Branding and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Building Virtual Presence

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Chapter 6
Between Physical and Virtual Reality:
The Case of Benetton Brand, "A Company that is Born from Ideas"

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a perspective theory, not yet fully developed, that seeks to analyze the connections between "Social Representations and Corporate Communication" (Penz, 2006; Usunier & Lee, 2009). It is divided into two sections. In the first, descriptive section we identified the organizational dynamics of the Benetton Company utilizing structural elements found in the enterprise's literature and documents. The objective was to understand Benetton galaxy's role in globalization and its complex market strategies. Since this was an internal view of the company, data was obtained from internal documents, including the company's publications, such as Global Vision and Colors publications. In order to understand the company from an external perspective, we consulted studies conducted on the Benetton universe that considered the marketing element as interaction between the company and the market (Kotler, 1997; Nardin, 1987; Semprini, 1996; Moliner, 1996; Tafani, 2006). In the second, empirical section, the social representation of the Benetton brand is analyzed using a large sample of Benetton's advertisements, selected as the basis for research to identify the perceptive modalities of advertising messages and attitudes in Benetton's communication strategies (de Rosa, 1998, 2001; de Rosa & Losito, 1996; de Rosa & Bocci, 2009). In this second section the relationship between social representations and corporate communication will be presented in a dialogical perspective that examines the social discourse "of"

Benetton in regard to social issues. We will look at the different phases of advertising campaigns (1992-2008, with special focus on one of the controversial campaigns: Autumn-Winter 1992\1993) and the discourse "about" Benetton. The targets of reference for our research program are considered to be not only recipients of the company's advertising campaigns, but also potential buyers.

SOME STRUCTURAL DATA ON THE COMPANY: FROM A FAMILY BUSINESS, TO AN INDUSTRY, TO A "CULTURAL PHENOMENON"

Established in 1965 as a family business called "*Maglieria di Ponzano Veneto dei Fratelli Benetton,*" the Benetton Group transformed rapidly into an industry that reached far beyond Italy's borders. After initially launching itself on the international market, it then positioned its brand globally, not just in terms of financial markets but also in terms of cultural horizons. The Company itself became a "cultural" phenomenon, in fact, a true "case study."

The Benetton Company's adventures were summed up by Luciano Benetton[1] himself in an interview published on July 28, 1992 in United Colors of Benetton: A Global Vision:

"A company that is born of ideas: this is both the Benetton reality and its legend, as recounted on the pages of newspapers and magazines in America, China, Egypt, France, Japan, India, England, Italy, Poland, Spain and Turkey. Yet in an ever more global and competitive market, every new idea must serve as a solid base for further innovation " (Yagi, 1993:10)

The brand's global position was obtained by flexibly combining centralized planning, mar-

Figure 1. www.benetton.it

keting, production management and distribution systems with the extensive use of information technology.

In step with an economy increasingly oriented towards a globalizing marketplace, on its very interactive website (Figure 1), the company presents a representation of itself as a "global business" based on the following aspects:

- Global product;
- Common approach to the market;
- Standardized image of stores on a world scale via the "select a country" option;
- Global financial management;
- Global communication strategies.

In line with its philosophy of flexible organization (Kotler, 1997), Benetton did not hesitate to modify its corporate choices and, intent on optimizing results, quickly changed course when necessary.

In retracing the company's principal steps from the very beginning, one can see the particularly dynamic character of this manufacturing company that by offering a colorful and economical product in its own casual clothing stores became a point of reference for young people "of all ages" and from around the world.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the company developed one of the most important keys to its success: "*decentralization*" (Kotler, 1997), which for the company meant a reduction in production risks and costs, and in terms of distribution allowed them to meet clients' needs and trends.

From the very beginning, the name "My Market," still used for numerous sales outlets, targeted young people... of all ages. With products clearly displayed in shop windows and easily reachable on open shelves and music playing at high volume, the sales outlets, initially small and located in central and high traffic areas of cities, were able to pick up on the most up-to-date trends and fulfill purchasers' aspirations.

In the 1980s, the company played the card of *breaking into international markets*. The goal was to reduce costs and escape protectionist problems, making the Benetton organization less dependent on currency fluctuations.

The changes in the company logo (from "*Maglieria di Ponzano Veneto dei Fratelli Benetton*" to "Benetton" and then "United Colors of Benetton") by themselves describe Benetton's structural transformation from a family business, to an industry that was national, international, and finally, global.

Information technology was another tool used to promote the company's growth. In the beginning of the 1980s they developed an internal information system which, by linking design production and distribution flows, gave Benetton an advantage that was practically unknown at that time in the clothing/textile world: receiving orders for garments during the same season and guaranteeing delivery to sales outlets within three weeks.

At the same time, the company adopted a policy to consolidate its image at the international level. In addition to a qualitative boost in product quality, there was a corresponding price rise sustained by an appropriate *market repositioning*. In that regard, the choice of an international advertising medium in the form of Formula 1 racing became one of the company's many sponsorship activities.

Under the banner of dynamism and color, Benetton inaugurated sports centers, financed volleyball, basketball and rugby teams:

"The characteristics of racing car competitions; speed, color, cross-culture glamour, as well as the integration of high technology and human creativity, all have their counterparts in Benetton's philosophy. The Benetton adventure with Formula 1 began in 1983 with the sponsorship

of the Tyrell Team. But Luciano Benetton grew so passionate about car racing, that by 1985 he bought the Toleman Racing Team" (Yagi 1993:16).

The affair that began in 1983 with the sponsorship of "Team Tyrrell," ended with the Benetton family purchasing the "Toleman Team" in 1985. The dynamism and international image of Formula 1 racing progressively was merged with Benetton's image, guaranteeing the company yet another tool for globalization.

However, the element that typified Benetton's new brand positioning was their gamble in investing in *advertising posters,* a medium that had fallen into disuse (Kotler, 1997). The billboards gave the brand a new visibility, allowing it to be present in the most crowded squares and streets around the world. These were giant poster "murals" that carried sophisticated messages that were an invitation to overcome all barriers under the banner "United Colors of Benetton." That choice, which from the company's point of view represented a low cost strategic option to obtain wide social visibility, on the contrary, was considered an act of "ingenuousness" by Semprini (1996)[2] in his socio-semiotic analysis. In his opinion, it contributed to amplify the conflictual and controversial discursive space that for years had marked the Benetton brand in the social arena.

Communication strategies played a primary role in the establishment of this economic empire, which went hand in hand with the creation of a cultural "issue." The communication "change in direction" from traditional advertising canons coincided with Oliviero Toscani's encounter with the Benetton Company. Since 1984 the well-known and controversial photographer has submitted his pictures directly to Luciano Benetton for approval, to the satisfaction of both parties, at least as can judged by the numerous interviews given by these two personalities who have become a recurring figures in the daily press and the subject of biographical accounts. (Toscani, 1995). Toscani swept away the canons of traditional advertising

from Benetton's campaigns, which, based on the famous "connotative transfer" model (Barthes, 1964; Semprini, 1996), were present in the company's advertising until 1983 and were centered on the product and positive social values (beauty, wealth, power, beautiful scenery, etc.).

Although with a more graphic than "photographic" expressive style (cf. Semprini, 1996), although remaining anchored to the product, in the initial phase of the various campaigns the advertisements transmitted messages in a style totally different from campaigns prior to 1984. With joy and vitality they expressed a philosophy inspired by "universal harmony," different peoples, races and cultures embracing each other, and by the rainbow of colors representing the chromatic metaphor while at the same time referring to the Benetton's polychromic products that were progressively conquering overseas markets.

From 1989 on, there was a definitive passage from product advertising to corporate advertising. From 1989-1991 there was a transitional phase, that we like to define as 'contrastive' (cf. de Rosa, 1998), which was characterized by the presence of opposites, generally portrayed by couples (no longer by groups, or collective subjects), contrastively connotated by their chromatic dimension (white-black), a whole/part contrast ("hands-body"), symbolism ('angel-devil'), metaphors ('wolf and lamb', 'dog and cat') or shock value (the famous kiss between a priest and nun, toilet paper, the *Pinocchios*, etc.).

The "*Denouncing the Evils of the World*" campaigns, launched beginning Spring/Summer 1992 (there was a preview a year earlier with the ad 'war cemetery and condoms'), began to include images with notable social impact that generated strong conflictual and controversial opinions. Such negative reactions were justified loudly in the name of the illegitimacy of a company to appropriate the right to intervene in that kind of discursive space (traditionally the realm of medical-scientific, legislative, political, etc. specialists, cf. Semprini, 1996). Benetton's com-

munications section, with Oliviero Toscani in the forefront, responded to these with a progressive escalation of increasingly strong messages, claiming their right to distinguish themselves from the grayness of the kind of conformist commercial advertising that sells a sweetened, deceptive and falsified image of reality. The right to denounce "reality" in its pervasive "crudeness" of violence, abuse, sickness, social and natural scourges (immigration, racism, terrorism, mafia, death penalty, ecological catastrophes, etc.) in all corners of the world and to lay claim to themes previously allowed only for non-profit advertising (i.e. AIDS) was reaffirmed, not only abstractly in the name of an enlightened right to knowledge of the "truth or an almost "messianic" desire for communication.[3] The right and desire to speak to the world on universal themes ("sex, religion, race, life and death" Toscani, 1998) was supported by a commercial rationale in which, despite judicial, political and scientific controversies, sales always increased after the ad campaigns. This was true to the extent that the company, confident in its communication success, decided not to finance market studies on the results of its advertising campaigns.

In fact, the results from an extensive research program that we conducted confirmed the success of the strategy that, departing from a social discourse "of" Benetton "on social issues," triggered a social discourse "on" Benetton that ended with the creation of a meta-representation for the brand. The meta-representation turned out to be expanded and played up in auto reverberating circuits fueled by the same contrastive drives that the messages' source had set into motion. This confirms that this strategy, designed with the objective of triggering a process of attitude polarization, was guided less by ingenuousness, as Semprini believes than by a more or less intuitive or intentional choice to stand out in terms of "social visibility," taking their place as an "active minority in the world of advertising" (cf. de Rosa, 1998; de Rosa & Smith, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a 1998b).

Beyond opinions on the mode of communication adopted by the Toscani-Benetton advertisements, their moral, esthetic and deontological criteria and the political and discursive legitimacy that inspired them, it is undeniable that they were able to create a kind of *world-wide virtual conference or debate* on the world's current burning issues. They created a symbolic space for discursive interactivity that played out not only at the level of images (advertisements), texts (Colors) and words (interviews and press releases), but also by direct social intervention. Another means by which Benetton was able to communicate to the entire world was via *actions on, in and towards social issues*, intervening on AIDS issues (distributing condoms in their stores and in schools, financing research, sponsoring publications on prevention, etc.), world peace (distributing 'multicultural passport notebooks' in schools, etc.), poverty (collection and distribution of clothing for people in the Third World with the assistance of Caritas and the Red Cross), etc. If on one hand this change in course from *denunciation to action* can be interpreted as a counter attack to respond to criticism that they had exploited painful public and private human tragedies for commercial purposes[4]. On the other hand, beyond results and the ability to contribute to the resolution of real problems, these organized interventions certainly had the power to communicate to the world that the Benetton company had the tools necessary to intervene in areas and contexts that had always been the prerogative of other forces: political powers through their Ministries of Health, Education and Scientific Research, religious powers and their humanitarian organizations, etc.

If on the whole, from an ideological point of view, the choice of heavily connotated themes seemed to respond to the need to challenge the young people of the 1990s to be drawn closer to themes of social engagement, Benetton's advertising campaigns and social interventions seemed to be seeking to reach a much wider range of interlocutors among "young people of all ages."

The Benetton company's final gamble was to make the transition from *"international" to "global,"* as stated by Aldo Palmeri in an interview given to the editors of News:

"Above all it means to be strongly rooted in the territory. To be everywhere in order to be, above all, local."[5]

Being global in terms of production and distribution is a goal that was only half attained. Benetton wants to be global in terms of *image* as well. The company has always tried to transmit a unified message via the integration of all elements of marketing.

"Our products gradually came to be enriched by certain intangible elements, such us our corporate philosophy and style, our image, and the product displays at points of sale. A simple marketing technique thus contributed to the notion of a global "package" which encompassed, along with our clothing, the idea of a world based on youth and universality" (Yagi, 1993:8).

In contrast with the style of advertising that in the last decade seems to have followed a strategy of '*attracting by dividing'*, their stores were conceived for '*attracting by unifying'* and appear to be offering themselves as symbolic places for social reconciliation, where one can feel at home while celebrating the daily rite of mass consumption. It is not by chance that one never saw posters from the very controversial ad campaigns displayed in Benetton stores, even in periods when they were at their most reckless and were widely distributed. Instead, usually large posters of pictures from the Benetton fashion catalog were displayed, preserving the cheerful graphic style that characterized the cycle we called "universal harmony" that is found in Toscani's first ad campaigns for Benetton.

The commercial network's evolution and updating continued throughout the 1990s, primarily via an expansion in the size of sales outlets, which led to opening multi-purpose megastores, like those in London, New York, San Francisco, Barcelona, Moscow, and Riyadh and the multi-level store opened on Piazza Venezia in Rome in 1998. These were able to offer the entire range of Benetton brand clothing and accessories and to consolidate the prestige and global image of the group.

During these years the company experienced an important growth in terms of dividends and a worldwide increase in sales that brought its debt down to zero.

The 1996 record results were obtained thanks to a program of constant innovation in the corporate system, in later years integrated with incisive plans for containing management costs. Investments for innovation were used to update central processing and applications systems with the latest generation of technologies, and, above all, for continuous improvement in integrated logistics. In this area, new automated systems made possible a notable improvement in efficiency and speed for customer services, while greatly reducing costs.

To have an idea how the group has continued to grow during the third millennium, one can consult the Interactive Value Chain (Figure 2) found on Benetton's corporate website. This growth was predicated on an increase in speed for the entire system and was based on consumer confidence built and consolidated over more than forty years of activity.

Thanks to ample multimedia content, this tool allows the user to discover the world of the Benetton group via the various entries dedicated to the brands and to in-depth studies concerning "Products," "Corporate Governance," and "Communication" that provide users with a 360º view of the Benetton Company.

There is a description of a:

• Global brand (United Colors of Benetton) to which four other specialized brands

Figure 2. The interactive value chain

Figure 3. Fabrica

were added (Undercolors, Sisley, Playlife, Killer Loop);

• High-quality creative product that responds to fashion needs in real time;

• Industrial structure based on speed and efficiency;

• Network of 5,800 stores in 120 countries;

• Attention to communication via various instruments.

Alongside *Colors* (the "ideological manifesto," published by Benetton in seven bilingual editions distributed simultaneously around the world) and as part of the global flow of communication, in 1994 a research center for communication development was born: *Fabrica* (Figure 3).

Fabrica is a center for the study of communication that seeks to set itself off from the conventional directives and rhetoric of traditional mass media. *Fabrica* (which in Latin means "workshop") places emphasis on the principle of learning by doing, rather than on didactics; a voyage within experience. *Fabrica* is a production facility where experienced students/ co-workers participate in workshops to study production in publishing, graphics, photography, sound, video and design.

As described to this point, Benetton's corporate profile seems to go well beyond a simple industrial organization and instead represents a "cultural phenomenon."[6]

Luciano Benetton is an enlightened, postmodern patron of the arts who has embraced the attractiveness of a productive and cultural binomial world. To consolidate the company's ties to the cultural dimension, his *Foundation* is involved in historic research and in preservation of cultural patrimony. Research activities include education (courses, seminars and conferences) and publication and dissemination of findings. In fact, the *Benetton Foundation* promotes and directs studies, research and projects aimed at the preserving places, historical memory and other aspects of

the area that surrounds the city of Treviso, Italy. This deepening of historic and cultural roots in the area from which the Benetton Group comes produces a double effect in terms on enriching the artistic patrimony of the culture of the Veneto Region while also consolidating the brand name "Benetton," that in terms of image needed strong stability to move from "international" to "global."

In 1993, the Japanese publisher *Robundo* distributed worldwide Tamotsu Yagi's book, *United Colors of Benetton: a Global Vision.* As Tamotsu Yagi explicitly acknowledged in an interview published in *News di Colors*, this book "*shows an industry in constant evolution, and engaged in many things in different areas, from the development of architectural projects and new products, to establishing a kind of experimental school.*"[7]

Global Vision contains clips from an imaginary film, able to encapsulate this large company's communication mix, which leans towards globality in terms of production as well as image. It is clear that when the product's various components are harmonious in expressing a single message, that is, when the name, price, the "made in," and the sales outlet all transmit the same concept, speak one language, and carry the same message, the media's job, and especially that of advertising which acts as a loudspeaker amplifying the company's image, will be much easier.

In fact, with its ad campaigns, Benetton was able to incite debates and continuous confrontations between journalists, writers and scholars in mass communication as well as among the individuals that constitute the company's target of reference: "buyers" and "potential buyers."

The photographs that Oliviero Toscani took personally or chose for advertising campaigns have been exhibited in museums and galleries in many countries and imitated or parodied by many advertising agencies.[8]

Since the end of the 1980s there have been many complaints, legal cases and acts of censorship as well as many positive opinions and expressions of solidarity. As has already been mentioned,

Figure 4. "Tribe"

each new advertising campaign marked a deeper divide and a more radical polarization in attitudes among those who were in favor and those against the communication strategies offered by Benetton.

In the second part of this article we will seek to highlight the social representations of the Benetton Company as expressed by young people, the target of the company's products and its advertising campaigns. We will also explore the possible links between the various global communication strategies implemented by the company and its production goals as well as the role that in the construction of that representation was mediated by the kind of social "meta-communication" that the company was able to create about itself and its own 'discourse' (the Benetton "case," as a cultural phenomenon).

THE BENETTON COMPANY SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF THE TARGET: YOUTH

This study is part of a much larger product designed to examine social representations and corporate communication. We chose Benetton's 1992/1993 Autumn-Winter ad campaign precisely because of its ability to provoke extreme and clashing reactions in public opinion. Our hypothesis is that the Benetton ad campaigns that denounced the 'evils of the world' activated representations that were expressed in highly polarized evaluative attitudes because of the strong "ideological" connotations

Figure 5. "Interview"

Figure 6. Cormorant

Figure 7. "Pigs in a dump"

Figure 8. "Bricklayers mate"

Figure 9. "Dirty white doll"

Figure 10. "Dealth penalty"

of these ads that spoke out against various social problems and the implicit request to "choose " a pro or contra position (Figures 4 to 10).

The 1992/93 Autumn/Winter campaign consisted of seven images, all focused on important social topics, each with a strong indictment of "the world's evils." It was a pessimistic progression of the narrative in previous campaigns, which had been more oriented towards an ideology of "fraternity" in the name of "The United Colors of Benetton."

First in Italy and later in other European countries (Austria, France and Portugal), we already have published the methodological plan for this extensive research project as well as results concerning the social representations that emerged from using the campaign ads as research material/ stimulus (cf. de Rosa, 1998; de Rosa & Losito, 1996; de Rosa & Smith, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a 1998b; de Rosa & Bocci, 2009)

Presented in all its aspects (cf. de Rosa, 1998), the methodological plan in particular was designed to reconstruct the representational dynamic in the links between social discourse "of" Benetton in its various expressions (*Colors*, social intervention experiences, etc.) and "on" Benetton. The latter was reconstructed on the basis of textual documents produced by experts and non-experts in

scientific publications, interviews and articles published in the press, letters sent to newspapers or directly to the company as well as on responses from subjects in later phases of our study under the experimental conditions described below.

In this article we only will present and discuss some of the results obtained concerning the Benetton brand's social representations and, in particular, the discursive dynamic clearly explained by the associative network produced in reaction to the stimulus "Benetton." We will refer to reactions to the display of the campaign ads only to compare the polarization of the representational field relative to the ads themselves with that of the representations of the Benetton brand in function of the two hypotheses described below.

Hypotheses:

1. Alongside highly opposing reactions to the advertising campaign, the target would have a relatively positive representation of the company and that, paradoxically, the controversy caused by the "provocative" style of the campaign would be associated with a kind of meta-communication that reinforced positive connotations of the brand name.
2. Within the discourse dynamics of the associative networks (stimulus word "Benetton"), the social representation of the Benetton brand name would mediate between the company's advertisements (and other communicative strategies) and its industrial production and activities (goods and attributes).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY PLAN

Experimental Conditions and Population

The stimuli (i.e. images from the 1992/93 Benetton Autumn/Winter campaign) were presented under two different conditions to two groups of subjects (one condition per group).

Condition A

In experimental condition A, 64 students, representative of the social psychology student population, were exposed to two stimulus images (Tribe and Interview) chosen from 7 images belonging to the previously mentioned ad campaign. These were chosen because of their elevated semantic ambiguity. The two slides were projected and the research tools administered under controlled conditions in the Faculty of Psychology 2 laboratory-classroom at the University of Rome "Sapienza."

Condition B

In condition B, we recreated a situation that produced stimuli that were as close as possible to reality. In order to simulate a condition of normal daily exposure, in contrast to laboratory conditions, and permit the formulation of more spontaneous answers, we gave the subjects magazines classified by type of readership (women, young people, family magazines, etc.) in which one of the seven ads were found.

960 subjects were selected for this second condition, equally distributed in terms of the variables sex, age (14-15; 18-19; 21-25), and profession (students or workers).

Table 1 illustrates the number of subject samples that produced the associative networks starting with the stimulus word "Benetton," the results of which are being presented and discussed in this article. In addition, the table illustrates how the subjects were divided into sub-samples in function of being exposed to the seven images from the Autumn/Winter 1992-93 ad campaign.

This second phase entailed creating a *condition of normal daily exposure* (the most natural possible condition for exposure) to all the seven stimulus images that were part of the 1992/93 Autumn/Winter ad campaign. To this end, each of the experiment subjects was presented with different magazines that had previously been classified by type in function of their typical

Table 1. Number of subjects interviewed and different kinds of exposure to the images in the two different experimental contexts

Benetton Autumn-Winter 1992\1993 Campaign	Number of Subjects and Conditions	
Image	**Condition A**	**Condition B**
Tribe	64 subjects	120 subjects
Interview	64 subjects	120 subjects
Pigs in a dump		120 subjects
Cormorant		120 subjects
Dirty white doll		120 subjects
Bricklayer's mate		120 subjects
Death penalty		240 subjects
TOTAL	**64 subjects**	**960 subjects**

readership (women, young people, families, etc.). The subjects were allowed to browse the magazines (one per subject) for 10 minutes. The objective was to study the type of strategy that guided the selection of ads, how attention was allocated, message comprehension and interpretation and memory of previous exposure to the same image.

Other intervening variables inherent to familiarization with the image and the mnemonic and cognitive processes tied to them were taken into consideration in the *condition of normal daily exposure:*

- prior knowledge of the message;
- familiarization with the image and linked memory and cognitive processes;
- intensity of the memory (how many times the subject had previously seen the ad);
- the location (where it was seen);
- contexts of eventual conversations concerning the message;
- the typology of interlocutors (if and with whom it was the subject of discussion).

The Techniques

The goal of the techniques used to collect the data for this study was to identify possible connections between the dependent variables linked to the message/advertisement (descriptions of the image; interpretation of the message; interpretation of the meaning attributed to the message by the source; memory reactivation processes; evaluation of the message's effectiveness; evaluation of the message's moral acceptability; identification of the message's topic) and variables outside the message (attitude to message's topic; purchasing behavior concerning Benetton products; socio-demographic data*)*.

A series of tools were created and administered to carry out these surveys. They are listed below in the order in which they were administered to the sample subjects:

1. Associative network (for the stimulus words: image, Benetton, I);
2. Description of the image (free texts);
3. The subject's interpretation of the message (free texts);
4. The subject's interpretation of the meaning attributed to the message by the source (free texts);
5. Analysis of mnemonic reactivation processes (questionnaire);
6. Evaluation of the message's efficacy (questionnaire);

Equation 1.

$$\text{Polarity Index (P)} = \frac{\text{No. of positive words - No. of negative words}}{\text{Total No. of associated words}}$$

Equation 2.

$$\text{Neutrality Index (N)} = \frac{\text{No. of neutral words - (No. of positive words + No. of negative words)}}{\text{Total No. of associated words}}$$

7. Identification of the message/denunciation subject (questionnaire);
8. Attitude towards the message/denunciation subject (questionnaire);
9. Purchasing behavior for Benetton products (questionnaire);
10. Socio-demographic data concerning the research subjects (questionnaire).

Concerning the present discussion, the *associative network* was the most important technique used (see de Rosa, 1995, for a complete description of this projective technique). It was the used first in order to prevent responses being anchored by information from the questionnaire that could bias word elicitation. The technique requires participants first to associate words with stimulus words and then to establish connections and branching patterns between the elicited words that are written around the stimulus word found in the center of the page. It enables respondents to specify the structure of a semantic field by themselves. Therefore, starting from a free association test, you obtain a textual web. The associative network also provides information about the order in which words come to mind. This order indicates both their saliency and the level of stereotyping of the elicited representations. Because of their high level of accessibility,

participants' first words may be their most salient as well as the most socially shared).

The associative network requires people to attribute a particular polarity to each word (positive, negative or neutral) to describe its connotations. This enables not only the structure and content of a social representation to be revealed, but also the "polarization of the semantic field' (i.e. the evaluative and attitudinal aspects of the representation). A polarity index calculates the positive, negative, or neutral connotations of the free associations evoked by each of the stimulus words used in this study: image, brand name. This index, which varies from +1 to -1 is calculated using Equation 1.

A second "neutrality" control index, which also varies between -1 and +1, is also calculated. In this way the structure, content, and polarity of particular representations are established (Equation 2).

Associative network processing has two objectives in terms of data analysis,: the first is to describe the structure and content of the representational fields associated with the stimuli, achieved by lexical correspondence analysis: SPAD-T (see Lebart, Morineau, & Beçue, 1989). The second is to reconstruct the discourse dynamics implicit in the structure of the associative network by applying a content analysis program DISCAN to the corpus

of elicited words (see Maranda, 1990). Technical details of these analyses are described elsewhere.

Data Analysis Procedures

Filemaker memorized words in their order of appearance, branching patterns and connections and then transferred them to Word.

Having two different objectives, the data was analysed using two different procedures. The first described the structure and content of the representational fields associated with the different stimuli; the second reconstructed the discourse dynamics implicit in the associative network's structure.

1. *Analysis of lexical correspondence* (ACL) using the SPAD.T program[9]. The objective was to *identify the structure and content of the representational field* associated with the various stimulus words. Once distinct data bases containing all the *associated words* (active variables) were available and all the *ramifications* and *connections* had been identified by the associative network, the necessary procedures to prepare the files of *illustrative variables* were performed. A cross-analysis of the variables identified by the different survey techniques was conducted, including those identified via questionnaire and those concerning the polarity indices identified by the associative networks. Among the many procedures offered by the SPAD-T program, as analysis strategies we used: Artex, Selox, Numer, and Aspar for active variables (words) and Ardic, Selec and Posit for illustrative variables.

2. To achieve our second goal focused on *content and discursive analysis* we used the DiscAn program[10] that allowed us to identify the organization of the functional roles of the texts' associative dynamic.

The data obtained via questionnaires was organized into contingency tables and then treated with the usual cross-referencing procedures (CHI^2) using the S.P.S.S. program. After appropriate re-categorization, the resulting balanced variables were then extracted as illustrative variables using a SPAD-T analysis of the associative networks.

Following this, a final analysis using the ALCESTE. program[11] was conducted on the textual data (free text) related to the three open questions on the questionnaire (description of the image, the subject's attribution of meaning and in the subject's opinion, the meaning the source attributed to the image).

Given the massive quantity of data and the complex picture of the results that emerge from it, we decided to choose the results concerning the "*discursive dynamic*" related to the stimulus word "Benetton" for presentation in this article. Before continuing, we believe it will be helpful to first provide some information necessary to understand the analysis conducted using the DiscAn program, which is not yet well known. We will refer briefly to a previous article (de Rosa & Losito, 1996).

The DiscAn program was used to show the structure of the functional roles of the associative dynamics of texts.

Like most content analysis programs, DiscAn analyses language corpora into alphabetical and frequency-based lists of lexical units (words, syntagmas, etc.) as well as providing other options such as collocation research and dictionary and thesaurus construction. Once lexical units from a corpus have been organized into a thesaurus according to the researcher's specifications, discourse analysis processes can be applied to this "meta-text."

A single categorization system was used to obtain the DiscAn results. The categories used for the "Benetton" and "image" associative networks included:

- product;
- brand name;
- economic/commercial aspects;
- company leaders and source of the advertisements;
- advertising in general;
- Benetton advertising;
- image;
- message;
- advertisement content;
- advertisement characters;
- context.

Each of the 11 categories included several modalities (43 in total).

This corpus content categorization system was used to organize the lexical units. Classification (thesaurus creation) of associative networks produced "meta-texts" for discourse analysis at a semantic level.

In DiscAn the categories are treated as semantic nodes. DiscAn calculates the contribution of each category to the map for each node of the semantic network (level of activity). A node might therefore generate a wide network of semantic flow, but be relatively inactive, while another might be very active but at the same time hinder semantic flow.

DiscAn calculates the probability of transition from one category to a previous or subsequent one (first level Markov chains). In this way probabilistic chains of semantic nodes represented in the thesaurus categories can be constructed; the degree of reception (input) and emission (output) for each of these can also be calculated and their role in the semantic map defined.

The degree of reception of a node (d-) is termed "internal semigrade" and the degree of emission (d+) "external semigrade." When the internal semigrade of a node is greater than the external semigrade, we have an attractor or "absorber" node, whose input number is higher than its output. If the internal semigrade is lower than the external semigrade, we have a diffractor or "source" node, whose output number is higher than

its input. When the internal semigrade is equal to the external semigrade, we have a transmitter or "relay" node, which neither reduces nor expands the discourse dynamics of the corpus but simply acts as a connector. A high number of relays, however, indicates the presence of stereotypes.

This data enables the semantic "activity" of a corpus to be described. Its internal dynamics depend on the intensity with which each node absorbs, diffracts or transmits. DiscAn calculates the d+/d- score for each node A score of 1 means that it is a relay node, if it is greater than 1, it is a source node and if it is less than 1, it is an absorber node. The total of the internal and external semigrade scores for the respective frequencies (d- f) + (d+ f) shows each node's contribution to the global activity of the corpus and its relevance in terms of discourse as well as semantics. A map of this activity can also be produced from this data (de Rosa & Losito, 1996).

DiscAn was used in this research because of the similarity between the dynamics of the elicited words and the dynamics of discourse: they both have a morphological structure that can be analyzed overall in terms of internal relations.

Textual Analysis Categories

Below is found the list of the principle analysis categories used to transform the list of the 9465 words (complete associated dictionary) elicited in response to the stimulus "Benetton" in a meta-text that can be analyzed using DiscAN.

To guarantee that the DiscAn results could be compared to each other, even if derived from associative networks that sometimes referred to advertisements and sometimes to the brand, in order to identify categories that could be generalized as well as being inclusive of the elements present in the entire corpus, we established a single categorization plan which was based on all the associated dictionaries.

Categorization plan for the networks "Benetton" and "image."

- Product
  - -as such (ex. sweaters, pants, wrist-watches, look)=1
  - their attributes (ex. warm, expensive, fashionable, appealing to the masses, national-popular, etc.)=2
  - consumers (ex. children, young people, etc.)=3
- Brand Name
  - (ex. O12, brand)=4
  - their attributes (ex. Maletton (play on company name, in Italian bene = good, male =bad), international, etc.)=5
- Economic\Commercial Aspects
  - entrepreneurial activities (ex. stores, franchising, company, sector, fashion)=6
  - entrepreneurial objectives (ex. money, success economics, business, etc.)=7
  - sponsorship (ex. Formula 1, sports teams)=8
- Company Learders And Advertisement Source
  - protagonists (ex. Toscani, Benetton, Luciano...)=9
  - their attributes (senator, La Malfa, clever, from the Veneto..)=10
- Advertising In General
  - communication (ex. publicity, advertising, image)=11
  - channels and tools (ex. photographs, magazine, billboard, technique)=12
- Benetton Advertising
  - communication (ex. publicity concerning Benetton)=13
  - its attributes (current, shocking, strong, rule breaking, colorful, surprising, etc.)=14
  - target audience (ex. young people, women, etc.)=15

- Image
  - visual/perceptive aspects (ex. color, green, white, light blue)=16
  - their attributes (ex. original, imagination, interesting, innovative, stimulating)=17
- Message
  - intention (ex. denunciation...)=18
  - message results (ex. scandal, clamor)=19
  - emotional correlations for the user (ex. pain, tenderness, emotion, crudeness)=20
  - attributes referring to message content (ex. rhetorical, serious, connotation...)=21
- Advertisement Content
  - specific topic (ex. mafia, racism, work, races, death penalty)=22
  - values (ex. liberty, transgression, courage, truth; joy, peace..)=23
  - negative values (ex. violence, abuse, cruelty, indifference...)=24
  - non specific macro issue (ex. social reality, current events, politics, social problems...)=25
  - content elements and details
    - present (ex. electric chair, cormorant, asphalt...)=26
    - absent (ex. arrows, drum, camera..)=27
    - external elements evoked in the associative network for the stimulus (ex. Sofia Loren, Clinton etc.)=28
- Advertisement Characters
  - Individual protagonists:
    - present (policeman, journalist, non-European immigrant)=29
    - absent (photographer...)=30
  - Collective/institutional protagonists:
    - present (tribe, young people, journalism, police...)=31
    - absent 32

- ◦ Ethnic/racial identity:
  - ▪ (ex. Israeli, Moroccan, Indian)=33
  - ▪ physical/external attributes (ex. fat, tall)=34
  - ▪ personality traits (ex. shy, introverted, extroverted)=35
  - ▪ psychological condition (ex. uncomfortable, embarrassed, afraid, etc.)=36
  - ▪ behavioral qualifiers (absurd, boss, cynical)=37
  - ▪ verbal or gestural actions represented or presumed (help, murder, etc.)=38
- • Context
  - ◦ Circumstantial and relational context:
    - ▪ present (arrest, environment, dark, closing)=39
    - ▪ absent (friendship, community)=40
    - ▪ socio-geographic context (USA, London, Italy, United States)=41
    - ▪ setting for administration (ex. supervised practical experience program, university)=42
    - ▪ other=43

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In order to quickly and efficiently verify the first of the two hypotheses presented in this article, we selected the most synthetic and illustrative results from the many that emerged from the various analysis procedures available on the tools mentioned above. We compared polarity indices of the representational fields associated to the various ads from the advertising campaign under examination and the polarity indices relative to the semantic fields created by the subjects for the stimulus word "Benetton."

With a glance at the graph that illustrates the results (cf. Figure 11) it is possible to confirm the hypothesis relative to the company's prevalently positive representation compared to the prevalently negative, or at least ambivalent and contrastive, polarization of the representations evoked by the advertisements under study. Further analyzed in other articles, (de Rosa, 1998; de Rosa & Smith, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a 1998b; Kirchler & de Rosa, 1996; de Rosa & Bocci, 2009) the results confirm that the "confrontational" style of the company's communications, which aim to provoke a particularly animated and contrastive discussion, paradoxically have contributed to the creation of a kind of functional meta-communication that reinforces a positive connotation for the 'brand name'.

The graph highlights that the average polarity index relative to individual images is tendentially negative for almost all of them, in particular for the photographs *Interview* and *Electric chair*. The negative reaction to photographs in which children figure (as in *Tribe* and *Child labor)* was more attenuated, probably because of the effect of the "tenderness" evoked by the little protagonists. Conducted using the content of the images as an independent variable and the average polarity indexes relative to each individual image as a dependent variable, analysis of the variance shows that when the kind of photograph administered is changed, the evaluative reaction expressed about it also significantly varies ($F = 12.58$; $p < 0.001$).

The difference between the prevalently negative evaluation vis-à-vis the seven stimuli advertisements and the positive evaluation concerning the Benetton brand is shown in the figure below. It illustrates the notable "disproportion" between the average polarity indices relative to each individual image (which as you can see are almost always negative) and the average polarity indices concerning the brand name (which are always positive).

Figure 11. Indexes of polarity relating to the seven images (campaign 1992/93) and to Benneton brand
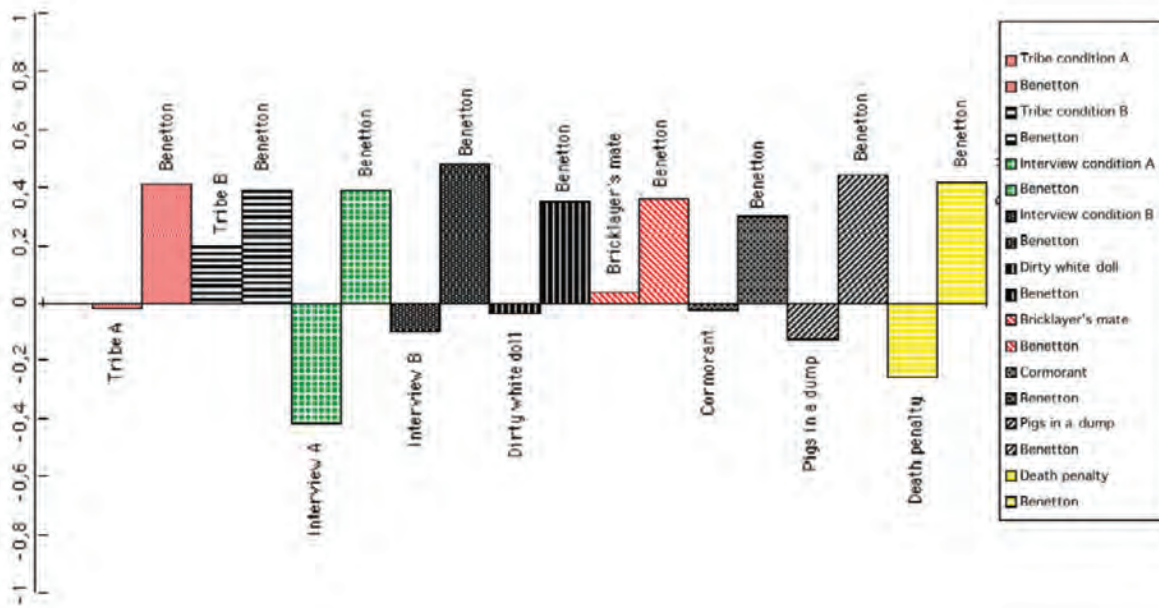
These results were also supported by the significant differences between the average values were obtained via T di student. As far as concerns condition B, the difference between the average polarity indices relative to the brand (X = 0.40) and to the seven images (X = -0.07) is extremely significant (t = -21.73; p<0.001). Analogous results were obtained in condition A. In fact, the difference between the average polarity indices relative to the brand (X = 0.39) and the two images (X = -0.23) is highly significant in this case as well (t = -14.46; p < 0.001).

The average neutrality indices highlighted a strong inclination towards expressing a "clear" stance, sometimes positive (in the case of the brand), sometimes bipolarized but tendentially negative in the case of the seven images. In condition B, the average neutrality indices relative to the brand (X = - 0.54) and to the images (X = -0.63) are, in fact, both highly negative. This shows that there were few neutral associations. However, a comparison between the averages highlights the existence of a significant difference between the two neutrality indices. The evaluative responses vis-à-vis the brand are more neutral than those expressed concerning the seven images (t = -5.26; p< 0.001). In condition A, the neutrality indices relative to the brand (X = -0.46) and to the two images (X = -0.9) are, as in the previous case, both negative even if in the second condition the difference between the averages is not significant (t = -0.76).

As regards the second hypothesis, Figure 12 shows the DiscAn results for the associative networks in terms of the discourse dynamics activated by the stimulus word "Benetton." It shows the links between the categories of words elicited from subjects in response to the brand name[16] and illustrates the semantic connections of the "Benetton" representation in terms of all its advertising, marketing, and production activities. This network seems to occur despite the contrasting polarity indexes for the advertising and brand name representations and confirms the effectiveness of the company's communicative strategies.

The most obvious result is the central role of "goods," which seems to act as the organizing nucleus for all the other source/relay elements.

Figure 12. Semantic map: graphic visualization of DiscAn results
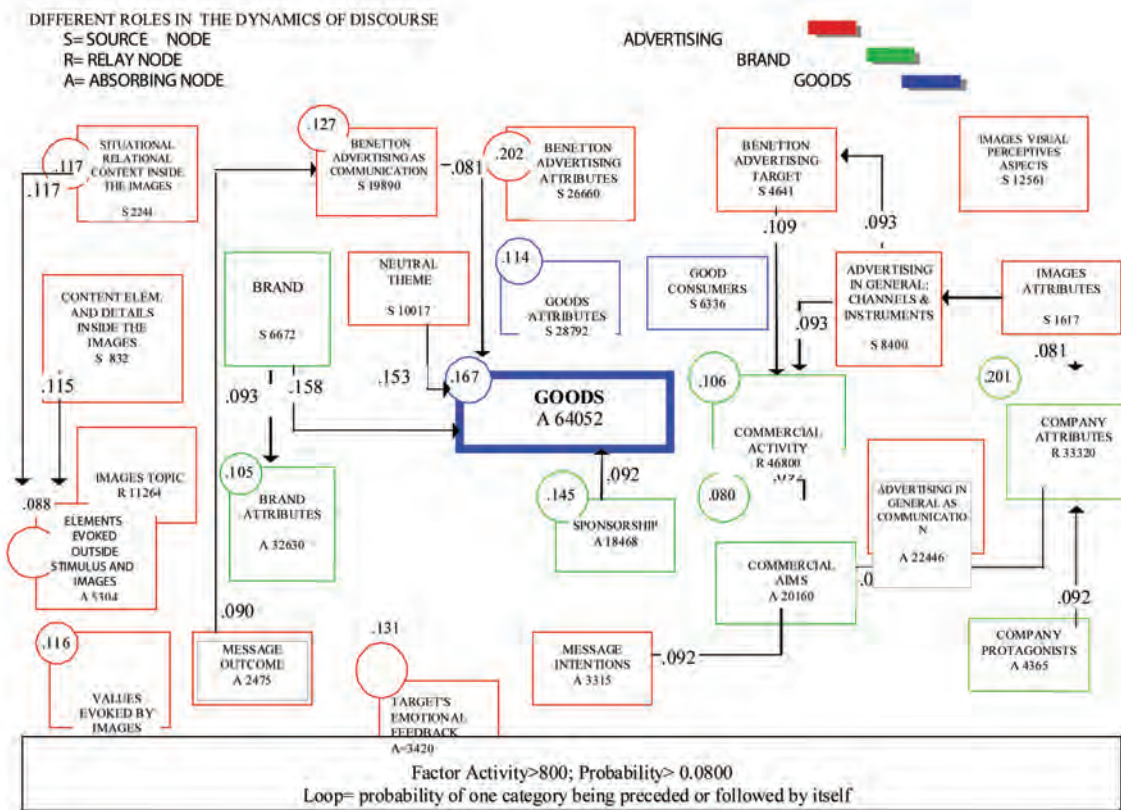
"Sources," "goods attributes*"* and "Benetton advertising attributes*"* have the highest level of activity. "Goods" is the biggest "absorber" and has the highest level of activity. The role of "goods" is central: all the other categories on the map (advertising, brand name, economic/commercial aspects) revolve around it.

Associations produced in response to the stimulus "Benetton" refer to different areas. The area relating to "production" was described first, then the area relating to Benetton advertising, specific Benetton campaign images used in the research, advertising in general, economic/commercial activity, the source and its attributes and the campaign message. This semantic route can be traced on the map via source categories in the upper half and absorber categories in the lower half.

The dual role played by advertising in the semantic dynamics is particularly interesting. It acts as a source (i.e., it is greater than 1) for the Benetton stimulus, particularly for the "message outcome," "emotional correlates" and "message intention" categories, and as an absorber (i.e., it is less than 1) for advertising in general. This highlights the more active role Benetton advertising played in activating sources for semantic routes compared with advertising in general, which seems to have had a more receptive/passive role.

The results for the advertising images show links between the descriptive level ("context elements" and "details present in the images" are both source nodes.), the interpretative level ("topic" is a mediator and relay), and the evaluative level (values evoked from the images is an absorber node). As regards links between advertis-

ing and company production aspects, "Benetton advertising" seems to open up a discourse about the "product." This was a surprising result since this discourse had been removed or denied during the advertising campaigns. Benetton advertising seems to play a diffracting role in the associative dynamics as if, starting from the advertising message, the associative discourse was able to act as a source for a number of semantic paths. These are clearly more complex links than those that start from the brand name and its attributes or from "product attributes" and "consumers," all of which tend to revolve around the product.

In conclusion, in the description, interpretation, and evaluation of Benetton advertising, the associative discourse expands in the direction of economic/commercial aspects and source attributes and eventually focuses on the Group's "product" and "protagonists."

This link seems to stand out despite the negative attitude registered when the polarity indices associated to the representations of the advertisements related were compared to those of the brand and offers another confirmation of the efficacy of the company's communication strategies despite the numerous controversies.

Is the key to the success of Benetton's communication formula that it follows the path of the discursive dynamic, starting from the world of communications, then moving to that of the company and its marking strategies and finally concentrating on production and assets?

In the final analysis, does the company increase its sales by provoking fierce controversies and rejecting the product that is found at the center of the representational field?

This company "born from ideas" never ceases to surprise. Once the brand had been enriched by the value added by the shock ad campaigns, it did not hesitate to change course and return to themes that are apparently twenty years old but are once again current. This is true not only in Italy, but also in the rest of the world.

CONCLUSION

While it is clear that the results of this research are limited to one case and the population we studied, it does confirm the success of Benetton's communication strategy. Social discourse "by" Benetton "about" social issues set off a social discourse "about Benetton" which then set up a meta representation of the brand name: the brand name is expanded and emphasized within self-reflecting circuits which feed off the contrasting forces activated by the source of the message. This process suggests a paradoxical effect (as shown in the graph) that despite powerful resistance to accepting Benetton's communicative style by a large portion of the target audience, a positive

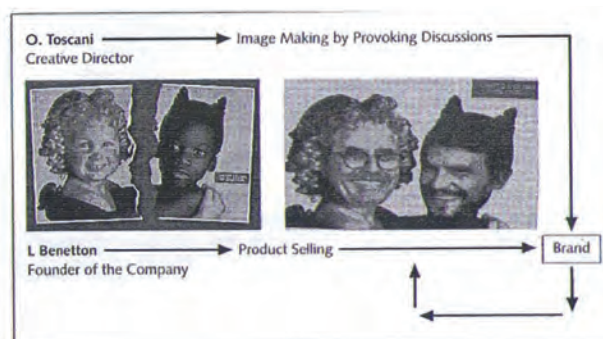*Figure 13. F=f(C,Rs): fashion as a function of communication and social representations*
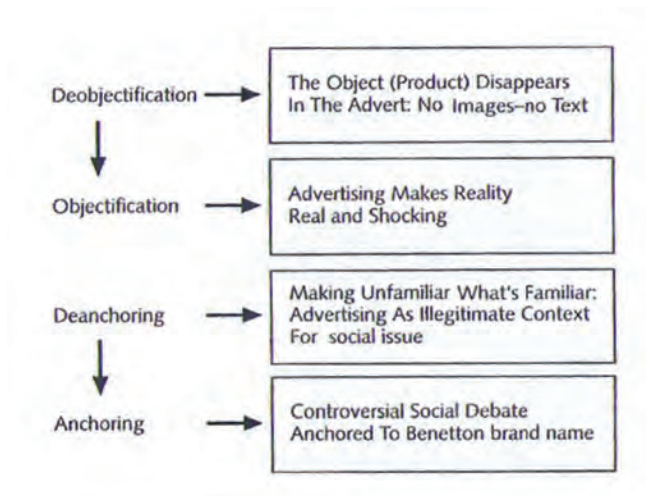
Figure 14. Two strategies, two processes

Deobjectification →	The Object (Product) Disappears In The Advert: No Images–no Text
↓ Objectification →	Advertising Makes Reality Real and Shocking
Deanchoring →	Making Unfamiliar What's Familiar: Advertising As Illegitimate Context For social issue
↓ Anchoring →	Controversial Social Debate Anchored To Benetton brand name

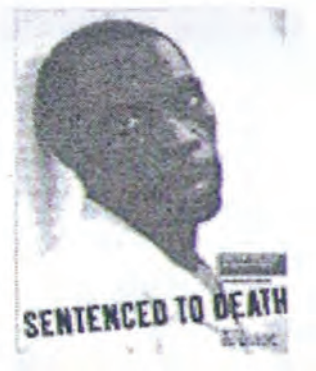*Figure 15. Face to the death*

SENTENCED TO DEATH

Figure 16. Undercolors collection 2008

representation of the brand name was still created by communicative strategies capable of arousing controversial attitudes to ad campaigns anchored in controversial social representations (Figure 13).

However, is it possible to explain this phenomenon more completely? What did these advertisements change? From what we have seen, what in their character enables them to be certain of success? One way of answering these questions is the connection between Benetton's advertising style and the behavior of an active minority with the fashion world.

As we know, consistency creates conflict through a "virtual" worldwide debate. This conflict or controversy is amplified by the multiple communication genres, including advertisements (icons), interviews and press releases (texts), texts with images (*Global Vision*, *Colors*, the Benetton website), and social actions. As is known, this may be a deliberate attempt to be considered an "active minority," at least in the advertising community. Achieving social visibility (de Rosa, 1998, de Rosa & Smith, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a) is linked to favorable evaluation of the brand. Other observers have commented that Benetton's advertisements have the merit of being noticed and being talked about (Kotler, 1997; Semprini, 1996). We will examine the character of these messages and why they have succeeded in changing advertising practices. It is a critical practice in the sense that it is

normal practice for an "active minority" and just a means towards an end. That end is to innovate and to generate a new social representation of the company that chooses to adopt such a strategy. Put in more "commercial" terms, "the goal is to sell" the brand.

If we were to summarize how social representations are shaped during communication, we would say that the two processes (defamiliarization and decontextualization) observed in Benetton's advertisements work alongside the processes of anchoring and objectification that makes the familiar unfamiliar. They create a code for distinguishing and recognizing Benetton's messages as advertisements. Rather than being noise or redundancies, they become events or "happenings" (Figure 14).

Negative reactions were based on the presumed illegitimacy a commercial company intruding in a discourse space traditionally the domain of medical/scientific, legislative, and political discourse communities (Semprini, 1996). Toscani's response to these criticisms was to claim the right to take a different, more colorful approach to traditional commercial advertising, whose images were illusory and falsified reality. Toscani claimed that his portrayal of worldwide "reality" with its full horror of violence, illness, social and natural disasters (e.g., immigration, racism, terrorism, mafia, death penalty, ecological disasters), and his use of issues which previously had only been used in nonprofit advertising was justified not only in terms of an abstract right to "know the truth,"[10] but also commercial logic---sales figures invariably increased after each campaign. Indeed, because of the success of advertising campaigns based on the use of universal issues like sex, religion, race, life and death[11] Benetton decided not to conduct market research on the results of these ad campaigns.

Benetton's use of the HIV issue is one of the best illustrations of its strategic change towards social action. HIV is a topic which has appeared consistently in Benetton ads since 1991, for example, "Condoms" (1991) and "dying AIDS patient with family" (1992). Later, however, Benetton did not simply use the AIDS issue in a message/accusation format. It also supported programs for AIDS prevention among young people by distributing condoms in schools, donating money for AIDS research, exhibiting a huge condom shaped monument in public, and devoting a special issue of *Colors* to AIDS.

In using its advertising to try to demonstrate that it was not an enterprise that profited from human suffering, and that it was genuinely concerned with social issues, Benetton's strategy was clearly an attempt to respond to criticism provoked by Benetton's previous ad campaigns. Their goal was to re-establish a dialogue with those who, after the shock campaigns, had become extremely negative towards the company, including recognized humanitarian institutions. It seems that this dialogue, which for many years has been modulated by alternating the rhetoric between hard and soft messages, was broken off definitively after the 2000 "Looking Death in the Face" campaign (Figure 15).

Benetton's recent history and its communication strategies after the shock campaign on the death penalty, which caused Benetton's "divorce" with Toscani, confirms the hypothesis in de Rosa's (2001) chapter on the need for a new formula after the Benetton\Toscani breakup which consists of a return to the past. This future/past strategy has as its goal to re-establish a brand image of "universal harmony," as demonstrated by the advertising campaign found in Figure 16.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Luciano Benetton has been in charge of sales since the company was established in 1965. Although there was a clear division of labor among the Benettons (Luciano – sales, Giuliana - production, Gilberto - management, Carlo – physical plant), because of his status as the older brother and his character, it was Luciano who became the charismatic figure of the group (cf Kotler, 1997).

[2] According to Semprini, that ingenuousness was determined by the impossibility for the poster medium to segment the *target,* which therefore becomes indiscriminately exposed to messages without the ability to be selectively verified by the message's source. "*Because of their maximum visibility and position in public spaces, posters constitute a particularily direct form of address. It is a form of communication from which we cannot protect ourselves and that cannot avoid seeing. In plain view on billboards, brand messages therefore not only obtain more visibility but also amplify the drawbacks mentioned above in terms of both interpretation and reactions. Not only can a poster not be "turned off" like a television, or "closed" like a magazine, it is also "indiscriminate" communication. Placed on public streets, by definition it is directed to a public of all ages, sexes, and social conditions. This characteristic makes the reception mechanisms of a poster*

campaign less controlable and predictable than if the ads had beeen disseminated in a more targeted way in a magazine. The flow of images and messages that circulates in our societies, even if apparently chaotic and omnipresent, is, in reality, analysed, channeled, specialized and subdivided in order to reach a public that is equally segmented. From this point of view, poster campaigns are perhaps the least discriminating media tool. As a consequence they amplifie the controversial effects of all non-conformist communication." (Semprini, 1996, Italian translation 1997:80-81)

[3] This deals with what Semprini considers another form of ingenuousness, critisizing Benetton for its communicative arrogance in deciding to unilaterally break the rules of the discursive space game, ignoring the fact that in "speaking" one does not only pay attention to "what to say," but also selectively to "whom," in "what contexts," in "what ways," to "what ends" and "in the name of what and whom." "*There is another aspect that Benetton seems to ignore in its responses to criticism: the interpretation and reception conditions of a message are inscribed in a socio-cultural space that cannot be disregarded. To consider messages as absolute objects that do not entail proeedures of interpretative cooperation and filtering signifies disregarding one of the most fundamental principles of the functioning of social discourse. (Debray, 1994b)...Benetton's discourse seems therefore to forget that each act of communication sets into motion a network of extremely complex actors which alow us to highlight a second aspect of the "ingenuousness" of this discourse. Just as the awareness of a segment of the public cannot be achieved at the expense of another segment of the same public, one cannot ignore the fact that social discourse is subject to multiple reception phenomena*

and that the meaning of a message never entirely belongs to the person who enunciates it. Excusing oneself by saying that that you were misunderstood and that you had wanted to say something other that the public, or a segment of the public, understood is not an admissible justification in a mass communication context" (Semprini, 1996, Italian translation 1997:79-80).

[4] cf. concerning Semprini's (1996, Italian translation 1997:57-70) interpretations of the 'Clothing Redistibution Project" linked to the 1993 ad campaign, which he called the "cycle of truth." The character of this campaign as a counter response to the controversies triggered by previous ad campaigns was marked by three breaks in communication style: 1) Explicit consultation and dialog between the leader of the Benetton company and all possible interlocutors receptive to his call to donate used clothing; 2) abandoning the use of color for the chromatic sobriety and seriousness of black and white; 3) legitimization and external guarantee via collaboration with non-profit organizations, such as Caritas and the Red Cross, to neutralize criticism of "using-abusing" the world's ills. If this analysis is interpretively attractive (especially as it explains the element of symbolic reappropriation of the "product," clothing, which for years had been absent from the company's advertising), whether you like it or not, the element of criticism that it involves can be put into perspective by remembering that Benetton's social interventions for the prevention of AIDS began in 1991, parallel with its first poster on the issue ('Condoms'), before their later ads ("Terminal AIDS patient" 1992 and HIV, 1993) unleashed a high-pitched controversy, even with direct interlocutors (AIDS patients) and the organizations that represent their interests.

[5]   cf interview with Aldo Palmieri published in *News di Colors* (1993:2).

[6]   It was Palmieri himself who said so. This information came from News di Colors (1993:11)

[7]   taken from News di Colors (1993:11)

[8]   *"One of the most imitated advertising campaigns is without a doubt that of the United Colors of Benetton. From parodies of famous photographs, to paraphrasing the brand name and different renditions of the graphics, Oliviero Toscani's photographs are ransacked around the world. Sometimes the results are really funny, sometimes dismaying." (News di Colors, 1993:12).*

[9]   SPAD-T is the acronym for *Syteme portable d'analyse des donnes textuelle*. The software is availble for PCs and MAC (Lebart, L. Morineau A. & Bécue, M. 1989).

[10]   DISCAN is the acronym for Discourse Analysis, a program designed by P. Maranda (1990/1992).

[11]   ALCESTE is the acronym for *Analyse Lexicale par Context d'un Ensemble de Segments de Text*, a program designed by Max Reinert (version 2.0, 1992, for MAC). Four versions currently exist for both PCs and MAC and are available with multilingual dictionaries (French, Portugese, English, Italian and Spanish).