

TREND 2025  
**UNRULY LIVES**

Cover photography: Ehimetalor Akhere Unuabona, London, 2021.

DEEP DIVE REPORT TREND 2025  
UNRULY LIVES  
THE SPROUT STUDIO

PARIS, JUNE, 2021

CONTENT

<b>Trend 2025 Unruly Lives.</b>	p. 03
Values that will Guide Decisions and Behaviors.	p. 05
New Functional, Emotional and Identity Demands.	p. 07
Trend Aspects and Innovation Opportunities:	p. 09
<b>Reappropriated Freedom:</b>	p. 10
Signals of change.	p. 13
Recommendations to innovate.	p. 19
<b>Omnipresent Deliberation:</b>	p. 20
Signals of change.	p. 23
Recommendations to innovate.	p. 29
<b>Market Disobedience:</b>	p. 30
Signals of change.	p. 33
Recommendations to innovate.	p. 39
Factors that Drive the Trend.	p. 49

TREND 2025

# UNRULY LIVES

In recent times, strains present in societies were amplified and people were subjected to enormous pressure. This has caused a spiral of rebellion. Therefore, the desire to break the rules emerges, even when this behavior implies taking some risks. The future has become blurred, so decisions and actions will be executed as if there were no tomorrow. Managing high levels of uncertainty and feelings of frustration will become a challenge for personal and collective well-being.

In each territory, the combination of previous social problems and the disruption of daily life as a result of the pandemic have created an emotionally explosive scenario. Freedom will become a value to be defended after a period of extreme limitations. Anything that refers to control will incite feelings of disobedience in individuals. Protecting digital identity will become a priority. Mistrust, manipulation and polarization will make it difficult to build new consensus.

People will want to act directly in the public sphere, avoiding intermediaries to achieve instant effects. They will seek allies in all fields to achieve their objectives and will turn brands into a political tool. Loyalty will be volatile and will depend on the battle to be fought. There will be a greater demand for maximum transparency in decision-making processes.

Consumers will demand that companies assume their civic role by forcing them to abandon their exclusive status as economic players. There will be little room for naïve posturing in an era of profound cultural transitions. In the next three years, aligning the roles of citizens, workers, consumers and human beings to the new professed values will be the main task for people.



New York, 2020. Photo: Jakayla Toney.

**TANGIBLE FREEDOM**

**DIRECT ACTION**

**EMOTIONAL REBELLION**

**HONEST INTERACTION**

**TOTAL TRANSPARENCY**

[VALUES THAT WILL GUIDE DECISIONS AND BEHAVIORS]



WINNERS

STAND WITH  
STANDING  
ROCK  
MNI WICQNI

STOP  
HATE  
PEACE & LOVE

I AM NOT  
THE VIRUS

San Francisco, 2021. Photo: Jason Leung.

# FUNCTIONAL, IDENTITY, AND EMOTIONAL DEMANDS

**Rebelling against rules and protocols** that may be (subjectively) considered unfair, taking risks for transgressions.

**Transparency in all decision-making processes** and clear identification of those involved in the public debate.

**Obtaining reliable information** contrasted by peers in order to arrive at certain decisions.

**Experiencing risks** for an extra dose of adrenaline.

**Manage the storage and destination of personal data** to protect digital identity.

**Access to products and services with flexible and open configuration** to find new uses at any time.

**Feeling a greater degree of freedom**, eliminating feelings of oppression, choosing with the least amount of restrictions.

**Finding techniques to manage frustration**, dealing with conflict and reducing anger levels in daily life.

**Expressing —positive and negative— emotions without inhibitions**, making connections by taking a more visceral side.

**Aligning the roles** of citizens, workers, consumers and human beings to emerging values.

**Feeling an active participant** in the definition of the new cultural paradigm that is emerging.

**Normalizing the ‘abnormal’** to create more diverse and inclusive scenarios.

**Partnering with brands not afraid to assume their civic role**, beyond the economic one, by acting on social and political issues.

**Exercising labor activism** within organizations to eliminate contradictions with individual public discourse.

**Reviewing history** to reinterpret facts and characters and reevaluate their symbolic role in the future.

**Reporting social privileges** that threaten the power of self-determination.

**Acquiring knowledge of digital editing and manipulation tools** to shape powerful messages.

**Participating in independent discussion platforms** to promote individual and collective change.

SILENCE  
is  
VIOLENCE

UNRULY LIVES

# TREND ASPECTS AND INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

From an in-depth analysis of how the Unruly Lives trend will influence the choices people make in the market, three key characteristics emerge:

1. REAPPROPRIATED FREEDOM
2. OMNIPRESENT DELIBERATION
3. MARKET DISOBEDIENCE

For companies, each of these characteristics represents an opportunity to innovate by offering products, services, communication and experiences that respond specifically to people's new desires and behaviors.

Denver, 2021. Photo: Colin Lloyd.



UNRULY LIVES

# REAPPROPRIATED FREEDOM

[DAILY TRANSGRESSION] The spirit of rebellion will increase after a period of extreme control. Breaking official rules became a daily exercise during the pandemic and that stance will remain. The thresholds between legal and illegal forms of collective action and demonstration will not be easy to define in exceptional contexts such as those that will continue to arise in the coming years. Anything that refers to new instances of control will provoke contradictory feelings in the public.

[CLANDESTINE PLEASURES] In recent times, primary consensuses were broken. Mistrust is present at all environments, so people do not get to legitimize the rules in order to comply with them. Belief is needed to follow the guidelines, but manipulation and polarization dynamited certainties. Transgression is driven by the feeling of frustration, of not being able to do what is desired, of giving up those minimal pleasures that add meaning to the demanding routine of life and work. Pervasive dissatisfaction will make people of all ages break the rules in their daily actions, by even placing themselves at risk. A clandestine hedonism—which produces an extra rush of adrenaline due to the sense of danger—will begin to be positively valued.

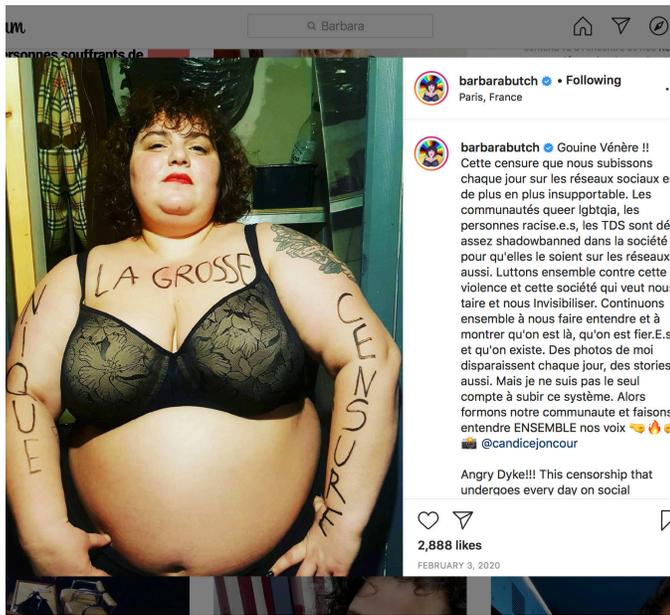
[MY STEPS, MY WAY] After a period of objective constraints, people will evaluate the actual degree of freedom they possess, both in society and the market, and will react radically when they feel it is at risk. There is a growing sense that oppression is in the rise in all its forms (mental, emotional, physical). Likewise, an increased perception of surveillance exercised by companies and organizations is noted through technologies such as geolocation, Big Data, facial recognition and artificial intelligence. The concept of democracy is beginning to be increasingly questioned by a mass of people who disavow any limits on individual actions and personal expression. Tension will increase around what limits are set and who sets them.

[EMOTIONAL SPIRAL] Feelings of injustice, high levels of uncertainty to deal with on a daily basis and a wider gap between individual expectations and reality will translate into high doses of frustration and the release of inhibitions to express it. The total disruption of life generates a liberation where anything goes to communicate a great diversity of complex feelings. Fury will no longer be contained and will be vented directly in the face of a system that has lost references and proves incapable of guaranteeing well-being. People themselves do not know how to manage their frustration. The ability to spread anger will increase, reaching populations much more easily and quickly.



Oakland, 2021. Photo: Jason Leung.

# SIGNALS OF CHANGE



@barbarabutch.

◆ **THE BODY AS A VEHICLE FOR EXPRESSION.** Bodies have become important vehicles for expression both in the street and in the digital space. French DJ, plus-size model and activist **Barbara Butch** started a public dispute against Instagram for limiting her freedom of expression. Although she does not show ‘genitalia’ or ‘nipples’ in her photos, Butch’s account was suspended automatically after sharing semi-nude pictures of herself, as millions of people do —uncensored— on the same social network. Algorithm fatphobia leads A.I. to recognize the presence of ‘too much skin’, regardless of the person’s body size. After months of fighting against this lack of diversity and inclusion, the artist managed to meet with Instagram France, and they promised to review the matter. Somali-Norwegian model **Rawdah Mohamed** posted a selfie on Instagram with a caption that read ‘*hands off my hijab*’, criticizing a proposed ban on the garment in France and pointing to deep-rooted discrimination and stereotypes against Muslim women. The hashtag she used, #Handsoffmyhijab [#PasToucheAMonHijab], went viral on Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, where thousands of women posted similar pictures in protest against the French Senate’s vote to ban anyone under 18 from wearing a hijab in public.

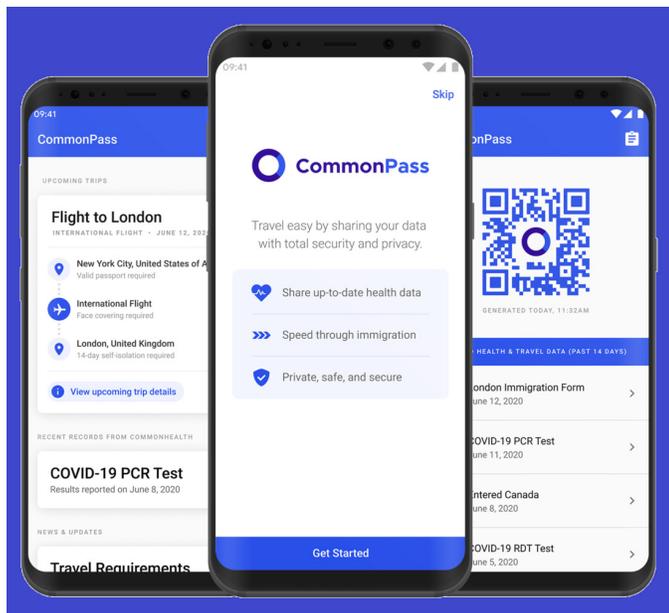
## 2 OUT OF 3

ADULTS IN FRANCE AND THE U.S. BELIEVE THAT THEIR POLITICAL SYSTEM NEEDS MAJOR CHANGES OR MUST BE TOTALLY AMENDED [PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2021].

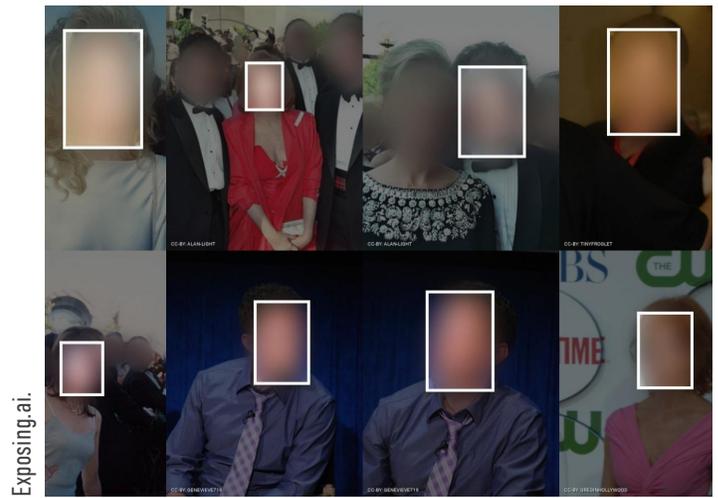
Lima, 2020. Photo: Sergio Zambrano.



◆ **THE CONTROL OF ONE’S HEALTH.** VaccineGuard is a digital vaccine passport project for immunized people to travel between different countries. Technology will allow those who received their COVID-19 dose to prove it by means of health credentials equipped with a QR code. **Guardtime’s** goal, the driving force behind this initiative, is to create a platform linking all actors, from vaccine manufacturers to the border guard checking an individual traveler, where reliable information about the immunization process can be shared from a variety of sources. To this end, the **WHO** will have to set up a global agreement among countries. The governments of Estonia, Hungary and Iceland have signed up for access to the system that could be used not only for travel but also for attending public events and work environments. Such companies as **Microsoft, Salesforce** and **Oracle** have also joined the Vaccination Credentials Initiative (VCI), with the goal of developing technology that could allow people who have received the COVID-19 vaccine keep track of their vaccination history in a digital application —a Health Wallet— on their phones.

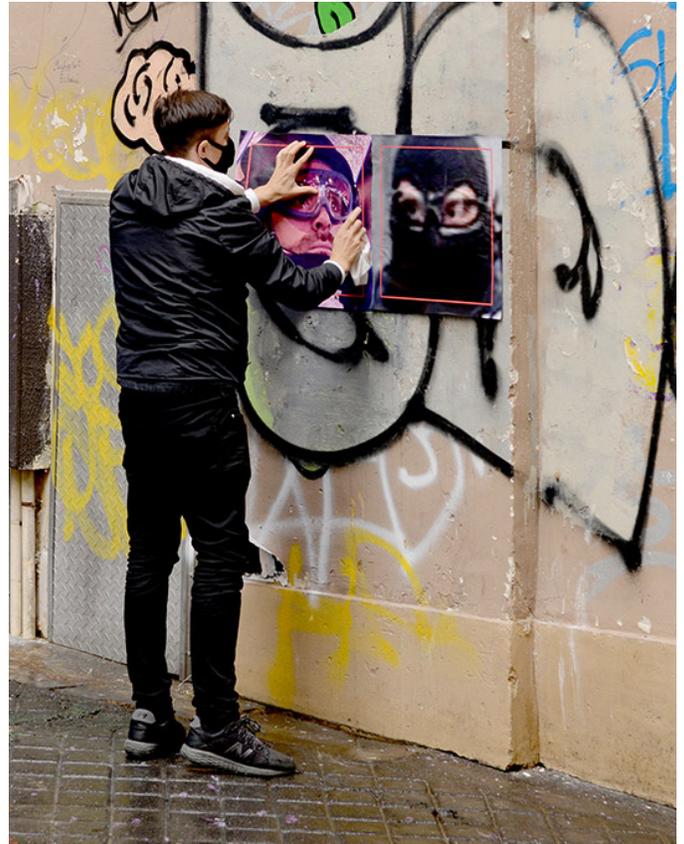


The Common Pass.



◆ **THE STRUGGLE FOR PRIVACY.** Platform **Exposing.ai** searches through more than three million Flickr photos distributed across six datasets (Diveface, FaceScrub, IJB-C, MegaFace, PIPA, VGG Face) to help users detect whether their pictures have been used without their consent to train facial recognition software, a common practice today. In 2019, it was reported that IBM made unauthorized use of 1 million Flickr photos for its Diversity in Faces service, with the goal of improving facial recognition problems related to racial bias reproduced by algorithms. **Amazon** and **Microsoft** used this resource to improve the accuracy of their software. Two Illinois residents and Flickr users affected by the scheme, Steven Vance and Tim Janecy, sued both companies for violating the Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA), enacted in that state in 2008. **IBM, Google, Facebook, Snapchat,** and **Shutterfly** are facing similar complaints. In 2020, IBM retired from the facial recognition market on the grounds that it opposes the use of the technology for mass surveillance that could be exercised by governments or companies on citizens. During the protests over the murder of George Floyd, Amazon imposed a one-year moratorium on the sale and use of its Rekognition software for law enforcement and security purposes. Microsoft pledged not to sell its facial recognition software to the police until this type of technology is regulated at a federal level.

● **FRAGILITY OF IDENTITIES.** In October 2020, the **French government** presented a bill called Global Security, including a section originally aimed to criminalize the malicious distribution of police images, including a ban to law-enforcement officers on photographing or filming the actions of citizens. This hindered the dissemination of evidence of police violence in a country that has experienced several such cases. It also enabled the police to film and use facial recognition through devices on the ground and in the air, such as drones. Questioning reactions were huge as civil liberties were considered to be in danger and provoked massive demonstrations in the streets in times of prohibition of actions on public roads. Although the bill has undergone modifications, some of its provisions still trigger alerts in civil society. A petition to ban facial recognition in Europe collected thousand of signatures in recent months encouraged by the **International Association for the Defense of Digital Rights (EDRi)**. During that campaign, activist, hacker and artist **Paolo Cirio** developed the Capture project, in which he created a database with 4,000 faces of French police officers to identify them with facial recognition technology, available through the platform [www.capture-police.com](http://www.capture-police.com). To this he added a street art performance that consisted of pasting hundreds of posters in the streets of Paris with the faces of the police officers. The process used by Cirio was similar to that of **Clearview**, a U.S. company that extracts images from the Internet profile faces and sells this facial recognition data along with identification software to law enforcement agencies. After official complaints, the artist preferred to cancel the publication of the photos on his site.



Paolo Cirio.

**60%**

OF FRENCH PEOPLE HAVE VIOLATED THE RULES OF CORONAVIRUS CONFINEMENT [IFOP, 2020].

**68%**

OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVE IN 87 COUNTRIES CLASSIFIED AS ELECTORAL OR CLOSED AUTOCRACIES. TEN YEARS AGO, APPROX. 48% OF SUCH POPULATION LIVED IN SUCH AUTOCRACIES [UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG, 2021].



@ludi\_lin.



@gloria\_oh.

## ● THE EXPANSION OF DIGITAL PROPAGANDA.

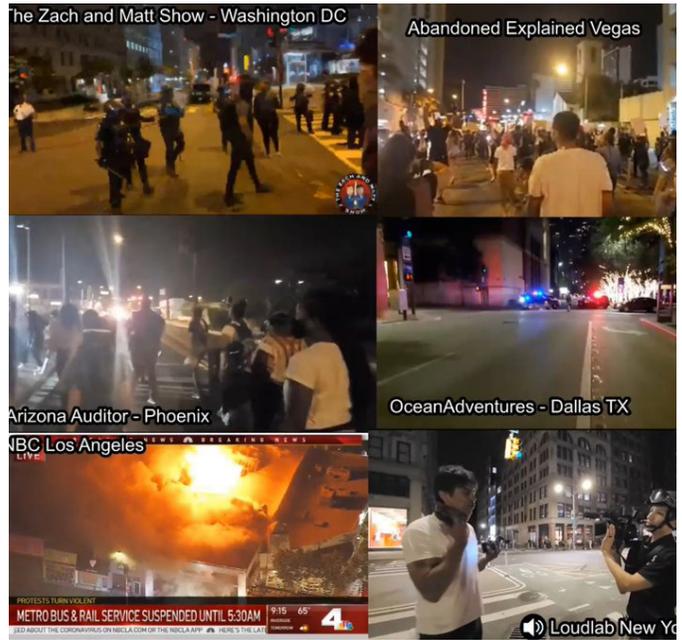
Research conducted by the University of North Carolina, as published by Science Magazine, has found evidence that clicktivism (online activism) can be very effective in spreading little-known ideas, divulging unconventional notions and disseminating new terms to a wide audience. Retweeting a message, sharing a hashtag, replicating a story or changing one's profile picture to the image of a cause does not have an immediate impact in terms of social change, but it can help introduce beliefs to encourage people to bring about changes in the streets. Studies suggest that people who engage heavily with politics online also do so in their offline lives: they attend demonstrations, join political rallies or donate money to civic campaigns. There are indications that, in the U.S., **left-wing or progressive movements** spread their ideas through hashtag activism (#TimesUp, #BlackLivesMatter, #TakeAKnee, etc.) to promote a cause, while **right-wing or conservative groups** execute indirect strategies by posting stories, opinions or ideas on small websites to encourage followers to share them on social networks, until they achieve media impact. Disinformation strategies are similar, as false claims start on private channels such as WhatsApp, before moving to platforms such as Reddit or Youtube where 'shareable' content is created to then seek its multiplication on social networks such as Twitter or Facebook, until finally reaching the media to amplify the message.

# 1 OUT OF 3

YOUTH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN OR LED ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 [UNSDG LAC, 2020].



Paris, 2021.



www.twitch.tv/woke.

◆ **THE BREAKDOWN OF RULES.** During the third confinement imposed in France in March 2021, fashion brand **Misericordia** decided to challenge official measures by leaving its store in rue Oberkampf open displaying a phrase on the front window which read 'Illegal Boutique. Clandestine opening. Welcome.' With a text displayed on the window, the brand stated that as an independent and fair labor business, based on the work of Peruvian artisans, the doors of their point of sale could not be closed, thus putting their project at risk. This statement also expressed support for health measures and demanded that the French government allocate more resources to the health system. This is one example of the many stores of different items that challenged official measures in place and found a way to continue operating in hiding, obtaining the support of the public.

**66,1%**

OF SPANISH YOUTH BELIEVE THAT, AFTER THE PANDEMIC, THEIR EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE WORSE THAN THOSE OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS [INJUVE, 2021].

◆ **REBELLIOUSNESS IN SYNC.** Live streamings of protests through social networks around the world have increased in recent times on platforms such as **Twitch, YouTube** and **Facebook**. The Twitch Woke channel compiles different streams on a single screen, highlighting the audio from only one of them at a time (to avoid auditory confusion) but allowing viewers to watch more than a dozen different streams simultaneously. Protests over the murder of George Floyd all across cities in the U.S. 'lived' in real time with an authentic record by viewers around the world. There were days when demonstrations in Portland and Hong Kong could be seen simultaneously, thus showing the similarity of patterns. Many of the tactics adopted by protesters in the West have been borrowed from the experiences of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement in recent years: take, for instance, traffic cones, leaf blowers and umbrellas to handle tear gas. On the day of the storming of the U.S. Capitol, people who live-streamed the events tended to be far-right activists and white nationalists. Observers were able to get inside the Capitol building as the crowd of Trump supporters pushed through, an access that traditional media outlets were unable to gain.



Paris, 2021.



Denver, 2021. Photo: Colin Lloyd.



@sza.



Wroclaw, 2020. Photo: Zuza Galczyńska.

69%

OF FRENCH PEOPLE SAY THEY ARE ATTENTIVE TO THE PROCESSING OF THEIR PERSONAL DATA WHEN USING THE INTERNET [IFOP 2021].

- **THE DESIRE FOR FREEDOM.** Statements claiming the value of freedom and how to defend it have flooded the streets of cities around the world. Whether through posters, street art works or slogans displayed on their body supporting activism, people have shifted their focus to the range of choices they can have today and have become aware of the limitations they are exposed to, whether exceptional —the result of a pandemic— or permanent —as a consequence of common legal, social and commercial practices. The call is to reflect critically on the possibility of free choice, and is reproduced around the world.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO INNOVATE

### Free Choices

Making consumers feel as much in control of their shopping experience as possible and allowing them the power of choice without manipulation of the offer. Providing easily comparable options so that users can assess the benefits directly. Reinforcing the credibility of the information with independent third-party validations. Clarity and simplicity about the conditions for terminating a business relationship will help to build confidence in it.

### Direct Actions

Proposing collaborative strategies with customers to improve a critical aspect of the brand. Inviting consumers to get involved by contributing ideas on how the offer could be better adapted to emerging values. Offering experiences where the public can design some collection items (analog and/or virtual) and be part of the communication campaign. This will make it possible to find alternative ways of responding to demands.

### Rebellious Messages

Celebrating people's rebelliousness and unfiltered emotional expression. Suggesting experiences allowing people to reflect on critical issues with access to relevant information and testimonies so that they can develop their opinions. Encouraging activism through products. Providing playful proposals to explore dissatisfaction and social discomfort in order to enrich the dialogue with brands. Developing a more human communication.

### Support of Causes

Not being afraid to get involved in supporting causes that are considered paramount. Using adopting a position as a method to further target the desired audience and create a valuable long-term relationship. Incorporating political scientists into teams to help contextualize and evaluate the relevance of creative and communication proposals. Partnering with like-minded brands around important causes for greater impact.

### Avoidance of Invasion

Redefining the commercial and communication strategy to avoid the negative feeling in the consumers that they are being watched in each of their actions on the Internet to obtain information. Clearly stating where the data used to personalize the customers' journeys comes from. Offering the user the possibility of deleting their history with the brand once their commercial relationship has ended.



Hong Kong, 2020. Photo: Manson Yim.

UNRULY LIVES

# OMNIPRESENT DELIBERATION

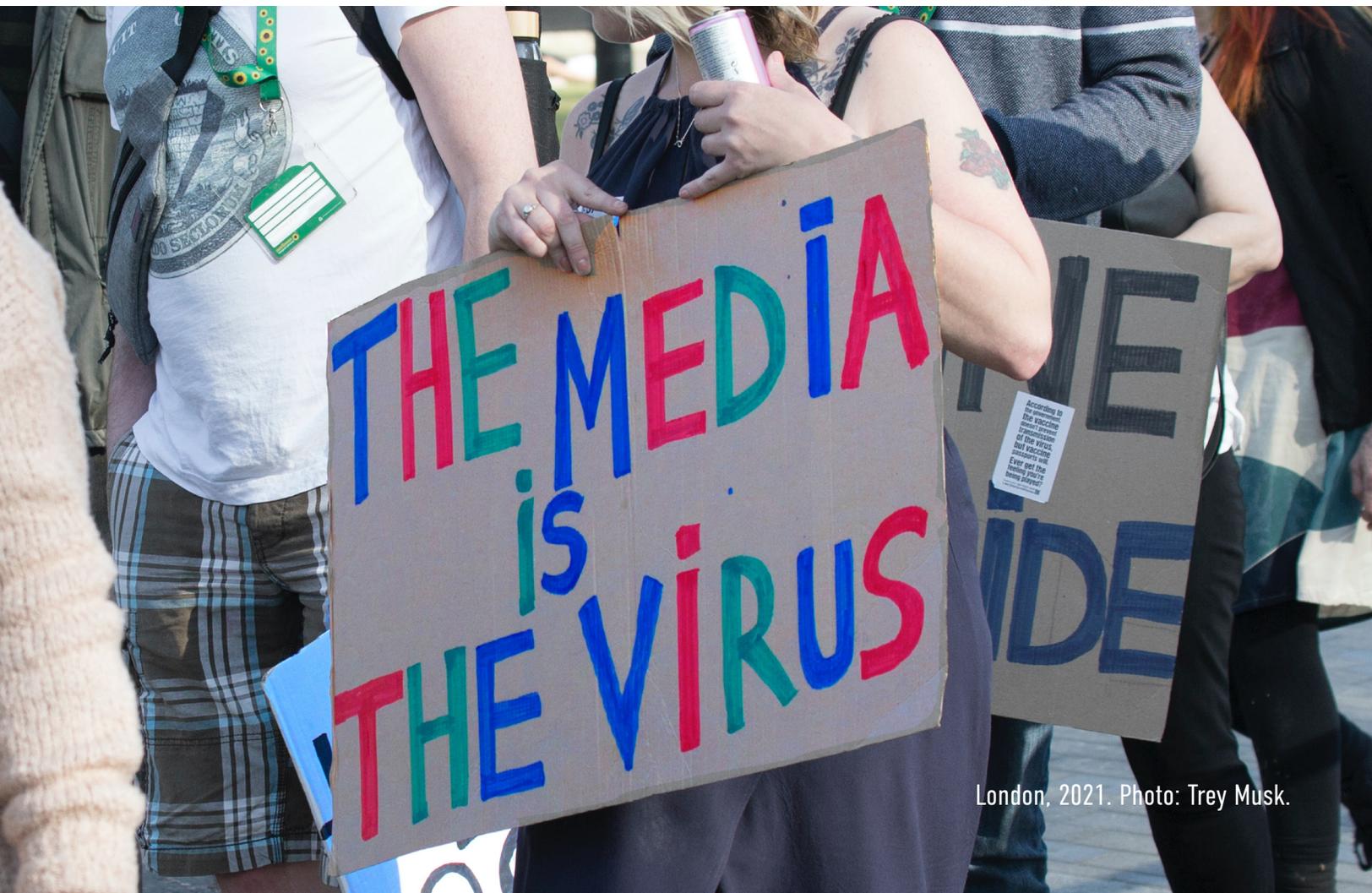
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[DISTORTED REPRESENTATION] The distortion of reality and the manipulation of truth have led to a loss of references. People will want to act directly in the public sphere, avoiding intermediaries or setbacks. They will recognize that this form of intervention has better and faster results in discussions, while provoking immediate reactions in others. The concept of representation is distorted, individuals refuse to delegate their power as they better understand how to be influential in a context of extreme polarization. They will find new uses for digital tools to expose their provocative messages and organize instantly to take action in the streets.

[TRANSPARENTING EVERYTHING] The pandemic has crystallized the multiple conflicts that cut across every society. The urgency to act is driven by a sense of permanent threat. Everyone has a large or small cause to defend and classifies those around them into the categories of allies or detractors. People distrust institutions and companies, so there will be greater pressure to make everything as transparent as possible, especially decision-making processes. Obtaining reliable information validated by other players becomes a fundamental task.

[BREAKING RULES] The digital public sphere is beginning to take shape, dominated by a tension between competing interests vying for control and a permanent breaking of the rules to gain advantage. In a scenario that encourages expression without inhibiting filters, the tension between digital identity (the possibility of individualizing participants) and anonymity (which guarantees not to assume responsibility for actions) on the Internet will be increasingly evident. The communication battle between companies, governments and individuals will be about what limits are established and who sets them, since the rules of the game —‘moderation’— have become debatable, flexible and permeable.

[REBUILDING LEGITIMACY] The solution will be the construction of an unprecedented legitimacy around a new set of values and guidelines to guide behaviors, but it will require a collective work that will have to leave out closed and unilateral precepts. The relevant actors will be those who can become a means, not an end, to generate discussions, reflections and promote changes. The key will be to involve the greatest number and diversity of voices, in a dynamic process full of tensions to be managed. The need to open an honest conversation will be the grounds for shaping the emerging cultural and social paradigm.



London, 2021. Photo: Trey Musk.

## SIGNALS OF CHANGE

# 52%

ON AVERAGE OF THE POPULATION IN 34 COUNTRIES ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE WAY IN WHICH THEIR DEMOCRACY WORKS [PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2020].

● **DISTURBING COMMUNICATION.** In the last few months, in the public streets of different cities around the world, direct and shocking messages to provoke passers-by were disseminated. Far from seeking a conciliatory approach, these statements seek to capture people's attention with questioning phrases and harsh pictures to make them uncomfortable in order to raise awareness of a certain cause. An example of this are the **campaigns in favor of veganism**, which consider that this confrontational strategy works best in a scenario plagued by information and stimuli that dilute people's attention. Phrases such as *'Don't let your food bleed'* or portrays of bloody human beings in the streets are part of the above-mentioned actions. In the context of the pandemic crisis, the Berlin tourism authority launched an advertising campaign in which an old woman shows her middle finger to people who refuse to wear masks. The sign reads *'Our index finger pointed at all those who don't wear their mask,'* next to a picture of the woman wearing a mask. The ad, launched by the **Berlin Senate** and **Visit Berlin**, was initially published in a local newspaper, but quickly spread on social media, generating widespread controversy. According to its champions, the idea of resorting to this symbol was to communicate in a very direct way with people who are not abiding by the rules and who are putting the lives of the elderly at risk.



Visit Berlin.



Buenos Aires, 2021.



London, 2020. Photo: Ehimetator Akhere Unuabona.



London, 2021. Photo: Nick Fewings.

# 58%

OF MEXICAN YOUTH REPORTED FEELING FRUSTRATED; 57% DISTRESSED; 52% SAD; 38% ANGRY, IN 2020 [UNAM & UAEM, 2020].

# 79%

79% OF AMERICAN YOUTH SAY THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS HELPED THEM REALIZE HOW MUCH THE DECISIONS OF POLITICAL LEADERS AFFECT THEIR LIVES' [GALLUP & TUFTS UNIVERSITY, 2020].

◆ **THE DEMAND FOR MODERATION.** In May 2020, in France, four associations sued Twitter for its inaction against hate messages flooding the platform. Quite the opposite, the account of feminist activist @melusine\_2 was suspended for several hours after posting the following statement: *'Massive sexual violence against women, children and gay men. And a matter of civilization: How can we get men to stop raping?'* In the midst of a context where hundreds of millions of tweets are posted on a daily basis (an average of 500 million per day), since 2017 Twitter has implemented the automatic moderation, based on software that detects certain words, expressions or images. This algorithmic method made it possible to more effectively manage and curb mass messages posted by fake accounts (or bots). In the case of messages, many tweets are moderated because their content is likely to be problematic or illegal. To deal with this content, Twitter relies on an undisclosed combination of detection software and human moderation. Human supervision is necessary in a wide range of situations, namely: words that the software may find conflicting may not have to be removed in a specific context (by understanding the subtlety of local language), while some violent messages may go unnoticed camouflaged in metaphors. The social network also began using the 'fact-checking warning' tag on tweets that could contain misleading and potentially harmful information. The company, however, has refused to communicate details of how its human resources are made up and to what extent they are involved in moderation.



London, 2021. Photo: Elinmetator Akhere.



Cruzcampo.

◆ **ENRICHING DIALOGUES.** In the wake of the disappearance of Sarah Everard in London, police forces advised women in the area not to go out alone as a way of preventing risky situations. Criticism of this request, which demanded a change in behavior on the part of women by avoiding the responsibility of men, abounded in social networks. **Stuart Edwards**, a Londoner who lives near where Everard disappeared, asked on Twitter what he and other men could do to make women feel safer. A discussion was provoked on the social network about what changes of behaviors men could introduce on public roads. The following are some of the recommendations made by the users: *'If you're walking behind a woman, even at a reasonable distance, and it's dark, cross the sidewalk and walk on that side. I've seen men do this a couple of times, and it's a huge sense of relief'* or *'If a woman is walking towards you, let her continue on her path and get out of her way rather than make her run. I consciously walk on the safest part of the road with access to traffic lights/exits and many times a man has forced me to walk between him and the wall'*.

◆ **PERFECTED MANIPULATION.** Advances in Artificial Intelligence applied to reproduce the image and voice of a person (deepfakes), and the increased use of this resource for communication purposes raise new ethical issues. In January 2021, Spanish beer brand **Cruzcampo**, launched a campaign starring a deepfake of singer Lola Flores, who died in 1995, who narrates the ad encouraging a return to local roots. The exact reproduction of the artist's vocal, gestural and physical characteristics—which had the family's consent—has amazed and baffled the public in equal parts. Bringing deceased characters back to life or showing living personalities performing unpublished actions thanks to A.I. editing is a promising creative resource, but at the same time a risk due to the ability to deceive audiences with broad social consequences. Fake pornographic videos starring famous actresses such as Gal Gadot or Scarlett Johanson, or doctored speeches by politicians, such as Obama calling Trump 'inept' are examples of the sophisticated manipulation that can be performed by challenging the concept of truth and creating confusion in the public debate. In Belgium, a political group released a deepfake of the Belgian prime minister giving a speech linking the COVID-19 outbreak to environmental damage and calling for drastic action against climate change.



Brussels, 2020. Photo: Mihai Surdu.



Los Angeles, 2020. Photo: Nathan Dumlaio.

- **THE REWRITING OF HISTORY.** Protests against racism lead to the revisionism of those symbols that celebrate practices that have enabled the oppression of minorities, such as colonialism and slavery. In June 2020 in Bristol, UK, protesters toppled the sculpture of one of the biggest slave traders in British history, Edward Colston. The same action spread to cities such as Antwerp, where the local government removed the sculpture of former King Leopold II - whose regime contributed to the deaths of millions of people in Africa —after it was vandalized. Statues of Christopher Columbus were knocked down in the United States recently, just as they were in Chile in 2019 and Bolivia in 2018. In Colombia, the **Misak indigenous** peoples tore down the sculpture of Spanish conquistador Sebastián de Belalcázar. In October 2020, two days before celebrating Columbus Day, the Government of Mexico City removed the monument to Christopher Columbus, on Paseo de la Reforma, for fear of popular reaction.

- **POLITIZATION OF SHOWS.** The IOC Executive Board resolved that demonstrations and protests of political, solidarity or social nature will continue to be prohibited for athletes on the podium, in the stadiums or during ceremonies during the 2020 Olympic Games, to be held in Tokyo in 2021, as well as for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. The IOC also determined that they will not allow athletes' clothing with phrases about social slogans in Olympic venues, although they approved the use of words such as 'respect', 'solidarity', 'inclusion' and 'equity' on jerseys. Hours after this announcement, the **World Players Association** announced that they will provide legal support to any athlete who violates these rules to voice their position.

# 54%

OF SOCIAL NETWORK USERS, AGED 18-29, SAID THEY HAD USED THEM IN JUNE 2020 TO SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ABOUT DEMONSTRATIONS TAKING PLACE IN THEIR AREA [PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2020].



Wrocław, 2020. Photo: Zuza Galezynska.



Clément Poplineau.



Paris, 2021.



London, 2021. Photo: Samuel Regan-Asante.

- **SYMBOLY OF INEQUALITY.** French artist Clément Poplineau has developed a provocative language in painting, transposing the codes of the Renaissance era to represent the current social inequality. Notions of oppression, power, police violence, political revolt and class warfare are part of his works of art, challenging traditional discourse. His main characters are youth of the French working and popular class, portrayed with the resources of classical painting, originally intended to immortalize the rich and the noble. New symbologies and referents are emerging in several societies to represent the state of discomfort faced with the current social context and irreverence towards established rules.

# 87%

OF YOUNG LONDONERS AGED 16-24 SAID IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR VOICES TO BE HEARD [MUSEUM OF LONDON, 2020].

- THE URGENCY FOR PARTICIPATION.** Even in the context of fear generated by the pandemic and an electoral scenario marked by violence, the turnout at the U.S. presidential elections was high. A large majority of voters managed to exercise their civic right by dealing with the sanitary rules, while clearly expressing their political positions both online and offline.



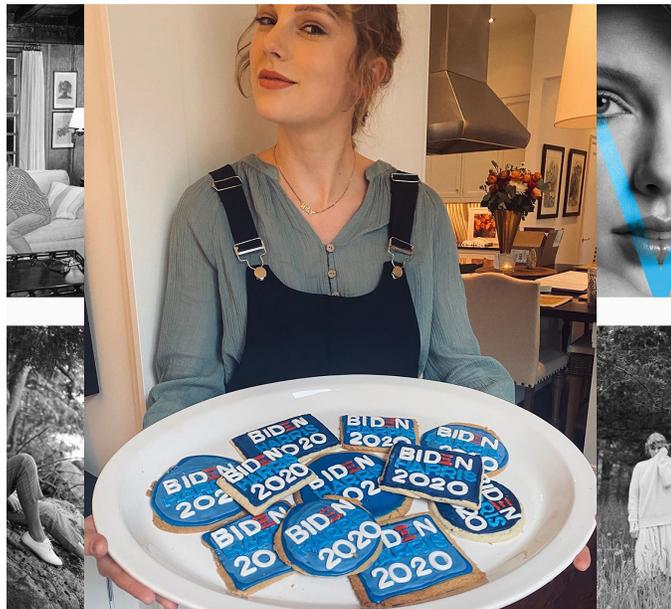
Photo: Colin Lloyd.



Photo: Gayatri Malhotra.



Photo: Gayatri Malhotra.



@taylorswift.

**22%**  
 OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION, ON AVERAGE, HAS FELT ANGER, A FEELING THAT HAS BEEN ON THE RISE SINCE 2016 [GALLUP, 2019].

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO INNOVATE

### Human Brand

Dropping out defensive postures and honestly opening up to change, to apply the principles of inclusion, diversity and social justice that are emerging. Becoming a more humane brand, capable of admitting to the mistakes made and further correcting them. Reviewing files from a critical perspective, to align them with the new civic demands. Change must be experienced as a collective learning process.

### Adaptive Retail

Developing a retail experience with the ability to adapt quickly to the events and social mood that set the agenda of the day, in a local market. Incorporating intelligent systems that measure the daily mood of the public to introduce instantly empathizing messages and help modify emotional states. Using a multiplicity of analog, virtual and digital sensory stimuli to guide people.

### Facilitating Role

Escaping the role of forbidding the discussion of different issues, to become facilitators of real conversations around the necessary transformations in society and the market. Brands can create permanent discussion forums where the most contentious discussions can be approached. Making moderation rules as transparent as possible so that participants feel they are in a safe environment in which to express themselves.

### Based on Evidence

Validating the offer and brand identity with scientific and social references that help convince people about traceability and benefits. This will allow the public to gain confidence and at the same time amplify the brand's message without guilt. Offering collective instances of product and service testing so that users can share their ideas without pressure.

### Reducing Anger

Starting the relationship process from the diagnosis of widespread frustration in the public. Supporting the public to manage this feeling with therapeutic and self-preservation experiences, in order to improve listening conditions, and then offering products and services. Designing customers' journeys with instances of emotional decompression and thus associating the brand with well-being.

### Inclusive Access

Eliminating elitist and exclusionary discourses that cause frustration in an audience distressed by inequity and privilege, to create inclusive messages that can connect deeply with people. Broadening the range of brand references in favor of diverse voices and agents of change, guiding consumers to transform negative aspects of their lives.

San Francisco, 2021. Photo: Jason Leung.

FIGHT for CHANGE  
PUSH for  
EVOLUTION  
▲▲▲  
REVOLUTION

UNRULY LIVES

# MARKET DISOBEDIENCE

[CONSUMPTION AS POLITICS] People will turn brands into a political tool for their direct actions. They have understood how to use companies as pressure weapons, to install topics of debate and provoke changes in the public sphere. They know the fear that companies have of negative reactions in a polarized communicational context that can jeopardize their business in the short term. It will no longer be just a matter of consuming what is aligned with personal values, but of using brands to confront others.

[CIVICS BRANDS] Consumers will demand that companies assume their civic role, forcing them to abandon their exclusive status as economic players. People are more aware that there are no innocent messages or actions, so they distrust institutions and companies alike. Citizens are implacable with politicians, whom they systematically distrust, and now this skepticism has extended to brands. There will be no 'royalty' strategies that can contain civic fury in the face of corporate mistakes.

[ALLIES FOR/IN TRANSITION] People will seek allies in all fields to achieve their goals. In communication, new symbologies will be constructed and referents embodying rebellion and provocation in the face of the rules will be sought. People are aware that they must participate in the dispute that is shaping a new cultural and social paradigm, although they are not entirely clear about what it will consist of. Normalizing the abnormal, the different, the diverse, is a principle. Reducing inequalities and privileges will be the next step.

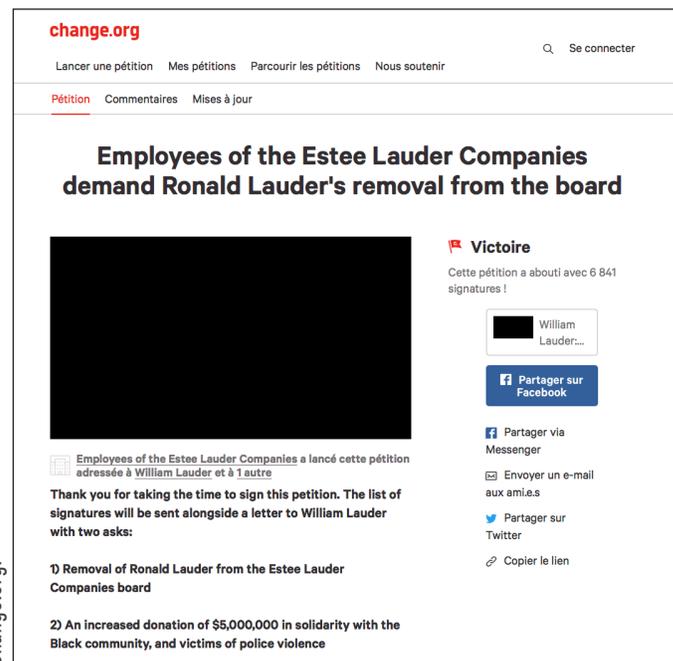
[EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM] Labor activism will grow to challenge organizations internally. Employees are beginning to feel that the political positions and values of the companies they work for directly affect them in their individual position-taking in the public sphere. Today's causes and activisms are cross-cutting and involve people

across all environments. No one wants to have a visibly contradictory discourse that discredits them. Aligning the roles of citizens, workers, consumers and human beings to the new professed values will be the great challenge.





Signal.



Change.org.

◆ **THE APPROPRIATION OF TECHNOLOGY.** One of the key tools being used by protesters around the world to organize their activities is **Google Docs**. This resource is not encrypted, does not rely on logging into a social network and was clearly not designed for purposes of activism. Through Google Docs, people share lists of books on different topics and information on how to make donations to support different causes, as well as guides for writing letters to political representatives. Shared documents can be viewed and edited anonymously by everyone, ensuring accessibility and efficiency in times of government and corporate surveillance. '2020 is a pretty good year to cover your face,' argued **Signal**, the encrypted messaging app, as it launched a new tool that makes it easy to blur faces when users share images of people —preserving their privacy—, a way to support global protests against racism and police violence.

◆ **LABOR ACTIVISM.** In June 2020, a group of **Estée Lauder Companies** employees, called for the resignation of the company's heir Ronald Lauder for his support of President Donald Trump following mass protests against racial inequality across the country. Group brands such as Estée Lauder, Clinique and La Mer issued statements condemning systemic racism in the U.S., as did many cosmetics companies, some of which also gave donations to support the Black Lives Matter movement. However, several brands were accused of hypocrisy by not reflecting the values they touted in their occasional posts in their corporate and communication policies. More than 100 employees signed a statement in which they argued: 'Ronald Lauder's involvement with the Estée Lauder Companies is damaging to our corporate values, our relationship with the black community, our relationship with this company's black employees, and this company's legacy.' On their part, hundreds of **Facebook** employees organized a virtual strike to protest the executives' decision to do nothing about the President Trump's outrageous posts on the platform.



Honor of Kings & Burberry.

66%

OF FRENCH PEOPLE WOULD GIVE UP ON A DIGITAL SERVICE THAT DOES NOT CLARIFY HOW IT USES AND STORES PERSONAL DATA [IFOP 2021].

70%

OF U.S. ADULTS UNDER 30 SAY THEY HAVE TALKED TO THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT POLITICS [GALLUP, 2020].

◆ **COMPANIES IN THE CROSSFIRE.** Some Western brands have spoken out critically about the sourcing of cotton produced in China's Xinjiang region, alerted by human rights groups who allege that the fiber is harvested there through forced labor. Amid accusations of profiting from modern slavery, **H&M** publicly announced in 2020 that they would stop buying cotton. **Nike, Burberry, Adidas and Hugo Boss** followed similar actions. At the beginning of 2021, all these companies were subjected to a boycott by Chinese consumers, including attacks on social networks and contract terminations with local celebrities, with the argument of not supporting Western brands that do not buy native cotton and defame the country. **Tencent**, the Chinese Big Tech that owns Honor of Kings, the popular online video game that has 100 million daily active users, dropped its collaboration with British luxury brand Burberry, due to the diplomatic dispute. The project included two new skins for heroine 'Yao', designed by Riccardo Tisci, as a way to create in-game activations that would promote the brand's products. A large majority of Chinese players expressed that they would not buy the skins because of the brand's position on the Xinjiang issue. The same brands that gained support from Western consumers for taking a stand on social issues faced tougher Asian shoppers based on nationalistic beliefs. In this scenario, several of them began to have contradictory messages. Hugo Boss insisted on their website that they do not buy any products from Xinjiang directly. However, on Weibo social network, the firm expressed that '*we will continue to buy and support Xinjiang cotton.*' The message was later removed. H&M minimized criticism in order to 'regain the trust' of consumers and partners in China.

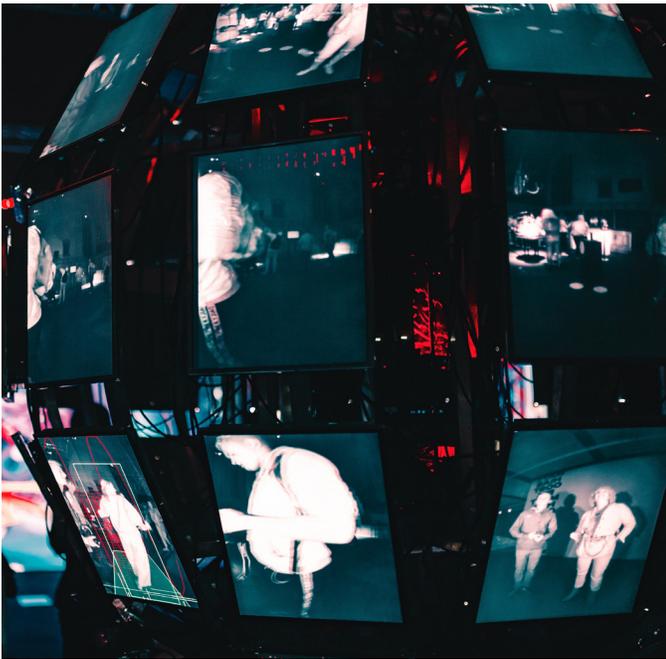
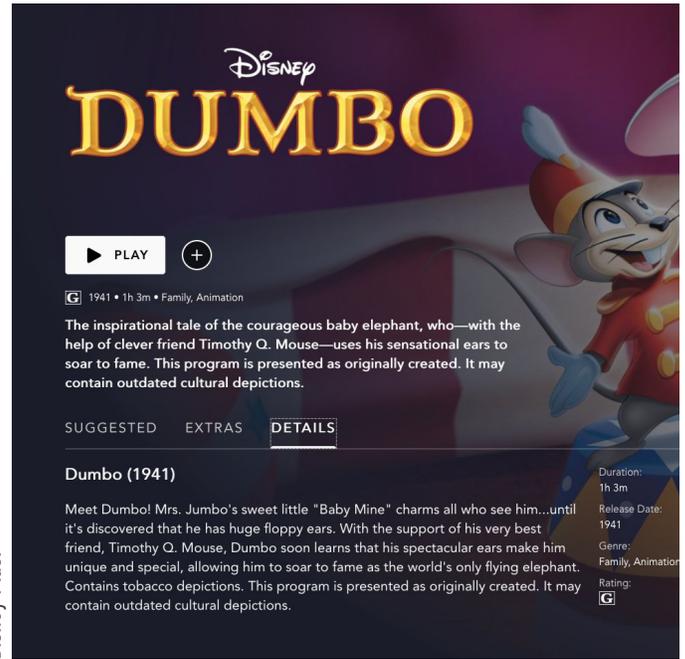


Photo: Maxim Hopman.

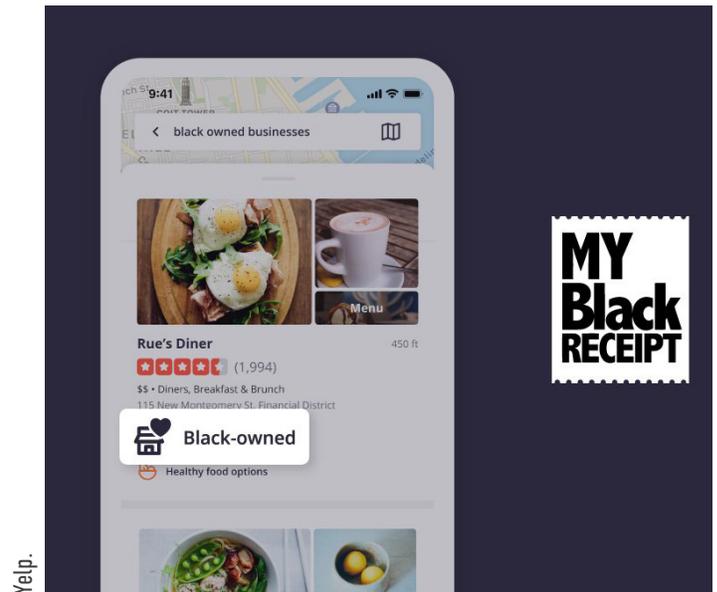
◆ **THE VALUE OF SECURITY.** WhatsApp had to publish a new FAQ section to clarify an alleged misunderstanding caused by an update to their privacy policy. Some people interpreted they would be forced to allow the social network to share profile information and diagnostic data with Facebook. The latter situation led to the exodus of approximately 2 billion WhatsApp users to **Signal**, a messaging app recommended by most security experts, which provides end-to-end encryption protocol and is not associated with other companies. **Telegram** was another social network that benefited from the anger of users. The company further explained that the update only included changes related to messaging in WhatsApp Business, which is optional. Nothing would change for the personal use app, so Facebook would not be able to see private messages and neither would WhatsApp, due to end-to-end encryption. The company stated that they did not share users' contacts with third parties. However, people are beginning to be vigilant about the authoritarian policies being implemented.



Disney Plus.

◆ **MISTAKES AS LEARNING DRIVERS.** As to the entertainment industry, **Disney** has decided to play a positive role in encouraging diversity through its content. In old animated films it is common to find stereotypes and prejudices typical of the era in which they were made. That is why the Disney Plus platform has decided to remove the following movies from profiles used by children: *Peter Pan* (1953), *Dumbo* (1941) and *The Aristocats* (1970), for having racist representations through some of their characters. To encourage ongoing dialogue around these topics, the films are still available to the rest of the adult audience with a warning displayed on the opening credits. Take, for instance, the *Peter Pan* case: *'The film portrays indigenous people in a stereotypical way that reflects neither their diversity nor their authentic cultural traditions. They are shown speaking in an unintelligible language and they are repeatedly referred to as 'redskins', an offensive term. Peter and the Lost Boys dance, wear headdresses and other over-the-top clothes.'*

THE GENERATION BORN BETWEEN 1981 AND 1996 IS LESS SATISFIED WITH DEMOCRACY THAN ANY OTHER AGE GROUP. SINCE 2008, HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY HAVE CAUSED THEM TO LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM [CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, 2020].



◆ **THE VINDICATION OF MINORITIES.** In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement managed to influence brands by achieving changes that were demanded decades ago to end the stigmatization and inequality of the black community. L'Oréal group announced that discriminatory words such as 'whitener' or 'lightener' would be removed from their packaging descriptions. Quaker Oats company decided to change the traditional logo of the Syrup Aunt Jemima brand, considering that the campaign's picture was racist. Yelp launched a new tool to allow businesses on the platform to identify themselves as black-owned so customers can search the app for businesses they want to support. In June 2020, Sephora joined the '15% Commitment' launched by designer Aurora James, which commits retailers to sell more black-owned brands until they reach the proportional African-American population in the US: 15%. The agreement, signed when Sephora owned 3%, includes U.S. businesses, stores, e-commerce platforms and the app.

# 65%

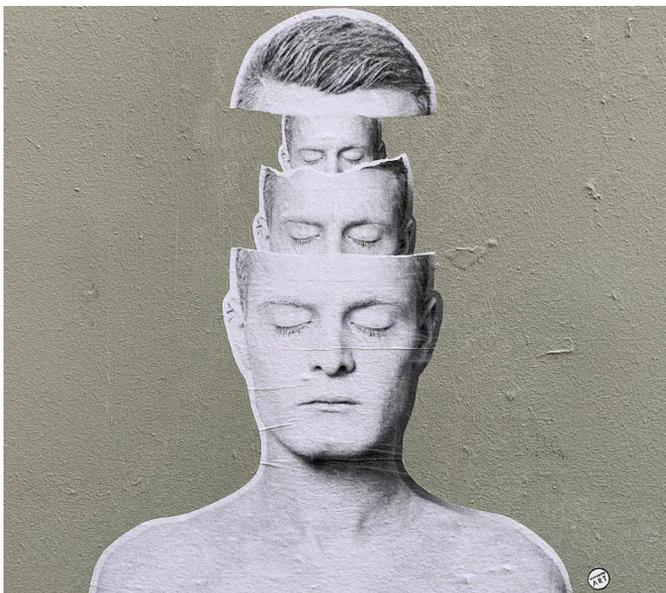
OF ITALIANS HAVE SUFFERED PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS DURING THE QUARANTINES IMPOSED [ISTITUTO ELMA RESEARCH, 2020].

# 64%

OF U.S. ADULTS SAY THAT SOCIAL NETWORKS HAVE A MOSTLY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE REALITY OF THE COUNTRY [PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2020].



@marcusrashford.



Exposito, Paris 2021.

◆ **THE END OF ANONYMITY.** Manchester United footballer **Marcus Rashford** described how he was subjected to racist abuse on social media after a 0-0 draw with Arsenal. Onwurah called for a discussion on how to implement a user identity verification system on social networks to protect people from the harms associated with online anonymity. His case is added to that of many celebrities who recently complained about the violence exercised by some users on social networks, some of these well-known people have decided to close their accounts. In April 2021, the English football community launched a 72-hour boycott of social media to protest the abuse received by players. The **British Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS)** unveiled a project to create a digital identity 'trust framework' setting out the ground rules for the use of new technologies, which will enable people to prove something about themselves digitally and take responsibility for their actions online. Criticism of this type of project focuses on the privacy implications that could be exercised if the information is subsequently used for other public purposes. One case that triggered alarm bells was the British government's idea to reuse the COVID-19 contact-tracking app developed by the **NHS** in response to the pandemic as a 'health passport' to allow people to prove they have been vaccinated or tested negative for COVID-19.

• **THE COMMON PRACTICE OF THREAT.** The boycott culture has gained ground as a way to take direct action and provoke instant reactions in public opinion, as well as changes in those involved. This action has spread to all areas and it is no longer about consumers against brands, but it is also exercised between companies, as in the case of firms (Unilever, Patagonia, Adidas, Microsoft, Coca Cola, among others) that joined the 'Stop Hate for Profit' campaign and stopped their investment in advertising on Facebook, as a way to pressure the social network to take measures to prevent the dissemination of hate speech.



www.stophateforprofit.org



Ben & Jerry.



Libération.



@dukeandduchessofcambridge.



Photo: Annie Spratt.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO INNOVATE

### Transitioning Together

Brands can assume the role of people's allies in an era of transitions plagued by contradictions. Playing a useful role in helping them to adopt and exercise the new values and cultural patterns that are emerging. Creating accessible and simple programs in which the public can progressively modify aspects of their way of living, consuming and relating to others.

### Assumption of the Civil Role

Managing the delicate balance between commercial and political roles. Clearly informing what kind of relationship and expectations the company has with the community in which it operates. Making corporate decisions that could impact local social, labor and environmental conditions as transparent as possible. Providing access to first-hand information on all actors involved in the production chain.

### Management of Conflict

Considering conflict as a rule and not an exception. Training creative and communication teams in the critical observation of contexts in order to easily identify potential crises and tensions that could be generated by the design and presentation of a product, service or experience. Conducting refresher sessions on the evolution of general psychosocial drivers and thus better understand people's decision-making process.

### Removal of Authoritarianism

Avoiding all or nothing thinking. People consider authoritarian companies are those that present conditions of use that are constantly changing and, after years of using the service, propose to the public to accept new rules (hand over data, for example) or leave the platform, losing messages and contacts. Offering various alternatives for users to choose from, clearly stating the benefits in each case.

### Reinforcement of Values

Emphatically affirming the values of the brand, to avoid undesirable uses of products and services that could involve them in an involuntary stance. Getting ahead of the curve in taking positions on issues that could become causes for activism in the future. Building support and collaboration networks with local organizations to support the principles of the brand.



# FACTORS THAT DRIVE THE TREND UNRULY LIVES

## 29%

IS THE INCREASE OF THE TOTAL NET WORTH OF AMERICAN MILLIONAIRES, THAT IS, \$850 BILLION FROM MARCH 2020 [IPS, 2021].

Reality has become difficult to manage for most people. Political, economic, social, health and environmental problems converge in every society to create complex scenarios. These critical situations represent real risks to the quality of life, while at the same time call into question the possibility of reversing the negative situation in the future. The future has become unstable and diffuse, so the certainty that things will get much better is no longer a widespread idea. In contrast, people are acting in the present to try to reverse situations that tangibly affect them, namely: racism, domestic violence, economic inequality, discrimination, gender inequality, climate crisis, among others.

## 19 TIMES

TIMES WERE BLACK YOUTH MORE LIKELY TO BE STOPPED AND SEARCHED THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 2020 [UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, 2020].

The pandemic has revealed, for a large majority, the unequal conditions and structural privileges that have a negative impact on the opportunities of individuals. In every country, vulnerable groups—for one reason or the other—multiply and become visible. Around these causes, a transversal and massive identification is generated that transcends borders, which combines with other battles and feeds back on each other. The outlook becomes very dynamic as there is a chain of daily activisms that exclude the possibility of reaching a horizon of harmony.

## 1 OUT OF 6

YOUTH HAS STOPPED WORKING AND 1 OUT OF 2 HAS FACED EDUCATIONAL DELAYS SINCE THE START OF THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC [UN, 2021].

Frustration is a widespread feeling in contemporary societies. This has been crystallized even more recently by the health crisis, but also by the recurrent economic turmoils, which have particularly affected young people. In recent years, the growth of mental illnesses, such as stress, loneliness, depression, anxiety, has been evident. The current uncertainty has only widened the gap between individual expectations and reality.

# 72%

OF LATINO FAMILIES, 60% OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES, AND 55% OF NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES HAVE REPORTED 'SEVERE FINANCIAL DISTRESS' IN THE U.S. IN 2021 [HARVARD UNIVERSITY, 2021].

# 90,2%

OF ITALIANS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS HARMED THE MOST VULNERABLE AND WIDENED SOCIAL INEQUALITIES [CENSIS, 2021].

# 3,5%

OF THE POPULATION NEEDS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN PROTESTS TO ENSURE TANGIBLE POLITICAL CHANGE [ERICA CHENOWETH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY].

Widespread distrust of the political institutions that should bring solutions and manage crises has led to an increase in attitudes and behaviors based on protest. The actions undertaken to express disagreement and achieve change are framed between traditional and alternative strategies, the latter encouraged by new technological tools. The digital public sphere has become a field of dispute with opaque rules that put a strain on the idea of democracy. The increase in online and offline surveillance, with the expansion of data, artificial intelligence and facial recognition, is beginning to be considered by citizens as a serious risk.

The communication crisis is one of the factors influencing the way in which people intervene in collective discussions. The loss of credibility of the traditional media and the use of technological resources that allow easy manipulation of facts make it difficult to reach agreements on reality. Participation through the Internet and the possibility of taking refuge in anonymity has facilitated the emergence of a cruder and more direct mode of expression. The high exposure of the permanent use of social networks entails that personal identities and values can be frequently attacked. Reputation has become an important value, yet difficult to protect in a game without clear rules. The stress this causes means that the margins of tolerance are narrowing.

The next three years will see the true psychological, social, economic and political impact of the pandemic, so it will be a period fraught with tensions to be eased. In this critical scenario, people will have an active role to play in influencing government and corporate decisions in their favor.

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