

**Advertising social identities: Inclusive representations of race, ethnicity and gender in
marketing campaigns of makeup brands**

A multimodal critical discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT

Recent years in marketing have seen the growth of a new advertising practice, namely inclusive marketing which targets the diverse consumer through increased representation of race, ethnicity and gender as primary social identity constructs. Inclusive marketing caters primarily to historically marginalized groups and strives within the North American socio-political and economic context marked by multiculturalism, postmillennialism and identity politics. This is particularly the case in the beauty industry which is considered a dream industry as it epitomizes the importance of appearances and aesthetics in contemporary society. Nevertheless, inclusive beauty representations are still largely under researched, especially in the context of digitalization and social media, reaching the youngest Gen Z who comprise an appealing customer base with the biggest purchasing power in history. Representations have been recognized in the media, marketing and psychology fields as crucial sites of research and knowledge about social identity construction. Therefore, this research aims to update such knowledge by investigating the nature of marginalized and dominant identity representations within digital inclusive marketing and whether and how such representations construct or subvert dominant media scripts of racial, ethnic and gender expression and consequently shape contemporary inclusive beauty brand culture. The question posed is: How are race, ethnicity and sexuo-gendered identities represented in YouTube inclusive marketing campaigns of makeup brands operating in the US market? To ground the research question, a theoretical framework including an overview of current critical theories and concepts from the fields of media, marketing, social and advertising psychology, and feminism is offered. Secondly, the study employs an intersectional lens to the data analysis to comprehensively investigate the complexities of identities featured. Thirdly, a detailed explanation of the chosen method, namely multimodal critical discourse analysis with a social semiotic approach is presented, alongside a description of the sample and data collection, operationalization and procedure. The main results indicate the presence of strategic ambiguity, illusory correlations, cultural blindness and intersectional travesty in the depictions of marginalized intersectional identities. Meanwhile, dominant identities are subjected to tokenistic inclusion. Individuality is framed as synonymous with overall beauty and strictly inherent to diverse individuals, thereby excluding dominant identities from the beauty ideal. Collectivity is represented as a limited source for confidence and acceptance and as an isolating environment through structural oppositions of “us” and “them”. Finally, deconstruction of gender roles and femininity particularly is present in few cases, however genuine subversion is lacking and instead femininity is replaced with seemingly superior masculinity. These overarching results demonstrate that even in inclusive marketing, hegemonic scripts persist in marginalized social identity representation.

KEYWORDS: *inclusive marketing, social identity, brand culture, representation, makeup*

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1. Introduction

“Fenty Beauty was created for everyone: for women of all shades, personalities, attitudes, cultures, and races. I wanted everyone to feel included. That’s the real reason I made this line.” - Rihanna, founder of Fenty Beauty (LVMH, 2022)

In 2017 Rihanna, a Hollywood celebrity and a woman of color, launched the makeup company Fenty Beauty and with it revolutionized the beauty industry. The brand introduced 40 foundation shades - an act which was highly praised by customers, influencers and critics (Pompa, 2021). Soon other brands followed and began expanding their shade ranges and launching their own inclusive campaigns to stay competitive. Although inclusive marketing attempts have been made earlier by other cosmetics and fashion companies like Dove and United Colors of Benetton (Heiss, 2011; Gopaldas, 2013), Fenty Beauty became perhaps the most prominent pioneer of inclusivity in the makeup market (Pompa, 2021).

Inclusive marketing continues to grow as a strategy to reach multicultural consumers. North America has a particularly diverse population, where one out of three people identifies as African American, Hispanic, Asian or with another minority (Shankar, 2015). Furthermore, neoliberalism and identity politics are heavily debated political topics in the American public sphere (McDonald et al., 2022) as they represent “a movement against the established state of absolute individualism” and address the struggle of certain disempowered individuals as members of larger communities (Wrenn, 2014, p. 511). To cater to customers’ needs, makeup brands in the US have shifted their efforts towards producing more diverse campaigns, especially as race and ethnicity alongside gender and sexuality are primary social identity constructs for Americans, informing community membership (Shankar, 2015). Hence, representation as an integral part of meaning production and dissemination in a given culture (Hall, 1997) is crucial for establishing diversity in the marketplace.

The rise of inclusivity as a marketing tactic has increased the visibility of marginalized identities in advertisements. Certain racial and ethnic minority groups and LGBTQIA+ folk have been historically excluded from beauty advertisements in the US and globally or have been caricaturized (Gopandas & DeRoy, 2015; Nölke, 2018). Inclusive marketing offers more meaningful minority representations and therefore has the potential to challenge dominant cultural norms. Interactive digital platforms like YouTube which allow elaborate and creative visual content further aid brands’ diversity practices and the site has become a desirable promotional space for campaigns (Wang & Olmsted, 2020). Consequently, some relevant questions arise about the nature of marginalized and dominant

identity representations in light of digital inclusive marketing and, more specifically, whether and how such representations maintain or challenge hegemonic media scripts of ethnic and gender expression and in turn shape contemporary inclusive beauty brand culture. Inspired by this, the current research aims to answer the following research question:

How are race, ethnicity and sexuo-gendered identities represented in YouTube inclusive marketing campaigns of makeup brands operating in the US market?

Multiple studies from media and culture fields and marketing and social psychology have previously examined race and gender representations in beauty advertising. Most of this research has concentrated on investigating fashion magazines (e.g. Richins, 1991; Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998; Machin & Thornborrow, 2003; Schroeder, 2006; Harrison, 2008; McLoughlin, 2013; Kaur et al., 2013; Brown & Knight, 2015; Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015; Baykal, 2016; Pompa, 2021). Richin (1991) examined women's representations in magazine advertisements and discovered that conventional portrayals of attractive models raises the standard for everyday women to strive for perfection and has a detrimental effect on self-esteem. Schroeder and Borgerson (1998), in a visual analysis of fashion advertisements state that "the idealized world of ads depict a fantasy life in which everything exists to contribute to one's well-being, except if one happens to be a woman." (p. 192). They argue that the use of white, conventionally attractive models and their objectification and passivity hinders the progress of gender roles in media representations. Later, Schroeder (2006) who deconstructed a Calvin Klein perfume ad argued that although various gender representations appear on the surface, they are still ridden with dominant stereotypes. Likewise, in multimodal discourse analysis of Cosmopolitan magazine's advertisements, Machin and Thornborrow (2003) observed that women are represented as "playful fantasies" (p. 468), where they rely on seduction and social maneuvering instead of intelligence to communicate their position. Meanwhile, adopting a social semiotic approach to investigate online advertisements for male mascara, Harrison (2008) revealed that the ads prompt men to consume typically feminine products while maintaining traditionally masculine constructs.

More recent studies by Kaur et al. (2013), McLoughlin (2013) and Baykal (2016) found that idealized notions of femininity persist in the 21st century and promulgate "a universal aesthetic of female beauty which is white, western and wealthy; a standard imbued with corresponding ideals regarding femininity and female sexuality" (Baykal, 2016 p. 39). Additionally, in a content analysis, Brown & Knight (2016) showed that idealized representations were age-related since ads framed aging signs as dreadful and unforgivable.

Meanwhile, little research has focused on new media marketing campaigns like digital video campaigns and even less attention has been devoted to inclusive marketing in beauty. In a study of Dove's inclusive campaign for real beauty, Heiss (2011) found that a display of naïve integration whereby diversity of women's identities is constrained by a reflection of conventional beauty standards. Similarly, Gill and Kanai (2019) and Pompa (2021) found that campaigns add one inclusive element like skin color yet do not challenge other idealized stereotypes. In a study of the SK-II skincare brand's Change destiny, declared as an inclusive campaign by the company, Xu and Tan (2020) discovered that it constructs narratives of female empowerment through feminist discourse advocating for the change of destiny, however traditional gender ideology is used to construct those representations. With regards to race which is overall less researched than sex and gender (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015), Hagan (2019) provides a historical analysis on campaigns showing that colorism is persistent even in seemingly inclusive marketing. Likewise, through a semiotic discourse analysis of inclusive marketing campaigns, Rahmavati (2019) demonstrates that brands verbally proclaim their support for racial diversity, yet visual representations overwhelmingly convey stereotypical beauty standards with regards to face symmetry or leanness.

Throughout this overview it is clear that despite the relevance of newer interactive forms of marketing like digital video campaigns, those are still largely neglected in favor of print advertising. Nowadays younger generations are almost exclusively consuming digital media, especially video content on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram and the latter's advertising appeal has increased tremendously. Therefore, this study explores YouTube campaigns as notable digital marketing practices, updating the identity representation research field.

Despite its growth, inclusive marketing as a growing practice in the beauty industry is also not sufficiently explored. Additionally, research on both inclusive and general advertising has mainly focused on a single category at a time and thus a unidimensional rather than intersectional lens has been ubiquitously employed. Against this background, the present research aims to address those gaps by expanding the research on inclusive marketing by taking an intersectional approach. According to Gopaldas and DeRoy (2015) such an approach is more insightful as it considers the heterogeneous nature of human identity, whereby multiple categories define social existence. Since their influential intersectional investigation of race and gender in beauty advertisements, more similar studies have emerged (e.g. Nölke, 2018; Gill & Kanai, 2019), yet they are still scarce. This study makes a contribution to intersectional research of identity representations and by doing so reveals

more intricate representational scripts which in unidimensional research might be unnoticed. Additionally, it observes representational salience and quality and accounts for the presence or absence of certain multifaceted identities, as well as the (de)construction of stereotypes pertaining to identity intersections.

The societal contribution of this study stems from its exploration of inclusive marketing as part of a larger socio-political context. With the rise of US identity politics (Grier et al., 2017), the appeal of diversity inclusion as a marketing practice in contemporary brand culture is also expected to grow. The investigation of inclusive representations will show the extent to which the latter align with notions of individuality and personal agency, collectivism and community (Shankar, 2015; Peraccio et al., 2014). As such, this analysis reveals trends in beauty representations shaping the brand culture of inclusive beauty. From a managerial perspective, this deconstruction of inclusive representations can promote critical self-reflection and awareness. Subsequently, it can contribute to the refinement of future diversity content by avoiding surface-level inclusivity, gaining a competitive edge and ultimately establishing stronger and more meaningful relationships with customers through more multifaceted social identity representations.

The current research is structured in the following manner. Firstly, a theoretical foundation drawing from the relevant fields of marketing and branding, social and advertising psychology, cultural media studies and feminist studies is presented. Critical links between theory, concepts and practice are developed. Following this, race, ethnicity and sexogendered identities are investigated by employing a qualitative methodology which is most suitable for exploring media representations (Brennen, 2017). Particularly, a multimodal critical discourse analysis combined with a social semiotic approach is employed as a research method (Krees & van Leeuwen, 2020) to answer the research question exhaustively. Subsequently, a critical discussion of the main representational patterns, followed by the situation of these findings in the broader context of inclusive brand culture is presented. Finally, the paper concludes by addressing limitations and offering directions for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

The aim of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, inclusive marketing is conceptualized, beginning with its definition and discussion as a marketing practice particularly in relation to the North American contemporary socio-political and economic context. Theories from social and advertising psychology are subsequently reviewed to explain the role of inclusivity in social identity formation. Following this, the feminist concept of intersectionality is introduced alongside constructivist explanations of representation and its key aspects pertaining to diversity marketing. Then, marketing literature on inclusive representations issues is revised. Secondly, brand culture as a broader concept in cultural and marketing studies is conceptualized. Thirdly, digital marketing communication and specifically YouTube as a social platform relevant to this study are presented. Across sections, examples from literature about representations of race, ethnicity and gender in advertising are provided as they directly relate the study's research question.

2.1. *Defining inclusivity in marketing*

Within multicultural capitalist societies differences between people are often celebrated but one universally common characteristic is that everyone is a consumer (Dimitrieska et al., 2019). From a business perspective, identity aspects like race, gender and sexuality matter mostly in terms of profit and it is expected that representations should appear as congruent with their multicultural target audience. This requires brands with diverse customers to employ marketing practices different from conventional advertising which historically has focused on a dominant, white middle class (Shankar, 2015). This marked the rise of inclusive marketing¹ defined by Dahl (2002) as “the practice of marketing with an emphasis on reaching all possible customer segments, especially segments that have been historically marginalized in the marketplace” (as cited in Gopaldas, 2013, p. 93). Inclusive marketing entails the considerate alignment of marketing initiatives with consumers that are otherwise excluded due to their low numbers (e.g. minorities), low income or lack of prominent public voice. Those marginalized communities traditionally were defined by their race and/or ethnicity, however more recently LGBTQIA+ folk, aged and disabled groups have been increasingly featured (Shankar, 2015). Because of the growing attention towards

¹ Inclusive marketing is often used in academic literature interchangeably with diversity marketing, cultural marketing, multicultural marketing and woke marketing/advertising. The definitions of these concepts are fundamentally similar or identical.

these minorities, inclusive marketing then also appears as a more niche form of marketing, whereby ethnic or LGBTQIA+ representations appear exclusively (Puntoni et al., 2010).

Marketers embrace inclusivity for several reasons like senior management demand, profit, unique selling proposition or personal beliefs (Gopaldas, 2013). Either way, the core aim of inclusive marketers is to convince customers that buying their brand's product is like "purchasing a sign of their own individuality and empowerment" (Findlay, 2019, p. 5). Dimitrieska's et al. (2019) holistic approach to inclusive marketing highlights four main aspects. First is fairness and respect, where individuals feel included as brands are showing respect by embracing differences and avoiding favoritism. The second is value and belonging, where people feel valued for their uniqueness and capabilities and can identify with other inter-group members. Third is safety and openness, where individuals feel safe to express themselves without embarrassment and feel content with brands reflecting their interests and ideas. Lastly, empowerment and growth make customers appreciate brands' encouragement of authentic self-expression (Dimitrieska et al., 2019). Evidently, inclusive marketing is expected to give consumers the opportunity to participate in the brand's marketing and its representational choices. Moreover, inclusivity has become a go-to for resolving political, cultural and economic tensions at large, where brands are able to provide the needed resources to tackle those issues (Schau & Schau, 2019). This aspect of diversity marketing warrants a deeper examination of the socio-political and economic landscape.

2.2. From inclusive politics to inclusive marketing?

Race, ethnicity and sexuo-gendered identities are primary individual and social constructs for Americans (Shankar, 2015) and different societal shifts justify their prominence. According to Keller (2021), recently the advertising industry has experienced transformation due to changes in politics, economics and society resembling the cultural revolution from the 1960s. Globalization, multiculturalism, postcolonialism and the idea of a "postracial" United States are now rising, pinned by ideologies of neoliberalism and individualism (Grier et al., 2017; Shankar, 2015; Peraccio et al., 2014). These transformations have been reflected in institutional changes like the 2010 Census which put the multicultural consumer in the spotlight (Shankar, 2015), the introduction of diversity offices in business and education (Jamal et al. 2015) and legislations supporting equality like the shared parental leave (Ritch & Dodd, 2021). These signify the beginning of a new era of postmillennialism, characterized by identity politics, where community consideration outweighs individual

needs, insertion of politics and ethics in non-political spheres of life, polarized political views and outcry against inequalities and injustices (Ritch & McColl, 2021).

Postmillennial values in combination with the convenience of digital technology have enabled a growing ease for mobilizing support or boycotts for brands (Khamis, 2020). Notable, clean beauty, sustainable and inclusive brands have gained popularity over the recent years largely through vocal consumer support on social media (McDonald et al., 2022). Alternatively, brands that have failed to endorse identity politics and inclusivity have been notoriously punished (Khamis, 2020), such as the online scandal that led to massive boycott when Tarte cosmetics released a foundation with only light and medium shades (Hagan, 2019). In fact, according to Edelman's 2017 research featuring 14,000 US consumers, 57 percent stated that they would purchase from or avoid brands based on their social values and practices (as cited in Lee & Yoon, 2020). Similarly, Ritch & Hamilton's (2021) qualitative study confirmed that most participants would boycott a socially unethical brand. The findings relate with the rise of feminist social movements like the #MeToo campaign which have sensitized the public to companies' inclusive practices. Remarkably, these social movements themselves originate from diversity campaigns, demonstrating the latter's conversational, participatory and convergent nature.

Postmillennialism is inherently influenced by fourth wave feminism where new technology creates awareness of inclusivity and the message is delivered through marketing campaigns (Ritch and Dodd, 2021). Under feminist-driven neoliberalism, disruptive tech innovation have made the global marketplace more welcoming to the flow of new ideas (Peraccio et al., 2014) and have raised the value of customers as external stakeholders. Thus, previously marginalized consumers due to minority status and low income have evolved into a group with greater purchasing power (Williams et al., 2004) and marketers have caught up by giving marginalized identities market values through increased representation. Inclusivity also coincides with brands' interest in the Gen Z consumer segment, born between 1995 and 2010 and described as the most consumerist generation in history with a purchasing power of \$143 billion in the US alone (Ritch & Hamilton, 2021). They also exhibit higher levels of political awareness than their predecessors (Ritch & Hamilton, 2021) and "woke", politically-charged marketing campaigns are especially designed to target them.

In a dynamic environment marked by hyper-awareness, in order to stay competitive businesses are acknowledging the need to adapt their marketing strategies. One such outstanding practice is commodity activism, defined by Banet-Weiser (2012) as the consolidation of political and social objectives with consumer behavior where activism is

achieved through branded capitalist frames. Individuals use their brand consumption to communicate their identity politics (Bennett, 2012) and amid the personalization of politics, intersection of crowdcultures² and the birth of “hip consumerism³” (Khamis, 2019) it is crucial to investigate how brands negotiate this. Consumers nowadays demand more from companies and authentic value is especially desirable. To achieve this, brands engage in commodity activism where they showcase their authenticity and promote it as a consumer behavior. Perhaps the most common type of commodity activism is “wokeness”, where businesses are involved in challenging injustices and displaying solidarity to the most oppressed groups (Ritch & Hamilton, 2021; Sobande, 2019). This challenging power structures and encouraging “woke bravery” (Sobande, 2019, p. 2724) is undoubtedly relevant to the younger customers who hold the key to brands’ success.

Nevertheless, in literature commercialization of identity is highly problematized. Cottom (2019) has expressed fear that commodity activism equates moral to economic value. As a result, feminism, Black Lives activism and other equality movements are increasingly represented through brands acting as saviors in the name of equality (Jackson, 2016). Moreover, it is conveyed that these collective goals are best achieved through individual consumption rather than collective action which is accomplished by reconstruction of racial and sexuo-gendered identities resting upon notions of individualism, choice and freedom (Banet-Weiser, 2012). Like in a poetic full circle, the long opposed postulate of neoclassical economics assuming consumer rationality is revived by commodity activism which also imagines the individual as shrewd and prioritizing self-care (Monteverde, 2016). Consequently, notions of individual entrepreneurialism and the branding of the neoliberal self emerge (Banet-Weiser & Mukherjee, 2012) and establish identity as a self-project where full control is granted to the individual but its potential can be successfully realized only through calculated choices of consumption. Those choices are in turn determined by companies’ marketing of their values through representations which are key benchmarks of postmillennial reasoning.

² In *Branding in the Age of Social Media*, Douglas Holt (2016) defines crowdcultures as the new social groups which serve as incubators and disseminators of new political, societal and environmental ideas and practices.

³ Hip consumerism has emerged as a counteract to traditional “mindless” consumerism. It is essentially a counterculture to traditional consumer behavior characterized as consumption for consumption’s sake (Khamis, 2019).

An example illustrating the commodity activism logic is the Dove campaign for Real Beauty (Banet-Weiser, 2012) which endorses the idea of the individual as an identity entrepreneur, occupied with aspects like self-esteem and the feeling of comfort with one's body size, shape and imperfections. The decision to serve one's interest by purchasing a product from the brand is justified by its equation to a contribution to the bigger female empowerment cause. Dove's campaign is not exclusive and more beauty brands justify consumerism by linking it to social activism as beauty becomes its own political economy, permeating all spheres of life. New technologies have allowed easy access to beauty products and tools and have exponentially increased the public's demand for them (Banet-Weiser, 2012). Meanwhile, the saturated beauty market has pushed brands to communicate stronger political stances through the use of commodity activism, thereby politicizing the whole industry and cementing the inclusive approach to advertising. Still, as much as politics can determine consumption they do not explain the particular ways in which diversity advertising is perceived by consumers and targets specific responses from them. Therefore, the psychological reasons informing the adoption of inclusivity are considered next.

2.3. Digging deeper: The social psychology of inclusive marketing

Although rationality and collective consciousness can affect postmillennial consumption, these constructs are themselves determined by the psychological processes triggered by inclusive representations. The social-psychological perspective deems people as a "constellation of singularities" with different consumption mindsets but nevertheless community-oriented (Peraccio et al., 2014, p. 8). Earlier research has shown that women from individualist cultures such as the American respond more favorably to ads situating uniqueness within a larger context of connectedness rather than separation (Lu Wang et al., 2000). Social identity theory (SIT) sheds light on these findings by stating that people's self concepts are based on their social identities. Social identity is formed from the individual's association/membership in a particular group and is directly related to self-image and self-satisfaction as parts of the self identity (Sierra et al., 2009; Licsandru & Cui, 2019). SIT suggests that members of a social group "identify with that group, view themselves as representative of that group, and model their attitudes, emotions and behaviors accordingly" (Sierra et al., 2009, p. 55). Hence, social membership bears emotional significance (Pires & Santon, 2019).

Meanwhile, inclusive ads instill a sense of personalization, where each consumer feels personally addressed, especially with respect to their most unique traits. This effect is

elucidated by perceptual selectivity whereby the distinctiveness of a characteristic in an advertising context increases the chances of it becoming a salient part of one's identity at the given time (Williams et al., 2004). Perceptual selectivity is part of distinctiveness theory stating that distinctive attributes are more salient to the consumer than common ones. When tested with variables like minority identities, this theory has found robust support and targeted advertisements have been proven successful as they resonate with unique and meaningful to the audience characteristics (Williams et. al., 2004). An inclusive ad prompts the individual to categorize themselves based on predetermined, intentionally foregrounded criteria. This is defined as ethnic self-awareness in literature on ethnicity (Williams et al., 2004; Licsandru & Cui, 2019), however, depending on the identity primes, it can be equally called gender, sexuality or class self-awareness. Due to their emotional aspect, it is further proposed that such self-awareness dimensions elicit more favorable attitudes towards same-race, ethnicity or gender actors and subsequently prompt adoption of similar ways of self-perception and expression (Williams et al., 2004). Those might manifest in rebellious acts against binary gendered assumptions or narrow minority representations, facilitated by the branded tools provided in support of such lifestyle decisions (Ritch & Dodd, 2021). Lastly, because individuals are multidimensional, they belong to more than one group and their self-identity is formed from multiple social identities which might be either triggered or dormant at a given moment. The priming of a particular identity in advertisements is called situational identity and is described as an "internal juggling act" (Licsandru & Cui, 2019) in which particular identity(ies) are adopted based on the cultural frame used at the given time.

Based on this conceptualization, the question of how companies use these insights in their inclusive marketing to create customer-based brand equity (CBBE) arises. From a communications perspective, it appears that the broader the representation, the bigger its appeal to the constellations of singularities, i.e. each individual within a social group. As such, marketers produce different cultural frames in all-in-one campaigns appealing to various consumers and encoded with specific values in mind (Peraccio et al., 2014). Therefore, inclusive elements might speak to neoliberals and progressives, social activists, the young Gen Z, people from marginalized cultures and their supporters etc., where the aim is to transform such sentiments into consumer-brand identification (CBI). CBI assesses the degree to which brand representations provide the desired tools for social identity formation and posits that companies that are able to provide diverse cultural frames are better perceived by customers, heighten the likelihood of purchase and are more likely to gain customers' loyalty (Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012). Considering this, marketers cannot afford

underrepresentation as audiences make rational choices based less on the quality of products and more on brands' symbolic associations. It then becomes evident that social identity and its various aspects like gender and race are considered in social-psychological and marketing theories as experiences/constructs rather than biological determinants. It is argued that they are entirely dependent on their subjective and often stereotypical representations in media and that specific identity intersections are the most affected (Ritch & Dodd, 2021). Subsequently, the next two sections revise literature on the concepts of intersectionality and representation as defining elements of inclusive marketing.

2.4. Inclusivity and intersectionality: The more, the merrier?

The US consumer is a multicultural one and requires intersecting cultural frames to accurately reflect this complexity (Perraccio et al., 2014). Intersectionality is the practice of mixing different social identities in representations and is a complex notion sometimes regarded as a theoretical concept and other times as a method of research (Gopaldas, 2013). Here it shall be applied and discussed in both contexts since theory cannot be separated from the methodological approaches that are inherently designed to test it. In doing so, intersectionality is defined as “the multiplicity and interactivity of social identity structures such as race, class and gender in fostering life experiences, especially experiences of privilege and oppression” (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 91). Meanwhile, more recent definitions avoid the definition of constructs as it is a subject of expansion. Thus, intersectional identities are also thought to include sexuality, age, class, citizenship, education and other naturalized - although not natural - usually disadvantaged social categories (Gopaldas, 2013; Parsons et al., 2022; Nölke, 2018). Intersectionality is grounded in intersectional feminism originating from critical theory and positing that social identity constructs are observed in a state of power struggle (Parsons et al., 2022) and certain identity combinations are underrepresented, caricaturized or outwardly discriminated.

Inclusive marketing supposedly seeks to break this cycle. Marketplace diversity positions brands and customers at the crossroads of multiple cultural realms (Jamal et al., 2015). For example, the organizational collective in the Black Lives Matter movement has emphasized the importance of intersectionality and discourses encouraging the appreciation of black women and black LBTIQA+ folk (Nölke, 2018). In a similar vein, brands have adopted intersecting identity representations which provide insight into the fine-drawn but meaningful changes of identity constructs. Still, one could argue that representations in general are always intersectional since they feature more than one identity construct. As such,

in the context of conventional representations, we always talk about white men, while diversity marketing represents less traditional intersecting identities. Put differently, race is always sexuo-gendered and a sexuo-gendered identity is always racialized. This confirms the need for scholars to adopt more often an intersectional approach in their research of inclusive representations. For now however, the focus will shift to the concept of representation which is integral to intersectionality, along with the ways diversity representations manifest in beauty marketing.

2.5. The theory and practice of inclusive representation

Media studies consider representations as information sources determining future knowledge, interpretation and attitudes towards individuals and cultures (Hall, 1997). This capacity to shape our perceptions can create the illusionary sense of knowing a person, group or idea well enough despite not having experienced it (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2002). Thus, even when inclusive marketing is considered, advertisements convey carefully framed and meaningfully primed cues. In fact, inclusive marketing representations can often feel overly-determined (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2002), i.e. abundant with encodings so that their universal appeal is maximized. In diversity marketing which is packed with postmillennial values, meaning is even further emphasized. Politics of representation are more involved since the editorial decisions to include/exclude, highlight/tone down certain social identities subtly indicate what is celebrated or overlooked (Khamis, 2020). On top of that, inclusivity often equals fairness for the consumer and therefore the ways in which groups are represented matter immensely. Thus, ads become cultural texts and much as any other media text and their representations should also be discussed in constructivist terms.

In constructivist theories, social identities are not permanent possessions but fluid constructions dependent on and are built within socio-political, historical contexts. (Pires & Santon, 2019). According to Goffman (1959), people construct their social identities through interactions with others and the media, subsequently enacting social performances⁴ which ultimately fit within the officially accredited values of society, like those found in the media representations used for identity-building in the first place (Arthurs et al., 2018). As such, representations carry symbolic meaning conveyed through language and visual systems which are composed of icons/signs containing and outwardly reflecting ideas (Borgerson &

⁴ Goffman (1959) defines the idealized versions of one's social identity as social performances (as cited in Arthurs et al., 2018).

Schroeder, 2002). This symbolic representation is also referred to as iconic ideology (Pires & Santon, 2019). Furthering the understanding of identities as acts/performances is Burke's (1968) theory of dramatism which assumes that language is a symbolic action unfolding in front of an audience through terministic screens that are inevitable and frame all visual and verbal cues in predetermined ways (as cited in Murphy & Harris, 2017). Thus, they are filled with what Burke (1969) calls "substance" which is "etymologically [...] a scenic word" (p. 22) and ergo actually refers to the "sub-stance" or the context that the media text lays out. Hence, by paying attention to the dialectical and metaphysical dimensions, we can infer the iconic ideologies at play.

In practice, Holt (2006) and Gopaldas (2016) who researched brand icons, have exposed how in ads commercial ideologies are strongly intertwined with often polarizing racial, ethnic or gender ideologies. As inclusive marketing draws upon ideological meaning, some relevant questions are: what are the commonly used approaches to diversity representation?; what are the parameters of visibility?; and what social identity templates does diversity marketing generate?. Literature has addressed to an extent those questions. Firstly, diversity is represented as "the new normal", in unapologetic, inoffensive and sometimes equivocal manner (Shankar, 2015). The latter is rooted in purposeful polysemy which is advertising polysemy appearing as a consequence of a brand's implementations of strategic ambiguity. This ambiguity manifests in a convergence of representations and meaning in textual signs, where marketers ensure that they benefit from the polysemic interpretation of different groups (Puntoni et al., 2010). Purposeful polysemy in inclusive beauty ads may create stories that emphasize individuality while simultaneously highlighting the importance of the collective, thereby bridging the meanings of two polar concepts. This produces felt affinities and equivalences (Gill & Kanai, 2019) where general optimism and agreeableness are celebrated.

Secondly, "the new normal" of diversity is often not quite 'normal'. It is instead represented through aspirational realness indicating the assemblage of aspirational norms displaying the revelation of diversity in an ideal, yet seemingly more realistic and less ad-like world (Shankar, 2015; Findlay, 2019). Beauty is considered a dream industry because it is intrinsically ethereal. Beauty representations especially are idealizations of aesthetic and artistic inspirations that are not easily communicated or consciously realized. This tendency for idealization leads to a skewed view of diversity which usually happens to involve good-looking people with minimal flaws like freckles or stretch marks (Pompa, 2021). This is a typical case of strategic ambiguity where beauty representations do not necessarily claim to

be idealization-free but are challenging enough of its aspects to market themselves as authentic. With the aim to integrate themselves in the consumer's personal life, these brands suggest that they are the customer and the customer is them (Pompa, 2021; Gill & Kanai, 2019) and prompt the message that “genuine moments of humanity can still be contemplated, even in contrived and commercialized texts” (Duffy, 2013, p. 137). However, an underlying point is that aspirational realness can only be achieved by becoming part of the brand's inside circle and modeling behavior according to the actors in the ads.

Thirdly, “the new normal” in inclusive representations often reveals itself through empowered eroticism, entailing the bold display of sexuality which is represented as a new form of empowerment for marginalized identities (Parsons et al., 2021). Instead of submitting themselves to patriarchal conceptualizations of sexuality, inclusive ads embrace the latter as a weapon used against dominant representations. Thus, empowered eroticism appears as a choice, albeit a contrived one. Although scholars discuss this concept in the context of gender and sexuality advertising (e.g., Parsons et al., 2021; Walther, 2019; Parmentier, 2016), from an intersectional perspective, empowered eroticism can manifest in ways relevant to race, ethnicity or age. For example, as black women have been historically objectified and exoticized (Watson et al., 2019), it could be that their empowered eroticism is more explicit.

Finally, beauty brands' inclusive social identity templates may add several different constructs while solidifying other aspirational representations conforming to hegemonic ideals (Gill & Kanai, 2019; Findlay, 2019). In instance, the cosmetics company Glossier which brands itself as inclusive employs actors who are racially diverse but nonetheless young, able-bodied and with smooth skin. Airbrushing is further used to hide undesired imperfections and emphasize the more socially acceptable ones like moles and freckles (Findlay, 2019). Meanwhile research on sexuo-gendered LGBTQIA+ identities has shown that ads frequently replicate heteronormative constructs such as white, middle-class, good-looking gay couples and nuclear families (Nölke, 2018) that appear non-threatening to the conservative audiences, while their personalities are stereotyped (e.g., the fashionable gay best friend) (Ritch & Dodd, 2021). Lastly, transsexuals, bisexuals, butch lesbians and other genderqueer identities are oftentimes entirely excluded (Gong, 2020; Nölke, 2018; Tsai, 2011). Even when transsexuals are present, they are mostly represented as male-to-female transitioners who inspire to attain an exaggerated but conventional feminine look (Nölke, 2018). The above observations suggest that there may be certain identity constructs which are not as easily challenged. To see which constructs are more robust, this chapter next elaborates on the representational issues discussed in critical media and marketing literature.

2.6. *The 'bad' and the 'ugly' of inclusive marketing*

Inclusivity certainly faces a fair share of criticism in literature. For example, Duffy (2013) argues that aspirational realness and authenticity efforts are sugar-coated attempts to incorporate the audience into a consumerist cultural matrix. For this reason, inclusive representations might pour into the very pool of problematic representations. A second concern has been the degree to which diversity in general comes across as genuine. According to Gopaldas (2013), brands should be alert to the multiplicity of identities and should provide more intersectional representations. He describes a United Colors of Benetton ad featuring a black woman and a white woman holding a baby as an example of an encompassing many different intersecting constructs, namely racial and sexual diversity and adoption as a personal and social cause. The ad overtly expresses identity politics and in contrast to Gopaldas' argument, highlights an issue faced by inclusive marketing related to young people's interpretation of ads that are too explicit in their diverse representations as artificial and dramatizing differences (Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Tsai, 2011). Instead of being perceived as celebrators of inclusivity, companies could be accused of "woke-washing" and "tokenism" (Parsons et al., 2021; Sobande, 2019).

Additionally, it could be that despite being diverse, social identities are still contrived within repeating and sometimes controversial codes. For example, generalizations could lead to brands becoming culturally tone-deaf like in instances where people with different ethnicities but similar looks are portrayed in the same editorial fashion. This cultural blindness can show up in "illusory correlations" (Licsandru & Cui, 2019, p. 262), whereby differences produced by an outer-group are actually non-characteristic to the inter-group. Assumptions of hyperfemininity among transsexuals exemplify this concept. Repetition and contrivence can further reinforce intersectional invisibility, whereby some intersecting social identities are much less represented, and intersectional travesty which includes lower quality representations of marginalized identities (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015), involving stereotypization, ridicule, dismissal or other practices of symbolic annihilation (Nölke, 2018). Hence, diversity could end up appearing not quite fake but somewhat hollow which is reflected in the concept of naive integration, describing the surface-level tokenism sometimes observed in ads where diversity is synthesized through common stylistic choices (Gill & Kanai, 2019).

Lastly, in relation to representational quality, Gill and Kanai (2019) state that bodies are not evenly represented as cameras often show non-conventional bodies only to quickly shift back to those fitting the dominant beauty standard. One of the main criticisms towards

the Dove campaign has been the lack of sufficient deconstruction of the traditional “real beauty” stereotype (Ritch & Hamilton, 2021). In terms of LGBTQIA+ identities, Nölke (2018) goes as far as to question the use of sexuo-gendered identities in all marketing as they have been notoriously subjected to homogeneous representations. Despite this, marketers acknowledge that even contrived diversity representations sell simply by the virtue of their inclusivity. Companies’ inclusive practices are loved just as much as they are questioned, hence successfully assisting in the creation of a particular type of mass culture that they benefit the most from - the brand culture, subsequently discussed.

2.7. A brand new culture

Until now inclusive marketing has been conceptualized through different socio-political, psychological and cultural perspectives. These, however, can be encompassed by an umbrella term for these seemingly separate approaches, namely brand culture. Literature on branding is ubiquitous in the academic and managerial context. Presently, companies are understood as corporate brands rather than corporate entities and brands are conceptualized and researched with high scrutiny (Schroeder, 2009). Sarah Banet-Weiser (2012), an influential branding author, defines brands as the intersectional parallels between marketing, products and customers and writes that the juggling of these parallels has created cultural contexts in the everyday life of the consumer concerning all formations and manifestations of social identity and affective relationships. Consequently, during and through this process, brand cultures emerge and with them, the current culturally consonant frameworks (Khamis, 2020).

Branding entails the assignment of various cultural associations to a product with the goal to make the audience identify with the brand (Banet-Weiser, 2012). Although traditionally regarded as an economic, means-to-an-end mechanism, Banet-Weiser (2012) argues that branding has transcended this congenital realm to become just as much a tool for shaping cultural constructs as it has been focused on ensuring CBBE and profit. Furthermore, since contemporary brands take up cultural spaces perceived as authentic like identity politics, creativity, and self-expression, people witness how what companies want to be registered as authentic culture, is in fact the action of branding authenticity (Banet-Weiser & Mukherjee, 2012). Brands are entangled with culture to such an extent that they become undifferentiated from it. Thus, cultural labor is simultaneously channeling and channeled into capitalist practices in a twofold process. Next, Banet-Weiser and Mukherjee (2012) point out that branding is different from commodification. While the latter holds the previously

mentioned cynical view that brands equate moral to economic value (Cottom, 2019), branding defines the significance of the social identities in the first place; it is therefore broader and deeper, encompassing the entirety of lived culture, including the identity narratives communicated to us. Branding, in contrast to commodification, does not merely use social identities, it evolves and transforms them from everyday culture into brand culture.

Modern branding is heavily shaped by inclusivity. Through the employment of diverse representations, companies ensure that a “structure of feeling”⁵ (Williams, 2015, p. 23) is established, where consumers feel safe and seen for their uniqueness. The effect is achieved by creating visual and textual narratives that are able to immerse the individual as the main character. When represented identities and morals align with those of the audience, materiality is transcended (Banet-Weiser & Mukherjee, 2012; Oswald, 2019). This view aligns with what Keller (1993) refers to as the experiential versus the symbolic benefits of a brand, where the former describes the functional nature of the product, whereas the latter indicates the emotional benefits derived from consumption. Later, Keller (2019) defines the marketing efforts to evoke symbolic benefits as the creation of “intangibles” (p. 22), determining the cultural value of brands. Alongside this, it is expected that because brands express symbolic values, they are therefore saturated with ideological codes (Gopaldas, 2016) that await the audience’s interpretation to transform into meaningful social identity constructs.

Constructivism is an especially relevant approach to brand culture conceptualization which understands consumers as constructors of their attitudes and beliefs about social identities, as well as the performance of their own identities within and through cooperation with brand culture (Schroeder, 2005; Holt, 2006). In turn, this exemplifies a brand culture that can be compared to pseudo-culture⁶. The latter is understood as culture that is not naturally learned through real-life shared experiences but instead appears as a naturalistic illusion of such experiences through the superimposition of certain media constructs (Holt, 2006). Etymologically, pseudo translates as similar to the original but not exactly like it

⁵ Raymond Williams (2015) has coined structures of feeling as a term to describe the "affective elements of consciousness and relationships" (p. 23) taking place in everyday culture.

⁶ Brand culture and pseudo-culture are hereby used interchangeably due to the conceptual parallels existing between them in academic literature. Pseudo-culture is essentially understood as a manifestation of brand culture (Holt, 2006).

(Yazdanparast et al., 2018) and implies that such cultural representations always somewhat change or distort the original subject of representation. These representations exemplify the immaterial labor which produces cultural standards (Banet-Weiser, 2012). Moreover, pseudo-culture reveals itself in a world of pseudo-modernity characterized as ephemeral, experiential, value-driven and engaging (Ritch & McColl, 2021). This means that marketing representations exhibit the same features in their function of cultural meaning management (Avery, 2019). The signs produced in brand culture disclose multiple ideological meanings from different layers such as: the brand itself; the individuals and groups represented through language in visuals; the audience who compares and recognizes themselves in identity representations; and the cultural landscape as a whole (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Thus, signs are self-referential to the extent that they reflect their own cultural creations. As such, the social identities constructed by brands are constantly referenced back to and are either solidified or updated in a complex process of meaning-making situated in and simultaneously molding brand culture.

Evidence from research has shown that the more symbolic a brand is, the better it is received (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Oswald, 2019). This explains the conceptualization of brands as cultural icons whose marketing practices are recognized by people as embodiments of important symbolic representations. In the beauty industry cultural icons are especially significant because they directly communicate values of self-expression (Khamis, 2019). Cultural branding of beauty is characterized by several tendencies. First, it embodies the promotionalism of social identity aestheticization, meaning that the latter is promoted as a derivative of various aesthetic practices one has to perform (Holt, 2004) like putting on a lipstick that matches the individual's inner identity. Next, iconic status is achieved by beauty brands positioning themselves as cultural activists. They are often found on the cutting edges of cultural innovation (Holt, 2004) and prompt people to reconsider themselves by constantly reshaping or reconfiguring identity constructs borrowed from crowd cultures and in turn targeting them (Khamis, 2019). Thirdly, iconic beauty brands achieve a cultural halo effect (Holt, 2004) by delivering symbols that give rise to powerful social identity myths. Hence, cultural branding in the beauty industry creates storied products (Holt, 2004) which narrate distinctive and symbolic branded features (e.g., black-friendly, gay-friendly, fun, sophisticated). Lastly, it should be acknowledged that brand culture increasingly unfolds within digital environments. In this light, a discussion on digital marketing communication and YouTube marketing as the concrete site of research is discussed.

2.8. *Embracing the digital in marketing communication*

New media marketing literature has acknowledged that 21st century digitalization has made marketing and branding increasingly complex (e.g., Balkan, 2021; Carey et al., 2021; Kerrigan & Hart, 2016). Social media's ability to foster connectivity and dialogue has created an environment where user feedback is considered in the marketing of products (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Balkan, 2021). As Steinhoff et al. (2019) aver, understanding customers' online behavior is advantageous for attending to people's value-related needs. Therefore, brands have leveraged the digital tools at their disposal to gather customer insights, develop customer-brand relationships and improve their dynamic capabilities (Balkan, 2021; Wang & Kim, 2017). Brands using a variety of social media enjoy higher customer engagement (Lim et al., 2015) as they gather comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences across platforms. Furthermore, real-time digital interactions have reduced the time to meet these demands and play on the principle of reciprocity, where the brand hears the audience and vice versa (Balkan, 2021).

Another consequence is authenticity where brands are perceived as sincere and transparent due to fast response, direct engagement and openness. This coincides with Kang and Hustvedt's (2014) observation that customers' degree of trust correlates with the brand's transparency levels. Through social media, brands can appear egalitarian, granting customer control over the marketing process. A third aspect is the capacity to create more diverse representations of social identities and ensure that individual needs are met (Carey et al., 2021). Digital personhood, a term introduced by Kerrigan and Hart (2016) describes these digital-native representations as facilitating the construction of new, "extended selves" (p. 1717), whereby even the physical body is realized through online behaviors. This is exemplified by audiences consuming online branded content, for example via watching a YouTube video, and subsequently translating their insights into user-generated practices like a try-on of the product advertised on social media. Additionally, diverse online representations normalize the visibility of less accepted social identities (Carey et al., 2021) and create more tools for construction and numerous avenues of digital personhood expression. For instance, technology has enabled brands' provision of platforms for women to share their unfiltered experiences, has encouraged the expansion of gender identity expression and has heightened awareness of sexism, racism and xenophobia (Ritch & Dodd, 2021). As such, digital marketing communication has created a counteract brand culture which grows in popularity. This translates into diffusion of innovation, where inclusive ideas quickly gain traction in the digital space (McColl & Ritch, 2021).

Diffusion of innovation and other digital benefits are derived mainly from (online) content marketing, defined by the Content Marketing Institute as “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action” (as cited in Wang & Olmsted, 2020, p. 294). This practice offers value to the target audience subtly by accentuating pull instead of push logic, where customers are not forced to receive marketing messages but casually encounter them, often searching for the content themselves (Wang & Olmsted, 2020). In 2018, over 70 percent of North American brands had content marketing strategies in action, naming content marketing as one of the main areas for budget delegation (Handley et al., 2020) and their budget is anticipated to increase in the upcoming years (Wang & Olmsted, 2020). Furthermore, the top US beauty brands have an impressive reach, with M.A.C. Cosmetics having over 600 thousand and Fenty Beauty over 800 thousand subscribers (M.A.C. Cosmetics YouTube, 2022; Fenty Beauty YouTube, 2022). In a brand culture where fourth wave, campaign-based, digital feminism (Ritch & Dodd, 2021) provides the opportunity of inclusivity expansion, beauty brands have increasingly adopted video digital marketing and its stylistic affordances. Thus, this chapter concludes with an overview of YouTube marketing as a prevalent marketing practice.

2.9. YouTube: The content community

In the digital era, customers visit YouTube to receive detailed brand and product information (Ciampa et al., 2020; Scott, 2020). YouTube’s beauty community is one of the biggest and the site is the most used source for cosmetics; consequently it has been dubbed as “the content community” (Duffett et al., 2019, p. 3) as it attracts large like-minded groups around specific topics. Overall, YouTube is the second largest social platform with approximately 2.6 billion monthly visitors, a third of which are between 18 and 32 years old (Robinson, 2021). In the US alone, there are over 200 million users which is an increase of 8.6 percent compared to 2018 (Park & McMahan, 2020). Moreover, the site is free and is therefore the largest video content marketing platform (Duffett et al., 2019).

YouTube has come to represent brand culture fostering a sophisticated ecosystem of content practices (Arthurs et al., 2018). Marketers are able to successfully employ a push-pull logic to drive consumer engagement (Keller, 2021). This has been proven in a research conducted by Duffett et al. (2019) who have found that there is an increased CBBE as a consequence of YouTube marketing communication. The platform gives brands the opportunity to take advantage of the interactive environment and focus on community-

building with reduced time and more creative options (Wang & Olmsted, 2020). Furthermore, authority, credibility and transparency are established as a result of its interactive nature. However, because it is a video website, audiences interact through the content as a platform function, allowing marketers to integrate elaborate contextual cues in their videos. This elevates the role of YouTube as a site for brand meaning production (Brodie, 2017). While other platforms with more limited audio-visual capacities serve as information sources with a call-to-action, it has been found that they are less impactful compared to YouTube's elaborate, persuasion-oriented content (Wang & Olmsted, 2019). This positions the latter as a valuable outlet for content production, advertising products through more elaborate, emotionally-charged social identity narratives.

Ultimately, YouTube videos help brands to enjoy greater exposure to younger generations; compete for visibility to attract clients and endorsers, including the currently highly trusted beauty influencers and vloggers; produce high quality engaging marketing campaigns; improve their authenticity and transparency; and recognize through analytics observation the most effective content strategies. In the following chapter the methodological approach to studying inclusive beauty advertising campaigns on YouTube will be discussed in detail, alongside detailed information about the analytical process.

3. Method

This chapter introduces the methodology guiding the analysis of this research. The method and approach applied in this study are discussed, followed by a description of the sampling procedure. Subsequently, the operationalization and the coding procedure are described. Finally, an elaboration on the study's credibility and reflexivity as important epistemological considerations in research is presented.

3.1. Multimodal critical discourse analysis

The current study examines identity representations in YouTube campaigns which fall into the category of mobile campaigns described as “two-way communications and integration of mobile media into a cross-media marketing communications program” (Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto, 2008, p. 51). The method of research is multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020) since this study is not interested in statistical representative results but rather in the investigation of complex, symbolic concepts where qualitative methodologies are recognized as suitable (Brennen, 2017). Concretely, MCDA was chosen over other methods for three distinctive reasons. Firstly, MCDA originates from critical constructivist theories and reveals ideological connotations⁷, power relations and their naturalized representations in media (Xu & Tan, 2020; Fairclough, 2003). Thus, this method allows the researcher to “denaturalize” representations (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 9) by means of exploring how certain ideologically sound constructs are strategically constructed, deconstructed or reconstructed and thereby reinforced, challenged or subverted (Xu & Tan, 2020; Schroeder, 2006). Furthermore, if ideologies are derived from representations, then they are also embedded in identity representations (Fairclough, 2003; Harrison, 2008). Therefore, MCDA is useful for uncovering the particular ways in which ads shape race or gender and how this relates to the larger context of inclusivity.

Secondly, compared to critical discourse analysis (CDA) which only focuses on the language mode⁸ and critical visual analysis (CVA) which prioritizes the visual, MCDA is concerned with multiple modes of discourse simultaneously. Many scholars (e.g., Krees & van Leeuwen, 2020; Xu & Tan, 2020; Simoes & Freitas, 2012; Jewitt, 2009) stress that media

⁷ According to Xu and Tan (2020), in MCDA ideology refers to the ideas, beliefs, norms and values that can be found in all types and aspects of discourse in society.

⁸ Kress (2009) defines modes as “a socially shaped and culturally given source for making meaning” (p. 54). He identifies language, image, speech and music as some common modes used in representation.

communication involves different avenues of meaning production and the analysis should be approached in a global fashion. Advertising is a good example illustrating the usefulness of MCDA (Simoes & Freitas, 2012). It produces ideological codes through the strategic symbolic arrangement of various discourse constituents and therefore meaning is obtained by virtue of those different elements (Johnson, 2008). As such, representation is not limited to a single component and instead permeates text, speech, sound, smell and all other given aspects of an ad (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). MCDA recognizes this by investigating how different elements are operating at the same time to produce comprehensive representations (Xu & Tan, 2020). As such, social identities - the primary foci of representation, are simultaneously observed, read and heard and cannot be exhaustively researched without multimodality (Fairclough, 2003). Hence, the present MCDA is centered around the two most commonly used representational modes - visual and language.

Notably, the interaction between visuals and language is reflected in “the grammar of visual design” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020, p. 2) which is a critique towards critical discourse analysis (CDA) and its tendency to isolate language from visualization. Instead, the authors state that visual communication is also discourse and has its own “grammar” consisting of culture-specific aspects (e.g., physicality of people represented, poses, colors, focus etc.). Yet, an image or a video alone can be too indefinite, with excessive possibilities for interpretation and therefore analysis is best conducted in parallel with language. MCDA acknowledges that modes enhance each other’s meaning by either aligning with and reinforcing the message or creating contrasting meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). Consequently, MCDA grants the ability to draw comparisons or identify incongruencies and critically infer the subtle, intricate ideological meanings certain visual and linguistic decisions represent.

Thirdly, multimodality is especially pronounced in more dynamic and elaborate ways of communication like videos which exemplify the integrality of language and visuals as they unfold simultaneously and instantaneously, leaving little time for audiences to process them consciously (Xu and Tan, 2020). Moreover, the enhanced capabilities of digital technologies have reshaped the appearance of these modes in novel, interactive and co-dependent ways (Jewitt, 2009). For these reasons, MCDA was chosen as the method guiding the current research, both in order to systematize the analytical process and to identify meanings, in line with the research question. Next, the specific MCDA approach to the analysis is described.

3.2. Social semiotic approach to MCDA

Introduced by scholars like Hodge and Kress (1988) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006; 2020), the social semiotic approach (SSA) to MCDA is centered around symbolic meaning production in different modes of communication. Compared to the other approaches of systemic functional grammar (O'Halloran, 2005) and multimodal interactional analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2003) which focus on larger discourse systems like genre (e.g., advertising), SSA explores the specific resources that modes provide (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020) (*Figure 1*). Through deep observational account of the stylistic visual and verbal cues, SSA reveals the social context in which they appear and the particular ways of construction (Jewitt, 2009). Based on the objective of this study, which is to reveal how representations of social identities construct said identities within inclusive marketing, SSA was deemed as the most suitable MCDA approach.

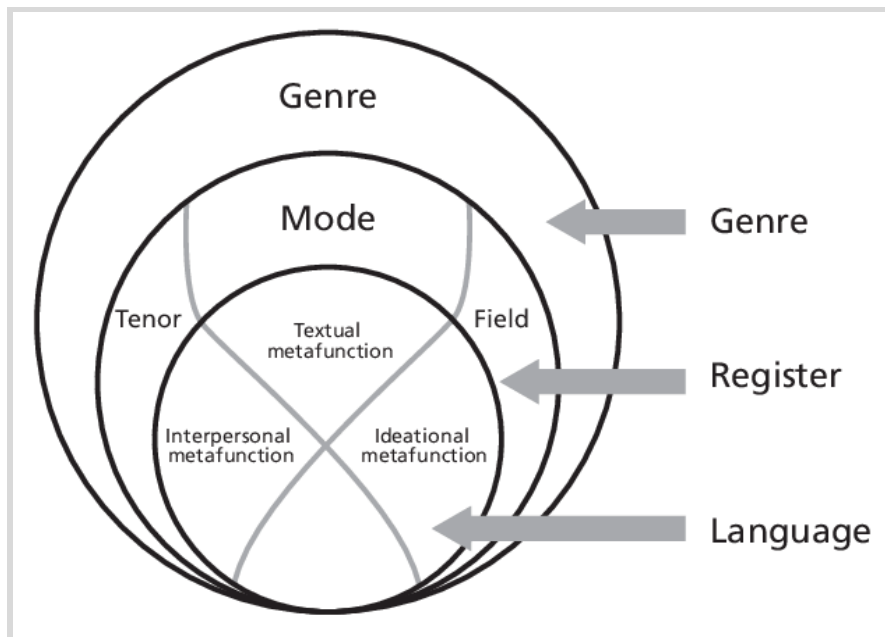


Figure 1 (Nieto, 2019, p. 99)

In terms of language, SSA borrows three metafunctions from systemic functional linguistics (SFL): ideational, interpersonal and textual (Bell & Millic, 2002). The ideational resources construct representations of reality according to which people form their identities. In the advertising language this is accomplished through the careful selection of words, phrases and lexical grammar molding a specific identity frame (Jewitt, 2009). The second interpersonal metafunction describes the grammatical and lexical choices made to establish a relationship between the actors and actors and audiences. Thus, grammatical structures

introduce certain types of relations and are also recognized as signs (Jewitt, 2009). The third, textual metafunction refers to the organization of all ideational and interpersonal signs into text and establishes the overall context (Jewitt, 2009).

Meanwhile, the visual mode has been developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) who introduce visual social semiotics (VSS) encompassing three visual dimensions mirroring language metafunctions. The representational dimension is a presentation of the “goings on” and “ideas” in visual cues like composition or actors’ appearances (Bell & Milic, 2002, p. 208). The interactive dimension considers both the interaction with the audience (gaze direction, shot distance, angles) and the represented participants (proxemics⁹, touches, gazes). The third dimension is the overall composition which each symbolic sign builds. This is expressed in the overall style that the visuals emit and can be inferred from the salient aspects (Bell & Milic, 2002). SFL and VSS provide the needed tools to perform SSA instead of a surface level, ungrounded commentary on discourse. The congruence between these separate frameworks allows for comparison between the verbal and visual metafunctions and shows how the latter enhance or undermine each other (Harrison, 2008). In the current study SFL and VSS are used as a benchmark to arrive at the operationalization. Appendix A provides a summary of the two grammars, followed by the detailing of the sampling rationale and procedure.

3.3. Sample

Corporate advertisements have been considered by discourse analysts as relevant analytical data as they communicate product value through identity values and lifestyles (Harrison, 2008; O’Halloran et al., 2011). Herein campaigns were chosen as a notable example of corporate advertising (Parente & Strausbaugh-Hutchinson, 2014). YouTube videos were specifically selected as they use different modes of representation to create a more elaborate context compared to still images (Parente & Strausbaugh-Hutchinson, 2014), and grant enough time for metafunctional possibilities to emerge. Thus, the sample in this research consists of 52 videos of 30 inclusive marketing campaigns found on YouTube and produced by 20 makeup brands currently operating in the North American cosmetics market.

The sampling technique used is purposeful sampling. According to Etikan et al. (2016), the selection of the means of obtaining data and the type of data should be done with clear judgment since no insightful analysis can compensate for an inadequate sample.

⁹ Stuart Hall (1968) describes proxemics as the psychology of individuals’ use of space.

Purposive sampling allows for deliberate gathering of data, taking into account the particular context of investigation (inclusive marketing). Consequently, “the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available sources characterize the data collection” (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2). Following this, the approach to the data collection of makeup brands was chosen to be longitudinal, cross-sectional and maximum variation. Firstly, research on diversity frequently makes use of purposive longitudinal data because it enables the situation of findings in a larger yet defined social context (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015). Secondly, a cross-sectional sample focuses on multiple brands at a time rather than a single brand case study across time. By doing so, it provides possibilities to draw comparative analytical observations and broadens the scope of the study to illustrate the market and its inclusive practices more comprehensively (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015). Thirdly, the maximum variation sample ensures the collection of broad spectrum data, acknowledging the heterogeneity of the market and its representational variation (Etikan et al., 2016).

Considering these points, the present sample consists of inclusive marketing campaigns produced in the last 5-year time span, from 2017 until mid-2022. The timeframe was chosen due to the increased speed of brands’ inclusive strategies adoption since the success of Fenty Beauty launched in 2017 (Pompa, 2021). Additionally, looking at the available data, it was determined that most makeup brands do not produce campaigns for each launch but strategically choose the timing of their video campaigns while opting for image-based ads in between. The final sample is characterized by an even distribution with a tendency towards increased inclusive practices in more recent years, whereby 4 out of the 30 campaigns studied were produced in the first half of 2022, 6 in 2021, 8 in 2020, 5 in 2019, 5 in 2018 and 2 in 2017.

Next, the sample consists of beauty brands operating within the US cosmetics market specifically. Firstly, according to a global cosmetics report, North America is the biggest beauty market alongside the Asia-Pacific market (Statista Research Department, 2022). Therefore, as a global market reaching millions of people, it is important to explore brands’ representations which have an impact on both industry and society in the US and globally. Secondly, the US population is incredibly multicultural (Shankar, 2015) and it is important to understand the ways race, gender and ethnicity are constructed and represented. Following this, the 20 brands were selected from an exhaustive list of top 500 cosmetics companies (Growjo, 2022), from which only the US representatives deemed inclusive against criteria discussed later were taken in. Those were further sampled on a maximum variation principle and emerged in two categories - price and type of ownership (Appendix B1). This was

strategically chosen to reflect possible comparison between the type of brand and its practices.

To make sure that only inclusive marketing campaigns are featured in line with the research question, only brands which had diversity, equity and inclusion values and practices in place and had those stated on their official websites and/or social media were considered. To reach a manageable sample for qualitative analysis, the following criteria were applied leading to the final dataset. Taking into account definitions of inclusive marketing discussed in the theory, the campaign had to feature more than one race or ethnicity (e.g., black, white, Asian, Arabic, Hispanic) or historically marginalized race identity(ies) (e.g., native American, black); and/or feature more than one or both of the dominant male/female sexuo-gendered identities (e.g., transgender male, non-binary) or a historically marginalized sexuo-gendered identity(ies) (e.g., gay, lesbian). Meanwhile, campaigns centered around other marginalized identities were after all excluded as they fell beyond the scope of this research. Additionally, only videos of 30 seconds and more were considered to ensure that information-rich representations. In cases where brands had produced more than 5 campaigns in the 5-year timespan, only the 5 most recent were sampled. This criterion guaranteed that there is no single brand oversaturation of data, however such cases did not emerge. Lastly, oftentimes the inclusive campaigns would consist of more than one video. All of these were therefore regarded as integrative parts of the same campaign and were sampled accordingly. Appendix B2 offers an overview of the finalized sample. This comprehensive detailing allows the researcher to keep track of patterns that might emerge upon coding and to subsequently draw in-between comparisons. Next the operationalization and coding procedure of the sample are presented.

3.4. Operationalization

Inclusive marketing can be analyzed by using two approaches. The more traditional unidimensional approach investigates diversity through one social identity at a time (e.g. race only), whereas the feminist intersectional approach researches diversity through a spectrum of two or more intersecting identities. Intersectionality challenges academics to avoid overgeneralizations across single constructs leading to repression of marginalized individuals and by doing so, progress inclusive marketing research (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015). The current research recognizes that not all genders and races are regarded the same and applies an intersectional lens to the operationalization of inclusive representation. As such, differences between heterogeneous groups can be accounted for and instances of

intersectional invisibility and travesty can be exposed (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015). The initial step of intersectional research is determining the social identities represented in the data (Gopaldas & Fischer, 2012). In the present sample, the identities most commonly found were related to race, ethnicity and sex and gender. Because the semantics of sexuality and gender are heavily intertwined (Gopaldas and DeRoy, 2015) and in intersectional research separation is impossible, they were merged in the same conceptual category of sexuo-gendered identities. The coding of these identities is discussed in the procedure.

The second step was the operationalization of the SFL and VSS frameworks for the SSA. SFL identifies the main represented themes and the frame angle through the use of language. People express meanings about things in nouns, practices in verbs and qualities in adjectives (Schleppegrell, 2012). Harrison (2008) stresses that although some scholars assume that SFL can be carried out without grammatical analysis, a discourse analysis without it is simply “a running commentary on a text” (p. 59). Thus, the distinctive characteristics of verbal and written discourse are likely to be found in the lexical-grammatical features and the formation of semantic relationships between words, phrases and sentences (Fairclough, 2003). Hence, those are hereby thoroughly explored. Particularly, instead of focusing on clauses or grammatical sentence structure which are more characteristic for the systemic functional grammar (Jewitt, 2009), this study’s SSA investigates the grammatical elements creating systems of wording and ultimately shaping the ads’ context. Appendix C1 presents the grammatical-lexical features which guided the coding procedure and were based upon the coding recommendations of Machin and Mayr (2012), Fairclough (2003) and Kress (2012). The social identities of the actors were also taken into account to keep track of associations between language and actors and was therefore included in the coding scheme. Finally, the textual metafunction which informed the overall context was operationalized as the category of style, defined as “the effect of the sum of choices made” (Kress, 2012, p. 40), i.e. the overall atmosphere impressed upon in the ad.

Meanwhile, the VSS metafunctions were operationalized by developing an iconological coding frame (Machin & Mayr, 2012) where visual dimensions and their respective elements were inspired by VSS coding schemes developed by Gopaldas and DeRoy (2015), Machin & Mayr (2012) and Schroeder and Borgerson (1998). The scheme begins with the general dimension providing an overall image description (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998) and reflected in broader visual codes like the context and setting, social identities and objects. The individual dimension includes the individual characteristics of the

actors in the ad, such as aesthetic appearance, body parts, body positioning, interpersonal interactions etc. Furthering to these are aspects like lighting, focus, distance of the shot etc. The background dimension comprises details in the background like background colors, objects, people, lighting. The final salience dimension represents the foregrounded aspects of the ad and demonstrates what is emphasized or left out. For each dimension both the denotative and connotative facets were marked. Lastly, the style category was also applied herein to arrive at a comprehensive description of the dominant atmosphere. Appendix C2 shows the elaborate VSS coding scheme.

Notably, researchers (e.g., Kress and van Leeuwen, 2020; Baykal, 2016) emphasize that the visual and verbal modes of a discourse are independently organized and structured and although linked, are not always dependent on each other. Thus, the SFL and VSS analyses were initially performed separately, while the ways in which they interacted to create the overall representation of identities were drawn from a comparative practice.

3.5. Coding procedure

To facilitate the coding procedure, all sampled videos were downloaded from YouTube and entered into Atlas.ti, a software program used in qualitative research. Unlike traditional paper-based coding, software allows efficient data processing through easily digestible visual representations which can improve the quality of the critical analysis (O'Halloran et al., 2011). Furthermore, software is useful as digital schemes grant an easier processing of multimodality whereby "the software environment allows the analyst to collocate within the one interface a variety of different analyses in multiple configurations" (O'Halloran et al., 2011, p. 122). Consequently, Atlas.ti facilitated the drawing of inferences and links. Finally, the digital coding schemes are easily exported and shared, thereby facilitating feedback, correction and transparency.

Based on the intersectional processing, the initial categories were those of the social identities. First, a coding scheme consisting of the represented unidimensional identities was developed and grounded in the data. In the race category subcategories identified were Asian (people whose appearance indicates East-Asian descent); Black (people whose appearance indicates African descent); and White (people whose appearance signals a Caucasian background). The ethnicity category consisted of the subcategory Brown which represented Latin-American, Middle Eastern, native American and other minority/mixed-race identities. For sexuo-gendered identities the subcategories identified were straight men and straight women (people who explicitly appeared to be heterosexual and binary gender-wise); gay men

and lesbian women (people who explicitly state or appear as gay or lesbian and binary gender-wise); non-binary persons (people whose gender appeared ambiguous or identified as non-binary); transgender persons (people who identified as transgender). The latter subcategory was further broken down into transgender men (female-to-male) and transgender women (male-to-female). Based on this preliminary coding, 28 intersections were identified and subsequently ordered in frequency terms (Appendix D1).

Next, each video was coded with the SFL and VSS coding frames developed in the operationalization. Jewitt (2009) advocates for researchers to naturally reveal the codes within the text instead of using a predefined conceptual system. This argument was followed in the current procedure. For example, some social-psychological visual codes initially proposed by Schroeder and Borgerson (1998) like the male gaze¹⁰, feminine touch¹¹ and licensed withdrawal¹², albeit insightful, were not purposefully included in the operational coding frames but were instead kept in mind and allowed to naturally unfold throughout the data examination. Subsequently, the sample was coded using Gleeson's (2011) step by step approach.

At first an open coding was performed, where the videos were viewed several times in different orders, alone and in random groups while taking notes of immediate initial observations. At this stage no specific SFL and VSS codes were attached to the represented identities but rather more general descriptors or "proto-themes" (Gleeson, 2011, p. 543) began to take form. Following this was a focused coding procedure where the videos were separately coded using the SFL and VSS frames and when a proto-theme appeared frequently, it was noted down. From there, videos containing a similar visual and/or linguistic proto-theme were strategically grouped and observed again to see if these preliminary themes were pronounced and if so, they were given a name and a brief description drawing from the coded connotations. Next, once again the videos were watched in various combinations depending on the correlating proto-themes. The previous SFL and VSS codes were examined to see if any other prominent themes emerged. Once the focused coding was revised, the proto themes were compared to see if they are distinctive enough from each other and if so,

¹⁰ The male gaze refers to women's representations in sexually objectifying, harmful ways with the aim of appeal to the heterosexual male (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998).

¹¹ The feminine touch describes the use of hands for aesthetic purposes and is usually found in stereotypical representations of women (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998).

¹² Licensed withdrawal refers to the psychological detachment of the actor from the scene and is most common in women's representations (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998).

they were raised to the status of themes and more elaborate descriptions were given. Alternatively, when the themes appeared too similar, they were grouped together in a comprehensive theme. Meanwhile, alongside precise descriptions, the most illustrative and meaningful examples from the videos were identified. This was the axial coding stage where refined themes were developed, however they were still language-only and visual-only. Therefore, at the last level of selective coding all main themes were examined together and comparisons and distinctions were drawn between them. Previously discussed concepts and theories were also taken into account where it was relevant and these steps together lead to the establishment of the high-order selective codes included in the final coding scheme (Appendix D2). Those are highly saturated, context-rich and ideologically charged and represent the end results shaping the critical discussion. Finally, qualitative research requires an introspective evaluation of the methodological and analytical processes. Thus, to end this chapter, the reflexivity and credibility of the research are considered.

3.5. Credibility and reflexivity

MCDA is a complex methodology and while its main objective is the understanding of signs and their meanings, it also involves the judgment and evaluation of the analyst. Sometimes interpretation comes instantaneously as some texts appear more transparent, however critical research is often reflexive, “involving a great deal of conscious thought about what is meant, or why something has been said or written as it has” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 11). The selective focus of the researcher shapes certain interpretations in ways which might differ from others if the focus was shifted. This concrete study adopts SSA to arrive at meanings about social identities in the context of inclusive beauty representations, however, a different approach within a different context exploring those same identities might generate differing results. Furthermore, critical scholars acknowledge that texts have political, social, cultural, cognitive and moral dimensions (Mackay, 2017; Lazar, 2007) whose sources of interpretation need to be reflected upon if we are to ask more questions about societies. Roderick (2018) and Mackay (2017) argue that because societies are subjected to constant change, interpretations cannot be completely objective in their representation of the heterogeneous world. Adding to this is the positionality of the researcher which reflects the particular interpretative repertoires determined by unique personal and social situations (Mackay, 2017). At present, the researcher’s position as a Western-European white, heterosexual woman has informed the categorizations and descriptions of race and gender. Therefore, it has to be acknowledged that definitions of ethnicities and sexuo-gendered

identities, although described as impartially as possible to avoid reproduction of stereotypes, still stem from the existing knowledge and experience of the analyst and therefore might differ from definitions given by gender-queer or ethnic minority researchers. Lastly, personal ideological viewpoint is a key interpretative factor since the neutral, negative or positive assessment of certain visual or lexical choices might be influenced by it (Fairclough, 2003).

In this light, the current research follows the tradition of “critical social science” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 16) where the aim is to give scholars within the social sciences a scientifically-sound incentive for questioning practices in society which at first might appear unproblematic or progressive. Keeping in mind that human knowledge is incomplete (Fairclough, 2003), the study nevertheless seeks to extend and update knowledge in media communication and social disciplines. Through an exploration of seemingly progressive, positive practices, the findings will hopefully inspire further knowledge development and investigation of inclusive marketing in more critical intertextual and intersectional terms.

Reflexivity also recognizes the role of credibility in MCDA which ensures that the research decisions made are sound/rigor and replicable to the best extent possible. Based on Silverman’s (2011) features of credible research, this study has firstly established conceptual rigor through the introduction of inclusive marketing and its importance for studies of social identity representations, as well as its discussion through relevant theories, concepts and prior research. Secondly, methodological rigor was ensured through detailed description and justification of the method and approach to the analysis and their subsequent operationalization, along with thorough and transparent presentation of the sampling and coding procedures. Finally, the analytical process began with acknowledgement of ideological presuppositions and results expectations (Gleeson, 2011) which highlighted personal bias awareness. Additionally, the inductive analytical approach was grounded in theoretical considerations and the use of appropriate tabulations when possible (Silverman, 2011), where some of the final categories were shaped in consideration of concepts and prior research findings. Ultimately, personal account, methodological transparency, meticulous record keeping and critical analysis through comparison seeking guaranteed this study’s credibility. The following chapter presents the analysis and discussion of findings.

4. Results

To systematically present the results, the analysis is structured into four parts. The chapter opens with a discussion on individualism and collectivity as primary representational constructs for minorities and the social polarization of their inter-groups, followed by the aspirational glamor and aspirational realness constructing identities in opposing manner. The focus then shifts to the presence of intersectional travesty regarding non-binary persons of color and black straight women's portrayals. Lastly, the tokenistic incorporation of dominant identities and their limited exposure is discussed.

4.1. Individuality, collectivity and group polarization

4.1.1. Individuality

The current analysis has revealed that individuality and uniqueness are main representational constructs for two of the most recurrent social identities in the data, namely black straight women and non-binary persons of color (see Appendix D for representational frequencies). In black straight women's representations, individuality is equated to black beauty: "I am black and therefore I am beautiful", "I am rare" and "I'm so diverse, confidence is a million with all these looks that I'm giving". Supportive visuals strategically foreground them through longer shots and (extreme) close-ups, indicating personalization and intimacy. Furthermore, diversity relates to beauty through statements like "black beauty is the mother of all beauty" and "It's all black aesthetic". The salience of black women's individuality simultaneously generates lexical suppression of hegemonic identities achieved through statements like "we're all beautiful" and "beauty that stands for all people around the world", juxtaposed with visuals of social groups where straight black women appear at the forefront and center of the shot (*Figure 1*).

The individuality of non-binary persons of color who are especially featured in social campaigns is also rooted in diverse features through statements like "love yourself as you are - black, queer, bold and beautiful - you are you" and hyperboles like "this complete and utter individuality" and "tons of unique potential". Likewise, their uniqueness is framed as dependent upon marginalized group affiliation: "grab a sister to be fabulous with", "what's important is finding people who are just as amazing and special as you are". Moreover, success is achievable only by means of embracing and showcasing their marginalized identity shown through overlexicalization: "stick to who you are", "stick to what you are", "I am using my own unique power", "be your unique self, you are worthy, you are worthy of it all and you can have it all".

These findings are consistent with theories arguing that individuality is employed as a general selling point in the representation of minorities and consequently becomes their main empowerment source (Findlay, 2019; Dimitrieska et al., 2019). A paradox of particularity versus universalism is also revealed, whereby individual characteristics of black and/or queer beauty are especially addressed as representative of those particular identities, yet simultaneously frame such niche notions of beauty as the universally accepted ideal. This generates diversity determinism since the unique beauty of those identities is strictly tied to their marginal status. As such, they are bound to define and express themselves through it. Purposeful polysemy is observed (Puntoni et al., 2010) where representations bridge the notions of the individual and the group (Gill & Kanai, 2019) and consequently uniqueness is shown as a marginalized group characteristic as much as an individual one.



Figure 1

4.1.2. Collectivity

Collectivity is a frame used to represent most social identities featured in the campaigns. Girlfriend culture, a stereotypical way of representing women in ads (Findlay, 2019; Duffy, 2013), has been observed with regards to all straight women. It is expressed in visuals of women holding hands, walking in groups, taking selfies and enjoying stereotypically feminine activities (*Figure 2*). The particularity versus universalism paradox appears again, especially in the depictions of women of color since their individuality appears as part of a collective picture grounded in interpersonal social relationships. Thus, their

uniqueness depends on girlfriend group affiliation and validation conveyed in sentences like “we’re showing up together, all glistening and confident” and “we all have different hues and glows”.



Figure 2

Meanwhile, separate approaches are used to represent collectivity for the different social identities. For black straight women collective effort manifests in their depictions as agents of progress in the beauty community though an emphasis on personal responsibility: “it’s hard but it’s on me, I have to do it”, “I have to fall in love with myself again and show them”, “then I remember that power I have again”. They are given more personal power within the group and appear less reliant on it for confidence and support which instead come from within. Notably, those statements imply that black women have to overcome internal struggles to reach confidence levels required to embrace their responsibility as drivers of change. Thus the latter becomes both a heavy burden and a mission that the woman has to realize. Visually this is expressed through licensed withdrawal (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998) (*Figures 3 and 4*) where women are shown contemplating their lives, crying because of rejection, experiencing an emotional crisis (e.g., cutting off their hair), followed by visuals of them getting up, fixing themselves and going out with friends. Crucially, these typically feminine negative behaviors (Signorielli, 1997) are represented as obstacles for the woman to overcome, embrace her personal agency and become powerful. Hereby “woke bravery” (Sobande, 2019, p. 2724) requires the suppression of femininity and embracing of masculinity and consequently does not deconstruct hegemonic stereotypes nor challenge

dominant power structures where the black woman's identity is in a state of struggle (Parsons et al., 2022).



Figures 3 and 4

Black straight women are additionally represented as active ideological endorsers of identity politics on the behalf of their community as they are often featured in roles of spokespersons or activists:

“Inclusive beauty is consideration, it’s collaboration, it’s an appreciation of differences and we are advocates for inclusivity.”

“I am very vocal about inclusivity in beauty.”

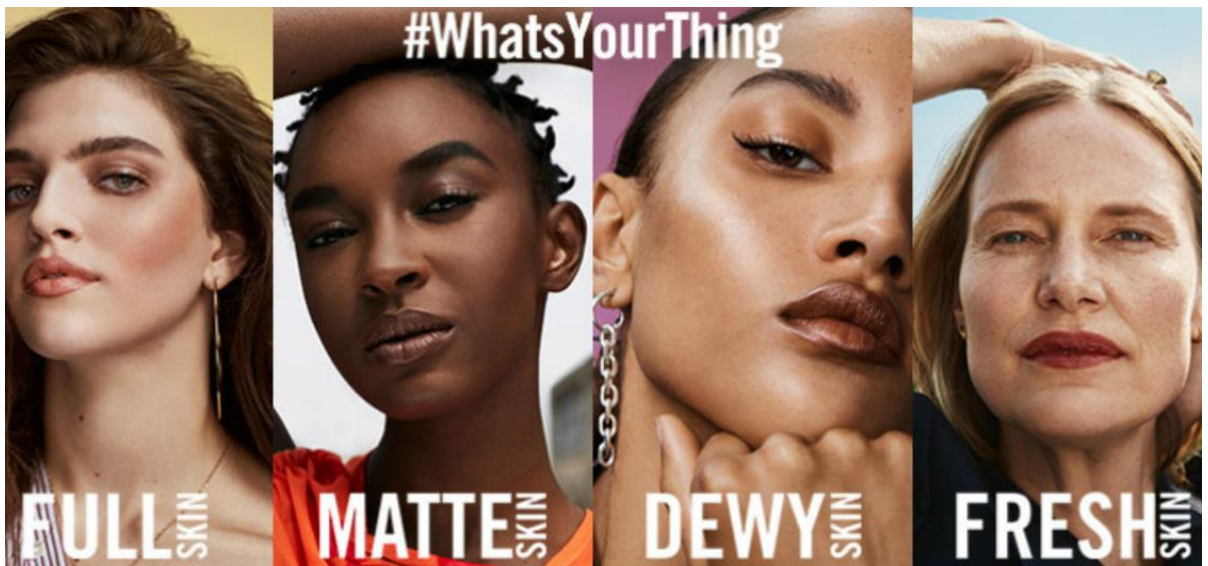
They are also shown as leaders (*Figure 5*) of gay prides, social protests and as members of organizations like the Los Angeles LGBT center and Black Lives Matter. The

appearance of metaphors resembling political slogans like “win your race” and “right the story” align with the postmillennial trend of integrating politics into inherently non-political beauty conversations (Ritch & McColl, 2021). Accordingly, black women appear in professional clothing, addressing the audience directly (“you can be the change you want to see”) and acting as leaders by “leading the conversation”, “making waves” and “bringing the revolution”.



Figure 5

Contrastingly, white straight women are casted as a support group for black women and other marginalized communities, cheerleading and enabling their voices. This is shown in expressions like “I am rooting for them”, “be an ally”, “be there, be present for them”, “they need to be heard” and metaphors like “they deserve to have a seat at the table”. Support is also conveyed via visual decentralization as they appear in the peripheries of shots, sometimes partially cut out of frame (*Figures 6 and 7*). Considering previous observations of diversity being framed as integral part of uniqueness and the inclusive agenda of giving voice to oppressed identities (Shankar, 2015), white women’s representations are shifted from main actors to sidekicks - a role traditionally devoted to minorities (Larson, 2006).



Figures 6 and 7

Asian straight women are significantly less featured compared, usually appearing on the fringe of shots and enjoying less screen time. They are represented as part of their ethnic collective rather than the larger beauty community. This is achieved through strategic cultural foregrounding, where they are purposefully defined in cultural terms via connotative words like culture, food, cooking, honor, holidays, native, language, mandarin, Chinese, family and tradition, passed on, inherited etc. There is a strong emphasis on the woman’s cultural perseverance duty:

“As an American-born Chinese I continue to speak and learn my native language. One of the reasons why I do that is because English is my parent’s second language and with many relatives still in Asia, I still want to be able to communicate with them.”

“I honor my culture by incorporating traditions and values that were taught and passed down to me such as cooking specific dishes, as well as understanding why we celebrate key holidays.”

This prompts the stereotypical idea of the Asian straight woman being a family-oriented woman with a collectivistic mindset who has to cherish and preserve her culture by engaging in traditionally feminine practices (Pyke & Johnson, 2003). The collectivistic mindset is further exemplified by the lexical suppression of individual uniqueness and the overemphasis on the community as a source of individuality, confidence and acceptance. This is expressed through historical identity narration (“when I was growing up”, “as a kid”) and described as a transformation journey which perpetuates harmful stereotypes of Asian women as shy and restricted to their own culture (Wen, 2013):

“I didn’t feel truly accepted until I went to college and found an entire group of Asian women like me.”

“Growing up, I was a shy kid and I lacked confidence [...]. Later, I discovered more and more women who looked like me and felt like me.”

“If I could describe how they [her mother and sister] empowered me to never, ever, ever doubt your true, unique self”.

These findings align with what Licsandru and Cui (2019) call illusory correlations in theory of representation which reveal themselves in the creation of usually incorrect stereotypes endorsed by outer groups. These are particularly obvious in the current portrayals of Asian women who are constructed in white-washed, cliched ways, despite the attempt to give their identities cultural visibility.

Brown straight women’s identities are also grounded in the collectivity of their own cultures. Their representations also display illusory correlations through the strategic cultural foregrounding of cultural artifacts (*Figures 8 and 9*) In this case however, indigeneous and muslim cultures specifically are subjected to exotification (Watson et al., 2019) as the salience of artifacts and the style of the ads can be described as mysterious and detached from reality. In some campaigns, the isolated settings, dimmed lighting, timing of the day (twilight, nighttime), mystical music, and verbs and nouns like pray, believe, song, tongue, echo evoke associations with mystic ritualism, magic and witchery. Therefore, the particularities of these cultures are overamplified to achieve dramatism rather than genuine appreciation (Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Tsai, 2011).



Figures 8 and 9

Next, collectivity is strongly featured in non-binary persons' of color representations who, being frequently featured from a first person narrative perspective, express their struggle with finding success and point their family and community as limited sources of acceptance:

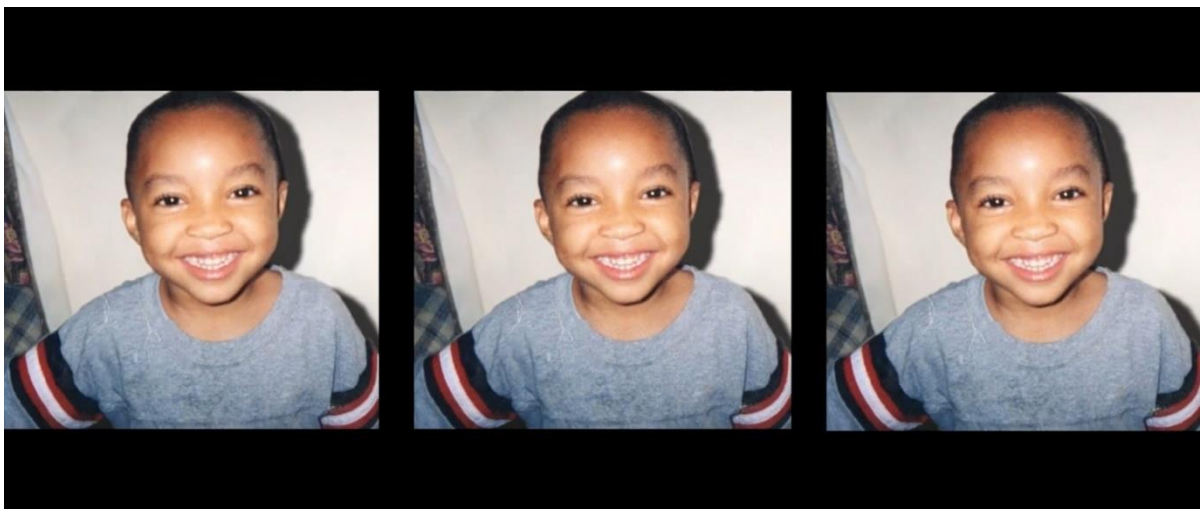
"Not many people believed in me but she [their best friend] did, she stayed with me."

"They [their mother and aunt] accepted me for who I was and never judged me. If I wanted to be an actor they were my directors, if I wanted to be a singer, they would hand me the mic."

Their identity unfolds as a journey from struggle to self-discovery. This personal story insertion of struggle and success creates intimacy and personalization and is further supported by the foregrounding of early life photos (*Figures 10 and 11*) and personal accounts:

“Growing up, my dad worked with a lot of queer musicians so they were constantly around the house and they were just a huge inspiration to me as a child to be accepted.”

“They [non-binary folk] made it known that you can be you and you can be talented and all these things and still feel safe, feel accepted and it is really important to have places like this as a resource for people who don’t have a safe space.”



Figures 10 and 11

Meanwhile, white non-binary persons, like white straight women, appear as “allies”, implying that they are more privileged and have the ability to influence and provide support for more marginalized sexuo-gendered identities. They are portrayed as more potent members in the community:

“I’m a proud ally and I use my influence to uplift others.”

“I hope I don’t make just clothes, I hope I make people think and I think it’s a beautiful thing to show others that they can be ambiguous with who they are and how they identify.”

These findings show that in the current data of inclusive ads, queer persons are not only more frequently featured, compared to previous observations (Fisher et al., 2007; Peñaloza, 1996) but are also given more vocal via first-person accounts, bringing to the surface feminist narratives of minority oppression (Parsons et al., 2022). They are implicitly represented as identity politics advocates for their communities, however non-binary persons of color particularly do not emerge as victors of oppression but victims whose struggle for visibility persists, despite their growing media prominence (Nölke, 2018). Therefore, such representations go one step further to accentuate intersectional oppression and acknowledge the continuous twofold debilitation of being queer and a person of color.

4.1.3. Group polarization

Group polarization is a third pattern found in the representations of brown and Asian straight women, as well as non-binary persons of color who are also most strongly defined by their niche community. Representations of brown straight women emphasize the hegemonic oppression that they are suffering. For muslim and indigeneous women, victim narratives of social and media isolation are conveyed. Instances of symbolic annihilation (Tuchman, 1979; Nölke, 2018) include personal accounts of muslim women living in a western cultures: “I didn’t see many people who looked like me”, “I often got those weird stares because I looked different” and overlexicalization of adjectives like silenced, hidden, voiceless, missing and ignored. Feelings of rejection are also visually instilled by situating those women in their homes or in isolated locations like empty roads and beaches (*Figures 12 and 13*). When shown in a group, it is usually their minority community, further prompting cultural segregation. This division is expressed in antagonistic oppositions of us versus them, inside versus out, cold versus warmth, achieved through metaphors: “every fire needs a stove”, “the world is dark and cold so stay where it’s warm” and “find your way back home”. The hostility of the outside world is also represented as treacherous and deceitful: “we’ve been tricked to believe that our voices don’t matter”; “those are lies that you have been fed to be a certain way”.



Figures 12 and 13

In the representation of indigeneous women particularly, symbolic annihilation takes the form of literal annihilation through emphasis on violence , achieved through the overlexicalization of hyponyms of death like murdder, bury and bleed and their metaphorical use: “they tried so hard to bury us, they didn’t know that we were seeds”, “we will fight and bleed”. “They” and “them” are not specified and therefore lexically suppressed. This creates strategic ambiguity (Puntoni et al., 2010), whereby cues like a television screen with the news channel on and news notifications flashing a mobile phone (*Figures 14 and 15*) are insufficient to discern who “they” are, which leaves them open to interpretation. Furthermore, those women are also shown mostly alone or with similar others in wild locations, hence aligning with previous representations as outsiders (Novo, 2003).



Figures 14 and 15

Asian straight women's representations also include instances of symbolic annihilation, albeit less dramatic and subtly oppressive:

"At the time I felt like there was a lack of positive Asian representation in a lot of media outlets. Because of this it was hard to fully embrace myself."

"I was the only Asian student in school and there wasn't a whole lot of representation around me either."

Finally, non-binary persons of color often reference an antagonistic relationship between themselves, the community and the larger society. "They" is unspecified and

sentiments describing this dynamic are expressed through literal and metaphorical structural oppositions:

“We have to support each other ‘cause it’s all that we really have when the world is against us.”

“You know, if we are not constantly uplifting each other when everyone wants us to fail then we are not following in the end.”

“There is no place for old views in a new world.”

Makeup and clothes are framed as a coping mechanism regarding the hostility of the world, achieved through hyponyms of battle. This takes polarization one step further to signal overt hostility, threatening the existence of the queer individual and their community:

“Clothing, fabric and makeup all compile together and are just kinda the ultimate weapon in terms of being a complete individual.”

“It’s almost like building up this armor that is who you are and you can’t have one without the other.”

“It [makeup] is a shield. It’s almost like a comfort barrier for me.”

“I wear thick lashes just so I can block out the haters. [...] I like nude lips so that the haters will see me talking back to them.”

Ultimately, the analysis reveals that “they/them” is used cryptically which aligns with previous findings of the prevalent use of polysemic interpretation in advertising (Puntoni et al., 2010; Pompa, 2021). This achieves two things: the discourse remains politically correct and no direct blame for the marginalization of those identities is stated, while identity politics are still endorsed by addressing issues of discrimination. It is further observed that symbolic annihilation takes place not in the absence of representations but in the declaration of such by those marginalized identities. Thus, by reinforcing polar concepts like oppressor and oppressed, the feminist discourse of power dynamics rooted in identity struggle (Parsons et al., 2022) remains, however only on the surface since the seriousness of the latter is ironically undermined by strategic ambiguity. Those representations appear empathetic yet continue to paint those identities in a contrived manner by casting them as victims (Moscovici & Perez, 2009), directing them to their own community as a solution to their issues instead of pushing changes in the status quo and subsequently ironically perpetuating cultural dissent.

4.2. Aspirational realness and aspirational glamor

4.2.1. Aspirational realness

The data examination has revealed aspirational realness in white straight women's beauty depictions, referring to ads' attempt to represent an ideal, yet simultaneously realistic image (Shankar, 2015; Findlay, 2019). Romanticization is specifically applied since they wear minimal makeup, simple, light-colored clothes and appear in natural outdoors, fields, nature settings and around animals (*Figures 16 and 17*). Their facial expressions consist of slight smiles, demure looks and natural lighting creates a halo effect (*Figures 18 and 19*). Consequently they look both ethereal and relatable and the stereotype of the angelic, innocent white woman persists (Shome, 2011). Aspirational realness is further conveyed via juxtaposition of white women's faces against adjectives like comfortable, effortless, fresh, full referring to their skin (*Figure 20*). This "girl next door" portrayal (Antioco et al., 2012) is a surface-level attempt at natural, positive and relatable representation but nevertheless maintains the idealization of conventionally attractive, flawless women (Pompa, 2021).



Figures 16 and 17



Figure 18 and 19



Figure 20

Brown straight women are also constructed through aspirational realness, albeit in a manner which deconstructs above-mentioned idealizations through the subversion of their femininity and its replacement with masculine traits (usually in social campaigns). For example, straight women with Latin American heritage are often shown in professions like boxer, dj, drummer and are framed through masculine aspirations like “superhero” and “a girl boss”. Empowerment is established through hyponyms like dare, screaming, impeccable, unstoppable, ready for anything, life-proof. Brown women are also displaying the feminine touch (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998) less frequently and are shown in more practical situations like driving cars and using their hands and bodies in intentional ways like grabbing a rope or boxing (*Figures 21 and 22*). Appearance-wise, those women wear unisex clothes, less makeup and/or typically masculine accessories like caps, tattoos and piercings (*Figure 23*).





Figures 21 and 22



Figure 23

Furthermore, aspirational realness manifests in depictions of everyday, natural-looking women appearing flawed through the foregrounding of their dark circles and skin conditions via extreme close-ups (*Figures 24 and 25*) and inclusion of statements declaring their conditions. Supported by statements like “I have to get comfortable with all of it”, “having to look at the positive side of stretch marks” and structural oppositions like “cover them or rock them”, brown women’s realness pertains to both their mentality and their looks.



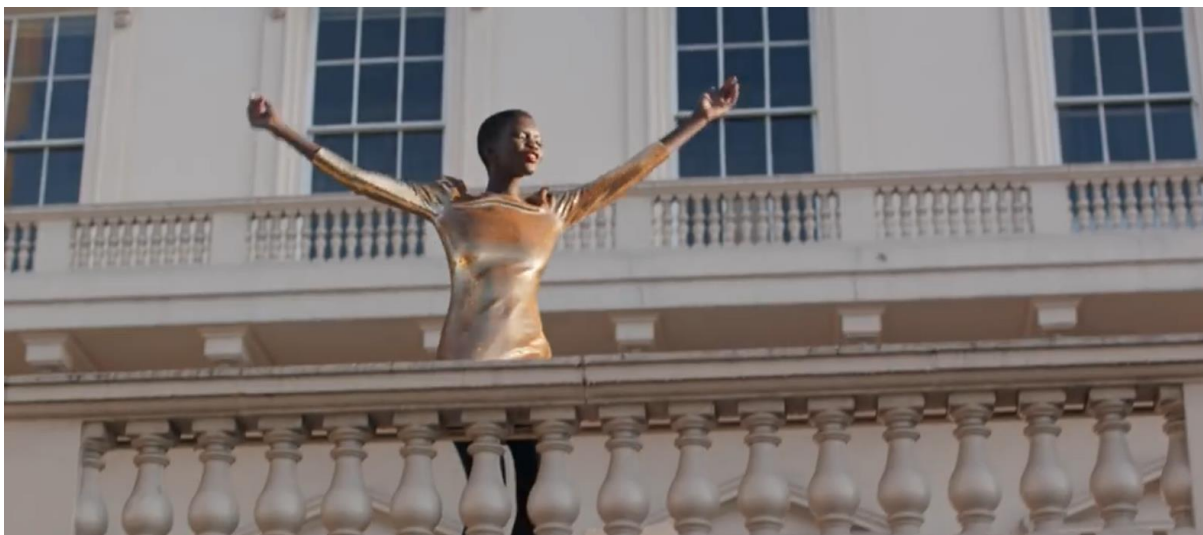
Figures 24 and 25

This reveals firstly that for brown women makeup is not a necessary tool for self-expression (Smith et al., 2021) but instead an optional practice, and secondly that those women are represented as entrepreneurs of themselves, with personal authority over their identity which reflects prior findings from diversity campaigns (e.g. Heiss, 2011; Xu & Tan, 2020) and the trend of branding the neoliberal self through choices of mental self-care found in contemporary brand culture (Banet-Weiser & Mukherjee, 2012; Monteverde, 2016).

4.2.2. Aspirational glamor

Black straight women are commonly represented through aspirational glamor, exemplified by obvious makeup and accessorization, expensive settings and the use of bold colors and patterns (*Figures 26 and 27*). Even in instances of initially perceived aspirational realness (e.g., wearing simpler, more modest clothing and less makeup), they are still

glamorized, as their skin glistens, body and facial parts are fragmented and expressions exhibit licensed withdrawal. A pattern of featuring bald/short-haired women is also observed, conveying a striking and “naked” appearance (*Figure 28*). Black women’s glamor could be interpreted as owning their desires and expressing themselves and their social status in a powerful, unapologetic manner (Levy, 2020). Thus, struggle with appearance and victimization are hereby replaced with empowered eroticism (Parsons et al., 2021).



Figures 26 and 27



Figure 28

The analysis has shown that aspirational glamour pertains to non-binary white representations by framing those identities as fashion-forward and extravagant (*Figure 29*). Despite this, they, similarly to white straight women, wear less makeup, pastel colors and shots focus on their eyes (*Figure 30*) consequently appearing both aspirationally realistic and aspirationally glamorous. The halo effect is present too, where a lighting coming from the back provides a more angelic appearance (*Figure 31*). As such, white feminine stereotypes are carried onto other genders perceived as feminine, ultimately demonstrating gender blindness (Licsandru & Cui, 2019).



Figure 29



Figure 30

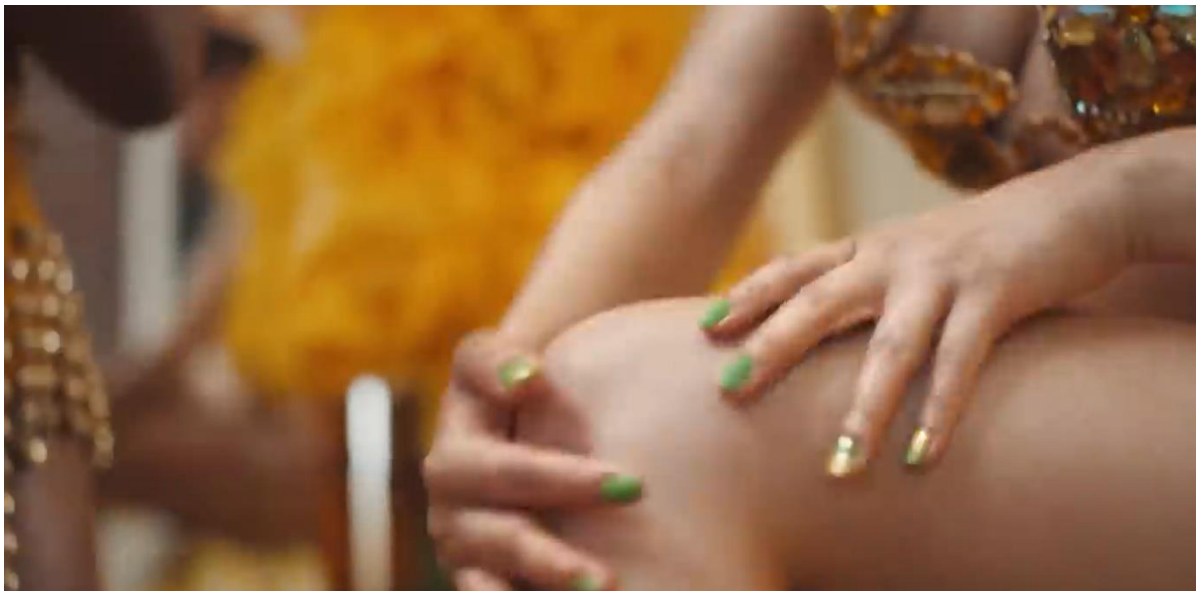


Figure 31

4.3. Intersectional travesty

Intersectional travesty, referring to the representation of marginalized intersectional identities in contrived and caricatured fashion (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015) is found in the portrayals of the most minority identities, namely black non-binary persons of color, gay people of color, as well as black and Asian straight women. A substantial part of the campaigns represent straight black women through hegemonic patterns of cultural exoticification, eroticization and objectification found in previous media portrayals (e.g. Ward

et al., 2013; Watson et al., 2019; Sengupta, 2006) This is achieved via the visual mode and is prevalent in product campaigns which commonly do not feature women's personal accounts. Cultural exotification is reflected where an ethnic minority frame is foregrounded through the inclusion of ethnic objects, clothing and accessories. However, those cultural artifacts are strategically used to enable the salience of certain body parts and therefore the focus shifts on said body parts rather than the cultural object itself. Examples of this are cases where ethnic clothing enables the feminine touch (*Figures 32 and 33*) and women seductively touch their body parts, and instances where body parts take over the frame and are visually detached from the rest of the body. The exotification of black women is further constructed through the use of phrases to describe said culture from an outsider perspective: “*a story of mystery*”, “*depths of Africa*”, “*royal and opulent*”, “*alluring*”.





Figures 32 and 33

Objectification is achieved through fragmentation of the aforementioned body parts, mouth and lips. Facial expressions are overtly seductive (*Figure 34*) and instances of licensed withdrawal like closing of the eyes, dreamy expressions and gazing towards something invisible to the viewer in the distance manifest (*Figure 35*). Black straight women are also more likely to pose, dress in revealing clothing and are also filmed from a social distance, where most of their body is visible (*Figure 36*). These findings demonstrate that the male gaze, referring to the framing of female bodies in sexually desirable to the heterosexual male ways (Shroeder & Borgerson, 1998) persists in black women's representation. They are frequently shown as fragmented body parts rather than in their entirety which dehumanizes them and makes them unrecognizable while authenticity and relatableness are diminished. Notably, the two very distinct scripts of the leader and activist black woman and the sensual seductress are polarizing and lacking nuance. The black woman has to choose between devotion to her social cause which excludes her femininity, and being overtly feminine and sexual, preventing her from breaking stereotypes and advancing inclusivity. These two polar scenarios further exemplify the issue with empowered eroticism, as it seldom offers true variety and freedom of expression (Parsons et al., 2021).



Figure 34

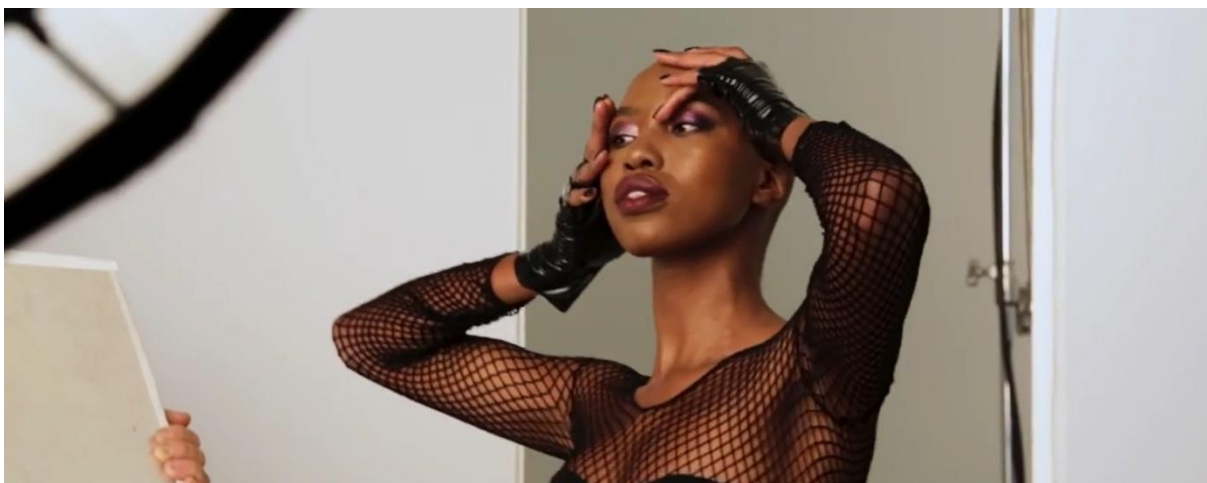


Figure 35



Figure 36

Finally, black women are portrayed in stereotypical occupations like models, athletes and dancers (*Figures 37 and 38*), reinforcing the dominant perceptions of said women's own body exploitation (Lee, 2010) and black people being talented in sports (Ferguson & Satterfield, 2016). Additionally, a pattern of behaviors and attitudes, including sequential visuals of jumping through emotional states like crying, laughing, flirting, as well as connotative words like feel, emotions, crazy, wild, exciting, amazing, loudly, love and heart, represents those women as overly emotional and expressive. Ultimately, through the foregrounding of a traditionally feminine characteristic like emotionality, rationality as more common masculine trait, appears lexically absent.





Figures 37 and 38

Asian straight women's intersectional travesty manifests in stereotypical white interpretations of Asian beauty trends. In product campaigns, which often represent them from a third person perspective, they are filmed from creative angles and appear with colorful, geometric hairstyles, costume-like clothing and creative makeup (*Figures 39, 40 and 41*). On the contrary, in social campaigns where women are telling their stories, a more simple appearance is curated (*Figure 42*). This signals cultural blindness (Licsandru & Cui, 2019) and limits the Asian woman's possibilities to present herself in a more multifaceted manner.





Figures 39, 40 and 41



Figure 42

The intersectional travesty of non-binary persons of color is most salient since their representations are one-noted. They are shown in stereotypical occupations like dancers, singers and drag performers in virtually all of the campaigns and are subjected to scripts of theatricality, seemingly “performing” their identities. This is achieved by demonstrations of persona-like images as they are exclusively shown applying makeup, preparing for stage and state that their identity is “like building a character”, alongside other references to their identities as “these personas”. Makeup determinism takes place, where the latter is represented as an absolute tool for self-expression: “the hair, the eyelashes, the eyebrows, the chipped nail polish - it’s all me”, “makeup is my main way of self-expression”. Identity performance is also constructed through theatrical settings like makeup rooms, stage curtains, neon lighting, clapperboards, wigs and so on (*Figures 43, 44 and 45*). Moreover, overfeminization (Nölke, 2018) is revealed through theatrical makeup, opulent accessories and feminine touch overuse (*Figures 46 and 47*).





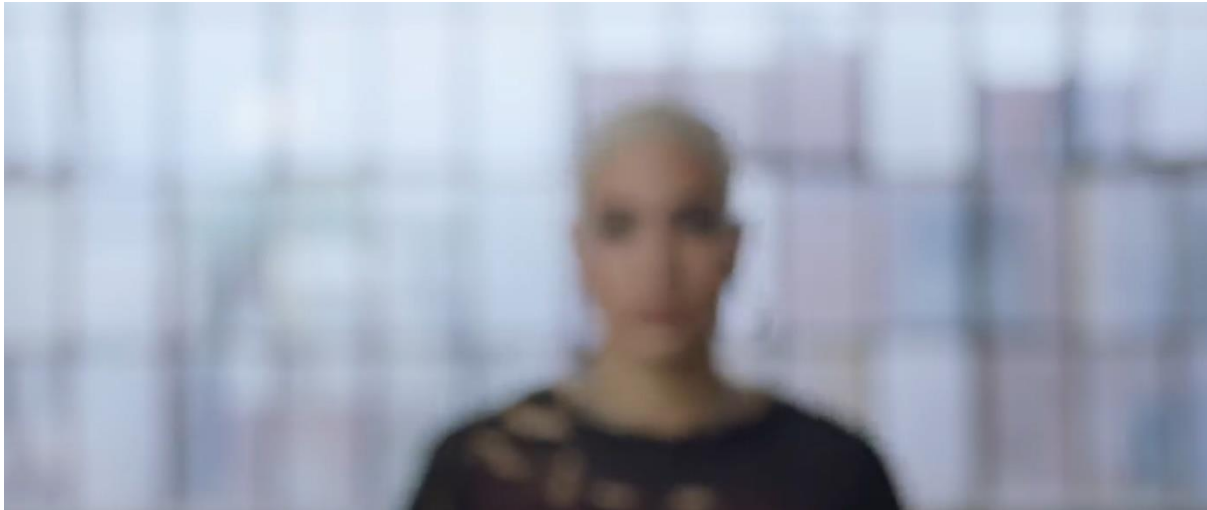
Figures 43, 44 and 45



Figures 46 and 47

Non-binary persons of color are also represented through strategic ambiguity, including rhetorical questions like: “Who is she? Who isn’t he?”, “Who am I?”, “What do I do?”, making them appear as self-questioning; this is also carried in abstract words like fluid, energies and dimensions and structural oppositions of clarity versus ambiguity: “blur the lines” yet “see people a little bit better”. Negative perceptions of their fluidity are found in phrases like “it’s like being an alien” and “I mean, I probably look like a little weirdo”. These paired with grainy, blurry visuals with shifting focus, overexposure and unnatural settings (*Figures 48, 49 and 50*), represents the non-binary identity as bizarre, surreal and unexplainable. This self-alienation and self-questioning signals unacceptance from the binary hegemonic society which is ironically justifiable, as self-understanding appears difficult for those identities.

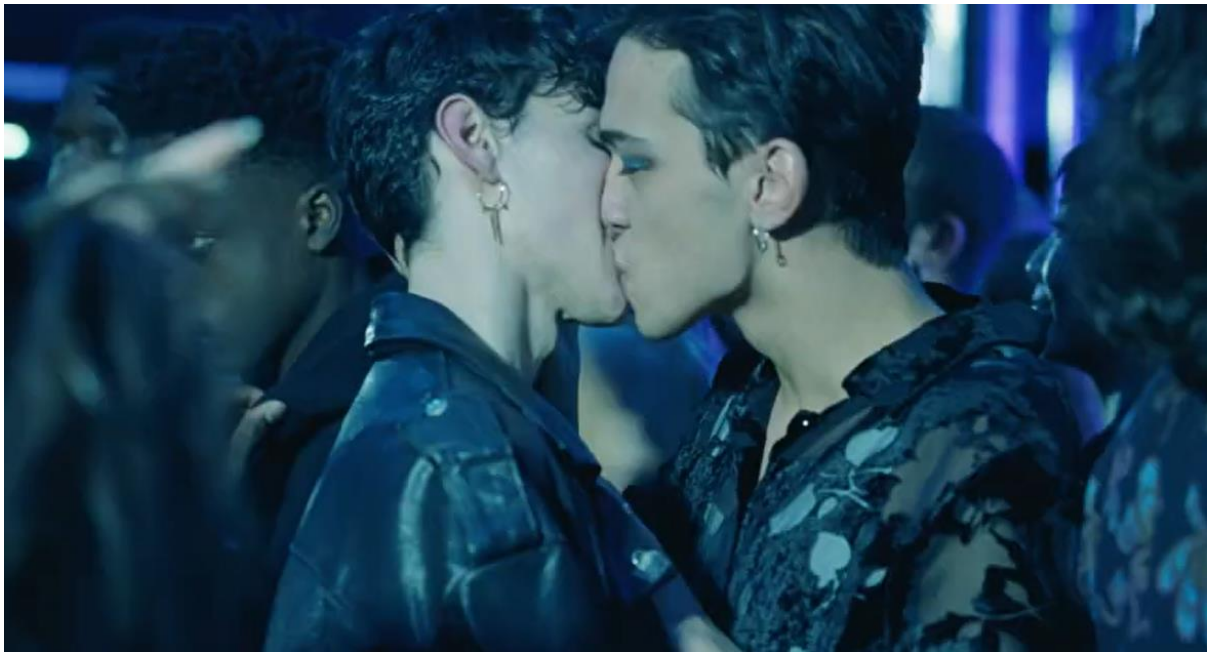




Figures 48, 49 and 50

These observations demonstrate that within representations of non-binary persons of color, the supposed authenticity in inclusive representations (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Heiss, 2011) is lacking and is instead replaced with the concept of the performing self which gives bigger importance to appearance display and management of impressions (Elliott & Davies, 2005). Hence, although queer persons are included in the beauty ads, their portrayals are not diverse or genuine.

Meanwhile, all gay and lesbian people, whose exposure in the campaigns is limited, are ubiquitously subjected to oversexualization through intimate acts display (*Figures 51 and 52*). In one campaign a brown and a black lesbian women in a relationship maintain heteronormative gender roles (Nölke, 2018) where the black women appears feminine by wearing makeup and accessories and giving seductive expressions (*Figure 53*), whereas the brown lesbian woman's femininity is deconstructed through a masculine appearance as she wears a gray overall and cap hiding her hair. Hegemonic gender roles transpire in the use of language, emphasizing the roles of helper (usually the man) and the helped (usually the woman) (Salminen & Glad, 1992): "I always try to make her life a little bit easier in any way I can help for her" versus "you definitely helped me out for so many things, babes so thank you, I appreciate it". Additionally, the declaration of their sexuality is overlexicalized: "so basically show them how gay we are"; "we're so gay". Thus, inclusive representations continuously define gay persons in relationship and sexual terms instead of personality, careers or interests.



Figures 51 and 52



Figure 53

Finally, transgender women's representations are marked by intersectional invisibility and travesty. In one campaign a white transgender woman carries the transgender flag and in another a brown transgender woman speaks about her influence on other like-minded people:

“A lot of transgenders, they write me, they tell me like ‘you are my inspiration, you teach me to go out there and leave my dream.’”

Overfeminization is also present in the use of heavier makeup and revealing clothing (Figures 54 and 55).





Figures 54 and 55

4.3. Tokenism and limited exposure

Notably, the analysis has revealed the tokenistic use of dominant identities. In white straight women's representations strategic ethnic framing is observed, whereby there is constant juxtaposition to black women creating ethnic contrast and amplifying the inclusive message. In these cases, white women take the backseat, being frequently positioned behind black women and therefore fall into the background, giving the possibility for the latter to become the salient element in the frame (*Figures 56 and 57*).





Figures 55 and 57

Lastly, straight men are barely featured in the campaigns and when they are, it is in tokenistic ways. Black and brown straight men are stereotypically represented as athletes, dancers or engaging in sports activities (*Figures 58 and 59*). They are defined by masculine black culture through the use of slang like “reggae”, “put the swag on it” “da bomb” and exhibit behaviors and mentality common in men’s representations through figures of speech like “mental leveling”, “it’s a state of mind”. They are also introduced as doers through hyponyms like focus, discipline, movement, physical, execute. Finally, a white straight man who is represented in only one campaign is portrayed as a ballet dancer, subverting gendered career choices.





Figures 58 and 59

These patterns indicate naive integration discussed in theory with regards to the surface-level tokenistic inclusion of minority identities in ads (Gill & Kanai, 2019). Thus, dominant identities' representations are some of the most contrived, reflecting dominant constructs. This ultimately points out a subversion occurring in inclusive representations, where previously marginalized identities are overwhelmingly featured while historically privileged identities take a backseat.

5. Conclusion

The intersectional analysis of inclusive makeup campaigns has revealed several findings. Firstly, individuality is a script used in the representation of minority identities and is framed as synonymous with beauty stemming strictly from marginalized group affiliation. This indicates that diversity is the only manifestation of beauty. A paradox of particularity versus universality emerges as minorities represent not only the beauty of their own communities but universal beauty, thereby minimizing the importance of dominant identities as a part of the beauty conversation. Secondly, collectivity is a source of acceptance and empowerment and marginalized group affiliation is framed as a requirement to feel beautiful and worthy, further prompting the idea that confidence can only be derived from like-minded individuals. In collectivity portrayals, symbolic annihilation evoking feelings of isolation (Tuchman, 1979; Nölke, 2018) is present in indigeneous, Asian and brown women's representations, while for non-binary persons of color the community is framed as an essential to survival and success. Nevertheless, in most ads a message of wider acceptance is conveyed. Thus, a paradoxical relationship emerges between the desire to feel included and accepted in mainstream society and the willingness to remain isolated and find sufficiency in one's own community. The presence of group polarization and strategic ambiguity (Puntoni et al., 2010) creates cultural dissent between "us" and "them" and prompts the villainization of the entire outside world instead of concrete problematic aspects. This additionally contributes to the seclusion of marginalized identities and the division of ideologies through a two-way abnegation of minority and majority, traditionality and modernity, similarities and differences.

Thirdly, the representation of minority identities is oftentimes based on one identity at a time, such as race or gender. Therefore, despite the inclusion of disempowered intersectional identities, distinctiveness theory and perceptual selectivity (Williams et al., 2004; Licsandru & Cui, 2019) are still very carried through inclusive representations as marketers promote one cultural frame at a time, where the more marginalized identity becomes the salient one. As such, many portrayals, albeit inclusive of marginalized identities, are not representing them intersectionally but unidimensionally. This leads to limited and conventionally scripted representations of otherwise nuanced minorities where brown and Asian straight women are framed through their religion, cultural traditions and practices, whereas queer persons are framed through their gender and sexual beliefs. Although those identities are more frequently featured, they are nevertheless partially subjected to tokenism for wokeness' sake (Tsai, 2011).

Fourthly, the unidimensional representations of minorities highlights important discoveries pertaining to illusory correlations, cultural blindness (Licsandru & Cui, 2019) and intersectional travesty (Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015). The analysis has demonstrated the use of conventional tropes promoting overt black female sexuality (Ward et al., 2013; Watson et al., 2019), angelic and aspirationally realistic white femininity (Shome, 2011), non-binary identity performance (Elliott & Davies, 2005) and traditional gender roles of lesbians and gays and therefore confirms previous research which has revealed harmful beauty and behavioral in ads (e.g. Heiss, 2011; Rahmavati, 2019; Xu & Tan, 2020; Pompa, 2021). Minorities are herein depicted in limited ways which only superficially challenge hegemonic notions, for example through empowered eroticism (Parsons et al., 2021), yet instead perpetuate them and solidify power struggles already exemplified in non-inclusive representations (Parsons et al., 2022; Sobande, 2019). Finally, deconstructions of dominant representations and marketing practices are observed. First, naive integration which so far has been discussed with regards to minority representations (Gill & Kanai, 2019) is revealed through the tokenistic use of the more traditionally dominant identities. Second, the femininity of women from indigeneous or Latin American descent is deconstructed and replaced with masculine scripts, while for white straight men the opposite occurs. Nonetheless, the limited possibilities for self-identification and expression remain as there is a lack of representational range. Ultimately, femininity is not as much deconstructed as it is replaced with implicitly superior masculinity, solidifying the idea of women's femininity as subordinate and of lesser quality.

Meanwhile, an intertextual investigation of the data has indicated that drugstore makeup brands are more likely to launch social campaigns, while middle-range and high-end brands mostly launch product campaigns, including celebrity brands making up the majority of the latter categories. Social campaigns are more inclusive of intersectionally marginalized identities like black gay men, non-binary persons of color and exclusive of more dominant identities such as white straight women, black straight men. Meanwhile, product campaigns are more likely to represent diversity across one spectrum, especially race like straight women of color. These findings demonstrate that in the US market, drugstore brands disproportionately employ more elaborate forms of commodity activism as a marketing practice to convey wokeness and achieve CBI (Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012; Sobande, 2019). On the other hand, celebrity and expensive brands rely on unidimensional inclusive representations, where straight women of color are the main representational focus. This could be explained by the fact that high end and celebrity brands are still largely aspirational

due to their glamorous status and expensive prices and are simply not attempting to reach all consumer segments, whereas drugstore brands have more diverse and younger audiences showing higher awareness towards social justice. As such, drugstore brands appear as leaders of inclusive conversation in the makeup space.

In broader terms, the analysis has demonstrated an inclusive brand culture where diversity appears as a gateway to the endorsement of particular identity politics rooted in postmillennialism. Postmillennial ideas of individual, social and political polarization and its perpetuation of feminist beliefs on hegemonic power structures and marginalized oppression (Ritch & McColl, 2021) are hereby represented. In this inclusive culture, all social identities are encoded with political messages and branded through identity politics. Inclusive marketing, rather than using social identities to sell a product, instead sells the identities themselves and consequently their values. Thus, the representations of social identities in inclusive brand culture become ideologically supercharged, whereby little is conveyed about them outside of political ideology.

Inclusive brand culture is also exclusive of some identities, particularly more dominant ones. This is a new observation which warrants an elaboration. For once, a distinction should be made between diversity promotion and diversity inclusion. Although inclusive campaigns strive to promote diversity, they are not necessarily widely inclusive in their representation which is evident from the persistent lack of Asian, lesbian, gay, transgender and straight men's representations. Next, a second line should be drawn between inclusion and equality of representation since the inclusion of certain identities does not indicate how equally they are represented. The present case demonstrates the tendency of brands to make exceptionally marginalized identities (e.g., non-binary persons of color) or those appearing as the obvious choice (e.g., black straight women) more salient compared to others (e.g., white straight women). In light of this, it should be mentioned that despite the lack of dominant identity representations, inclusive marketing demonstrates that the participation in diversity culture and by extension identity politics is more important to the postmillennial consumer. The brand message is not about diversification as a simple audience-pleasing tactic but conveys deeper meaning about the ideology that diversity actually stands for and manages to appeal to large heterogeneous audiences. This possibly explains why despite being neglected, dominant social identities endorse diversity culture, as well as why brands attempt to incorporate diversity, prompted by the growing collective ease of consumer support and rejection (Khamis, 2020).

Lastly, a third distinction should be made between equality and quality of representation. Inclusive marketing of makeup predominantly reveals stereotypical practices like intersectional travesty, naive integration, heteronormative gender roles, girlfriend culture, aspirational realness and more. Under the inclusivity cloak hegemonic representations within beauty culture remain mostly unchanged. However, this shallow, tokenistic interpretation of diversity has been recently challenged by the rise of digital technologies which have opened up consumers to more experiential relationships and meaningful representations offering hyperpersonalization and adding value (Williams, 2015). It has already been predicted that digitalization will continue to grow and take increasingly immersive forms within revolutionary, hybrid platforms for advertising and communication like the metaverse (Kim, 2021). This is especially true for industries which are already inherently experiential, such as makeup. In this light, the current research which revealed surface-level beauty representations, as well as previous research which demonstrated that consumers perceive inclusive ads as artificial (Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Tsai, 2011) should be considered by brands who wish to remain competitive within the shifting digital landscape. Inclusive beauty brand should continue its development by changing its focus and offering not only numerous but also more quality representations. Ultimately, stereotypes should be broken and experiential value could be added through elaboration and diversification of storytelling, traditional scripts deconstruction and information and knowledge offering, thereby prompting the audience to willingly and meaningfully embrace the inclusive message.

This research naturally faces some limitations. A first limitation is the size and the nature of the sample. The analysis has been performed on a relatively small sample of 20 brands and 30 of their marketing campaigns. The chosen content is YouTube videos, which although rich in meaningful representations, do not account for other possible findings from types of content like images or articles. Furthermore, the decision to investigate campaigns only has been strategically made as they are more developed advertising practices, representing core brand values and hence brand culture. Those however are still a limited source of interpretation, therefore drawing definite conclusions about all manifestations of inclusivity in the beauty industry is cautionary.

A second limitation is the scope of the study. Firstly, this research has focused only on brands operating in the US and its current findings can only be indicative of inclusivity as it pertains to said market. Secondly, the particular focus on makeup brands does not account for representations within the beauty industry in general since it also includes other markets like skincare and haircare. Thirdly, the study explores social identity representations in

inclusive marketing specifically and therefore the current patterns cannot be taken as symptomatic of the larger advertising context. This is particularly relevant considering the rise of other forms of niche marketing like community and tribal marketing, and more general novel trends like conversational marketing and experiential marketing.

A third limitation can be found in the researcher's positionality and their interpretative bias. The detailed operationalization and procedure ensured that the analysis is grounded in data and is therefore as impartial and unbiased as possible, however, subjectivity is an immanent characteristic of qualitative research. Some social identities and their cultures like black/African, Asian, muslim and indigenous traditions and practices were less familiar to the analyst, hence their interpretations could be somewhat constrained. Similarly, an outsider perspective informed interpretations of LGBTQIA+ identities and their power struggles within society. Therefore, those interpretations should be read with caution and not taken to suggest a declaration of an absolute truth.

Finally, this study opens the possibility for further research. The scope of investigation can be broadened by including other marketing practices and their representations. As such, comparative research could be conducted to reveal potential differences between inclusive and non-inclusive representations of social identities. Furthermore, a cross-international scope could be adopted and a more comprehensive exploration of the cosmetics industry can be carried out by including other cosmetics markets within the beauty industry alongside makeup. Another direction that could be taken is to explore inclusive marketing across different content ranges, form and platform types. Thus, future research can focus on other types of content marketing along with YouTube campaigns like Instagram and/or TikTok posts or official website content. Finally, considering that brand culture is more interactive and diverse than ever, inclusive marketing research can explore customer-brand and brand-influencer collaborations constructing and conveying inclusive messages to build brand identity and image. Furthermore, this study could be used as a benchmark to research diversity marketing as a practice in the context of new and upcoming advertising technologies. This could be effectively achieved by employing scenario methodologies which would ultimately reveal relevant and interesting paths for inclusive marketing development in the future.

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Appendix A

Table 1: SFL and VSS frameworks.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL)	Visual social semiotics (VSS)
<i>Ideational metafunction</i> : strategic grammatical and lexical choices representing ideas, values and beliefs about ideological social constructs.	<i>Representational metafunction</i> : strategic compositional, aesthetic and appearance choices representing ideas, values and beliefs about ideological social constructs.
<i>Interpersonal metafunction</i> : strategic grammatical and lexical choices establishing social relations between the actors or the actors and the audience.	<i>Interpersonal metafunction</i> : strategic proxemics, angles and other relational cues establishing social relations between the actors or the actors and the audience.
<i>Textual metafunction</i> : the context created by the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions combined.	<i>Compositional metafunction</i> : the context created by the representational and interpersonal metafunctions combined.

Appendix B1

Table 2: Brands, pricing and ownership categorization.

Brand	Pricing	Ownership
Bobbi Brown	High end	Celebrity
Cheekbone Beauty	Middle range	Independent
Estée Lauder	High end	Mainstream
Fenty Beauty	Middle range	Celebrity
Haus Laboratories	Middle range	Celebrity
Huda Beauty	Middle range	Celebrity
Kosas	High end	Independent
Live Tinted	Middle range	Independent
Maybelline	Drugstore	Mainstream
M.A.C. Cosmetics	Middle range	Mainstream
Milk Makeup	Middle range	Mainstream
Morphe	Drugstore	Independent
Nyx Cosmetics	Drugstore	Mainstream
Rare Beauty	Middle range	Celebrity
Revlon	Drugstore	Mainstream
Revolution Beauty	Drugstore	Mainstream
Sephora	Middle range	Mainstream
Uoma Beauty	Middle range	Independent
Wet `n Wild	Drugstore	Mainstream

Appendix B2

Table 3: Final sample in numbers.

Sample size	20 brands, 30 campaigns and 52 videos
Production year	4 campaigns in 2022, 6 in 2021, 8 in 2020, 5 in 2019, 5 in 2018 and 2 in 2017
Brand ownership	Mainstream (n=10), celebrity (n=5), independent (n=5)
Price	Middle range (n=10), drugstore (n=7), high end (n=3)
Campaign type	Social campaigns (n=16) or product launch/brand campaigns (n=14)
Video length	Shortest video length = 30 seconds, longest video length = 3:08 minutes, average video length = 1-2 minutes.
Use of mode	Videos featuring visuals, text and speech (n=24) and visuals and text only (n = 6)
Social identities frequency	Campaigns featuring on race/ethnicity and sexuo-gendered identites (n=15), race/ethnicity only (n=14) and sexuo-gendered identities only (n=1)

Appendix C1

Table 4: SFL coding frame.

Grammatical features	Interpretation (connotation)	Lexical features	Interpretation (connotation)	Social identity of the actor
Nouns		Metaphors		
Adjectives		Hyponyms		
Verbs		Hyperboles		
Pronouns		Rhetorical questions		
Sentence mood		Phrases as figures of speech		
		Word connotations		
		Lexical suppression or absence		
		Structural oppositions		
Style				

Appendix C2

Table 5: VSS coding frame.

Dimensions	Elements (denotation)	Interpretation (connotation)
General	Setting	
	Objects	
	People	
Individual	Basic physical characteristics of people	
	Positioning of objects and people	
	Interactions between people and with objects	
	Body parts	
	Body poses	
	Face	
	Eyes and gaze	
	Makeup	
	Clothes	
	Accessories	
	Lighting	
	Focus	
	Shot distance	
	Color	
Background	People	
	Objects	
	Color	

	Lighting	
	Focus	
Salience	Foregrounded elements	
Style		

Appendix D1

Table 6: Intersectional Coding Scheme.

Intersectional identities	Frequencies of representation
Black straight women	21 campaigns
White straight women	16 campaigns
Brown straight women	15 campaigns
Asian straight women	9 campaigns
Black non-binary persons	9 campaigns
Brown non-binary persons	7 campaigns
White non-binary persons	4 campaigns
Black straight men	3 campaigns
Black lesbian women	2 campaigns
White gay men	2 campaigns
White straight men	1 campaign
Brown straight men	1 campaign
Black gay men	1 campaign
Brown gay men	1 campaign
Brown lesbian women	1 campaign
Brown transgender women	1 campaign
White transgender women	1 campaign
Asian lesbian women	-
Asian transgender women	-
Asian transgender men	-
White lesbian women	-
Asian straight men	-
White transgender men	-
Brown transgender men	-
Asian non-binary persons	-
Asian gay men	-
Black transgender women	-
Black transgender men	-

Appendix D2

Table 7: Final coding scheme.

Themes	Selective codes	Axial codes	Social identities and definitions	Examples
<i>Social identity</i>	Uniqueness and individuality	Beauty as diversity	Diversity is represented as defining beauty, especially with regards to ethnic minorities and sexuo-gendered marginalized identities like non-binary white persons, non-binary persons of color and black straight women.	“Black beauty is the mother of all beauty”; “Love yourself as you are - black, queer, bold and beautiful”; emphasis on different as beautiful as more diverse looking people tend to be presented in (personal distances) close-ups and extreme close-ups and with longer lasting shots.
		(In)equality of individuality	Individuality is represented as an equal opportunity for every social identity, however the framing of beauty through diversity codes is limiting the extent to which more conventional social identities like white straight men and women can relate to such representation.	“We’re all the same, we are all unique-looking”, “we’re beautiful” as statements pertaining to minority social identities; “beauty that stands for all people around the world” is contrasted with an image featuring only people of colour and LGBTQIA+ identities.
		Congruence of individuality and group belonging	For some identities like non-binary persons of color and straight Asian women uniqueness is represented as dependent upon certain marginalized group affiliation.	“Find a sister to be fabulous with”; “When I found my Asian girls I was truly able to be authentic and come as I am”.

	Individual agency	Marginalized empowerment	Some groups like non-binary persons of color are capable of self-realization, happiness and success only by means of fully embracing and emphasizing their marginalized intersectional identities.	Overlexicalization of “Stick to who you are”, “stick to what you are”, “I am using my own unique power”, “be your unique self and you can have it all” (referring to their marginalized identity).
		Personal responsibility	Black straight women are represented as personally responsible for driving the change of inclusive beauty.	Statements like “It’s hard, but it’s on me, I have to do it”; “I have to fall in love with myself again and show them”; “then I remember that power I have again” .
		Individual influence	Transgender women are represented in the role of influencers and role models that set an example for others like-minded individuals.	Transgender women receiving letters of people sharing how they were inspired by them and looking up to them.
	Identity narration	First person storytelling	Asian straight women and non-binary brown and black persons are frequently represented through a first person narrative of their lives.	Personal stories starting from childhood (“when I was young”, “growing up I”) and continuing to now; photos of the people as kids and youngsters are foregrounded at times.
		Transformation journey	Asian straight women and brown and black non-binary persons’s personal narratives are represented as a transformation journey from lack of	Asian straight women recalling how the lack of positive Asian representation and feeling insecure but the conversation around beauty has helped and

			confidence to self-discovery and feeling worthy.	allowed them to accept themselves. Non-binary people of color are presenting life as a story which can be changed through finding love and acceptance.
Social identity stereotypization	Stereotypical genderization and racialization of occupation choices		Black and brown straight women, black and brown straight men, non-binary white persons and non-binary black and brown persons are represented in banal and expected ways through their choices of interests and careers.	Black and brown straight women are stereotypically represented as models, dancers and athletes; black and brown straight men are represented as dancers, music lovers and athletes; Asian straight women are represented as tech-savvy enthusiasts; non-binary white persons are represented as fashion lovers and designers; and non-binary brown and black persons are represented as artists and performers.
	Stereotypical genderization and racialization of human behaviors and attitudes		Brown and black straight men exhibit a typically masculine behaviors and mindsets, whereas black and brown straight women, black gay men and non-binary people of color are more likely to present typically feminine behaviors.	Figures of speech like “mental levelling” and “it’s a state of mind”; featured in a “doer” role through words like focus, discipline, movement, physical, execute; use of black slang like “put the swag on it”, “da bomb” etc.; words connoting emotions and feelings (e.g. feel, believe, heart, love, passion).

	Social identity subversion	Deconstruction of gendered career choices	A straight white man and straight brown women's identities are deconstructed through non-traditional career choices.	The straight white man is a ballet dancer (ballet is associated with graciousness and femininity); brown straight women are shown as dj, boxer, drummer.
<i>Social environment</i>	Community and collectivism	Safety	Brown straight women are represented as relying on their inter-group for safety and protection.	Metaphors like "Stay where it is warm", "every fire needs a stove" and "find your way back home".
		Love and acceptance	For Asian straight women, non-binary persons of color and black and white gay men the community is represented as a limited source of love and acceptance.	Anecdotal experiences such as "I didn't feel truly accepted until I went to college and found an entire group of Asian women like me"; "Only when I moved to New York and met my people, I felt truly loved and accepted for who I really am".
		Group empowerment	The community is represented as a main source of confidence and empowerment for Asian straight women, non-binary persons of color and black and white gay men.	Statements like "if I wanted to be an actor she was my director, if I wanted to be a singer, she would hand me the mic"; "If I could describe how they empowered me to never, ever, ever doubt your true, unique self".
		Girlfriend culture	Straight women of all races and ethnicities are validated through their ubiquitous representation in girl-	Public and social shots of groups of women laughing, holding hands, smiling at each other,

			only friendship groups.	conversing, taking selfies together etc.
Strategic cultural foregrounding	Minority ethnic salience	Asian, black and brown straight women, as well as black straight men are purposefully defined in ethnic and cultural terms.	Ethnic artifacts and accessories are visually foregrounded; words like culture, food, cooking, honor, holidays, native, language, mandarin, family and tradition, passed on, inherited are used as hyponyms of East Asian culture. Chill, reggae, music, beat, swag are all slang terms from black culture.	
	Minority gender salience	Non-binary white, black and brown persons as well as gay black and white men are purposefully defined in sexuo-gendered terms.	“My pronouns are he, him, man and queen”; “When I came out as gay”; “Masculinity and femininity are the two forces that makeup every individual human experience”.	
Social activism	Ideological endorsement	Black straight and lesbian women are represented as active endorsers of neoliberal social ideas and identity politics.	Black straight women are represented as spokespersons and activists through visuals of them presenting identity politics slogans like “win your race”, “right the story” as being depicted at the front of protests and marches.	
	Leadership	Black straight women are frequently represented as the leaders of neoliberal	Black women are described through metaphors like “making waves” and “bringing the revolution” and	

			social ideas and identity politics.	statements like “the trends we love, the tools we need, the change we see are all black culture”; “they are leading the conversation”
		Organization/group membership	Straight and lesbian black women are frequently represented as members of a particular social organization or activist movement.	Featuring certain movements and social organizations like the Los Angeles LGBT center; describing oneself as an activist.
		Support	Straight white women are frequently represented as passive supporters of marginalized groups and enablers and advocates of minority voices.	Imperative sentence moods like “Be an ally”, “Be there, be present for them”; “they need to be heard”; metaphors like “they [black women] deserve to have a seat at the table”.
<i>Power dynamics</i>	Hegemonic oppression	Symbolic annihilation through isolation and suppression	Asian and brown straight women are represented as isolated and their voices suppressed by society and media at large.	Statements like “I didn’t see people who looked like me”; negative adjectives like silenced, hidden, voiceless”, “missing”, “ignored” visuals evoking feelings of isolation and detachment from the outer world.
		Cultural division and dissent	Brown straight women, non-binary people of all colors and gay black men are represented as separated from the rest of society, in an	Structural oppositions of you and them, us and them, fire (the community) and cold (the world out there); statements such as “we’ve been tricked to

			antagonistic relationship.	believe that our voices are worthless”; metaphors like “they tried so hard to bury us, they didn’t know that we were seeds”.
		Literal annihilation	The oppression of particular ethnicities of brown straight women like native American women is represented literally in terms of violence and aggression.	Overlexicalization through words like murdered, bleeding, buried.
Struggle	Personal struggle with success	Non-binary brown and black persons are represented as struggling with being successful in life.	Statements like “It was hard to do what I wanted to do”; both visual and language structural oppositions of falling and getting up; ups and downs, ebbs and flows, losing and winning and sweet-bitter (with regards to life).	
	Struggle with fitting into dominant societal beauty standards (individualism)	Brown straight women are often represented as struggling with achieving perfection pertaining to their weight, body and skin, yet also embracing such imperfections.	Overlexicalization of words like hyperpigmentation, dark circles, dark spots; statements like “I have to get comfortable with all of it”, “having to look at the positive side of stretch marks” and oppositions like “cover them or rock them”, “; foregrounding and framing flaws in close-up shots.	
	Struggle with acceptance from	Asian and brown straight women, black	Structural oppositions such as “everyone is	

		the hegemonic society (collectivism)	and brown lesbian women, as well as non-binary individuals of all colors are often represented as not finding acceptance within a white, heteronormative society but instead finding it in a niche community.	against us”, personal accounts like “I didn’t feel accepted”, “this feeling of isolation”, “a group of queer musicians [...] they were a huge inspiration to me, to feel accepted”.
	Progress	Satisfactory levels of representation	Black straight women are represented as being satisfied with the levels of inclusive representation in contemporary media.	Statements like “We now see women of all skin tones, all skin colors being represented and it is such a rewarding feeling”; “I feel like over the years things have changed so much”; “years ago this would’ve been crazy but now it’s so much better”.
		Looking towards the future	Black straight women are represented as pioneers of change, future-oriented and progressive.	Statements such as “We are the evolution”; “there is a lot of work that has to be done”.
<i>Visual aesthetics</i>	Realism	Aspirational realness	Straight white women, non-binary white persons and sometimes black and brown straight women are represented as “a girl next door” and appear natural and everyday-looking.	Use of the “no makeup” makeup look, simple clothing, minimal accessorization, close-ups of flaws, connotative words like effortless, comfortable, breathable etc.

		Romanticization of beauty	White straight women are frequently represented through elements associated with nature and romantic experience.	Representation in nature and outdoor settings, featuring objects like trees, fields, flowers and animals. Pastel, light colors, especially white and flower motifs are common features.
		Suppression of feminine aesthetics	Brown straight women are frequently represented through typically masculine aesthetics or through a suppression of typical feminine displays.	Visual aesthetics include typically masculine accessories (caps, tattoos) and baggy clothes, covering up, lack of makeup, hair is hidden; women are featured as athletes in typically masculine sports (e.g. boxing).
	Explicit sexuality and hegemonic gender roles	Heteronormative relationships	Black and brown lesbian women in relationships are displaying stereotypical heteronormative gender roles.	Black lesbian woman appearing feminine, wearing obvious makeup and accessories, while brown lesbian woman appears masculine with an overall grey jumpsuit, short hair and wearing a cap; masculinity and femininity are structurally opposed through common heteronormative tropes of the helper (usually a man and in this case the brown lesbian woman) and the one needing help (usually a woman, in this case the black lesbian woman).
		Overt sexual display	Black and brown lesbian women in relationships and gay	Overlexicalization through statements like “so basically show them

			men are explicitly stating their sexuality through public manifestations of affection.	how gay we are, show how gay they are”, “we are so gay”; positioning in close proximity, featuring kissing and overt sexual gestures like touching certain body parts.
Intersectional travesty	Cultural exoticification and eroticization		Elements of ethnic culture are strategically framed and used to eroticize black straight women.	Explicitly foregrounding certain body parts of women dressed in ethnic clothing, focusing more on those revealed body parts rather than the clothing itself.
	White interpretations of beauty trends		Straight Asian women’s appearance is marked by stereotypical white interpretations of East Asian beauty trends.	Stereotypical colorful and geometrical hairstyles, bold makeup, anime-like and game-like character appearance, featuring the glass skin trend.
	Aspirational glamour		Non-binary white persons and straight black women are represented as exceptionally fashionable and glamorous.	Fashion-forward clothing choices, excessive makeup and accessorization, use of blinding gold colors and glitter patterns, shots from creative angles.
	Objectification		Black and sometimes brown straight women are objectified by being frequently represented through the male gaze and displays of licensed withdrawal.	Lips, smiles, eyes are fragmented from the rest of the face; facial expressions are overtly seductive (e.g. winking, blowing a kiss, showing the tongue); alongside this, displays of licensed withdrawal like gazing in the distance or closing eyes are common in

				representations of women of color.
		Overfeminization	The femininity of white, black and brown non-binary persons is especially exaggerated through aesthetic choices and multiple instances of the feminine touch.	Typically feminine elements like hands, makeup and accessories (e.g. rings, high heels, frills) are foregrounded; touching body parts, applying makeup, fixing hair, caressing the face and other objects and so on.
		Theatricality	Non-binary persons of all colors are represented as “performing” their social identities.	Settings like backstage makeup rooms, objects like clapperboards, stage curtains in the background, artificial neon lights; connotative phrases like “building a character”, “designing myself” and metaphors such as “It’s almost like if you are a puzzle, fashion and makeup are the puzzle pieces that help you reach the best version of yourself”.
		Makeup determinism	For non-binary persons of color makeup is used as both a weapon and protection from the outside world and as a sole way to express themselves.	Metaphorical use of makeup as a shield, an armour and reference to society as a battlefield; emphasis on the use of makeup to tackle the brutality of the outside world (“I wear thick lashes just so I can block out the haters, [...] I like nude lips so that the haters will see me talking back to them”); “the hair, the eyelashes,

				the eyebrows, the chipped nail polish - it's all me".
		Strategic ambiguity	Non-binary persons of all colors are represented as difficult to discern and explain, as well as bizarre and surreal.	Both feminine and masculine visual representations of the actors in the ads; soft shifting and blurry camera focus; structural oppositions of clarity and ambiguity ("blur the lines" vs "see people a little bit better"); negative connotative words like alien and weirdo and words connoting spirituality like energies, spirits and flows.
<i>Positionality</i>	Strategic exposure	Strategic foregrounding	In social campaigns marginalized intersectional identities like non-binary brown and black persons, brown and black gay men and women are visually foregrounded. In product campaigns straight women of all colors except white but especially straight black women are more foregrounded.	Diversity of angles and distance of shots, length of shots, appearing at the forefront and center of a group, representations from first person narrative perspective and being given a back story; featuring of early life photos as means of identity elaboration.
		Strategic backgrounding	In both social and product campaigns less marginalized identities like white, brown and Asian straight women fall into the background.	Instances of licensed withdrawal, being positioned in the background, shorter length of the shots, cropped from the frame etc.

	Ethnic framing and contrast	Juxtaposition	Straight women of color are frequently juxtaposed to people of lighter skin like white straight women and are represented as relative to each other.	Close positioning of women with light skin to women with darker women; personal touches like leaning on each other's shoulders, showing skin on skin in close up-shots.
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