



THE EFFECT OF BRAND ACTIVISM AND PERCEIVED  
POLITICAL ORIENTATION ON BRANDS IN THE ERA  
OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSUMPTION

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*“Start where you are. Use what you  
have. Do what you can.”*

*Arthur Ashe*

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The realization of this project marks the end of this incredible journey that started from a feeling, love. A love, for the city of Lisbon, that blossomed during my Erasmus in 2017. After that experience, I've always known that my path would have crossed again with this marvellous and unique place, sooner or later. After the end of my bachelor's degree, I finally had the opportunity to come back to the city I love, and so my first thanks are to ISCTE University, for having made this possible.

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## **Resumo**

O presente estudo pretende analisar o efeito do ativismo de marca e da percepção da orientação política acerca das marcas nos dias de hoje, onde existe um tipo de consumo cada vez mais sociopolítico. O foco será na perspectiva das marcas, sendo que o impacto dos efeitos de ativismo de marca e da percepção da orientação política foi analisados em fatores como defesa da marca, atitude de marca e valor global da marca. Adicionalmente, considerando o tema sob análise, o presente estudo também questiona se estes efeitos são influenciados pela própria orientação política dos consumidores, através da investigação do nível de semelhança entre este último e a percepção da orientação política das marcas. Um questionário online foi distribuído para 268 participantes revelando que todos os fatores são significativamente influenciados pelo ativismo de marca e pela percepção da orientação política das marcas. Além disso, a influência da semelhança da orientação política dos indivíduos com a percepção da orientação política das marcas também foi validada, os inquiridos que têm uma semelhança maior, têm também níveis mais elevados de defesa da marca, atitude de marca e valor global da marca. Consequentemente, investigadores podem adotar estas variáveis e moderador para novos estudos sobre este tema. Foi provado que o ativismo da marca prevê a PPO, então essa relação deve ser explorada mais amplamente. Além disso, o ativismo da marca e a PPO são bons preditores da defesa da marca dos consumidores, da atitude da marca e do valor geral da marca, portanto, os profissionais devem investigar esta relação mais exaustivamente, para atingir um nível de conexão mais profundo com seu público.

**Palavras-chave: Ativismo de marca; Percepção da orientação política; Defesa da marca; Atitude de marca; valor global da marca**

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## **Abstract**

The present study intends to analyse the effects of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) on brands in the era we're living in, which is characterized by consumption behaviour that is influenced by socio-political aspects. Focusing on the brand's perspective, in the current study, the effects of brand activism and PPO were measured in terms of their effects on consumers' brand advocacy, brand attitude, and overall brand equity (OBE). Additionally, considering the topic under analysis, the present study also evaluates whether these effects are influenced by consumers' political orientation, and the individuals fit with brands' PPO (IPPO) was considered. An online questionnaire was distributed and 268 were obtained. Results reveal that all constructs are significantly influenced by brand activism and PPO. Additionally, the influence of IPPO fit was significant, with respondents that have a high IPPO fit having higher levels of brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE). Consequently, researchers might adopt these variables and mediator for further studies on the subject. It was proved that brand activism predicts PPO, so this relationship should be explored more extensively. Moreover, brand activism and PPO are good predictors of consumers' brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity too, therefore, practitioners must investigate this relationship further, to achieve a more profound level of connection with their audiences.

**Keywords: Brand activism; Perceived political orientation (PPO); Brand advocacy; Brand attitude; Overall brand equity (OBE)**

JEL Classification System:

M31, L82/L8

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## 1. Introduction

Brands have always taken a stand throughout history. As there are various reasons behind this practice, one of the most relevant is to address a social issue. When a brand does that, we talk about Social Marketing, whose main purpose is to achieve the benefit of society, through the attempt of trying to rework people's perception and behaviour.

In recent times, though, it is becoming increasingly challenging for brands to take a stand on a social issue without risking damaging their reputation and their brand equity. First, in today's marketplace brands are under a lot of pressure as consumers want them to take a stand over socio-political issues. That is because consumers are becoming increasingly conscious and as a result, they demand more transparency than ever before. Moreover, we're living the so-called post-truth age, which is characterised by the failure of trust towards established institutions that has led to a new environment where there's not a universal truth anymore, but more a scenario of different truths competing against each other. This is largely due to the immense and continuous proliferation of digital contents of any kind.

As the ultimate consequence of this phenomenon, brands must evaluate their actions very carefully, as they are exposed to a risk that was never that high, especially when it comes to brand activism. What appears as an emerging problem, is the fact that brands are increasingly perceived as politicised by their consumers every time they take a stand on a certain issue. Hence, what appears to have become nearly utopian, for brands, is to remain politically neutral when taking a stance in the post-truth era.

## Research Problematic

We live in a politically polarized world, that is the divergence of political attitudes to the ideological extremes. Consequently, companies have become more activists, even though they must be pay greater attention when taking a stand on social issues, as the risk of harming the brand reputation and brand equity has never been higher.

It hasn't always been like this. In the past, it was common practice, for brands, to not interfere with the political and social sphere. Firms were only focusing on sales and steer clear of any type of emotions. When business contributed to a political campaign, it was normally an equal contribution to all the parties involved. Things started changing with the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) movement of the 1980s when firms began to consider the impact they were having on society and the environment. But still, politics wasn't involved as companies' advocacy was only about their products and processes (Bailey *et al.*, 2020). Nowadays, the 24/7 news cycle and the social media "echo-chambers" (Bail *et al.*, 2018) have increased the political polarisation, that has fostered brands to become more activist posing a great challenge for organisations: remain neutral (Bailey *et al.*, 2020).

Many events that happened during the last couple of years are illustrative of this phenomenon. One of them is the Hobby Lobby case, which was one of the first time a retail company challenged a federal mandate that stated that companies pay for insurance coverage for contraception, taking their cause to the US Supreme Court and winning. Other illustrious instances of times when brands have tried to raise awareness of certain topics, encourage the debate, and change attitudes were the iconic Nike ad campaign featuring NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick in protest to racial injustice and police brutality, or the Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods' decision to stop selling certain weapons, responding to the dramatic mass shootings happening in the United States. (Bailey *et al.*, 2020).

In all these examples, it is undeniable how brands, by supporting a social issue, were aligning to a certain political view too. Nike, for instance, until the Kaepernick campaign, has always been relatively silent about politics. Although, that specific campaign was extremely political, if considered that Kaepernick has been highly criticised since 2016 by conservatives when he kneeled during the national anthem before NFL games to highlight anti-black police violence.

Former US President Trump harshly attacked him as well, and right parties have largely misinterpreted his protest as targeting veterans and the American flag rather than police misconduct (Waymer *et al.*, 2021; Nittle, 2018).

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the level of objectiveness and the level of perception, which is the interest ground of this dissertation. In particular, brand political neutrality does not imply that it will be perceived and therefore acknowledged by consumers. There is a certain number of variables that might lead to a dissonance between objective political orientation and perceived political orientation (PPO), the concept this dissertation focuses on, in relation to brand activism.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, “political” means being related to the government or public affairs of a country. In fact, it is undeniable that consumers today have become more demanding and want brands to take stands on socio-political issues, it yet to be seen what the impact on consumers’ minds is, if they perceive a certain brand’s relationship with a specific governmental institutions or political party. Moreover, in the high polarised environment where we live, people’s political sensibilities can be easily offended. This can eventually lead to an escalation of political controversies. These controversies, arising along party lines, can trigger a consumer’s boycott from one side of the political spectrum to the other side. In this context, a company can find itself at the centre of the controversy and its sales might end up increasing or decreasing, depending on the issue that underlies the controversy, and the political beliefs of its customer base (Neureiter *et al.*, 2021)

The above reinforces the matter of study of this study, as it emphasises the need to investigate the relationship between brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) to see if the latter has any significant effect on the brand itself. Moreover, it is highlighted the importance of brand fit when a company involves in an activism strategy, to understand how the brand/cause appropriateness moderates the outcome of the brand’s communication. Lastly, the need to compare the PPO of the brand with the political orientation of consumers, has also been emphasized in the development of the study. How, in fact, the level of similarity between the two moderates the effect that PPO has on the brand?

## Main Research Questions

Research questions are interrogatives that a research work wants to answer. They are crucial elements for both a qualitative and quantitative research. Moreover, these statements can further help the development of the main hypotheses.

Hence, this study is intended to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the brand activism relate to Perceived Political Orientation (PPO)?
2. How does Brand Activism and PPO impact the outputs related to Brand Attitude, Brand Advocacy and Overall Brand Equity (OBE)?
3. How does the level of fit between individuals' political orientation and the brands' PPO influence the outputs IPPO Fit?

The principal purpose of this dissertation is to elaborate on the concept of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) to see how they affect the brand itself. In fact, if consumers perceive the brand politically oriented with a political party or governmental institutions when taking stands on social issues, how does it affect the company?

Furthermore, the study introduces other elements that will help diving into the relationship between PPO and brand activism and building the conceptual framework. One of these elements is the brand fit. We know that authenticity is key (Schmidt et al., 2021, Vredenburg et al., 2020) when it comes to brand taking a stand on socio-political issues, for them to be credible. As a result, how will the brand fit impact the effectiveness of the activism campaign?

Finally, the dissertation focuses on consumers' political orientation in comparison to the brand's perceived political orientation (PPO) introducing the element of individuals PPO fit (IPPO Fit). How does it moderate the effect of PPO on brand attitude, brand advocacy and overall brand equity (OBE)?

## **Structure of the Study**

This study is divided into different sections for organisational and clarity purposes. More specifically, first there is an introduction and contextualization of the theme, then a literature review around the main concepts related to the theme will follow. The description of the methodology applied, and the data analysis section will be later developed, and the results discussed. Lastly, the conclusions of the study, the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and the limitations of the research will be presented as well.

In the first section there is the introduction of the main theme of the dissertation with the research problematics and the presentation of the main research questions and the definition of the objectives.

The subsequent section focuses on the literature review of the principal concepts related to the theme of the study and the formulation of the research hypotheses that will be later tested.

In the third section, the methodology which best adapts to the purpose of the work will be presented, along with the decisions taken to gather information. It is specified the structure of the all the approaches used, as well as the scales of references that are used to measure and validate the concepts under investigation.

The fourth chapter concerns the analysis of the results retrieved from the data of the survey developed and conducted. An evaluation of the reliability of the scales used to measure the variables will be made as well as the test of the elaborated hypotheses.

The final chapter will discuss the results obtained, along with the conclusions taken from the study, the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and the limitations of the study. Finally, there are suggestions for future research that could take place in this area of study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Social Marketing – History and Evolution

The principal field of study that lies at the basis of this dissertation is that of Social Marketing. The concept started to receive a lot of attention thanks to Philip Kotler and Gerard Zaltman's major publication "*Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change*" in the Journal of Marketing in 1971. The authors defined it as "the design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research" (Kotler *et al.*, 1971).

In more recent years, Shoreibah (2009) has proposed one of the most accurate and comprehensive definition of Social Marketing as "the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluating of programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part" (Shoreibah, 2009). The author has also proposed an exceptional historiography of the evolution of Social Marketing, outlining different eras. In the "period of discovery" (1951-1971), for the first time, a marketing terminology was introduced in non-business applications, which is what we now call "social marketing". During the following "period of conceptualization" (1971-1979), the focus was still on influencing ideas rather than behaviours. The third "period of integration and development" (1979-1994), was an important moment for the growth of the subject as social marketing's research started to proliferate at an unprecedented rate and different scientific articles on the subject began to be published.

The further "period of reappraisal" (1994-2003) witnessed an important shift as the concept of social marketing was readdressed based on the publications of the previous period. Andreasen (1994), switched the emphasis from ideas to behaviour. He introduced the different concepts of behaviour influence as opposed to behaviour change, stating that social marketing's focus is on influencing voluntary behaviour, and not on coercion. During the latest period analysed by the author, the "period of reconception" (2003-2009), more critical positions regarding the applicability of commercial marketing concepts to social marketing started to appear (Shoreibah, 2009).



In recent years, the aim of social marketing has expanded. The focus now is about exploring its potential in promoting institutional and organisational change (Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, since the advent of the digital age, consumers had the chance to have direct contact with brands, developing higher expectations that ultimately results in brands being compelled to take stances at a rate that has never been seen before. Brands have never been that much socially active.

## 2.2. Brand Activism – Definition, Elements and Categorization

The first construct this study seeks to investigate is brand activism, which can be defined as a specific type of condition where organisations or brands play a leading role in the processes of social change. Nowadays, this practice is exponentially growing among companies, as they strive to take the initiative on what they believe is beneficial for society. This eventually results in firms making public statements and tailoring their activities in a that support their selected social causes. Brand activism clearly differs from Corporate Social Responsibility (Kumar, 2020).

Sarkar and Kotler (2018) defined several elements of brand activism that differentiate the practice from CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities. First, CSR activities are generally favourable actions for most of the society while brand activism doesn't benefit from this type of acceptance since there is usually no universally correct response to a socio-political issue. In some cases, the issues may not even be perceived as problems that need to be addressed. Moreover, while CSR is primarily focused on organisational concerns, with the goal to make all the operations of a company more sustainable, brand activism deals with different types of concerns, whether they are social, environmental, or human, which are not related to a firm's core operations.

Therefore, brand activism can be defined as an evolution of CSR (Sarkar and Kotler, 2018) as companies are now called to take more responsibility even in the social sphere, and participate in achieving the social good, switching from a corporate-driven to a social-driven vision (B&P, 2020; Kumar, 2020). Unlike CSR campaigns, that are usually part of a company's strategic plan, a brand activism activity can be tailor-made or accidental, therefore involving a greater

uncertainty and risk than CSR campaigns. On the other hand, the potential reward is also higher (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2020).

Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020) have defined brand activism as: “*the alignment of a brand’s explicit purpose and values with its activist marketing messaging and prosocial corporate practice*”

This is fundamental for brands to achieve marketing success and social change. The authors considered marketing success in terms of brand equity (Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020) which results from a positive response to the brand driven by strong, favourable, and unique brand associations held in consumers’ minds (Keller, 1993). But which are the factors that can bring brand activism to be a successful strategy in building brand equity? Despite the undeniable fact that companies are increasingly involved in the socio-political sphere, there is, surprisingly, little research about brand activism, including when this strategy can be effective for brands.

In recent years, an important contribution on the matter has been offered by Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020), which defined authenticity as the core element that can lead a brand activism strategy to be successful. The authors defined the concept as “encompassing mutually reinforcing and supportive brand purpose, values, messaging, and corporate practice” (Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020). In the context of brands, Schmidt *et al.*, (2021) have argued that authenticity is not only related to the product or services offered by the brand, but also in the way the brand’s ideas of truth are constructed socially. In fact, brand authenticity stands out only if consumers perceive the brand to be truthful towards itself and its consumers, backing at the same time consumers to be true to themselves (Morhart *et al.*, 2015).

Brands have always connected to causes throughout the years. The practice was to choose a cause for the brand’s own benefits (Wu, 2016), especially with the advent of cause-related marketing. CSR activities, in fact, were promoted by brands to commercialise their commitment for social good and building secondary associations (Schmidt, 2021). The concept has been introduced by Keller (1993) and refers to those associations that are linked to another entity that can change the meaning of the brand in the minds of consumers by either strengthening or completing current brand associations (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). The extent to which these associations are perceived authentic, producing a positive effect on the brand, depends on another crucial element that this study aims to explore, which is the congruency to the brand, of brand fit.

In fact, when there is a good fit or congruency between the brand and the cause supported, consumers can more easily understand the link between the brand itself and the secondary source of meaning. This ultimately results in consumers seeing the brand more authentic or as a true brand with a purpose (Schimdt *et al.*, 2021).

Nevertheless, having a high brand fit is not enough if the fit is not well delivered. Beverland *et al.*, (2008), had already argued that promoting authenticity avowedly is a double-edged sword as it may undermine the brand's credibility while Holt (2004), highlighted the potential risk for brands that take elements of a socio-political issue to build an activism campaign without demonstrating allegiance to the underlying beliefs of the issue in question. This is exactly what had happened in the infamous Pepsi's 2017 advertisement featuring the celebrity, Kendall Jenner. The advertisement, which used the context of political protests, wanted to deliver the message that a can of Pepsi, consigned to a police officer by Jenner, would help to reduce the conflict. The campaign was strongly criticised because it lacked authenticity. In fact, as pointed out by Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020), in the Pepsi campaign being the message not aligned with the brand's prosocial corporate practice, led to a perceived inauthenticity.

Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020), starting from the key characteristics that determine authenticity, that are brand's core purposes and values, the type of message and the corporate practices, categorised different from of activism. The authors argued that authentic brand activism is determined by the extent to which the purpose and value of the brand are aligned with its activist marketing messaging and prosocial corporate practice. Its contrast is inauthentic brand activism, that occurs when there is a misalignment between purpose and values and marketing messaging and prosocial corporate practice.

To be able to be genuine and build a connection with their customers, brands must clarify the link between the non-market strategy (which is the social and political nature of the issue), the business strategy and the alignment of the brand's strategy with its branding activities (Lawton *et al.*, 2014, Morhart *et al.*, 2015, Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020). Contrarily, when brands and supporting a position for appearance purposes while carrying out its business strategy in the opposite direction, the authenticity is disputed, creating potential adverse effects for the brand.

### 2.3. Perceived Political Orientation (PPO)

The second construct object of investigation of this study, is perceived political orientation (PPO). Political orientation had been first introduced by Converse *et al.*, (1964) as policy preferences, which are normative desires for specific programmes of government actions. With regards to the term “perceived”, in this context it refers to the human brain, and the way in which it sorts, elaborates, and classifies sensory information to build a cognizant reality experience (Harman, 2018).

Several studies have argued that there are psychological motives that underlie political orientation, including needs for order and structure, experiential openness, and sensitivity to threat. Starting from these assumptions, Jost *et al.*, (2003) proposed a framework for explaining the differences in ideological attitudes. According to the model the authors proposed, people tend to have a right-wing ideology partly because it reduces fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. It also helps to avoid change and justify inequality among different groups or individuals. (Jost *et al.*, 2003). The evidence reported by the authors supported the concept that there is a match between strong psychological motives to reduce ambiguity and anxiety and the central values of the right-wing ideology, which are resistance to change and acceptance of inequality (Jost *et al.*, 2003, Thorisdottir *et al.*, 2007).

Does all of this adapt to brands too? Can they be perceived politically oriented? Nowadays all consumption is socio-political, as brands contribute to form people’s identity through primary and secondary associations (Holt, 2004). The result is that consumers now express their political orientation by both boycotting or promoting a certain product. This type of behaviour, whether individual or collective, reflect a social context in which the politics that underlies the single product becomes the crucial point (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). Socio-political consumption has been rapidly increasing as consumers, nowadays, are considering the impact of their choices on the environment and society like they have never done before. Moreover, due to the increased polarisation of society amplified by social media’s echo chambers (Shepherd *et al.*, 2015), consumers have also become extremely aware of the new socio-political nature of their consumption. Consequently, brands are now more willing to put socio-political associations in view in their turn (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021).

Therefore, companies' political orientation has largely to do with a switch in the practice of consumption, with social movements that are now trying to standardize their participation in the public decision-making using professional techniques (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Dauvergne (2017), for instance, has reflected on how the labels "sustainable" and "eco-responsible" have impacted the palm oil consumption without, however, eliminating its use. Consequently, the author has differentiated between two different aspects, which are the capacity to influence corporate decisions and the efficacy in environmental terms (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). When social movements are mature, their messages should be in line with the political action being pursued. Companies, on their side, are trying to align their messaging with these organisations in the name of a commitment to the environment and the society. This is what has been defined the "corporate citizenship" (Waddock, 2004).

But are brands willing to take stances on highly politicised issues too? Previous studies have highlighted the fact that brands would prefer to avoid taking sides on these kind of issues for the potential risk of alienating consumers (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). However, the tendency is starting to switch, as we're now witnessing to more brands supporting delicate and divisive matters, like LGBTQ or immigration, showing a strong determination to fill a socio-political space, also thanks to more CEOs that are becoming increasingly socially active (Chatterji *et al.*, 2018).

The risk is represented by the fact that not all consumers share the same principles and values or have the same concerns or priorities, which is why managers' most emphasised reason for not taking a stance on social issues, is the potential backfire on the company's ability to attract and retain customers and partners (Deloitte, 2018).

In fact, even though companies do not directly support a political party or a governmental institution, they do embrace certain principles, which represent more progressive or conservative positions (Matos *et al.*, 2017), and a possible misalignment between the brand political stance and the consumers' affiliation, might be perceived as a violation of brand trust and brand relationship, ultimately resulting in harming the brand (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019) as consumers tend to punish brands towards which they oppose politically, if they believe those brands are threatening the well-being of the society by polarising and conservatizing it (Duman *et al.*, 2017).

## 2.4. Conceptual Framework

Even though many studies approached the matter of political orientation, most of them addressed it from a consumer perspective. In fact, the literature that discussed the subject on a brand's perspective is very scarce. For the proposed dissertation, it is intended to analyse this void in the literature and measure the impact of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) on brands in an era where the consumption has become extremely socio-political. To do so, a model has been developed to analyse the effect of PPO on brands from both a brand's perspective and a consumer's perspective.

The following study aims to examine the ultimate impact of brand activism and PPO on brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE) as illustrated in the research model proposed.

### 2.4.1. Brand Activism and PPO

Considering what has been addressed in the chapter above, it appears very clear that there might be a relationship between brand activism and the perceived political orientation of the brand. In fact, even though companies have always tried to avoid the alignment of their brands with politics, the tendency has started to change exactly when the political environment has become more partisan. In recent years, we have witnessed numerous examples of firms that began to publicly link their brands with political positions. Matos *et al.* (2017) have taken the controversy on marriage equality for same-sex couples as an example of the phenomenon. In this dispute, we have seen companies like Chevrolet or Guinness to express themselves favourably, supporting this cause, while others, like Barilla or Chick-Fil-A were more linked with the defence of the traditional marriage. According to Goldhill (2014), the issue, ended up becoming a "marketing tool" (Matos *et al.*, 2017).

Political orientation has an influence on behaviours and cognitive processes too. There are, in fact, a high number of variables affect socio-political consumerism. Aaker (1991) had already defined brand association as anything linked in memory to a brand and all informational modes connected to it (Keller, 1993). While some brands with positive associations are considered by the consumer in the purchase choice being part of the evoked set, consumers may also have neither positive nor negative associations for some brands, which fall within the inert set.

Finally, the inept set, consists of brands consumers are aware of but would not buy because they have rejected them from their purchase intention (Narayana and Markin, 1975). For all these reasons, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1. Brand activism has a significant effect on how the brand is perceived in terms of political orientation (PPO).**

#### 2.4.2. Brand advocacy

In the literature, brand advocacy is often associated with positive word-of-mouth (PWOM), which has been referred as favourable and informal communication between consumers regarding their experiences with specific products or services (Westbrook, 1987). According to Fournier *et al.*, (2012), brand advocacy differs from PWOM since it is founded on consumer-brand relationships. This means that consumers who are advocates of the brand, have a stronger connection to it than those who just share PWOM. This will eventually result in more empathic behaviours. An explanatory definition of brand advocacy is the one offered by Jillapalli *et al.*, (2010) which defines it as: “an active engagement that involves expending more effort in promoting the brand” (Jillapalli *et al.*, 2010). Advocates, to sum up, are not just willing to share information on the brand, but they desire it.

According to Mukherjee *et al.*, (2020), brand activism gives consumers the chance to determine the level of self-brand similarity and see if the brand moral foundations are in line with their own. The higher the self-brand similarity, the higher will be the identification with the brand and, consequently, the level of brand advocacy (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2020). For all these reasons, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2. Brand activism has a significant effect on brand advocacy.**

Brand advocacy has been defined as a consumer’s commitment in promoting and supporting a brand. If a brand takes a political stance, it expresses the corporate meaning, helping to create confidence at the consumers’ eyes, if they will recognise their beliefs with the brand’s ones (Kumar, 2020). In this case, in fact, brand and consumers will build a strong rapport, which will eventually produce an effect on the advocacy of the brand too (Kumar, 2020).

Consequently, the additional hypothesis is also proposed:

**H3. The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on brand advocacy.**

#### 2.4.3. Brand Attitude

Keller has defined brand attitude as: “consumers overall evaluation of a brand” (Keller, 1993). Therefore, the attitudes towards the brand are all the judgments developed by consumers as they connect with the brand. Brands, in fact, have always tried to distinguish themselves in the mind of consumers, to be more easily identified against its competitors. Through the marketing activities, brands can help consumers develop different brand associations, which are the reflection of how the brand is perceived in the consumer’s mind (Keller, 1993; Langaro *et al.*, 2015). Brand attitude is none other than the evaluation of those associations.

The consumers’ attitude toward a brand is continuously changing as they acquire, gather and experience new brand elements (Langaro *et al.*, 2015). This means that if consumers are receiving negative inputs, their evaluation of the brand will be negatively influenced consequently.

Several studies have demonstrated that attitudes towards the brand can decrease in a substantial manner among those consumers who disagree with the stand taken by the brand. Mukherjee *et al.*, (2020) argued that, as for brand advocacy, with higher levels of self-brand similarity, there will be a higher identification with the brand and, as a result, a higher level of brand attitude (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed for this study:

**H4. Brand activism has a significant effect on brand attitude.**

Sandıkcı *et al.*, (2008) exploring the field of anti-consumption behaviour, introduced the topic of politically motivated brand rejection, which was defined as the refusal use or purchase a brand only because of its perceived association to a certain political ideology (Sandıkcı *et al.*, 2008). Consumers’ choices, in the context of political consumerism, are based on certain attitudes and values concerning mainly social justice, fairness and non-economic issues.



The anti-consumerism attitudes, according to the authors, might just be a function of choosing one object and one brand over another (Sandıkcı *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, consumers can form positive or negative attitudes as the political ideology of the brand aligns or differs from their own (Sandıkcı *et al.*, 2008).

Reasoning the above, the additional hypothesis is also proposed:

**H5. The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on brand attitude.**

#### 2.4.4. Overall Brand Equity (OBE)

The concept of brand equity was first introduced in the late 1980s, but it was with Aaker (1991) that it acquired more popularity. The author described brand equity as: “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm customers” (Aaker, 1991). Few years later, Keller (1993), introduced the consumer-based model of brand equity, defining it as: “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller 1993). According to several studies, by enhancing consumers’ perception and association about a brand, brand equity can be generated (Tanveer *et al.*, 2016). Being able to generate brand equity is very important for companies to differentiate their products and services and gain competitive advantage (Tanveer *et al.*, 2016).

According to Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020), when brands are engaging in authentic activism there is a potential large gain of brand equity, which becomes contingent damage in case of inauthentic activism. Therefore, brand activism can play a primary role for the marketing success of a firm in terms of brand equity, resulting from a positive response to the brand driven by brand associations, that are a dimension of brand equity (Aaker, 1996) held in consumers’ minds (Keller, 1993; Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020). When these associations are favourable, as in case of authentic brand activism, there is a great brand equity outcome, but in case of unfavourable associations, the risk of harming the brand is very high (Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020). The present study intends to analyse the relationship between brand activism and overall brand equity; therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed:

## **H6. Brand activism has a significant effect on overall brand equity (OBE).**

Brand equity has been defined as the value of the brand among its consumers (Ahmed *et al.*, 2017). Measuring brand equity can be done by numerous ways, but the main model consists of four different dimensions including brand awareness, brand associations, perceived brand quality and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Ahmed *et al.*, 2017). The second fundamental model is the one developed by Keller in 1993 and called customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model, which is based on the idea that the authority of a brand depends on what consumers have learned, seen, felt, and heard about it during their experience over time (Keller, 1993). The two components of brand equity according to Keller's model are awareness and association (Ahmed *et al.*, 2017).

In the context of brands associated with a political ideology, Duman *et al.*, (2018) have addressed the Keller's model of brand equity arguing that consumers may have different levels of psychological engagement with brands due to different internal or external factors (Duman *et al.*, 2018). Among these levels of engagement, the authors highlighted the importance of brand avoidance as a type of consumer resistance that is becoming increasingly important (Duman *et al.*, 2018). Brand avoidance is the consumer's deliberate choice to reject a brand and it falls into four different categories; experiential avoidance, deficit-value avoidance, identity avoidance, and moral avoidance (Lee *et al.*, 2009). Moral avoidance represents the act of avoiding a specific brand because of the incongruence between its values and associations and the consumer's ideological beliefs (Lee *et al.*, 2009). According to Duman *et al.*, (2018), moral avoidance can be associated with the politically motivates brand rejection, being defined as "the refusal to purchase and/or use a brand on a permanent basis because of its perceived association to a particular political ideology that the consumer is opposed to" (Duman *et al.*, 2018).

Therefore, the additional hypothesis is also proposed:

## **H7. The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on overall brand equity (OBE).**

#### 2.4.5. The moderator of the model

A moderating variable, or moderator, is intended to modify the relationship between two principal variables. Its objective is to measure the strength of the relationship. For this study, defining the moderating variables of the relationship between brand activism and PPO with brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE) is of major importance to go beyond the study and have a more complete real-life picture. Moderators are useful to judge the external validity of a study, by identifying the limitations of when the relation between the variables occurs.

##### 2.4.5.1. The moderation of Individuals PPO Fit (IPPO Fit)

In the era of the socio-political consumption, consumers are now used to express their political orientation through ethical behaviours, including promoting or boycotting specific brands they feel particularly close to or distant (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). According to Edelman (2018), almost two thirds of consumers around the world buy or boycott a brand only because of its position on a socio-political issue. Thus, belief-driven buyers are now the majority across important markets like the US, UK, Germany, and Japan. More importantly, the Edelman survey found that consumers view brands as a more powerful force for social change than the government, as they believe they have better ideas for solving a country's problems (Edelman, 2018). This ultimately results in consumers having more trust on brands than any political institution.

Jost *et al.*, (2009) have dedicated a lot of attention to political orientation, as something that influence every aspect of a consumer's life. Political orientation is, in fact, a predictor of tons of attitudes, beliefs and preferences (Jost *et al.*, 2009). For instance, in the social relationships, studies have found that we tend to have a more positive affect and personal satisfaction when we deal with persons or objects that share the same political orientation as us, being very sceptical and suspicious in the opposite scenario (Wakslak *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, it is coherent to predict that the individuals fit with the PPO of the brand (IPPO Fit), that is the comparison between the perceived political orientation of the brand as opposed to consumers' own, might have an important role in the impact that PPO can have on brands. In fact, if the brand is perceived to be oriented towards a political party the consumer steadily opposes, he might feel "betrayed" and react negatively. Thus, a last set of hypotheses is proposed:

**H8a. The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and brand advocacy in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO Fit, brand advocacy will increase.**

**H8b. The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and brand attitude in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO Fit, brand attitude will increase.**

**H8c. The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and OBE in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO Fit, OBE will increase.**

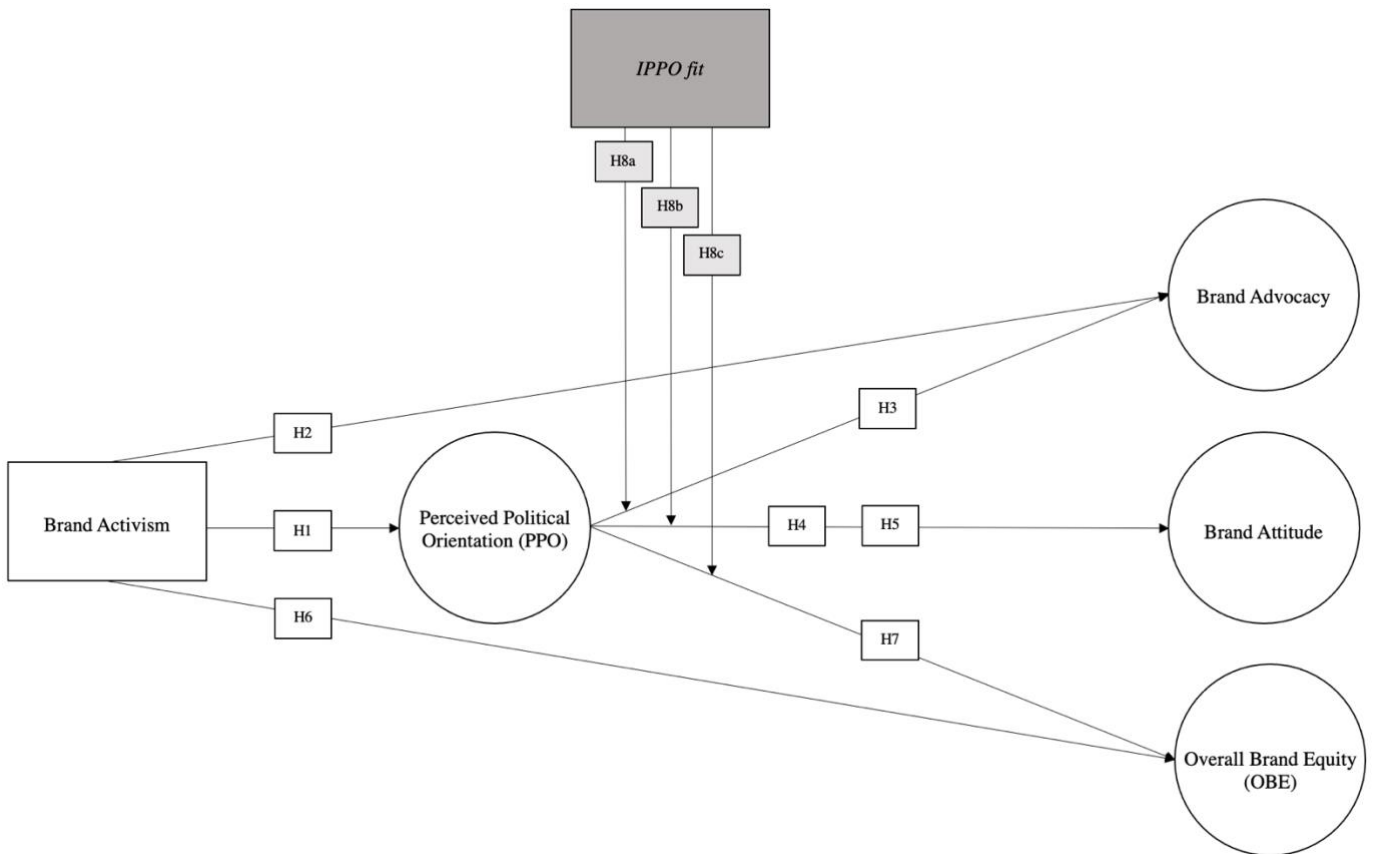


Figure 1 - Conceptual framework  
Source: Developed by the author

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research objectives

The effect that brand activism and PPO have on brands has been sometimes referred in previous studies, but has never been investigated thoroughly, in fact, the literature has a lack of empirical evidence to support the arguments. Therefore, a process comprising a specific method to get insights into consumers' attitudes, motivation, and perceptions was enacted.

#### 3.2. Research method and sampling procedure

In this chapter, the methodology to investigate the research questions proposed at the beginning of the study and to verify and validate the hypotheses developed in the previous section, will be presented. Research methods are specific techniques involved in collecting the required data to answer the research questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). For this study, a quantitative approach has been used by the means of a questionnaire to help better investigating the suggested hypotheses. The survey was elaborated through the software Qualtrics and distributed online to a sample of the target population (Malhotra, 2017). The target population for this study is individuals with 18 years of age or more as they are eligible to vote. Within the framework of this survey, no limitation was applied to the respondents' nationalities, although most of the participants are citizens of a Western European country.

#### 3.3. Data collection

##### 3.3.1. Measuring Brand Activism and Perceived Political Orientation (PPO)

To measure the effect of brand activism and PPO on brands, an experiment of manipulation of socio-political activeness has been conducted, comparing a socio-politically active brand with a non-socio-politically active one, featuring a fictitious company (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). The fictitious organisation has been selected based on real brands that have been using activism in their communication. The experiment had already been conducted using real brands to test the effectiveness of the manipulation of socio-political activeness (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). To assess the outcome of the experiment and measure the effect of brand activism, well-established scales for brand advocacy (BA) (Wilk *et al.*, 2020), brand attitude (BA<sub>t</sub>) (Spears *et al.*, 2004) and overall brand equity (OBE) (Washburn *et al.*, 2002) were used (Table 2).

To measure the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand, the scale used by Thorisdottir *et al.*, (2007) has been adapted for the purpose of this study.

Activist brands are the ones that responds to the Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020) definition in the literature review, namely brands that align their explicit purposes and values with their activist marketing messaging and prosocial corporate practice. The authors have defined some characteristics of brand activism, which are: the brand is purpose and values driven, the brand addresses a controversial, contested or polarising socio-political issue (which can be progressive or conservative), and the brand contributes toward the socio-political issue through messaging and brand practice (Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020). To investigate the participants' perception of socio-political activeness throughout the manipulation, direct questions have been submitted following the definition and the characteristic of brand activism proposed by Vredenburg *et al.*, (2020) and mentioned above.

To perform the experiment, the respondents first read a background story for the fictitious brand Gold Tomato, an American food company founded by an immigrant in 1901. Next, respondents were shown one of two manipulations (political vs non-political, which performed as control) in the form of a press release from Gold Tomato (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). After being shown one of the manipulations, the respondents answered manipulation checks about followed by items relating to PPO and their feelings towards the brands, in terms of brand advocacy, brand attitude, and their perception of the overall brand equity (OBE).

### 3.3.2. Measuring instrument

The collection of data consisted in an online questionnaire, as abovementioned. As the focus was to investigate the effect on brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) on brands, no initial questions to limit the sample was needed, for the purpose of the study. The respondents were randomly divided in two groups and exposed to different stimuli throughout, using the manipulation of socio-political activeness, with the aim of measuring the impact of the two main constructs of brand activism and PPO on brands. To assess the respondents' understanding of the valence of manipulations, manipulation checks were presented and answered.

In the final part of the questionnaire, validated measures from previous studies were used and applied in a 7-point Likert scale to measure the constructs brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE). Some of the items were semantically adapted with the purpose of maintaining the coherence of the study. To measure the PPO of the brand, participants were asked to answer three different questions about the brand: “Gold Tomato is aligned with messages of political parties”, “Gold Tomato acts as if it would support political parties”, “Political parties would find a supporter in Gold Tomato”. Subsequently, to assess the political stance of the brand, participants were asked to say if the brand was in support of a right-wing political party, left-wing political party, or centrist. Specifically, respondents were asked to place the brand they were exposed on a single left-right parties’ continuum, from 0 (extreme left) to 7 (extreme right) with 4 (centrist) as the midpoint (Thorisdottir *et al.*, 2007).

To assess the impact of the moderator of the model (IPPO fit) and evaluate how it affects the relationship between the type of political orientation of the brand (political stance) and brand advocacy, brand attitude, and the overall brand equity, an additional question has been presented to respondents, following the same rationale used to measure the PPO of the brand. This time, respondents have been asked to place themselves on a single left-right continuum, from 0 (extreme left) to 7 (extreme right), with 4 (centrist) as the midpoint. (Thorisdottir *et al.*, 2007). Ingelhart *et al.*, (1976) have shown that this is a valid and reliable measure of left-right identification.

Brand advocacy was measured using 8 items adapted from Wilk *et al.*, (2020) scale to measure online brand advocacy (OBA), keeping all the original items that can be adapted to offline brand advocacy too. Answers were given on a 7-point Likert scale from 1- Totally Disagree to 7- Totally Agree. The construct of brand attitude was measured using the 5 original items from Spears *et al.*, (2004) to analyse brands evaluation on a bipolar scale (e.g., Unappealing/Appealing; Bad/Good) on a scale from 1 to 7. Finally, the overall brand equity (OBE) has been measured using the original 4-item scale proposed by Washburn *et al.*, (2002). In a 7-point Likert scale, the responses were scored from 1- Totally Disagree to 7- Totally Agree. The complete list of items can be found in Table 1.

Author(s)	Dimension	Item(s)
Wilk <i>et al.</i> , (2020)	Brand advocacy	<b>BA1:</b> I could see myself defending X when others talk it down/negatively about it
		<b>BA2:</b> I could see myself trying to convince others to buy X
		<b>BA3:</b> I could see myself saying positive things/talk favourably about X
		<b>BA4:</b> I could see myself mentioning I am happy with X performance
		<b>BA5:</b> I could see myself saying that X great
		<b>BA6:</b> I could see myself providing details about upcoming promotions and available discounts for X
		<b>BA7:</b> I could see myself providing extra details about X
		<b>BA8:</b> I could see myself providing lengthy explanations as to why X is better than other brands
Spears <i>et al.</i> , (2004)	Brand attitude	<b>BAt1:</b> Unappealing/appealing
		<b>BAt2:</b> Bad/good
		<b>BAt3:</b> Unpleasant/pleasant
		<b>BAt4:</b> Unfavourable/favourable
		<b>BAt5:</b> Unlikable/likable
Washburn <i>et al.</i> , (2002)	Overall brand equity (OBE)	<b>OBE1:</b> It makes sense to buy X instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.
		<b>OBE2:</b> Even if another brand has the same features as X, I would prefer to buy X.
		<b>OBE3:</b> If there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to buy X.
		<b>OBE4:</b> If another brand is not different from X in any way, it seems smarter to purchase X.

Table 1 - Table of items

Source: Developed by the author



### 3.4. Data analysis procedure

After a satisfactory number of responses was obtained in the online questionnaire the acquired data was extracted from the Qualtrics software directly to the statistic software SPSS 28.0 where the variables were recoded and introduced to build the database of this research. An initial filtering has been made to remove the invalid responses and the ones that did not match the target sample.

For analysis' purposes, a variable labelled as "PPO manipulation" will be created, with the compute variable tool, to separate the respondents into two different groups of exposition. In that way, respondents exposed to the non-political manipulation will be coded into 0 as respondents exposed to the political one will be coded as 1.

Finished all the treatment of the data, a descriptive analysis of the sample will be developed in terms of the total target sample and the two subgroups defined, for comparison reasons. Moreover, descriptive analysis of the items with means and modes between the groups was also considered for the comparison of groups.

To check dimensionality and the validity and consistency of constructs, a principal components analysis (PCA) was performed, firstly using Kaiser's criteria of extracting factors with Eigenvalues equal or greater than 1 and repeated until a satisfactory value of explained variance will be obtained. The aim of this analysis is to check if the items are loading in the constructs as expected. To evaluate the reliability of the scale the Cronbach's alpha was executed where variables with a score above 0,6 were considered satisfactory.

To analyse the hypotheses proposed, statistical tests were conducted to reach conclusions. From H1 to H7, simple linear regressions were first conducted to predict the value of a dependent variable based on an independent variable and validate the hypotheses. Subsequently, to check if the magnitude of the effect, Independent samples t tests and Oneway Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) tests have been used, comparing the mean of a certain variable of interest is the same in the population for 2 (t test) or 3 or more independent groups (ANOVA) and investigate if the mean difference is significant between groups. For H1, H2, H4 and H6, the comparison of means occurred between the two groups of respondents exposed to the non-political manipulation and the political one.

Regarding the hypotheses H3, H5 and H7, the test was performed according to the groups of respondents defined by the summated average of the variable “PPO” corresponding to the items used to measure the construct.

To analyse the moderation effect of the IPPO fit (H8a, H8b and H8c), an Independent samples t test analysis was conducted. First, a new variable called IPPO (Individuals PO – Brand PPO) was created and subsequently the sample was divided in two groups according to the level of fit between the perceived political orientation of the brand and the individuals’ own political orientation (high IPPO and low IPPO). For every hypothesis, the Independent samples t test was conducted by comparing the means in each construct between the two groups (high IPPO and low IPPO).

The detailed analysis and results obtained will be presented in the next chapter.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Measuring instruments

The online questionnaire collected a total number of 440 responses, of which 158 corresponded to either unfinished or empty questionnaires, reason why they were removed from the sample. Of the remaining 282 responses, some others (14) had to be removed as well from the sample due to evidence that respondents were not paying attention to the question asked. The final target sample represents 268 valid responses ( $n=268$ ). The data collection took place between September and October 2021.

### 4.2. Sample characterization

In terms of demographic characteristics, the target sample under analysis is mainly composed by female individuals being 60,4% against the remaining 39,6% of male. In terms of age, the sample is considerably young. This variable was initially defined by a range of 7 groups between less than 18 to 75+, only the three lowest groups that englobe individuals from less than 18 to 34 years old account for a cumulative percentage of 60,1%, with the more represented group being the one from 25 to 34 years old with a percentage of 36,6%. In terms of nationality, more than half of the respondents are Italian (57,5%) and the remaining 42,5% are from all the other nationalities.

In terms of education, the sample is highly educated in general, 71,7% have a either a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree (33,6% Bachelor's and 38,1% Master's). The remaining percentages are split between the top and the bottom levels of the range representing the 28,3%, the majority of which are represented by respondents with a high school degree (17,9%). 63,4% of the sample are workers, 19% are students and 11,2% claim to be student-worker, who is aligned with the overall representation of ages.

#### 4.2.1. Group exposed to the non-political manipulation

As described in the methodology, the experiment was designed to randomly create two groups of respondents according to type of stimulus they were exposed. The group exposed to the non-political manipulation includes respondents that were shown a non-socio-politically active message from the fictitious brand Gold Tomato and it has 133 individuals ( $n=133$ ) from the target sample. 60,9% of these are female as 39,1% are male.

Regarding the distribution of the age, this group follows the tendency of the sample having a larger number of young participants, the interval with most responses was “25-34 years” with 36,6% and “18-24 years” with 21,1%. The intervals “35-44” and “55-64” registered a percentage of 13,5% each, the interval “45-54” registered 11,3% and “+65” a percentage of 4,5%. In terms of nationality, 59,4% of the respondents are Italian and 40,6% are from all other nationalities.

Considering the level of education, the group is mainly composed of individuals with a Bachelor degree (38,3%) and individuals with a Master degree (34,6%), and in terms of occupation, most of the respondents indicated to be currently working (63,9%) or studying (18,8%). 8,3% of the people in the group considered themselves as “*Working Student*” as 3% were *Unemployed* and 6% *Retired*.

#### 4.2.2. Group exposed to the political manipulation

The group exposed to the political manipulation includes respondents that were shown a socio-politically active message from the fictitious brand Gold Tomato and it has 135 individuals (n=135) from the target sample, of which 81 are Female (60%) and 54 Male (40%). Considering demographic characteristics, once again the group is described as young aggregating the majority of the respondents (37%) in the bound “25-34”, followed by “18-24” with 25,2%. The remaining respondents had lower frequencies split between the other intervals. In terms of nationality, 75 respondents are Italian (55,6%) and the other 60 (44,4%) are from all the other nationalities.

Concerning the literacy and current situation of the group, the majority of the respondents indicated to have a Master’s degree (41,5%), 28,9% were Bachelor’s. The other answers registered as following: “*High school*” 19,3%, “*Post-Graduation*” 6,7% and “*Ph.D.*” 3,7%. In terms of occupation, the group has similar results with the sample, having a significant larger number of Workers (63%), Students (19,3%) and Working Student (14,1%). To sum up the characterization of both groups, is possible to conclude that they have similar characteristics, reflecting the attribute of the whole target sample.

#### 4.3. Validation of measures

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to check dimensionality and validate the reliability of the scales of brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE).

From the principal components analysis conducted, a solution with 3 factors was presented using Kaiser's criteria, and that account for 78,2% of the variance of the initial variables. Through the varimax rotation it was possible to verify that all items loaded above 0,500 (Marôco, 2014). Moreover, the Bartlett's Test proved that the PCA could be performed in this case as the null hypothesis was rejected (Sig = 0,000) and the KMO test revealed a good value too (KMO = 0,945 > 0,8) according to Marôco (2014). Lastly, from the reliability test of the scale, measured with the Cronbach's Alpha, all variables scored more than 0,600, considered a satisfactory value (Marôco, 2014).

Constructs	Factor Loadings			Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
	1	2	3		
<i>Brand Advocacy</i>					
BA1	<b>,616</b>	,206	,496	0,935	,929
BA2	<b>,703</b>	,165	,470		,924
BA3	<b>,664</b>	,244	,421		,927
BA4	<b>,652</b>	,226	,484		,926
BA5	<b>,767</b>	,263	,253		,926
BA6	<b>,807</b>	,252	,192		,927
BA7	<b>,768</b>	,276	,198		,929
BA8	<b>,776</b>	,112	,350		,926
<i>Brand Attitude</i>					
BAT1	,352	<b>,686</b>	,279	0,957	,970
BAT2	,222	<b>,902</b>	,204		,940
BAT3	,208	<b>,923</b>	,175		,938
BAT4	,178	<b>,896</b>	,180		,935
BAT5	,141	<b>,913</b>	,148		,946
<i>Overall Brand Equity</i>					
OBE1	,377	,208	<b>,795</b>	0,934	,918
OBE2	,354	,216	<b>,811</b>		,909
OBE3	,339	,272	<b>,789</b>		,911
OBE4	,315	,263	<b>,806</b>		,915

Table 2 - Results from exploratory factor analysis (BA, BAT, OBE)

Source: Developed by the author

The same test was conducted for the variable perceived political orientation (PPO). From the principal components analysis conducted a solution with 1 factor was presented using Kaiser's criteria, that accounts for 77,4% of the variance of the initial variables explained, which is a very satisfactory percentage. Through the component matrix it was possible to verify that all items loaded above 0,500 (Marôco, 2014). Even in this case, the Bartlett's Test proved that the PCA could be performed being the null hypothesis rejected (Sig < 0,001). From the reliability test of the scale, measured with the Cronbach's Alpha, the variable has a score higher than 0,600. (Marôco, 2014). When calculating the averages for three items regarding PPO, it was confirmed that the summated average for the group exposed to the non-political manipulation is different from the summated average of the group exposed to the political one.

#### Factor Loadings

Construct	1	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
<i>Perceived political orientation</i>			
<i>(PPO)</i>			
<b>PPO1</b>	,873	0,854	,807
<b>PPO2</b>	,909		,744
<b>PPO3</b>	,857		,831

Table 3 - Results from exploratory factor analysis (PPO)  
Source: Developed by the author

#### 4.4. Hypotheses testing

Regarding the first hypothesis (*H1: Brand activism has a significant effect on how the brand is perceived in terms of political orientation (PPO)*), a simple linear regression analysis was used to test if brand activism significantly predicted the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand. The results of the regression indicated the predictor explained 19.5% of the variance ( $R^2 = .195$ ,  $F(1,266) = 64,1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that brand activism significantly predicted perceived political orientation (PPO) ( $\beta = .441$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In that reasoning, H1 is accepted since there is statistical evidence that brand activism significantly influences the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand.

<b>R Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>.195</b>	1,266	64.127	.441	< 0.001

Table 4 - Simple linear regression results (H1)

Source: developed by the author

After the validation of the hypothesis, to check the magnitude of the effect and see if there are two different levels of the construct PPO, an Independent samples t-test was also conducted. From the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, the Sig. (2-tailed) < .001 rejected the hypothesis that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable. Therefore, to test the equality of means, the test to choose is the one that does not assume the equality of variances of the variable under analysis in the two groups. The t-test for Equality of Means rejected the null hypothesis Sig. (2-tailed) < .001 ( $\alpha = .05$ ), informing that there is a significant statistical difference between the mean of PPO in the two groups (Non-political manipulation = 2.77 – Std. deviation 1.27, political manipulation = 4.20, Std. deviation 1.62).

Regarding the second hypothesis (H2: *Brand activism has a significant effect on brand advocacy*), from the simple linear regression analysis used to test if brand activism significantly predicts brand advocacy, the results of the regression indicated that the predictor explained 9.4% of the variance ( $R^2 = .094$ ,  $F(1,266) = 27.6$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that brand activism significantly predicted brand advocacy ( $\beta = .307$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In that reasoning, H2 is accepted since there is statistical evidence that brand activism significantly influences brand advocacy.

<b>R Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>.094</b>	1,266	27.595	.307	< 0.001

Table 5 - Simple linear regression results (H2)

Source: developed by the author

From the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, the Sig. (2-tailed) < .006 rejected the hypothesis that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable. Therefore, to test the equality of means, the test to choose is the one that does not assume the equality of variances of the variable under analysis in the two groups.

The t-test for Equality of Means rejected the null hypothesis Sig. (2-tailed) < .001 ( $\alpha = .05$ ), informing that there is a significant statistical difference between the mean of brand advocacy in the two groups (Non-political manipulation = 3.99 – Std. deviation 1.13, political manipulation = 4.77, Std. deviation 1.28).

By analysing now, the effect of brand activism on the construct brand attitude (*H4: Brand activism has a significant effect brand attitude*) another simple linear regression analysis was used to test if brand activism significantly predicts brand attitude. The results of the analysis indicated that the predictor explained 7.5% of the variance ( $R^2 = .075$ ,  $F(1,266) = 21.4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that brand activism significantly predicted brand attitude ( $\beta = .274$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In that reasoning, H4 is accepted since there is statistical evidence that brand activism significantly influences brand attitude.

R Square	df	F	Beta	Sig.
.075	1,266	21.434	.274	< 0.001

Table 6 - Simple linear regression results (H4)  
 Source: developed by the author

In the Independent samples t test, a difference in the Levene’s Test was observed compared to the previous hypotheses. The Sig (2-tailed) = .362 >  $\alpha = .05$  didn’t rejected the hypothesis that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable. Therefore, in this case, to test the equality of means, the test to choose is the one that assumes the equality of variances of the variable under analysis in the two groups. The t-test for Equality of Means rejected the null hypothesis Sig. (2-tailed) < .001 ( $\alpha = .05$ ), informing that there is a significant statistical difference between the mean of brand attitude in the two groups (Non-political manipulation = 4.20 – Std. deviation 1.59, political manipulation = 5.10, Std. deviation 1.56).

As for the next hypothesis (*H6: Brand activism has a significant effect on overall brand equity (OBE)*), on the construct overall brand equity (OBE), from the simple linear regression analysis to test if brand activism significantly predicts overall brand equity (OBE), the results indicated that the predictor explained 10.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .107$ ,  $F(1,266) = 31.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that brand activism significantly predicted overall brand equity (OBE) ( $\beta = .327$ ,  $p$



< .001). In that reasoning, H6 is accepted since there is statistical evidence that brand activism significantly influences overall brand equity (OBE).

<b>R Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>.107</b>	1,266	31.879	.327	< 0.001

Table 7 - Simple linear regression results (H6)  
Source: developed by the author

From the Levene's test, in this case, equal variances were not assumed (Sig 2-tailed = .033 <  $\alpha$  = .05). The t-test for Equality of Means, once again, rejected the null hypothesis Sig. (2-tailed) < .001 (<  $\alpha$  = .05), informing that there is a significant statistical difference between the mean of overall brand equity in the two groups (Non-political manipulation = 3.71 – Std. deviation 1.29, political manipulation = 4.70, Std. deviation 1.55).

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</b>		<b>Results</b>
					<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>	
<i>Perceived political orientation (PPO)</i>	Non-political manipulation	133	-8,015	< 0,001	-1,77766	-1,07638	<b>Significantly different</b>
	Political manipulation	135					
<i>Brand advocacy</i>	Non-political manipulation	133	-5,258	< 0,001	-1,06913	-,48654	<b>Significantly different</b>
	Political manipulation	135					
<i>Brand attitude</i>	Non-political manipulation	133	-4,630	< 0,001	-1,28044	-,51630	<b>Significantly different</b>
	Political manipulation	135					
<i>Overall brand equity (OBE)</i>	Non-political manipulation	133	-5,654	< 0,001	-1,33195	-,64360	<b>Significantly different</b>
	Political manipulation	135					

Table 8 - Independent samples t-test results (H1, H2, H4, H6)  
Source: Developed by the author

Regarding the third hypothesis (*H3: The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on brand advocacy*), a simple linear regression analysis was used to test if the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand significantly predicted brand advocacy. The results of the regression indicated that the predictor explained 9.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .097$ ,  $F(1,266) = 28.6$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that PPO significantly predicted brand advocacy ( $\beta = .312$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In that reasoning, H3 is accepted since there is statistical evidence that the PPO of the brand significantly influences brand advocacy.

<b>R Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>.097</b>	1,266	28.600	.312	< 0.001

*Table 9 - Simple linear regression results (H3)*  
 Source: developed by the author

To check the magnitude of the effect and see if there are different levels of the construct brand advocacy, a Oneway Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Although, the test was abandoned for its non-parametric alternative (Kruskal-Wallis test) as the assumption of equality of variances was not fulfilled ( $\text{Sig} < .001 < \alpha = .05$ ). The Kruskal-Wallis test concluded that the level of brand advocacy increases substantially when the brand is perceived politically oriented (mean rank = 181.95) while there's almost no difference between the two groups that perceived the brand as either not oriented or neutral (mean rank neutral = 120.39, mean rank not oriented = 121.91). By looking at the test statistics, the Sig. ( $< .001$ ) rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that the distribution of brand advocacy is different for at least one of the three populations defined by the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand.

Regarding the next hypothesis (*H5: The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on brand attitude*), from the simple linear regression analysis used to test if the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand significantly predicts brand attitude, the results of the regression indicated that the predictor explained 4.9% of the variance ( $R^2 = .049$ ,  $F(1,264) = 13.7$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that PPO significantly predicted brand attitude ( $\beta = .222$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In that reasoning, H5 is accepted since there is statistical evidence that the PPO of the brand significantly influences brand attitude.

<b>R Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>.049</b>	1,264	13.730	.222	< 0.001

Table 10 - Simple linear regression results (H5)  
 Source: developed by the author

Once again, to check the magnitude of the effect and see if there are different levels of the construct brand attitude, a Oneway Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed.

Although, even this time the test had to be abandoned for its non-parametric alternative (Kruskal-Wallis test) as the assumption of equality of variances was not fulfilled (Sig = .006 <  $\alpha$  = .05). From the Kruskal-Wallis test, it is possible to conclude that, as for brand advocacy, the level of brand attitude increases when the brand is perceived politically oriented (mean rank = 179.02) while there's a very small difference between the two groups that perceived the brand as either not oriented or neutral (mean rank neutral = 115.31, mean rank not oriented = 123.55). By looking at the test statistics, the Sig. (< .001) rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that the distribution of brand attitude is different for at least one of the three populations defined by the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand.

Analysing now the seventh hypothesis (*H7: The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on overall brand equity (OBE)*), from the simple linear regression analysis that tests if the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand significantly predicts overall brand equity (OBE), the results of the regression indicated that the predictor explained 10.1% of the variance ( $R^2 = .101$ ,  $F(1,265) = 29.7$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that PPO significantly predicted OBE ( $\beta = .318$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In that reasoning, H7 is also accepted as there is statistical evidence that the PPO of the brand significantly influences OBE.

<b>R Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>.101</b>	1,265	29.766	.318	< 0.001

Table 11 - Simple linear regression results (H7)  
 Source: developed by the author

When performing the Oneway Analysis of variance (ANOVA) once again the assumption of equality of variances could not be fulfilled ( $\text{Sig} < .001 < \alpha = .05$ ) and the test had to be abandoned for its non-parametric alternative (Kruskal-Wallis test). From the Kruskal-Wallis test, in accordance with the previous constructs tested, the level of OBE increases when the brand is perceived politically oriented (mean rank = 188.60) while there's a much smaller difference between the two groups that perceived the brand as either not oriented or neutral (mean rank neutral = 111.63, mean rank not oriented = 122.30). By looking at the test statistics, the Sig. ( $< .001$ ) rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that the distribution of OBE is different for at least one of the three populations defined by the perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand.

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Results</b>
Brand advocacy	<i>Not oriented</i>	162	121.91	< 0.001	<b>Significantly different</b>
	<i>Neutral</i>	49	120.39		
	<i>Oriented</i>	55	<b>181.95</b>		
Brand attitude	<i>Not oriented</i>	162	123.55	< 0.001	<b>Significantly different</b>
	<i>Neutral</i>	49	115.31		
	<i>Oriented</i>	55	<b>179.02</b>		
Overall brand equity (OBE)	<i>Not oriented</i>	162	122.30	< 0.001	<b>Significantly different</b>
	<i>Neutral</i>	49	111.63		
	<i>Oriented</i>	55	<b>188.60</b>		

Table 12 – Kruskal-Wallis test results (H3, H5, H7)  
Source – developed by the author

Regarding the hypotheses number 8, about the moderating effect of the individuals fit with the perceived political orientation of the brand (IPPO fit), additional Independent t tests were performed. For this set of hypotheses, the questions “On a scale from 1 to 7, how do you perceive Gold Tomato in terms of political orientation?” and “On a scale from 1 to 7, how do

*you consider yourself in terms of political orientation?"* were considered and used to define the two independent variables, labelled as "Brand PPO" and "Individuals PO".

First, a new variable called "IPPO" was created by computing the difference of the abovementioned variables. Subsequently, the whole sample (n=268) was split according to the new variable in 2 different groups (low IPPO and high IPPO).

Regarding H8a (*The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and brand advocacy in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO fit, brand advocacy will increase*), from the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, the Sig. (2-tailed) = .263 ( $> \alpha = .05$ ) did not reject the hypothesis that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable. Therefore, to test the equality of means, the test to choose is the one that assumes the equality of variances of the variable under analysis in the two groups.

The t-test for Equality of Means rejected the null hypothesis Sig. (2-tailed)  $< .001$  ( $< \alpha = 0,05$ ), informing that there is a significant statistical difference between the mean of brand advocacy in the two groups (mean low IPPO = 3.95 – Std. Deviation = 1.20, mean high IPPO = 4.74 – Std. Deviation = 1.21). Both the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference in brand advocacy are negative, thus suggesting that the group with a high IPPO has higher average levels of brand advocacy than the group with a low IPPO. In that reasoning, the H8a is accepted since it was detected a significant difference between the group that has a high IPPO and the one with a low IPPO. There is statistical evidence suggesting that when there is a fit between the perceived political orientation of the brand (PPO) and the individuals' political orientation, the levels of brand advocacy will increase.

Similar results were found for H8b (*The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and brand attitude in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO fit, brand attitude will increase*) and H8c (*The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and overall brand equity (OBE) in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO fit, overall brand equity (OBE) will increase*). For H8b, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances did not reject the hypothesis that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable (Sig. 2-tailed = .304  $> \alpha = .05$ ). Conversely, for H8c, the same test rejected the hypothesis that the two samples come from populations with equal variance of the variable (Sig. 2-tailed = .041  $< \alpha =$

.05). Therefore, in this case, to test the equality of means, the test to choose is the one that does not assume the equality of variances of the variable under analysis in the two groups.

From the t-test, for both hypotheses the Sig. (2- tailed) < .001 ( $\alpha = .05$ ), informing that there is a significant statistical difference between the mean of brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE) in the two groups (BA: low IPPO = 4.18 – Std Deviation = 1.47, high IPPO = 5.05 – Std. Deviation = 1.6) (OBE: low IPPO = 3.67, Std. Deviation = 1.30, high IPPO = 4.65 – Std. Deviation = 1.53). Both the lower and upper limit of the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference are negative, suggesting that the group with a high IPPO has higher average levels of brand attitude and OBE than the group with a low IPPO. In that reasoning, H8b and H8c are also accepted, as it was found a significant difference between the group that has a high IPPO and the one with a low IPPO. Once again, statistical evidence suggests that when there is a fit between the perceived political orientation of the brand (PPO) and the individuals' political orientation, the levels of brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE) will increase.

Construct	Group	n	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Results
					Lower	Upper	
<i>Brand advocacy</i>	Low IPPO	121	-5,305	< 0,001	-1,08111	-,49583	<b>Significantly different</b>
	High IPPO	147					
<i>Brand attitude</i>	Low IPPO	121	-4,439	< 0,001	-1,25419	-,48346	<b>Significantly different</b>
	High IPPO	147					
<i>Overall brand equity (OBE)</i>	Low IPPO	121	-5,613	< 0,001	-1,31524	-,63211	<b>Significantly different</b>
	High IPPO	147					

Table 13 - Independent samples t-test results (H8a, H8b, H8c)

Source: Developed by the author

Table 14 summarises the results obtained for each hypothesis after the concluded analysis

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Brand activism has a significant effect on how the brand is perceived in terms of political orientation (PPO)	<b>Accept</b>
H2: Brand activism has a significant effect on brand advocacy	<b>Accept</b>
H3: The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on brand advocacy	<b>Accept</b>
H4: Brand activism has a significant effect on brand attitude	<b>Accept</b>
H5: The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on brand attitude	<b>Accept</b>
H6: Brand activism has a significant effect on overall brand equity (OBE)	<b>Accept</b>
H7: The perceived political orientation (PPO) of the brand has a significant effect on overall brand equity (OBE)	<b>Accept</b>
H8a: The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and brand advocacy in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO Fit, brand advocacy will increase.	<b>Accept</b>
H8b: The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and brand attitude in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO Fit, brand attitude will increase.	<b>Accept</b>
H8c: The individuals fit with the PPO of the brand moderates the relationship between PPO and OBE in a way that, when brands are perceived with a high IPPO Fit, OBE will increase.	<b>Accept</b>

*Table 14 – Hypothesis results*  
*Source: developed by the author*

## 5. Conclusion

The present dissertation proposed a model to study the effect that brand activism and the perceived political orientation (PPO) have on brands, more precisely in terms of brand advocacy, brand attitude, and overall brand equity (OBE). Moreover, it was analysed the moderator effect of IPPO fit, consisting in the level of fit between the individuals' political orientation and the brands' PPO.

Nowadays, brands are increasingly using socio-political connotations in their communication and a lot of recent research has been done to understand what constitutes a socio-political activist brand, to explore consumers' attitudes and determine if the perception of a brand as being socio-politically engaged, has an influence on consumers' product use (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021, Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020, Moorman, 2020) but little has been written on the direct impact the perceived political orientation of a brand might have on the brand's side. This study aimed to understand this impact, that brands' perceived political orientation (PPO) can have on them in times like this, where consumptions is increasingly becoming socio-political. For that, an experiment was conducted, through an online questionnaire that allowed to quantify the hypothesis proposed in the light of the literature previously presented.

This study confirmed the assumptions and revealed that the impact was fully reflected in the research made. In fact, the effect of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) impacted the consumers' perceptions of the brand in terms of all the constructs presented (brand advocacy, brand attitude, and overall brand equity). These results can be certainly explained by the fact that consumers have nowadays a better awareness of the political nature of consumption, as societies have become more polarised (Schmidt *et al.*, 2021).

When brands take a socio-political stance, they offer consumers a much bigger chance to fully identify with them, while at the same time it allows themselves to leverage secondary source of meaning to differentiate from competitors (Keller, 2003). Moreover, it has been demonstrated by previous studies that consumers are now increasingly expecting brands to engage socio-politically (Bhagwat *et al.*, 2020, Moorman, 2020, Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020) and fill the void left the established institutions (Edelman, 2020).



The study also contributed to better understand the role of individual's fit with the perceived political orientation of the brand (PPO) and how this can affect the extent of the impact of the brand's perceived political orientation. As hypothesized, the findings confirmed the premise of the moderation effect of IPPO fit on brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity. When there was a fit between how consumers perceived the brand in terms of political orientation and their own political beliefs, it was reflected in higher values of brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity. According to the statistical results, the higher difference was detected when it comes to the overall brand equity (OBE) and the lowest was in terms of brand advocacy. This means that when consumers have a political identification with a brand, they will have a better perception of the brand, increasing its social value.

To sum up, the present study investigated the influence of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) on brands and the moderating effect of individuals fit with the PPO of the brand (IPPO fit). By the acceptance of all the proposed hypothesis, a significant contribution was brought in the analysis of brands' perceived political orientation (PPO) and its effect. Nevertheless, there are still potential resources to be explored, especially regarding the correlation between brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO).

### 5.1. Theoretical contributions

The goal of this work was to determine the effect of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) on brands.

The literature this work focused on, does not include the construct perceived political orientation (PPO) of brands. Thorisdottir *et al.*, (2007) only tested the political orientation of the individuals, but not its relationship with the one of the brands and the moderating effect of IPPO fit. The confirmed existence of this relationship constitutes an important finding that contributes to the research field. Brand activism proved to have a predictive effect on the outcome perceived political orientation (PPO). Moreover, IPPO fit also moderates the relationship between PPO and the outcome brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity (OBE). Since this study is limited in some ways, more attention should be paid to the construct perceived political orientation (PPO) and IPPO fit, as brands should start considering PPO and IPPO fit in models that explore brand activism

## 5.2. Managerial Implications

This research allowed some valuable findings that aligned with the previous literature can be of great interest to the area.

The research developed revealed a significant impact from brand activism and the perceived political orientation (PPO) of a brand in all the variables under analysis. These results suggest that consumers expect brands to take socio-political stances and that socio-political associations are, for a brand, of primary importance. As a result, managers should be aware that such associations are valuable when they are strategic and fully integrated into a unified conception of the brand. Managers have the need to identify which issues they should support, in which way and calculate the risks and opportunities involved.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that consumers expect brands to act in alignment with their own values, as they will be more willing to advocate, have more better attitudes and a more positive overall brand equity towards the brand. For this reason, brand managers should thoroughly analyse the brand's past socio-political activities as well, choose the topics to engage with very carefully and strive for consistency of their activities with a long-term perspective.

To reassume, should all companies take a socio-political stance? Even though this is easy to say, the finding of this research show that brands that take a socio-political stance are perceived more positively by consumers compared then those that do not, in terms of brand advocacy, brand attitude and overall brand equity. On the other hand, taking a socio-political position can have the potential to alienate some segments of consumers, especially when the issue is thorny. Companies should be aware that the adopting a political narrative can result in polarizing outcomes for the brand (Bhagwat *et al.*, 2020) and that perceived authenticity is key (Vredenburg *et al.*, 2020). Consumers with a different political orientation might stop buying or using the brand and might even publicly engage in anti-brand behaviour. Companies must know that there is always the potential risk to remain trapped by their own choices and issues may develop in unexpected directions, especially if the brand's communication does not entirely meet the expectations of the target audience.

### 5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study focused on the effect of brand activism and perceived political orientation (PPO) on brands, but it offers multiple opportunities for future research in the field of brands taking socio-political stances. This can help to both expand the field of study and to overcome some limitations of this study caused by several aspects.

Firstly, the survey respondents were in the vast majority young (60% of the sample below the age of 34). Secondly, the socio-political activeness manipulation focused on only one brand in one product category (food industry). Moreover, the brand was fictitious and further studies might consider using real brands to conduct the experiment. It is also important to mention that the manipulation focused on a specific issue (immigration) but future research might test different causes.

Thirdly, which is one of the main limitations of the study, the responders to the online survey were mostly Italian (57%). Reflecting on this, future studies should aim at broader generalizability and address different industries and product categories. It could make a difference, for instance, if the brand taking a socio-political stance is a product brand or a corporate brand, as the aim of corporate brands is normally much broader than that of product brands. For this reason, the various consumers, according to their own political orientation, could have different views on a brand's socio-political stance.

Moreover, the subjectivity of the scenarios represents another limitation of the study, even though most of the subgroup has considered both the non-political manipulation and the political one as such, this evaluation still depends on the individual perception. Although, it needs to be reinforced that the scenarios presented were well understood and a validation was conducted. Future research on the topic could still consider a different approach when exposing customers to an empirical manipulation.

Furthermore, even though authenticity was revealed as an important factor to determine the goodness of a brand activism campaign, the study did not measure authenticity during the experiment. Therefore, future studies might empirically test the impact of perceived authenticity.

Lastly, it may also be interesting to draw more attention to cross-cultural differences. Despite the efforts to ensure consistency of the research methods across countries, the results of this study are very specific to the contexts analysed (Western Europe) and cannot be transferred to other cultural environments. Even though the sample included different nationalities, most of the sample (57%) was Italian, which is a culture that has specific characteristics, especially when it comes to the evaluation of a food brand. Future research could make use of samples from very different cultures and different continents, that could also lead to different results.

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## **Appendix**

### Appendix 1 – Online questionnaire in English

#### **Non-Political Manipulation**

Gold Tomato is a brand famous for its delicious tomato sauce, that was founded by an Italian immigrant, Angelo Mucci, in 1901. Its latest introduction is a new variant called “Italian Dream”.

Now, read the Marketing Director of Gold Tomato explaining the strategy behind the campaign introducing the new variant:

“Our campaign is about the American dream. We wanted to show how our founder trusted his instincts and worked hard to create a popular food brand. Angelo Mucci always believed that by giving people quality and encouraging them to try new things, you will be successful. This is still our message and mission today.”

#### **Political Manipulation**

Gold Tomato is a brand famous for its delicious tomato sauce, that was founded by an Italian immigrant, Angelo Mucci, in 1901. Its latest introduction is a new variant called “Italian Dream”.

Now, read the Marketing Director of Gold Tomato explaining the strategy behind the campaign introducing the new variant:

“Our campaign is based on the belief that immigration is at the core of America’s success. As our founder brought ideas from his homeland in Italy to build a very successful brand, so the campaign wants to encourage every immigrant to unlock their potential and achieve their dreams. This is still our message and mission today.”

## **Introduction**

*Intro The following questionnaire is part of the study of a dissertation for the Master's in Marketing at ISCTE Business School. I'd like to receive your opinion about a brand.*

*All responses will be anonymous and will not be used to any other end. The predicted time to finish the questionnaire is about 5 minutes.*

*Any questions or doubts can be sent to [fcooal@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:fcooal@iscte-iul.pt)*

***Thank you very much for your collaboration,***

*Fabrizio Como*

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1- *Which of the following sentences better describe the scenario you just read? (The two scenarios are reported above)*

- Gold Tomato's latest campaign is about the American dream.*
- Gold Tomato's latest campaign is about the value of immigration to the American's culture.*

2- *Gold Tomato was founded by an Italian immigrant*

- True*
- False*

3- *Gold Tomato's new flavoured tomato sauce is called "Italian Pleasure"*

- True*
- False*

4- On a scale from 1 to 7, how much do you agree with the following statement about Gold Tomato?

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
<i>Gold Tomato is addressing a divisive socio-political cause.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Gold Tomato is committed to a divisive socio-political cause</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5- On a scale from 1 to 7, how much do you agree with the following statements about Gold Tomato?

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
<i>Gold Tomato is aligned with messages of political parties.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Gold Tomato acts as if it would support political parties.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Political parties would find a supporter in Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6- On a scale from 1 to 7, how do you perceive Gold Tomato in terms of political orientation?

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Centrist</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Extreme left</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
							<i>Extreme right</i>

7- On a scale from 1 to 7, rate your level of agreement with the statements below:

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
<i>I could see myself defending Gold Tomato when others talk it down/negatively about it.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself trying to convince others to buy Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself talking favourably about Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself mentioning I am happy with Gold Tomato's performance.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself saying that Gold Tomato is great.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself providing details about upcoming promotions and available discounts for Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself giving extra details about Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>I could see myself giving lengthy explanations as to why Gold Tomato is better than other brands.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8- Following the criteria below, describe your overall feelings about Gold Tomato. My feelings about Gold Tomato are

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<i>Unappealing</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Appealing</i>
<i>Bad</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Unpleasant</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Pleasant</i>
<i>Unfavourable</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Favourable</i>
<i>Unlikable</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Likable</i>

9- On a scale from 1 to 7, rate your level of agreement with the statements below

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Partially Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
<i>It makes sense to buy Gold Tomato instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Even if another brand has the same features as Gold Tomato, I would prefer to buy Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If there is another brand as good as Gold Tomato, I prefer to buy Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If another brand is not different from Gold Tomato in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



10- On a scale from 1 to 7, how do you consider **yourself** in terms of political orientation?

	1	2	3	Centrist	5	6	7	
<i>Extreme left</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Extreme right</i>

11- Age

- Less than 18*
- 18-24*
- 25-34*
- 35-44*
- 45-54*
- 55-64*
- 65-74*
- 75 or more*

12- Gender

- Male*
- Female*

13- Nationality

--- Type your answer ---

*14- Educational qualifications*

- Basic Education (9th Grade)*
- High School (12th Grade)*
- Bachelor's Degree (or equivalent)*
- Post-Graduation*
- Master's Degree*
- PhD*

*15- Current situation*

- Student*
- Working Student*
- Worker*
- Unemployed*
- Retired*

## Appendix 2 - Online questionnaire in Italian

### **Non-Political Manipulation**

Gold Tomato è un marchio famoso per la sua squisita salsa di pomodoro ed è stato fondato da un immigrato italiano, Angelo Mucci, nel 1901. La sua ultima introduzione è una nuova variante chiamata "Italian Dream - Sogno Italiano".

Ora, leggi il Direttore Marketing di Gold Tomato che spiega la strategia alla base della campagna pubblicitaria lanciata per introdurre la nuova variante:

“La nostra campagna riguarda il sogno americano. Volevamo mostrare come il nostro fondatore si è fidato del suo istinto e ha lavorato duramente per creare un famoso marchio alimentare. Angelo Mucci ha sempre creduto che dando prodotti di qualità alle persone e incoraggiandole a provare cose nuove, alla fine avrai successo. Questo è ancora il nostro messaggio e la nostra missione oggi”.

### **Political Manipulation**

Gold Tomato è un marchio famoso per la sua squisita salsa di pomodoro ed è stato fondato da un immigrato italiano, Angelo Mucci, nel 1901. La sua ultima introduzione è una nuova variante chiamata "Italian Dream - Sogno Italiano".

Ora, leggi il Direttore Marketing di Gold Tomato che spiega la strategia alla base della campagna pubblicitaria lanciata per introdurre la nuova variante:

“La nostra campagna si basa sulla convinzione che l'immigrazione sia al centro del successo dell'America. Come il nostro fondatore ha portato idee dalla sua terra d'origine per costruire un marchio di grande successo, così la nostra campagna mira ad incentivare ogni immigrato a sbloccare il proprio potenziale e realizzare i propri sogni. Questo è ancora il nostro messaggio e la nostra missione oggi”.

### **Introduzione**

*Il seguente questionario fa parte dello studio di una tesi per il Master in Marketing presso ISCTE Business School. Vorrei avere la tua opinione su un marchio.*

*Tutte le risposte saranno anonime e non verranno utilizzate per nessun altro fine. Il tempo previsto per completare il questionario è di 5 minuti circa.*

*Qualsiasi domanda o dubbio può essere inviato a [fcooa1@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:fcooa1@iscte-iul.pt)*

**Grazie mille per la vostra collaborazione,**

*Fabrizio Como*

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1- *Quale delle seguenti frasi descrive meglio lo scenario che hai appena finito di leggere?*

- L'ultima campagna di Gold Tomato riguarda il sogno americano.*
- L'ultima campagna di Gold Tomato riguarda il valore dell'immigrazione nella cultura americana.*

2- *Gold Tomato è stata fondata da un immigrato italiano*

- Vero*
- Falso*

3- *La nuova salsa di pomodoro introdotta da Gold Tomato si chiama "Italian Pleasure - Piacere Italiano"*

- Vero*
- Falso*

4- In una scala da 1 a 7, quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo a Gold Tomato?

	Totalmente in disaccordo	In disaccordo	Parzialmente in disaccordo	Né d'accordo né in disaccordo	Parzialmente d'accordo	D'accordo	Totalmente d'accordo
Gold Tomato sta affrontando una causa sociopolitica divisiva.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gold Tomato è impegnata in una causa sociopolitica divisiva.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5- In una scala da 1 a 7, quanto sei d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo a Gold Tomato?

	Totalmente in disaccordo	In disaccordo	Parzialmente in disaccordo	Né d'accordo né in disaccordo	Parzialmente d'accordo	D'accordo	Totalmente d'accordo
Gold Tomato è allineata a messaggi di partiti politici.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gold Tomato agisce come se sostenesse i partiti politici.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I partiti politici troverebbero un sostenitore in Gold Tomato.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6- In una scala da 1 a 7, come percepisci Gold Tomato in termini di orientamento politico?

	1	2	3	Centrista	5	6	7	
Estrema sinistra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Estrema destra

7- In una scala da 1 a 7, valuta il tuo livello di accordo con le seguenti affermazioni:

	<i>Totalmente in disac- cordo</i>	<i>In di- sac- cordo</i>	<i>Parzialmente in disac- cordo</i>	<i>Né d'ac- cordo né in disac- cordo</i>	<i>Parzialmente d'accordo</i>	<i>D'ac- cordo</i>	<i>Totalmente d'accordo</i>
<i>Potrei vedermi difen- dere Gold Tomato quando gli altri ne parlano negativa- mente.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Potrei vedermi nel cer- care di convincere gli altri a comprare Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Potrei vedermi parlare favorevolmente di Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Potrei vedermi nel dire che sono contento della performance di Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Mi vedrei nel dire che Gold Tomato è fanta- stica.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Mi vedrei nel fornire dettagli sulle prossime promozioni e sconti di- sponibili per Gold To- mato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Mi vedrei nel dare det- tagli extra su Gold To- mato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Mi vedrei nel dare lun- ghe spiegazioni sul perché Gold Tomato è migliore di altri mar- chi.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8- Sulla base dei criteri seguenti, descrivi la tua percezione di Gold Tomato. Gold Tomato è:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<i>Poco attraente</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Attraiante</i>
<i>Cattiva</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Buona</i>
<i>Sgradevole</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Gradevole</i>
<i>Sfavorevole</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Favorevole</i>
<i>Antipatica</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Simpatica</i>

9- In una scala da 1 a 7, valuta il tuo livello di accordo con le seguenti affermazioni:

	<i>Totalmente in disaccordo</i>	<i>In disaccordo</i>	<i>Parzialmente in disaccordo</i>	<i>Né d'accordo né in disaccordo</i>	<i>Parzialmente d'accordo</i>	<i>D'accordo</i>	<i>Totalmente d'accordo</i>
<i>Ha senso acquistare Gold Tomato invece di qualsiasi altro marchio, anche se sono uguali.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Anche se un altro marchio ha le stesse caratteristiche di Gold Tomato, preferirei comunque comprare Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Se c'è un altro marchio buono come Gold Tomato, preferisco comprare Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Se un altro marchio non è in alcun modo diverso da Gold Tomato, sembra più intelligente comprare Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10- In una scala da 1 a 7, come ti consideri in termini di orientamento politico?

	1	2	3	Centrista	5	6	7	
<i>Estrema sinistra</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Estrema destra</i>

11- Età

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 o più

12- Genere

- Maschio
- Femmina

13- Nazionalità

--- Inserisci la tua risposta ---



*14- Titoli di studio*

- Istruzione di base (nono grado)*
- Scuola secondaria (dodicesimo grado)*
- Laurea triennale (o equivalente)*
- Master post-laurea*
- Laurea magistrale*
- Dottorato di ricerca*

*15- Situazione attuale*

- Studente*
- Studente lavoratore*
- Lavoratore*
- Disoccupato*
- Pensionato*

### Appendix 3 - Online questionnaire in Portuguese

#### **Non-Political Manipulation**

Gold Tomato é uma marca famosa por seu delicioso molho de tomate e foi fundada pelo imigrante italiano Angelo Mucci em 1901. Sua última introdução é uma nova variante chamada “Italian Dream - Sonho Italiano”.

Agora, leia o Diretor de Marketing da Gold Tomato explicando a estratégia por trás da campanha, apresentando a nova variante:

“Nossa campanha é sobre o sonho americano. Queríamos mostrar como nosso fundador confiou em seus instintos e trabalhou duro para criar uma marca de alimentos popular. Angelo Mucci sempre acreditou que dando produtos de qualidade às pessoas e incentivá-las a experimentar coisas novas, você terá sucesso. Esta ainda é nossa mensagem e missão hoje.”

#### **Political Manipulation**

Gold Tomato é uma marca famosa por seu delicioso molho de tomate e foi fundada pelo imigrante italiano Angelo Mucci em 1901. Sua última introdução é uma nova variante chamada “Italian Dream - Sonho Italiano”.

Agora, leia o Diretor de Marketing da Gold Tomato explicando a estratégia por trás da campanha, apresentando a nova variante:

“Nossa campanha é baseada na crença de que a imigração está no centro do sucesso da América. Como nosso fundador trouxe ideias de sua terra natal na Itália para construir uma marca de muito sucesso, a nossa campanha quer encorajar cada imigrante a desenvolver seu potencial e realizar seus sonhos. Esta ainda é nossa mensagem e missão hoje.”

### **Introdução**

*O seguinte questionário faz parte do estudo de uma tese de mestrado em Marketing da ISCTE Business School. Gostaria de receber sua opinião sobre uma marca.*

*Todas as respostas serão anônimas e não serão usadas para outra finalidade. O tempo previsto para conclusão do questionário é de cerca de 5 minutos.*

*Qualquer questão ou dúvida pode ser enviada para [fcooal@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:fcooal@iscte-iul.pt)*

**Muito obrigado pela sua colaboração,**

*Fabrizio Como*

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1- *Qual das seguintes frases melhor descreve o cenário que acabou de ler?*

- A última campanha da Gold Tomato é sobre o sonho americano.*
- A última campanha da Gold Tomato é sobre o valor da imigração para a cultura americana*

2- *A Gold Tomato foi fundada por um imigrante italiano*

- Verdadeiro*
- Falso*

3- *O novo molho de tomate da Gold Tomato é chamado "Italian Pleasure - Prazer Italiano"*

- Verdadeiro*
- Falso*

4- Avalie numa escala de 1 - “Discordo totalmente” a 7 - “Concordo totalmente”, o seu nível de concordância com as seguintes afirmações:

	Dis- cordo total- mente	Dis- cordo	Discordo parcial- mente	Não con- cordo nem dis- cordo	Concordo parcial- mente	Con- cordo	Con- cordo to- talmente
A Gold Tomato está a tratar uma causa sociopolítica que divide.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Gold Tomato está empenhada com uma causa sociopolítica que divide.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5- Avalie numa escala de 1 - “Discordo totalmente” a 7 - “Concordo totalmente”, o seu nível de concordância com as seguintes afirmações:

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Discordo parcialmente	Não con- cordo nem dis- cordo	Concordo parcialmente	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
A Gold Tomato está alinhada com mensagens de partidos políticos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Gold Tomato age como se fosse apoiar partidos políticos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Os partidos políticos encontrariam um apoiador na Gold Tomato.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6- Avalie numa escala de 1 - “Extrema-esquerda” a 7 - “Extrema-direita”, como percebe a Gold Tomato em termos de orientação política:

	1	2	3	Centrista	5	6	7	
Extrema- esquerda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extrema- direita

7- Avalie numa escala de 1 - “Discordo totalmente” a 7 - “Concordo totalmente”, o seu nível de concordância com as afirmações abaixo:

	<i>Discordo totalmente</i>	<i>Discordo</i>	<i>Discordo parcialmente</i>	<i>Não concordo nem discordo</i>	<i>Concordo parcialmente</i>	<i>Concordo</i>	<i>Concordo totalmente</i>
<i>Eu poderia me ver defendendo a Gold Tomato quando outros falam negativamente sobre isso.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver tentando convencer outras pessoas a comprar a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver falando favoravelmente sobre a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver mencionando que estou feliz com o desempenho da Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver dizendo que a Gold Tomato é ótima.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver fornecendo detalhes sobre as próximas promoções e descontos disponíveis para a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver dando detalhes extras sobre a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Eu poderia me ver dando longas explicações sobre por que a Gold Tomato é melhor do que outras marcas.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8- Segundo os critérios abaixo, avalie a percepção que tem da Gold Tomato. A Gold Tomato é:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<i>Não apelativa</i>	<input type="radio"/>						<input type="radio"/>	<i>Apelativa</i>
<i>Má</i>	<input type="radio"/>						<input type="radio"/>	<i>Boa</i>
<i>Desagradável</i>	<input type="radio"/>						<input type="radio"/>	<i>Agradável</i>
<i>Desfavorável</i>	<input type="radio"/>						<input type="radio"/>	<i>Favorável</i>
<i>Difícil de gostar</i>	<input type="radio"/>						<input type="radio"/>	<i>Fácil de gostar</i>

9- Avalie numa escala de 1 - “Discordo totalmente” a 7 - “Concordo totalmente”, o seu nível de concordância com as afirmações abaixo:

	<i>Discordo totalmente</i>	<i>Discordo</i>	<i>Discordo parcialmente</i>	<i>Não concordo nem discordo</i>	<i>Concordo parcialmente</i>	<i>Concordo</i>	<i>Concordo totalmente</i>
<i>Faz sentido comprar a Gold Tomato em vez de qualquer outra marca, mesmo que sejam iguais.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Mesmo que outra marca tenha as mesmas características que a Gold Tomato, eu preferiria comprar a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Se houver outra marca tão boa quanto a Gold Tomato, prefiro comprar a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Se outra marca não é diferente da Gold Tomato de forma alguma, parece mais inteligente comprar a Gold Tomato.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10- Avalie numa escala de 1 - “Extrema-esquerda” a 7 - “Extrema-direita”, como você se considera em termos de orientação política:

	1	2	3	Centrista	5	6	7	
<i>Extrema-esquerda</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Extrema-direita</i>

11- Idade

- Menos de 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 ou mais

12- Gênero

- Masculino
- Feminino

13- Nacionalidade

--- Insira a sua resposta ---

*14- Habilitações académicas*

- Ensino Básico (até ao 9º ano)*
- Ensino Secundário (até ao 12º ano)*
- Licenciatura (ou equivalente)*
- Pós-graduação*
- Mestrado*
- Doutoramento*

*15- Situação atual*

- Estudante*
- Estudante trabalhador*
- Trabalhador*
- Desempregado*
- Aposentado*