Brand Disruption: Decoding the Contingency of Clashing Stakeholders

Theoretical Background

Conventional Branding Theory
- Brand meanings controlled by the legal brand owner (Keller, 2012)

Prevalent Brand Disruptions
- Consumer Brand Sabotage (Kähr, et al., 2016)
- Doppelgänger Brand Images (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006)
- Brand Publics (Arvidsson & Callandro, 2016)
- Conspicuous Brand Usage (Ferraro, Kirmani, & Matherly, 2013)

Research Project and Results

Research Objective
- Development of a systematic understanding on why conflicting brand meanings emerge and how their predominance is negotiated by clashing stakeholders
- Facilitation of a holistic discussion on brand disruptions and potential prediction/prevention strategies

Theoretical Lens
- A practice-theoretical perspective enables to analyse the underlying socio-cultural processes
- Investigation of band-related practices (e.g. buying, consuming, discussing, or disposing branded products) to grasp clashing stakeholder propagandizing their individual brand perceptions

Data Collection
- A netnographic approach (e.g. social media data) is combined with phenomenological interviews to explore two extreme brand disruption contexts: the focal brands are Birkenstock and New Balance

Current Results

Co-Optation
- the health-sandals brand Birkenstock was taken over by the high-fashion industry (mainstream)
- “Theory of Signs” as semiotic analogy to brand meaning negotiation

Contestation
- the sport-footwear brand New Balance is currently under strong pressure by right-wing extremists

Sources