

# The Clothing Manifesto: A Post-Communist Analysis of Nostalgia in Fashion Advertising

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## Abstract

*Understanding audiences is crucial for successful ad campaigns. Thus, it is important for companies to strategically capitalize on their target audience's identity, which is often shaped by their environment. Past research has examined the impact of communism on advertising, however there is no existing research specific to the fashion industry. This research seeks to understand how Berlin's communist history impacts modern fashion advertising. The study examines markers for communism and capitalism in two multinational fashion campaigns, the Gucci's Spring Summer 2016 campaign and Levi's "Go Forth" campaign, both of which were shot in Berlin. Using a qualitative thematic analysis, this study finds that multinational fashion companies embrace the post-communist consumer identity through the combination of elements of nostalgia along with modern trends. These findings are significant for multinational fashion companies as they can better appeal to their target audience's identity through the use of nostalgia, and further develop strong affinity for the brand.*

## I. Introduction

Prior to the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, citizens of communist Eastern European countries lacked consumer choice and purchasing power. In the pursuit of creating a classless society, citizens were subject to serious government regulations, control, and surveillance. The Communist Party controlled all aspects of everyday life; media was state-owned, products were manufactured within the Soviet-bloc, and people were employees of the state. As a result of this hyper-controlled lifestyle, citizens of the Soviet-bloc were infatuated with Western culture and style.

Although the divide between communist and capitalist nations was strong throughout Europe during this time, it was particularly contentious within the city of Berlin, Germany. Following World War II, at the Yalta and Potsdam peace conferences, Germany was divided into four Allied occupation zones. The three Western zones became the Federal Republic of Germany and the Eastern zone became the German Democratic Republic. Notably, this division resulted in the split of the country's capital, Berlin (Hasic, 2019). The German Democratic Republic further amplified the divisiveness of the country in 1961 by constructing the Berlin Wall, a barrier physically dividing the city. This barrier created a massive cultural difference between the two sides, West Berlin representing freedom and prosperity, and East Berlin the Soviet struggle.

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The unification of Berlin fused two drastically different cultures. As a result, East Berlin citizens, particularly youth, were eager to experience new, multi-national products. Targeting this new market needed to be done strategically. According to Layton (2011), marketing is part of a multi-level system that must account for key factors including history, culture, politics, and institutions. Because Eastern Europe was a completely new market for multinational companies, they needed to tailor campaigns to the culture and identity of the people.

This trend later paved the way for examinations of the role of nostalgia in advertising (Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2018). Although the communist era is not historically referred to as a positive time in European history, it has a strong significance that continues to impact global communications efforts in the realm of advertising and marketing. The complex history of Berlin provides unique grounds for further analysis of this trend. This research draws upon campaigns from Gucci and Levi's, both shot in Berlin, to understand how multinational fashion advertisements reflect elements of nostalgia.

## II. Literature Review

### *Historical Significance of the Communist Era*

The communist era in Eastern Europe was a defining period for the region riddled with social, political, and economic restrictions. Although communism came to an end in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the implications of this era have lasting consequences, particularly in regard to interest in Western goods. Germany, and specifically the city of Berlin, provides a unique case study of this time period as West Berlin functioned as a democratic, capitalist society, whereas its eastern counterpart, East Berlin, was subject to an oppressive socialist regime. The contrast is deeply unsettling and could be seen through both state and local practices, including “the exchange of political prisoners and dissidents for western currency, West German state loans to the GDR, images on western television (whose airwaves easily crossed the otherwise impermeable border), and the coveted *Westpakete* (western packages)” (Berdahl, 2005, p. 238). These practices reflected the inequality seen between the East and West, further emphasizing the concept of the “golden West” where consumer choice ruled, and citizens enjoyed economic autonomy (Berdahl, 2005, p. 238).

East Germans' awareness of their Western counterparts' freedom further fueled desire for western goods. Ultimately, people wanted the products they could not obtain under the communist regime (Berdahl, 2005). The repression of consumer choice during the communist period intensified the interest in these goods and had profound effects following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The communist era is notorious for suppressing consumer choice. Because of this, East Germans were particularly intrigued by western products. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the process of democratization began in East Germany. With this opening, citizens quickly viewed consumer choice and access to goods as fundamental rights and entered a “collective shopping spree” (Berdahl, 2005, p. 235). This new-found freedom cultivated a sense of belonging among formerly ostracized East Germans; however, it was also a period of adjustment and learning. In fact, many Eastern Germans received formal training regarding consumption and self-presentation in the workforce. Notably, the selling point of this training was the “promise of ‘success’ based on culturally competent consumption practices” (Berdahl, 2005, p. 246). Adopting western style was viewed as a vehicle for success, which in turn pushed East Germans to conform to western ideals, and in turn lose a part of their identity in the pursuit of a sense of belonging.

The obsession with consumer choice created a massive opportunity for multinational brands to infiltrate the Eastern European market. In fact, “Because globally recognized, western brands were virtually non-existent in Eastern Europe before 1989, their market pull has been especially powerful there” (True, 1999, p. 369). It is not surprising that multinational companies have had a strong draw in these countries as they went years without any substantial product choice. As a result, young people in this region have strong preferences towards American brands such as Levis jeans and Coca-Cola (True, 1999). These distinctly American products have been highly revered as they represent the ideal version of freedom and democratic values, including consumer choice and individualism (Berdahl, 2005).

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### ***International Branding & Advertising in Eastern Europe***

With the infiltration of multinational brands into the Eastern European market, companies had to adapt their advertising and marketing strategies to appeal to the economies in transition. In market societies, production and consumption are embraced, thus making advertising an accepted cultural phenomenon among consumers (Kelly-Holmes, 1998). However, in the case of Eastern Europe, citizens were not socialized in a society where they possessed the same economic autonomy. As a result, advertisers were faced with the challenge of communicating with “unconsumerised” citizens and ultimately had to construct the framework for producing marketing texts within the newly transitioned countries (Kelly-Holmes, 1998). Although this was a new challenge in the industry, it also paved the way for new opportunities and strategies within the communications field.

In joining this market, global advertising has successfully linked ownership and consumption to new identities (True, 1999). The concept, and realistically the struggle with identity, was a significant element of the post-communist transition. Citizens of Eastern European countries were ostracized from Western culture during the process of assimilation. Following the events of 1989, the issue of German-German relations emerged. Although the country was now unified and no longer divided by the Berlin Wall, there was a strong sense of otherness among those formerly from East Germany. This resulted in the creation of new identities revolving around the need to catch up and blend in with Western culture (Berdahl, 2004). Thus, there was an opportunity for advertising and marketing efforts to target these individuals specifically in their quest to fit in. In fact, the financial opportunities that arose from advertising opportunities in Eastern Europe were astronomical. In Bulgaria “advertising expenditure rose from \$4.3 million in 1996 to \$322 million in 2006” (Ibroscheva, 2007, p. 410). The opportunity for multinational brands in Eastern Europe continues to climb and maintains a strong influence within the economy.

In terms of strategy, to successfully target citizens of Eastern Europe, advertisers needed to understand their ideology, which ultimately is what “allows us to participate meaningfully in a culture” (Kelly-Holmes, 1998, p. 342). East Germans’ desire to fit in with Western culture was so strong, providing easy grounds for multinational companies to secure a new customer base. In fact, “social and cultural transformations result from even the seemingly most trivial penetration of western imports and advertising media” (True, 1999, p. 363). Thus, it is evident that Western advertising captured the desire for cultural belonging and capitalized on a new market by increasing advertising efforts and understanding the complex history and systems at play within the region.

### ***Marketing as a System***

Marketing is a complex industry that is imperative for the success of brands. At its core, marketing is part of a greater multi-level system that both influences and is influenced by “institutional and knowledge environments in which they are active” (Layton, 2011, p. 260). In the case of Germany, specifically Berlin, there is an incredibly diverse environment of institutions and knowledge at play that must be considered when examining marketing strategies. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, citizens of West Berlin had access to a plethora of consumer goods, whereas their counterparts in East Berlin lived in an economy of shortages with little economic autonomy.

Additionally, East Berlin functioned primarily as a manufacturing economy in which production was valued significantly more than consumption. However, when East Germany was absorbed in 1989, factories were closed and many people lost their jobs. As a result, there were clear winners and losers of the transition. The winners prospered and assimilated well into a Western lifestyle, whereas the losers were unemployed, poor, and even homeless (Berdahl, 2005). This massive divide within the population of Germany emphasizes the various economic, social, and political systems at play within the country. All of these factors need to be considered when developing marketing and advertising efforts as marketing “constraints and opportunities created by religion, geography, history, and physical infrastructure” (Layton, 2011, p. 264). In this case, history is one of the most significant factors as it was ultimately the communist era that defines the unique landscape of the city of Berlin and its people.

### ***Nostalgia in Post-Communist Branding***

After examining Germany’s history and its implications on the marketing system, it is important to look even more specifically into the role of nostalgia in marketing. Nostalgia is a unique sensation in the post-communist case as “memory is an interactive, malleable, and highly contested phenomenon but also

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the process through which things become informed with a remembering- and forgetting- capacity” (Berdahl, 2004, p. 176). Often times, people will suppress their bad memories in favor of remembering the good. In fact, nostalgic branding capitalizes on memories associated with pride, love, and happiness. These emotions aid companies in building relationships with their consumers (Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2018).

Grębosz-Krawczyk’s theory on the impact of nostalgia on brand equity in a post-communist economy is particularly helpful in understanding this phenomenon. His research on nostalgia for transgenerational versus generational brands, specifically in the food and cosmetics industry, suggests that there is a higher level of brand equity among nostalgic transgenerational brands as they provide consumers with “the security references, identity, well-being, emotion and re-enchantment without positive connotations with communist period” (Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2018, p. 225). Although communism is reflected upon as a dark period in which the people were suppressed by the state, it was still a significant point in people’s lives and general history that cannot be ignored. Thus, brands and advertisers began capitalizing on this wave of nostalgia by using popular culture and symbols to trigger consumption behavior that was suppressed before the fall of communism (Moraru, 2010).

Looking specifically at the case of Germany, nostalgia from East Germans is particularly high. The process of reunification after 1989 was complicated and not as liberating as many had hoped. Ultimately, this longing for the past “is more than simply an escapist defense mechanism against the chaos and disenchantment of Reunification itself” (Betts, 2000, p. 734). Although there was great freedom that emerged from reunifying Germany, it was also a very divisive time in which East German citizens were particularly ostracized within their own country. They were seen as second-class citizens and looked down upon as a result of their time under the socialist state. Following the initial excitement of obtaining Western products, “formerly distained articles suddenly became material reminders of a vanished world, newly idealized ‘fragments of a crumbled identity’” (Betts, 2000, p. 741). Integrating into a society that pushed individuals to shed their identity and reimagine their beliefs was a taxing process; thus it is not surprising that amidst their struggle East Germans developed a sense of nostalgia for the past.

It has been more than 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, yet current advertising campaigns are highlighting images of the past, including planned housing projects, dull colors, and old transportation. Society is moving forward, however, there is clearly still a fondness for the past. It is important to understand why this dark period still impacts modern marketing and advertising, particularly in the fashion industry, which is often focused on new, emerging trends.

Berlin is a unique city. It is an emerging fashion capital filled with creative and eccentric ideas but also with a history of extreme division between the capitalist west and the communist east side of the Berlin Wall. Examining the city’s modern fashion advertising through a nostalgic and post-communist framework will yield interesting insights into how a communist past impacts an industry rooted in forward-thinking and modern trends. There has been no prior research conducted on nostalgia in post-communist fashion industries, and the findings of this study will provide useful insights about how nostalgia is reflected in campaigns.

Although there is no research regarding nostalgia in fashion advertising, Grębosz-Krawczyk’s work focuses on the role of nostalgia in transgenerational and generational brands, specifically in the food and cosmetics industries. Thus, this research will fill the existing gaps in post-communism advertising research by seeking to understand if the same nostalgic undertones in transgenerational brands are depicted in multinational fashion advertisements. This study will investigate these topics through a qualitative thematic analysis of campaigns by Levi’s and Gucci.

### ***The Case Studies***

This research will look at two fashion advertising campaigns, both of which were shot in Berlin. It will examine Levi’s “Go Forth” campaign and Gucci’s Spring Summer 2016 campaign. These two multinational companies were selected very specifically. Prior research frequently discusses Eastern European’s infatuation with Levis denim as the company was seen as a uniquely American brand (True, 1999). Under communism, jeans were much more than an item of clothing, they were a token of capitalism and those who wore them were considered enemies of the state (Panek, 2019). The symbolism behind this brand is fascinating and clearly indicates the fact that branding and marketing are rooted in various systems of society. Specifically, the “Go Forth” campaign declares Levi’s to be the “Uniform of Progress.” In the context of post-communism, examining this campaign is particularly compelling as it provides grounds for the analysis of nostalgia with branding, focusing on both the past and the more progressive present.

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On the other hand, Gucci's Spring Summer 2016 campaign combines trendsetting designer fashion with scenery highly reflective of the communist era. The fashion industry, particularly designer fashion, is notorious for having bold and eclectic advertising campaigns and the setting of Berlin in the Spring Summer 2016 campaign was no different. Following the end of communism, luxury brands such as BMW and Armani did particularly well in the Eastern European markets (True, 1999). Thus, examining a campaign by Gucci, a highly regarded and luxurious fashion brand, will provide interesting insights about the reflection of nostalgia in advertising across different price sectors of the fashion industry. The following two research questions will aid in the explanation of this phenomenon of intertwining the past and present in modern advertising campaigns.

RQ1: How does Berlin's communist past impact modern, multinational advertising, specifically within the cases of Levi's and Gucci?

RQ2: How do advertising campaigns by Levi's and Gucci reflect elements of nostalgia?

Research Question 1 will take a historical approach and focus specifically on how elements of the communist era continue to influence advertising. In order to understand advertising in the post-communist era, it is crucial to understand how the past shaped modern practices. Existing research suggests that there are many systems at play within the marketing sector and this research will specifically seek to understand their implications for marketing in Berlin.

Research Question 2 will focus specifically on the two advertising campaigns this study will analyze, Levi's "Go Forth" campaign and Gucci's Spring Summer 2016 campaign. By examining both of these Berlin-based campaigns from multinational brands, this research will examine how modern advertising campaigns reflect elements of nostalgia. Prior research suggests that people are more loyal to nostalgic brands, regardless of price (Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2018). With this knowledge, this research seeks to understand how nostalgia may be used as part of a campaign to sell modern products.

### III. Methods

This study used a qualitative thematic analysis of Levi's "Go Forth" campaign and Gucci's Spring Summer 2016 campaign, both of which are campaigns from the past decade. The analysis reviewed these campaigns for markers for communism and capitalism within fashion advertisements shot in Berlin.

This research investigated sixteen photos from the Gucci Spring Summer 2016 advertisement campaign, in addition to a video of Levi's launch of the European "Go Forth" campaign in Berlin. The Gucci campaign was retrieved from the "Stories" section of the Gucci website under the "Ad Campaigns" header. All photos and the video shot by British fashion photographer and director Glen Luchford for the Gucci campaign were available on this page. Only photos that included the models' faces were selected for analysis. Facial expressions were one marker this qualitative thematic analysis examined, thus making it an important element to have in the sample. Screenshot images were compiled of the photos and placed into Figure 1. The images were then further labeled for reference purposes.

The Levi's "Go Forth" 2011 campaign video was retrieved from Vimeo. The video was titled "Levi's® Launch of the European 'Go Forth' campaign in Berlin" and published by Cromatics, a German-based production company. The video is four minutes and 31 seconds long, and from this, 18 screenshots were taken for qualitative thematic analysis. Additionally, quotes were taken from speakers in the video to be coded in the analysis. Similar to the Gucci content, the screenshots were compiled into Figure 2 and labeled individually to be referenced throughout the research.

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Figure 1. Photos from Gucci Spring Summer 2016 Campaign

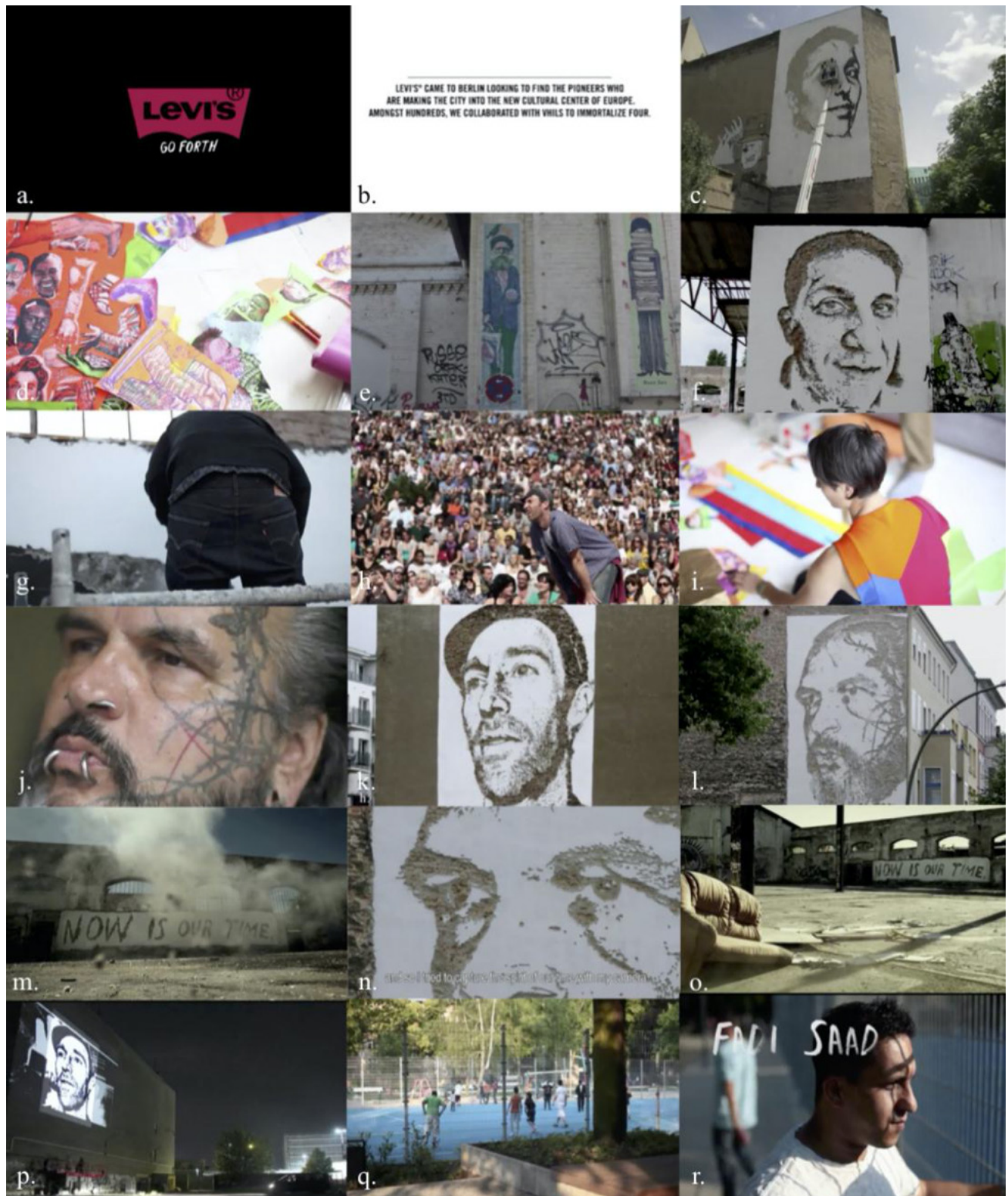


Figure 2. Screenshot from Levi's "Go Forth" Campaign video

## IV. Analysis

Data were examined qualitatively using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), identifying themes specifically related to the study's two research questions. Once initial codes were established, they were synthesized into potential themes. Using a constant comparative approach between the campaigns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), these themes were then examined for their resonance and consistency with existing literature related to nostalgia and communist branding.

These themes were developed using markers for communism and capitalism from existing research on post-Cold War advertising in Romania (Moraru, 2010). Markers of communism included dull color schemes, urban settings, and facial expressions. Dull color schemes were represented by both black and white and shadows. Specifically, "Bichromatic white-black explains very well the restrictions ... Other times, the colors are replaced by shadows, characters are usually silhouettes" (Moraru, 2010, p. 60). Dull color schemes were also observed through "milky-yellow lighting" (Lewis, 2016). Urban settings were characterized by rigid streets, small parks, the construction site, small streets, and small apartment buildings (Moraru, 2010, p. 59-60). In addition, the urban settings theme examined transportation. Specifically, Dora trains from Berlin's U-Bahn system which were characterized by "1950s design: yellow exteriors, plush green leather seating and milky-yellow lighting" (Lewis, 2016). Finally, facial expressions were observed by all characters displaying "the same facial mimics one cannot see any smile, any personal touch on their faces, they are pictured only inside a serious, cold and hypercritical surroundings" (Moraru, 2010, p. 58).

After these markers were examined to determine elements of communism, the study then sought to understand the intertwining of nostalgia with modern trends in advertising campaigns. To do so, it compared modern capitalist markers including bright colors, creativity, and non-traditional societal roles (Moraru, 2010). Bright colors were defined as bringing rich expressivity. Creativity was viewed through a nostalgic lens in which elements of the communist era were expressed in a creative way that aligned with popular culture. Finally, non-traditional societal roles were seen as "the non-conformist teenager" or a female hero (Moraru, 2010, p. 57, 60). The contrast from this thematic analysis of communist versus capitalist markers in the two campaigns allowed for a deeper analysis of the role of nostalgia and the influence of communism on modern fashion advertising. Further, through this analysis, this research explored the campaigns to look for emergent themes related to communism, nostalgia, and modern branding through a constant comparison technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

## V. Findings

The Gucci Spring Summer 2016 campaign and the Levi's "Go Forth" campaign differ greatly in their creative strategies and advertising purposes. Creative Director Alessandro Michele and Photographer and Director Glen Luchford created the Gucci Spring Summer 2016 campaign to encapsulate the spirit of Germany's 1980's pop culture (Stansfield, 2016). Levi's developed the Berlin "Go Forth" campaign with Wieden + Kennedy Amsterdam to highlight "the pioneers who are making the city into the new cultural center of Europe" (Cromatic, 2012). Despite the differences, the campaigns both feature markers for communism and modern capitalism which will later provide grounds for the analysis of the role of nostalgia in multinational fashion advertisements shot in Berlin, Germany.

### ***Markers of Communism***

#### **Urban Settings and Transportation**

Of the 16 images from the Gucci Spring Summer 2016 (Figure 1), images d, f, and j all directly feature public transportation. Images d and f show women in front of a dated yellow bus and image j depicts a woman lying on a rooftop overlooking a train station with yellow Dora-style trains. These yellow buses and trains are seen in images d, f, and j can be characterized as "textbook examples of 1950s design" (Lewis, 2016). Further, urban settings are clearly visible in images a and c. In image a, a man and woman overlook a small, circular park in the middle of a roundabout and apartment housing projects line the background of the photograph. Similarly, in image c a woman leans against a wall, and uniform buildings sprawl across the background.

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The Levi's 2011 "Go Forth" Campaign is shot exclusively in urban areas within Berlin. Of the 18 screengrabs (Figure 2), images k, l, and p depict the faces of Berlin "pioneers" in the walls of buildings around the city and also have housing projects visible in the background. Additionally, the video highlights Faadi Saad, a Berlin resident who works with at-risk youth. In images q and r, he is seen observing a small, fenced-in park where Berlin youth congregate to play basketball. Overall, both the Gucci and Levi's campaigns heavily featured urban settings.

#### **Facial Expressions: Cold and Serious**

Images from the Gucci campaign (Figure 1) were selected based on the presence of models' faces for analysis. Of the 27 visible faces seen across the 16 different photos, only one model in image g is seen with a slight smile. The other 26 faces depict a lack of smile, a serious demeanor, and many look visibly upset. Image b shows a straight faced woman looking emotionless as she descends an escalator. Image h exhibits a woman leaning against a hand-dryer where she rests her somber face in her hand as an emotionless man reaches for her hair. This man is also supporting another sorrow looking woman on his shoulder to the right. More generally, models in this campaign look lifelessly at the camera. This is highlighted in image k where both women in the bathroom stare blankly ahead, and image l where all three models appear frozen, with the woman on the far right mid stand.

In Figure 2, images j, l, and n depict Sven Marquardt, a local photographer in Berlin. He is covered in tattoos on his face, has many piercings, and maintains a cold and serious facial expression across all three images.

#### **Dull and Muted Colors**

Eleven of the 16 images from the Gucci Spring Summer 2016 Campaign (Figure 1) have backgrounds with muted or dull colors. Dull lighting can be described as "milky-yellow" (Lewis, 2016). This is pictured in images d, e, f, n, o, and p. The yellow tile lining of the train station walls in images n and o, along with the bus stop location in images d and f creates very murky lighting. Images e, m, and p are shot in a dark hallway, giving them a similarly muted look. Images a, c, and j are all shot outside and have very dull, gray backgrounds.

The art of Berlin's pioneers, by Portuguese street artist Vhils, is featured in six of the 18 screengrabs in Figure 2 (images c, f, k, l, n, and p). Each of these portraits is on the side of various buildings in Berlin and produced in a very dull and muted, black-and-white color scheme. Additionally, images m and o, depict a wall in an empty, depressed lot saying "Now is our time." These images lack a presence of color and reflect the "milky-yellow" lighting.

#### **Wall Imagery**

Using the constant comparison technique for open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), both the Gucci Spring Summer 2016 campaign and the Levi's campaign provided grounds for a new marker of communism, the use of wall imagery. In the "Go Forth" video, Vhils explains his artistic motive stating, "I went to go into the walls and tried to dig and play with these layers of the past" (Cromatic, 2012). So, the images of Berlin's pioneers are carved into walls throughout the city that previously had political messages from the working class in the 1980s. Additionally, in Figure 2, images m and o depict a cement wall stating, "Now is our time." The area is barren, and image m further depicts the blast through the wall used in the artistic process.

The Gucci campaign (Figure 1) furthers the idea of wall imagery in fashion advertising. Images a and c are both shot on a rooftop and the models are standing by a cement wall. In image a, both the male and female models peer over the wall to the streets below, and in image c, the model leans against the cement wall with rows of housing projects seen behind her.

### **Markers of Modern Capitalism**

#### **Colors and Rich Expressivity**

The Gucci Spring Summer 2016 campaign (Figure 1) features a plethora of bright colors. Images i, h, and k are all shot in a nightclub bathroom with bright pink tile and pink and orange wallpapered walls. This campaign brings significant color to the images through the clothing line. Teal is a prominent color throughout the photos. Image m captures a man running through the hallway in a teal jumpsuit, image g shows a woman in a teal dress waiting next to another woman in an emerald green suit, image k shows a woman in a long teal gown in the bathroom, and image p shows a woman walking through a hallway in a sheer, teal skirt.

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Additionally, reds and pinks are seen throughout the line. A man is seen in bright red shorts in image e, a woman in a red top lies on a rooftop in image j, a woman wears a mid-length pink skirt in image l, and a man wears a red, patterned suit in image n. Finally, and most uniquely, there is a peacock in three of the 16 photos (images e, n, and p). This peacock is different shades of green, teal, and purple.

The Levi's Campaign (Figure 2) interviews Varicus and Gould, two Berlin artists who work on social issues such as migration. In the interview, the duo explains their work: "We do it in a very colorful way because we have a feeling that somehow the issues are transported" (Cromatics, 2012). This colorful work can be further examined in images d, e, and l, where shades of pinks, oranges, greens, blues, and reds can be seen in their work, both in the studio and in the streets. Additionally, in highlighting Joe Hatchiban, a Berlin resident who performs karaoke, the camera pans a colorful and excited crowd, seen in image h.

### **Creativity and Popular Culture**

The Gucci campaign (Figure 1) features elements of the communist era in a creative way, aligning with modern, popular culture. Image p shows a man and a woman walking past a store front with vintage advertisements on display in the windows. The woman is wearing a sheer, colorful dress, while the man is in a patterned suit walking a peacock on a leash. In image f, a woman is seen dressed in an extremely lavish and classic white jacket and skirt set while awaiting the dated, yellow bus. Similarly, image d shows a woman in a long, patterned jacket with matching luggage, examining her freshly painted nails also awaiting the same old, yellow bus.

Levi's interviewed Vhils about his concept for the street art in the "Go Forth" campaign in Berlin. He explains, "I went to go into the walls and tried to dig and play with these layers of the past" (Cromatics, 2012). Additionally, image e depicts Varicus and Gould's work. Their colorful artwork about various social issues is contrasted with graffiti and barren walls.

### **Non-Traditional Roles**

Figure 1 heavily features the non-conformist teenager role. In image e, a boy is seen skateboarding through a mall while holding a peacock. Additionally, image l shows a girl wearing a sheer bra top next to a couch where another girl sits with a boy in a patterned, blue suit. The "Go Forth" campaign also discusses the role of the non-conformist teenager. The video showcases Faadi Saad as one of Berlin's pioneers. However, the narrator explains his past as a former member of a gang (Cromatics, 2012).

### **Social Change**

Again, using the constant comparison technique for open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the Levi's campaign provided grounds for a new marker, social change. Through their artwork, Varicus and Gould shed light on issues such as torture migration. Similarly, Saad is "trying to bridge the social gaps of Berlin and help the at-risk youth avoid drugs and violence" by teaching children "how to cope and hopefully how to become role models themselves" (Cromatics, 2012).

## **VI. Discussion**

Using Moraru's markers for communism and capitalism, along with Braun and Clarke's theory for qualitative thematic analysis (2006), this analysis provides important insights into the impact of Berlin's communist past on multinational advertising. Both the Gucci Spring Summer 2016 campaign and the Levi's "Go Forth" campaign were shot in the city of Berlin within the past ten years. Additionally, both companies, despite Gucci being a luxury brand and Levi's a more accessible, but renowned denim company, are globally recognizable brands, making them optimal campaigns to examine.

As a result of its divided history during the communist era, modern Berlin still has many remnants of the past, making it a unique location for fashion advertising shoots. Through this qualitative thematic analysis, it is evident that urban settings and transportation from the past play a heavy role in the campaigns. In 2016, the city of Berlin made the decision to recommission several "Dora" trains, known for their yellow exterior and 1950s design. These trains were originally introduced during the Cold War and ran on the Berlin U-Bahn system but were retired when the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 (Lewis, 2016). The Gucci campaign features these trains in Figure 2, image j, and similar buses in images d and f. The presence of this transportation in the campaign is a nod to the past and successfully intertwines bold, modern fashion

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with vintage elements of communism. Further, this reference to the past can be seen in both campaigns through markers of urban settings. Government-planned housing projects remain a dominant part of Berlin's architecture and can be identified numerous times in both campaigns. Murals in the Levi's campaign are painted on the side of these apartment buildings. Although the apartments were built during a tumultuous time, this period had a tremendous impact on the people of Berlin and shaped the city's identity. Thus, it is not a period to repress, but rather embrace, as portrayed in these fashion ad campaigns.

Through the constant comparison approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) this research determined the presence of wall imagery to be an emergent theme within the two campaigns. The Berlin Wall serves as a universal symbol for the era of Eastern European communism, and its fall is further symbolic of a period of reunification. In the Levi's "Go Forth" campaign, the film concludes with a scene of a wall in a barren lot stating "Now is our time." This is pictured in Figure 2 images m and o. The stark contrast between the gritty, abandoned surrounding area with the empowering message displayed on the wall ties together the past with the present in an extremely meaningful manner. The fall of the Berlin Wall represented a period of new beginnings and opportunities for East German citizens. With reunification, came "national legitimacy in which access to consumer goods and consumer choice are defined as fundamental rights and democratic individualism" (Berdhal, 2005, p. 235). The phrase "Now is our time" capitalizes on this legitimacy and individualism that now fuels the city's unique and creative environment, while also acknowledging the great strides it took to get there.

Although it is more subtle, the Gucci campaign (Figure 1) utilizes wall imagery as an acknowledgement to the past. In images a and c, models are seen leaning against a cement wall overlooking the city. The three models featured are all dressed in high-fashion outfits which contrast greatly against the bleak background. This juxtaposition further establishes the findings of this study: Berlin's communist past provides grounds for unique multinational fashion advertising. This setting brings rich history to light in a revolutionary and creative manner beneficial to the forward-thinking industry.

In featuring walls in fashion advertising campaigns, both Gucci and Levi's recognize Berlin's history while capitalizing on the city's strength and the will of the people to take control over their future. As multinational companies, it is important to connect campaigns to consumers identities (True, 1999). By understanding the audience, companies develop successful campaigns. Although the Gucci campaign aims to sell a luxury fashion line and Levi's highlights the working class, they both successfully understand their surroundings and use the uniqueness of the community to better their ad campaigns.

### ***Using Nostalgia in Fashion Campaigns***

The fashion industry is known for bringing creativity and expression to advertisement campaigns. Gucci's campaign is filled with vibrant colors, quirky outfits, and unique props, including a peacock. All this is contrasted with various locations throughout the city of Berlin selected to bring elements of 1980s popular culture to the shoot (Stansfield, 2016). In his research, Moraru defines creativity through a lens of nostalgia where elements of the communist era are expressed in a new manner that aligns with popular culture (Moraru, 2010).

Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele and photographer Glen Luchford bring creativity to the Gucci campaign through a nostalgic lens. There is a stark juxtaposition throughout the images between the markers for communism, including urban settings and transportation, with the bright colors and rich expressivity outlined by Moraru (2010). Images d and f (Figure 1) both depict women dressed in pristine and fashionable clothing while waiting for yellow, dated public transportation. Similarly, images n and o are shot in a dated U-Bahn train station lined with yellow tile walls while models sport the Gucci line. Further, in image o, one model is holding a leather purse with the notorious Gucci symbol front and center.

By using these locations for the shoot, Michele and Luchford reflect elements of nostalgia to create a unique fashion campaign. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, there was a strong market pull for globally renowned western brands, as they were non-existent under communism (True, 1999). As a multinational luxury brand, Gucci utilizes nostalgia in its campaign as a means to reinvigorate consumer identity. Although this campaign was released over 25 years after the end of communism in Berlin, nostalgic undertones provide security, validate identity and ultimately, cultivate "re-enchantment without positive connotations with communist period" (Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2018, p. 225). By contrasting urban settings such as housing projects, transportation, and wall imagery with the bright and floral pieces from the Spring Summer 2016 collection, Gucci capitalizes on the opportunity to acknowledge the identity of many of its German consumers,

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while also promoting a new, fashion-forward line.

Unlike the Gucci campaign, the Levi's "Go Forth" video from Berlin focuses more on the stories of the city's pioneers than the actual product being marketed. This decision was strategic on behalf of Levi's as their brand alone has nostalgic meaning within the city (True, 1999). Using the historical significance of the brand, Levi's links the modern and progressive spirit of present Berlin with the complex and divided past to create a genuine, and engaging campaign. According to Grębosz-Krawczyk (2018), brands who capitalize on nostalgia have higher brand equity among consumers. For Levi's, ending the video with wall imagery finalizes the role of nostalgia in the campaign. The statement "Now is our time" appears on a cement wall following an explosion, as seen in Figure 2, image m. This is an extremely powerful ending to the "Go Forth" Berlin video, ultimately creating an engaging and symbolic campaign through the contrast of both communist and capitalist markers.

## VII. Conclusion

The communist era in Berlin has a lasting impact on modern identity and culture that advertisers, specifically in the fashion industry, seek to embrace in campaigns. This research illustrates how the contrast between communist and capitalist markers, outlined by Moraru (2010), work simultaneously to reflect elements of nostalgia and highlight modern fashion trends. Now, over 30 years later, multinational fashion brands such as Gucci and Levi's are invigorating consumer interest through the use of nostalgia.

Although the campaigns are inherently different, they both work to embrace the city's unique history. According to Layton (2011), marketing is part of a complex system influenced by the environment it operates in. These companies recognize the past experiences of the city and use the environment as a means to develop creative fashion campaigns that appreciate the identity of their consumers.

Based on the qualitative thematic analysis of the two campaigns, this research determined that Berlin's past does impact modern multinational fashion advertising, and that elements of nostalgia are reflected in campaigns through the use of communist markers including urban settings, transportation, dull colors, and wall imagery. However, this study does have limitations. This research only examined two campaigns, and thus the findings cannot be generalized to all fashion advertising. Future research could seek to examine other fashion ad campaigns and their use of Cold War cultural context.

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