

Corporate Sociopolitical Activism - The Case of Immigration Policy & Labor Shortage

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Abstract

Labor shortages threaten economic and social stability of many developed nations. Despite immigrants' functional indispensability to addressing these challenges, immigration remains polarized, often framed undifferentiated and negatively by right-wing actors. Besides politicians, businesses—facing direct labor shortages—are increasingly advocating for immigrants' indispensable role. This paper examines how corporate sociopolitical activism affects immigrants' public perception and subsequent voting and buying behavior. A pre-election study in Germany shows that engaging in corporate sociopolitical activism can influence societal perceptions, with the communicated underlying rationale being crucial. Specifically, instrumental rationales can increase the public's perception of immigrants' indispensability—even more than statements by politicians—and reduce the support for undifferentiated anti-immigration positions. Importantly, such activism does not harm consumers' buying intentions.

Keywords: corporate sociopolitical activism, immigration, functional indispensability

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