

# POLINA LANDGRAF

## Statement on Research

I am a behavioral scientist studying the determinants and consequences of changes in consumer behavior that have kicked off in the last two decades. In recent years, a lot has changed—the political climate has grown polarized, the threat of a terrorist attack or a deadly pandemic has become tangible for many, and new technologies have substantively re-shaped markets and human behaviors. Through two focused research streams, my research explores what these changes mean for marketers and brand managers.

My **Branding** stream of research seeks to provide brand managers with practical guidance on how to manage brands in this new environment. The insights uncovered in my research are consequential because multiple branding principles, that have long been taken for granted, have changed in the last two decades. From explaining why brand identity is now *co-created* (rather than just created) to highlighting unanticipated drivers of brand equity, my research delivers necessary insight into what managers can (or should) do differently today.

In my second research stream - **Psychology of Technology** - I address both marketers and, directly, consumers and public policy institutions. Specifically, I work to provide insights into how new tech, digital spaces, algorithms, and use of data impact everyday consumer behaviors—from decision-making to emotional reactions. For example, my research offers a roadmap for sustainable use of data and explains how algorithms can impact consumers' emotions and well-being.

I use quantitative, experimental, and qualitative methods in my research. I have scraped online data, analyzed large datasets (~1,000,000 observations), conducted difference-in-differences field experiments, worked with proprietary datasets provided by real businesses, conducted in-depth interviews with SMEs, and designed online and lab experiments.

In all research projects, my ultimate goal is to build rigorous scholarship that provides meaningful, actionable guidance to real businesses.

## Branding

I study how brands can remain relevant and valuable, given the changes of the last several decades. In *Corporate Brand Identity Co-Creation* (published in *IMM*, 2020), I explore the shift from brand identity creation to shared co-creation with brand stakeholders. For this paper, I worked closely with five SMEs and their CEOs, managers, employees, suppliers, and customers, in order to gain a well-rounded, balanced perspective and develop practical recommendations on how to co-create brands. In *Brand Personality and Customer-Based Brand Equity: Evidence From 18-Year Panel Data* (currently a 2<sup>nd</sup> round R&R at *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*), I leverage a unique, proprietary longitudinal dataset to show how the impact of different brand personalities on brand equity has been changing over time. This paper provides important and timely insights on how to manage the evolving effects of brand personalities and what managers can anticipate in the future. In *How Mortality Salience Hurts Brands with Different Personalities*, I explore the impact of large-scale tragedies—9/11 and the COVID pandemic—on consumer preference for brands with different personalities. Using field (a diff-in-diff) and lab experiments, I show that existential threats

decrease equity of exciting brands and advise managers on how to overcome this detrimental impact. This work has been well received at multiple internationally renowned conferences in the U.S. and Europe (North American ACR, European ACR, Marketing Science, EMAC) and is currently under review at *International Journal of Research in Marketing*.

Several of my working papers focus on the changes in the political climate and their effects on brands. These papers highlight the oftentimes unanticipated impact of politics-related events on branding and suggest strategies to add to managers' playbooks. In *How Political Elections Impact Brands*, I use a proprietary longitudinal dataset covering 2,000+ brands to show that political elections can substantively impact equity of exciting brands. This paper has been presented at the ACR 2019 and is currently being prepared for submission to *Journal of Marketing Research*. In *How Political Polarization Affects Persuasiveness of Consumer Reviews* I use a unique, longitudinal dataset from Yelp (~1,000,000 observations) to demonstrate a moderating effect of political polarization on the relationship between attitude certainty and review helpfulness. This paper is targeted at *Journal of Marketing*.

Going forward, I plan to continue exploring how branding can remain a valuable marketing activity given the changes in consumer behavior that have already happened and the new ones that will arrive in the future. I am specifically interested in exploring the effects of politics-related and emergent ideological phenomena, such as the impact of 'cancel culture' on consumer behavior.

## Psychology of Technology

In this stream of research, I study how new technologies, digital spaces, algorithms, and the use of data are changing the way people (consumers, managers, business creators, investors) think, feel, and behave. In *Sustainable Data Management* (forthcoming chapter in *Handbook of Sustainability-driven Business Strategies in Practice*), I examine how businesses and consumers can use data in a sustainable way. Because of the unique challenges associated with data (e.g., immateriality), achieving data sustainability requires substantive shifts in established decision-making patterns. I focus on some practical ways of approaching such sustainable use of data in *How to Nudge Consumers (and Firms) to Adopt Sustainable Data Management Practices* (award winner in the 2021 EMAC-Sheth Foundation Sustainability Research Competition; €5,000).

In *How New Product Names Can Influence Funding Outcomes on Crowdfunding Platforms* (under review at *Journal of Product Innovation Management*), I study how consumers make sense of brand names in the context of crowdfunding and provide entrepreneurs with guidelines on how to create start-up brands that appeal to crowdfunding investors. In *The Impact of Digital Avatars on Persuasion*, I examine persuasiveness of digital avatars in a healthcare and wellness context and offer practical guidance on designing persuasive avatars. This paper has been warmly received at multiple conferences (*European ACR, EMAC*) and is being prepared for submission to *Journal of Marketing*.

Another branch of my Psychology of Technology research agenda looks at how technology impacts what is arguably the most human part of humans: emotions. Under a UVA Batten Institute Research Grant (\$8,682), I examine several research directions. In one research project, I study the feelings of anger in response to being rejected by an algorithm (vs. a human). In another research project, I study consumer emotions in the context of online (vs. offline) dating. These lines of research hold much promise in offering novel insights into consumer behavior in the age of high tech, algorithms, and big data.

## References

### *Published:*

Iglesias, O., Landgraf, P., Ind, N., Markovic, S., and Koporcic, N. (2020), Corporate Brand Identity Co-Creation in Business-to-Business Contexts, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 85(2), 32-43.

Guha, S., and Landgraf, P. (Forthcoming). Sustainable Data Management, in: *Handbook of Sustainability-driven Business Strategies in Practice*. Edward Elgar.

### *Under review:*

Brand Personality and Customer-Based Brand Equity: Evidence From 18-Year Panel Data – with J. Luffarelli and S. Delre; 2<sup>nd</sup> round R&R at *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*

How Mortality Salience Hurts Brands with Different Personalities – with A. Stamatogiannakis and H. Yang; Under review at *International Journal of Research in Marketing*

How New Product Names Can Influence Funding Outcomes on Crowdfunding Platforms – with A. Stamatogiannakis and J. Luffarelli; Under review at *Journal of Product Innovation Management*

### *Working papers:*

How Political Elections Impact Brands – with A. Stamatogiannakis and H. Yang

How Political Polarization Affects Persuasiveness of Consumer Reviews – with N. Lurie, A. Stamatogiannakis, and S. Calderon

How to Nudge Consumers (and Firms) to Adopt Sustainable Data Management Practices; Award winner in the 2021 EMAC-Sheth Foundation Sustainability Research Competition (€5,000)

Consumer Emotions in Response to Algorithm-Generated Recommendations – with T. Kim; Recipient of the UVA Batten Institute Research Grant 2020 (\$8,682)

The Impact of Digital Avatars on Persuasion – with A. Stamatogiannakis