racial, ethnic, or cultural background.

Addressing egalitarianism within the context of immigration is crucial due to the profound impact that immigration has on societal structures, norms, and values. Immigration, as a dynamic force, brings about significant social and cultural shifts, challenging existing paradigms of equality and inclusivity. As populations become more diverse due to the influx of immigrants from various backgrounds, the importance of embracing an egalitarian approach becomes paramount. This approach not only facilitates the integration of immigrants into their new communities but also enriches these societies by fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and equal opportunity for all. The principles of egalitarianism, when applied to immigration, advocate for the dismantling of barriers and the creation of equitable systems that recognize and celebrate diversity. By prioritizing equality, societies can better address the disparities and challenges faced by immigrant populations, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their origin, has access to the same opportunities for growth, success, and participation in civic life.

However, the journey towards achieving true egalitarianism in the context of immigration is underscored by the realities reflected in immigration and equality data. According to Statista, disparities in employment, education, and social integration rates among immigrant populations compared to native populations highlight the ongoing challenges in achieving equality. For instance, immigrant workers are often overrepresented in lower-paying, less secure jobs, and immigrant children may face educational gaps compared to their native peers. Such data underscore the urgency of addressing egalitarian principles within immigration policies and practices. By focusing on creating more inclusive societies that actively work to eliminate inequalities, we can ensure that the contributions of immigrants are valued and that their rights are protected.

3.5.4 The tension

The interplay between the principles of *egalitarianism* and the realities of the immigration emergency presents a complex tapestry of tension and synergy, both in modern society and throughout history. Egalitarianism, with its roots in the belief of equal worth and rights for all individuals, stands as a guiding principle that seeks to navigate and mitigate the challenges posed by immigration. Historically, waves of immigration have tested the resilience of egalitarian values, challenging societies to extend the principles of equality and fairness to new arrivals, often amidst resistance and controversy. The tension arises from the juxtaposition of idealistic aspirations of inclusivity against the pragmatic challenges of integrating diverse

populations, each bringing unique cultures, languages, and perspectives. This dynamic has played out across various epochs, from the early migrations that shaped the foundations of nations to the global movements of people witnessed today, driven by conflicts, economic disparities, and environmental changes.

In contemporary society, this tension is further accentuated by data that reveal disparities in the treatment and outcomes for immigrant populations. For instance, studies and reports, akin to those found on platforms like Statista, highlight significant gaps in employment rates³⁷ and access to education³⁸ between immigrant groups and native populations. These disparities underscore the ongoing struggle to actualize egalitarian principles in the face of complex immigration dynamics. The challenge is not merely one of policy but of societal attitudes and structures that can either facilitate or hinder the path towards genuine equality.

Addressing the tension between egalitarianism and immigration necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses policy reform, education, and community engagement. It requires an acknowledgment of the historical contexts that have shaped attitudes towards immigration and a commitment to forging a future where egalitarian principles are not just aspirational but are manifested in the lived reality of all individuals.

3.6 Semiotic analysis of the campaigns

In the forthcoming analysis, we will delve into the previously selected advertising campaigns employing a semiotic lens. This includes Budweiser's "Born The Hard Way," Benetton's "Migrants," Smirnoff's "Stay Open," and Jigsaw's "Love immigration." Moving forward, a more comprehensive and detailed examination of Budweiser's "Born the Hard Way" campaign will be undertaken. Given that this campaign is presented in video format, it allows for a richer analysis due to the abundance of cues and the extensive nature of the medium. Video provides a multifaceted canvas that captures a wide array of signals—visual, auditory, and narrative—offering a deeper insight into the storytelling techniques employed. On the other hand, it is also the selected advertising for my thesis that had the higher impressions from consumers.

The campaigns from Benetton, Jigsaw, and Smirnoff are also rich in narrative and thematic content, the analysis of these will be conducted with a comparative approach, using the Budweiser advertisement as a benchmark. This comparative methodology will not only highlight the unique aspects of each campaign but will also allow for a nuanced understanding of how different brands utilize storytelling within their advertising strategies.

³⁷ Source:

<https://www.statista.com/chart/31268/unemployment-rate-gap-between-migrants-and-the-native-born-population-in-selected-oecd-countries/>

³⁸ Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1416885/difference-reading-performance-immigrant-inequality/>

When analyzing advertising campaigns, it's crucial to consider the format and medium through which their message is conveyed, as this significantly influences the methods used for analysis. In this context, examining campaigns like Benetton's "Migrants," Smirnoff's "Stay Open," and Jigsaw's "Love Immigration" requires a different approach compared to analyzing a campaign like Budweiser's "Born the Hard Way." This is because the former campaigns do not primarily utilize video formats as their main advertising tools, thus making them unsuitable for analysis under a technical breakdown sheet that focuses on video-specific elements such as cinematography, editing, sound, and visual effects.

The framework for the “Born The Hard Way” spot dissection is developed by the technical breakdown sheet proposed by Peverini (2012), which aids in pinpointing salient units and elements within the advertisement's narrative. This is the only advertising of the above mentioned analyzed in this manner as it is in video format. The methodology involves segmenting the campaign into sequences, facilitating a detailed examination. By utilizing a systematic grid, we ensure a meticulous observation and cataloging of all components that play a strategic role in reinforcing the brand's messaging.

| #Sequence | Duration | Visual Column | Soundtrack | Notes |
|-------------------|--------------------|---|---|-------|
| 1,2,...,n-1, n | 0:00,...,t -1,1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of the content - Movement of the MDP (Moving Picture) - Width of the shot - Angle of shooting - Depth of field and focus - Lighting - Color - Internal composition of the frame - Graphic elements - Transition modes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noises (intensity, origin, movement) - Spoken (intensity, origin, movement) - Music (intensity, origin, movement) | |

The Budweiser advertisement is dissected into its constituent segments. A segment, or sequence, is defined as a narrative block composed of multiple scenes put together by a unified action or theme. We will document the duration of each scene, along with a "visual column" that encapsulates an in-depth description of the scene's content, frame dimensions, and camera angles. This includes noting predominant color schemes and lighting techniques.

Critical to the impact of a commercial is the orchestration of various elements—such as editing, choice of actors, music, and the interplay of perspectives and camera movements—which collectively establish the advert's ambiance.

Furthermore, each segment's soundtrack will be identified, detailing the type of sound, its use within the scene, and any other relevant observations. Following the analytical dissection, we will shift to a reflective mode to discern how these elements generate meaning and effectively advocate for the product and concept in question.

3.6.1 Born the hard way - Budweiser

Commercial Introduction

The Budweiser commercial titled "Born The Hard Way" emerged as a pivotal narrative during the Super Bowl LI telecast, marking its inception in the arena of public discourse even prior to the game's commencement. This particular spot transcended the traditional confines of advertising, evolving into a cultural statement. Within a mere 24 hours following its release, it garnered over 2.5 million views, a number that exponentially grew to 21.7 million within the first 72 hours, reflecting a monumental reach by any standard. The advertisement's resonance was not confined to its viewership; it elicited a kaleidoscope of reactions across the social media landscape. At a time when the nation's political climate was particularly volatile, especially concerning immigration policies, "Born The Hard Way" was perceived by many as a poignant reminder of America's foundational ethos as a nation built by immigrants. This sentiment was championed by influential voices, including Ellen DeGeneres, who referred to the ad for acknowledging the essence of America as a land of freedom and opportunity.

On the flip side, the commercial also sparked controversy among a segment of the population aligned with the then President Trump's stringent immigration policies. The divisive nature of the political context at the time was reflected in the call by some Budweiser consumers for a boycott of the brand and its parent company, Anheuser-Busch, citing disapproval of the advertisement's thematic undercurrents. In the competitive advertising showcase of the Super Bowl, Anheuser-Busch's commitment was unmistakable, securing the spot as the top advertiser with a significant investment of three minutes and thirty seconds of airtime—a testament to their belief in the message and potential impact of their campaign. The brand's strategic move was validated as data from ISpot.tv, a measurement firm utilizing analytics from 10 million connected TV sets, indicated that Budweiser captured the largest share of digital voice amongst all Super Bowl advertisers. This metric signifies the extent of digital engagement and conversations generated by the advertisement, further cementing its status as a commercial that not only sold a product but also sparked a nationwide dialogue.

Commercial Technical Breakdown

Below is the datasheet describing the analytical breakdown of the "Born the Hard Way"³⁹ spot.

³⁹ Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZmlRtpzwos>

| #Sequence | Duration | Visual Column | Soundtrack | Notes |
|-----------|----------------|--|---|---|
| 1 | 0:00 - 0:03 | <p>- Content description: We see a man in the center of the frame at a bar looking down in what seems like a background from older times that we can imagine is a traditional bar. I'm going to call this man the "protagonist". We can see is not modern times based on the illumination from the background (old lanterns), paintings and photographs hanging on the wall behind and the man standing besides him speaking to him that has a style (type of mustache and hairstyle) that men used to have in the 1850's. At the end we see the protagonist looking at the front as if he is thinking about something.</p> <p>- Movement of the MDP (Moving Picture) - the camera slowly moves closer to the man that we can assume is the protagonist of a story that is about to be told.</p> <p>- Angle of shooting: Focus on the protagonist.</p> <p>- Lighting: Obscure.</p> <p>- Color: Black colors.</p> | <p>- Spoken: We hear the man besides the protagonist speaking to him at what seems the beginning of a conversation: "You don't look from around here".</p> <p>- Music: Background intense music as if something's about to occur.</p> | |
| 2 | 0:04 - 0:14 | <p>- Content description: We see the protagonist in the bottom part of a moving boat, in dirty clothes, writing in a small book. Then we see him violently fall to a side along objects in the boat as it goes over a big wave in the ocean. Then we see him with another man stitching a wound on the face of the protagonist that we can assume is the result of the fall we previously saw.</p> | <p>- Spoken: We hear the man stitching the protagonist' would tell him "Why leave Germany?", to which the protagonist responds "I</p> | We see the translation script of the man stitching the wound as he is speaking in german. |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | | - Lighting: Obscure. | want to brew beer”. - Music: Background intense music continues. | |
| 3 | 0:15 - 0:22 | - Content description: We see what appears to be the protagonist's passport being stamped by an immigration officer upon arrival by boat. The protagonist looks at the stamp and grips his passport with a half-smile, pleased to have arrived. Then, we watch as he begins to walk through the dusty streets of the United States, facing disapproving glances and physical assaults from passersby. - Lighting: Sunny. | - Spoken: We hear the immigration officer telling the protagonist “Welcome to America”. Then we hear the people on the streets that hit him as he walks yelling at him: “We don’t want you here!” and “Go back home!” - Music: Background intense music continues. | People has an american accent |
| 4 | 0:23 - 0:27 | - Content description: We see what appears to be an engine of a boat, followed by the protagonist sitting on a boat still traveling, with the book we saw in the second sequence in his hand. He is sitting beside a person of color, that we can assume by the context is another immigrant, they both look at each other and smile, then look ahead. - Lighting: Light but not sunny. | - Noise: the engine of the boat. - Music: Background intense music continues. | |
| 5 | 0:28 - 0:33 | - Content description: We see the silhouette of a man screaming and fire in | - Spoken: We hear the man in | |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|--|--|
| | | <p>the back of the scene. Then we see people jumping from a boat in flames to the water. Then we see the protagonist emerging from the water to breathe, struggling.</p> <p>- Lighting: Obscure.</p> | <p>the silhouette screaming: “Abandon ship”.</p> <p>- Music: Background intense music continues.</p> | |
| 6 | 0:34 - 0:38 | <p>- Content description: We see people walking through a grassy field with a gray sky in the background. Then, we see the protagonist as part of the group, walking and shielding himself from the cold. Next, we see him in a boat that someone is rowing forward, looking at his notebook, which we saw in the second and fourth sequences. He is seated among other individuals of various racial features, whom we can assume are also immigrants.</p> <p>- Lighting: Obscure.</p> | <p>- Noise: we hear the rain at the beginning of the scene</p> <p>- Music: Background intense music continues.</p> | |
| 7 | 0:39 - 0:41 | <p>- Content description: We see the protagonist arriving in what seems like a town in a foggy atmosphere. He walks in the mud. He walks among the people that seem to be locals. Then we see him looking ahead.</p> | <p>- Spoken: We hear a man speaking to the protagonist: “Welcome to St. Louis, son”.</p> <p>- Music: Background intense music continues.</p> | |
| 8 | 0:42 - 0:52 | <p>- Content description: We see the protagonist in the same setting as in the first sequence, as if he has just finished recalling his entire story that we've witnessed. The man beside him, observed in the first scene and assumed to be a local due to his well-groomed</p> | <p>- Spoken: The American man says to the bartender: “Beer for my friend, please”.</p> <p>The protagonist</p> | |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|--|--|--|
| | | <p>appearance and period-appropriate American style, appears to engage the bartender and orders a beer for the protagonist. The protagonist looks on, seemingly surprised by the act of kindness, glances at the man, and expresses his gratitude. In the next shot, both men are seen from the back, centered in the frame. The protagonist tells the man that next time, they will drink the beer noted in his notebook, the same one we saw in earlier sequences, revealing his plans to create his own beer, referenced in the second sequence. We can see the protagonist's book in more detail now and we can recognise the drawing of a beer bottle with the Budweiser logo in it! Next to it we can see the logo in a bigger size. The man who offered the beer introduces himself by name and extends his hand for a handshake. The protagonist introduces himself in return, and the two men shake hands while exchanging looks.</p> <p>- Lighting: lights from the bar but we see the sun entering from the window.</p> | <p>says to the american man: "Thank you", then he says: "But next time, this is the beer we drink" The American man replies introducing himself: "Eberhard Anheuser" The protagonist introduces himself as well: "Adolphus Busch".</p> <p>- Music: Background intense music continues.</p> | |
| 9 | 0:53 - 1:00 | <p>- Content description: We see the two last names of the American man and the protagonist in red letters and a white background, "Anheuser-Busch". Then we see the sentence "When Nothing Stops Your Dream, This Is The Beer We Drink" below the last names. Finally the sentence disappears and in its place we see "Budweiser".</p> | <p>- Music: Background intense music continues.</p> | |

Commercial Analysis

As anticipated at the beginning of this section, the semiotic analysis involves the decomposition of the spot into sequences.

Overall, the brand tells the emotional immigration story of a German man who, only at the end of the commercial, is revealed to be one of the founders of Budweiser beer. It is not until the conclusion that we see him meet his American partner, with whom he would eventually establish the company we now know today as Budweiser.

The *first sequence (0.00–0.03)*, sets the stage with an air of anticipation and a compellingly intense atmosphere, the scene opens on a man, whom we'll refer to as the "protagonist," positioned centrally within the frame of a bar. This setting, steeped in the ambiance of the soft glow of old lanterns, alongside paintings and photographs adorning the walls, all reminiscent of the 1850s. This era is further evoked by the presence of another man beside our protagonist, his style—characterized by a particular type of mustache and hairstyle—echoing the period's fashion. As the camera subtly zooms in, emphasizing our protagonist's thoughtful gaze directed forward, it's clear he's lost in his thoughts, looking tired. We can see the protagonist has long hair and a beard of someone who hasn't shaved or cut their hair in a while.



Image 9: Frame from section one

In the *second sequence (0.04 - 0.14)* the narrative deepens as we transition to a scene set in the lower deck of a moving boat. Here, the protagonist, clad in soiled garments, is engrossed in jotting down thoughts in a small book. Suddenly, the tranquility is shattered as he, along with other objects, is violently thrown to one side by a massive wave crashing over the boat. The aftermath of this tumultuous moment is captured in a subsequent scene, where we find him alongside another individual who is stitching a wound on his face. Throughout these moments, the use of obscure lighting and predominantly black colors not only enhances the overall mood of mystery and intensity but also captures the viewer's attention, as we want to know how the story will develop.



Image 10: Frame from section two

In the *third sequence* (0.15 - 0.22) we are presented with a moment of contrast that poignantly reflects the dichotomy of the immigrant experience in America. The sequence begins on a note of official acceptance and a semblance of welcome, as evidenced by the immigration officer stamping the protagonist's passport upon his arrival by boat. The sunlight bathes the scene in a warm glow, symbolizing hope and a promising new start for the protagonist, who holds his passport with a half-smile, a tangible sign of his relief and satisfaction at having reached his destination. This moment of validation is underscored by the officer's welcoming words, "Welcome to America," serving as an official endorsement of his arrival and the opportunities that lie ahead. However, as the protagonist ventures into the streets of the United States, the narrative takes a dramatic turn. The disapproving glances and outright physical assaults from passersby and hostile exclamations, "We don't want you here!" and "Go back home!" vividly encapsulates the protagonist's encounter with the dual facets of his new environment: governmental acceptance versus societal rejection.

This sequence masterfully conveys the nuanced complexities of immigration, capturing the protagonist's initial moment of acceptance and hope under the sunny skies, only to confront him with the chilling reality of societal hostility.



Image 11: Frame from section three

In the *fourth sequence* (0.23 - 0.27) the narrative deepens, revealing the shared journey of immigrants bound for America. The scene opens with a glimpse of what appears to be a boat's engine, setting the stage for a journey. As the camera pans, we find our protagonist seated on the boat, the same book we encountered earlier in his grasp, symbolizing continuity and the persistence of his dream. Beside him sits a person of color, their presence underlined by the context as another hopeful immigrant. The two exchange smiles, a simple yet profound gesture that transcends words, encapsulating a shared experience of hope, resilience, and the unspoken hardships of their journey. This mutual recognition signifies not just their individual aspirations but the collective experience of countless others venturing towards the promise of America. The scene beautifully captures the essence of complicity among immigrants, a bond forged in shared struggles and dreams, highlighting that despite the diversity of their origins, the challenges they face are universal.



Image 12: Frame from section four

In the *fifth sequence* (0.28 - 0.33) the narrative takes a dramatic turn, with a scene of desperation and survival in chaos. Initially, the audience is presented with a striking image: the silhouette of a man screaming, and fire in the background. A boat in flames, representing both literal and metaphorical challenges, force the passengers to make a life-threatening decision. We see people leaping from the burning boat into the relative safety of the water below. This act, while a desperate escape, underscores the dire situations that push individuals to the brink in their quest for a new beginning. The focus then shifts to the protagonist, who emerges from the depths, gasping for air. This moment of re-emergence is laden with symbolism of the immigrant experience, portraying the protagonist's resilience and will to survive amidst overwhelming odds. The sequence not only heightens the narrative's emotional intensity but also serves as a stark reminder of the physical and metaphorical battles endured by those who seek a new life in a distant land.



Image 13: Frame from section five

In the *sixth sequence* (0:34 - 0:38) we are presented with a group of people navigating their way across a field, and a gray rainy sky over their journey. Among them is our protagonist. Wrapped against the biting cold, his figure embodies the physical and metaphorical challenges that lie on the path to a new beginning. As the scene transitions, we find the protagonist aboard a modest boat with other immigrants signifying the collective effort required to move towards hopeful shores. The protagonist, focusing in his notebook—a recurring symbol of his dreams and plans for the future—is an evidence of his focus amidst the chaos of migration. Surrounding him are individuals of diverse racial backgrounds, each with their own stories. Their presence on the boat symbolizes not only the physical journey across waters but also the crossing of cultural and historical backgrounds.



Image 14: Frame from section sixth

In the *seventh sequence* (0:39 - 0:41) the protagonist arrives in a foggy town, metaphorically representing the unclear future and challenges that lie ahead. Then, the scene shifts to a moment of interaction that interrupts the solitude of the protagonist's journey. A man tells him: "Welcome to St. Louis, son." This greeting, simple yet profound, marks a significant moment of acceptance and belonging. It signifies the protagonist's transition from an outsider to someone recognized by the community.



Image 15: Frame from section seventh

In the concluding *eight sequence* (0:42 - 0:52) the narrative comes full circle, returning us to the initial setting. As we revisit the bar, the protagonist experiences a gesture of camaraderie from the well-dressed local man beside him. This act of ordering a beer for the protagonist not only signifies acceptance but also the beginning of a significant partnership. The protagonist's

surprise and gratitude upon receiving the beer are palpable, marking a moment of transition from stranger to friend. This exchange, simple yet profound, is elevated as the protagonist shares his vision of the future—a future where they would toast with a beer of his own making, as hinted at in his notebook. The revelation of the Budweiser logo alongside his plans adds a layer of anticipation and excitement, bridging his past aspirations with the reality of his present, and our present.

As the camera frames both men from the back, centered and united in their purpose, the protagonist's suggestion of "next time" becomes a pivotal moment, symbolizing not just the sharing of a drink but the sharing of a dream. The introduction of the American man as Eberhard Anheuser and the protagonist as Adolphus Busch cements the historical foundation of their partnership, and the beginning of the Brand. Their handshake it's the symbol of co-founders embarking on a venture that will become synonymous with American brewing excellence, Budweiser.

This sequence, rich in symbolism and historical nods, not only closes the narrative loop but also opens the door to the legacy of Budweiser—a legacy built on dreams, perseverance, and the shared vision of two men, Adolphus Busch and Eberhard Anheuser, whose partnership would leave an indelible mark on the American landscape.



Image 16: Frame from section eight

In the final *ninth sequence* (0:53 - 1:00), the essence of the narrative and the birth of an iconic brand are encapsulated through powerful imagery and text. The presentation of the two last names, "Anheuser-Busch," set against a crisp white background and rendered in bold red letters, immediately draws the viewer's attention.

Beneath the names, the sentence “When Nothing Stops Your Dream, This Is The Beer We Drink” emerges, as the perseverance, ambition, and vision shared by the founders. This statement goes beyond mere advertising; it encapsulates the spirit of the brand and what drove Busch and Anheuser to overcome obstacles and realize their dream of creating a beer that would become Budweiser. The sentence fades, making way for the bold, iconic “Budweiser” logo. This closing sequence, with its clear and impactful visual storytelling, effectively communicates the foundational story of Anheuser-Busch and Budweiser. It leaves the viewer with a lasting impression of the brand's heritage, rooted in the unyielding pursuit of a dream and the creation of a beer that has become synonymous with moments of camaraderie, celebration, and perseverance between two people of different cultures and backgrounds, finding a common ground in beer.



Image 17: Frame from section ninth

3.6.2 Migrants - Benetton

Benetton's campaign on immigration, spanning over three decades, serves as a vivid illustration of the brand's commitment to weaving social issues into the fabric of its identity, underlining the intricate relationship between migration and art. The campaign, driven by the artistic and editorial vision of Oliviero Toscani and Tibor Kalman, leveraged the power of provocative imagery to spark conversation and reflection on the pressing issue of immigration. The utilization of a striking Associated Press photograph depicting Albanian refugees in desperate flight, and other similarly impactful images, marked a bold departure from traditional fashion advertising. These images, devoid of any Benetton clothing, were chosen not for their commercial appeal but for their ability to convey a powerful message about the human condition, thereby transforming the brand into a platform for social commentary. Specifically we want to analyze in this section the commercial ad “migrants” published in 2018.

The advertisement, which primarily featured two images, was shared on the retailer's Twitter page and appeared in print within the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, displaying the United Colors of Benetton logo. The image shown below was taken down from Twitter following a surge in critical responses.



Image 18: Image of the campaign “Migrants” by Benetton⁴⁰

The image depicts a scene of migrants, tightly packed on a small vessel, many wearing bright orange life vests. It captures a moment of crisis or rescue at sea, with one figure standing, possibly a rescuer, overseeing the situation. The image is evocative and emotionally charged, aligning with the description of Benetton's advertising campaigns, which are known for their provocative and often controversial content.

Given the context of Benetton's campaign, this image is likely intended to evoke a response that is not just about the plight of migrants but also about the broader issues of immigration, diversity, and inclusion. It challenges the viewer to confront harsh realities. It presents the brand as a proponent of a more accepting and interconnected world, aiming to resonate on a deeply emotional level with a global audience. This approach of aligning brand identity with social activism is bold and can be polarizing, but it also allows consumers to engage with the brand on a moral and intellectual level. It invites them to make purchasing choices that reflect

⁴⁰ Source: Yeginsu, Ceylan. “Benetton “Migrants” Ads Draw Outrage for Using Photos of Real Migrants.” *The New York Times*, 21 June 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/world/europe/benetton-ad-migrants.html.

their values, thus positioning Benetton not just as a seller of clothes but as a participant in social discourse, and this became a central characteristic of its brand identity.

The collaboration between Toscani and Kalman, and their decision to use compelling photojournalism as the centerpiece of Benetton's advertising strategy, underscored the brand's dedication to raising awareness about global social issues. This decision to prioritize message over merchandise invited viewers to engage with the brand on a moral and intellectual level, offering consumers the opportunity to align their purchasing choices with their values. Despite facing backlash and government bans, Benetton's unwavering stance on immigration and its commitment to using its platform for advocacy rather than mere commercial gain remain defining characteristics of the brand's identity. Through its bold and unconventional campaigns, Benetton has not only highlighted the complexities of immigration but has also stood as a testament to the power of brands to influence public discourse and effect social change.

3.6.3 Global Art Street Project during Heritage Month - Smirnoff

The Smirnoff Global Street Art Project, in alignment with the celebration of Immigrant Heritage Month, offers a lens into the brand's engagement with issues of immigration and inclusivity through the medium of street art. The campaign was launched in the United States during June, which is designated as Immigrant Heritage Month, to highlight and share the diverse stories of American immigration.

The collaboration with Los Angeles street artist Morley brought a personal and humanizing element to the campaign. Morley is known for his work that features his own image alongside messages that encourage the viewer to connect with the humanity of various social issues, including immigration.



Image 19: Image of the The Smirnoff Global Street Art Project campaign⁴¹

The artwork, depicted in the image above, was published as physical posters and displayed in public spaces – specifically, on bus shelters throughout Los Angeles. This approach to using public spaces for art installations ensures high visibility and accessibility to a wide audience, facilitating public engagement with the themes presented. The posters in the image communicate messages of hope, struggle, and unity. They are designed to be eye-catching and thought-provoking, with bold colors and straightforward text that make the messages easily readable and impactful to passersby. Each poster carries a distinct message:

1. *"Our hope spans the miles between us"* - This could signify the emotional distance that immigrants feel from their homeland and loved ones, and the enduring hope that connects them across that divide.
2. *"A dream untested is easily punctured"* - This suggests the vulnerability of immigrant aspirations and the need to challenge and realize them to avoid the loss of potential.

⁴¹ Source: Kim, Matt. "Morley and Smirnoff Launch L.A. Street Art Campaign for Immigration." *Inverse*, 13 July 2016, www.inverse.com/article/18148-morley-smirnoff-street-art-immigration.

3. *"May our tears be made of gasoline to keep us going"* - This is a poetic expression of resilience, implying that the hardships faced by immigrants (symbolized by tears) fuel their determination and progress.

4. *"Some homes are made of memory"* - This reflects on the concept of home for immigrants being not just a physical place but also an assemblage of memories and experiences from their past.

Morley's involvement underscores a meaningful engagement with the topic, as he sought out real stories of immigration to inspire his art, thus bridging the gap between the individual experiences of immigrants and the public's perception of them. By featuring his own likeness in the posters, Morley creates a direct and personal connection with the viewer, inviting them to engage with the subject matter on a more personal level. The campaign's distribution strategy, involving public bus shelters and a prominent display in Venice Beach, targeted high-traffic areas to maximize the campaign's reach and influence. This physical mode of display is particularly effective in the context of a discussion about immigration because it occupies the same urban spaces that immigrants themselves would navigate daily.

3.5.4 Love Immigration - Jigsaw

The Jigsaw brand's "Love Immigration" campaign emerged as a bold statement within the context of post-Brexit Britain, a time characterized by intense debate over national identity, immigration, and the UK's place in the world. As a response to the rising sentiment against immigration, Jigsaw's campaign can be seen as part of a broader trend within the fashion industry to address and counteract social and political issues, leveraging its visibility to promote a message of inclusivity and diversity, as previously stated from Benetton.

The Independent⁴² and The Guardian⁴³ both emphasize the campaign's aim to provoke thought and initiate dialogue around the positive impacts of immigration. Jigsaw published its "Love Immigration" campaign in a high-visibility format at one of London's most frequented locations, Oxford Circus Tube Station. This "takeover" of such a central spot ensured a wide audience. The campaign also gained traction on social media platforms, where it was met with positive reactions from the public, as reported by The Independent. The campaign included shop windows and billboards adorned with posters stating "♥ immigration." This visual

⁴² Source: Fiatherstone, Emma. "Jigsaw Just Released an Ad Celebrating Immigration after the Brexit-Vote." *The Independent*, 13 Oct. 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/jigsaw-immigration-new-campaign-celebration-british-values-style-high-street-fashion-brand-a7999256.html.

⁴³ Source: Wood, Zoe. "The Fashion World Speaks Out: "without Immigration, We'd Be Selling Potato Sacks."" *The Guardian*, 14 Oct. 2017, www.theguardian.com/fashion/2017/oct/14/fashion-world-immigration-migrant-workers.

strategy was not only meant to catch the eye but also to stimulate conversation and reflection among the viewers.

As reported by The Independent, Peter Ruis, Jigsaw's CEO, underlined that fashion is not isolated from the broader societal context and that it would be insincere to ignore the contribution of immigration to the industry, as well as to Britain's culture and economy. He made it clear that Jigsaw's campaign was a celebration of this contribution and a statement against the demonization of immigrants.

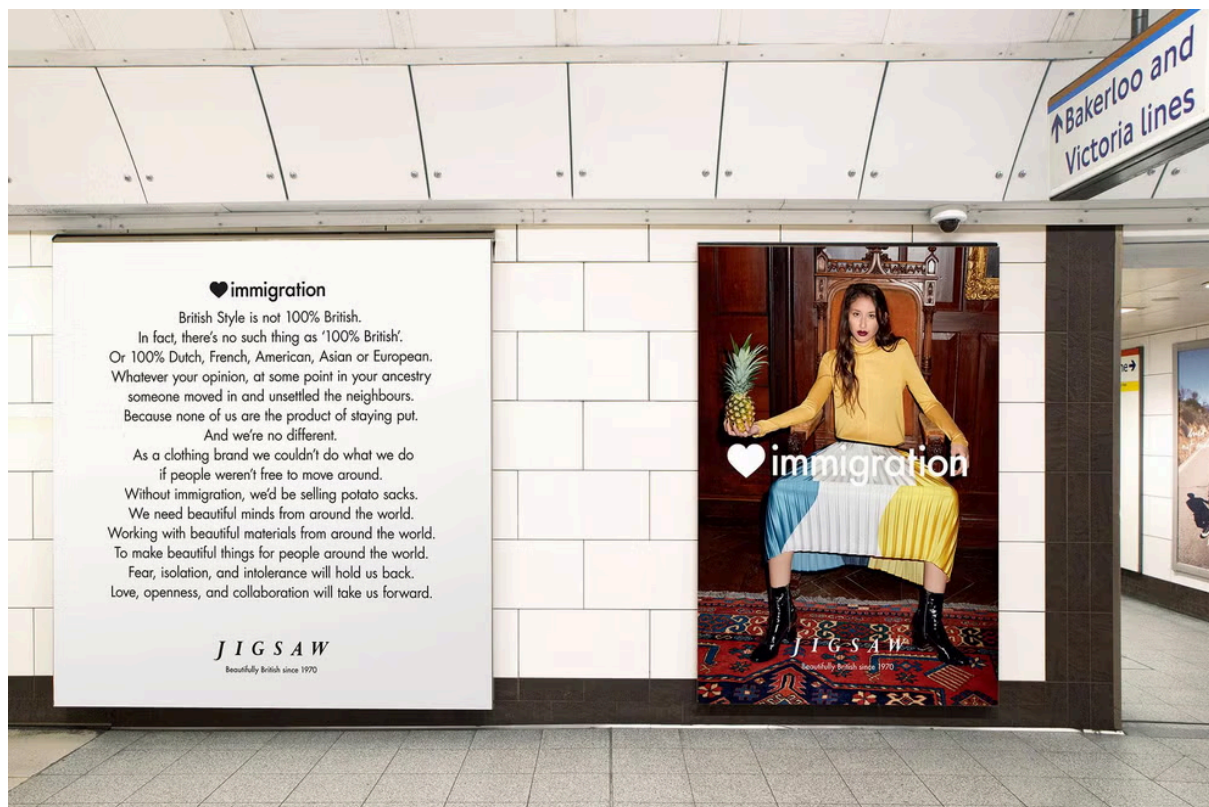


Image 20: Image of an ad from the campaign “<3 immigration” by Jigsaw⁴⁴

As we can see in the image above, the campaign featured models from diverse ethnic backgrounds wearing clothing from Jigsaw's Autumn/Winter 2017 collection, which was sourced and manufactured in 16 countries, highlighting the global interconnectivity of the fashion industry. The posters included models alongside the statement below, celebrating immigration, pointing out the international origins of the clothing materials and the multinational workforce behind the brand, as mentioned in the Daily Mail⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Source:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/jigsaw-immigration-new-campaign-celebration-british-values-style-high-street-fashion-brand-a7999256.html>

⁴⁵ Tingle, Rory. “UK Fashion Chain Jigsaw Praises Immigration in New Ad Campaign.” *Mail Online*, 12 Oct. 2017, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4974304/Jigsaw-gets-political-campaign-praising-immigration.html.

“❤️ immigration

British Style is not 100% British.

In fact, there's no such thing as '100% British'.

Or 100% Dutch, French, American, Asian or European.

Whatever your opinion, at some point in your ancestry

someone moved in and unsettled the neighbours.

Because none of us are the product of staying put.

And we're no different.

As a clothing brand we couldn't do what we do

if people weren't free to move around.

Without immigration, we'd be selling potato sacks.

We need beautiful minds from around the world.

Working with beautiful materials from around the world.

To make beautiful things for people around the world.

Fear, isolation, and intolerance will hold us back.

Love, openness, and collaboration will take us forward.

J I G S A W

Beautifully British since 1970”

The "Love Immigration" campaign by Jigsaw serves as a counter-narrative to the increasing anti-immigration rhetoric post-Brexit and the election of Donald Trump. By emphasizing that British style is not "100% British," Jigsaw challenges the notion that immigration dilutes national identity. Instead, the brand posits that immigration enriches and is an integral part of British culture and, by extension, British fashion.

By partnering with Ancestry.co.uk, as reported by The Independent and Daily Mail, Jigsaw not only supported its message through advertising but also through action, offering their staff

genealogy tests. This move was symbolic, showing that Britain's genetic diversity is vast and that pure "Britishness" is a myth—hence reinforcing the campaign's message that immigration is woven into the very fabric of the nation's identity. Jigsaw's campaign stands as a testament of brand activism to address and influence public discourse on critical issues like immigration. The campaign had positive reception, particularly on social media and by public figures such as London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

3.7 The Semio-Narrative Level

In this section, we will apply the actantial model to further analyze the Budweiser commercial "Born the Hard Way." This approach is particularly pertinent as the commercial employs storytelling—a powerful tool in branding. The narrative arc of the advertisement chronicles the journey of Adolphus Busch, the founder of Budweiser, as he travels to America to pursue his dream of brewing beer. This story is instrumental in forging an emotional connection with the viewer, aligning with the concept that storytelling in branding serves as a means to craft a specific brand image, imbue values, and foster an emotional bond with consumers, as noted by previous literature.

Storytelling transcends mere product promotion, evolving from functional attributes to engaging emotions and enhancing brand visibility, recall, and emotional involvement. It aligns with how consumers process information, as human memory is inherently narrative-based. Moreover, storytelling enables consumers to construct and communicate their identities through the brands they associate with. While storytelling does not possess a standalone methodology, it draws from narratology and semiotics, providing a rich analytical framework.

The Budweiser commercial exemplifies the elements of effective storytelling outlined by Vincent (2002)—plot, characters, themes, aesthetics, and emotional impact—showcasing characters who confront and surmount formidable challenges to achieve their dreams. Furthermore, according to Fog et al. (2005), a compelling brand narrative should incorporate a message, conflict, characters, and plot, all while being entertaining, accessible, and emotive, and conveying the brand's core values. These elements are vividly present in "Born the Hard Way," making the actantial model an apt lens for dissecting and understanding the commercial's narrative and its impact on the brand's storytelling efficacy.

3.7.1 Actantial Model

When we look at stories a bit more deeply, we run into the idea of actants. Actants represent the abstract roles or functions within a story, distinguished from characters in that they are not limited to individuals with agency or personality. In semiotics, an actant is a syntactic function

that participates in the action, irrespective of whether it is embodied by a person, an object, an animal, or even an ideational value. This conceptualization allows for a broader understanding of narrative dynamics, transcending the anthropomorphic limitations traditionally associated with characters. Actants are essential in defining the story's architecture, as their interactions and relationships are critical for the narrative's cohesion and development.

In this model, we encounter six elements that combine to shape narratives:

- Subject – The receiver after he has accepted to perform the task
- Object – Is always the objective and the goal of the subject
- Opponent – The obstacles that try to prevent the subject from achieving the object
- Helper – The one who or the thing that helps the subject
- Sender – The one who or the thing assigning the task
- Receiver – Is the one who effectively receives the task

The actantial model is the core and abstract structure common to all selected campaigns. I chose to develop this analysis in order to identify the core values of the advertising, and the commonalities found.

Budweiser

The Budweiser story as analyzed in the prior section can be broken down into the actantial model as follows:

1. Subject

In the narrative, Busch is the actant who takes on the task; he is the driving force of the story. He's the protagonist who we follow from the beginning, as he arrives in America with a dream and the determination to fulfill it.

2. Object

The object of the subject is to create a unique beer, Budweiser, which represents his personal ambition and the physical representation of his dream. This is illustrated by his notebook filled with plans and the eventual revelation of the Budweiser logo.

3. Opponent

The opponents in this narrative are the various challenges that Busch faces, which include the societal hostility towards immigrants, the physical journey, and the struggle to establish himself in a new country. These obstacles try to prevent him from achieving his goal of creating Budweiser. The opponents of the campaign are people opposing immigration in America, in the middle of the political tensions between Trump's supporters and people against his politics.

4. Helper

Helpers in this story are those who assist Busch in achieving his goal. This includes Eberhard Anheuser, who partners with him, and potentially other immigrants and characters who show kindness, like the immigration officer and the man who welcomes him to St. Louis. These helpers provide support and assistance that Busch needs to overcome the obstacles he faces.

5. Sender

The founder (the “protagonist”) serves as the Sender. He decides to embark on a quest for self-realization and portrays the message of inclusivity and bravery the commercial is trying to communicate.

6. Receiver

The receiver of the task is once again Busch himself. He accepts to perform the action that is to create a unique beer, with all of the obstacles and effort that this implies.

Comparative Analysis between campaigns

This section compares Budweiser's narrative strategy with those employed by Benetton, Smirnoff, and Jigsaw in their respective advertising campaigns, under the actantial model point of view. Each brand utilizes the actantial model's roles in diverse ways to engage with immigration and audience perceptions. This comparative analysis aims to highlight how the different brands leverage narrative elements to convey messages addressing immigration. While Budweiser and Jigsaw focus on the historical and cultural contributions of immigrants, Benetton and Smirnoff highlight contemporary social issues and the celebration of diversity.

Budweiser's narrative centers around Adolphus Busch, an immigrant embodying the pursuit of the American Dream, which humanizes the brand and aligns it with perseverance and success. Benetton, on the other hand, positions itself as a provocateur, seeking to ignite conversation on the migrant crisis through thought-provoking imagery. Smirnoff champions diversity and inclusivity, portraying itself as an advocate for the blending of cultures. Similarly, Jigsaw takes on the role of a promoter for the positive impact of immigration on British fashion, using its platform to challenge and reshape perceptions.

Regarding the object we can observe a common ground but through different approaches in all four brands. Budweiser focuses on creating a unifying product that symbolizes the contribution of immigrants to American culture. Benetton aims to provoke discussion and awareness around the migrant crisis, reinforcing its image as a socially conscious brand. Smirnoff seeks to promote social mixing and the celebration of diversity as core values, encouraging societal acceptance. Jigsaw's objective is to challenge negative attitudes towards immigration, emphasizing its enriching effect on British style and identity.

The Opponent Role is similar for the analyzed brands. Budweiser addresses societal hostility towards immigrants, reflecting broader historical and contemporary struggles. Benetton faces criticism for potentially exploiting sensitive issues for commercial gain, highlighting the delicate balance between social commentary and commercial interests. Smirnoff and Jigsaw combat societal prejudices and negative attitudes, whether they stem from cultural barriers or political sentiments, like those surrounding Brexit.

The Helper Role for Budweiser, its individuals like Eberhard Anheuser and supportive communities. In Benetton's case, while less explicitly defined, it includes those who align with the brand's social vision. Smirnoff's helpers are the diverse individuals and consumers who resonate with its message, while Jigsaw finds allies in multicultural communities and customers who share its values.

The Sender Role reflects the initiators of these campaigns, from Budweiser's use of its own heritage to convey a message of inclusivity to Benetton and Smirnoff's marketing teams, who aim to provoke thought and celebrate diversity. Jigsaw is driven by its brand philosophy and the cultural and economic arguments supporting immigration.

The Receiver Role, finally, encompasses the audiences these campaigns target. Each brand aims to influence perceptions, stimulate discussion, or encourage acceptance and appreciation of diversity and the contributions of immigrants. This role is crucial as it reflects the broader societal impact these narratives aspire to achieve, highlighting the power of advertising in shaping public discourse on immigration.

The examined campaigns demonstrate a strategic use of narrative roles and semiotic resources to engage with the subject of immigration, reflecting and potentially shaping societal values and attitudes. This comparative analysis underscores the significance of narrative and semiotic approaches in understanding how advertising intersects with cultural and social discourses, in the context of immigration.

3.6.2 The Canonical Narrative Scheme

The canonical narrative scheme offers a structured approach to storytelling that engages audiences by unfolding the plot through four distinct phases: manipulation, competence, performance, and sanction. This method crafts a narrative journey that not only entertains but also conveys deeper messages and values, thus resonating with the audience on a meaningful level.

1. Manipulation: marks the story's commencement, featuring an instigating event or influence where a sender persuades the protagonist to embark on a journey or change their course of

action. This persuasion is achieved through strategic appeals that motivate the protagonist to pursue a new path, setting the narrative in motion.

2. Competence: sees the protagonist being challenged to acquire or demonstrate new skills and emotional resilience. This development phase is crucial for preparing the hero for the trials ahead, signifying growth and readiness to face forthcoming obstacles.

3. Performance: involves the protagonist actively pursuing their goals, confronting challenges, and striving to achieve something of value, such as addressing wrongdoing or injustice. This phase showcases the hero's application of their skills and determination in pursuit of their objective.

4. Sanction: culminates the narrative with the protagonist receiving recognition or validation from the community or society at large. This acknowledgment not only celebrates the hero's achievements and efforts to rectify an injustice but also elevates their social standing, reinforcing the story's moral or message.

By integrating these elements—manipulation, competence, performance, and sanction—into its narrative framework, a brand can effectively communicate its core values and positioning. This storytelling strategy enables the brand to stand out, fostering a unique identity that appeals to consumers who value authenticity and social responsibility, thereby enhancing the brand's appeal and market differentiation.

Budweiser

1. Manipulation:

The manipulation phase in the Budweiser commercial can be seen in the depiction of Adolphus Busch's journey and the struggles he faces upon his arrival in America. The sender Adolphus Busch himself, as identified in the Actantial model previously, embarks on a journey to fulfill his dreams, as the narrative aims to persuade the audience to align with the brand's values of perseverance, dreams, and the positive role of immigrants.

2. Competence:

Competence is depicted through Busch's development of skills and resilience. As he faces challenges, his competence grows, illustrating not only his ability to brew beer but also his emotional strength and adaptability. The commercial highlights how he acquires the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue his dream, despite the hostility and hardships he encounters.

3. Performance:

The performance aspect is shown through the actions that Busch takes to realize his dream. This includes the hard work and dedication he puts into brewing beer, as well as the establishment of a successful partnership with Eberhard Anheuser. The commercial emphasizes the physical and metaphorical journey Busch undertakes, showcasing the effort and resolve needed to achieve his goal of creating a renowned beer.

4. Sanction:

Sanction is reflected in the final success and recognition that Busch achieves, not only in the success of Budweiser as a beer but also in its status as an American icon. The commercial suggests a broader social sanction, where the brand and its founder are celebrated for their contribution to American society and industry, as well as their role in exemplifying the American Dream. The brand is recognized not just for its product, but also for its story of overcoming adversity and fostering egalitarianism.

Through this narrative, Budweiser effectively communicates its brand values and distinguishes itself as more than just a beer company, but as a symbol of the American ethos and a proponent of the positive impact of immigrants and hard work.

Comparative Analysis between campaigns

Each campaign intricately weaves the theme of immigration into its narrative, yet they employ the phases of manipulation, competence, performance, and sanction in distinct manners that reflect their unique brand identities and societal messages. In this section I will compare the selected campaigns under the canonical narrative scheme to examine the symbolic meanings and cultural implications of these narratives within the immigration context.

Each brand initiates its narrative with a manipulation phase that serves as a call to action, drawing attention to immigration through different persuasive appeals. Budweiser employs the personal journey of its founder to symbolize perseverance and the immigrant's contribution to American success, appealing to a sense of national pride and historical appreciation. In contrast, Benetton's use of provocative imagery seeks to evoke empathy and a reevaluation of the migrant crisis, leveraging shock value to manipulate public attention. Smirnoff and Jigsaw, meanwhile, use their platforms to challenge societal prejudices and promote a more accepting view of immigration.

The competence phase across the campaigns encourages audience engagement and reflection on immigration. Budweiser showcases the development of skills and resilience. Benetton, through its challenging imagery, fosters a deeper understanding and empathy towards migrants, aiming to cultivate a more informed and compassionate audience. Smirnoff and Jigsaw demonstrate their competence by aligning with inclusive values, inviting their audiences to join

them in this social stance, thereby enhancing their brand's reputation as socially responsible entities.

In the performance phase, the campaigns actively engage with their messages, striving to influence societal attitudes towards immigration. Budweiser's depiction of success and integration emphasizes the positive outcomes of perseverance and hard work. Benetton's campaign becomes a platform for social discourse, challenging viewers to confront and discuss the realities of migration. Smirnoff and Jigsaw perform by celebrating diversity and challenging negative stereotypes, contributing to a narrative of inclusivity and acceptance within their respective societal contexts.

The sanction phase reveals the cultural and societal acknowledgment of each campaign's narrative. Budweiser achieves a symbolic sanction, celebrating the immigrant's role in the American dream and reinforcing a narrative of unity and success. Benetton's mixed reactions underscore the controversial nature of engaging with immigration through advertising, reflecting the brand's position as a provocateur in social discourse. Smirnoff and Jigsaw receive social validation for their advocacy, reinforcing their identities as brands committed to inclusivity and reflecting a growing societal endorsement of diverse and multicultural values.

The manipulation phase across the campaigns utilizes symbolic appeals to emotion, ethics, or shock to draw attention to the issue of immigration, each brand using its unique semiotic resources to engage the audience. The competence and performance phases are rich in cultural symbols and narratives that reflect societal attitudes towards immigrants and diversity, showcasing the brands' roles in shaping and reflecting these attitudes. The sanction phase, in turn, highlights the cultural significance and societal acceptance (or rejection) of these narratives, offering insights into the current state of social discourse around immigration.

In conclusion, the use of the canonical narrative scheme to analyze advertising campaigns from Budweiser, Benetton, Smirnoff, and Jigsaw reveals not only the strategic employment of narrative structures but also the semiotic depth of these narratives within the context of immigration. This comparative analysis underscores the power of advertising narratives to reflect, challenge, and shape cultural and social understandings of immigration, highlighting the dynamic interplay between brand storytelling, societal values, and semiotic meanings.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Conclusions

This thesis explored the nuanced ways in which brands navigate the complex and polarized topic of immigration through advertising campaigns. Through the lens of the actantial model and the canonical narrative scheme, campaigns from Budweiser, Benetton, Smirnoff, and Jigsaw were analyzed, each offering a distinct perspective on immigration and demonstrating a range of strategies to engage with this sensitive issue. The analysis illuminated how these brands utilized narrative structures and semiotic resources to convey their messages, reflecting their unique brand identities and societal messages.

My methodology consisted in applying Laura Oswald's brandscape model to comprehend effective problem-solving strategies. This widely-utilized model helps delineate brand positioning and facilitates discussions on emerging market phenomena. It enables companies to actively delve into consumer culture, aligning and adjusting it with their brand ethos to devise groundbreaking strategies aimed at launching impactful campaigns.

This approach was executed in stages, starting with a synchronic analysis to evaluate the current state and values of selected brands. Subsequently, through diachronic analysis, I examined the selected brands that had a history of addressing immigration, Benetton and Smirnoff, as well as additional brands that approached immigration differently, to establish a historical benchmark.

The brandscape synthesizes a comparative analysis across the selected advertising campaigns, mapping out a semiotic landscape of cultural categories, emotional territories, tensions, and common semiotic cues observed. This comprehensive analysis aims to capture the collective brand approach to the topic of immigration, assessing the broader semiotic and cultural implications of such communications.

The analysis identified two critical codes in the discourse on immigration. The prevailing code was the "immigration emergency," signaling heightened recognition of mass immigration issues, especially in America and Europe. Yet, the nascent code of "egalitarianism" suggests a budding commitment to equality, despite increased awareness. This commitment is reflected in campaigns promoting cultural integration and inclusion. I then explored the interplay between egalitarianism and immigration, recognizing it as a key dynamic. Addressing this dynamic requires holistic methods that tackle underlying structural issues and champion inclusivity, necessitating sustained initiatives for both raising awareness and fostering inclusion.

Following with the Actantial Model, this model was instrumental in deciphering the core values and commonalities within the advertisements, each engaging with the theme of immigration from distinct angles. In conclusion, the selected campaigns effectively leverage

narrative structures to reflect and influence societal values towards immigration, demonstrating the power of storytelling in brand communication.

Subsequently, the Canonical Narrative Scheme, unfolds the plot of the advertisements through Manipulation, Competence, Performance, and Sanction, analyzing the narratives' deeper messages and values. This storytelling method is instrumental in engaging audiences, fostering an emotional connection, and ultimately reinforcing the brand's core values and identity. This strategic narrative framework enables brands to stand out through a story that connects with the audience on an emotional level, appealing to consumers who value authenticity, thereby enhancing the brand's market differentiation and appeal.

4.2 Managerial Implications

Brandscape

From the analysis in the grid created from the brandscape analysis in section 3.7 of chapter 3, we can discern several managerial implications regarding advertising that addresses the subject of immigration.

Brand values alignment

Brands deeply rooted in values of diversity and inclusivity are well-positioned to engage with immigration themes in their advertising efforts. These values, which align with the positive emotional territories identified in the brandscape analysis, such as feelings of belonging, acceptance, and solidarity, should be at the heart of the campaign narratives.

When a brand's core values resonate with these emotional territories, their immigration-related messaging can be both powerful and well-received. Brands should leverage these values to craft campaigns that not only reflect their stance on immigration but also tap into the cultural and emotional landscape of their audience.

By strategically aligning their campaign's tone with their brand values and the current societal emotional territories related to immigration, managers can ensure that their messaging is both authentic and impactful. This alignment not only contributes to a positive brand image but also demonstrates corporate responsibility and sensitivity to the complexities of immigration. The grid analysis thus provides a valuable tool for managers to determine the most appropriate level of activism and cue strength for their brand's foray into the topic of immigration.

Use of real imagery

The second managerial implication we can draw from this analysis is that a brand's alignment with the values of immigration does not exempt it from facing limitations and potential

backlash when engaging with sensitive themes such as the immigration crisis. Benetton's case illustrates that while a brand can achieve extensive impact and reach, the use of real images from a humanitarian crisis can attract criticism, especially if it is perceived as capitalizing on the efforts of others for commercial gain. The negative reaction to Benetton's use of an image featuring a charity's rescue operation is a poignant example of the consequences of overstepping perceived boundaries in brand activism.

For Benetton, the criticism was not necessarily about the alignment of values or the intention behind the message, but rather the appropriateness of its execution. As previously mentioned, the charity involved in the rescue operations condemned Benetton's actions as a misappropriation of their work. This indicates that while brands may aspire to participate in larger societal conversations, there is a critical need for sensitivity and an understanding of the context in which these images and messages are used.

It is paramount that brands recognize their role as corporations and remain respectful of the agencies and individuals directly involved in humanitarian efforts. This involves using imagery and narratives that reflect a brand's genuine contributions to a cause, rather than appropriating the work of others. In the realm of addressing humanitarian crises, such as immigration emergencies, it is advisable for brands to either showcase their own efforts or provide support without overstepping into areas that could lead to negative perceptions.

Humanitarian approach

The third managerial implication that emerges is the recognition that alignment with positive immigration values—such as diversity and inclusivity—does not shield a brand from the controversies that may arise from delving into the immigration subject. The case of Budweiser demonstrates that even with a campaign aimed at highlighting historical perseverance and ambition, interpretations within the political context can vary greatly, leading to unexpected consumer reactions.

Budweiser's commercial received a mix of reactions, and the company had to navigate the delicate space between celebrating its heritage and being drawn into the current immigration debate. The reaction from Trump's supporters, who initiated a boycott, signaled the risks associated with unintentionally stepping into a politically sensitive arena. The subsequent decision by Budweiser to change its advertising agency after the ad, as well as the fact that the agency responsible for the campaign was later not rehired, speaks to the potential repercussions of misaligned consumer interpretations.

For managers, this underscores the need for explicit clarity in campaign intentions when addressing sensitive subjects like immigration. The brand must also anticipate and manage the diverse interpretations and reactions of its audience. A proactive stance in this regard enables

the brand to maintain control over its campaign narrative and to respond effectively to any potential controversies.

Brands like Smirnoff and Jigsaw, which were clearer in their positions on immigration within their campaigns, provide a contrast to Budweiser's experience, highlighting the importance of transparency and preparedness in managing public perceptions and responses to advertising that touches on immigration.

The final analysis indicates that Jigsaw and Smirnoff have exemplified effective approaches to addressing immigration in their advertising campaigns. They have achieved a balance by aligning their campaigns with their core brand values and ensuring a respectful and conscious approach to the complexities surrounding the immigration crisis. Both brands have adeptly considered the political and social contexts of their campaigns.

For Jigsaw, the "Love Immigration" campaign resonated well with its audience, as it was based on the brand's celebration of diversity, inclusivity, and cultural integration. It managed to connect with the public sentiment without resorting to shock tactics or controversy, instead fostering a message of unity and the positive contributions of immigration to the UK's heritage.

Smirnoff, through its "Global Street Art Project," utilized guerrilla marketing to surprise and engage the public, encouraging a dialogue about hope, struggle, and unity in the context of immigration. The brand's strategy was marked by a respectful articulation of the immigration theme, using public art to engage viewers in a manner that was both thought-provoking and aligned with Smirnoff's branding as a socially conscious entity.

Brands aiming to navigate the complex issue of immigration in their marketing efforts can learn from the positioning of Jigsaw and Smirnoff. They should aim to place their strategies within the center of the grid, which represents a strategic balance between the brand's alignment with immigration support and the appropriate use of strong cues. This balanced approach helps ensure that campaigns are impactful yet sensitive, evoking a supportive stance on immigration while remaining true to the brand's identity and values. It also mitigates the risk of controversy or backlash, as seen with other brands that may have veered too far towards either extreme of the grid.

In essence, Jigsaw and Smirnoff's campaigns suggest a template for other brands: to engage with immigration in a way that is potent and meaningful, yet tactful and in tune with the brand's ethos and the societal context, thereby taking a supportive role that can be embraced by their consumers.

Semio-narrative analysis

Drawing on the semio-narrative analysis of Budweiser's "Born the Hard Way" commercial, a compelling managerial implication emerges: positioning the immigrant as the focal point of the advertisement, embodying the roles of sender, subject, and almost as “heroic” protagonist, can significantly enhance brand storytelling and emotional engagement. This approach not only humanizes the brand but also elevates it beyond a mere product to a symbol of resilience, inclusivity, and the pursuit of dreams.

This strategy capitalizes on the power of storytelling to forge a deep emotional connection with audiences, leveraging narrative-based memory and identity construction to resonate with consumers on a personal level. By portraying the immigrant not just as a character in the story but as the story's hero and message sender, the advertisement has the power to invite viewers to see themselves in the narrative, encouraging identification with the brand's values of hard work, ambition, and inclusivity. This not only enhances brand recall and emotional involvement but also positions the brand as a champion of diversity and perseverance, thereby appealing to a broader audience and fostering a positive brand image.

Finally, the following general managerial insights for brands engaged in immigration discourse through their marketing strategies can be added to this research conclusion:

Cultural Sensitivity and Education: Brands must prioritize cultural sensitivity and education, investing in understanding the multifaceted aspects of immigration. This involves continuous learning and engagement with immigrant communities to ensure marketing strategies are both respectful and informed, resonating authentically with diverse audiences.

Authentic Engagement and Brand-Consumer Alignment: Authentic engagement is crucial. Brands must align their external marketing messages with internal practices, reflecting a genuine commitment to immigration issues. This alignment enhances consumer trust and loyalty, as consumers increasingly value transparency and corporate social responsibility.

Strategic Narration and Narrative Consistency: Employing strategic narration that resonates with audiences is key. Brands should ensure narrative consistency across all platforms, crafting stories that effectively communicate their stance on immigration while maintaining a coherent brand identity.

Engagement, Dialogue, and Stakeholder Consideration: Open dialogue and stakeholder consideration are imperative. Brands should engage with consumers, advocacy groups, and immigrant communities, actively listening to feedback and adapting their strategies to address diverse concerns and perspectives.

Innovative Campaigns and Strategic Partnerships: Brands should pursue innovative campaigns and form strategic partnerships with organizations supporting immigrants. This approach not only lends authenticity to brand campaigns but also ensures that marketing strategies contribute positively to the broader issue of immigration.

Monitoring Impact and Adapting to Change: Continuous monitoring of the impact of marketing campaigns on brand reputation and consumer sentiment is essential. Brands must be agile, ready to adapt their strategies in response to changing political and social landscapes to stay relevant and maintain consumer trust.

Addressing immigration through marketing requires a multifaceted strategy that combines cultural insight, ethical marketing practices, and consistent messaging. By engaging authentically with the issue of immigration, brands can navigate this complex field successfully, enhancing their brand equity while contributing to social change.

4.3 Limitations and Future Research

The research presented in this thesis offers a valuable insight into how brands have utilized advertising to address the subject of immigration, yet it also presents several limitations that pave the way for future research opportunities.

Given that the campaigns analyzed were selective, representing a fraction of the vast expanse of industries, the scope of the study is inherently limited. Industries vary in their consumer base, brand values, and marketing approaches, which could potentially offer a different perspective on the issue of immigration. Hence, an analysis that encompasses a wider range of industries could provide a more holistic understanding of the commercial world's engagement with immigration themes.

Moreover, the thesis concentrated on a specific historical timeframe. However, immigration is a perennial issue with different facets in various eras. Investigating advertising campaigns from different periods, especially those corresponding to other notable immigration crises, could yield insights into how societal attitudes and marketing strategies have evolved over time.

Additionally, the geographic focus of this study was confined to the United States and Europe, regions with their unique immigration challenges and societal dynamics. Expanding the research to include campaigns from other geographical areas could uncover culturally specific approaches to immigration in advertising and how these reflect the global landscape of migration.

The thesis primarily examined brands whose values are in line with diversity and inclusivity, which naturally supports a positive portrayal of immigration. There is, however, an untapped area of study in examining brands that have engaged with the subject of immigration without having a direct alignment with these values. Understanding how such brands navigate the complex waters of immigration themes could offer a contrasting narrative to the current research.

Moreover, future research could benefit from a detailed analysis of social media reactions to advertising campaigns centered on immigration. While this thesis relied mostly on newspaper articles for assessing public response, social media provides immediate and diverse user feedback. A thorough examination of comments, shares, and engagement metrics could yield richer insights into consumer sentiment and the broader impact of these campaigns on public discourse. Employing data analytics to parse social media could enhance our understanding of how brand narratives resonate with audiences and influence perceptions on immigration.

Finally, a significant limitation of this study is the focus on brands that have indirectly or directly supported immigration. Future research could delve deeper into cases like Benetton's, which used real imagery from immigration crisis. It would be valuable to examine if using images from a brand's own humanitarian efforts, rather than unrelated charitable work, may be perceived more favorably. This exploration could include both existing and hypothetical cases to assess the potential effectiveness and public reception of such marketing moves.

These limitations underscore the vast potential for further research that can not only build upon the findings of this thesis but also broaden the understanding of brand activism in the context of immigration. Such work could offer nuanced insights into the role of corporate advertising in shaping and reflecting societal values and attitudes towards one of the most pressing issues of our time.

SUMMARY

This thesis delves into the complex realm of pro-immigration marketing initiatives, seeking to illuminate the research void regarding how consumers react to brand activism related to immigration. There's a significant gap in understanding the impact of these campaigns on aspects such as brand perception, loyalty, purchasing decisions, and sales within the existing marketing scholarship. This study endeavors to fill this gap by examining the nuanced interrelations and effects of marketing communications, brand narratives, and societal divisions when it comes to immigration issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1 of the thesis explores the complex dynamics of immigration and its societal implications, highlighting the role of brands in navigating and influencing this polarized landscape through brand activism. It begins by discussing the multifaceted nature of immigration, its impact on societies, and the challenges it poses, including cultural clashes, economic integration difficulties, and the societal polarization it can exacerbate.

The chapter then transitions to examining the potential of brands to address these issues, arguing that through authentic engagement and brand activism, companies can foster positive change and contribute to societal cohesion. It delves into the distinction between genuine brand activism and "woke washing," emphasizing the importance of authenticity in brand communications related to immigration. The analysis further extends to the influence of media portrayal of immigration on public opinion, underscoring the power of responsible and informed brand activism to shape narratives and consumer perceptions positively.

Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the need for a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders involved in the immigration discourse and the role of brands in navigating the complexities of this issue to effect meaningful societal impact.

SOCIETY AND IMMIGRATION

The chapter delves into the intricate role of semiotics in marketing, specifically in the context of immigration, illustrating how the discipline aids in deciphering and shaping the complex layers of meaning that brands convey within societal and cultural frameworks. It underscores the dynamic interplay between sign systems—such as logos, slogans, and packaging—used by brands to establish identity and differentiate themselves, and the active role of consumers in interpreting these signs, influenced by their cultural and personal backgrounds. The chapter further explores the intersectionality of immigration and racism, the impact of stereotypes in advertising, and the concept of cultural branding as a form of activism, advocating for authentic engagement with immigration narratives by both profit and non-profit organizations. Through a series of case studies, it assesses how brands navigate the sensitive terrain of immigration in their marketing strategies, emphasizing the need for a nuanced, responsible approach that transcends traditional marketing to touch on broader societal values and issues. The identification of a research gap concerning the specific impact of immigration-themed advertising on brand perception and consumer engagement sets the stage for further investigation into how brands can effectively leverage these narratives within a values-driven marketing framework.

ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 delves deeply into the mechanisms through which brands utilize marketing campaigns to address immigration, aiming to influence consumer perceptions and establish corporate leadership. This chapter outlines the research question, focusing on the impact of brand activism on immigration on consumers and how it contributes to corporate leadership. Utilizing Laura Oswald's Consumer Brandscape analysis approach, the thesis examines advertising campaigns from Benetton, Smirnoff, Budweiser, and Jigsaw, highlighting the intricate ecosystem of commercial, cultural, and social forces that shape brand identity and consumer perceptions.

The analysis adopts both synchronic and diachronic methodologies to explore the current marketing campaigns and communications of these brands and their historical engagement with immigration issues. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the overarching themes, messaging strategies, and visual representations used by brands to navigate the cultural and emotional landscape of immigration. The chapter also introduces the concept of dominant, residual, and emerging codes within the Brandscape, providing a

framework for identifying the symbols, narratives, and rhetorical devices that construct brand messaging on immigration.

The thesis further employs semiotic analysis, dissecting selected advertising campaigns to reveal how brands craft narratives that resonate with audiences and foster meaningful connections. The analysis highlights the brands' roles as agents of social change, capable of influencing public opinion and societal norms through strategic storytelling and visual communication. By examining the semiotic and narrative structures of these campaigns, the thesis offers insights into the motivations behind brand activism on immigration and its implications for consumer engagement and corporate identity. The semiotic analysis culminates with a thematic brandscape table used to create a grid where selected brands were positioned in order to extract valuable insights for brands aiming to address immigration on their marketing campaigns in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The thesis examines the intricate relationship between brand activism in advertising and the contentious issue of immigration. It scrutinizes various advertising campaigns through semiotic analysis to unravel the complexities of consumer perception and societal impact. This investigation is anchored in a comprehensive methodology that incorporates the Consumer Brandscape model by Laura Oswald, designed to dissect the multifaceted ecosystem of brands within consumer culture.

The thesis unveils several managerial implications from the thematic brandscape analysis. It illuminates that brands championing values of diversity and inclusivity, as evidenced in the emotional territories derived from the brandscape, are better equipped to construct resonant campaigns on immigration. Such campaigns strike a chord with audiences when they embody these core values, fostering a perception of authenticity and sensitivity.

Yet, as evidenced by the reactions to Benetton's use of real crisis imagery, a brand's alignment with the values of immigration does not grant immunity from criticism. Brands must tread carefully, respecting the delineation between corporate involvement and the actual efforts of humanitarian agencies. Employing shock imagery or leveraging charity-related pictures for commercial purposes could backfire, emphasizing the need for brands to utilize their own narratives of contribution toward immigration issues.

The Budweiser case further accentuates the potential for controversy, even when the brand does not overtly intend to engage in the present political discourse on immigration. Misalignments between a brand's intentions and public perception can trigger movements like the boycott by Trump supporters. This highlights the necessity for clarity in a brand's

advertising intentions, especially when broaching subjects as delicate as immigration, to avert unintended backlashes and maintain narrative control.

Finally, the thesis postulates that the most balanced and effective approaches to addressing immigration in advertising, as exemplified by Jigsaw and Smirnoff, stem from a thoughtful alignment of campaigns with brand values and a conscious articulation of the immigration theme, respecting the political and social contexts. Brands aiming to delve into immigration should strive for a central positioning on the grid, balancing brand alignment with appropriate use of strong cues.

Despite its comprehensive nature, the thesis acknowledges limitations that open avenues for further research. It proposes exploring a wider array of industries, different historical periods, and geographic regions to enrich the understanding of immigration in advertising. The thesis also suggests delving into brands without inherent alignment with immigration support and analyzing social media reactions for a more nuanced grasp of public sentiment.

In essence, this research encapsulates an exploration into brand activism's intersection with immigration, offering a perspective on strategic advertising narratives while setting the stage for expansive future research.

APPENDIX

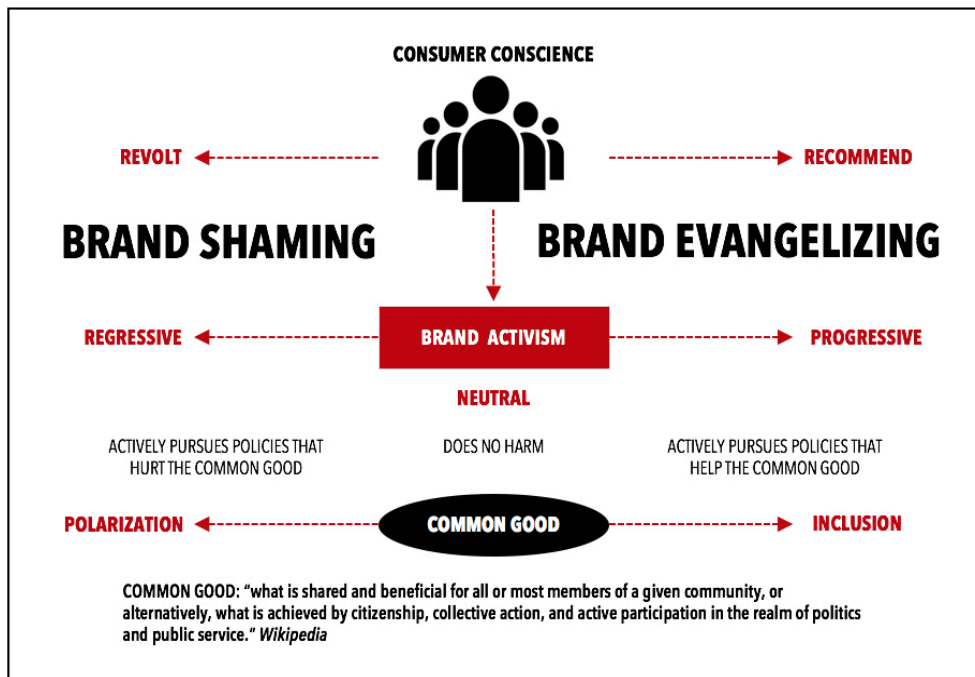


Image 1

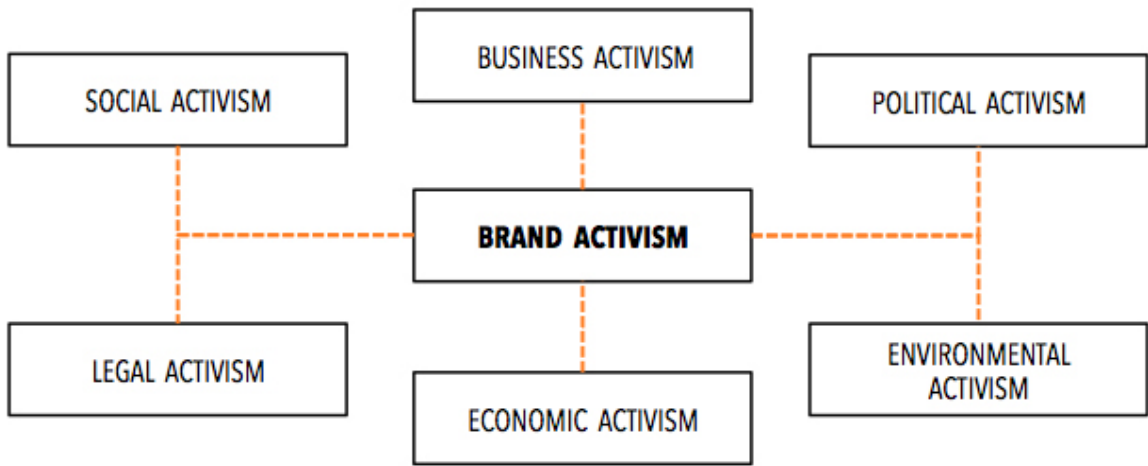


Image 2



Image 3

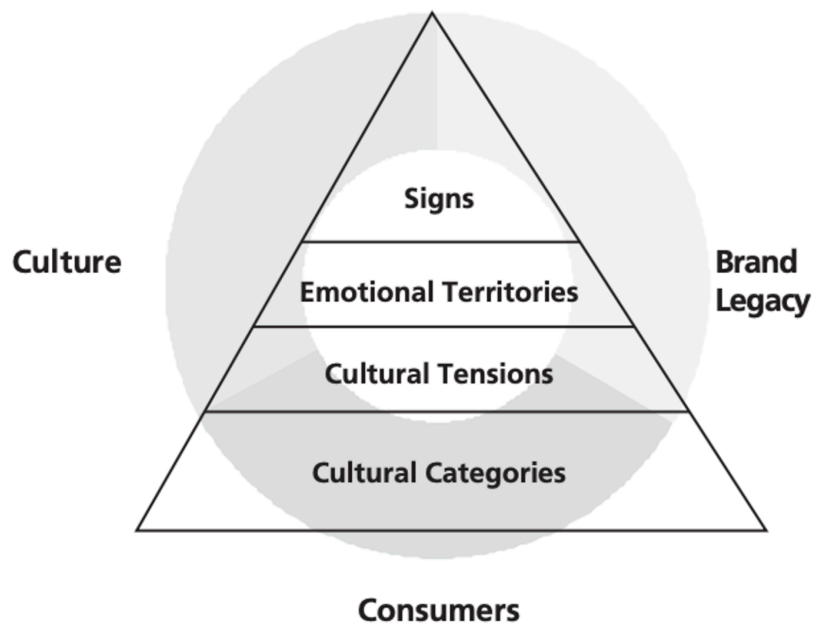


Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7

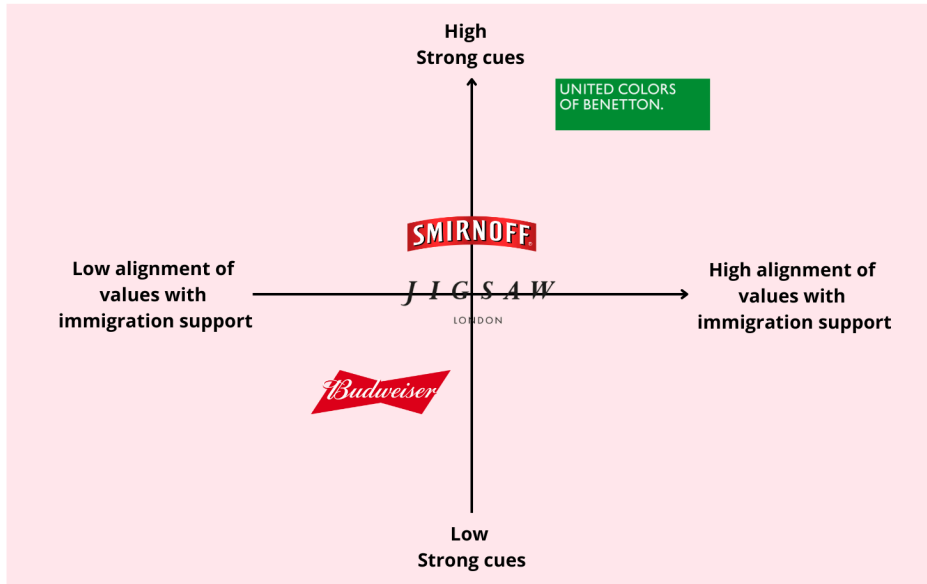


Image 8



Image 9



Image 10



Image 11



Image 12



Image 13

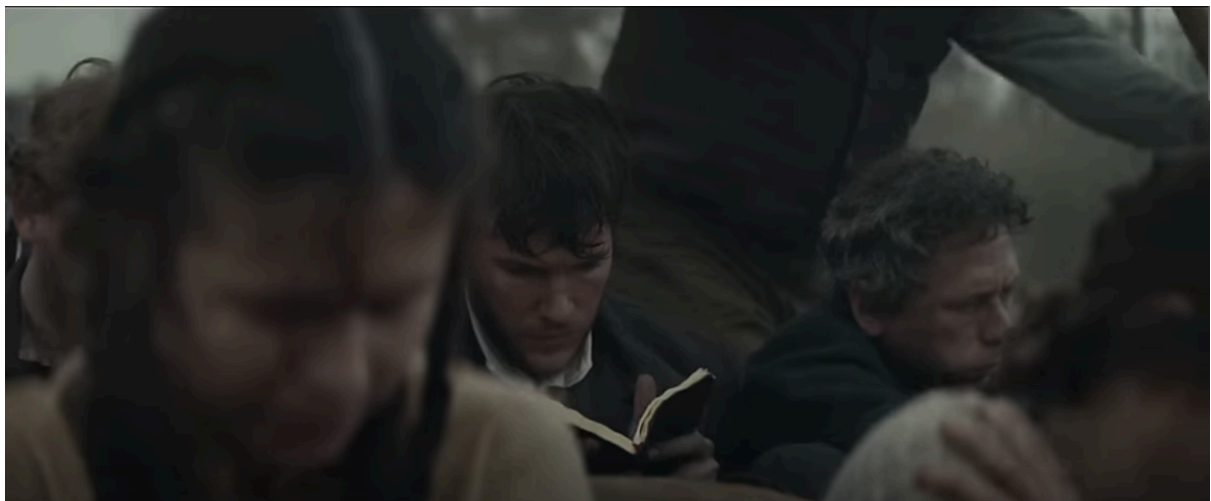


Image 14



Image 15



Image 16

Anheuser-Busch

WHEN NOTHING STOPS YOUR DREAM,
THIS IS THE BEER WE DRINK.

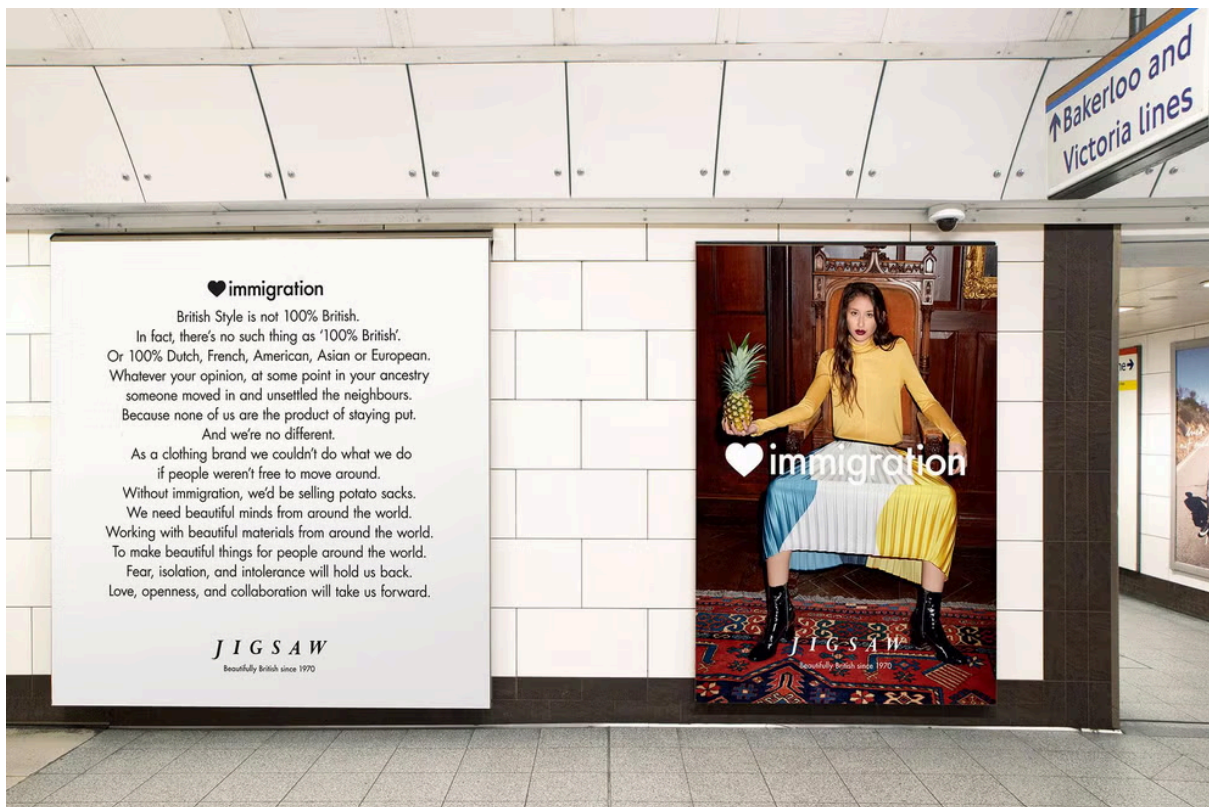
Image 17



Image 18



Image 19



BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Brandshaming: The Kids vs. the NRA” – Philip Kotler and Christian Sarkar. 11 Mar. 2018,

www.marketingjournal.org/brandshaming-philip-kotler-and-christian-sarkar/.

“A New Wave of Mass Migration Has Begun.” *The Economist*, 28 May 2023,

www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2023/05/28/a-new-wave-of-mass-migration-has-begun.

Abrajano, Marisa, and Zoltan Hajnal. *White Backlash*. *Press.princeton.edu*, Princeton University Press, 28 Feb. 2017,

press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691176192/white-backlash.

- Adams, Peter. “Smirnoff’s Big Brand Strategy Shakeup Is All about Inclusion.”
Marketing Dive, 26 June 2023,
www.marketingdive.com/news/smirnoff-vodka-brand-refresh-campaign-diversity-inclusion/653232/.
- Ahmad, Fayez, et al. “Brand Activism and the Consequence of Woke Washing.”
Journal of Business Research, vol. 170, 1 Jan. 2024, p. 114362,
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S014829632300721X,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114362>.
- . “Effective Messaging Strategies to Increase Brand Love for Sociopolitical Activist Brands.” *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 151, no. 3, 1 Nov. 2022, pp. 609–622, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0148296322006385,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.07.031>.
- Alesina, Alberto, et al. “Immigration and Redistribution.” *The Review of Economic Studies*, vol. 90, no. 1, 11 Mar. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdac011>.
- Alvaro-Gonzales , Luis Ignacio, et al. “Business-Nonprofit Partnerships as a Driver of Internal Marketing in Nonprofit Organizations. Consequences for Nonprofit Performance and Moderators.” *Www.scopus.com*, Apr. 1AD,
www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85013149711&origin=resultslist&sort=plf-f&src=s&sot=b&s=DOI%2810.1016%2Fj.brq.2017.01.001%29&sessionSearchId=3eb1789348a4a826037ab9e9e898f691&relpos=0.
- “America’s Immigration System Is Broken.” *The Economist*, 30 June 2018,
www.economist.com/united-states/2018/06/30/americas-immigration-system-is-broken.
- “America’s Story: An Immigrant Story.” *Www.carnegie.org*,
www.carnegie.org/interactives/immigration-reform/#.

- Atkinson, Claire. "Budweiser's Super Bowl Ad Was the Most-Watched Online." *NyPost*, 7 Feb. 2017, nypost.com/2017/02/07/budweisers-super-bowl-ad-was-the-most-watched-online/.
- Battocchio, Ava Francesca. "Effects of Transparent Brand Communication on Perceived Brand Authenticity and Consumer Responses." *Research Gate, Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22 Oct. 2020, www.researchgate.net/publication/348463130_Effects_of_transparent_brand_communication_on_perceived_brand_authenticity_and_consumer_responses.
- "Benetton Criticised for Migrant Images." *BBC News*, 20 June 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44545860.
- Bhagwat, Yashoda, et al. "Corporate Sociopolitical Activism and Firm Value." *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 84, no. 5, 1 Sept. 2020, pp. 1–21.
- Bloemraad, Irene, and Alicia Sheares. "Understanding Membership in a World of Global Migration: (How) Does Citizenship Matter?" *International Migration Review*, vol. 51, no. 4, Dec. 2017, pp. 823–867, <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12354>.
- Boman, Laura, et al. "Strength in Diversity: How Incongruent Racial Cues Enhance Consumer Preferences toward Conservative Brands." *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 168, 1 Nov. 2023, pp. 114208–114208, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114208>.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "Color-Blind Racism in Pandemic Times." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, vol. 8, no. 3, 31 July 2020, p. 233264922094102, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649220941024>.

- Cătălin, Munteanu Claudiu, and Pagalea Andreea. “Brands as a Mean of Consumer Self-Expression and Desired Personal Lifestyle.” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 109, no. 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 103–107, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.427>.
- Cho, Eunsoo, et al. “Between Ethnic Diversity and Immigration: Perceptions toward Immigrants in a Globalizing World.” *Social Science Research*, vol. 117, 1 Jan. 2024, p. 102945, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X2300100X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2023.102945>.
- Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. “Framing Theory.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 10, no. 1, June 2007, pp. 103–126, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.
- “Company Vision | Benetton Group.” *Www.benettongroup.com*, www.benettongroup.com/en/the-group/profile/company-vision/#:~:text=The%20Group%20has%20a%20consolidated.
- Cooper, Glenda, et al. “Beyond the “Refugee Crisis”: How the UK News Media Represent Asylum Seekers across National Boundaries.” *International Communication Gazette*, vol. 83, no. 3, 6 Apr. 2020, p. 174804852091323, journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1748048520913230, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048520913230>.
- Cosenza, Giovanna. “La Societa Degli Ibridi - “Stereotipi E Pregiudizi. Dalle Scienze Sociali Alla Semiotica.”” *Mimesis*, 2023, pp. 243–257.
- D’Andreamatteo, Antonio, et al. “Immigration, Policies of Integration and Healthcare Expenditure: A Longitudinal Analysis of the INHS (2002–2018).” *Health Policy*, 7 Dec. 2023, p. 104960,

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0168851023002452,

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2023.104960>.

Davies, Lucy. “Majority of Consumers Buying from Companies That Take a Stand on Issues They Care about and Ditching Those That Don’t, Accenture Study Finds.” *Newsroom.accenture.com*, 5 Dec. 2018, newsroom.accenture.com/news/2018/majority-of-consumers-buying-from-companies-that-take-a-stand-on-issues-they-care-about-and-ditching-those-that-dont-accenture-study-finds.

De Coninck, David, et al. “Public Attitudes towards Immigration, News and Social Media Exposure, and Political Attitudes from a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Data from Seven European Countries, the United States, and Colombia.” *Data in Brief*, vol. 39, Dec. 2021, p. 107548, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2021.107548>.

Demircioglu, Mehmet Akif, and Roberto Vivona. “Depoliticizing the European Immigration Debate: How to Employ Public Sector Innovation to Integrate Migrants.” *Research Policy - the National University of Singapore*, Nov. 2021, p. 104150, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048733320302250, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104150>.

“Discourse Analysis - an Overview | ScienceDirect Topics.” *Wwww.sciencedirect.com*, www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/discourse-analysis.

Douglas, Mary, and Baron C. Isherwood. *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. *Google Books*, Psychology Press, 1 Jan. 1996, books.google.ch/books/about/The_World_of_Goods.html?id=gSzVWXGhGy8C&redir_esc=y.

- Downes, James F., and Matthew Loveless. "Centre Right and Radical Right Party Competition in Europe: Strategic Emphasis on Immigration, Anti-Incumbency, and Economic Crisis." *Electoral Studies*, vol. 54, Aug. 2018, pp. 148–158, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2018.05.008>.
- Dylong, Patrick, and Silke Uebelmesser. "Biased Beliefs about Immigration and Economic Concerns: Evidence from Representative Experiments." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, vol. 217, 1 Jan. 2024, pp. 453–482, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167268123004250, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2023.11.017>.
- Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington, Ind. Indiana University Press, 1976.
- Essed, Philomena. *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. SAGE Knowledge, Thousand Oaks, California, 1991, sk.sagepub.com/books/understanding-everyday-racism-an-interdisciplinary-theory.
- "Eurobarometer." *Europa.eu*, europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2169.
- Facchini, Giovanni, et al. "Countering Public Opposition to Immigration: The Impact of Information Campaigns." *European Economic Review*, vol. 141, Jan. 2022, p. 103959, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurocorev.2021.103959>.
- "Fenty Launches New Selection of Over-Sized T-Shirts." *Snobette.com*, 10 July 2019, snobette.com/2019/07/fenty-new-over-sized-shirts-immigrant-no-more-music/.
- Fiatherstone, Emma. "Jigsaw Just Released an Ad Celebrating Immigration after the Brexit-Vote." *The Independent*, 13 Oct. 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/jigsaw-immigration-new-campaign-celebration-british-values-style-high-street-fashion-brand-a7999256.html.

- Fog, Klaus, et al. *Storytelling: Branding in Practice*. Springer Science & Business Media, 6 Dec. 2004.
- G. Klein, Jill, and Niraj Dawar. "Corporate Social Responsibility and Consumers' Attributions and Brand Evaluations in Product Harm Crisis." *Research Gate*, International Journal of Research in Marketing, 1 Dec. 2004, www.researchgate.net/publication/223082630_Corporate_social_responsibility_and_consumers%27_attributions_and_brand_evaluations_in_product_harm_crisis.
- Gallo, Carmine. "Budweiser's Super Bowl Ad Taps the Brand's Best Marketing Tool." *Forbes*, www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2018/02/04/budweisers-super-bowl-ad-taps-the-brands-best-marketing-tool/?sh=1f94c4f25da0.
- Garimella, Kiran, et al. "Political Discourse on Social Media." *Proceedings of the 2018 World Wide Web Conference on World Wide Web - WWW '18*, 2018, arxiv.org/pdf/1801.01665.pdf, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3178876.3186139>.
- Giua, Mara, et al. "Inclusive Europe: The Impact of the EU Cohesion Policy on Immigrants' Economic Integration in Italy." *Journal of Policy Modeling*, June 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpolmod.2022.06.001>.
- Gonnot, Jerome. "Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe: Cross-Regional Differences." *Europa.eu*, Open Research Europe - European Commission , 28 Apr. 2023, open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/articles/3-66#:~:text=URL%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fopen.
- Gray, Samuel. "Rethinking the Law and Economics of Immigration Policy for High-Skilled Migrants in the Global Knowledge Economy." *Georgetown*

Immigration Law Journal, vol. 34, 2019, p. 473,
heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/geoimlj34&div=21&id
=&page=.

Hainmueller, Jens, and Michael J. Hiscox. “Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment.” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 104, no. 1, Feb. 2010, pp. 61–84,
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055409990372>.

Hatton, Timothy J. “Public Opinion on Immigration in Europe: Preference and Salience.” *European Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 66, Oct. 2020, p. 101969, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101969>.

Holt, Douglas B. *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*. Harvard Business School Press, 1 Jan. 2004.

Hugo, Graeme. *Migrants in Society: Diversity and Cohesion a Paper Prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration and Does Not Represent the Views of the Global Commission on International Migration*. 2005.

Hydock, Chris, et al. “Should Your Brand Pick a Side? How Market Share Determines the Impact of Corporate Political Advocacy.” *Papers.ssrn.com*, 14 July 2020, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3651205.

J. Hopkins, Daniel, and Jack Citrin. *The Muted Consequences of Correct Information about Immigration*. *The Journal of Politics*, 1 July 2018, www.researchgate.net/publication/328259243_The_Muted_Consequences_of_Correct_Information_about_Immigration.

- Joly, Danièle. “Some Structural Effects of Migration on Receiving and Sending Countries.” *International Migration*, vol. 38, no. 5, Dec. 2000, pp. 25–40, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00126>.
- Jr, Cleve R. Wootson. “Budweiser Uses a Super Bowl Ad to Tell an Obscure Immigrant Story — Its Own.” *Washington Post*, 2 Jan. 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/news/food/wp/2017/02/01/budweiser-uses-a-super-bowl-ad-to-tell-an-obscure-immigrant-story-its-own/.
- Kim, Matt. “Morley and Smirnoff Launch L.A. Street Art Campaign for Immigration.” *Inverse*, 13 July 2016, www.inverse.com/article/18148-morley-smirnoff-street-art-immigration.
- Kim, Yeonshin, et al. “Understanding Customer Participation in CSR Activities: The Impact of Perceptions of CSR, Affective Commitment, Brand Equity, and Corporate Reputation.” *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 75, 1 Nov. 2023, p. 103436, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0969698923001832?casa_token=O2h-5KH9jRYAAAAA:uk7dqoUZ5_5TRZ7P2PSdu5p6GjsitPik5bF5TSI9rccSG_n5Nz1pR5DvE4utog8sYiXZiiUfqA, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103436>.
- Klobucista, Claire, et al. “The U.S. Immigration Debate.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 6 June 2023, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-immigration-debate-0.
- Korschun, Daniel. “Brand Activism Is Here to Stay: Here’s Why.” *www.researchgate.net*, Drexel University; Philadelphia, PA, USA, 1 Nov. 2021, www.researchgate.net/publication/355578470_Brand_Activism_Is_Here_to_Stay_Here’s_Why/citation/download.

- Kotler, Philip, and Christian Sarkar. *Brand Activism: From Purpose to Action*.
IDEA BITE PRESS, 4 Nov. 2018.
- Kotler, Philip, and Christian Sarkar. ““Finally, Brand Activism!” – Philip Kotler and Christian Sarkar.” *The Marketing Journal*, 9 Jan. 2018,
www.marketingjournal.org/finally-brand-activism-philip-kotler-and-christian-sarkar/.
- Kumar, Nirmalya, and Jan-benedict Steenkamp. “Diaspora Marketing.” *Harvard Business Review*, Oct. 2013, hbr.org/2013/10/diaspora-marketing.
- Landowski, Eric. “Sociosemiotics: A General Theory of Meaning.” *Scielo*, 1 June 2014, www.scielo.br/j/gal/a/bPV5nZ7ZFrRyJP74QNry9yB/?format=pdf.
- Lee, Tiane L., and Susan T. Fiske. “Not an Outgroup, Not yet an Ingroup: Immigrants in the Stereotype Content Model.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 30, no. 6, Nov. 2006, pp. 751–768,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.06.005>.
- Legaspi, Althea. “See Controversial Immigration-Themed Budweiser Super Bowl Ad.” *Rolling Stone*, 3 Feb. 2017,
www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/see-controversial-immigration-the-med-budweiser-super-bowl-ad-105782/.
- “Levi Strauss Foundation.” *Levi Strauss & Co*,
www.levistrauss.com/values-in-action/levi-strauss-foundation/.
- Licsandru, Tana Cristina, and Charles Chi Cui. “Ethnic Marketing to the Global Millennial Consumers: Challenges and Opportunities.” *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 103, no. 103, Feb. 2019, pp. 261–274,
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296319300712,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.01.052>.

- Lim, Joon Soo, and Cary A. Greenwood. "Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Stakeholder Responsiveness and Engagement Strategy to Achieve CSR Goals." *Public Relations Review*, vol. 43, no. 4, Nov. 2017, pp. 768–776, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0363811116305069, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.06.007>.
- Maiorescu-Murphy, Roxana D. "Business-Centered versus Socially Responsible Corporate Diversity Communication. An Assessment of Stakeholder (Dis)Agreement on Twitter." *Public Relations Review*, vol. 48, no. 1, Mar. 2022, p. 102138, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102138>.
- Manfredi-Sánchez, Juan-Luis. "Brand Activism." *Communication & Society*, vol. 32, no. 4, Oct. 2019, pp. 343–359, <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.32.4.343-359>.
- Mangano, Dario, and Gianfranco Marrone. "Brand Language. Methods and Models of Semiotic Analysis." *Handbook of Brand Semiotics - Kassel University Press*, 2015, pp. 46–88.
- Mangum, Maruice. "Revisiting Economic Threat and Cultural Concerns: Public Opinion toward Immigration and Non-Citizens by Race." *Social Science Research*, vol. 83, Sept. 2019, p. 102309, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.05.002>.
- Markovitz, Gayle, et al. "What Global Corporations Are Doing to Fight Systemic Racism." *World Economic Forum*, 24 June 2020, www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/companies-fighting-systemic-racism-business-community-black-lives-matter/#:~:text=URL%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fwww.weforum.org%2Fagenda%2F2020%2F06%2Fcompanies.
- Maysa, Ayoub. "Media, Public Opinion and Migration Policies in Euro-Mediterranean Countries: The Case of France." *Scopus.com*, 1 Jan. 2024,

www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85175167100&origin=resultslist&sort=plf-f&src=s&sid=1278c379c65e30351e8fa577a1005083&sot=b&sdt=b&s=TITLE-ABS-KEY%28media+coverage+immigration%29&sl=41&searchId=1278c379c65e30351e8fa577a1005083&relpos=3.

McCracken, Grant. "Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundation of the Endorsement Process." *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1989, pp. 310–321.

Miglietta, Anna, et al. "What Causes Prejudice? How May We Solve It? Lay Beliefs and Their Relations with Classical and Modern Prejudice and Social Dominance Orientation." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 40, 1 May 2014, pp. 11–21,
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0147176713001429,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.12.004>.

Mirzaei, Abas, et al. "Woke Brand Activism Authenticity or the Lack of It." *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 139, no. 1, Feb. 2022, pp. 1–12,
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296321006962,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.09.044>.

Monahan, Lisa, et al. "Did You Hear Our Brand Is Hated? The Unexpected Upside of Hate-Acknowledging Advertising for Polarizing Brands." *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 154, Jan. 2023, p. 113283,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.08.047>.

Moorman, Christine. "Commentary: Brand Activism in a Political World." *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, vol. 39, no. 4, 15 Sept. 2020, pp. 388–392.

- Mukherjee, Sourjo, and Niek Althuisen. “Brand Activism: Does Courting Controversy Help or Hurt a Brand?” *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, vol. 37, no. 4, Mar. 2020, pp. 772–788.
- Neureiter, Michael, and C.B. Bhattacharya. “Why Do Boycotts Sometimes Increase Sales? Consumer Activism in the Age of Political Polarization.” *Business Horizons*, vol. 64, no. 5, Feb. 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2021.02.025>.
- News, Fnn. “SMIRNOFFTM Celebrates the Diverse Stories of American Immigration during Immigrant Heritage Month.” *Floridanationalnews.com*, 22 June 2016, floridanationalnews.com/blog/smirnoff-celebrates-the-diverse-stories-of-american-immigration-during-immigrant-heritage-month/.
- Oswald, Laura Ruth. *Marketing Semiotics: Signs, Strategies, and Brand Value*. Oxford University Press, 1 Dec. 2012.
- “Our Culture | Budweiser Brewing Group UK&I.” *Budweiserbrewinggroup.co.uk*, budweiserbrewinggroup.co.uk/our-culture.
- Parrado, Emilio A., and Chenoa A. Flippen. “Migration and Gender among Mexican Women.” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 70, no. 4, Aug. 2005, pp. 606–632, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000404>.
- Peattie, Ken, and Frank-Martin Belz. *Sustainability Marketing — an Innovative Conception of Marketing*. Marketing Review St Gallen, 1 Oct. 2010.
- Peverini, Paolo. “Environmental Issues in Unconventional Social Advertising: A Semiotic Perspective.” *Semiotica*, no. 199, 2014, pp. 219–246.
- . *I Media: Strumenti Di Analisi Semiotica*. Carocci editore, 2012.
- Pew Research Center. “Views on Race, Immigration and Discrimination.” *Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy*, 5 Oct. 2017,

www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/4-race-immigration-and-discrimination/.

Porter, Britney. "A Guide to Incorporating Cultural Identity into Brand Building."

Forbes, Oct. 18AD,

www.forbes.com/sites/britneyporter/2023/10/18/a-guide-to-incorporating-cultural-identity-into-brand-building/?sh=184f4507514b.

Rees, P. "International Migration - an Overview | ScienceDirect Topics."

Www.sciencedirect.com, 2009,

www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/international-migration.

"Refugee Livelihoods." *IKEA Foundation*,

ikeafoundation.org/themes/refugee-livelihoods/.

Ritschel, Chelsea. "Benetton Migrant Rescue Advertising Campaign Faces Backlash from Charity." *The Independent*, 20 June 2018,

www.independent.co.uk/life-style/benetton-migrant-rescue-photos-advertising-twitter-sos-mediterranee-a8408666.html.

Roblain, Antoine, and Eva G.T. Green. "From Perceived Polarization of Immigration Attitudes to Collective Action." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 80, Jan. 2021, pp. 112–120, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.11.009>.

Rumbaut, Rubén G. "Assimilation of Immigrants." *ScienceDirect*, Elsevier, 1 Jan.

2015, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780080970868311096.

Schiller, Nina Glick, et al. "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration." *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 1, Jan. 1995, pp. 48–63,

<https://doi.org/10.2307/3317464>.

- Schneider-Strawczynski, Sarah, and Jérôme Valette. "Media Coverage of Immigration and the Polarization of Attitudes. *." 1 Mar. 2022.
- Schneier, Matthew. "Rihanna Takes a Stand for Immigrants: "Everyone out Here Is Just like Me."" *The Cut*, 20 June 2019, www.thecut.com/2019/06/rihanna-takes-a-stand-for-immigrants.html.
- Schwartz, Mark S., and Archie B. Carroll. "Corporate Social Responsibility: A Three-Domain Approach." *Business Ethics Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2003, pp. 503–530, www.jstor.org/stable/3857969.
- Sen, Sankar, and C.B. Bhattacharya. "Does Doing Good Always Lead to Doing Better? Consumer Reactions to Corporate Social Responsibility." *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 38, no. 2, May 2001, pp. 225–243, <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.38.2.225.18838>.
- Simons, Margaret . "Immigration and Advertising: Benetton and the Power of Provocation." *Journal of History of Design and Curatorial Studies*, The New School Parsons, 1 Jan. 2021, adht.parsons.edu/historyofdesign/objectives/immigration-and-advertising/.
- Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.
- Sniderman, Paul M., et al. "Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers: Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 98, no. 1, Feb. 2004, pp. 35–49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s000305540400098x>.
- Spohr, Dominic. "Fake News and Ideological Polarization: Filter Bubbles and Selective Exposure on Social Media." *Business Information Review*, vol. 34, no. 3, 23 Aug. 2017, pp. 150–160, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266382117722446>.
- Swaminathan, Vanitha, et al. "Branding in a Hyperconnected World: Refocusing Theories and Rethinking Boundaries." *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 84, no. 2, 28

- Jan. 2020, pp. 24–46, [journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022242919899905](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919899905),
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919899905>.
- “The Anti-Migrant Wave Rolls Onwards in EU Polls.” *Www.ft.com*, 5 June 2018,
www.ft.com/content/97213cb8-68aa-11e8-8cf3-0c230fa67aec.
- Tingle, Rory. “UK Fashion Chain Jigsaw Praises Immigration in New Ad Campaign.”
Mail Online, 12 Oct. 2017,
www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4974304/Jigsaw-gets-political-campaign-praising-immigration.html.
- Vincent, Laurence. *Legendary Brands: Unleashing the Power of Storytelling to Create a Winning Market Strategy*. Kaplan Publishing, 18 Sept. 2002.
- Vredenburg, Jessica, et al. “Brands Taking a Stand: Authentic Brand Activism or Woke Washing?” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, vol. 39, no. 4, 14 Aug. 2020, pp. 444–460, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620947359>.
- Weinzimmer, Laurence G., and Candace A. Esken. “Risky Business: Taking a Stand on Social Issues.” *Business Horizons*, vol. 59, no. 3, May 2016, pp. 331–337, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.01.007>.
- “Why Migration Is in Such a Mess Once More.” *The Economist*, 9 Nov. 2023,
www.economist.com/international/2023/11/09/why-migration-is-in-such-a-mess-once-more.
- Wood, Zoe. “The Fashion World Speaks Out: “without Immigration, We’d Be Selling Potato Sacks.”” *The Guardian*, 14 Oct. 2017,
www.theguardian.com/fashion/2017/oct/14/fashion-world-immigration-migrant-workers.

Yeginsu, Ceylan. “Benetton “Migrants” Ads Draw Outrage for Using Photos of Real Migrants.” *The New York Times*, 21 June 2018,

www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/world/europe/benetton-ad-migrants.html.

Zhirkov, Kirill. “Social Dominance Orientation and Differential Affect toward Immigrant Origin Groups: Evidence from Three Immigration-Receiving Countries.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 85, Nov. 2021, pp. 170–183, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.09.014>.

Zineldin, Mosad. *Transformational Leadership Behavior, Emotions, and Outcomes: Health Psychology Perspective in the Workplace*. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 1 Feb. 2017.

SITOGRAPHY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwvAgDCOdU4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-grjIUWkoBA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZmlRtpzwos>