Branding Paradigm Shift:
The Example of “Eastern European Men School”

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31 May 2018

Abstract

In the age of information, the consumers become increasingly more perceptive about the common strategies that marketers employ in order to promote their product, as well as have it stand out in comparison to those of competitors. This is due to over-exposure to trending branding paradigms, which the customers grow resistant to these techniques. This leads to the necessity to differentiate one's brand and find a manner of alternative strategies, which involve the employment of unconventional techniques.

The goals of the paper are achieved through the method of critical discourse analysis that is applied within the research section of the paper, where it is used to extract information that helps define the initial brand identity of "Vytautas", as well as the way it was changed through the unorthodox advertisement.

The paper draws strong inspiration from Holt's 2002 text, that defines the idea of context of advertisements' relying on varying, alternate reality, present within the content of the advertisement. Furthermore, the examples of cultural and historical marketing, as noted by Holt (2004), Kaptan (2010), and Klumbyte (2010) are similarly referred to, due to their insight on the branding paradigms.

The paper relies on social phenomena, such as identity, stereotypes and truthiness, which provide an insight on the context of the primary analyzed advertisement, allowing the primary character, as well as his discourse to be assessed. Ultimately, definition of terms, such as brand and its identity, allow the understanding of the concepts, within the context of the paper, providing a common ground between the author and the reader.

Drawing inspiration from authors who explored examples relying on marketing trends, the paper takes a point of departure from brand identities, built through use of the common techniques. Taking the example of a 2013 commercial "Eastern European Men School", created to promote a Lithuanian brand of mineral water "Vytautas", and conducting an analysis of the discourse of the advertisement, as well as its subjects, the paper studies a bizarre marketing example that strays from the conventional branding paradigms. The example was chosen due to the fact that while it was meant for a local audience, it had attracted a large international attention. The paper strives to define the brand identity that the product's marketing team had created for it via the chosen example of advertisement, as well as how its discourse differs from the conventional branding paradigms.

The findings of the paper note that the discourse of the analyzed advertisement causes the brand's identity to partially shift from its initial roots, leading to assumption, that while the commercial employs some of the previous techniques (such as product placement, humor, and some cultural and

historical context), they are used in a more sardonic manner. At the same time, the brand also seems to shift its discourse from the common branding paradigms by employing the aforementioned marketing techniques to indirectly promote safety and social tolerance.

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Introduction

From the archetypical infomercial catchphrase-filled pitches of Billy Mays and Anthony Sullivan to memorable template of Barrack Obama's presidential campaign, to shocking social adverts on cigarette packs and finally colorful imagery and slogans of television commercials, the marketers seem to be consistently trying to find new ways of reaching out to the viewer. More so than simply creating and tailoring brands after celebrities, the advertisers discover ways of using not more than couple of minutes of the given time to create motion pictures in their own right. Doing so not to employ a well-known personality's name or status to endorse a product, but more to tell a story that genuinely makes the viewer emotionally invest themselves in the advertisement's plot. The marketers seem to use a plethora of techniques to attract the viewer's attention, with some of the most popular examples being an attempt to appeal to the society by forming their imagery around certain social or cultural themes and values.

Altogether, the marketers seem to stop at nothing to establish their brands as those of value, appealing to the audience via everything from the basic human needs, to moral values and even cultural pride. And it is almost as though the discourses of brand identities are most commonly set on these paradigms. However, every now and then some more puzzling, even bizarre examples of marketing can be noted. From the loud advertisements of Old Spice, to the comically destructive commercials of Panda Cheese, the marketers seem to adapt to the consumers, appealing to their sense of novelty. Though a number of these unusual advertisements are intended for a certain audience, they often wind up attaining a more international status and acknowledgement, seemingly growing past its marketing-oriented roots, towards a whole different status, met with laughter, criticism, or even plain confusion. At the first sight, these advertisements have very little to do with examples of the brands that seem to strive to make their brand name synonymous with moral or social values, ideologies, or cultural principles. Such is an example of "Eastern European Men School", where the marketers attempt to attract the audience with controversy.

Throughout the 5 years after it was published, the short film has achieved a large amount of publicity by being viewed 2,554,792 views, over 35,000 likes (positive interactions) and 782 dislikes (negative interactions) and 2,134 comments. and the cumulative duration of the short film watched reaches roughly 10 years of runtime (data retrieved from the video statistics section of the short film within the YouTube video-sharing website, on the 28th of May 2018). Overall, the video has attracted interest of not only its target audience (individuals who have access to purchase the promoted brand), yet also attained an international popularity in form of foreign viewers. Exactly due to its bizarre

techniques an international attention, the commercial can be considered an intriguing example of unorthodox marketing.

With bizarre and unusual examples of seemingly satirical, self-deprecating marketing within "Eastern European Men School" it leads to a question: **How does the example of "Eastern European Men School" attract its consumers and how does this example of bizarre marketing relate to the conventional branding paradigms?**

Problem Statement

The initial notion of the problem arises from the fact that Vytautas's "Eastern European Men School" appears to stray from the common branding paradigms, rather than simply relying on applying certain values to its brand name, the marketers take a risky, unorthodox approach, creating a bizarre, satirical short film, that seems to poke as much fun at itself, as it refers to potential social structures. In spite of this, the short film has acquired not only the attention of the consumers that the mineral water was aimed to, yet also international audience, gaining a large number of views. This, in turn, leads to questioning the reasoning behind why a seemingly bizarre, unusual commercial acquired a large amount of attention, as well as its potential roots in conventional branding paradigms.

Methodology

Research Design

In order to answer the questions posed by the paper, the paper first defines the used research method (Critical Discourse Analysis). Further on, the texts of authors, that the paper draws inspiration and some of the concepts from are reviewed, in order to note the context surrounding the problem of the paper. This further leads to definition of key terms and concepts that either relate to the research, or, within the research, aid the definition of the short film, or its discourse (i.e. defining the social identity of the film subject allows looking for potential appeal he has towards the audience).

Within the analysis section of the paper, the short film, "Eastern European Men School", that serves as an advertisement for a Lithuanian brand of mineral water "Vytautas" is investigated, referring to the texts of the mentioned authors, as well as the theoretical part of the paper. The research is conducted by relying on the method of critical discourse, thus the language used, the subject (his appearance, intonation, mimicry, etc.), the atmosphere and potential hinted context are studied.

First and foremost, the initial brand identity is defined, in reference to previous advertisements of this brand.

Following up to the former, a large amount of attention is paid to the subject (the primary character) of the film, who's social identity, in correlation to the stereotype he represents, is defined, noting down potential social (even historical) context that it may relate to.

Furthermore, the atmosphere (relating to the concept of the parallel reality within the advertisements) is defined, hinting at the potential laws of the reality of the advertisement.

Relying on that, the values that the brand identity seems to attain are defined and noted down, allowing some degree of understanding as to what is Vytautas's brand identity, created by this commercial, leading up to the answering of the first half of the problem formulation.

By comparing the adjusted brand identity to the initial one, the brand's relation to the trending branding paradigms is defined.

The analysis focuses on conducting a critical study of discourse of an unorthodox example of a commercial, relying on it to answer the questions posed by this paper, allowing to understand not only the popularity of the advert, yet also potentially delving into the shift of the trending branding paradigms, as well as how it influences the discourses of marketers.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is an umbrella term defining the study of communication or otherwise expression. This section covers the general aspects of the discourse analysis, as well as ventures to more specific variations of the theory that are applied within the research section of this paper.

Discourse, as a term, is defined as one that has multiple meanings, authors appear to define it as anything from *"language in use"* (Brown and Yule, 1983) to *"language above the sentence or above the clause"* (Stubbs, 1983), to various context that relate to the use of language (Baker and Ellece, 2010). Similarly, while the application of the analysis may vary, at its roots, the general description of the method of discourse analysis is that of: *"an approach to language that can be applied to forms of communication other than talk"* (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, this explains that the discourse analysis is something that applies beyond common verbal communication (i.e. text, gestures). Notably, discourse analysis should not be considered an opposite of content analysis, in-fact it relies on content analysis as a form of inspiration (Bryman, 2016). Essentially, this means that whilst the discourse analysis may study the common spoken communication, it also takes a step further to look into other types of communication that relate to it, as well as the potential meanings behind it.

However, as noted before, the discourse analysis does not possess the single-minded approach of the content analysis (Bryman, 2016), instead the discourse analysis is more of an umbrella term, as it covers *"several different approaches"* (Bryman, 2016) under its name and thus making it essential to differentiate and apply specific aspects of the method in order to apply it to the study in question.

Within the *Discourse Analysis (2000)*, Gill distinguishes the four common themes of the discourse analysis. As further discussed by Bryman (2016), discourse is:

- A topic
- Constructive
- A form of action
- Rhetorically organized

In order to understand the discourse theory better, the themes will be further detailed.

The initial theme notes the discourse analysis to be a topic. In the *Social Research Methods*, the author regards it as: *"a focus of enquiry itself and not just a means of gaining access to aspects of social reality that lie behind it"* (Bryman 2016). Essentially, the author defines discourse analysis as analysis of language and communication, i.e. not a research only to acquire the background information on a specific topic, but to analyze the communication and its use. This means that whilst the discourse

analysis remains a means to acquire specific information, it is, additionally, serving as a method to analyze the language used to ask for it, as well as receive it.

Subsequent theme defines the language as a means of constructing a view of the social reality (Bryman, 2016). The author claims that the use of language creates and defines a specific view of social reality, in a sense, the theme relates to the themes of social constructivism, which, as noted, defines that a specific reality is formed through interaction between a number of subjects. Essentially, here, language is a form of interaction that leads to creation of specific structure, i.e. a personalized view of reality.

Penultimate theme defines language as a way of acting upon something, author states that: *"Language is a way of accomplishing acts, such as attributing blame, presenting oneself in a particular way, or getting an argument across. Moreover, a person's discourse is affected by the context that he or she is confronting."* (Bryman, 2016). Essentially, similarly to expressing or forming one's view of the reality, language is a means of practice and a way of creating some form of impact within social environment. This can be anything from aiming to express one-self by using a specific type of vocabulary, intonation, expressions to an attempt to influence the other individuals or circumstances. Depending on the already present circumstances (such as already existing views or opinions) an individual may have to resort to a different approach (i.e. different language – discourse). According to Bryman: *"People seek to accomplish things when they talk or when they write."* (Bryman, 2016), essentially implying that communication can serve not only as a goal, but also as a way to achieve it, something that furthers an individual's aims. Ultimately, this discourse theme defines that while language may not only simply construct and get one's view across, yet also serve as a means to an end, i.e. something that can impact situation towards a favorable outcome. In addition to that, the approach of the individual may change, strongly depending on the circumstances regarding the subject.

The last theme analyzed by Bryman is the rhetorical organization, present within the discourse analysis. In that regard, relating to the previous two themes, discourse is used to determine validity of a specific view or statement. Essentially, discourse is something that is employed to define importance or truthiness of one statement over another. In the words of the author the discourse *"is concerned with establishing one version of the world in the face of competing versions."* (Bryman, 2016).

Overall, the themes identified by Gill (2000) and further defined by Bryman (2016) note that an analysis of discourse is likely going to focus on the language used, not only what it conveys, the fact

that the language is used to construct a particular view or convey it as a more valid one among the others.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Given a variation of methods that fall under the umbrella term of discourse analysis, it is vital to specialize and thus select a specific method that then is employed within the analysis section of this paper. For the purposes of this study, critical discourse analysis has been chosen.

At its simplest, critical discourse analysis is defined as:

"Unlike many other forms of linguistic analysis, CDA is not only concerned with words on a page but also involves examining social context – for example, asking how and why the words came to be written or spoken and what other texts are being referenced by them." (Baker and Ellece, 2010)

Essentially, critical discourse analysis does more than simply investigate the meanings of the text, rather, it takes a step further, looking for insight in the meanings behind it, taking notice of a number of secondary aspects (i.e. something that is not explicitly said), such as grimaces, implied expressions (such as emotions, intonations), the type of language used, as well as potential background information (or context).

The critical discourse analysis seeks out information that may be initially hidden away, in-fact it *"criticizes the mainstream linguistic approaches for taking conventions and practices at face value, as objects to be described in a way which obscures their political and ideological investment"* (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). Fundamentally, the critical discourse analysis is not only the study of the content of an expression (i.e. a message), but also one of the context surrounding it. It makes no difference if the context is intellectual, emotional, social, or cultural, the critical discourse analysis thrives on the analysis of deeper meanings and reasons behind simple messages.

Additionally, authors distinguish a sequence of questions that may emerge whilst a critical discourse analysis is being conducted. Basically, in order to access the context of the message, beyond the question of *"what the message is?"* it is possible to ask (and answer) questions, while analyzing the content of the actual messages. Essentially it is a matter of *who, how, why and when* (van Dijk, 1997), in addition to *"to what effect"* (Bryman, 2016). With these questions answered, the context behind the content of the message (notably, here, message is used to refer to not only what is written or said, yet also otherwise expressed) unveils. Asking *"who?"* provides an answer to the author's circumstances, potential ideology, historical background, cultural and social values, generally anything that pertains the sender of the message. *"How?"* gives an insight on the message itself, the

language and vocabulary used, the potential expressions, grimaces, emotions conveyed. *"Why?"* explains the reasoning and potential goals of behind the use of the message, substantially, what is the message trying to achieve. *"When?"* further deepens the understanding of the circumstances of the message, whether it was expressed during, between, after some kind of event (with the event being any general occurrence or lack thereof). Lastly, Bryman's (2016) *"to what effect?"* reveals the by-product of the message, in essence, what are the consequences of the message. All in all, the first four questions reveal the cause and provide insight on the causality, while the last one simply focuses on what the message accomplishes.

All things considered, while the critical discourse analysis allows to access and study the content of the message itself, it furthermore allows and encourages to access everything that is no immediately seen, in order to understand the studied phenomenon better.

Critical Evaluation of the Method

Given that the discourse analysis allows the researcher to access not only the base content of the subjects of the study, yet also the underlying context, the research is a qualitative one in its nature. This is done in order to achieve the aims of the research and as opposed to the chosen methods, the quantitative ones would fall short, as they would not permit to sufficiently analyze the context in question, or, worse, simply be utterly incompatible.

Furthermore, the upsides of the qualitative research include an ability to conduct an in-depth research of the topic, as well as attain the understanding of the underlying context easier. This is done due to the fact that a (critical) discourse analysis focuses upon both the analysis of a content (on a lower scale, secondary focus), as well as analysis of the context of the content (on a higher scale, primary focus). Essentially, this displays its superiority over quantitative analysis in this case, as it is simply better suited for the task at hand.

On the other hand, the chosen method is not without fault, and, due to the variety of techniques that can be considered a part of the discourse analysis. This makes it a complicated, if not puzzling task, as not all of the methods, that may fall under the umbrella term of discourse analysis, may be valid (similarly to qualitative methods). That is why it was necessary to define a specific method (critical discourse analysis), which, thus, solved the potential issue that may arise.

Alternatively, discourse analysis displays another weakness, in the sense that while it may provide a massive insight on the context of the analyzed content, it relies on the understanding (and potential additional study) that the researcher may have to conduct, in order to understand the underlying context a bit better. This may lead to some degree of subjectivity being displayed by the author, as

while one may take a number of measures (such as potentially using a number of sources to research a phenomenon) to prevent it, it might not be entirely possible to completely do so, as, to some point, it would deny human nature.

Ultimately, due to its strengths and ability to overcome the method's flaws, the critical discourse analysis remains the optimal method for this paper's research.

Literature Review

Within this section of the paper, several authors and their insights on commercial marketing and adverts are addressed. Notably, different examples of marketing campaigns and their foci on different values are noted here. This provides some comprehension as to how varying brand identities can be run. Fundamentally, the section covers the concepts of brand identities built around the concepts of historical context and nostalgia (Klumbyte, 2010); nationalism and cultural context (Kaptan, 2010); as well as number of marketing examples noted by Holt, relating to marketing that focuses on fulfilling consumer's physiological needs, as well as emotional marketing.

Neringa Klumbyte, "The Soviet Sausage Renaissance"

Klumbyte, within her article, defines the necessary historical background, of Lithuania being the first country to retract from the Soviet Union in pursuit of sovereignty. The author reflects the importance of the step in the country's sovereign future, noting the seeming utter abolishment of the Soviet relics present within the country:

"Repudiating the past has been part of building the new European present and future: Soviet statues were demolished; street and park names were changed; biographies and histories were rewritten; and new laws were passed guaranteeing the existence of the new nation-state." (Klumbyte 2010)

This hints at the country's strong interest to not only take a different direction within the future, yet to also rid itself of anything reminiscent of the previous time of oppression, to distance itself from that part of its history.

Notably, author observes that within the 1998, roughly a decade after the country's separation from the Soviet regime, a local meat producer and manufacturer "Samsonas" has released a new product line, under the name of "Soviet". Unsurprisingly, this was met with critique from the country's spheres of journalism, politics and academics (Klumbyte 2010).

Regardless, in spite of the Soviet imagery, the product line was in-fact met with interest from the consumers, going on to become rather successful, as the author notes:

"Although the public space was purged of objects associated with the Soviet past, Tarybinės dešrelės (Soviet sausages) emerged in the consumer market in 1998 and reoccupied memories, dinner tables, and bodies. "Soviet" sausage brands overwhelmed competing brands and emerged as a clear leader in the market" (Klumbyte, 2010)

Furthermore, within the conducted interviews, the author noted that the correspondents spoke of the quality and affordability of meat products during the Soviet times (Klumbyte, 2010), further

supported by the manufacturer, “Samsonas”, noting their choice for the name not out of some form of a pro-Soviet movement, but in an attempt to note the quality and freshness of their products. Basically, this leads to an explanation (or interpretation) of the choice of the brand identity being focused on a period where meat products were seemingly of a higher quality.

However, in spite of a degree of positivity towards the products (of the Soviet era) and the seeming imagery of quality, the reality remains questionable as something potentially viewed on a warped, nostalgia-induced manner. Klumbyte quotes a respondent, who contests, even shuns the belief that the Soviet-era meat produce was that of a high quality (as well as the use of Soviet name and imagery), noting that some “meat” products, in-fact, contained no meat, and a number of individuals simply resorted to theft of groceries, from their respective work places, in order to survive. (Klumbyte, 2010).

In the end, while this leads to the overall quality (of the meat products in the Soviet era) as well as the validity of the name “Soviet” for a high-quality product, something questionable. Regardless, “Samsonas’s” “Soviet” sausages gained a favor within the consumers, who went on to indeed consider the name of “Soviet” sausage synonymous with high-quality, leaving it irrelevant whether the historical context is accurate here or not.

Klumbyte’s work shows an example of a brand identity, that may have initially been met with controversy, yet nonetheless, attained a large number of consumers, causing its name became synonymous with quality. Ultimately, while this could be, in a way, caused by the quality of the products, there is little doubt, that the reference to historical context and reliance on potentially sentimental past, has given the product line a necessary push. In that regard, Klumbyte’s work displays a nostalgia-centric (relying on historical context) brand identity that “Samsonas” has seemed to create for the “Soviet” product line.

Yesim Kaptan, “Selling “Turkishness”: Nationalism and globalization in Turkish advertising”

Similarly, to the example of the “Soviet” sausages, come the examples noted by Kaptan within her dissertation. Here she explores the concept of nationalism within the advertisements of Turkish products, both locally and globally.

The author reflects on the historical background of the country, as she describes the change of country’s state from an Empire to a Republic, noting the importance of both modernization of the country in a more Western tradition, whilst remaining nationalistic, by focusing on its cultural heritage (Kaptan, 2010). This helps define and emphasize and important factor of the Turkish people: pride in national and cultural aspects of the country. The reason why this is important to note is the

fact that the context and the plot of the Turka Cola commercials relate to various customs present within the Turkish culture.

Describing the commercial of one of the analyzed products, Cola Turka, the author notes a number of oddities within it: while it was intended for Turkish audience, the advert is set in New York and is primarily in English, with Turkish subtitles and a seeming hybrid of Turkish and English being used to set the theme, similarly to a beginning of a movie, where the seeming protagonist runs into an acquaintance(Kaptain, 2010). The secondary subject of the film becomes important, due to the fact that he is possessing an almost cowboy-like appearance (clad in a denim shirt, a seeming leather vest and possessing a cowboy hat). Seemingly, the appearance of the second man is meant to represent a clearly American individual, likely drawing inspiration from the American Western genre films.

Further on, Kaptan details the conversation between the two individuals. Seemingly, the protagonist is utterly confused by the other man, who appears to speak a mixture of Turkish and English, exhibiting interest in Turkish football scene, naming famous player and displaying cultural intricacies attributed to Turkey (insisting on covering the protagonist's check, as well as kissing him on both cheeks to bid farewell) (Kaptan, 2010). The author soon notes that the strange behavior of the man in cowboy outfit is soon attributed to the beverage he is drinking, Cola Turka, and it is as if the commercial differentiates itself and the brand from the global American brands (i.e. Coca Cola and Pepsi), by seemingly saying *"This is Cola Turka; it is ours to such extent that it can "Turkify" even an American" (Kaptain, 2010)*. The author's description of the advert serves a purpose other than to describe the plot – it notes down peculiarities (i.e. the hybrid language, Turkish customs, and the seeming reason behind them – the beverage).

With the product's competitors being globally accepted and known brands, the Cola Turka differentiates itself by drawing upon the Turkish sense of nationalism. It stands out by making a man clad in outfit that could very well be attributed to a character from an American Western, act in Turkish tradition, even speak Turkish, while consuming a beverage that is not American but Turkish. In that regard Kaptan's description and interpretation of the advert goes to illustrate an example, where cultural and national pride are used to attribute a beverage, that could normally be considered "American" to Turkey. In that regard, the author's analysis of the Cola Turka commercial is an example of national marketing.

Douglas B. Holt "How brands become icons: the principles of cultural branding"

While Holt's publication serves another purpose within the paper, in the sense it provides a degree of understanding to some of the terms used within the paper, it notes a number of examples of brands

that build their brand identity based on specific values. Holt's insight upon these brands is highly valuable and thus it would be wrongful to disregard it. Namely, this section will be addressing Holt's examples of a brand of soft drink – Coca Cola, as well as a beer brand – Corona.

The author notes that Corona has grown to be a successful brand, basing their brand identity on two different things, during two different time periods. Initially, Holt describes that Corona had achieved a status of popularity, due to what it embodied as a seeming college-related partying beverage, due to relatively cheap price and seeming plain authenticity of its packaging (Holt, 2004). Author notes that the brand had simple attained popularity due to the way it was treated by its consumers, they were in-fact the ones that had assimilated Corona into their acts of partying (here, Holt provides an example of putting a wedge of a lime into a bottle of Corona being likened to a "party ritual" of taking shots of tequila with lemon and salt) (Holt, 2004). Ultimately, author notes that Corona has seemed to lose its popularity, as the local distributor (in the US) had neglected to further boost its popularity and utterly relied on the seeming word-of-mouth of its consumer, who simply moved on to other beverages (Holt, 2004).

This example of Corona's initial brand identity embodies the idea of meeting an individual's basic needs. In the sense, it regards the recreational needs of young adults that rely on having their downtime within circles of like-minded individuals, partaking in festivities, usually attributed to the youth. These festivities are often fueled by inebriation and other forms of debauchery. Corona's initial attempt at creating its identity was highly successful, yet short-lived. Ultimately, it could be assumed that this was caused by the fact that Corona's distributor had simply neglected to maintain its identity.

Taking notice of the situation and seemingly learning from its mistakes, the distributor took a different approach. Holt notes example of a commercial of an *"idyllic beach scene – what Americans understood as a Mexican beach" (Holt, 2004)* that seemingly displayed a polar opposite of the previous image of Corona – utter, undisturbed tranquility. Author notes that the seeming culmination of the advertisement campaign was where a man, that had been previously skipping stones, instead, reached out for a pager (that had conveniently went off), only to fling it as though it had been another pebble (Holt, 2004).

Seemingly, in contrast to its previous imagery, Corona was now creating an image of rest, tranquility, the treatment of the pager (as though it had been another stone to skip) was a seeming protest to life's attempt to bring the subjects of the commercial to reality (in the sense that pager likely represents work and certain responsibility to it and tossing it away signifies the fact that Corona permitted the subject, as well as the consumer, to take a break from everything and relax). The author notes that

this campaign was met with an increased customer base (Holt, 2004), who once more relied on Corona to bring the sensation of recreation. Though, this time, as opposed to lascivious partying, it was quiet, calm time relaxation and tranquility.

Ultimately, this example goes to show not only the potential shift of paradigm within a brand's identity, yet also the fact that a brand's identity may rely on more physiological aspects of a consumer's needs (as opposed to tempting customers with quality ingredients ("Soviet" sausages) and appealing to their sense of national pride (Cola Turka)).

Another example of brand identity noted by the author is Coca Cola. While the initial example of Coca Cola's brand identity was reminiscent of Cola Turka (in the sense that it was an example of cultural marketing, although focused on American culture and values), Holt notes that Coca Cola's identity has taken a turn towards emotional branding.

Holt describes the change within the values displayed by Coca Cola by giving an example of commercial. The advert depicted by the author, focuses on two young girls, eventually joined by other youthful individuals of different countries, even cultures (as noted by their outfits and features), each holding a bottle of Coca Cola and singing: *"I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony."* (Holt, 2004). The author notes that what had seemed to start as a folk song, slowly turned into an anthem (Holt, 2004).

The advert described by Holt, seemingly, focuses on positive relations, acceptance, tolerance among individuals of different cultures. Here, the symbolism, of the song, imagery of each one of the singing youth holding onto the beverage attempts to grant Coca Cola an almost eponymous symbolism. Where the brand's identity was focused on strongly American symbolism, now it held a different value, one which seemed to unite people.

In that regard, as opposed to cultural branding, Coca Cola strongly relied on appealing to the individuals via their emotions. Similarly, to Corona, it can be considered an almost complete opposite of the previous brand identity – where there once stood values of American pride, now remained ideals of unity within varying cultures. Through that, Coca Cola had seemingly attempts to create imagery of peaceful symbolism, thus appealing to consumers' emotional satisfaction.

Douglas B. Holt "Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding"

The final analyzed text differs from the prior three, in the sense, while they were used to establish different types of marketing that brands might employ in order to build their identities, this one draws inspiration from the phenomenon of customers influencing the branding trends.

Noting that the branding techniques are hardly stable and, in-fact, are consistently evolving (Holt, 2002), author distinguishes that product marketing and brand identities are formed based on certain trending techniques, or branding paradigms. Essentially, marketers rely on the already existent branding themes, that influence the manner in which a brand is built (Holt, 2002). Furthermore, within the article, Holt muses the idea of consumers influencing the branding trends and paradigms, he notes that *"Consumer culture is the ideological infrastructure that undergirds what and how people consume and sets the ground rules for marketers' branding activities" (Holt, 2002)*. Fundamentally, the author notes that the consumers' choices and preferences strongly impact the way brand identities are formed, as well as how products are marketed. In that regard, brands-building is influenced by two factors: the existent paradigms and the consumers.

In that regard, Holt brings forth two statements:

"1. Firms compete to add value to their brands, guided by the principles of the extant branding paradigm. Aggressive firms continually push the envelope, innovating new techniques that push the principles to their logical extreme. These techniques create contradictions in consumer culture.

2. As consumers pursue the various statuses and desires that are valued within the extant consumer culture, they become collectively more knowledgeable and skilled in enacting the culture, producing an inflation in what is valued. This inflation, combined with increasing literacy in how branding operates, produces reflexivity that challenges the accepted status of marketer's actions." (Holt, 2002)

Essentially, the author notes a certain degree of symbiosis between the actions of the marketers and the actions of the consumers. By relying on the relevant (i.e. present at that very moment) examples of marketing, brands form their identities and aim to acquire new degrees of worth to their customers. Similarly, the customers wish to acquire their own goals (be it satisfaction of physiological needs, or ways to validate or even differentiate self), they rely on the current, popular trends (i.e. consumer culture). By pursuing this, the customers understand these trends (and in that regard, brand building) better, eventually leading to the necessity of creation of 'something new' (i.e. new trends, new brand identities, new products, something to differentiate). Ultimately, this causes some degree of mutual influence between the brands and their purchasers.

While there is a degree of mutual influence between the consumers and the brands, it is important to note, that in the end, it is the brands that adapt to the needs of the consumers. The author notes that as the currently prevalent branding themes become more common and more easily understood by the audience, they lose their efficiency (Holt, 2002). In that sense, the consumers gain a certain degree of resistance to it, either due to finding these branding paradigms dull, or by simply losing interest in them (or, one could even simplify it by saying that they get bored of commonly seen advertisements).

As an example, marketers might rely on a specific, effective format of television commercials, which makes sense due to a degree of effectiveness of these commercials. However, as the same brand (or even multiple other brands) continuously uses same format, displaying same values and techniques, the advertisements grow less effective, leading to the necessity to create new ways of reaching the customers.

Ultimately, overuse of specific marketing and branding techniques, cause a degree of oversaturation, which leads to these techniques becoming less and less effective, as the consumers get exposed to them more. In that sense, making the customers resistant or even immune to certain marketing. This creates a need to 'surprise' the customers by finding new ways to have the brand stand out from the others.

Sub-Conclusion

The texts from the three authors cover varying types of marketing, from historical and nostalgia-focused marketing example of "Soviet" sausages, to cultural pride inducing Cola Turka, and finally, physiological need-fulfilling Corona and emotionally gratifying Coca Cola. The analyzed texts grant the understanding, as well as example of already existent foci of marketers and grant the study of this paper some valid context and potential examples of comparison. Realistically, while the example analyzed within the paper greatly varies from each and every example analyzed within this section of the paper, number of traits of emotional, historical and cultural marketing can be noted within it. Final analyzed text provides strong basis for the reasoning behind the commercial (studied by this paper), as its unorthodox nature could be attributed to an attempt to combat consumer resistance. Essentially, the texts covered by the literature review provide both inspiration and a basis for the research.

Theoretical Framework

This section of the paper details and explains the theory of social constructivism, as it is used as the theoretical aspect of the paper. Notably, number of terms and phenomena are similarly detailed, in order to acquire understanding of certain themes and aspects of the analyzed film. While some terms are defined only to provide an understanding to, otherwise, vague terms, others are used as a theoretical basis in order to acquire data that leads to answering the problem and reaching the goals of the paper.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism, as a concept, is explained as a social structure formed by an interaction between a number of people (both individual or group motivation does not have an impact). Essentially, the intercommunication between a number of social subjects can lead to a creation of a *"common-sense knowledge"* (Psathas, 2013), fundamentally becoming something that influences the way a specific phenomenon is perceived by the involved persons, and, perhaps, eventually, uninvolved bystanders (in the sense, where the uninvolved bystanders are considered individuals that did not create the specific perception of a concept).

Social constructivism, as a term, initially came up in the book "The Social Construction of Reality" by Berger and Luckmann (1966). Here it is implied that contrasting cultures and societies have different ways of perceiving the very same phenomenon (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Essentially, this implies that a specific viewpoint or a manner of understanding something, remains subjective and based on meanings created within a group that an individual belongs to. Naturally, a person's understanding of specific aspects of reality is influenced by the group he or she belongs to. This means that the group's ideology, cultural and moral norms, historical background and even preference for specific kind of mentality, creates a certain manner of understanding or perceiving something.

Furthermore, due to the fact that a specific view is subjective to a specific society, the value of something could be underestimated (or considered a given) by one group, whilst the other could potentially have a completely different view (Psathas, 2013). Moreover, Collin (2013) notes the interpretation of views, understanding and beliefs of specific phenomenon being formed due to historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as communication being something that: *"constitutes rather than reflects reality"* (Collin, 2013). Basically, a specific perception of a reality is downright characteristic and subjective in correspondence to the context present within a group, where interactions are something that form the understanding of the world.

Lastly, Arriola (2013) notes that while in realism, social structures are viewed as something that cannot be changed, in social constructivism, the very same structures are something that can change, vary, and be adapted (Arriola, 2013). Meaning that even if an understanding or view of a specific phenomenon is bound to a unique background context, it does not imply that the context cannot evolve or change and in turn influence the understanding (i.e. acceptation of a new custom, adapting different values, even something like technological or otherwise advancement that would permit a new perspective). The context itself can change and a view of a phenomenon adapts with it.

In the terms of the paper, there is a strong connection between individuals expressing themselves through interaction (or language) which resulting in a social construct (i.e. manner in which something is viewed or perceived). This relates to the discourse analysis, specifically covering its themes (second to fourth). Fundamentally, this leads to a connection between the theory of social constructivism and methodology chosen for the study within the paper.

In addition to that, the short film forms a connection between itself and its viewers (at the same time, the subject of the film too creates a connection between itself and his audience). The connection manifests through several factors: the seeming interaction between the subject of the film (active, sender) and the audience (passive, receiver). Through seeming hints at details, sharing of tips and 'lessons' that the subject of the film 'teaches' the audience, a particular context is formed, and in a sense, a group, containing the film subject and the viewer, is formed. Essentially, this leads to shared knowledge between the viewer and the subject of the film.

Social Identity

As a whole, an individual's identity relates to an individual's defining traits. Identity:

"*gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live in. Identity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not." (Woodward 1997)*

In that regard, the author defines identity as something that, to a point, connects (in the sense, that some traits of their identity are similar or relatable) people and allows understanding of them as individuals. Essentially it defines both the likeness among different people: *"Identity is about identification with others whom we assume are like us (if not the same), at least in some significant ways"* (Buckingham, 2008), as well as characteristic divergence of their traits. Furthermore, the former author notably adds *"Often identity is marked by difference."* (Woodward, 1997), thus hinting that while similar traits grant individuals an ability to relate to each other, the more defining point of

it is, in the end, the differences, something that makes individuals distinguished among others. Fundamentally, identity can be defined as a set of traits that defines an individual.

Similarly, social identity can be considered one of the two: one, a person's individuality, second, their relationship with a group of multiple individuals (Buckingham, 2008). Slightly deviating from the concept of identity, social identity focuses on not only an individual's defining traits, yet also how they blend (or fit into) a social construct – a group. This, in turn, according to authors, allows the individual to develop their identity and the manner in which they are perceived within a certain group (Turner and Oakes, 1986). Basically, this leads to an individual's identity, partially being defined by their role within a group, as well as how they perceive it.

Due to the fact that an individual develops their social identity whilst being a part of a group, it can be said that they are influenced by it, meanwhile, similarly, causing some form of influence towards the group, and thus, the other members of it. In general, it can be said that an individual creates their own social identity, whilst mutually influencing and being influenced by the group.

Furthermore, not unlike the theory of social constructivism, membership within a group, comes with shared context: moral and social values, historical background, et cetera. This includes them potentially possessing certain common beliefs. Thus, social identity of an individual who might possess traits that the group might find favorable, is likely to be appreciated more than an individual whose traits are more akin to an anathema to those of the group. Essentially, much like within the theory of social constructivism, different traits may be perceived differently within different groups.

Granted, however, an individual does not acquire traits that can be attributed to their identity solely from their interactions with a single group. Rather, multiple factors influence a social identity from social status, to education to particular values and ideologies (Buckingham, 2008).

Concluding, a person's social identity is a set of traits that define them within and outside of groups. It can be both the manner they perceive themselves, as well as the manner in which they are perceived, essentially creating slightly different senses of the same individual, the self-perception versus group-perception.

In the terms of the paper, social identity relates to the theory of social constructivism. It thrives on the idea that aspects of an individual's sense of self are molded by interactions with other individuals. Further relating to the research comes the idea that creation of a specific social identity of an individual, within a commercial, results in the subject of the commercial being viewed in a particular way or invoking specific feeling with the imagery.

The concept of social identity emerges within the analyzed short film in two ways: the identity of an ideal man, that is both described and, seemingly, embodied by the subject of the film and each individual spectator's view of him. Essentially, the former manner, relates to the formation of one's own social identity, while the latter is the way it is perceived by others. Due to weird, if not vulgar, at times, image that the subject of the film seems to exude, the audience winds up having a certain reaction, be it humorous, disgust, or otherwise. Essentially, it is important to note down the traits, and define the social identity of the subject of the film, as it is one of the main foci of the commercial and thus one of the main tools that the commercial employs.

Stereotypes

At its simplest, stereotype is a type of phenomenon that relates to formation of a very generic understanding of something (that being an individual, subject, phenomenon, object, etc.) Essentially, stereotypes are highly generalized, if not condensed mental images of something. In that regard they can pertain specific physical traits of a group of individuals (e.g. Goths wear black), a general mindset or preferences of a group (e.g. all children hate eating broccoli), even the capabilities of individuals (e.g. men are better drivers, all Asians are good at mathematics). Stereotypes generally appear to be (similarly to truthiness) based on assumption of something, rather than legitimate knowledge. As such, there is usually very little data to support specific stereotypes.

Authors note that the concept of stereotypes possess three principles they: aid explanation (of something), save energy and are shared beliefs of a group (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears, 2002).

As the initial principles dictates, stereotypes can serve as a catalyst of providing insight on and comprehension of specific people or happenings. Through creation of a general image (of something) and then portraying it within examples, stories or otherwise, a potential initial impression of something can be formed. In that regard, it is possible to share a general idea of a phenomenon via a stereotype, which then, can be easily understood and referenced. This, as noted by authors, can be dangerous, however, as while stereotypes are useful in this manner, they can cause misinformation (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears, 2002). Essentially, by taking a specific piece of intelligence, gained through a stereotype, to heart, without questioning it in the slightest. In that regard, relating to the concept of truthiness, a stereotype might simply have traits of a genuine truth, but in reality couldn't be anywhere further from the actuality. This can be caused by a number of factors, ranging from belief that the source of the stereotype is trustworthy, to it aligning with an individual's personal or shared beliefs, to simply 'feeling' true. Altogether, stereotypes can highly aid in understanding something, by simplifying it, however, it should be always taken with a critical mind, so as to not attain a false impression.

The secondary principle highly relates to the first one, in the sense where stereotypes, as a tool of explaining something, are generalized beliefs. Rather than having to explain a full phenomenon, stereotypes focus on the very general traits, initial impressions and in that regard, simplify explanations. This, in turn, shortens the amount it takes to take in a particular topic.

The final principle relates to the theory of social constructivism, as the authors note, stereotypes can be caused by varying context, circumstances or historical backgrounds (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears, 2002). In that regard, certain stereotypes are common to specific groups, exactly due to the context the group might have with the subject of a potential stereotype. Fundamentally, they are shared by the groups and thus, one group might find a specific idea repulsive, due to a bad experience with it, others might have little trouble with it and might even encourage it (a potential example could be individuals encountering a dangerous predator in the wilds versus animal tamers, who would go as far as to embrace the very same predator). Simply put, as per general principle of social constructivism, stereotypes are subjective to groups, as they are beliefs formed due to group's context.

Furthermore, the final aspect of stereotypes, relates to the idea of misleading stereotypes. A member of a group, who had a bad experience with a specific object or person, might then generalize and relay the information towards the other members of the same group, leading to a potential false impression (of an object, person or phenomenon) and potential prejudice, formed by the members of the group that in-fact never encountered it. Thus, while stereotypes aid individuals in learning about something faster, they can be considered fairly dangerous, if misleading.

Within the paper, the concept of stereotypes is defined due to the fact that the study has some focus on the general impression built by the subjects of the analyzed film. In that regard, it focuses on general traits the subjects exhibit and the way their social identities are expressed, as well as potential connotations that might have towards the short film as a commercial. Essentially, the stereotype of the social identity (displayed by the film subject) is analyzed.

Brand and Brand Identity

The concept of brand is defined by Doyle, within the 4th edition of "A Dictionary of Marketing", here the author defines it as:

"A combination of attributes that gives a company, organization product, service concept, or even an individual, a distinctive identity and value relative to its competitors, its advocates, its stakeholders, and its customers." (Doyle, 2016)

Following the definition of Doyle, a brand is fundamentally something that sets a company apart from others. In that regard, it is the way it creates and embodies specific values in the eyes of others (i.e. both fellow companies and the targeted customers). Doyle further notes:

The attributes that make a brand are both tangible and intangible: a name, a visual logo or trademark, products, services, people, a personality, reputation, brand loyalty, mental associations, culture, and inherent values which, together, create a memorable, reassuring, and relevant brand image in the eye and mind of the beholder. (Doyle, 2016)

This further enhances the definition of a brand, providing aspects, or attributes that are considered a part of a specific brand. Notably a number of this are material (the name, logo, certain products), Holt notes that when a company first establishes itself or a line of products, the material attributes are hollow as they do not yet have any real history (Holt, 2004) (or contextual significance). Thus, comes the second part of the definition which further elaborates it via certain values and the feeling the brand gives off (in Doyle's terms: personality and mental associations).

In that regard a brand is a collection of a number of material (symbolism) and immaterial (morals, values, the way brand expresses itself, as well as its history) qualities that create a certain value and embody a number of qualities in the eyes of both the competitors, peers and the consumers. The combination of both is essential, as the purely material aspects have nothing truly supporting them (i.e. have no context), whilst the purely immaterial ones are often indistinguishable if not attributed to the material.

Doyle notes the brand identity as:

"The way in which various elements of a brand are made to appear externally, by means of a corporate logo or symbol, a product, service, packaging, slogan, or a physical environment. This can also mean the sum total of all the elements of branding that make the unique identity." (Doyle, 2016)

Not unlike the concept of social identity, the brand identity appears to be the manner in which brand is formed and viewed by the audience it is aimed to. Similarly, to the traits of an individual's identity, brand identity possesses certain symbolism or otherwise traits, when it comes to the way the product is presented to the viewer (be it the product's qualities, or the manner in which it is presented to the consumer).

Notably, Doyle's definition seems to strongly focus upon the more physical aspects of a brand identity (i.e. packaging, logo), only elaborating the more ideological aspects with notice of a slogan (Doyle, 2016). Arguably, however, the manner in which a brand's identity is portrayed is not limited to its

physical appearance. Doyle's notice of a slogan, a peculiar saying, characteristic to a specific brand, leads to the more principle and moral-oriented aspects of a brand's identity.

As hinted within other sections of this paper, a brand's identity can often be focused on the less tangible aspects (e.g. moral values (Holt's examples of Coca Cola, 2014), historical (Klumbyte, 2010) and cultural context (Kaptan, 2010)). This permits the brand identity to be centered less around providing only the basic needs that the product of a brand is offering to meet and rather, focus on granting certain moral satisfaction and the like. I.e. the brands enhance their identity by employing additional context to show that their brand is of high quality ("Soviet" sausages), displays nationalistic qualities (Cola Turka) or aims to cause friendly terms and prosperity among different groups and cultures (Coca Cola). Another example could include brands that are deemed ecological, generally implying a higher quality and additional care relating to its production.

Essentially, the act of building a brand identity not only on the tangible, physical aspects, permits a brand to be a part of something higher, i.e. making its products synonymous with specific qualities or aspects. In that regard, one could claim that consumption or use of certain brands allows not only the basic needs to be met, yet enhances (and, in a sense, permits he display) the potential social identity of the consumer (e.g. if you consume locally-produced goods, you exhibit certain nationalistic or even patriotic traits).

All in all, a brand identity is often created, based on a product's physical traits (e.g. logo, packaging, the function it serves), however, it is additionally focused around secondary aspects, such as the values they may represent or their origin.

Within the context of the paper, both brand and brand identity come as terms that are consistently used throughout it. It is necessary to define them, as, while the terms might feel self-explanatory, there is a potential for varying interpretations of it and thus, undefined it could lead to potential confusion.

Truthiness

The term of truthiness embodies a phenomenon relating to an individual possessing a subjective view of a particular event, phenomenon, social reality or otherwise, regardless of any particular factual data that may relate to it. While the term itself was first used by Stephen Colbert in 2005, a definition of it lies in A Dictionary of Journalism: *"A satirical term referring to something that feels as if it might be true, or that somebody (even a journalist) wishes to be true, regardless of the evidence."* (Harcup, 2014). Harcup notes that the use of truthiness as a term, is in-fact sardonic, even mocking.

This could likely be due to the fact that it pertains the feeling of something being true, rather than genuinely proven to be true.

Manjoo notes that truthiness is something that is usually presented as a factual statement, even possessing traits of one, yet, as it has no factual data to back it up, it remains a strongly baseless allegation (Manjoo, 2008). The abstraction itself relates to the interpretation of an individual (or a group of people) interpreting or understanding something based purely on their view upon it, the feeling it gives and, in a sense, (relating to social constructivism) the potential context the phenomenon in question might be portrayed in. However, this (or these) individual(s) often have very little objective information on the topic. Fundamentally, this leads to examples of simply assuming that something is true or, perhaps, an instinctual feeling that it is so.

In addition to that, it is not just a groundless belief that could form a truthiness. To some degree, it can be easily influenced by other factors (once again, relating to social constructivism), such as established cultural beliefs or values, or even personally-acquired ones, through certain relationship with the topic or phenomenon in question (say, through literature or personal history (or context)).

Notably, it should not be assumed that something that could be considered truthiness is necessarily false belief or misinformation. It can very well pertain something that could very well be true, but there may be a simple lack of data (or intentional ignoring of such) to base the opinion on.

Ultimately, within the study of the paper, the concept of truthiness strongly pertains two things. First, the analyzed film subject's view of particular individual (to paraphrase – if you are not his definition of a real man, you are not a real man), as well as the contempt towards the individuals that do not fit his description being, seemingly, justified. Second, pertains the feeling a viewer with particular cultural or historical background may feel towards the subject of the film – one may claim that individuals, not unlike the subject of the film, do in-fact exist in reality and can be seen on the streets.

Mythical World of Advertisement

With a number of brands making (or attempting to make) their names synonymous with certain aspects or values, it becomes a given that their identity is set within almost entirely different worlds. These are the worlds that, while not entirely separate from ours, possess an additional set of laws (sometimes even entirely different sets) that govern the existences of the subjects of the advertisements. Taking an example of Cola Turka, a beverage seemingly so Turkish, that it causes an almost iconic American man to speak in an entirely different tongue.

In this regard, Holt notes that brands are surrounded by mythical identities (*"simple fictions that address cultural anxieties from afar, from imaginary worlds" (Holt, 2004).* Seemingly, brands, through the creation of their identity, address additional issues. While Holt claims that cultural issues are approached in this manner, it is arguable that the mythical identities address so much more. Yet again, relying on examples of existent commercials, Snickers illustrates a scenario, where, seemingly, almost magically, worn out, clumsy individuals are turned into highly capable and reliable protagonists once the issue of hunger is solved (Snickers, 2014 commercial). Holt argues that as people partake in the act of consumption, they experience parts of the myths surrounding the brand identity (Holt, 2004). In that sense, the brand identities, while formed in fiction, end up in reality and the consumers who employ the use of specific products, will, to some degree, indeed experience the feeling that the brand creates within its adverts (such as driving an expensive car might feel empowering).

Fundamentally, the mythical identities and the seeming parallel worlds where the brand's identity is built, are highly kindred in nature. While it tries to relate to the potential consumers, it all takes part in a separate plane of existence, away from mundane, away from the usual responsibility. Thus, the brands, in a sense, end up solving the potential issues (cultural disagreements – Coca Cola: multicultural hand-holding and singing example; working responsibility – Corona: skipping the pager example) within the fictional worlds of the advertisements, essentially within a specific context. However, at the same time, the same problems within the reality remain untouched and the brand can only emulate the feeling of doing so towards the customers that partake within its myth.

Within the paper, defining the creation of a brand's identity (or even the whole plot of an advertisement) to be set in a seeming mythical world is necessary. This is due to the fact that the commercial analyzed within this paper is one that seems to create its own set of laws (such as what is right and what is wrong) that seem to be completely justified within the parallel reality of the short film, as opposed to our reality.

Sub-Conclusion

The analyzed concepts and theory permit a deeper degree of understanding the topic of the research (as well as lead up to it). The theory of social constructivism provides a deeper understanding to the chosen methodology, allowing to consider the actions of the film's subject (and thus – the marketers) as ones aiming to achieve subjective goals. Furthermore, it explains that the viewers perceive adverts and have differing ways of understanding it or noting specific aspects of it (as per different context, relating to the potential viewers). The concepts of brand, brand identity define these terms, allowing a common ground between the author of this paper, as well as the reader (when it comes to these

terms), as well as provide an understanding to these concepts. Truthiness and the mythical world of advertisement, as concepts, focus on the subjectivity of: the film and its subject, the viewer and, lastly, the reality which the commercial takes place in. Fundamentally, it provides a perception to what the marketers may rely on to create a more unique value to the advertisement, in order to make the viewers less resistant to it. Finally, stereotypes and social identity take it a step further, allowing some understanding as to why the subject of the film might be perceived in a specific manner (in the sense, deepening the understanding of social constructivism). The analyzed terms and theories intertwine, in the sense that one term or concept aid explanation of another, whilst, at the same time, being further defined by it.

Essentially, the definition of both marketing and social terms allows the concepts to be more easily referenced to within the research section of the paper, as they ground the terms as something specific, allowing them to be understood as the paper's definition of it, within its context. In addition to that, the terms supplement one another, allowing to explain the present social phenomena, as well as reach the goals of the paper.

Analysis

The paper seeks to define the brand identity of mineral water "Vytautas", created by the "Eastern European" Men School commercial, as well as its correlation to the orthodox branding paradigms. In order to achieve the goals of the paper, the research is split into a number of sub-sections. While the analyzed content might differ, the method used to analyze it is critical discourse analysis. The analysis section of the paper is split into four sub-sections. The initial section analyses a couple of advertisements that the brand had previously employed to build its identity. Second section defines the social identity of the seeming main character of the "Eastern European Men School". Third section defines the mythical (alternate) reality that exists within the commercial. Finally, fourth section defines the brand identity created via "Eastern European Men School", noting the value and points of attraction it may have towards its audience.

"Vytautas" 's initial brand identity

In order to establish in what manner, the discourse of "Vytautas" 's brand identity departs from the more conventional branding paradigms, it is important to note the initial brand identity that the brand possessed, as well as the way it has evolved over time. For that purpose, old "Vytautas" advertisements will be analyzed, establishing the values that the brand seems to display. These short films are found on "Vytautas" Facebook page and were broadcasted on Television a decade ago.

As a starting point, it is important to note down the atmosphere that has surrounded the brand throughout its 2009 advertisements. The translation of slogan, that has seemingly reverberated throughout the commercials was *"Regain your strength"*. In this sense, it is important to note that within the original language of commercial, the word used for 'strength' can have a number of meanings, including vigor, endurance and overall physical well-being. Essentially, in the context, the word 'strength' can have a number of meanings, all pertaining the context of physical prosperity in sense of strength and constitution. The importance of the explanation relates to further analysis of the commercials. Essentially, it is revealed through discourse of the subjects of the commercials, as well as the hinted context.

The first analyzed commercial spans barely at 16 seconds and immediately, a specific mood is set up. The advertisement establishes itself to be within the capital of Lithuania, on a seemingly pleasantly warm day. The can immediately note the jovial wedding marsh, while being shown a young man, seemingly struggling to carry his newlywed bride over a bridge (essentially, hinting at a Lithuanian wedding tradition). As the seeming groom appears to be worn out and fatigued, the music cuts, only to be replaced by a more fast-paced one. A large man is then shown to be slowly jogging up from behind, carrying a bottle of the marketed mineral water, stopping, taking a swig, before handing it

over to the groom, saying *"Regain your strength"*, the newly arrived man, then simply picks up the bride and seemingly displays an awe-inspiring act of easily carrying her. The advertisement soon cuts back to the sight of both groom and bride, with the athlete, seemingly encouragingly patting the shoulder of the young man and a seeming narrator names the brand, before once more resounding the slogan.

The local sights of Vilnius, as well as display of Lithuanian traditions, strongly hints at the brand as something Lithuanian. In that regard, the brand does not seek to gain international popularity. It is very well content with holding not only a Lithuanian name (Vytautas), yet also being consumed locally. In that regard, "Vytautas" seems to form a cultural image – the brand wants to be surrounded by local traditions, it wants to be consumed by the locals, in the capital. As opposed to Cola Turka, it does not seek to establish itself as something so national that it converts people of other nationalities – it is entirely content with displaying its national pride through being surrounded by local context.

This is furthermore established by the fact that the local viewers may identify the more muscular, larger man as Zydrunas Savickas, a well-known Lithuanian athlete, who partakes in strongman competitions. In-fact, that year, the athlete had gained the title of the world's strongest man. Seemingly, through that, the brand had used a famous Lithuanian sportsman to establish itself as something consumed by them. Due to the renown of the athlete and the seeming slogan, pertaining revitalization, the brand similarly hints at the mineral water as something particularly healthy.

The brand identity of "Vytautas" is then further built through the length of the other commercial (25 seconds). Similarly, to the previous one, it shows athletes that the viewer is likely to be familiar with. Although, unlike the previous advertisement, this one takes place in a wellness center, where the players seem to be trying to already rest. The seeming conflict of the film is created through a sauna. Three men are sitting in the sauna room, with one of them turning up the heat, feeling completely comfortable, while two of his teammates struggle, only to run out and leap into a pool to cool down. The viewer is soon introduced the seeming 'protagonist' of the commercial, a player by the name of Arvydas Sabonis, who seems to be amused, as his teammates struggle to keep within the boundaries of the sauna. Strolling into the sauna, unfazed by the heat, he pours water over the rocks (so as to create more steam, and thus, more immediate heat), he seems extremely comfortable, whilst the previously resistant man, leaps out of the room screaming. Sabonis soon offers him a bottle of the mineral water "Vytautas" and the commercial cuts to the narrator, who serves similar purpose to the previous commercial.

To provide some context, basketball is widely popular within Lithuania, with the noted player being among most well-known and influential figures within the sport's history in the country. The use of highly famous local sportsmen allows "Vytautas" to build its brand identity, as something that is consumed by well-known and successful athletes. And in the context of the second commercial, he (Sabonis) is not only more famous than others, but by far tougher, which is, hinted to be attributed to his choice of drink. Where other players could not handle the heat of a sauna, he was not only perfectly comfortable, yet also thrived, displaying a surprising feat of endurance.

Both advertisements exhibit famous and successful local athletes, seemingly, at least at that point, at the peak of their respective sport's ranks. With the commercial's main characters (the sportsmen) seemingly speaking to both: the subject of the film that the bottled mineral water is handed to, as well as the viewer, the advert hints at the idea of "Vytautas" being a potential source of Savickas's strength and Sabonis's endurance. In that regard, the film creates special laws, where those who imbibe "Vytautas" too can be as strong as Savickas or as enduring as Sabonis. They allow both, the seemingly physically inferior characters, and the viewers of the adverts to partake in the brand's myth, as if to say, "if you drink "Vytautas", you will not only recover from fatigue, yet will also possess the physical aptitude of these men".

Furthermore, another aspect of the commercials that can be noted, is that they both draw on slightly comical situations. The characters that appear to struggle in their respective situations display almost exaggerated expressions, meanwhile the famous athletes undertake the same tasks with great ease and vigor. This, in that sense, gives the brand a more playful image, as while it poses some degrees of struggle within the adverts, it never seems to be anything serious and in-fact, even played down to seem more like a playful ab, rather than genuinely vicious.

Altogether, the brand seems to establish itself as an almost-mythical source of the abilities of prospering athletes (in that sense, as if to say "Be as strong as Savickas" or "be as tough (enduring) as Sabonis), yet it also relies on the cultural aspect it is not something strange, exotic or foreign, it is a notably Lithuanian mineral water. It is furthermore supplemented by seeming attempt to make the situations lighter, comical, thus making the situations seem more light-hearted. Altogether, the values that "Vytautas"'s brand identity seems to emulate within these older commercials, rely on physical health and vigor, as well as national and cultural context, whilst relying on light, simple humor to relay it.

“Eastern European Men School”: Social Identity of the Instructor figure

The one prevailing character throughout the duration of the entire short film is the seeming narrator (or, perhaps, host) of the commercial. The character remains entirely unnamed, though, in a sense, takes on a role of a mentor or teacher figure both actively and within the hinted context of the eponymous, fictional school. In order to more easily refer to the character, he will be referred as “Instructor” within the analysis. The need to define the traits that identify his social identity arises from the fact that as the only character that makes contact with (talks to) the potential consumer. In addition to that, most of the short film in-fact does revolve around this character, thus, it can be assumed, that “Vytautas” relies on the Instructor to relay their brand identity, as well as use him to attain the interest of the viewer.

For starters, it is important to note the very basic discourse of the Instructor. As the commercial begins, he immediately displays verbal language that seems to be highly informal: it contains slang words and hints of mockery in certain scenes (such as whenever he speaks of individuals that do not seem to fit his description of ‘real man’). The lack of formality is further emphasized by the choice of vulgar vocabulary (essentially through use of profanities, both hinted and spoken, as well as contempt in the voice). Notably, while displaying the boorish choice of language and vocabulary, the Instructor seems to be highly comfortable. His words are clear (even if sometimes mis-pronounced), he shows great amounts of confidence and comfort, practically creating a feeling of him being an authority figure on the matter – there is hardly any hints of doubt within his voice. Finally, the Instructor displays some degree of competitiveness and general wish to display superiority, over both peers and others (such as encouraging engaging in physical confrontations with, likely, weaker individuals and challenging common laws, i.e. his mention of driving under influence of alcohol). In addition to the previous, the Instructor figure seems to exhibit a clear hint of accent, that could normally be attributed to Eastern and Slavic regions of Europe.

Altogether, the verbal discourse of the main character of the short film hints at his identity being centered around brashness, competitiveness, and general confidence.

Similarly, the movements of the man hint at some degree of physical prowess. Much like the verbal language, he has no inhibitions of moving freely, his stance and movements are wide, unobstructed. The Instructor seems to relish the idea of displaying his physical aspects, through either performing a cartwheel within the very first segment of the short film or flexing his arm muscles within the another. Furthermore, the main character’s confidence is displayed through the lack of reluctance to make any kind of physical contact. He is shown tapping shoulders and even shoving other people without any hint of awkwardness.

Altogether, the choice of the character's discourse (both physical and spoken language) show the character's wish to establish himself as a bona fide male, in-fact, it could even be claimed that he wishes to establish himself as a man among men, through his emphasis of conjunctions "real man" and general behavior. He appears to aim to establish himself as one superior to others. Thus, it can be summed up that the Instructor character appears to show himself as a strong (superior to others, at least), confident individual, who wishes to teach others to be like him, due to his willingness to explain what an ideal man is (in his view). Considering the character's discourse, as well as general mannerism, a sensation of some feeling of reliability is created. In that sense, it is the character's confidence that sets him apart as someone, who, indeed, seems to be a "veteran of being a man", in that sense, it is as though he knows very well what he speaks of, as well as acts on.

Given that social identity is a concept that possesses a degree of duality, the former defines the manner in which the character could potentially wish to be perceived by peers and the viewer. Notably, however, intended audience (i.e. Lithuanians), could identify a bit more in his image, based on their familiarity with the social and historical context, relating to the character.

It is first and foremost important to note that the general identity of the character aims to emulate, or at the very least, was inspired by the Russian 'gopnik' stereotype. Essentially, one surrounding the concept of a delinquent or even a small-time criminal, who displays some degree of aggression, dominance over women and marginalized masculinity.

The short film emulates the stereotype, through the actions of the character, as well as his traits (especially the accent). This causes the viewer to rely on the feeling of truthiness, essentially making them recall the stereotype of individuals (that, to some degree, are sometimes reminiscent of some delinquent youth on the actual streets). The advertisement uses this feeling to close the gap between itself and the viewer. The seeming vulgarity and offensiveness (from outright swearing to down-talking other people) of the discourse of the Instructor, as well as controversial themes serve to create both a sensation of discomfort, and amusement for the viewer. This creates the feeling of truthiness that brings the short film slightly closer to the viewer, by showing an exaggeration, a satire of a social stereotype, whilst, at the same time, it serves another purpose, as it attracts the viewer's curiosity, making them wonder what can be seen next. Essentially, while the short film appears to take itself quite seriously, the viewer sees it from a different angle. As something satirical, comical, thus giving the character's identity a whole different dimension.

Thus, the social identity of the subject of the film, the Instructor, possesses a degree of duality. On one hand, the character passes himself off as serious, competitive, strong individual, who is an

authority figure, when it comes to all of the aforementioned aspects. On the other hand, the exaggeration of the character, gives the viewer a completely different view and the parallels to a social stereotype leave the character to not be taken seriously in the slightest, making him more of a comical relief than anything.

Alternate Reality of "Eastern European Men School"

Similarly, to identifying the lead character's social identity, in order to distinguish the brand identity that the advertisement creates for the "Vytautas", it is important to note do the context and the atmosphere within "Eastern European Men School", as well as the underlying laws of the mythical world that the advertisement takes part in.

As a starting point, in order to determine the parallel reality of "Eastern European Men School", it is important to note that nearly the entire plot of the short film takes part in the eponymous, though fictional institution. Likely, borrowing the premises from an actual educational institution, the fictional school seems to establish some degree of realistic image. The premises of the titular institution seem to include very common implements and furnishing of an actual educational institution (e.g. desks, blackboards, even a gym, the hallways shown within the school seem to be filled with informative displays). Altogether, the appearance of the premises is one that can be attributed to an actual educational institution, and as opposed to the unusual Instructor figure, it retains the feeling of legitimacy.

Another defining aspect of the parallel reality of the commercial is the overall atmosphere it gives off, as well as the seeming underlying principles. One of the things that can be immediately noted is that within the short film, the difference between what is acceptable highly changes. While in our reality, one may frown at vulgarities and even the hints at immoral and unlawful acts, here, both the Instructor and the plot hint at this negative behavior, seemingly meeting no reprimands. Instead, it is as though it is a given that people should engage in physical confrontations, act unlawfully, even engage in desecrating acts. The seeming approach and normalization of controversial themes, within the plot of the advertisement, yet again brings the viewer to the parallels that the advertisement draws from the 'gopnik' social stereotype. As the individuals that the stereotype encompasses are considered to be small-time criminal (i.e. unlawful), the principles shown within the advert similarly evoke the truthiness of the stereotype, creating both an image of ironical humor and disgust.

Essentially, "Eastern European Men School" invokes a semi-realistic image of a school, visually, not unlike institutions of our reality, while at the same time drawing a line of difference in the way of

different underlying principles. Here, what is vulgar and profane in our reality, is not. Here, it is seemingly the right manner of behaving.

However, in spite of the seeming straightforwardness, there is slightly more to the mythical world of "Eastern European Men School". While the seeming social and verbally announced moral aspects of the short film seem to be rather contradictory to ones acceptable in our reality, the advertisement acts, in-fact, to not support negative kind of behavior, yet to deter the viewer from it.

Taking the example of the driving segment, the Instructor announces that drunk driving is a good way to pass time (in his words – *"it's fun"*). In that sense, it would appear as though unlawful behavior is encouraged by the advertisement; however, it serves the opposite purpose in the manner of aversion. While not directly shown, merely hinted by the audio and the mimicry of the Instructor, the individual who did partake in driving under the influence of alcohol did not have a happy ending. The audio simulates the sound of a traffic accident and the Instructor cheekily remarks that drunk driving is fun *"not for him anymore"*. In that regard, the segment serves a purpose of an almost social advertisement, that seems to say: *"if you engage in drunk driving, you risk harming yourself"*. Through the use of humorous atmosphere, the situation is more amusing rather than horrifying, yet, nonetheless, it makes a point.

Similarly, to the driving segment, throughout the length of the film, the Instructor character is shown to show a degree of disdain and dislike (in the sense, he wishes to establish his own superiority) to women and marginalized men. While on one hand, his mimicry, intonation, even choice of words, seem to be one of contempt, the viewer, in spite of the characters confidence, get to view it as something mildly comical. In that sense, the character, in spite of his strong traits and seeming encouraging discourse, is not encouraging his kind of behavior. Through creation of the highly ironical context, the commercial, once more, seemingly tries to instill certain values to the viewer. Through the display of how, seemingly, pathetic the character looks, whenever he acts in a disdainful manner, the advert as though says: *"be tolerant and respectful".* Fundamentally, by appealing to the ironical sense of humor, the commercial creates an image of the character, that the viewer should not wish to aspire to be alike to. And through that, the viewer is encouraged to act in a completely different manner.

Ultimately, the alternate reality of "Vytautas" "Eastern European Men School", is defined by seemingly conflict aspects. On one hand, the reality of the commercial is similar, yet unlike ours, here individuals are expected, if not encouraged to behave brashly, displaying vulgar if not downright felonious discourses. On the other hand, the commercial seemingly punishes its subjects for acting

unlawfully, while, at the same time, surrounding the (at the first glance – proud and confident) Instructor character, with a degree of ridiculousness, seemingly, as if to deter the viewer from assimilating similar traits, by making them seem laughable if not pejorative.

"Vytautas" brand identity formed by "Eastern European Men School"

Employing the use of the primary character, the atmosphere and, finally, the seeming laws of the advertisement's reality, "Vytautas" slightly differentiates its brand identity from the past. Initial examples of emulating more traditional, cultural values and vitality, through the use of local sports icons and seemingly, friendly ("pat on the back"-like) humor are seemingly replaced by different examples of the more recent commercial. While here, "Vytautas" retains its sense of humor, now it is far cheekier, if not even slightly harsh, seemingly challenging the viewer to accept a more sardonic choice of humor. The previous sports icons are replaced by characters that emulate a regional stereotype, that further enhances the sense of harsh humor. Finally, instead of displaying physical values of strength and endurance, "Vytautas" employs its harsh humor as though a creative mentor. It does not suggest drinking the mineral water, in order to revitalize. Instead, the brand's advertisement arguably commits itself to a social call, as though as social campaign or advertisement, it uses cheeky humor, to encourage viewer to a larger degree of open-mindedness, at the same time, asking to abstain from driving drunk.

Unlike an actual social advertisement, that may explore the harsh, graphic realities of issues in question, "Vytautas" "Eastern European Men School" employs a more light-hearted approach. Through the means of humor and the exploration of controversial themes, the brand seemingly not only allows its identity to grow, yet it also aims to influence the viewer – not directly to consume the mineral water, but as a social call, in order to grow as individuals.

In that regard, the brand identity formed by the commercial possesses both unusual and unconventional traits of brand identity building. On one hand, it employs marketing tricks (such as product placement, seen throughout the entire short film), as well as appealing to an individual's sense of morality and social values. At the very same time, however, its approach is unorthodox and rather than assimilating morals and values, it seems to pass itself as a supporter of such. It does not claim the values as its own, instead, it becomes an advocate.

In that sense, "Vytautas" takes a point of departure from conventional marketing paradigms. While the brand does not seem to completely abandon its previous image, it still appears to be branded as a healthy mineral water, it, nonetheless, has a different approach, relying on the slight shock value that

controversial imagery and vulgarity of the advert possesses to not only display itself as a product, yet to also instill certain values within its consumers.

Discussion

The primary focus of the study was to look into an example of unorthodox advertisement (and thus – an example of brand identity building) and understand the branding paradigm shift, that varying, uncommon discourses of the brands, create. Thus, the study was conducted, by taking the example of brand identity of "Vytautas" (as well as one created through "Eastern European Men School"), which has been analyzed, in accordance to critical discourse analysis, by taking into consideration the discourse of both, the old advertisements, as well as the recent one, as well as comparing them, in order to note down the difference between the initial brand building of "Vytautas" and the current one.

Notably, the "Eastern European Men School" makes for a peculiar advertising example, as it had attained attention beyond the local audience. As the short film appears to have attracted interest of multinational and multi-cultural audience. Due to that, the paper may be relevant for individuals, wishing to delve deeper into unconventional branding paradigms, as well as look into examples of brands employing a less common discourse to form their identities.

The study has found that while some aspects and traits of the approach, that the brand had initially used, remain (such as the brand's preference for the use of humor as a marketing tool), the brand appears to involve the use of some additional, more unusual tactics. Instead of focusing on promoting the brand through the use of initially defined traits, regarding physical prowess, the brand seemingly reels its audience in by exposing it to controversy and questionable themes.

The brand melds seemingly absurd stereotypes and scenarios with the feeling of truthiness, thus bringing it closer, as a humorous, yet surprisingly relatable experience. Through the use of this, the brand employs a more orthodox branding paradigm (of attributing a specific moral value or sentiment to the product) differently, by using the aforementioned to advocate moral values of open-mindedness and tolerance as well as suggesting sober driving, rather than directly applying the technique through advertisements.

While the "Eastern European Men School" employs techniques, more akin to inducing surprise, or even creating shock, it still draws some inspiration from conventional marketing practices, such as convenient product placement, within the short film, or using discourse of a character to hint that the product is something positive, in his opinion.

Ultimately, it was found that the identity of the brand, does cause some shift of traditional branding paradigms, by doing something that could be considered unusual, it does not entirely abandon the conventional strategies and still employs them, albeit in a more conservative manner.

Conclusion

By bringing the viewer in closer, through exaggerated stereotype and seemingly comical situations, the brand identity of "Vytautas", seemingly has hidden values, that, almost symbolically to the advertisement's title, teach the viewer. Be it through the driving segment, or how laughable the character looks when he's talking down others. In that regard, rather than directly display try to emulate specific values, the brand cleverly employs comedy to attract its viewers, at the same time, displaying and teaching small moral lessons.

Throughout the length of its running time, "Eastern European Men School" seemingly causes both, a degree of fascination and perturbance to its viewers. On one hand, the amusing short film, seemingly emulates a social stereotype known to both: the locals and potential foreign audience and thus acts as a source of entertainment, as its parallel reality remains close enough to relate to, yet distant enough to find absurdity within its content. On the other hand, the short film retains its use as a marketing tool, as it attains the interest and attention of its viewers, leaving an impression that causes them to spread it among their peers. Essentially by appealing to the historical background and the potential social remnants, in form of a stereotype, make the advertisement additionally relatable for the originally intended audience (i.e. Lithuanians). Thus, the "Eastern European Men School" differentiates by serving as a source of amusement (with its run-time being long enough to be considered just a bit more than a common television commercial), and a social call, while subsequently having a value to the brand, as a means of marketing. Ultimately, due to its discourse, the commercial serves as an unorthodox example of branding and a seeming mixture of both conventional and unorthodox branding paradigms. This goes to show that even though brand identities often take discourses that are set on conventional practices, unusual tactics attract wider audiences, due to their sense of novelty.

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