

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND CAUSE MARKETING

Consumer Logics and #MeToo-Related Campaigns

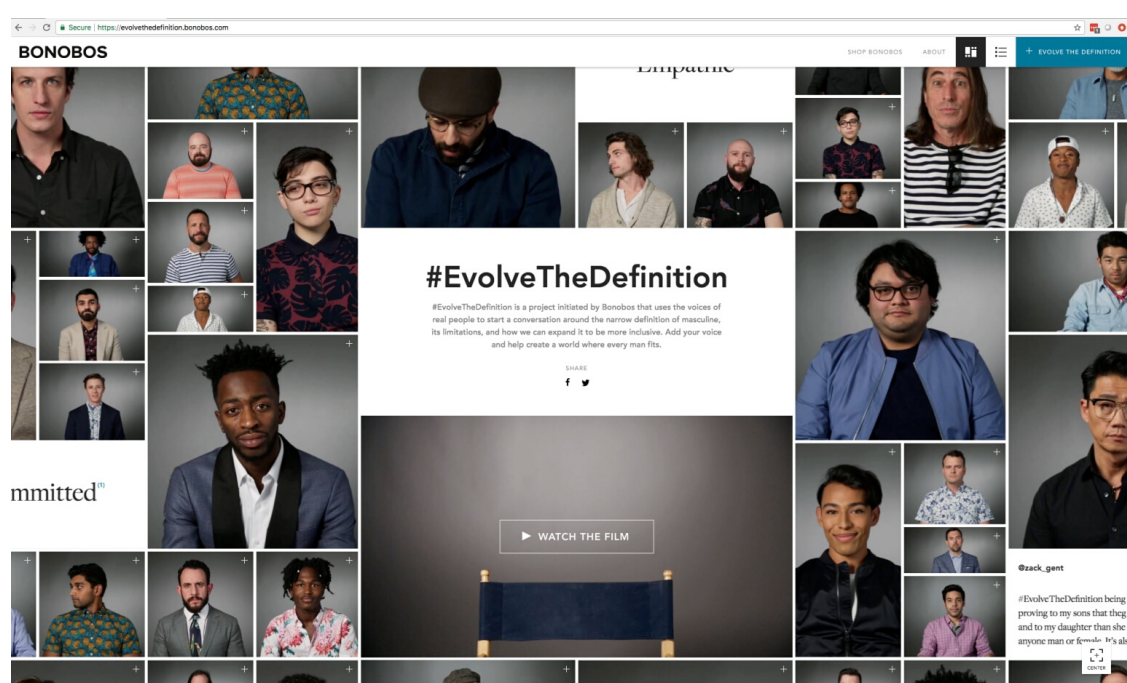
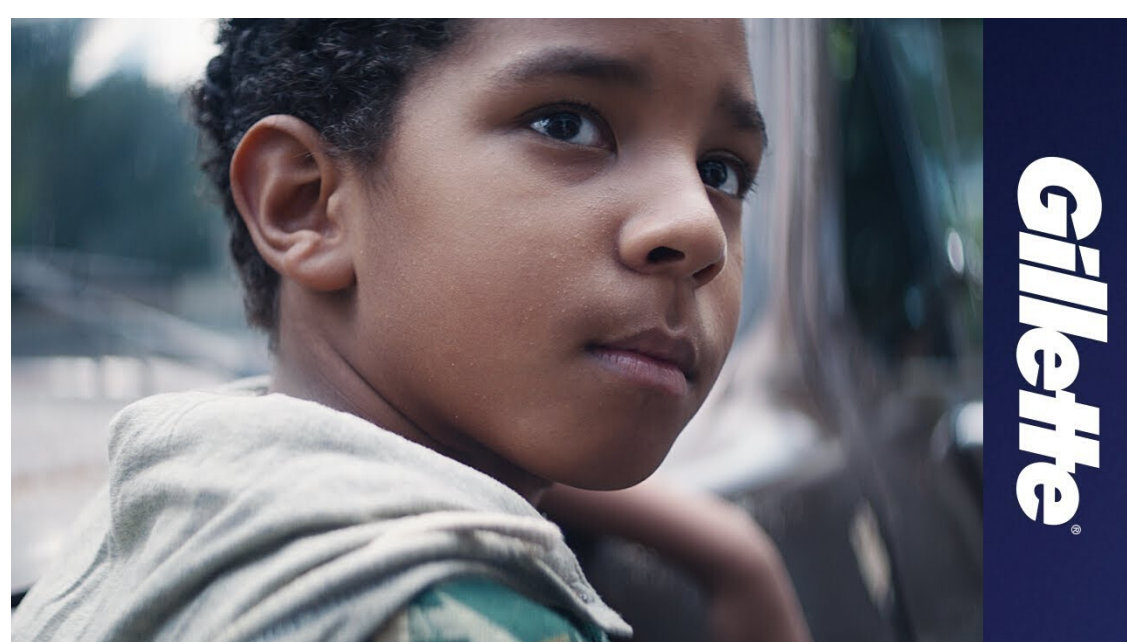
Thao Pham - May 2020

PURPOSE

- Examine #MeToo's influence on advertising content by examining consumers' logics used to interpret #MeToo-Related campaigns
- RQ: What have been influences of #MeToo on brand meaning?
- Subject: Gillette's "The Best Men Can Be" (Jan 2019) and Bonobos's "Evolve the Definition" (July 2018)

METHODS

- Sample:
 - Twitter Data
 - 12 in-depth Interviews
- Textual Analysis: open, axial, selective



INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Institutions as consisting of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior.

Three Pillars

- Regulative: Formal/Informal rules
- Normative: Norms and morality
- Cognitive: Individual interpretation

Institutional Logics:

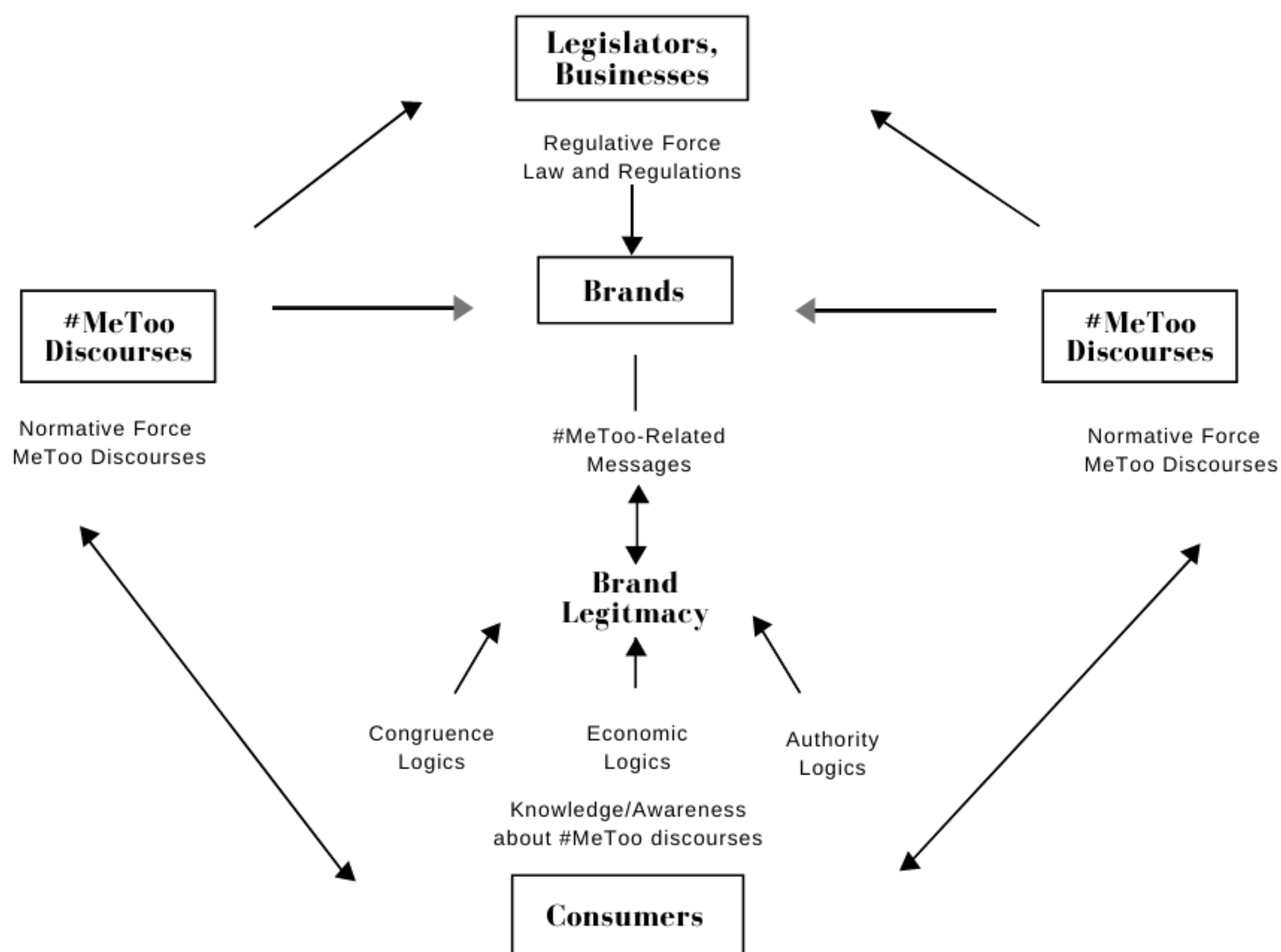
Socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices employed by social actors to assign meanings to events around them

Institutional Legitimacy:

The degree of cultural support for an organization, attained through social actors' attribution of meaning through logics

FINDINGS

Institutional Forces and Logics



Consumer Logics

- **Economic**
 - Practicality (Positive)
 - Good-business strategy (Neutral)
 - Make-money (Negative)
- **Congruence**
 - Problem-solving (Positive)
 - Transforming image (Neutral)
 - Inauthentic (Negative)
- **Authority**
 - Support
 - Boycott

THEMES

- Consumers mainly utilize *economic* and *congruence logics* when interpreting #MeToo-related brand messages. However, their knowledge/awareness of #MeToo's discourses influence how they prioritize the logics, leading to different attitudes toward the message (positive/negative/neutral)
- Brands, through the normative and regulative forces, establish legitimacy for #MeToo as a CSR cause worth pursuing. However, consumers "do not give #MeToo too much credit" for creating impactful changes for advertising content. Reasons for this may include:
 - Consumers' lack of frame of reference about #MeToo campaigns
 - Consumers' frames of reference about #MeToo are different from the frame adopted by brands

IMPLICATIONS

- Cause marketing messages can be controversial but still necessary because brands can educate and provide consumers the language to discuss social issues, making them more open to the practices.
- Brands can limit risks of backlash from cause marketing adopt a dialogic approach to engage with consumers on social media to acknowledge consumers' opinions and increase brand legitimacy to address social issues.