ADVERTISING PRODUCERS’ LOCALIZATION OF GLOBAL BRANDS:
GLOCALIZATION, STORYTELLING, AND
AUDIENCE CONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to 1) critically explore how contemporary advertisers are operating within a *glocal framework* to diffuse product information and branding to diverse, distant consumers; and 2) to assess the implications of these processes for consumer-audiences. This project explores what approaches global advertising producers utilize to distribute product information and branding to local audiences, how these processes then impact and shape the creation and diffusion advertising campaigns, and lastly, how do those processes impact the way advertisers imagine and target their audiences. The findings of this study shed light on how advertising producers imagine their work, their role within that work, and the audiences who consume their products. This project uncovers how the processes of global information diffusion impact partnerships between “headquarters” and local offices, the way in which messages are adapted and localized for various audiences, how these messages are extolled around the world, and conversely, what messages, stories, or cultural values might be minimized or lost as a result of this current environment.

This project draws upon in-depth interviews with advertising professionals and other global stakeholders, as well as on industry trade reports, press articles, and academic research. Interviews were conducted with global stakeholders at Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour. In addition to conducting in-depth interviews as a methodological approach, this dissertation engages with a case study logic as a way of understanding the context within which global advertisers localize global brands.
Furthermore, employing a multiple-case study approach allowed me to compare and contrast processes and implications between and amongst this trio of brands and various global producers, balancing the intricacies of a single organization with larger themes and trends in industrial production.

Themes related to the glocal framework emerged that spoke to the complex processes that global producers must navigate in order to do work on a global scale. These themes, the Global Mindset, which considers how producers conceptualize their role and their work; the Global Story, which explores how producers tell global stories to their consumers (and to themselves); and the Global Consumer, which illuminates the undercarriage of the delicate relationship between producers and consumers; have significant implications because understanding global production processes helps to explain under what context campaigns were conceptualized, how decisions were made, and why certain campaigns are more culturally relevant to local audiences. Beyond this, these findings shed light on the nuances of global brand diffusion pointing to larger trends in glocal advertising, and more broadly, the future of advertising on a global scale.
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband, Chris, and our beautiful daughter, Molly Rose.

Without them, and my faith, I would have lost heart a long time ago.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:13
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By and large, this dissertation project is the hardest thing I’ve ever done. It has taught me so much about myself, about what I value in life, and about what kind of academic I’d like to be. I had to rely on my faith, on my relationship with Jesus, in profound ways, but I am so much stronger for it. This process has taught me that life’s journey is not meant to be traveled alone, and that sometimes you must lean on other people despite your inclination not to. In a “go it alone” culture, I’m reminded that it really does take a village – and that’s a good thing.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CONTEXTUALIZING INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL ADVERTISING</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Early Years: Agency Creation and Budding Expansion</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing Back</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Creative Revolution: From the U.S. to International Audiences</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s: Mega Mergers, New Media &amp; Multinational Agencies</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s: Branding, the Internet, and the Evolution of Global Advertising</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursts &amp; Babbles: The Dot-Com Bubble and Consumers Start Talking Back</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Current State of Global Advertising</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Case of Three Global Brands</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

viii
4. THE GLOBAL MINDSET:

NETWORKS, PARTNERSHIPS AND GLOCALIZATION ..............................................100

Glocalization: Capitalizing on Points of Convergence ...................................122
Glocalization: Nuancing Campaigns & Cultural Difference ..........................141
Networks and Partnerships: Diffusing Global Advertising & Branding ..........162

5. THE GLOBAL STORY:

THE STORIES WE SELL – TO CONSUMERS, TO OURSELVES .......................182

The Stories We Sell ..........................................................................................184
The Stories We Sell Ourselves .......................................................................201
What Informs and Propels Stories in a Global Matrix ..................................216

6. THE GLOBAL CONSUMER: THE GLOBAL

TUG OF WAR BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND AUDIENCES ............................254

What Global Producers THINK About Audiences .......................................257
What Global Producers NEED from Audiences ..........................................271

7. THE GLOCAL APPROACH: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ...........................281

Final Thoughts ...............................................................................................299

REFERENCES CITED ..................................................................................306
APPENDICES

A. SAMPLE SOLICITATION EMAIL ................................................................. 341

B. LIST OF INFORMANTS ............................................................................. 342

C. INTERVIEW GUIDE .................................................................................. 343
CHAPTER 1
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Geographically distinct societies are increasingly connected economically, politically, and culturally as part of the processes and structures of globalization. Despite this amplification of worldwide social relations, systems of influence continue to encompass localized cultural flows; underscoring locality’s impact on global processes, Steger (2009) writes, “Given that language, music, and images constitute the major forms of symbolic expression, they assume special significance in the [global] sphere of culture” (p. 71). Against this backdrop, scholars have sought to understand the processes of local cultural reaction and reinvention to films and television programs from other parts of the world (Adriaens & Biltereyst, 2012; Miller, Govil, McMurria, Maxwell, & Wang, 2004; Moran, 2010; O’Connor, 2012; Rao, 2010; Straubhaar, 2008), music that projects unfamiliar sounds and styles (Taylor, 1997), and products that are altogether unfamiliar or seemingly unnecessary (Hamelink, 1983). This local adaptation of cultural products embraces the ideals of globalization, yet takes a more nuanced approach. Rejecting theories of cultural imperialism, Robertson (1992, 1995) offers the idea of “glocalization,” whereby local cultures adapt and redefine global products and processes to suit their particular values, beliefs, and customs. This complex interaction of the global and the local is influenced by cultural borrowing, hybrid practices, and the nuanced ways in which societies adapt products and processes to their own likeness and desires (Appadurai, 2013; Kraidy, 2005; Robertson, 2012).
In tandem, glocalization impacts the production of cultural products, as well as the ways in which local audiences are constructed. Advertisements and other forms of promotional culture are increasingly adapted and redefined in nuanced ways within various cultures. In fact, marketers and advertisers have hijacked the term “glocalization,” ostensibly to justify their movement into new cultural markets for financial growth. To this end, the processes of glocalization are shaped by advertisers’ imaginations of various audiences. Robertson (2012) claims that glocalization “involves the construction of increasingly differentiated consumers, the ‘invention’ of ‘consumer traditions’…” (p. 194). This celebratory perspective suggests that globalization and localization are not at odds resulting in a homogenized culture, but that globalization has increasingly involved the incorporation of locality in nuanced ways. The concept of glocalization has been used as a lens to explore film, television, music, and other cultural products, but critical intervention into the localizing of brands is lacking. Additionally, while the processes of advertising have been explored in various contexts, these endeavors do not encompass glocal advertising campaigns, processes, and producers.

The purpose of this dissertation is 1) to critically explore how contemporary advertisers are operating within a glocal framework to diffuse product information and branding to diverse, distant consumers; and 2) to assess the implications of these processes for consumer-audiences. Similar to Serazio’s (2013) in-depth analysis of the increasingly interactive advertising industry, this project will offer a “second-order study of audiences,” providing insight into how advertisers and other cultural producers and
stakeholders think about and conceptualize audiences within the context of this global/local nexus. This project draws upon in-depth interviews with advertising professionals and other global stakeholders, such as brand creatives, executive chefs, footwear development specialists, and global research and development leaders, as well as on industry trade reports, press articles, and academic research to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What approaches do advertisers utilize to diffuse global (or multinational) product information and branding to local audiences?

RQ2: How do these processes shape the creation and distribution of cultural products (i.e., advertising campaigns)?

RQ3: How do these processes impact the way advertisers imagine and target audiences and what are the cultural implications of these constructions?

The findings of this study shed light on how advertising producers imagine their work, their role within that work, and how producers construct the audiences who consume their products. This project uncovers how the processes of global information diffusion impact partnerships between “headquarters” and local offices, the way in which messages are adapted for various audiences, how these messages are extolled around the world, and conversely, what messages, stories, or cultural values might be minimized or lost as a result of this current environment. These findings have significant implications because understanding the global production processes helps explain under what context campaigns were conceptualized, how decisions were made, and why certain campaigns
are more culturally relevant to local audiences. Beyond this, shedding light on the nuances of global brand diffusion points to larger trends in glocal advertising, and more broadly, the future of advertising on a global scale. Additionally, these findings are critical because advertisers are often creating content for audiences they have never met, making assumptions about their habits, values, and buying patterns, and this research seeks to examine to what extent content creators relate to the people they are marketing to and if this is problematic.

By focusing on the glocal production of promotional culture, this project addresses significant gaps in both the critical advertising studies and globalization literatures. First, although the processes of glocalization have been explored within other cultural industries, including television (Adriaens & Biltereyst, 2012; Moran, 2010; O’Connor, 2012; Straubhaar, 2008), Hollywood film (Baltruschat, 2010; Miller et al, 2004; Rao, 2010), and music (Taylor, 1997), critical interventions into the localization of global brands is lacking. Studies of advertising are especially crucial given the global nature of advertising holding companies, especially given that the five biggest global holding agencies (WPP, Omnicom, Publicis, Interpublics, Dentsu) employ well over a quarter million employees worldwide with annual revenues exceeding $57.4 billion (“Agency Family Tree,” 2016; Hepburn, 2012). For instance, the largest holding company, WPP, owns over 100 prominent agencies with a presence in over 120 countries (Hepburn, 2012).
Additionally, with the exception of a few notable contributions to the 
glocalization conversation (e.g., Robertson, 1992, 1995, 2012), few studies consider how 
brands are localized from a production of culture perspective in which global producers 
must navigate advantageous partnerships, fast-evolving technologies, and cultural 
nuances every step of the process. Finally, as transnational brands continue to grow and 
influence cultural practices (see Klein, 2009), their ability to construct audiences is an 
important area for researchers, cultural producers, and policy makers to better understand, 
especially as social media platforms and other digital applications provide producers with 
the capacity to engage with consumers in ways previously unseen. Characterized with an 
undertone of ambivalence, this study thus has implications for both producers and 
consumers because global cultural flows impact not only the processes through which 
advertisers adapt global campaigns, but also the ways in which consumers are 
conceptualized as a result of these processes.

Literature Review

This project will engage with and build upon two bodies of literature: 1). critical 
studies of advertising production and 2). theories of globalization, specifically inquiring 
into the processes of glocalization. Before diverging into these two bodies of literature, it 
is worth underscoring the historical developments that have led to the current free-
flowing, global marketplace where the media and cultural industries maneuver liberally. 
The free-flowing and broad-reaching nature of these industries contributes not only to the 
global imaginary (people’s growing consciousness of a globally connected world), but
also directly to globalization’s economic, political, and cultural impact—both positive and negative—on societies across the globe.

**The Emergence of the Global Capitalist System**

The contemporary global economic system can be traced back to the assemblage of world leaders at an economic conference held in Bretton Woods in 1944, toward the end of World War II. Led by the United States and Great Britain, major economic powers of the global North agreed to reverse previously instated regulations and policies stifling the advancement of international trade. Beyond a firm commitment to expanding international trade, such measures included decreasing high tariffs on imports, creating a more stable currency exchange system, which was a fixed gold value pegged to the US dollar, and most importantly, the conference participants established agreed upon binding rules that would govern international economic endeavors (Schifferes, 2008). The Bretton Woods conference also instituted The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, later known as the World Bank, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, later succeeded by the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Helleiner, 2010; Schifferes, 2008; Steger, 2009). These three new international economic organizations oversaw various parts of the international trade system to include administration of the new system, loan dissemination for reconstruction and later, development projects, as well as the overseeing and enforcement of trade agreements. The system coming out of Bretton Woods operated successfully for almost three decades, allowing national governments to control money flows in and out of their
regions, while also benefitting from looser international trade regulations (Schifferes, 2008; Steger, 2009). However, the Bretton Woods system, which fostered the beginning of global economic relations, eventually collapsed in the early 1970s, ushering in a new kind of economic order based on expanding free markets and neoliberal values.

Rooted in the classical liberal ideals of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, neoliberalism conceptualizes the market as a self-regulating system tending toward equilibrium of supply and demand (Steger, 2009). In other words, these British philosophers and other neoliberal proponents view any constraint on free competition as an interference with the system’s natural efficiency. David Harvey (2005), in his comprehensive look at the history of neoliberalism, claims that neoliberalism “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (p. 2). The neoliberal revolution was catapulted in the 1980s under the leadership of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan “consciously linking the notion of globalization to the ‘liberation’ of economies around the world” (Steger, 2009, p. 40). Within this neoliberal revolution three significant developments related to globalization took place—greater internationalization of trade and finance, the intensification of power of transnational companies, and the enhanced role of international economic institutions like the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO (Harvey, 2005; Schifferes, 208; Steger, 2009).
Of relevance to this particular study, the internationalization of trade and finance, as well as the increasing power of transnational companies (TNC) fostered an infrastructure that allowed global cultural products, like advertising campaigns, to traverse the globe with more ease and momentum than ever before. In 1970, roughly 7,000 transnational companies had subsidiaries in other countries; by 2006 that number skyrocketed to 78,000 (Steger, 2009, see p. 49). Because of the exponential growth of TNCs, advertising shortly followed in an effort to introduce new audiences to new products, services, and companies. According to Dal Yong (2008), in his comprehensive examination of global mergers and acquisitions within the communications industry, cross-border deals have increased exponentially with the advertising industry being the most active sector. Between 1983 and 2005 cross-border deals in advertising accounted for 31.2 percent of all mergers and acquisitions within the communications industry.

The neoliberal movement was transformational in providing TNCs access to new audiences, thus dramatically propelling the role of advertising and advertising agencies in the way cultural products moved around the world. Neoliberal policies maximize the role of markets and profit-making, minimizing the role of other institutions through deregulation and privatization (Dal Yong, 2008). In turn, these policies have greatly expanded and enhanced corporate profit-making opportunities, which are accompanied by global advertising campaigns and other branding strategies to acclimate new, global audiences to a wider range of products and services (Jain & Roy, 2012; Kalliny, 2012;
Thomas, 1998). With increasing privatization, deregulation, and international trade the utilitarian ideals that once ushered in international trade took a back seat.

An underlying thread in neoliberal ideals is the notion of competition—between nations, regions, corporations, as so on. As political social scientist Susan George (2000) asserts,

Competition is central because it separates the sheep from the goats, the men from the boys, the fit from the unfit. It is supposed to allocate all resources, whether physical, natural, human or financial with the greatest possible efficiency.

Because competition is always a virtue, its results cannot be bad. For the neo-liberal, the market is so wise and so good that like God, the Invisible Hand can bring good out of apparent evil.

Consequently, Margaret Thatcher once said in a speech, "It is our job to glory in inequality and see that talents and abilities are given vent and expression for the benefit of us all" (George, 2000). In other words, some people will get left behind in the competitive struggle—and this is not only acceptable to neoliberals, but required. People are unequal by nature, claim neoliberalists, but this is satisfactory because the contributions of the best-educated, the most networked, and the most resilient, will eventually benefit everyone. As Thatcher and neoliberal ideology (Harvey, 2005; Smith, 2012) asserts, “nothing in particular is owed to the weak, the poorly educated, what happens to them is their own fault, never the fault of society” (George, 2000). If the competitive system is "given vent" as Thatcher says, society as a whole will be the
beneficiary. As worldwide competition heated up, so did the competition for global audiences and their attention, thus bringing the advertising industry into the fold in a more intense way. In fact, recent work by Aronczyk (2013) highlighted the ways in which even national governments turned to advertising to secure their international reputations amongst global audiences.

It is with this foundation in mind that we turn more specifically to studies of advertising production within the culture industries. As will be made evident going forward, these themes not only provide a historical framework for studying glocal advertising, but also serve as a connector between the two following major bodies of literature.

**Critical Studies of Advertising Production within the Cultural Industries**

The study of media production, an expanding field of research for scholars, has seen a recent resurgence, linked to dramatic shifts in technologies of production, blurred boundaries around what constitutes creative work, and continued investments in policy initiatives (such as the UK Creative Industries Council). Media production studies consider media texts, audiences, and media industries important sites of investigation, with this study exploring the nature of industrial work, specifically advertising production. In tandem to critical studies of advertising production is an important backdrop provided by scholars from the Frankfurt School, who called into question the increasing linkages amongst capitalism, consumerism, and advertising.
These neo-Marxists philosophers, who hailed from the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt in Germany in 1923, and later relocated to the United States, saw capitalism not only as a system that created inequalities, but also as an ideology that used exploitation to meet its goals. The motivation and primary objective of the Frankfurt School was to reconceptualize Marxist theory to address developments in the 20th century including the global dominance of industrial capitalism, the rise of electronic media and popular culture, and the rise of fascism (Arato & Gebhardt, 1978). Major contributors, to include Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Leo Lowenthal, and Eric Fromm, used their platform to critique the emergence of modern society and to encourage challenging the status quo. In other words, the Frankfurt School reconceptualized Marxism as a critique of the enlightenment (see Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972). For the Frankfurt School, critical theory was an important and essential form of resistance.

While Frankfurt School scholars have a strong foundation in orthodox Marxist theory, they eventually distanced themselves from a focus on the economy and directed their attention to what they perceived as an underdeveloped portion of Marxist theory—the function and importance of culture and ideology and the rise of technology (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972; Marcuse, 1964). Frankfurt School scholars argued that modern capitalism did not unfold the way Marx predicted; in fact, modern capitalism acquired a certain stability and continuity in contemporary society. Thus, the Frankfurt School argued that the staying power of capitalism is due to the pervasive nature of
consumerism and the ‘culture industry’ (a term coined by Adorno) (Arato & Gebhardt, 1978). Central to the Frankfurt School’s argument is that the working classes have been pacified into capitalism, largely accomplished by the culture industry and popular culture. Adorno (1975) believed that the culture industry shapes the tastes and preferences of the masses, thereby molding their consciousness into a desire for “false needs.” Particularly identified with the work of Marcuse (1964, 1972), and the School in general, the concept of false needs is based upon the assumption that people have true or real needs such as the need to “be creative, independent and autonomous agents, in control of their own destinies, fully participating members of meaningful and democratic collectivities, able to live free and relatively unconstrained lives, and to think for themselves” (Strinati, 2004, p. 54-55); however, a modern capitalist system, by its very nature, can never truly meet people’s real needs. On the contrary, the development of false needs is the means of survival for a capitalist system, suppressing the realization and satisfaction of true needs. This concept’s roots in the Marxist theory of commodity fetishism is evident—as commodities of all kinds become more available, they become more capable of dominating people’s consciousness (Arato & Gebhardt, 1978). False needs, manifested and sustained in a modern capitalist system, are closely linked with consumerism, and thus, modern capitalism must continuously create and satisfy false needs to continuously distract from unsatisfied real needs. Creating false needs is a central function of the culture industry, claim Frankfurt School scholars, and advertising plays a fundamental role in propagating the desire to fulfill these false needs. Raymond
Williams (1980) calls this *magic*. He suggests that contemporary advertising can transform commodities into signifiers of the things a society desires most. Williams (1980) warns that advertising is “the official art of modern capitalist society,” (p. 221) suggesting that because advertising maintains such a powerful place in culture, its purpose, processes and structures, and infiltration into minds and homes should not be taken at face value, mirroring the caution of Frankfurt scholars.

It is this underpinning that provides a backdrop for advertising production studies; however, it is first important to acknowledge the field of study from which they hail—media and cultural production studies.

**The industrial production of culture.** Researchers have long been fascinated with media production and the resulting implications of production processes for producers and consumers – from newspapers to magazine production to radio to television, to the numerous ways that media now connect people and continents online (Berkowitz, 1997; Duffy, 2013; Jenkins, 1992; Klinenberg, 2005; Schudson, 1989; Schudson, 1997; van Dijk, 1985). Much of the research from the 1970s to the 1990s was conducted from political economy and cultural studies perspectives, with production research seeing a more recent revival, specifically in regards to the discovery and exposure of the experiences of the creative worker community (Deuze, 2007; Hilmes, 2009). Cultural production researcher David Hesmondhalgh (2007) suggests that the reason for the recent growth in the field of production studies is due in part to the increasing ubiquity and influence of large media corporations. Companies like Apple,
Disney, and News Corp earning $156.6b, $42.3b, and $33.7b, respectively, dwarf the GDP of most countries (World Bank Group, 2014). And, although the media industry does not compare to the banking or automobile industries in size, their influence on society and culture cannot be understated. Emerging from the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the first group of researchers to address media production grew out of the post-war years with an emphasis on exploring the production of art and entertainment. According to Hesmondhalgh (2007), at the time, also considered were other ‘cultural’ forms such as science and religion with the purpose of deconstructing social practices, which may have otherwise been taken for granted.

Although frequently used interchangeably, it is worth noting the evolution of “The Culture Industry” to the cultural industries. Originally, the phrase, “The Culture Industry,” was a chapter title in Frankfurt School scholars, Horkheimer and Adorno’s (1944), book, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In a continued critique of modern capitalist society, their use of the term “culture” referred to “an ideal state with art, with special, exceptional forms of human creativity” (Hesmondhalgh, 2012, p. 24). However, in Adorno and Horkheimer’s opinion, culture had almost entirely been engulfed in the capitalist system, evolving into a commodity itself. Hesmondhalgh (2012) suggests that Culture and Industry were intended to be oppositional, but “the two had collapsed together.” Thus, Culture Industry. As the term became more widely used it was converted into the plural form “cultural industries,” which suggested not only a break away from a “unified field” in which the productions of culture all behaved similarly, but also
reflected the field as a “complex, ambivalent, and contested” one in which the power
dynamics between culture and industrialization ebb and flow (Hesmondhalgh, 2012).

Cultural production research has historically fallen into one of two competing
schools of thought (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). On the one hand, political economists seek to
explore both the production and consumption of symbols in modern societies, specifically
inquiring into questions of justice, power, and equality. However, political economists
“often choose to ignore the issue of textual meaning” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 40). On
the other hand, cultural studies approaches are most associated with the study of
audiences and texts, but can also be useful in understanding production practices and
processes. Levine (2001), for example, explored how media production scholarship might
inform and expand the realm of cultural studies by analyzing the production processes
and cultural implications of General Hospital. Like Levine, this arm of cultural studies
seeks to better illuminate the everyday or ordinary production practices (Havens & Lotz,
2012). Within the larger body of literature focusing on the industrial production of
culture, however, there have been some notable contributions to the field, which will be
discussed in the next sections.

Much of the cultural production research has tended to focus on the production of
television and film. Increasingly, however, these studies are shifting the lens away from
macro studies of systems, elite personnel, and ownership to a focus on the actual lives
and identities of media workers. John Caldwell (2008), for example, explored the cultural
practices of film and television workers in Los Angeles. His investigation revealed
important nuances to daily life in production including the significance of gossip and
anecdotes among the production crew and the negotiation of personal and collective
spaces. These storytelling rituals amongst practitioners play an important role in
normalizing and making sense of life on a film or television set (Caldwell, 2008).

Caldwell (2008) also gives an account of production workers below-the-line, such
as electricians and camera operators, as well as accounts of above-the-line workers and
the way these roles play out distinctly depending on one’s position and power. What is
significant about Caldwell’s work, however, is that he emphasizes how imperative it is
that all experiences be given credence—not just the experiences of the elite creatives. He
argues that even the lowest worker contributes to the production of culture in worthwhile
ways. Relatedly, Mayer (2011) urges researchers to consider the contributions of media
workers beyond the “select few” creative professionals orchestrating television’s
programming outputs. Through Mayer’s ethnographic fieldwork in Brazil, she brings to
the forefront contributions from female assembly line workers. She also highlights the
experiences of casting agents for reality television shows, recognizing the constant
balance that media workers in this role must exhibit—a friendly supporter to the public,
but also as a skilled professional, to show competence and proficiency, to television
stations and sponsors. Far removed from the executive or creative suite, the experience of
these workers is still worth considering says Mayer and fulfills her aim to “repoliticize
the ordinary” (2011, p. 186) by revealing issues of class, gender, and inequality.
Her argument, like Caldwell (2008), is that conventional paradigms ascribe creativity and professionalism to a limited few, when in actuality the net should be cast much wider. They also both recognize the changing media landscape and the impact of this shift on hierarchical structures—a shift that necessarily gives more access to more voices from more positions in life, yet at the same time offering even less professional security and stability. As it relates to this study, the experiences of local agencies differ markedly from the experiences of advertisers closely linked to campaign development and, in turn, the vision from headquarters. These local experiences, however, still have much to offer to production studies research and may in fact be treated similarly to “below the line” worker researcher providing a more nuanced look at advertising production processes.

Along the same vein, Holt and Perren (2009) and Mayer, Banks, and Caldwell (2010) have also contributed substantially to the cultural production studies literature by focusing on the history of production studies, trends, and suggestions for future research within these fields. To their heed, many researchers (Banet-Weiser, 2011; Boulton, 2012; Deuze, 2007; Duffy, 2013; Serazio, 2013) have undertaken considerable projects exploring media production and the implications for how producers define their roles, environments, and processes, and furthermore, how cultural production affects larger spaces and audiences throughout society. For instance, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011), in their interviews with professionals working in television, music recording, and magazine publishing in the UK, uncovered that one of the biggest industrial tensions was
the constant *precarious* state of many contract-based media workers due to factors such as movement of labor offshore, tenets of neoliberalism, economic instability, and the “free” provision of content via audiences. Thus, professionally, contract-based media workers must come to grips with the reality that creative work is precarious, and this must be negotiated and renegotiated by each media worker over time.

Likewise, Deuze (2007) employs Zygmunt Bauman’s framework of *liquid life* to further describe the precarious state of media workers. Deuze contends that before the twenty-first century most people were able to categorize their lives in buckets: life, work, play. However, an environment with light-speed technological and innovative shifts, high competition, and changes in daily interactions have forced these buckets to overflow into one another. The distinction amongst the buckets is blurred not because the distinctions do not exist, but because modern society is one where flux, change, and uncertainty *are* the conditions of everyday life. Deuze (2007) contends that, “Living and working in the media is inherently confusing, as mediated experience blurs what is private and what is public, what is local and what is global, what is work and what is play.” (p. 42) Duffy (2013) also considers the precarious state of those in media production work; however, her in-depth analysis of the magazine industry, in particular, explores how shifts in technology are now impacting roles, audiences, and products—a powerful force added to an already complex industrial landscape. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008, 2011) likewise consider the constant tension between commerce and creativity—that persistent balance between wanting to express and utilize creative skills, while at the same time attempting
to communicate that creativity within the confines of a commerce based industry. All of these tensions impact the way projects are undertaken, who gets final say, and ultimately, the product audiences receive, which, as it relates to this study, suggests that advertising production processes might also face similar challenges.

**International production studies of culture.** While this research project seeks to address significant gaps in the advertising production literature in terms of glocalization, there have been some notable global studies of cultural production, albeit most of which focus on television and film. Curtin (2007), for example, situates the effects of globalization on Greater China’s film and TV industry concluding that while the Chinese film and TV industry is poised to reach a larger audience than ever, executives and producers first must understand and overcome long-standing traditions of paternalism and lack of creativity in media works. Much of their creative works offer imitation rather than creation, and unlike film and television industries from the United States and the United Kingdom, Greater China’s media market is heavily influenced by government policy. Similarly, Baltruschat (2010), illustrated by focusing on the American and Canadian versions of the popular *Idol* franchise, considered the way networked productions – across industries and countries – are shifting business processes across international cultural industries. Meanwhile, Landman (2010) too, explored how networked productions are influenced by location and local production processes, specifically by analyzing the Sci Fi series, *Farscape*, filmed and produced in Australia via a “co-venture” with American and other foreign investors and made for American TV (The Sci
Relatedly, Kraidy and Sender (2011) investigated how reality television formats are adapted around the globe and the tensions that arise from the meanings and values of reality television across an array of national, local, gender, class, and religious contexts.

Dawson and Holmes (2012), building on and substantiating the work of Mayer (2011), also explored the challenges faced by media workers historically and globally. They consider the industrial side of media production by engaging with themes such as division of labor, systemic obstructions, and lack of creative agency, particularly in the film and television industries. In his contribution, Dawson (2012) discusses how Hollywood was able to “thrive” despite the studio breakup because it fostered a culture of “leveraging risk,” manifested through outsourced production services down to a pool of smaller businesses competing for project contracts. However, what Dawson claims is that now the burden of that risk has been placed upon the small businesses and the freelance labor force, not the big studios, and thus, has negatively impacted the lives of these media workers. Even though it appears as if Hollywood is thriving, Dawson (2012) asserts that it is at the expense of the creative work force and the below-the-line laborers.

Together, these works indicate the growing consciousness and impact of globalization on the processes of media production, the end result of the product itself, and the way audiences consume and react to media with transnational features. While the previous production studies encompass television, film, magazine, and journalism experiences, research into the fields of marketing and advertising have also bore some
valuable insight into how the corporate and creative divisions come together to promote, market, and sell the products culled by armies of media workers.

**Advertising production studies.** David Hesmondhalgh (2012), in his detailed investigation into the cultural industries, claims that advertising and marketing have a special place amongst the “core cultural industries” because they “tend to have a greater functional element as they are intended to sell and promote other products” (p. 13). He contends that advertisers create texts requiring the use, manipulation, and creativity involved in the work of crafting symbols, much like other media production industries such as television and magazines. Advertising production studies have been approached from many different angles, especially in light of significant industrial factors such as the rise in hypercommericalism, shifts in distribution, specifically regarding digital technologies, and the ways in which advertising has infiltrated almost every aspect of life.

Advertising production studies scholarship has more recently focused on the actual experiences and daily activities of advertising professionals and workplaces, rather than macro-level perspectives on industry trends (see Frank, 1998). Understanding some of the cultural nuances of working in the advertising industry provides insight into not only how the industry functions, but how the industrial culture of advertising then impacts brand creation, campaigns, and the eventual products to which consumers are exposed. For example, Nixon (2003) argues that in order to understand the full impact of advertising, there needs to be a deeper understanding of the workplace cultures of people
engaged in creative advertising. He suggests that often in discussions of advertising, scholars are too quick to make overgeneralizations about developments or macro shifts affecting the industry as a whole, rather than considering the way agencies cultivate a culture from within that is then reflected in the work and advertisements being produced. Issues such as racism and inequality in agencies (Boulton, 2012), excessive workload with inadequate time to accomplish creative tasks (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011), and the constant reconstruction of audiences from passive to active consumers (Deuze, 2007) also shape both the processes and products of advertising professionals.

Specifically addressing advertising production culture, Deuze’s (2007) liquid life, or the blurring of boundaries between work, play, and life, is a constant due to shifts in technologies and the way this impacts professionalism, networks, and how consumers are viewed. Advertising is expected to be on multiple platforms, with multiple tie-ins, while professionals face a loss of control over content and messaging due to word-of-mouth, viral, and online buzz-generating techniques. At a time when the creative elite are expected to have robust Twitter accounts, blogs, and elite networks of personal and professional connections, the effects of globalization, digitization, and convergence on the media industries cannot be understated. These effects, reports Deuze (2007), point to an environment where change is the only constant and the line between personal and professional lives is hard to draw, thus making life in the cultural industries a rewarding one, but one that is increasingly precarious and demanding.
While Deuze (2007) briefly discusses the death of mass advertising, recent interventions into advertising production have considered this issue more fully. Turow (2006, 2011) has extensively examined how new technologies are impacting the way organizations interact with consumers. The commonly held, and often celebrated, position is that digital media are allowing consumers to customize their experience. IKEA, for example, allows consumers to “customize” their kitchens or bedrooms, but in actuality consumers choose options from mass produced hardware. Turow (2006) suggests, however, that companies like IKEA let you “personalize” your experience because in actuality, businesses and retailers are able to collect a great deal of information about consumers this way.

Turow (1998, 2006) also discusses the changing interaction between advertising and television noting how advertisers have moved to product placement, interactive ads, and digital ads projected on walls during sporting events as ways to get viewers to pay attention in a “DVR era.” Advertising continues to seek new ways to connect with audiences via the digital landscape, due in part to the waning of mass advertising’s effectiveness. Correspondingly, Serazio (2013) also finds that advertisers are increasingly employing guerilla marketing strategies to reach those seemingly elusive audiences. Guerilla marketing, says Serazio (2013), is advertising that does not look like advertising, but instead incorporates nontraditional elements, which rely on some factor of surprise or creativity or engagement in a way that audiences are not expecting. This “stealth” kind of marketing appears more underground, organic, and subtle—a much different approach.
than previous mass communication conventions and more semblance of a PR mentality. This trend is often used to localize global campaigns in a subtle way that’s not meant to feel like advertising; and this theme, as expected, emerged from my interviews.

Thus far, the research being considered has focused on the processes of advertising production and what effects these processes have on daily activities, campaigns, and strategic planning inside advertising agencies and departments. While this provides rich and valuable insight into how advertisers function, adapt, create, and morph within the industry itself, there is also another pertinent side of advertising production studies, which focuses the lens away from how advertising impacts the production process to the impact of advertising on audience construction.

**Audience construction.** A separate but related stream of literature has explored how advertising responds to the perceived needs of consumers as well as the social implications of the industrial construction of audiences. Interrogating a popular pattern for advertisers, Frank (1998) and Gloor and Cooper (2007) examined the trend of “cool hunting,” or identifying and creating a young, hip counterculture to target. Frank’s (1998) rather cynical approach to counterculture provides an early look into how big business managed to coopt counterculture by associating products and brands with rebellion or revolution. In his assessment of sixties youth culture, Frank (1998) exclaims that a real, robust counterculture actually came to fruition as advertisers defined the counterculture, figured out how to connect with this audience, and then created campaigns that linked products to their newfound sense of obsolescence. Gloor and Cooper (2007), approaching
cool hunting from a slightly different angle, also remark on the trend, namely as a strategy to help businesses sell products and services. They contend that if an advertiser or marketer can accurately pinpoint the trendsetting crowd or “catalysts of cool,” they can better cater their advertising to attract these kinds of consumers. All of these researchers indicate that audiences, and their values, are constantly being constructed and imagined by advertisers in order to more accurately sell them products that fulfill their every desire.

According to Turow (1998, 2006, 2011), this quest for cool has essentially never wavered, except now advertisers are more advanced; he advocates that marketers are now defining our identities for us, aggressively targeting the most desirable consumers. This fast-evolving approach to knowing consumers marks a significant change in the relationship between advertisers and their audiences. What Turow (2006) points out is a shift away from an open commerce environment to the “emergence of a new industrial logic,” (p. 180) prompting advertisers to view database marketing as the solution to reach consumers with more efficacy. The problem, asserts Turow (2006), is that database marketing is made possible by gathering copious amounts of information about consumers, sometimes in ways they are not made aware of. Once seen as unfathomable that websites would track users’ every move, now, especially to younger generations, some users appreciate, for example, Netflix’s ability to suggest “similar” movies, or Amazon’s propensity for suggesting “Books You May Like.” While some audiences rave about these “features,” Turow (2006) purports that this trend has made audiences increasingly suspicious. Consumers must now navigate price differences between online
and brick-and-mortar stores, and the reality is that different consumers are exposed to different prices depending on a variety of factors. This price discrimination often makes consumers envious of others whose profiles render better prices, bigger sales, and more worthwhile deals. This desirability factor is in turn affecting how consumers view themselves. Turow (2006) writes “…somehow the marketplace is deeply involved in defining an important basis for belonging in society” (p. 3). When advertisers construct audiences into desirables versus undesirables this discrimination has implications for how audiences view themselves and others.

This ideology underpins the work of Banet-Weiser (2011), who claims that brands are now more than a business model—they are informing the cultural context for everyday living. Banet-Weiser argues that instead of positioning brand culture as either commercial and inauthentic or noncommercial and authentic there is a place that exists in the middle—a place of ambivalence (p. 14). Unlike the point of view of No Logo’s Naomi Klein (2009), who took a strong stance that global consumer culture has coopted everything real and authentic, Banet-Weiser thoughtfully considers the space where “brand culture is culture, complete with competing power relations and individual production and practice” (p. 13, emphasis added). In considering historically “authentic” areas of life once protected from commercialism, such as religion, creativity, politics, and the self, she observes that these too have become subject to branded spaces. Because anything deemed commercialistic is typically equated with inauthenticity, as Frankfurt School scholars claimed, Banet-Weiser’s (2011) work is important because it casts a
wider net where authenticity is understood as the pure inner identity of the individual, but also in relationship with brand culture. She says that unlike commodification or commercialization, branding is different—“it is deeply, profoundly cultural.” (p. 14). The way audiences see themselves, argues Banet-Weiser, is deeply in relationship with brands—so much so that individuals’ relationships with brands are impacting how they see integral pieces of their inner core, what makes up each person’s authentic self.

Serazio (2013), too, shows that traditional advertising models have been debunked in favor of an emerging media environment in which advertisers seek to be more covert in constructing their audiences. These quiet strategies infiltrate, as Banet-Weiser (2011) also suggests, places once previously thought to be noncommercial or even protected from commercialization. These guerilla marketing strategies, to use Serazio’s term, seek to engage consumers in surreptitious ways that don’t “feel” like advertising such as product placement, alternative outdoor, word-of-mouth, and consumer-generated approaches. Serazio (2013) says that guerilla marketing strategies are reworking the conventional model of mass communication, rethinking how audiences might be managed. “For better or worse,” says Serazio (2013), “commercial objects do play a meaningful role in people’s lives, and they do seem to act as communicative tools” (p. 166). However, he calls the formation of identity through only consumption a “Sisyphean quest,” since, after all, the capitalist marketplace exists to sell products meant only for ephemeral contentment so that consumers repeat the cycle frequently. Drawing on Frankfurt School theories, Serazio (2013) suggests that despite an apparent shift in
power from advertisers to consumers, there exists a robust “regime of governance that accommodates yet structures participatory agency” (p. 2-3), meaning that audiences are still actively managed and constructed by advertisers despite feeling they have more agency. As Frankfurt School scholars observed, with the rise of the culture industry’s propensity for creating and then satisfying false needs, everything seemingly individualized is an illusion; individualization is a process that conceals the practice of standardization. It’s simply, as Serazio (2013) claims, just advertising not meant to look like advertising.

Together, these studies reveal how imaginations of audiences impact the production of advertising campaigns and how consumers see themselves and others, not only reifying social divisions, but also infiltrating the core of what makes up an individual’s identity. If a user somehow figures out their profile is undesirable, what ripple effects will this have on self-evaluation, community relationships, and potential future purchase decisions? The social implications for audiences are looming, and suspicion, trust, and envy are growing – of brands, of advertisers, and of other consumers. Despite the strength of these studies, their focus on U.S. cultures overlooks the ways in which advertising is operating within a glocal framework. With the bending of time and space brought on by technology, innovation, and globalization, the audience has taken on new and profound meaning.

Globalization Theory
Over the past forty years, scholars have shown significant interest in the forces and implications of globalization, conducting research that sheds new light on the ways societies are connected economically, politically, and more recently, culturally. However, despite significant scholarly attention, globalization remains a complex, contested topic. Scholars hailing from opposing schools of thought argue whether globalization is a singular process or a multi-dimensional set of processes, and also whether globalization is a new, post-industrial concept, spurred on by neoliberal ideals and emerging technologies, or if globalization is in fact a phenomenon that has been unfolding for centuries.

One of the earliest thinkers in theorizing global interconnectedness was Immanuel Wallerstein, a sociologist who developed a “world systems approach” in the 1970s. The central premise of Wallerstein’s ideas, which were captured in three books: The Modern World System, Volumes I, II and III, is that between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries “a single world economy developed, based on capitalism, and an integrated society, which was increasingly planet-wide in scope” (Jones, 2010, p. 22). Wallerstein suggested that a global-scale singular world system emerged that replaced all other prior forms of organization on earth – including more isolated economic and political structures. While many of Wallerstein’s ideas have been challenged, for a variety of reasons, his work is arguably most important to the globalization conversation because he proposed the first holistic framework for theorizing the nature of developing global interconnectedness.
Over time, most globalization scholars have come to agree on a few key facets of “what” globalization is. As Wallerstein conceptualized, the first characteristic involves the “creation of new, and the multiplication of existing, social networks and activities that cut across traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographical borders” (Steger, 2009, p. 14). The second characteristic of globalization reflects the “expansion and the stretching of social relations, activities and interdependencies” (Steger, 2009, p. 14). These first two qualities, are similarly, reflected in the work of Anthony Giddens, one of the most important contributors to early globalization theory. Giddens (1990) defines globalization as the amplification of worldwide social relations that links distant regions in such a way that daily happenings are influenced by events occurring on the other side of the world. This intensification Giddens refers to is due to the transformation of time and space brought on by modernity. Giddens believed that the phenomenon of globalization cannot be separated from the context of modernity. He theorized the process by which time and space stretches—local cultures and faraway places are connected through what he called time-space distanciation (Giddens, 1990). Giddens’ framework offers one of the most significant foundations for globalization theory by providing a set of theoretical concepts for understanding what globalization is, where it came from, and how to hypothesize about it (Jones, 2010).

Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (2000), who define globalization as the spreading, broadening, and increased rapidity of worldwide interconnectedness throughout all aspects of modern social life – cultural, spiritual, economic, commercial,
and political, also mirror Steger’s (2009) and Giddens (1990) opinion on the topic, who claim that the stretching of both space and time are one of the foundational building blocks of globalization. Held and McGrew were the first researchers that attempted to define contemporary globalization theory, making their contribution noteworthy because they provided a framework in which researchers can attempt to place all other globalization scholars.

The third characteristic, according to Steger (2009) involves the “intensification and acceleration of social exchanges and activities,” is realized through the work of Manual Castells’ (2004) and the notion of the network society, which attempts to structure how communication technologies impact the speed at which global flows take place. Manual Castells’ work is similar to Wallerstein’s and Giddens’ in that he wanted to understand the transformation of society within the environment of modernity – namely through a communication technologies context, but he differs from these scholars in that his work does not put forth an “all-encompassing globalization theory,” rather he veers toward discussing various “dimensions” of globalization in specific contexts. Castells defines the network society as “a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies” (Castells, 2004, p. 3). Castells’ conceptualization of an interconnected world stems from his formation of time and space, much like the framework purported by Giddens. What is most imperative about Castell’s contribution is that the focus of his
conceptualization moves the discussion away from physical places to the possibility of a
globalized social world made possible through readily available technological means.

Lastly, globalization scholars agree that the rise of the global imaginary, which
refers to people’s growing consciousness of living in a global world and the idea that
people’s frames of reference for identity, actions, and behaviors are increasingly global,
is inextricably linked to the globalization conversation. Derived from Giddens’ argument
that globalization must be conceptualized as a “powerful transformative force,” which
results in massive disruption through varying levels of society, Held et al. (2000), argue
that this disruption takes place beyond the economic sphere seeping into all corners of
society—including people’s growing global consciousness. For example, Steger (2009)
claims that the rise of the global imaginary is indistinguishably linked to the rise of global
media, while Appadurai (1996) says that the imaginary has taken on a range of new
attributes in the new global order. Held and McGrew (2007; see Held, McGrew,
Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999) agree, saying that globalization is reconstituting and re-
engineering relationships on local, regional, national, and international levels. The rise of
the global imaginary, in particular, was a strong, reverberating theme in my interviews
signifying how far the globalization conversation has come since the time of these early
globalization theorists.

Additionally, beyond agreeing on some of the characteristics of what
globalization is, there is also some consensus amongst scholars on several broader issues
surrounding the globalization debate. First, Jones (2010) claims that most of the key
thinkers on globalization now agree that “globalization is part of a much longer process of societal integration” (p. 12). He credits Hirst and Thompson’s (1996) critique of economic-based globalization as making it nearly impossible to argue that contemporary global society did not have its roots in earlier manifestations of the world capitalist economy. Secondly, major theorists (Castells, 2000; Giddens, 1990; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999; Steger, 2009) tend to agree that regardless of how globalization is defined it does amount to “something new.” This novelty could be speed, scale, our growing consciousness, or communication technologies, but nevertheless, something is qualitatively different than previous times. Thirdly, most key thinkers understand that globalization is having a complex impact on nation-states and political units. While most transformationalists agree that globalization is producing the need for nation-states to reconstitute their role, even less enthusiastic globalization scholars agree that nation-states will continue to play an important role as interconnectedness across the globe expands (Jones, 2010). Together, these studies not only make up the foundation of globalization theory, but also point to junctures where most globalization scholars agree. As it pertains to this study, having a historical foundation for how globalization, and thus glocalization, has developed—i.e., the stretching, intensifying, and accelerating of social relations—is imperative to understanding its effects and impact within a global advertising context.

What was frequently given peripheral treatment in the early globalization deliberation was how globalization influences cultural flows since much of the
Globalization research tended to emphasize political and economic factors (see Jones, 2010; Steger, 2009, p. i, 57). However, the dimension of culture has been brought into the conversation since the 1990s, largely through the contributions of Tomlinson (1999), Thompson (1995), Steger (2009) and Appadurai (1996), among others, although Dorfman and Mattelart (1984) explored the globalization of cultural icon, Donald Duck, as early as the mid-80s. Tomlinson (1999) defines culture as the ways in which humans construct meaning through symbolic practices, which include how people make sense of their identities, how they view themselves in relation to place, and how those processes thus impact shared desires, myths, and understanding. Appadurai (2013) claims that the “boundaries of cultural systems are leaky,” meaning that “…diversity, heterogeneity, and plurality” are critical features of culture in the globalization era (p. 181). Like Giddens and Held and McGrew, Appadurai’s perspective indicates that this detachment from place is heavily influencing culture and cultural identity. This detachment is related, in part, to global flows of communication, defined as the symbiosis of the global and the local, which differs according to particular cultural circumstances (Giulianotti, & Robertson, 2004; Robertson, 1995). In other words, a Scottish individual could be deeply impacted by the cultural messages of Adidas (Germany), Kraft (United States), or Toyota (Japan) if the advertising felt at once both local, familiar and globally relevant. Globalization, thus, diffuses advertising in powerful ways in which brands from distant locales are impacting cultures and cultural identity in ways that previously did not exist. Yet, the extent of that impact, or influence, is still hotly contested.
This dissertation advances these debates by exploring how transnational brands and advertising campaigns contribute to the processes of worldwide societal integration and the implications for both producers and consumers. While the literature reviewed here highlights some of the key thinkers on foundational globalization theory, the world has changed significantly since the work of these early scholars. Although many of the early globalization debates considered cultural flows peripherally, this dissertation work suggests cultural flows are just as impactful as economic and political flows because the end of one flow and the beginning of the next are hard to decipher, creating an intricate web, rather than parallel streams of activity. In other words, the production and diffusion of culture is deeply tied to political, technological, and economic structures and processes. To separate one from the other would be likened to pulling the threads out of a shirt—without thread the shirt would cease to exist. Even more so, the cultural production of advertising has deep, historical links to political and economic processes, yet a rich, qualitative examination of global brands has not been previously fully explored. What this dissertation highlights is that the ways in which global producers construct their messages (what’s important in life, what’s not) and construct their audiences (potentially diminishing cultural difference) impacts not only the way audiences view themselves and others, but additionally, these processes can prompt shifts in audience behaviors or values, which can have intense ripple effects on other sectors in the global matrix. To that end, it is precisely the polysemic nature of global advertising
that impacts communities in both positive and negative capacities – a tricky mix of exploitation and engagement.

**Ads in a global context.** Diffusing ads across cultures is tricky business—even for the most seasoned advertising team. For example, when Gerber, a Nestle owned supplier of baby foods started selling their products in Africa, they decided to use the same packaging they did in the United States to advertise their products on food store shelves. Later, they discovered that many African companies, or regional partners, were placing photos inside the package to cover the text-heavy label since many Africans could not read fluently (Fromowitz, 2013). Relatedly, Nike was forced to recall thousands of their shoes when an embellishment on the back, which was intended to resemble fire, seemed to resemble the Arabic word for Allah (Jury, 1997). Obviously, these blunders are problematic for a number of reasons and point to why studying the localization of global campaigns is so critical for both consumers and producers. For example, this study might ask, ‘What assumptions did this campaign team make about the African audiences they were trying to market to?’ and ‘What kind of reaction was made to the local companies’ decision to place photos over the package labeling?’ This kind of critical intervention, and other projects hailing from the cultural industries, are broadly approached from one of two lenses—cultural imperialism or cultural globalization.

**Cultural imperialism/cultural globalization debate.** Much of the scholarship on global media and promotional culture can be structured around the debate between
cultural imperialism and cultural globalization. The cultural imperialism thesis suggests that certain cultures threaten to dominate and overwhelm other more susceptible cultures (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 80). Tomlinson (1991) argues, “‘Imperialism’ grasps a specific form of domination, that associated with ‘empire’” (p. 19). This issue is different from inequality because inequality means that one has more than another – for example, America has more resources than Mexico. However, imperialism is quite another issue in that, imperialism is the forcible control or power of one nation over another.

Additionally, Herbert Schiller (1976, 1991), one of the most well-known writers on cultural and media imperialism, purports that cultural imperialism is best described as the sum of processes that modernizes societies, brings them into the modern world system fold, and forces, pressures, or bribes them into shaping social institutions, values, and infrastructures in the likeness of the dominating center. Imperialism, at the intersection of capitalism and globalization, can take many forms, such as cultural imperialism – the reality that most of the movies shown around the world come from Hollywood, California, or economic imperialism – the idea of capitalist expansion at the expense of other models. Alternatively, having grown out of cultural imperialism schools of thought, cultural globalization sees influence as multidirectional coming from many sides. Furthermore, although global media scholars are divided in determining to what extent influence happens, most agree that imperialism does not accurately define the complex nature of global cultural flows and cultural exchange happening around the world. It is this intersection where glocalization better defines the complex attraction
between cultural texts, such as movies, television programming, magazines, and advertising, and various global audiences.

**Cultural imperialism and advertising.** Cultural imperialism, however, has historically been linked to the role of advertising in globalization processes. Globalization is a powerful force catapulting advertising worldwide, encompassing a complex practice of the cultural, the economic, and the political (Jain & Roy, 2012). This domination can take many forms such as “the West over the rest,” the core over the periphery, and capitalism over almost everything. Cultural imperialism also suggests that certain media, structures, institutions, and organizations tend to dominate global flows, and typically, these come from advanced industrialized nations, such as the United States. In discussing the views of notable scholar Herbert Schiller, Tomlinson (1999) says Schiller equates capitalist culture with American culture or as Schiller exclaims, “homogenized North Atlantic cultural slop” (p. 81), lamented during a time of vast political growth in America’s economic prowess and international reach. Advertising plays a role in the processes of globalization in many significant ways, three of which I will discuss here, given its relevance to this project.

First, advertising is strongly linked to the notion of deterritorialization. Tomlinson (1999) defines deterritorialization as the “complex connectivity” that “weakens ties of culture to place.” He contends that this concept involves the “simultaneous penetration of local worlds by distant forces, and the dislodging of everyday meanings from their ‘anchors’ in the local environment” (p. 29). Giddens, too, places a great deal of emphasis
on the disembedding process, the “lifting out” of social relations from their local and physical environments and reconstituted by interactions from distant, disembedded places. Giddens asserts that modernity has allowed social relations to break free of the constrictions of face-to-face, local societies. The disembedding processes do not imply that people cease to live their lives in ‘real’ localities, but rather that their localities are increasingly colored by faraway influences. This juncture is where advertising plays an integral role. The role of advertising in underdeveloped countries has been criticized for “providing a need” where there was previously no need (Hamelink, 1983). For example, there are a variety of unnecessary household products readily available, but until an advertisement shows the need – the need is not recognized. Just as Tomlinson (1999) says that globalization is affecting the character of localities, it is the localities that are most dominated by advertising’s imperialistic claims. This is because advertising infiltrates people’s homes, living rooms, and cars, and even though a movie was made a million miles away it can still be heavily promoted in one’s hometown. This suggests that advertising plays a key role in serving as a conduit for exposing localities to various products and ways of life – an effect of how advertising producers imagine the alleged needs of their audiences.

An example of how advertising might serve as a conduit for exposure to various ways of life, Wang (2013) claims that there are more cell phones in India than toilets. According to a U.N. report, about half of India’s population, roughly 1.2 billion people are mobile phone subscribers, but only 366 million people have access to toilets, about
1/3 of their population. This flipped notion of the “needs” of daily life (i.e., a cellphone is more imperative to daily life than a toilet) has no doubt been impacted by the processes of globalization. This is not to suggest that advertising is the sole reason for this imbalance and lack of sanitary conditions; however, the role of advertising has unequivocally played a significant part in perpetuating the ideal that a cell phone is more important than basic sanitary needs.

Secondly, advertising can be viewed as a form of cultural imperialism because its promotion of mostly Westernized media content infiltrates the shelves and homes in foreign countries, making Western media dominant in many developing countries. In discussing whether globalization leads to more sameness or difference across cultures, Steger (2009) says that despite opposition to the spread of American popular culture, it seems to be unrelenting. Not only is advertising playing a role in the economic structure (through advertising supported media), but it is also promoting Westernized content into homes, and often this means at the expense of local, regional, or national programming (Hamelink, 1983; Moon & Park, 2007; Sinclair, 1987). So what seems to be left is a structural and cultural form of dominance by advertising, whose main purpose is to deliver audiences to clients (Smythe, 1981), and thus, sell more advertising to more obscure and far-flung audiences. This cyclical process is at the core of advertising and capitalism, according to the cultural imperialist perspective; however, this research seeks to take a more nuanced approach at the way advertising conceptualizes audiences and the implications that follow.
Lastly, cultural imperialist scholars claim that advertising serves to diffuse Western values and ethos, especially those of capitalism and consumption. From a globalization perspective, Tomlinson (1999) says that

Advertising texts…remain significant cultural texts. The way people make use of advertising texts may often be similar to the way they use novels or films. This is because they offer narratives (however ideologically suspect) of how life may be lived, references to shared notions of identity, appeals to self-image, pictures of ‘ideal’ human relations, versions of human fulfillment, happiness, and so on. (p. 18-19).

The less interaction, or mobility, a group of people has, the more likely they are to create imagined worlds through media, including advertising. Global media scholars (Appadurai, 1990; Darling-Wolf, 2015; Garcia Canclini, 2001; Shome, 2006), in fact, argue that “the notion of the global would not exist, at least not in its current form, without the media” (Darling-Wolf, 2015, p. X), suggesting that because very few people are able to accumulate extensive first-hand knowledge and experiences of various cultures, the media become a “crucial site on which impressions of ‘the global’ are formed and negotiated” (Darling-Wolf, 2015, p. X)

When it comes to western values, American values in particular, a culture of consumption reigns supreme with the idea that what you buy defines you. Schiller (1979) interprets the work of transnational corporations as almost entirely integrated in the capitalist world system and in terms of advertising’s role, he says: “They provide in their
imagery and messagery, the beliefs and perspectives that create and reinforce their audiences” (p. 30). The imagery and messages flow unevenly around the globe, and dependent economies in the Third World are affected in potentially negative ways. Hamelink (1983) lists three objections to the advertising practices of transnational corporations – that they intend to exploit economically, that they knowingly mislead and manipulate their audience in the Third World, and that they introduce unnecessary commodities and in the process suppress better ‘traditional’ products.” Dorfman and Mattelart, (1984) in analyzing the success of Donald Duck in underdeveloped countries ask, ‘How, in fact, does the American Dream travel?’ Their response is one which reflects the place from which cultural imports like Donald Duck come from, especially within the wider context of dependency among underdeveloped nations. The promotion of a culture of consumption, for example, is often diffused through advertising to places that are economically disadvantaged, that are being “sold” luxuries rather than necessities. Highly criticized by Frankfurt School scholars, what is essentially being taught is the American ethos that says, “self-actualization is achieved not through political participation or intellect or world awareness, but through consumption” (McAllister, 1996, p. 60). This conjuring up of “false needs” make advertising highly suspect.

While all of these views equate advertising, especially Westernized advertising, as historically culturally imperialist, this research seeks to take a more nuanced approach to advertising’s role in the global/local nexus, namely by considering how advertising seeks
to conceptualize and engage with global audiences rather than dominate them. To that end, this project seeks to challenge, as other scholars have (see Darling-Wolf, 2015), the global/local binary – where the local typically acts as “the global’s presumptive victim, its cultural nemesis, or its coerced subordinate” (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008, p. 339). Yet, while advertising has been discussed in light of some dynamics of globalization such as how factors like visuals and music enhance global campaigns (Jain & Roy, 2012), how advertisers need to pay close attention to cultural cues (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002), or even how national governments are relying on advertising to boost their legitimacy in an international arena (Aronczyk, 2013), considering the ways in which global campaigns are extenuated with local flavor has not been exhaustively studied. In turn, by taking a production studies lens to global advertising, this dissertation highlights the ambivalent and contradictory impact of cultural production processes on global campaigns, producers, and consumers.

**Processes of Glocalization**

Against this backdrop, scholars have sought to understand the processes of cultural reaction and reinvention of local cultural products. Rejecting theories of cultural imperialism, Robertson (1992, 1995) offers the idea of “glocalization,” whereby local cultures modify and redefine global cultural products and processes to suit their particular values, customs, and beliefs. Originally developed in Japanese business circles to refer to a global outlook on local conditions (Robertson, 1995), glocalization became popularized as a buzzword in business jargon during the 1980s. In surveying the literature, Robertson
Robertson (1995) suggests that “we live in a world of local assertions against globalizing trends, a world in which the very idea of locality is sometimes cast as a form of opposition or resistance to the hegemonically global…” (p. 29). Robertson (1995) argues that cultural globalization always takes place in local environments, for it is precisely locality that impacts the reception and reinvention of globalizing trends.

Rather than invoking cultural imperialism where one cultural flow (often coming from the West) dominates the other, Robertson (1995) says it is counterproductive to define the global as if the global excludes the local…doing so suggests that the global lies beyond all localities, as having systemic properties over and beyond the characteristics of units within a global logic. Furthermore, Robertson’s concept of glocalization seeks to “transcend the tendency to cast the idea of globalization as inevitably in tension with the idea of localization” (1995, p. 40). Glocalization, in other words, refers to the interdependence of local and global processes and the ways in which various localities impact global flows in varied and nuanced ways. Nestor Garcia Canclini (1992), in his work on cultural reconversion, also contends that commercial culture tends to absorb local cultural agents and institutions, rather than eliminate them. This complex interaction of the global and the local is influenced by cultural borrowing, hybrid practices, and the nuanced ways in which societies adapt products and processes to their own likeness and desires (Appadurai, 2013; Darling-Wolf, 2015; Murphy & Rodriguez, 2006; Robertson, 2012; Wind, Sthanunathan, & Malcolm, 2013).
Glocalization has implications for the production of cultural products as well as for the ways in which local audiences are constructed. Turning the lens more acutely on producers, Maynard (2003) defines glocalization as “the process whereby global corporations tailor products and marketing to particular local circumstances to meet variations in consumer demand” (p. 6). Advertisements and other forms of promotional culture are increasingly adapted, nuanced, and redefined in subtle ways within various cultures. In fact, Wind, Sthanunathan, and Malcolm (2013) maintain that a glocal advertising strategy is one in which there is a local adaptation of a universally embraced core idea that could resonate “in any market anywhere in the world.” Moreover, marketers and advertisers have hijacked the term “glocalization,” ostensibly to justify their movement into new cultural markets for financial growth. To this end, the processes of glocalization are shaped by advertisers’ imaginations of various audiences. Robertson (2012) claims that glocalization “involves the construction of increasingly differentiated consumers, the ‘invention’ of ‘consumer traditions’…” (p. 194). This celebratory perspective suggests that globalization and localization are not at odds resulting in a homogenized culture, but that globalization increasingly involves the incorporation of locality in nuanced and emergent ways. Furthermore, just as the impact of globalization is multidirectional, with varying impact, so too is glocalization’s impact on various communities and audiences—simultaneously engaging with local cultures while coercing them into the global marketplace. Glocalization & global media. Global media scholars seek to understand the ways that media produced in one place are
received and adapted by audiences in other parts of the world. Historically, audiences have preferred to consume locally produced programs. However, due to economic constraints or lack of production expertise, this has not always been possible. Straubhaar (1991, 2008) suggests that if the availability of locally produced programs is sparse, then audiences will choose programming that is “closest, most proximate or directly relevant to them in cultural and linguistic terms” (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) suggest that audiences have multidimensional, complex cultural identities, and it is this complexity that sheds light on why some television shows are well received across borders and other shows are less successful. This process of cultural proximity encompasses the “complex attractions between cultural texts and audiences” and relates to the way that cultural texts are received and adapted (or rejected) around the world. Consequently, the notion of cultural proximity is related to processes of glocalization in that the successful amalgamation of the global and the local is often an indicator of how well cultural products will be received.

The processes of glocalization have been explored within many cultural industries. For example, Adriaens and Biltereyst (2012) examined the glocalization of the telenovela format, specifically the adaptation of a Latin American telenovela to a Flemish, or Belgian, context, while O’Connor (2012) explored why Irish working-class teenagers prefer British shows over nationally produced shows, concluding that viewers have an identification with “spaces of celebrity,” which correlates to geopolitical centers such as Britain and the United States. Additionally, Moran (2010) considered the way
television program formats are impacting not only the local/global duality, but also cultural identities and societies, while Straubhaar (2008) also surveyed how Satellite TV is impacting the local/global nexus, namely by exposing audiences to a more diverse world, globalizing their identities even further.

Hollywood exports are also part of the global media/glocalization conversation as many places around the world are regularly exposed to films made in the United States. As a point of emphasis, the top 5 highest grossing films worldwide, to include Marvel’s *The Avengers, Jurassic World, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Titanic, and #1 Avatar*, all come from Hollywood studios (Fox, Paramount, Buena Vista, and Universal) (Box Office Mojo, 2016). When it comes to dramatic shifts in globally networked production ecologies, Baltruschat (2010), for example, claimed that cultural agents now negotiate the international media landscape through collaborative ventures, co-productions, and format franchising. She finds that these collaborative environments are blurring the lines of international media development and requiring new ways of thinking about the entire field of cultural production. Additionally, Miller et al. (2004) explored the factors that have made Hollywood so successful around the world – considering research from political economists, cultural theorists, and cultural policy, while Rao (2010) more specifically explored the glocalization and adaptation of Bollywood films, a fast growing film market. Outside of television and film, glocal processes have also underpinned the way music traverses the globe, (see Taylor, 1997), and how audience adapt different sounds to their own tastes, but this area has been studied to a much smaller extent.
Although the processes of glocalization have been explored within many cultural industries, investigating how producers localize global brands is severely deficient. The previous sections explored both the globalization and cultural production literatures, leading to a framework that both undergirds and informs a glocal lens to creating and diffusing global advertising. By focusing on the glocal production of promotional culture, this project addresses significant gaps in both the critical advertising studies and globalization literatures. Few studies consider how brands are localized from a production of culture perspective, and explorations of how global producers navigate advantageous partnerships, fast-evolving technologies, and cultural nuances every step of the process are even more infrequent, although Robertson (1992, 1995, 2012) offers notable contributions to the glocalization conversation. Furthermore, as transnational brands continue to grow and influence cultural practices (see Klein, 2009), their ability to construct audiences is an important area for researchers, cultural producers, and policy makers to better understand, especially as social media platforms and other digital applications provide producers with the capacity to engage with consumers in ways previously unseen. This study thus has implications for both producers and consumers because global cultural flows impact not only the processes through which advertisers adapt global campaigns, but also the ways in which consumers are conceptualized as a result of these processes. The findings of this study uncover how advertising producers imagine their work, their role within that work, and the audiences who consume their
products. The results, like culture itself, strike a chord of dissonance, unearthing how cultural production at once takes great care with locality, yet subliminally disregards it.
CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Employing a qualitative approach of collecting data, this research is grounded in an interpretivist framework using in-depth interviews. Lichtman (2012) describes interpretivism as “a doctrine that emphasizes analyzing meanings people confer on their own actions” (p. 24). Interpretivism developed from rationalism and relativism, specifically Plato’s Rationalism, which concerns the contemplation of what is real. According to Plato, “we cannot ‘know’ what is real because we can only imagine our own examples, and not the full extent of examples – thus we cannot ‘know’ what is real, only approximate it” (Schifter, 2013a). The interpretivist research paradigm underscores the quest for deeper understanding about the way various constituents, institutions, and groups of people make meaning and communicate that meaning to others. Interpretivism is concerned with perception and expression and gaining an understanding of happenings/experiences/events, knowing that it is contextual in nature.

The interpretivist paradigm fits this research project because the end goal is to better understand how advertisers and brands reach and resonate with audiences around the world – what are their strategies, drivers, thought processes, and how are they so confident that their advertising campaign will reflect the culture of various constituents around the world. Additionally, this research seeks to understand how imaginations of audiences (by advertisers) have a ripple effect on global partnerships, casting, packaging, and the stories sold (or not sold), to name a few. As a point of clarification, this research
is not concerned with emancipating far away impoverished people or challenging the
capitalistic nature of economic global interconnectedness. These are important questions
to ask, but fall outside the parameters of this particular project, although these themes do
arise tangentially in my findings. For interpretivism, “the nature of reality is socially
constructed and [the] purpose of research reflects understanding as the most important
goal” (Schifter, 2013b). This, in essence, summarizes what this research project seeks to
accomplish—to more deeply and richly understand how people, namely global
advertisers and other global stakeholders, make sense of their experiences, culture, work,
and more.

Like recent interventions into media industries (see Deuze, 2007; Duffy, 2013;
Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Serazio, 2013), in-depth interviews have been found to
provide rich insight into production studies uncovering the “strategies, tactics, and
processes of meaning-making” (Deuze, 2007, p. 234), making this method an appropriate
choice for this study. Additionally, in-depth interviews allow me to garner, first-hand,
how advertising professionals are grappling with changes that have been brought on by
globalization and how this is impacting the production of worldwide symbols of culture.
Since globalization is intensifying worldwide social relations and the pace at which
communication and information flows take place, in-depth interviews with the actual
campaign contributors will allow for vivid, “thick descriptions,” (Geertz, 1994) otherwise unavailable.
In addition to conducting in-depth interviews as a methodological approach, this dissertation engages with a case study logic as a way of understanding the context within which global advertisers localize global brands. Drawing on Stake’s (1995) characterization of a case study, this approach simultaneously “is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry” (p. 444). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) further underscore that the advantages of the case study approach lie in its ability to provide a holistic understanding of the inquiry at hand “within its social context.” The case study logic made sense for this project because globalization is simply too vast a topic to research on a broad level. On a “deep dive” level, looking at just one organization might fail to provide enough generalizations to global advertisers who work in vastly different industries, with dissimilar organizational structures, and who promote to a myriad of different audiences, among other variants. Employing a multiple-case study approach allows me to compare and contrast processes and implications between and amongst companies and global producers balancing the intricacies of a single organization with larger themes and trends in industrial production. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) argue that “case study allows for a highly complex and nuanced understanding of the subject of inquiry” (p. 256). Although I will discuss more specific advantages in these three companies at the end of Chapter 3, by engaging with Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour through a case study strategy, I am confident that the findings have broader implications for global advertisers and other cultural producers.
As I began to seriously strategize how to solidify interviewees, I used all the angles afforded to me. I made a small list of about seven companies that I knew were advertising globally or were about to advertise globally for the first time. This insight was garnered mostly by regularly reading *Advertising Age*, a leading trade publication. Through a not-so-linear and tedious process I was able to secure interviews with global stakeholders from Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour, and their respective advertising agencies, where applicable. As a point of clarification, throughout the rest of this project, I use the term “global stakeholder” as opposed to the narrower term “global advertiser,” because it was made acutely aware to me during my first few interviews that the work of global promotional production extends far beyond the small team of global advertisers. In hindsight, of course, promotion on a global scale takes the cohesion and cooperation of departments, agencies, and partners across the globe. To interview only global advertisers—in the truest sense—would be a disservice to the complex, multidimensional process of advertising production on a global scale. Therefore, the 23 interviews that make up the data in this project (9 from Airbnb and partners/advertising agencies, 8 from Campbell Soup, and 6 from Under Armour) are from informants whose titles include Head of Advertising, Chief Marketing Officer, Vice President of Global Brand Marketing, and President, International Accounts, but it also includes global producers with titles such as Global Vice President Research & Development, Head of Footwear Development, and Vice President of Campbell’s Global Culinary & Baking Institute. I intentionally chose the term “stakeholder” because despite their role, each of
my informants have a vested interest, or stake, in the successful global promotion and positioning of their respective brand.

When it came to Campbell Soup, I utilized personal connections, which resulted in an email introduction to Campbell’s Head of Human Resources, and she agreed to help me by forwarding my request along (virtually), eventually securing three willing interviewees. From there, these initial three informants provided additional potential interviewees, or a snowball sample—although most of the referrals did not pan out. Of monumental assistance was connecting with the executive assistants for some of the global executives. Once I appeased these (protective) gatekeepers, they became my allies in securing additional interviews with top, high-ranking global advertising, marketing, and culinary thought leaders at the company. When the referrals fizzled out, I turned to LinkedIn to solicit more interviews (See Appendix A for sample solicitation email). Most LinkedIn messages and emails were unreturned, but I did manage to secure the final few interviews I needed this way.

In the case of Under Armour, I utilized a personal connection who has endless connections to the sports world and many connections at Under Armour. He made an email introduction to one of the basketball marketing team members, who then forwarded my request to two willing interviewees. Consequently, neither of these interviewees provided in-house referrals. In fact, it is perhaps noteworthy that several of the interviewees were more than hesitant to provide referrals of colleagues. I got the impression that interviewees had “interview remorse” at the conclusion of our sessions.
thinking that they had perhaps said too much. When this life line at Under Armour fizzled out, I turned to LinkedIn to solicit more interviews. With each interview, I followed up by asking them to be “my connection” on LinkedIn; I believe this turned out to be a valuable move since, then, new, potential interviewees could see that I had already established a professional connection with some of their colleagues. I managed to secure the final few interviews I needed this way.

As for Airbnb, I took a chance that they would be willing to participate in my project by sending about 20 global stakeholders messages on LinkedIn and through my Temple email. Part of me was curious if their constant talk about “collaboration” and all the press around the role in pioneering the sharing economy was true—would they collaborate with a (very junior) researcher? Two senior people responded within 48 hours, and I secured a referral from one of them, but the rest of the interviews were solicited without help via LinkedIn messages and/or emails explaining what I was doing. In the case of Airbnb, additional interviews were also conducted with agency personnel as their global branding initiatives included heavy reliance and partnership with an agency of record.

I believe that having a professional profile on LinkedIn afforded me credibility that might not otherwise have been possible with a simple email. More so, when I emailed potential interviewees I included a direct link to my LinkedIn profile in my signature, and since LinkedIn tracks your profile views, I was able to see that many people clicked on my profile link, even those who never responded to me. Even with this
boost of credibility, roughly 250 attempts to reach global stakeholders resulted in 23 interviews (See Appendix B for a list of interviewees). Interviews lasted between 22 and 39 minutes. All interviews were via phone, except two Airbnb interviews that took place over video conference, at their request. All interviews were recorded and took place between March 2015 and November 2015.

The “guided interview” approach was employed, which provided some structure while also leaving enough leeway for the participants to expound upon topics as they felt led and also to allow for tangential topics to be discussed (See Appendix C for Interview Guide). Interviewing has much to offer in terms of depth, richness, and first-hand experience, providing a worthwhile method for more deeply understanding specific pieces of culture and society. This project is supplemented with historical and current information and trends from trade press articles, journal articles, and from the mainstream press. Many of the articles stem from well-known trade publications such as Advertising Age, Ad Week, Media Post, Forbes, and Media Week, that allowed me to better understand the environment that these advertising producers are operating in. This supplement is an integral part of the overall project and afforded me the opportunity to better understand the landscape and current approaches within the global/local nexus and to consider how various organizations and agencies are conceptualizing campaigns across various cultures.

In order to analyze the data in real time, this project employed a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which allowed themes to emerge inductively (see
A grounded theory approach consists of “simultaneous data collection and analysis, with each informing and focusing the other” (Charmaz, 2005), meaning that there is no theory or hypothesis to test but that the findings emerge from a constant back and forth amongst the interview data, simultaneously, to understand how all the moving parts relate to and thus, inform each other. This allows for an iterative process that helps to understand the processes of ad creation in a global environment for audiences these producers have had no contact with.

After the interviews were transcribed, I coded the informant commentary resulting in upwards of 40 related codes. After grappling with the data, codes were combined to reveal emergent themes that uncovered the way in which producers conceptualize their work in a global landscape. These themes were supplemented with information about global trends from trade publications, academic research, and the popular press. The ability to triangulate findings, that is to be “methodologically pluralistic, in the sense that a plurality of sources and data, gathered in a variety of ways, are employed to shed light on various dimensions of the phenomenon under scrutiny,” (Gripsrud, 1995, p. 5) strengthen the resultant themes revealed through this research and bolstered their implications for producers and audiences.

As suspected, one of the obstacles I encountered was that the participants' responses were unequivocally shaped by what Katherine Sender (2004) calls, “the pitch.” I encountered a methodological challenge in moving beyond corporate spin. Sender (2004) says “‘The pitch’ describes, most typically, the process whereby ad creatives
introduce a new campaign to clients – selling ideas to sell products” (p. 244). As both Sender (2004) and Serazio (2013) discovered, my interviewees often promoted their own ideas of glocal methods – whatever they may be – and attempted to sell me on them in the process. At times, I felt that by agreeing to speak with me, my informants felt that our conversation was another venue to “toot their own horn.” The sheer nature of the project would lead and interviewee to suspect that I liked their work if I was reaching out to them to learn more. Admittedly, my “deferential flattery” was an attempt to secure access or put an informant at ease, but likely “lubricated the ease with which they slipped back in to the ‘pitch.’” (Serazio, 2013, p. 82) This is not to suggest that the entirety of the interviews felt like a pitch meeting, but this obstacle was encountered, and was handled by sticking with the guided interview and getting informants talking about different elements of the campaign or their work. Like Sender (2004), I chose to “step back from a fruitless debate between whether data are ‘true’ or ‘false,’” particularly in regards to the “success” of a global campaign, and instead focused on “how [data] are shaped, contained, obscured, and elided in their production and analysis” (p. 244).

This research contributes to the field of cultural and media production studies, with a growing focus on the actual experiences of media workers, rather than more macro approaches to the industry. These works are unique because they hone in on specific dynamics of production processes, considering how the nuances of everyday life in media production are indicative of larger shifts in the industry itself—shifts that encompass, yet ignore locality and regional partners; shifts that tell powerful stories, yet ignore other
seemingly powerful stories; and shifts that empower audiences while harnessing their labor. Grappling with constraints on creativity, for example, is indicative of larger industry-related shifts in corporate organizational practices, and the implications for future generations will likely be an onslaught of more intense challenges and constraints on creative freedoms and labor practices. It is becoming more salient to researchers that these experiences, both from above-the-line and below-the-line workers, affect how media workers define their roles and how those roles factor into production processes and eventually, into the products that society consumes. The current project at hand teases out these production processes revealing important findings related to media work in a glocal framework.

Before teasing out the implications of cultural production in today’s global matrix, Chapter 3 first gives this project historical context, documenting the development of international and global advertising drawing on academic, trade, and popular press literatures. This history has been culled in a way that tells advertising’s rise to cultural significance from a global perspective, diverging from other takes on advertising history. This chapter closes with a consideration as to why Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour make appropriate contexts within which to explore glocal approaches to global advertising.

The following three chapters parse out the details of my emergent themes. In Chapter 4, I discuss the Global Mindset. Producers place a lot of emphasis on being of a global mindset in order to “do work” globally. In particular, this kind of thinking
provides producers with a useful framework for operationalizing glocalization. In other words, a sharpened global mind allows producers to capitalize on points of convergence amongst their audiences, while all the while paying close attention to areas in which they must localize or adapt their campaigns for regional audiences. Additionally, after exploring these two binary, yet codependent, constructions of how campaigns, or cultural messages, are conceptualized, this chapter illuminates the actual processes of global advertising diffusion, or the ways in which global advertisers seek to align themselves with agencies and partners that have access to a global network of resources while also embarking on building networks of their own through more interpersonal channels.

In Chapter 5, *the Global Story*, I argue that while advertising has seen monumental shifts in its modes of distribution and its relationship with consumers, the way in which it tells its stories has fundamentally changed too. Producers stressed the utmost importance of telling good stories; this kind of storytelling, however, stretches far beyond a simple narrative and becomes more complex when working with a global consumer culture where preferences and behaviors converge and diverge as quickly as they started. In this chapter, I describe and analyze how global stakeholders conceptualize the role stories play in their work, and then I reflect on the way stories inform the corporate and creativity identity amongst global stakeholders. Lastly, this chapter concludes with an analysis of what informs and propels stories in a global matrix, with a particular focus on dynamics of quality and new and emerging technologies.
In Chapter 6, *the Global Consumer*, I explore the ways in which global stakeholders strive to understand their audiences. Global producers, in essence, want to know their audience on a deep, intimate level. And while scholars, media critics, and academics (Ettema & Whitney, 1994; Duffy, 2013; Turow, 2013; Williams, 1958) continue to point out the fallacies and shortcomings in this way of thinking, global stakeholders are industrially bound to this process, due in part to historical processes, but secondarily to the permeating nature of existing mental schemata, or ways of thinking, in which they must, as a product of their job, synthesize large amounts of information. This chapter first examines the way that global stakeholders think about and characterize their core audience segments, and challenges related to doing so on a global scale. Next, the lens shifts to explore the ways in which global stakeholders depend on audiences—the ways in which their sheer survival is linked to their need for audience cooperation.

In conclusion, Chapter 7, *the Glocal Approach*, examines the major themes cutting across all of these findings and puts them into broader context, exploring the implications, challenges, and opportunities for producers and consumers. Additionally, this final installment considers the pragmatic and theoretical utility of glocalization to the production of advertising.
CHAPTER 3
CONTEXTUALIZING INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL ADVERTISING

Advertising has a long and storied history. Iconic imagery, massive agency mergers, bigger than life personalities, and even cult-like followings for shows like Mad Men, set in 1960s adland, are just a few of the glitzy moments that have ushered in the cultural phenomenon and economic powerhouse that the advertising industry is today.

This chapter takes a historical look at the ever-evolving backdrops in which advertising operated and how those eras brought us to the contemporary state of advertising today. More specifically, the following pages document the development of international and global advertising and illustrate a backstory that leads us to present day advertising, thus situating the current study at hand. Additionally, what sets this historical exploration apart from other histories of advertising is its rendering of advertising from a global perspective. Other histories of advertising exist (Lears, 1994; O’Barr, 2005; Pincas & Loiseau, 2008; Presbrey, 1929; Tungate, 2013), but I provide a detailed look at global advertising drawing upon academic sources, trade press, and popular publications, along with excerpts from my informants, that provide a new kind of backdrop, a fresh backstory, to global advertising’s industrial unfolding. Furthermore, although at first glance it may seem that some of these characters have little to do with international advertising, I mention them here because in order to understand the full breadth of influence that advertisers have, one must first understand their humble – albeit not always ethical – beginnings. The globalization of both culture and consumer has dramatically
shifted not only the activities of advertisers, but also the ways in which they imagine their audiences, their desires, needs, and values.

While advertising can be traced back to Greek hieroglyphics, Babylonian merchants, and painted walls in Rome (see Presbrey, 1929), and from there took a big leap with the invention of Gutenberg’s printing press and movable type in 1447 (Tungate, 2013), for our purposes here I start this historic look at advertising in a more modern era since local bartering, trade and negotiations tended to be more regional in nature having little to do with international promotion and advertising. However, before we get to the early 20th century, a time when advertising internationally was becoming more of a reality, it is worth underscoring some of the key moments that shaped the origins of advertising from the late 1800s. It is with these early producers of advertising, actual experts in promotion, in which we start this historical look at the rise in prominence and influence of international and global advertising.

**The Early Years: Agency Creation and Budding Expansion**

As America looked to unite after the Civil War (1861-1865), commerce and newspapers once again became an important part of the fabric of society. Historians (“Ad Age Advertising Century,” 1999; Presbrey, 1929: Tungate, 2013) have concluded that early advertising agents worked for newspapers rather than for organizations who wished to advertise. These early agents sold space in the newspapers and took a percentage of the fee as their commission – although not always in the most ethical ways (Tungate, 2013). However, in an effort to move advertising towards respectability, in the late-1860s and
1870s, two agencies came on the scene, NW Ayer in Philadelphia and J. Walter Thompson in New York, the latter, still in existence today as a massive global agency. As was customary at the time, these agencies worked closely with the newspaper business collecting circulation figures of newspapers and magazines around the country and, in turn, basing their commissions on readership (O’Barr, 2010). According to Tungate (2013), Ayer brought a much needed transparency to the industry by buying and selling space and then charging advertisers a fixed commission. Initially, he charged a standard commission of 12.5%, which was later raised to 15%, a rate that remained the standard commission fee for advertising agencies for many decades to come.

By the turn of the 20th century, however, several advertising agencies had expanded across the United States, marking a shift away from direct selling to mass-communicated advertising (O’Barr, 2010). Alongside domestic expansion, many U.S. agencies took part in export advertising, which is the act of creating advertising for American goods that were then exported to foreign countries in order to promote the products locally. These advertisements were produced in the United States and then mailed to foreign newspapers and magazines for publishing (O’Barr, 2008).

It wasn’t until the 1920s when American agencies began to open offices in foreign countries (O’Barr, 2008), although the J. Walter Thompson Co. (later known as JWT) was ahead of the curve, opening the first office in the United Kingdom in 1899 (“Ad Age Advertising Century,” 1999). Ironically, it was closed in 1916 “to save costs.” Nevertheless, this era was a time of great success and growth for the advertising industry.
Large agencies began expanding to many foreign countries in order to serve the local offices of American corporations abroad. In doing so, advertisers felt they could create more culturally appropriate material for those local audiences (O’Barr, 2010). This era of vast opportunity and growth was made especially evident with the unprecedented success of agencies JWT and BBDO. For example, JWT expanded around the globe quickly in part because they inked a deal with General Motors (GM) in which they agreed to “pursue the same international expansion” as their client, opening an agency wherever GM established a plant, and in turn, assured of their business worldwide (Alozie, 2011, p. 334). By having local offices, JWT, for example, felt they could promote GM with an international ethos, while simultaneously making it relevant through local consumer market research and hiring “native” copywriters familiar with the local language, customs, and traditions (Scanlon, 2003). Additionally, when BBDO came about (via acquisition) in 1928, their billings exceeded $32 million, an unparalleled book of business at the time. At the same time, in London, the International Advertising Exhibition was taking place for the first time and brands were infiltrating the public consciousness like never before (Tungate, 2013). Other agencies found themselves at a positive vantage point as well due to higher sales of costly goods like radios and automobiles and through continued corporate ambition to expand globally. As Tungate (2013) documents, the NW Ayer agency saw a boost in their international growth when Ford inked their services to launch their new Model A in 1928. “Just as JWT’s overseas expansion had been accelerated by General Motors, so Ayer's was driven by Ford, with
the agency opening offices in London, São Paulo and Buenos Aires. Slowly, the big agencies were going global” (p. 24). Despite these years of exponential growth and success, nothing could safeguard the advertising industry from the approaching financial meltdown and the many lean years to come.

The Stock Market Crash in 1929 and the resultant Great Depression were difficult years for advertising. Consumers could not spend what they used to, advertising was in less demand, and as a result advertising agencies slimmed down (O’Barr, 2010). Although advertising did not disappear during the Depression, it forced many agencies to close their foreign offices. As Tungate (2013) reports, “The hard sell got harder, more sex appeared in advertising. The bitter public glanced disdainfully at ads for products they could no longer afford. With the glory days of the 1920s at an end, advertising would never regain its coquettish charm.” According to Advertising Age (1999), after the stock market crash, advertising spending dropped from its high of $3.5 billion to $1.5 billion by 1933. Between the Great Depression and World War II, further developments in international advertising were postponed. Nevertheless, the ambitions of early advertisers would be realized in the second half of the 20th century.

**Bouncing Back**

Fox (1997) estimates that during war time the U.S. advertising industry donated over a billion dollars’ worth of space to the war effort. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the government’s voice was heard through much of the advertising (Tungate, 2013). Just as consumers were coming out of the Depression, they were asked to then turn their
efforts toward supporting the war – and burgeoning brands wanted in on the action too. The postwar economy of the 1950s were a time of abundant growth for advertising both domestically and abroad. Bolden-Barrett (n. d.) characterizes the era as “the advertiser’s dream decade,” since the American audience, in particular, was poised to move to the suburbs to buy homes, cars, furniture, and other products, effectively ending the thrift-based consciousness of decades before. Of course, this mind shift was ushered in with the help of advertisers. Consumer consumption peaked at historically high levels in the fifties, and advertisers were relentless with their messaging of “buy buy buy” (Young & Young, 2004). In conjunction with advertising’s persistent messaging, advertisers not only continued to make use of both print and radio advertising, but once television came on the scene, increasingly normalized in the homes of average Americans, so too came television advertising.

Although Advertising Age (1999; 2003) claims that there were roughly 7,500-10,000 television sets and eight commercial stations broadcasting in New York City as early as 1941, the television industry did not come of age until the war was over, but flourished even more once the FCC lifted the ban on new TV stations in 1952. TV advertising was one of the most important factors influencing advertising in the 1950s and in true American fashion early TV programming was advertiser-sponsored (“TV Turns on America,” 2005). With a new medium – one vastly unlike any to come before it – advertisers had a new challenge ahead of them. In fact, according to Young and Young (2004), radio as an advertising medium experienced significant decline in the fifties.
falling from nine percent of all ad dollars in 1952 to stabilizing around six percent in 1959. In the wake of radio advertising’s decline, TV advertising rose from six percent of all ad spend in 1952 to 13% by 1960 (Young & Young, 2004).

TV advertising gave ad agencies the opportunity to reach consumers in a way like never before, and in the 1950s and early sixties some of the biggest agency players in the United States including BBDO, Doyle Dane Bernbach, and Papert Koenig Lois sought to capitalize on this new medium. According to Tungate (2013), total U.S. advertising spend on TV grew exponentially from $12 million in 1949 to $158 million just three years later. Furthermore, in 1960, almost 90% of households had a TV (“TV Turns on America,” 2005). As became a sign of the times, brands were now firmly established on television. While much of television innovation and, consequently, television advertising, originated in the United States, this influential medium was starting to appear in other parts of the world, and in turn, advertisers internationally were beginning to grapple with how to best utilize this new medium for promoting products and brands. For example, as of 1947 there were an estimated 54,000 licensed television sets in the United Kingdom (Shagawat, 2011), Italy’s first official television broadcast was in 1954, and television arrived in Canada in 1952 (“Canadian Television,” 2008). While government regulation and control were still standard in the fifties in many countries, commercial supported programming increasingly became more common.

I mention the innovation of television briefly here because although television was not invented by the advertising industry, it undeniably was characterized and heavily
influenced by it. Still today, the way television operates is a direct result of the relationship between television and advertising, beginning in television’s infancy. Although much of the television innovation happened in the United States, and thus much of the initial advertising developments were in the United States, the reach of American advertising, even as early as the fifties, could be felt in far flung places. In fact, O’Barr (2008) says that while American advertising developed overseas branches in several countries during the fifties, mostly to support American companies selling their products and services in foreign markets, ads essentially remained based on American models of “what worked at home.” Offices by American agencies were opened in Australia, South Africa, Western Europe, and the Middle East, and although some agencies had Spanish-language departments, they essentially just translated ads and then shipped them off to newspapers in Latin America (O’Barr, 2010). However, at this point in time advertising was barely considered international, lacking the sophistication that became more prevalent in the eighties and nineties. Additionally, agencies did not have the infrastructure and network that now characterizes many of the global campaigns that are prolific today. Despite the early dearth of real infrastructure and networks, the advertising industry’s propensity for latching on to the newest innovation, honed in the industry’s infancy, is a characteristic still very much at play in advertising today – as will be discussed in forthcoming pages. As such, although television didn’t wholly usher in what is now referred to as the “creative revolution” in advertising, the way in which this time
period stretched advertisers in ways previously unseen is undeniably a factor in fostering one of the greatest eras in advertising.

**The Creative Revolution: From the U.S. to International Audiences**

It has been referred to as advertising’s coming of age, “when the industry mastered the language of TV, appropriated the medium of photography and produced unprecedented creativity” (‘History: 1960s,’ 2003). Tungate (2013) claims that advertising is a “constant tug of war between two schools: the creatives, who believe art inspires consumers to buy; and the pragmatists, who sell based on facts and come armed with reams of research” (p. 43). The creative revolution, however, was sparked by one of the decade’s most influential ad figures, Bill Bernbach, and his brash new agency, Doyle Dane Bernbach (Tungate, 2013).

Bernbach’s agency, which eventually became known as DDB, was opened in 1949, and made a splash on the advertising scene with a series of ads for Volkswagen. The most famous was a rather stark ad (at the time) promoting the small German Beetle to American consumers. At the time, the Beetle was the antithesis to American cars – not flashy, no horsepower, small, and unglamorous. And that’s exactly what the ads portrayed. Under Bernbach’s direction, several art directors and copywriters including Helmut Krone, Julian Koenig, Bob Gage, and George Lois worked on the account and eventually created the iconic VW advertisement with an unusually small Beetle in the upper left-hand corner of the ad with the caption ‘Think small’ (‘History: 1960s,’ 2003; Tungate, 2013). In fact, the ads are so iconic that not only did they appear in the first
season of *Mad Men*, but when Volkswagen’s new Beetle was launched in 1998, the advertising campaign paid homage to the original.

This kind of thinking – the kind that does not totally disregard research, but sees it as perhaps secondary to creativity in advertising, catapulted the advertising industry into new territory. *Advertising Age* (“History: 1960s,” 2003) says the creative revolution was characterized by “new” advertising that was “irreverent, humorous, self-deprecating, ironic and resonant.” These kinds of ads were well received by an American culture that was rebelling against their parents’ ideals of capitalism and conformism. Additionally, advertisers, influenced by the decade’s social and cultural upheaval, started to trend toward innovation, sophistication, and a growing awareness of the potential of a mounting youth culture (Gloor & Cooper, 2007; “History: 1960s,” 2003). Although there were other notable personalities from the 1960s advertising era such as David Ogilvy, Leo Burnett, and Mary Wells Lawrence, it wasn’t just American advertisers who were tailoring messages for a different kind of culture. The creative revolution soon made its way across the Atlantic unsettling culture abroad and influencing audiences around the world.

British adman Alfredo Marcantonio, in an interview with Mark Tungate (2013), recounts his own experience during the British creative revolution. When the VW ads from DDB hit the scene, Marcantonio was actually working in Volkswagen’s marketing department. He said he was so inspired by the ads that he quit his job to go work for an ad agency. Recounting his experience Marcantonio says
Agencies like Doyle Dane Bernbach showed us how to use our own language…

Of course, in those days American advertising was not diffused as widely or as rapidly as it is today. Keen young creatives would rush to the newsagents as soon as magazines like the *New Yorker* and *Esquire* came out, because that was where you could see the sharpest ads. (Tungate, 2013, p. 73)

Continuing, Marcantonio says that instead of mindlessly imitating the American creative revolution, “the Brits started one of their own,” which was entirely different but just as much of a break with tradition (Tungate, 2013). True as that may be, the creative revolution was also a product of the times – a shift away from postwar society and traditional values.

While Bill Bernbach and DDB are often recognized as the catalyst for the creative revolution in the United States, advertising agency Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP) is the agency that comes to the fore in British advertising history. Opening its doors in April 1960, CDP created and executed ads for Benson & Hedges cigarettes, Heineken beer, and Fiat cars, among other notable endeavors. “Fags, booze and fashion,” was how co-founder John Pearce once summarized their expertise (Tungate, 2013). Like Doyle Dane Bernbach, CDP was one of the first British agencies to partner art directors and copywriters – a trend that was still not wholly adopted by the industry. At the time, most art directors and copywriters worked in separate departments (Tungate, 2013). As industry trends and best practices evolved – on both sides of the Atlantic, so did the
network of agencies across the world, ushering in a more international existence for the industry.

At this stage in the history of advertising, the industry is well beyond domestic advertising, capitalizing on previous ventures into international advertising. Although renowned U.S. agencies, J Walter Thompson (later JWT) and McCann Erickson initially opened overseas offices in the 1920s, it wasn’t until much later in the century that agencies acquired foreign posts that resulted in work of any kind of significance. U.S. agencies such as Ted Bates, BBDO, and Grey all acquired London offices, as did Ogilvy & Mather a bit later on (Tungate, 2013). One of the challenges of the time was that as agencies merged or acquired smaller agencies around the world, issues with client conflict of interest cropped up as advertisers sought out new clients in different markets. Marion Harper, of McCann Erickson, was the mastermind behind the practice of acquiring agencies that operated independently but functioned under a parent company – in this case, Interpublic Group Cos. (“History: 1960s,” 2003). This model allowed agencies to serve competing clients without a conflict of interest. This move influenced other advantageous agencies to follow suit, broadening their reach on an international scale, and is now commonplace in the industry.

Leo Burnett, one of the most influential admen of the time, was actually one of the last to take his agency international, although most of his rivals were already reaping a large percentage of their billings from outside the United States. McCann Erickson, for example, was billing as much as 46% in the late sixties from clients outside of the States
Once the Leo Burnett Company merged with the London Press Exchange – a network of 23 agencies, Leo Burnett, seemingly overnight, became the fifth largest advertising agency in the world, with billings of $373 million. Agencies, like the Leo Burnett Company, continued expansion in the sixties and seventies resulting in the emergence of international agencies (O’Barr, 2008).

The sixties and seventies, however, were not just a time for agency growth – purely expanding their boundaries to help international clients’ reach different markets. In fact, the sixties and seventies were also a time when international advertising techniques gradually became more sophisticated. The use of voice-over soundtracks, for instance, allowed international advertisers to adapt campaigns more easily to local markets (O’Barr, 2008). Additionally, heavy use of visuals – thanks to TV and glossy print magazines – also allowed for easier international adaptation of advertising campaigns. Sparking even more change on the international scene, when U.S. based agencies like Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) and Papert Koenig Lois (PKL) opened offices in London, their new take on advertising harmonized with the experimentation that was occurring in the music, fashion, photography, and graphic design industries.

In addition to new international tactics, one of the most influential techniques that gained traction in the 1970s was the use of positioning. Advertising Age claims that marketers found it necessary to “position a product in the consumer’s mind, both within the context of its own merits and strengths and in relation to its competitors” (“History: 1970s,” 2003). Once the glitz of the creative revolution waned, the pendulum swung back
to more stern, empirically based research practices in advertising (“Positioning and Watchdogs,” 2005). This occurrence indicated a shift away from the creative revolution of the 1960s to a desire for more discipline and accountability (“History: 1970s,” 2003). The practice of positioning by advertisers resulted in the heavy use of comparative advertising, which flourished throughout the decade and beyond.

In terms of challenges for the advertising industry on the international scene, the seventies began with a minor recession, ending the postwar prosperity of the fifties and sixties, and agencies suffered along with the rest of the economy. Many large agencies experienced significant losses early on in the decade with a cumulative $15 million in U.S. billings reported lost in 1971, which went up to $33 million lost in 1973, and back down to $11 million in 1973 (“Positioning and Watchdogs,” 2005), although most of the largest agencies had record billings by the close of the decade. Further complicating the advertising scene in the seventies, clients began more regularly switching agencies, as much as 25% of clients chose to switch agencies of record, an occurrence that further strained the client-agency relationship (“Positioning and Watchdogs,” 2005).

Furthermore, increasing public suspiciousness of and disenchantment with advertising practices was at an all-time high putting intense pressure on advertisers to hit the mark (“History: 1970s,” 2003). And, although many agencies experienced lean years at the beginning of the decade, some operations prospered—such as the J. Walter Thompson Co., which became the first agency to break the billion-dollar mark worldwide (“Positioning and Watchdogs,” 2005).
Interestingly enough, despite the dismal start, the seventies produced robust growth on an international scale for advertising agencies, especially American based agencies. Aydin, Terpstra, and Yaprak (1984), in their comprehensive look at the development of international advertising agency business during the 1970s, considered the irony that despite American businesses losing market share to European and Japanese competitors, American agencies were the notable exception. Especially in electronics such as radio, TVs, and videocassettes—the Japanese “practically swept U.S. manufacturers from the marketplace” (“History: 1970s,” 2003). Of the 50 largest agencies in 1972, 35 were American, and by 1981, 31 of the 50 largest agencies were still American (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984). Nine of the 10 largest agencies, in the 1970s, were American, and they are of particular international importance because a substantial amount of their billings was derived from overseas operations (ranging from 32 to 76%) (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984). As a comparison, although Japanese agencies were well represented in the world’s 50 largest advertising agencies, only five percent of their total revenue was derived from overseas clients (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984).

Often described as “the rich getting richer,” industry consolidation, which more acutely characterized the eighties, began in the late seventies. Chevalier and Foliot (1974) predicted increased international concentration of the advertising industry through mergers and acquisitions, in particular by American agencies. Their prediction was confirmed when the number of U.S. agencies with worldwide billings of $25 million or
more doubled from 60 in 1970 to 120 in 1981 (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984).

Furthermore, the number of agencies in that group with international billings actually declined from 40 to 38—essentially what happened was that a much larger volume of business was now being split amongst a smaller number of firms (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984). For example, eight U.S. agencies with international billings were acquired by other agencies who also had international billings. In 1981, these eight agencies, accounted for $335.3 million, which amounted to only about three and a quarter percent of the total international billings of over $10 billion for all U.S. agencies (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984). Therefore, an abundant portion of the growth was due to the acquisition of foreign agencies.

Aydin, Terpstra, and Yaprak (1984) conclude that the growth in productivity by U.S. agency overseas operations is attributable to the synergies afforded through multinationalism. Additionally, these researchers predicted that while U.S. agencies were presently, in the 1970s, the most successful on the international scene that challenges lay ahead, particularly as non-U.S.-based agencies were beginning their “international expansion through acquisition and joint venture arrangements” (Aydin, Terpstra, & Yaprak, 1984, p. 56). A notable example, British-based Saatchi & Saatchi acquired Compton Advertising of the U.S. in 1982. In a fortuitous article, New York Times writer, Philip Dougherty (1982), wrote

The two agencies, which have worked together for seven years and have 10 multinational clients in common, are merging despite excellent individual growth
because of their conviction that the not-too-distant future will see all worldwide advertising handled by 10 giant agencies. They want to be one of them.

**1980s: Mega Mergers, New Media & Multinational Agencies**

The 1980s ushered in an era of extremely large ad agency networks with posts around the world. In 1982 and ’83 alone, eight large agencies were acquired by even larger ones (“History: 1970s,” 2003). Some of the biggest advertising players, agencies once considered stable and secure were changing hands. The J. Walter Thompson Co. was acquired by Martin Sorrell’s WPP Group in 1987 for $455 million, and two years later, WPP acquired the Ogilvy Group, including Ogilvy & Mather, in a “bitter hostile takeover,” the first of its kind in advertising history in which Ogilvy attacked Sorrell publicly (“History: 1980s,” 2003). British-based Saatchi & Saatchi acquired McCaffrey & McCall, along with Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample, Backer & Spielvogel and Ted Bates & Co. These transactions were so prevalent that *Advertising Age* called the eighties the “Decade of the Deal” (“Mergers and LBOs,” 2003). In fact, of the 100 largest advertisers in 1980, only a third still existed independently by 1990 (“Mergers and LBOs,” 2003).

At this point in time it seemed as if ad agencies had taken over the world, and much of this had to do with the Brits, “who saw themselves as the true inheritors of Bernbach’s creative mantal at DDB… and leveraged this into a short-lived assault on the world’s stock exchanges and Madison Avenue’s hitherto unchallenged status as the past, present and future of advertising” (Foster, 2010). Much of this British influence on international advertising had to do with the reign of the Saatchi brothers, Maurice and
Charles, who acquired one agency at a time around the world, launching their path to industry dominance. Even *Time* magazine announced in 1986, “In this era of the entrepreneur, nearly everyone and his brother are thinking big. But Charles and Maurice Saatchi, London's most successful admen, are thinking gargantuan.” By the end of 1986, Saatchi & Saatchi PLC had spent $1 billion acquiring 37 companies. It had 18,000 employees in 500 offices across 65 countries (Tungate, 2013). In 1988, Saatchi & Saatchi was the largest advertising group in the world. However, three years later, its shares had lost 98% of their value and the company experienced a significant drop in the rankings.

The international scene was ripe for massive mergers in the eighties and several factors ushered in the backdrop for these transactions to take place. Some of these societal factors included increased affluence, relative worldwide peace, improved transportation, changes in mass communication, and waves of deregulation (“History: 1970s,” 2003, “Mergers and LBOs,” 2003). More specifically, agency consolidations were driven by three factors: Banks and lending institutions were more reticent to finance highly leveraged acquisitions; now that agencies were reaping huge profits they had more money to spend on acquisitions; and agencies were constantly considering ways to increase their profitability (“Mergers and LBOs,” 2003). Additionally, deregulation played an influential role in boosting the ad industry as certain categories had a greater need to invest in ad dollars (“History: 1970s,” 2003). For example, in 1984, AT&T was forced to divest itself of its local phone companies by a court-ordered breakup, which allowed competitors MCI and Sprint to contend with the former monopoly. All three
companies devoted increasingly more dollars to advertising—MCI alone spent $12 million in 1989, and by 1994, the telecommunications sector was spending $3.5 billion on advertising (“Telecommunications,” 2003).

Although Robert Buzzel (1968) first pointed out the rapidity with which global standardization, thanks to the factors listed above, among others, seemed plausible, it was Theodore Levitt (1983) who popularized the idea. Levitt (1983), in his highly cited—and consequently criticized—article, *The Globalization of Markets* for *Harvard Business Review*, powerfully advocated for a shift away from a multinational marketplace to a global one. Here, it’s important to make clear the distinction between international, multinational, and global—as the eighties were a pivotal time in which organizations and agencies began to more strategically consider their position in the world marketplace. For the purposes here, international refers to the practice of importing and exporting without much investment outside of the home country (Iwan, 2007). This refers to early advertising practices from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although, even as late as the 1950s most U.S. agencies in other parts of the world were a matter of convenience; most of the advertising reflected American models of “what worked at home” (O’Barr, 2008). Multinational, on the other hand, refers to companies that are invested in multiple countries, but do not coordinate the products they offer in each specific country. As an example, Coca-Cola, one of the first companies to advertise around the globe, would work with different agencies in different parts of the world to run campaigns that accommodated local customs, values, and beliefs; however, there would be no
coordinated effort amongst regional campaigns. As Levitt (1983) points out, this can be a high cost strategy, when customizing practices and products such as cars (like Ford) or washing machines (like Hoover), for a variety of target audiences around the planet.

In contrast, a global organization, which Coca-Cola and rival Pepsi-Cola quickly became, operates with “resolute constancy—at low relative cost—as if the entire world (or major regions of it) were a single entity; it sells the same things in the same way everywhere” (Levitt, 1983). Drawing on early cultural imperialism theories, Levitt (1983) continues by making the case that “the world’s needs and desires have been irrevocably homogenized. This makes the multinational corporation obsolete and the global corporation absolute.” Without surprise, Levitt (1983), among other advertising and international business scholars (Burton, 2010; Kalliny, 2012; Narula, 2014; Taylor, 2002), attributes much of the globalization trends to technological advances. It invariably allowed more standardized practices pushing markets toward global commonality, and agencies quickly followed suit working through models of centralization and decentralization as were necessary to meet client needs. In fact, O’Barr (2008) suggests that it was during the eighties that American advertising agencies began to flourish in other countries, becoming full-service agencies in the country where they were situated. This shift reflected the “think globally, execute locally” trend in which central planning and strategy come from the United States, in most cases, but advertising was locally produced.
Companies like Coca-Cola, IBM, General Motors, Monsanto and McDonald’s had long been international marketers by the eighties, but at this juncture in time countless other organizations joined them seeking their share of the world market “as they made international advertising part of their general advertising strategy” (“History: 1970s,” 2003). Some of the most notable campaigns of the eighties include Nike’s “Just do it” campaign, by Wieden & Kennedy, which launched in 1982 with the help of rookie Chicago Bulls player Michael Jordan; Pepsi, which changed its long-time slogan from the “Pepsi generation” to the “Choice of a new generation” with the help of BBDO and music icon Michael Jackson, which was consequently one of the biggest celebrity product endorsements in advertising history; and the campaign created by (up and coming at the time) Chiat/Day featuring the Energizer Bunny, which consequently ranked among Advertising Age’s top icons in advertising history (“History: 1970s,” 2003; “Mergers and LBOs,” 2003). The 1980s also solidified the Super Bowl as the premium sports marketing opportunity thanks in part to the incredible, and now famous, “1984” commercial for Apple Computer, a spot directed by Ridley Scott for Chiat/Day (“History: 1970s,” 2003; “Mergers and LBOs,” 2003; Tungate, 2013). Although the commercial cost almost $1 million to produce it brought major results for the company, who used the ad to launch their new Macintosh computer.

It wasn’t just commercials and campaigns that put some agencies on the international map, it was also the way advertisers were grappling with the opportunities afforded by new media. In particular, the dominance of TV as an advertising medium was
solidified in the eighties, especially through cable TV, which profoundly altered the TV industry during the decade (\textquotedblleft History: 1970s,
\textquoteright 2003; \textquotedblleft Mergers and LBOs,
\textquoteright 2003; Dimmick, Patterson, & Albarran, 1992). Tungate (2013) says the eighties were the “golden age of TV advertising.” However, as cable channels flourished, it undermined traditional U.S. broadcast networks and the “once-dominant” broadcast networks saw their slice of the evening TV audience slide to less than 60%, exemplified by the likes of CNN (launched in 1980) and MTV (launched in 1982) capturing an unprecedented 40% of evening viewers (\textquotedblleft History: 1970s,
\textquoteright 2003). Cable TV was of particular influence on the international scene as big cable players like CNN sold advertising worldwide, offering organizations the opportunity to promote their products to a worldwide audience. For example, by the mid-nineties influential Asian viewers reported more engagement with cable than magazines and newspapers despite the relative underdevelopment of cable and satellite media at the time (Madden, 1999). In fact, according to this study, both affluent Asian viewers and Asian business decision makers chose CNN International as their cable and satellite station of choice (Madden, 1999). Although advertisers wrestled with other challenges in new media such as the first direct-to-home satellite system, DirecTV, which launched in 1988, the rise of the VCR, the remote control, the introduction of CDs, and the first digital camera—for advertisers the media game was about to take a new twist in the nineties.

\textbf{1990s: Branding, the Internet, and the Evolution of Global Advertising}
The nineties brought about some significant changes to the advertising industry, particularly as the industry adapted to shifts in promotional strategies, technological advancements, and new opportunities afforded by the global economy. In terms of promotional strategies, the traditional relationship between agency and client began to change as specialized consultants came on the scene (“History: 1990s,” 2003; “Information Superhighway,” 2005). Consultants appeared in database marketing, interactive media, and in all market segments defined by race and ethnicity. These experts offered assistance to advertising and marketing departments who became dissatisfied with the attention they were receiving from large agency holding companies. Additionally, some advertisers looked to consolidate accounts at fewer agencies, especially international accounts, while other organizations sought the help of several agencies. As the need to reach a global audience increasingly became of utmost importance, advertisers began to cut back their ad spending to spread their dollars. Advertising Age recounted this tense time saying, “Both advertisers and agencies were under pressure to find the most effective media outlets to reach the largest audience at the lowest possible cost” (“History: 1990s,” 2003). Established agencies reacted to the influx of professional consultants, boutique creative agencies, and the growing need to diversify promotional strategies by creating their own niche units, such as specialized ethnic agencies to focus on a particular demographic target audience and entire distinct technology departments to focus on emerging digital advertising strategies. These shifts impacted the size, structure, and functions of agencies, “As the array of available media
grew in complexity, big agencies spun off, or ‘unbundled’ their media departments”

Tangentially, corporate advertisers began moving their spending from advertising to promotion. In order to meet this client demand, the international advertising industry started to take a more “integrated marketing” approach, providing services ranging from promotion, advertising, direct response, and public relations to high-tech alternatives to include graphic design, viral and internet advertising (“Information Superhighway,” 2005). This integrated marketing communications approach, as the technique later became known, ushered in the evolution of branding. Around this time, marketers began to realize that there was more to the perception of distinct products and services than just their names. David Ogilvy described it as “the intangible sum of a product’s attributes” (McLaughlin, 2011). McLaughlin (2011), of Forbes, admits that the term brand is widely used but often misunderstood, but he advocates that a brand is what the public conjures up about your company or product—both factual and emotional. He says, “Your brand name exists objectively; people can see it. It’s fixed. But your brand exists only in someone’s mind” (McLaughlin, 2011). Some of the most recognized brands from the nineties include: Tommy Hilfiger – combining classic American preppiness with modern aesthetic reinterpretations, which allowed “everyone [to have] some Tommy in their style arsenal” (Harris, 2013); Gap – whose successful campaigns “Individuals of Style” featuring celebrities in black and white and “Who Wore Khakis” featuring the likes of James Dean and Andy Warhol catapulted their stock to previously unforeseen heights
(Groth, 2011); and Nike—which secured its place on top of the sneaker mountain in the 90s by infusing their products with new technology to increase performance (Harris, 2013). More than that, however, Nike was one of the first brands to epitomize the “lifestyle brand” concept, which continues to inform the way consumers make purchases today.

These weren’t the only changes impacting the advertising industry; the nineties were the first full decade of the World Wide Web. Although AOL was launched as early as 1989, Advertising Age deemed 1994 “the year of the internet” (Johnson, 2010). In February of that year, the first successful search engine launched (Jerry’s Guide to the World Wide Web – later Yahoo); in July, Jeff Bezos incorporated Amazon.com; and in October, the first banner ad was run by AT&T and placed by Modem Media, an internet focused advertising agency. What really rattled the advertising industry in 1994, however, was a speech made by then Proctor & Gamble Chairman-CEO, Ed Artzt, at the American Association of Advertising Agencies’ annual meeting. In his keynote address, Artzt warned that the advertising industry was “heading for trouble” because “television was about to change big time.”

From where we stand today, we can’t be sure that ad-supported TV programming will have a future in the world being created – a world of video-on-demand, pay-per-view and subscription television. Within the next few years… consumers will be choosing among hundreds of shows and pay-per-view movies. They'll have dozens of home shopping channels. They'll play hours of interactive videogames.
And for many of these [there will be] no advertising at all. If that happens, if advertising is no longer needed to pay most of the cost of home entertainment, then advertisers like us will have a hard time achieving the reach and frequency we need to support our brands.’ (“P&G's Artzt,” 1994)

By the 1990s it was evident that the combination of fragmented TV audiences and the rise of the internet were indeed going to change everything. Convergence became a hot buzzword and agencies scrambled to keep pace with new technological strategies (Jenkins, 2006). Internet companies began offering consumers an assortment of goods and services online, and by the late-1990s the internet audience in the United States alone was about 60 million (“Information Superhighway,” 2005), and Internet commerce reached an estimated $8 billion (“History: 1990s,” 2003). That number was expected to grow to $3 trillion by the late 2000s. The first ad, placed by AT&T on Hotwire in 1994, cost $30,000 for 12 weeks of visibility (“Information Superhighway,” 2005; Zeff & Aronson, 1999). By the mid-nineties, internet ad spending reached an estimated $300 million and more than tripled by 2000 (“History: 1990s,” 2003). Additionally, Stafford (2005) contends that the internet was pivotal to the international advertising landscape because it allowed greater and easier access to global business.

Against this backdrop, the World Wide Web, and other technologies of the time, ushered in a crescendo of debates about how to best approach international advertising and the new opportunities afforded by technological advances. Zou (2005) surveyed the international advertising literature from 1990-2002 and found that the most published
topic during this time period was on *standardization*. Although Buzzell (1968) advanced a broad framework for standardization, and Levitt (1983) popularized the idea even further, Kanso (1992) predicted correctly in saying that the controversy over using standardized versus localized advertising may continue for decades. In particular, international advertising researchers (Aaker & Williams, 1998; Alden, Hoyer, & Lee, 1993; Cailat & Mueller, 1996; Kanso, 1991, 1992; Zhang & Gelb, 1996; Zou, 2005) considered issues relating to what extent culture influences the decision to move forward with a standardized international advertising campaign or to localize campaigns for various regional markets. Kanso (1992) found that 75% of international advertising managers used a localized approach, while only 25% of firms identified with the standardized approach, which indicated a decline in the standardization of advertising from prior years. Other researchers identified additional specific cultural obstacles to standardization such as differences in gender depictions (Ford, Kramer Voli, Honeycutt, & Casey, 1998) and varying interpretations of humor (Alden, Hoyer, & Lee, 1993). However, despite the existence of important cultural differences, convergence is creating more possibilities for standardizing some executional facets of advertising. For example, one research investigation provided evidence that some types of comparative ads could be effective in Germany, a market that legally banned this type of advertising until 1998 and thought it to be ineffective (Schwaiger, Rennhak, Taylor, & Cannon, 2007). In addition, Kalliny, Dagher, Minor, and De Los Santos (2008) found that despite the commonly held perspective that the Arab world is enormously different from the United
States, there are several points of similarity when it comes to television advertising. Often framed as a “debate,” many researchers, international advertisers, and agencies began to occupy more of a middle ground position standardizing when possible and executing locally when necessary—this approach became even more pronounced in the years to come. Moreover, the next several years saw the emergence of Web 2.0, the next opportunity for global brands to engage with a newly minted global consumer culture.

**Bursts & Babbles: The Dot-Com Bubble and Consumers Start Talking Back**

As discussed in the previous section, the internet brought on a massive shift in communicative practices, especially in the way businesses and advertisers communicated with their consumers. But, as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end, and what is referred to as the “dot com bubble” burst in early 2000 sending internet businesses reeling. O’Leary (2009) said it was the “age of e-everything, including excess: overnight stock market millionaires, unchecked budgets, nonsensical brand names and creative license without limit.” The 90s saw steady commercial growth for internet-based companies (like ebay, Amazon, and Pets.com) until the amalgamation of rapidly increasing stock prices, unsubstantiated confidence that companies would soon see soaring profits, and widely available venture capital fostered a reality too good to be true. Forbes (2015) claimed that “crazy valuations and unprofitable business models were justified by the new business models made possible by the internet.” When the bubble burst many e-businesses went under, unable to sustain their faulty enterprises. Pets.com epitomizes the time: the estore was launched in February 1999, raised $50 million and
hired TBWA/Chiat/Day to run their marketing and advertising. In January 2000, Pets.com spends a significant amount of money on a Super Bowl ad, February 2000 they have their initial public offering, and by November they were practically losing money on every sale and filed for bankruptcy (“Book of Tens,” 2009; Johnson, 2010). One of the victims of the bust was advertising agencies who bartered their services in exchange for soon to be worthless company stock. Advertising Age (“Book of Tens,” 2009) rated the “dot com bust” as one of the biggest stories affecting agencies in the early 2000s saying eventually the industry would learn that “eyeballs and buzz don’t equal revenue.”

Despite the chaos brought on by early internet entrepreneurs the World Wide Web evolved from its perfunctory beginning to what scholars now refer to as Web 2.0, which produced a significant shift in the way advertisers communicate with their consumers. Every year Time magazine selects a person of the year, and in 2006 Time’s Person of the Year was “You.” Grossman (2006) says that 2006 was a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before. It’s about the cosmic compendium of knowledge Wikipedia and the million-channel people’s network YouTube and the online metropolis MySpace. It’s about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.

The tool that makes this possible is the World Wide Web. Time’s peculiar decision to pick “You” as their Person of the Year speaks volumes to the shift in power, or seemingly a shift in power (Turow, 2011), by consumers who embraced
the world of social media and in turn engaged with companies, advertisers, and brands like never before. Users watched and worked—creating videos, making profiles, blogging, writing songs, and contributing to open-source software (see Duffy, 2015). By 2005, the internet entered a stage in which it became—more than ever—a worldwide accessible network, and advertisers were trekking toward it with fervor (Jing, 2009). Savvy advertisers took advantage of this creative labor by hosting open design contests, showcasing tweets and blog posts along with traditional news feeds, and allowing users to take part in cultivating the brand. In 2007, for example, Dove launched a user-generated content (UGC) competition that urged “real women” to create short commercials for new Dove body wash products. These contestant-consumers were not compensated, per say, but the finalists were flown to Los Angeles. While some may consider this a form of exploitation, these women considered their participation as empowering (Duffy, 2010).

The early 2000s produced an onslaught of social networking platforms—Facebook launched in 2004, YouTube launched in 2005, Twitter in 2006, and in 2007, TV shows made a major move toward online streaming. The evolution of Web 2.0 and the rise in significance of UGC provided a pivotal moment for advertisers who realized that they must start engaging consumers where they are. One of the more effective ways that advertisers engage with users on social media platforms is through what Serazio (2013) calls guerilla marketing techniques, essentially advertising not mean to look like advertising. These guerilla marketing strategies, seek to engage consumers in
surreptitious ways that are not overtly ad-like such as through product placement, alternative outdoor, word-of-mouth, and through consumer-generated approaches. Serazio (2013) says that guerilla marketing strategies are reworking the conventional model of mass communication, rethinking how audiences might be managed. This challenge for advertisers still exists today, especially in light of the borderless consumer pool that is the global consumer.

Online ad revenue grew from $8.2 billion in 2000 to more than $12.5 billion by 2005, reflecting advertisers’ inclination to move away from traditional models of mass communication to get online (Ad Age Content Strategy Studio, 2015). This growth in spending mirrored Americans’ internet adoption growing from 46% to 66% of American adults using the internet by 2005 (Ad Age Content Strategy Studio, 2015). This “digital decade,” as Bill Gates called it in 2001, also gave rise to mobile phones, DVRs, and portable digital music players – all new obstacles, and opportunities, for advertisers (Bernoff, 2010). Although many of the interviewees in this study commented on the rather emergent status of mobile advertising, the smartphone technology was developed in the late-1990s and early 2000s. The first smartphone, the Simon by IBM, was released in 1994 but was pretty unsuccessful only selling 50,000 units and lasting on the market a mere 6 months (Aamoth, 2014). Consequently, mass adoption of the technology didn’t occur till much later in the decade and was still relatively rare outside of Japan.

However, the release of the T-Mobile Sidekick in 2002 spurred mass adoption, particularly in the United States, and was quickly followed by the first Blackberry in
2003, the first iPhone in 2007, and the first Android in 2008 (Aamoth, 2014). The capabilities of these products lured consumers to ditch their clunky old cell phones and join the smartphone revolution. As of 2008, about 12% of the global population owns a smartphone, and that number rose to 20% by the end of the decade (The Statistics Portal, n.d.). As will become evident in the findings of this study, mobile advertising is a major trend and focus for global advertisers of today. Overall, the first decade of the millennium produced a marked shift in the advertiser-consumer dynamic. Advertisers, in effect, had more access than ever before thanks in particular to technological advancements. “In the middle of the last century, [advertisers] gained the ability to reach their buyers through screens in their homes. At the turn of this one, they gain access to consumers through screens in their hands” (Ad Age Content Strategy Studio, 2010). The first decade of the millennium brought about new technologies, new media, and new players, but the goal of advertisers has remained constant over the years “to create a meaningful connection” (Ad Age Content Strategy Studio, 2010). This goal still motivates advertisers today.

**The Current State of Global Advertising**

As discussed previously, the evolution from international to multinational to global agency promoting global brands happened gradually, sped up with looser trade restrictions, the growth of TNCs, and technological advancements. The emergence of global brands made it necessary for the advertising industry to keep pace in order to serve their clients around the globe. Marcio Moreira, Vice Chairman and former Worldwide Director of Multinational Accounts of McCann Worldgroup, in an interview with
William O’Barr, observed that instead of talking about global ideas, agencies are now talking about brand platforms, “because the strongest expression of a brand comes from designing a platform and making sure it’s executed in a culturally relevant fashion wherever it’s found” (O’Barr, 2008). Moreover, and incidentally another indication of the evolution toward global advertising, Moreira said, “I even hesitate to use the word advertising anymore because there’s such a plethora of new channels out there.” He says he prefers to talk about “brand communications” because, for example, an Internet message could go viral attracting a lot of attention, garnering a following, but it’s not necessarily designed as an advertisement. “It’s designed as a piece of entertainment, or information, or an intriguing piece of communication that grabs your attention… and the public chooses to send it on to other people and thus turn it into a property for the brand” (O’Barr, 2009). Advertising is only one aspect of what a brand does, claims Moreira. “A vital global brand today has to have an array of communications covering a whole lot of approaches for communicating with the consumer: advertising, digital, online, offline, PR, events, promotions, manifestations in the physical space.” (O’Barr, 2008). Brock, Global Brand Creative, Under Armour, shared that as a global advertising producer everything is about the brand.

…The brand, again, it's everything. It's how we look. It's how we feel. It might be a graphic on a t-shirt that I have to run after, or someone else did a video, or an athlete posts a video. All that is a reflection on the brand. So even though the scope becomes a little bit more narrow or more focused by taking other things off
the plate, it's that much more difficult and stressful trying to make sure that it's all together on the same page.

Similarly, Schmitt (2008) says that getting the message out by using all available communications is imperative to building a global brand. This kind of verbiage is typical of advertisers today, as Brock’s comment underscores. As will become even more evident in the chapters to follow, advertisers see themselves as brand managers and conceptualize (traditional) advertising as just one part of their overall strategy.

Moreira continues to say that in the eighties “we were taking a global idea per se and executing it for use in a number of markets with some minor variations. Today we don’t necessarily bother to execute for usage across borders” (O’Barr, 2010). The brand platform Moreira refers to is more than a tagline or slogan, he says, “It’s a strategic brand notion that represents the brand in the way that it wishes to be represented and can be translated in a theme line in advertising communications, digital, or whatever other communication channels you might use” (O’Barr, 2008). One of the reigning examples that Moreira referred to is Nike’s *Just do it* brand platform – it differentiates Nike from its competitors and epitomizes everything that it stands for.

In contrasting global advertising from the eighties to the late 2000s, Moreira says that at McCann in the eighties they had an international team based out of New York that created commercials for their international clients, and the idea was that one commercial could be remade following the original pattern to work in a variety of countries and contexts. Moreira says that team has long been dispersed because the “so-called pattern
advertising of those days ceased to exist” (O’Barr, 2010). He explains that large holding companies, like McCann, prefer to use a central team to work on more strategic initiatives like designing the actual brand platforms, and have the individual markets take care of execution. Although Moreira does not use the word glocalization, this technique, in effect, is what he is referring to, and suggests a shift away from true standardized approaches to global campaigns.

One of the expectations of global advertisers is that they develop, execute, and stay true in all of their communications on all of the channels to their clients’ brand platforms, although this brand platform might be realized differently in different countries. Shelly Lazarus, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, in an interview with William O’Barr (2008), mirrored the observations of Moreira, saying that in her experience once the central brand management team comes up with the universals of the brand and develops a communications program that they think can work globally, 80% of the countries go with the global campaign or “some slight modification of it” (O’Barr, 2008). In Lazarus’ opinion, there are surface differences amongst cultures but deeper universal truths as well. This belief allows global advertisers to stay true to the brand platform while adapting their creative to their local markets. Lazarus also points out the significance of having local input; she says

As much as I believe in the universal truth of a brand, as much as I believe in global brands themselves and global communications programs, there’s always room to take what is created at the center and make it better. There are people in
the local markets who understand their culture and geography better than the
people at the center. They can adjust and reinterpret the message to take it from
100% to 150% (O’Barr, 2008).

Again, although Lazarus does not use the word glocalization, she alludes to the
importance of including, and sharing responsibility, with local constituents. One of my
informants who had experience working at three different advertising agencies spoke to
this point as well: “I think [campaigns do] need to be specific to every market…if you
want to relate to your audience... There can be one global insight. Airbnb has a great
tagline but it needs to be activated on a local level, I believe.” Additionally, Paolo, Head
of Advertising, Airbnb, said, “We talk a lot about global relevance and local resonance,
that’s sort of the guiding principle. We want it to resonate locally but it needs to be
relevant on a global basis, so we start from that.” These comments also shed light on the
significance of taking into consideration local customs and values, albeit tangential to the
core brand universals.

Beyond the focus on branding and brand universals in global advertising, as well
as techniques and opinions on standardization versus glocalization, which will be
discussed more in the following chapters, global interactivity between advertisers and
consumers is a major development in the current phase of global advertising. A relatively
new phenomenon, the definition and dimensions of advertiser-consumer interactivity
have been debated by scholars and no real consensus has been determined (Liu &
Schrum, 2002; McMillian & Hwang, 2002; Voorveld, Neijens & Smit, 2011; Wu, 2006).
However, Voorveld, Neijens, and Smit (2011) have summarized that all of the proposed definitions share some commonalities. First, almost all the researchers incorporate some facet of “two-way communication” (Liu & Shrum, 2002), although the terminology differs. In particular, with web-based applications the functionality to provide feedback and facilitate communication is a baseline necessity. A second dimension that researchers mention has to do with the notion of time or “responsiveness” (Song & Zinkhan, 2008). The idea of synchronicity is a key component of the interactive phase of global advertising. And the third dimension is related to control or “a user’s ability to voluntarily participate in and instrumentally influence a communication” (Liu, 2003).

O’Barr (2008) says that there is more interactivity with consumers in the contemporary global advertising environment than ever before. In fact, Publicis Groupe, the third largest global advertising and communications network, reported that 52% of their 2015 revenue was from digital activities (Publicis Groupe, 2016). To that end, consumers have more choices than ever before – choices about which ads to watch or read, what brand environments they want to participate in, and to what degree. Moreira says consumers expect dialogue and that the trend is just beginning (O’Barr, 2008). Tungate (2013) contends that brands what to engage consumers on multiple channels, “Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram… every social network is of interest to agencies, because it offers them the chance to get closer to consumers, engaging them on an active basis in a way traditional TV never could” (p. 247).
Interactivity, however, is not limited to social networking on a screen and agencies aren’t limited to creating only advertisements, in the traditional sense. Tungate (2013) suggests that far more elaborate things can be done on social networks. Take the example of Nike’s Fuel Band. Even though Nike already had the running space cornered with their Nike+ and Nike personal training apps, in 2012, they took social networking one step further by creating a plastic wristband that tracked physical movements and turned them into points. Created in partnership with digital agency R/GA, these points were only trackable through Nike apps and products (Tungate, 2013). The more physically active one is, the more points they accrue throughout the day. And, all these points can be shared across multiple social media networks simultaneously. “The Nike+ Fuel Band turned exercise into a 24/7 social one-upmanship game” (Tungate, 2013), and now several competitors, like Fitbit and Garmin, and most recently, Under Armour, are following Nike’s lead.

In the previous example, however, R/GA created the product for only one client—Nike, but, savvy agencies are now developing new technologies and then licensing them to clients to use internationally. TBWA in Germany, for example, created a window-shopping platform called Wi\Sh – unprompted by a client brief. Launched at the Adidas store, shoppers could peruse life-sized digital items on an interactive store window and drop them into a virtual shopping cart, which then appeared on a digital shopping cart on their phones – ready for purchase. By licensing this interactive technology, TBWA retained the intellectual property rights and was therefore able to adapt it for future
clients. Creative director Martin Mohr says, “…it illustrates the changing nature of agencies and what they do for clients. It's not about creating advertising – it's about creating new channels. It's about building stuff” (Tungate, 2013).

International and global advertising has been a long, evolutionary process, and Moreira summarizes the evolution productively. When asked about the internationalization of advertising, he said Stage 1 was about behaving abroad more or less like an agency would at home. The thinking was “what was good for the originating market was thought to be good for the new markets…The ads weren’t designed as pattern ads—that is, not for multi-country usage” (O’Barr, 2008). Stage 2, roughly the 1980s, “occurred when companies decided their brands were really powerful and important, so important, in fact, that they needed to control and manage the image” (O’Barr, 2008).

Stage 2, in Moreira’s opinion, reflected the thinking of central campaign creation, while allowing different regions and cultures to develop their own versions of the campaign. In Stage 3, the philosophy is that the various regions should have more creative license with their own work, but all the work should abide by the centralizing brand platform (O’Barr, 2008). While there are brands today operating on all stages, Moriera contends that the fourth stage has been set in motion. The fourth stage is “where the consumer dictates the behavior of brands. We are living in an interactive world. Companies don’t own their brands anymore. The consumer owns the brand and the consumer decides whether you’re communicating correctly or incorrectly” (O’Barr, 2008). Tungate (2013) also casts a
cautionary note saying that even the most awe-inspiring mediums around the globe are rendered banal by content that lacks magic.

While many of these issues and conversations are still hotly debated, it has ushered in contemporary, global advertising to its current cultural, political, and economic state. McKinsey & Company’s Global Media Report (2015) claims that ad and consumer spending on global media rose 5.4% in 2014, and they project that spending over the next five years will rise at a compound annual rate of 5.%. That’s an estimated rise in global spending on media from $1.6 trillion in 2014 to $2.1 trillion by 2019 (Bagchi, Murdoch, & Scanlan, 2015). Analysts estimate that advertisers spent almost $600 billion worldwide in 2015, which represents an increase of 6% from 2014 (eMarketer, 2014; Forbes, 2015). Global advertising is a major player in the economic, political, and cultural dynamics brought on my globalization with the United States, China, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom representing the top five spenders in advertising categories like total paid media, digital, and mobile (eMarketer, 2014). However, analysts forecast that by 2018, Brazil will be the fourth largest market, jumping Germany and the United Kingdom. In addition, the United States remains the largest market with global advertisers estimated to spend almost $190 billion on ads in the United States in 2015, representing 31.9% of the global ad market (eMarketer, 2015).

Trends suggest that digital advertising, which includes Internet and mobile ads, will surpass TV advertising becoming the largest advertising category by 2017, a year earlier than McKinsey & Company originally forecast (Bagchi, Murdoch, & Scanlan,
Additionally, advertisers spent an estimated $64 billion worldwide on mobile advertising in 2015, a key driver of growth in global advertising. This number represents an increase of nearly 60% since 2014 (eMarketer, 2015), and spending on mobile advertising is expected to more than double by 2018 to an estimated $158 billion. Furthermore, Zenith Optimedia (Barraclough, 2016) predicts that by 2018 mobile advertising will account for 92% of all “new advertising dollars added to the global market.”

Much of these advertising dollars spent worldwide are dictated by players at the five biggest advertising agency networks in the world. The biggest group is WPP, which has 194,000 people working in 112 countries across 3,000 offices. They claim to work with 352 of the Fortune Global 500 (WPP, 2016). WPP, with parent company locations in both London and New York, reported billings of $72.8 billion as of December 2015, with reported revenues soaring to $18.7 billion (WPP, 2016). The OmnicomGroup, which represents the second largest communications group, boasts three separate global advertising agency networks (BBDO, DDB, and TBWA) in addition to over 1500 agencies in over 100 countries, employing 74,900 people worldwide (“OmnicomGroup About,” n. d.). They boast three parent company offices in the United States, one in the United Kingdom, and two in Asia Pacific. Omnicom’s 2015 Annual Report (OmnicomGroup, 2016) to shareholders indicated revenues of $15.1 billion, an increase of 1.2% from 2014. Headquartered in Paris, the third largest advertising and communications group is Publicis Groupe, which has roughly 77,000 employees working
across 1356 agencies in 108 countries. According to their 2015 Annual Report, Publicis Groupe’s revenues in 2015 were $10.6 billion (Publicis Groupe, 2016), which represented a 32% increase in revenue from 2014. Interpublic Group represents the fourth largest network, employing more than 49,000 employees across 100 countries with 2015 revenues of $7.61 billion (Interpublic Group, 2016), and fifthly, Dentsu, who controls 25% of all ad spending in Japan, the world’s third-largest ad market, employs 43,000 professionals across 380 offices in 124 countries and exceeded revenues of $7 billion in 2015 (Doland, 2015). Together, these five global agency networks employ over 437,900 professionals with combined revenues of almost $60 billion—clearly, their impact on markets, media, varying locales, and culture cannot be underestimated.

Despite shifting agency network make-up and the constant evaluation of creative and production processes, audiences, and cultural trends, what seems clear is that advertising has always been at the forefront of the most intense evolutions of each era – whether that be a creative revolution, a shift in control from a centralized to a decentralized process, an era of acquisition and international mergers, an era of digital innovation, Web 2.0, or wearable technology. The current study picks up where this chapter leaves off. Situated squarely in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, advertising is grappling with technology, social media, the globalism of their brands, and managing communication that moves at a frenetic pace. The techniques might look more sophisticated and the research more advanced, but today’s advertisers are looking for the same thing they’ve always been looking for—the big idea.
The Case of Three Global Brands

This historical look at the evolution and exponential growth of the advertising industry tees up the study at hand, and in turn, the three companies that make up the focal points of this project. Before turning to the emergent themes from my investigative work with global producers in the advertising industry, it seems imperative to give a brief overview of the corporate histories and values of these three companies, as well as a brief synopsis of where they are in their global advertising journey.

The Collaborative: Airbnb

Airbnb is an online rental service that allows people to list, find, and rent vacation homes. It was founded in 2008 by co-founders, Joe Gebbia, Brian Chesky, and Nathan Blecharczyk. The company is based in San Francisco, California, and boasts over 2 million listings worldwide in over 191 countries. They also list approximately 1,400 castles available for rent. As a privately-held company, Airbnb is not required to release their financial statements, but in December 2015 Airbnb confirmed a $1.5 billion financing round, making it the third most valuable privately held startup, scoring a valuation of $25.5 billion (Alba, 2015; O’Brian, 2015). Their European headquarters are located in Dublin, Ireland (Worstall, 2013), but they have opened roughly a dozen international offices since 2012 in places like Paris, Barcelona, and more recently, Australia (Russell, 2012; Wauters, 2012).

Being the youngest company in the trio with a robust online presence, Airbnb is poised to move nimbly about the global matrix. In fact, Airbnb has been called one of the
pioneers of the sharing economy, “where asset owners use digital clearinghouses to capitalize the unused capacity of things they already have, and consumers rent from their peers rather than rent or buy from a company” (Geron, 2013). In other words, the sharing economy is one in which people rent their things—their homes, their cars, their tools—to others. In 2013, Airbnb launched a re-branding campaign in partnership with DesignStudio, in an effort to strategize and align their global advertising efforts. The resultant Belong Anywhere kicked off their foray into global promotion. Since then, they have been running global campaigns regularly, mostly with TBWA and Chiat/Day advertising agencies.

I deem them The Collaborative because it fits their line of work—as an online resource where people can share their listings, it fits their “place” in society—as leaders in the so-called sharing economy, and it fits what they tell me their values are—to belong, to share, to collaborate on not only listings, but making the world a better place, “where all 7 billion of us can belong.”

The Behemoth: Campbell Soup Company

Campbell Soup Company describes themselves as a global food company with a portfolio that includes not only the Campbell’s brand, but also brands such as Pepperidge Farm, Arnott’s, Kelsen’s, V8, Bolthouse Farms, and Plum Organics, to name a few. The company was started in 1869 by Joseph Campbell, a fruit merchant, and Abraham Anderson, an icebox manufacturer; they opened their first plant in Camden, New Jersey, still the company’s headquarters today. They employ over 18,600 employees worldwide
and are ranked #934 on *Forbes’ Global 2000 List* and #337 on the *Fortune 500* with sales exceeding $8 billion worldwide (Forbes, 2016; Fortune, 2016).

Campbell’s ran their first advertisement in 1931 via the radio with their familiar “M’m! M’m! Good!” jingle and launched their first television commercial in 1950. From there, the company sponsored popular programs at the time including “Lassie” and “Peter Pan.” In 1957, Campbell’s launched an international division and started selling its products in Australia and Mexico two years later. However, Campbell’s Swanson broth didn’t debut in China until 2007 (“Campbell Soup About Us,” 2016). Despite acquiring foreign brands (such as the Kelsen Group and Arnott’s) and launching various brands in new regions, Campbell Soup made no attempt to align or synergize its global pieces of business until 2015 in which they reorganized the entire company into three divisions: Americas Simple Meals and Beverages, Global Biscuits and Snacks, and Campbell Fresh. Of particular relevance to this project, the Annual Report (Campbell Soup Company, 2015) claims that the Global Biscuits and Snacks division is “focused on expanding in developed and developing markets while improving margins. This division unifies our Pepperidge Farm, Arnott’s and Kelsen businesses around the world” (Campbell Soup Company, 2015). Currently, the Pepperidge Farm headquarter office is in the United States (Norwalk, CT) and Arnott’s headquarter office is in Australia, while the Kelsen Group is headquartered in Denmark. Through trade press articles and my interviews, it was revealed that one of the impetuses for the reorganization was to align advertising
initiatives for the biscuit and snack business globally, as many felt they “lagged behind their peers” in this regard.

I deem them The Behemoth, a word used to describe “something that is unusually large and powerful;” synonyms include the word dinosaur, and “related words” include bulk and heavyweight (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Although the term originated in the Bible, I’m not suggesting that Campbell Soup behaves that archaically, nor am I suggesting they are as old as dinosaurs. However, in stark contrast to the other two companies making up this project, the tradition and longevity of Campbell Soup are what seems to precisely keep them perpetually behind their peers and competitors. However, they are working toward changing their approach, as The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Campbell’s is investing $125 million in its own venture-capital project to fund food startups in hopes to keep a better pulse on global food trends (Gasparro, 2016).

But behemoth, or mammoth, or Goliath, corporations move slowly—ever so slowly.

The Start-Up: Under Armour

Under Armour is a sports apparel, sneaker, and accessories company, headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. Founded in 1996 by former university of Maryland football player Kevin Plank, Under Armour began with a quest to create “a superior T-shirt,” one that provided “compression and wicked perspiration off your skin rather than absorb it” (“About Under Armour,” 2016). Coming in at #9 on Forbes’ list of The World’s Most Innovative Companies, they employ over 11,000 employees worldwide, and passed the $1 billion mark in 2010 (Forbes, 2016b). Under Armour ended
2015 with net revenues of $3.96 billion, an increase of 28% compared to $3.08 billion from the year before; this also marked their 25th consecutive quarter of more the 20% net revenues growth in their apparel category (Under Armour, Inc., 2016). They are the #2 sports apparel brand behind Nike (Fortune, 2016).

As a football player, Plank hated changing his “sweat-soaked cotton T-shirt over and over again during two-a-days,” thinking that there simply had to be something better. After extensive research, he designed the first Under Armour product, a HeatGear© T-shirt engineered to keep athletes cool, dry, and light in scorching conditions. Plank began selling his products up and down the East Coast and made $17,000 in sales that year (“It All Started,” 2016). Seeing the need to create momentum and build brand awareness after a few years of mild success, Under Armour struck a deal with the Oliver Stone film Any Given Sunday starring Al Pacino and Jamie Foxx, providing product that many of the actors wore in key scenes. Realizing the opportunity to leverage the product exposure in the film, Plank “bet big” and bought their first print ad in ESPN the Magazine, which paid off generating a $750,000 increase in sales (“Defining Authenticity,” 2016).

In 2003, Under Armour launched its first-ever TV campaign with their “Protect the House” campaign and launched another massive campaign “Click-Clack©” in 2006, alongside their initial foray into the footwear business. Brock, Under Armour, was one of the first 20 employees of the company and shared a candid story about the early days of Under Armour. He said
When we launched our first commercial, and when I wrote it, and we produced it in-house and used all our friends because we didn't have any athletes. We couldn't afford any athletes. They were real athletes, but we couldn't afford big name athletes. But now we have Tom Brady, Cam Newton, Clayton Kershaw, Jordan Spieth, but before that we had to use our friends. We had to use everything that we had at our disposal, cash in favors, do things off hours, not necessarily get permits for the places and all this other kind of stuff. So you had that to deal with compared to now where, like I said, we have marquee athletes and agents, make-up artists, and hair stylists, and the big production every time. But, also, the execution of it.

In addition, in an effort to increase their international reach, in 2006, Under Armour opened their European headquarters in the old Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam (“I Think You Hear Us,” 2016). They also have an international headquarter office location in Panama City, Panama, and a regional headquarter office in Shanghai for the Asia Pacific market. Recent successful global campaigns include “Book of Will,” one commercial in particular starring Jamie Foxx and Stephen Curry in 2015, which was recently launched at the time of my interviews, and thus, a primary focus in this project; and most recently, “Rule Yourself,” running late-2015 through 2016, which incorporates several of their marquee athletes like Tom Brady and Misty Copeland.

I deem them The Start-Up because despite their unprecedented growth over the past two decades, they embody the ideals, values, and work ethic of a start-up. It also
gives nod to their humble beginnings. Under Armour’s tagline, or slogan, “I Will,” used in all their marketing in every category, characterizes the essence of their brand culture. Under Armour operates with a “chip on their shoulder,” with a start-up mentality. When consumers think of Under Armour, they want them to think of an underdog, “being hungry,” or working relentlessly to be the best (Aaker, 2014). Aaker (2014) claims that Under Armour’s positioning provides “clarity, differentiation and protection from imitators in a complex, competitive arena.” Successful start-ups seem to acutely understand their purpose and their motivation, and no company exemplifies this better today than Under Armour.

**Why this Trio of Brands?**

What makes this trio of organizations a worthwhile mix is their combination of similarities and differences. These companies are similar in that they are all large, global companies with well-established brands. They are also all grappling with how to approach promotion and cultural production on an international scale making them worthwhile cases for this particular project. On the other hand, there are some notable differences amongst these three companies. Some areas of difference amongst these brands are obvious. Airbnb is an online service for renting rooms and homes around the world; Campbell Soup makes snacks, soups, and sauces, and Under Armour produces apparel, footwear, and now, fitness technology. Clearly, they operate in vastly different industries, pushing incredibly variant products, through a range of organizational structures to a bevy of different audiences. But, this is one of the strengths of this project.
Had I juxtaposed, for example, Campbell Soup with Kraft, this project would be lacking a well roundedness as to how other global advertisers outside of the consumer packaged food industry might approach their work on a global scale. On the other hand, had I only considered newer, dot-com type companies like Airbnb, Amazon, or Google, this project would be rendered irrelevant to the many organizations who have deep national ties and are grappling with shifts toward a more global advertising approach. To that end, because these three companies are so different in regard to their line of work, their corporate structure, and their traditional modes of distribution and promotion these findings are thus more broad in nature and more relevant to a varying range of global producers.

Additionally, one of the reasons these three brands work in this project is because of their relation to the digiconomy. On the one end of the continuum, Airbnb was born in an age of vast digital adoption, and it is precisely one of its strengths. There are no Airbnb brick and mortar stores to visit, but only a URL. Furthermore, Airbnb, “the Collaborative” is one of the propellants of the sharing economy – simultaneously informing the digiconomy and a byproduct of its growth. On the other end of the continuum is Campbell Soup who, founded in 1869, has a lengthy history of success a century before Arpanet was even fathomable. On top of that, the industrial evolution of consumer packaged food distribution has been a slow one. Consumers were used to buying packaged food in stores, in-person. To that end, despite widespread adoption of the Internet, consumer packaged foods, as an industry, were some of the last to capitalize on this new channel to distribute their product, and consumers still don’t seem wholly
convinced. Additionally, and several of my Campbell Soup informants reiterated this point, they have lagged in the digital advertising space, especially on a global scale.

Whereas Airbnb is wholly nestled in a digital existence pushing out global campaigns regularly, Campbell Soup, “the Behemoth,” is still fitting disparate pieces of advertising together in a way that may feel a bit clunky to the global consumer. Square in the middle of this continuum is Under Armour, who, as “the Start-Up” has typically moved quickly to adopt new technologies, yet has roots in a more grassroots approach to promotion.

What has manifested as a result is a global advertising approach that harnesses the power of social media and other interactive platforms to spread messages via electronic word of mouth, and they have capitalized on this by building expansive ecosystems of likeminded community members. In discussing the digital economy, Bohme (2014) says, “Innovations in technology enable new business models and companies can’t risk being left behind,” which characterizes the way these three brands’ desire to be at the forefront of technological innovation, yet their struggles and execution looking vastly different. These distinctions, in turn, make them an appropriate trio of cases for this project.

In addition, these three brands employ thousands of employees, in a range of countries, with total estimated revenues of almost $13 billion in 2015 alone. Their economic, political, and cultural impact is far-reaching with the ability to drastically change communities, alter local and industrial policy, and shift consumer behaviors. All of these factors make each of these three brands individually worthwhile case studies, however, exploring the dynamics, comparisons, and contrasts between and amongst these
three global brands make them an excellent focal point. The findings of this project are significant and relevant to today’s global cultural producers, underscoring fundamental dynamics and shifts in global advertising today.
CHAPTER 4
THE GLOBAL MINDSET: NETWORKS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND
GLOCALIZATION

Advertising thought leader and global strategist, Avi Dan (2011), whose former roles include Managing Partner at WPP’s Berlin Cameron, EVP for Saatchi & Saatchi, and the first Global Executive Director at Havas Advertising, claims that the current moment in advertising will experience more change than in the previous 150 years combined, especially as technology provides more efficient opportunities to reach consumers. Because Under Armour is in the business of fitness apparel and athletic footwear, Campbell Soup is in the consumer packaged goods industry, and Airbnb, while operating in the hotel and tourism industry, functions mostly online, their approaches at first glance might not seem to overlap given their incredibly variant industries. However, when it comes to advertising globally, these companies, and many others, regardless of industry, employ similar strategies. This chapter explores several arguments undergirding the process and production of both cultural product and cultural messages, or advertising, on a global scale.

In the following sections, I take a close look at how glocalization gets operationalized by global producers and stakeholders and the resultant challenges and implications for both producers and consumers. Calling upon the tenets of glocalization, advertisers first emphasize the ways in which they find it imperative to search for points of convergence amongst behaviors, tastes, and attitudes – as they see it anyway –
amongst various audiences. The diffusion of global advertising, in actuality, is only possible by focusing on the attributes that make audiences alike. Secondarily, I discuss how global stakeholders then pivot to underscore the realities of producing a culturally relevant campaign, in which even the most globally focused company must consider regional variations and cultural sensitivities in order to appeal to local audiences. These seemingly counter constructions of global advertising processes seem to suggest that global stakeholders see *more* advantages in highlighting *less.* In other words, syphoning campaigns down to “core human universals,” choosing not to translate global taglines with lots of reiterations, and lumping large groups of people together, despite seemingly obvious differences in behavior, provides global stakeholders with the most advantageous course of action.

Thirdly, after exploring these two binary, yet codependent, constructions of how campaigns, or cultural messages, are conceptualized, it is worth illuminating the actual processes of global advertising diffusion. The most powerful campaign in the world has little relevance if its intended audiences are never exposed to the actual ads. Global advertisers seek to align themselves with agencies and partners that have access to a global network of resources while also embarking on building networks of their own through more interpersonal channels. This section also looks more closely at a model of central intelligence and why it seems to be so advantageous for globally-minded companies. Together, these findings underscore how deeply complex operating in a global marketplace can be and how crucial it is that multiple stakeholders collaborate and
“buy in” in order for an advertising campaign to even take shape and disseminate to the appropriate audience. In turn, this chapter highlights the role of glocalization and how all of these decisions impact the promotional and creative process and the resultant cultural messages that audiences consume.

Before exploring how my informants are working through processes of glocalization, however, I find it salient to first discuss one of the more macro-level themes underpinning this section that emerged from my interviews. Almost all of my informants alluded to operating in an environment that necessitates a global mindset. Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) define a global mindset as “one that combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity” (p. 117). Even though I was asking my informants more pointed questions about products, campaigns, and execution in specific markets, many of my informants eventually concluded that to be successful in any global company in any role, not just in advertising or branding, one needed to deeply understand the dynamics of the global landscape. To think globally, or to invoke a global mindset, means operating efficiently in an ecosystem that facilitates global business. A leader operating under a global mindset is not intimidated with the vast amount of differences between and among various audiences and regions, but instead looks to leverage their organization’s own global capabilities to see where audience behaviors seemingly converge (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Kefalas, 1998; Levitt, 1983).
My informants constructed a global mindset in various ways. For example, one of my informants raised concern about the ability of American executives to see beyond their own nationalistic perspective. Mark, a C-Suite marketing executive at Campbell’s, said he’s setting up the new global promotional team, made up of advertisers, marketers, and other corporate communication people, with a “combination of internal and external people, but all of them have deep global experience either with our company or with other companies.” He admits that they have had to look externally for qualified candidates—both outside the company and the United States. “The people who operate globally often have grown up somewhere else because the U.S. doesn't, at least in my generation, didn't do a great job on necessarily inspiring a world view.” Kefalas (1998) claims that it is not unusual that executives with a global mindset are hard to find; he asserts that the unique ability to think globally and act locally is not an innate human trait and therefore, must be cultivated over time.

Additionally, the value of a global mindset is an organization’s ability to act quickly with accuracy (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). For advertisers at Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour, this means working with agencies or partners who have the capacity to mobilize on a global scale. Advantages of a global agency include global R&D, information access, constant availability, and a plethora of value-added partnerships already in place (Ozcan, 2015). Mark, Campbell Soup, further points out the advantages of partnering with a global agency network:
One of the things we can do [is] leverage our global relationship, right? We spend a lot of money with the agency on a global level, but we're brand new in Indonesia. So there, a couple of dollars we’re investing, they have no leverage. At a global level, we do [have leverage] so we can ensure that they get great talent on the business locally who can bring us those insights as needed.

However, Campbell Soup, on the one hand, faces some distinct challenges that neither Under Armour or Airbnb face in that they are an old company with a long history of deep ties to American culture. In fact, in the Spring of 2015, Denise Morrison, CEO of Campbell Soup Company, restructured the entire organization to address, in part, Campbell’s lack of focus on global audiences (Campbell Soup Company, 2016). This corporate restructuring resulted in three separate business divisions: Americas Simple Meal and Beverages, Packaged Fresh, and the Global Biscuits and Snacks division. As a result of the restructuring, all of Campbell’s brands thought to be most successful globally were housed in one division, allowing shared leadership, resources, and focus.

Cultivating a global mindset at Campbell Soup is a shift away from their traditional approach, which, according to my interviews, has historically focused on promotion in the home market – North America, for Pepperidge Farm’s Goldfish brand, Australia for Arnott’s Tim Tam brand, and Asia and Europe for their Kelsen butter cookies. When asked what he’d learned over the years, Sean, Global Advertising, Campbell Soup, said “…I truly believe having a global mindset helps me be successful in how I do my job, but also just how I live in general. So being more attuned to thinking
globally.” Sean’s construction of this mindset means getting his news from non-US or non-UK-based sources on a daily basis. “I perhaps look at France 24, or Deutsche Welle in Germany, or Rai Uno in Italy. Literally going to non-English, or non-American news sites helps me just learn about the world in a way that's kind of really easy.” Continuing he says, a global mindset can be cultivated by “going to some of the other countries, and just asking them questions, and immersing in that country. That kind of global mindset is, I think, the one thing that I see becoming more and more valuable over time.” Sean’s comments reflect how producers are approaching their work and ways in which they seek to be more relevant to the global consumer. In launching these three brands globally, to include Pepperidge Farms’ Goldfish, Arnott’s Tim Tam, and Kelsen’s Danish butter cookies, Campbell Soup is fundamentally shifting their advertising approach from a national one to a global one. Their behemoth nature has them positioned behind their competitors, but recent shifts in organization and resource utilization have them poised for a stronger global impact.

In contrast, both Airbnb and Under Armour, being newer companies, are nimbler, thus seemingly allowing them to move between international markets more sprightly. In comparison to the slow shift of a company deeply rooted in a national culture (like Campbell Soup), Under Armour executive Sebastian, Global Brand Marketing, suggests that a global mindset drives their thinking from the onset:

…For example the training category for us is huge. The training team is one of the most evolved from the perspective of being consistent globally because every
country… starts with training. They cover soccer in there… and they may have running or what have you… but at the core of it, you've got to nail training because it crosses all sports. It's the majority of what everybody in the athletic apparel space makes. They all start there and so because of that - that team really thinks from a global perspective.

What this comment suggests is that despite seeming like “just another category” for Under Armour, the training category is in fact a byproduct of a global mindset, driving decisions about how the product is created, how the advertising around the product is developed, and where the product is ultimately promoted—all for a global audience.

Similarly, Airbnb, by their very nature as an online resource to list and book unique accommodations around the world has almost always been focused on cultivating a global audience. Beau, a co-founder of DesignStudio, the agency that launched Airbnb’s rebrand in 2014, commented on how a global mindset led the process of rebranding for Airbnb. He said Airbnb co-founder, Brian Chesky was adamant about seeking out a “logo or a symbol that transcended language. Making sure this re-brand went globally was very much a part of the original brief. We worked… to make sure that everything we were doing answered that requirement.” Although Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) define a global mindset as a combination of openness to and awareness of diversity crossing cultures and geographic boundaries with a proclivity for streamlining big ideas, they also admit that cultivating a global mindset is a ceaseless quest. The dynamics of globalization cause frequent and rapid changes impacting the
production and distribution of cultural products that even the most senior executive must constantly stay informed about emerging advertising strategies and audience behaviors. Furthermore, a global producer’s construction of what exactly a global mindset means is subjected to one’s individual professional and personal experiences and their place in the organizational system.

Additionally, while the fact remains that global advertising is not a new area of study, the way in which advertisers approach their work is fundamentally different than a decade ago due to the cultural, economic, political, and technological dynamics associated with globalization. Furthermore, some scholars (Banet-Weiser, 2011) would also argue that consumers’ relationships with brands have also evolved, providing advertisers and brand managers with more challenges and opportunities than in previous eras. Together, the preceding examples suggest that conducting business on a global scale means invoking a global mindset that transcends the work environment, seeping into all areas of life. Even more so, some informants realize that being of a global mindset is not an innate skill and takes years of practice and honing, even recognizing that American executives can and have lagged in this quest.

It is with this underpinning that we turn to the emergent themes from my interviews, specifically considering the approaches that advertisers use to diffuse information about their global brands to various local audiences. The next two sections parse out the delicate balance between conceptualizing audiences as mostly similar to better activate a truly global campaign and all the while paying attention to certain
cultural nuances and sensitivities in order to better resonate with a variety of regional audiences. Although this approach can be problematic, those areas of concern will be discussed at length in Chapter 6. Here, I will instead focus on how advertisers and other brand stakeholders conceptualize their work and what they feel is imperative to successfully operating through a *glocalized framework*. Lastly, global stakeholders must align themselves with agencies and partners that have access to a global network of resources while also embarking on building informal networks of their own through more interpersonal channels. These findings underscore how a glocal approach can be advantageous and relevant for global advertisers and stakeholders, able to capture the dynamics of the global/local nexus in a way that other approaches to global advertising cannot.

**Glocalization: Capitalizing on Points of Convergence**

To begin, it makes sense to explore several junctures in which my informants felt that in order to advantageously advertise on a global scale it was imperative to search for points of *convergence* amongst behaviors, tastes, and attitudes – as they see it anyway – amongst various regions. Because Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour operate in vastly different industries, their approaches at first glance might not seem to overlap in significant ways. However, when it comes to advertising globally, these companies, and many others, regardless of industry, employ similar strategies. I will first consider how global stakeholders, and scholars, conceptualize their global work, and how that relates to larger themes from my interviews. Secondly, this section will look more closely at a
model of central intelligence and why it seems to be so advantageous for globally-minded companies.

**Conceptualizing Global Advertising Work**

A major development in the field of global and international advertising was the evolution of global consumer culture theory (GCCT). Proponents of this theory suggest that the dynamics of globalization have given way to a global consumer culture in which the consumptive patterns of consumers overlap regardless of their geographic locale (Taylor & Okazaki, 2015). While this theory will be more fully explored in Chapter 6, an outgrowth of this theory is the concept of global consumer culture positioning (GCCP)—a strategic approach by marketers and advertisers, which suggests that the shared consumptive practices, attitudes, and behaviors of geographically dispersed audiences create opportunities for transnational companies to use positioning strategies that cut across cultures (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999; Taylor & Okazaki, 2015). Several of my informants spoke to the opportunities afforded to them by approaching their work this way, suggesting the utility of this theoretical framework. In particular, one of the highest level executives at Campbell Soup, Mark, said that when launching a product globally the first thing they do is create a “need state” assessment “to try to just understand the consumer segmentation at a category level in multiple countries. My experience here,” says Mark, “and in several other categories is the market structures aren't really that different. As we set about building our global branding approach, the first is what are the things we think we can take globally and why.” Continuing, he explains that once they
figure out the products that can go global and what countries make the most sense, there are a couple steps that take place at a high level. “The first is really trying to come to a concrete, global brand positioning, and then, consequently, coming out of that is a ‘global brand book’ if you will, right, a playbook.” Getting global brand positioning means really understanding the insight of what that brand stands for at multiple levels, and this might be executed through brand pyramids, or brand purpose statements, etc. Mark says, “to the degree we can understand the commonality first, that's the lowest common denominator but more of the highest order of where we want to take the brand. That helps us to frame the kind of positioning approach that we want to take.” In other words, focusing on the commonality amongst audiences, as simultaneously the common denominator and the highest order, is a crucial step in advertising globally.

Echoing the strategic focus by Campbell Soup to hone in on commonalities amongst global audiences, Oscar, Global Product Development, Campbell Soup, says, “the underlining assumption…especially as likes to snacking, there absolutely is a wealth of evidence and inside knowledge that suggests that there's far more behaviors in common, than not.” Oscar’s research leads him to believe that different geographies don’t necessitate different portfolios of products, and there’s room for expansive cross-promotion. However, not all products are viable for global distribution. Oscar says, “like soup - we've learned the hard way that just because canned soup is big business in the U.S., that as a cooking and eating behavior it's far less transferable to Russia and China and where the eating behaviors and patterns are different.” Despite market research
showing Russian and Chinese consumers eat soup up to five times per week on average, Campbell’s was unable to persuade these consumers to try ready-made soup in lieu of their more traditional homemade soups (Jargon, 2011). In the case of the newly created global snacks division, Oscar explains, “That distance doesn't exist as much in snacking, where it's more of a global phenomenon with global needs.”

Both Mark and Oscar’s comments tee up a broader perspective held amongst global advertisers—that there are some core beliefs and “universal” truths about humans that advertisers can then co-opt to produce overarching brand platforms or campaigns that resonate with many audiences regardless of geographic location. This cooptation, however, does not suggest that advertisers believe in a completely homogenous consumer audience as suggested by Levitt (1983), but instead, and true to the tenets of GCCP, these advertisers believe that globalization has given way to more and more opportunities to cross-promote their products or services across country borders without changing their approach (Akaka & Alden, 2010; Taylor & Okazaki, 2015). To that end, advertisers believe that leveraging a core “universal” human truth – whatever that may be – by associating it with their product or service is a strategic way to reach global audiences, and informants from all three companies suggested they approach their work with this in mind.

For example, Brock, a brand creative executive, Under Armour, discusses the motivation behind Under Armour’s global tag line “I Will” in saying “the emphasis is on that word, ‘will,’ whether it is ‘I will’ or in terms of ‘willing things to happen’ is about
our brand, who we are, striving to prove people wrong, a little chip on our shoulder as the
upstart brand.” “I Will,” in some form, has been with the brand since 2003, and was then
launched in 2013 as the global tagline. Referring to their global work, Brock shared, “The
campaign was built around statements of will, and if you see any of our in-store or
advertisements, ‘I Will’ is usually followed by a declaration to dictate the tempo… ‘I
Will’ is the punctuation of each statement.” Brock suggests that “striving to prove people
wrong” or the determination to get the results you’re looking for is a core human desire
that can be understood around the world. Under Armour, in turn, links their product and
services to this “universal” human ideal. Patrick, a brand marketing director working
directly for Under Armour’s basketball category, spoke about the “Charged by Belief”
installment, part of the larger “Book of Will” campaign, under the global “I Will” brand
platform, which features NBA basketball superstar, Stephen Curry. He says that being
“charged by belief” is a human universal, “because we all have and can share belief
whether it's believing yourself to be a great player or to be a better student, to be a better
person. That's something that resonates with people.” Honing in on his industrial work,
he says, “We take a sports lens to it. When you have something that's very universal, and
you got a guy like Stephen who's visible, and people can identify with, it makes it easier.”
Despite characterizing “I Will” as a core human desire, however, the global tagline
clearly reflects the desires of a more individualistic culture, like the United States, in
which individuals tend to prioritize their own goals ahead of the group (Han & Shavitt,
Relatedly, David, Head of Community for Airbnb, embarked on an extensive project for Airbnb in which he met with both hosts and guests of Airbnb, as well as with employees of Airbnb, to uncover what their overarching global brand tag line “Belong Anywhere” actually meant to those at the core of the organization. His assessment was this:

Everyone wants to belong, and when they're traveling, ideally people want to feel like they belong there. At Airbnb, travelers ... Like a dirty word to an Airbnb guest is "tourist…" What tourism means is, you're looking at a country, not being part of it. You're taking photographs of things rather than talking to people, and engaging with people. That's why “Belong Anywhere” is relevant to everyone, basically, who wants an authentic cultural experience wherever they are in the world, is because they want to feel like they can belong and be like a local anywhere in the world.

When pressed further about whether he found any real distinction between cultures or a variance in cultural attitudes toward belonging, David said, “No. I didn't, because belonging is part of the human condition… If you're a normal human being… we are hard-wired as a species to want to belong, to become part of a tribe. So no, belonging is a human universal.” Although Airbnb had already adopted “Belong Anywhere” at the time of David’s research, it fortified the slogan even more and has thus been further integrated into other advertising campaigns, such as “Never a Stranger” or “Is Mankind?” both launched in several countries. Again, by linking products to a core human value
companies can further seep into the everyday lives of consumers as exemplified by statements such as “I’m an Airbnb kind of person.” Despite ferocious critics of corporate infiltration into the lives of consumers (see Klein, 2009), in this pivotal moment in global promotional culture, the blame cannot totally be placed on companies as consumers are now more than ever looking to define themselves through brands (see Banet-Weiser, 2011).

Clearly operating with a global mindset, Airbnb co-founder, Brian Chesky, worked with DesignStudio to launch their global rebrand, “Belong Anywhere,” in 2013, and as part of this process, Chesky was adamant about creating a logo or a “semi optic” that could “transcend language.” Beau explained that “making sure this re-brand went globally was very much a part of the original brief.” He also indicated that they used a third-party company to globally validate their work. “They took our designs and went globally to talk to people in China, their network in South America, and Africa, all the key markets. Generally, it was very positive feedback…The re-brand itself really had a global consideration for it.” Relatedly, my informants from Campbell Soup also spoke about tapping into a universal human truth in order to sell their products around the globe. An informant from Campbell Soup, who also worked on global brands at Kraft, said

The brands that I’ve seen translate the best globally have been the ones where...

Yeah, certainly they had a great and unique flavor, but they had a stronger emotional connection that was tied to a really human truth and insight…Oreo's a
great example of one that has had unbelievable success in a lot of markets. China's the second biggest market for Oreo. I believe Brazil is the third and then probably Venezuela or Canada after the U.S. A lot of that was really because there's a real insight around the emotional connection of the parent-child moment or the grandparent-grandchild moment. We're actually looking at a concept that's appropriate for Tim Tam, which is more about best friends... It could be adult women, for example. We've translated it very successfully in Indonesia, and we've started getting traction in Hong Kong. We'll begin bringing that to the United States in the next 12 months or so.

This comment underscores the way producers value highlighting less, rather than more, in a global campaign, despite seemingly significant cultural differences. The similar approaches employed by these companies to find points of convergence by co-opting what they believe to be core human universals or truths is striking. Many scholars (Al-Makaty et al., 1996; Miracle, Chang, & Taylor, 1992; Ricks, Arpan, & Fu, 1974) argue that viewing audiences as one homogenous entity is not only ill-informed, but also bad for business. However, proponents of GCCP theory, and many advertisers, including most of my informants, view this approach differently in that they believe there are core human universals that exist regardless of nationality, race, or income level—and here is where global advertisers see their sweet spot. Having raked in $13 billion in revenue in 2015 alone, these companies seem to be resonating with many global audiences, despite wide-spread criticism questioning their approach. This research, then, calls attention to
the irony that if viewing audiences as a homogenous entity is ill-informed then how do these companies continue to sell billions of dollars of products and services.

A fascinating distinction between these companies, however, lies in the way they view their own existence in relation to the global, or their sense of *globality*. One of the foremost challenges facing any global advertising team is translating a campaign into various language—or the decision not to. Often times, as several informants mentioned, beyond simply translating the slogan or tag line or brand promise, teams have to ensure that it makes sense in a new cultural setting and still carries the same ideal that it was originally intended to carry. Brock, Under Armour, recounted his experience with orchestrating the global launch of “I Will” in saying that it is the responsibility of the international creative team to “always be thinking about the international needs and uses for each region and then down to the country and then down to the city.” Brock shared that when “I Will” emerged as their global tagline, “we decided that we would not translate it, and it could go into every region, and we had a big summit.” Twice a year all the company creatives from around the world get together to talk about upcoming campaigns, messages, and trends. Brock said decisions like this are vetted with the group.

On the other hand, Paolo, Airbnb, specifically commented on why they chose to translate their tagline “Belong Anywhere” in every region they advertise in.

The tagline ‘Belong Anywhere’ we've translated into 29 different languages and you can imagine that that concept, because it's a bit philosophical, the back translations are very different in different places. In English, ‘Belong Anywhere’
would mean something, it means something very different in like Cantonese or Russian or German. They're just different variations on that so we did a lot of work to fine tune the meanings of those transcreations, other than translations, but like as we transcreated that tagline, what does it mean? If you look at other global brands, so Nike, for example, uses ‘Just Do It’ in every language because they wanted to be an American company. They don't change that language at all. We want to be a global company. We're headquartered here in San Francisco, but we are a global company, we have offices in 34 different countries. We translate everything on our product into 29 languages. Translating that tagline was really a demonstration of our values that like we expect this to be global.

The juxtaposition of these two comments points to the varying types of relationships that transnational companies have with global consumers. While it would appear that Under Armour’s approach is meant to convey their Americanness and to convey it favorably both in terms of product quality and company capability, it would then seem plausible to assume that Airbnb’s strategy is meant to minimize their American roots in favor of a more glocal approach. Keith Reinhard (2003), Chairman emeritus, DDB Worldwide, formed an ad hoc task force of DDB professional from 17 countries to address perceived cultural imperialism in the industry. His task force found that one of the most negative perceptions of American brands was a “gross insensitivity and arrogance—everything from failure to use the local language to the perception that Americans believe everyone wants to be like them” (Reinhard, 2003). In contrast, however, Steenkamp, Batra, and
Alden (2003) found that while the degree to which perceived brand globalness matters from consumer to consumer will differ, consumers’ perception of a brand’s global presence and reach is likely to result in brand preference. In other words, the more global the brand appears to be, the better. This preference, researchers claim, is due to the “symbolic value of prestige” associated with the brand and a projected global belongingness (Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). While global stakeholders conceptualize their work in a myriad of contested ways, the fact still remains that these are strategies used by advertisers to lure consumers into their powerful ecosystems. My informants, however, don’t see it as luring or co-opting the ways in which consumers define themselves. They, instead, emphasized how their respective company seeks to fill a deep void in consumers and that likewise, consumers are looking to align themselves with brands based on their corporate values or perceived associations.

In sum, one of the only ways that global advertising is logistically even feasible is by imagining and then lumping large groups of people together or, in other words, by capitalizing on points of convergence that cross national and geographic boundaries. In doing so, the greatest advantage for companies is the economies of scale and alleviating the need to have numerous teams in numerous locations essentially working on the same types of projects – in addition, of course, to building global brand platforms. What is more pronounced than ever before is not only the way in which companies seek to connect with global consumers, but the way in which consumers are increasingly seeking to cultivate a globally-minded existence (see Banet-Weiser, 2011). Vance, an
International Accounts executive, TBWA Worldwide, spoke to this convergence point in saying

I think if you look for those commonalities you can build global brands. The global communities of people are looking to live a certain type of lifestyle. But the version of that may look quite different… from the rich kid in Brentwood to the poor kid in Africa... I do think there is a global affinity to get a collective opinion of everything. There’s actually more that brings us together then divides us, and you can build brands around those things. The individual cultural interpretations of those things can be less important because people just go ‘I get it, I believe that even though I might say it a little differently, I might articulate it a little differently and it might look a little different, I believe in that.’

Vance’s comments seem to mirror the findings of Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003), in that while the impact of perceived brand globalness differs from consumer to consumer, the result is likely to be a positive one.

Together, this commentary on conceptualizing the processes of global advertising suggests that global stakeholders see more advantages in highlighting less. While standardization is not a new concept to global advertising (see Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011; Levitt, 1983), the complexity of the process has compounded significantly due to the rise in technological advances, clutter, and global consumer culture. What unsurprisingly did not come up in my interviews is what is lost, neglected, or phased out as a result of conceptualizing audiences in this manner. Beyond exploring how global
advertisers conceptualize their work and the strategic choices they make to connect with consumers and diffuse product information by seeking out points of convergence, global advertisers that I spoke with also shared insight into models that they use to help them successfully push campaigns on a global scale.

**Diffusing Global Campaigns: Central Intelligence**

Several of my informants spoke about how they “get work done” on a global scale and some models that they have adapted to do so. Issues related to standardization/adaptation in international advertising have been researched since the 1960s and continue to be a top area of research of scholars (Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011; Zou, 2005); in fact, from the years 1990 to 2002, in a study assessing the contributions of international advertising scholars to top peer-reviewed journals in this field, standardization was the most covered topic (n=28%) (Zou, 2005). Advertisers looking to diffuse global campaigns are constantly trying to straddle the line between standardization and adaptation to regional markets.

The model employed by all three of the companies I spoke to is one of “global central intelligence,” which means most of the “high level” creative content and strategy come from the company’s headquarters, despite the desire to reach audiences around the world and expand into new markets. Mark, Campbell Soup, spoke about the model that they are employing for their global products in saying that the recent company-wide reorganization has grouped brands into a snacking category. The three major brands in the category now have three respective global brand teams, which all report to the Chief
Marketing Officer. Mark says, “It’s something that we’ve kind of lacked in our historical perspective, so they’re good brands, they just usually stay in their favorite country, like where they were born.” The goal is to broaden and strengthen the global reach of these brands by now having a devoted global team. When asked about the advantages of setting up the global teams in this fashion, Mark continued, saying the advantage is two-fold:

One is if we really want to leverage the best of the brand locally, and the best of the brand globally, having a global agency partner means we can have one team working with the global director on the client's side, really understanding the strategy for the brand at a global level.

On the other side, he says, “then we have a creative team having oversight over all of the assets globally.” He said the beauty is in having the teams complement each other. “You have a strategy team that helps us to see ‘does this fit?’ and you have a creative team that looks for this kind of fitting in the overall campaign.” Mark, however, points to some potential challenges in producing campaigns this way in saying

One of the biggest reasons why that's a benefit, and I'm going to critique the career that I grew up in, when marketers locally love to create something new, right? It's what we're taught to do. Make your mark and do something different, and what they don't know because they don't have 50 years of the brand history and haven't studied it outside of their local market when it's coming in, they don't have necessarily an appreciation for what has fully worked before and starting
with that base knowledge before jumping into what would I do that’s completely different because I'm the brand marketer.

Infusing a global mindset, Mark’s comments resonate with the belief that a global central intelligence model is preferable in promoting products globally. This glocal approach of combining high-level strategy with more regional, team-based creative contributions is a powerful and effective method for advertising globally. Talking even more specifically about the central intelligence approach, Chris, Global Research and Development, Campbell Soup, said Campbell’s operates a number of Global Design Hubs. “Based on the brand, we identify a lab which would be the lead lab. It's based on where the brand has the most critical mass in the market.” Chris says from a technology standpoint all the labs can design, research, and manufacture a variety of products, but “strategically, for the company” they try to match the design hub with where the brand has the most critical mass. He claims this is advantageous for several reasons including matching up time zones and resources. Chris claims, “We used the strategic intent for the brand to drive the decision on where the leadership would come from.” So, even though Chris is referring to multiple Global Design Hubs, he’s advocating for a central intelligence approach for each brand. Although the various brands have different hubs (for example, the Goldfish brand’s hub is in Norwalk, Connecticut and the Kelsen brand’s hub is in Asia Pacific), they operate in a way in which the global advertising and marketing strategy diffuse across regions and countries from a central point.
Under Armour’s approach is likewise similar to Campbell Soup, although even more streamlined. Sebastian, Global Brand Marketing, Under Armour, shared that “if you are talking about creative production assets, for the most part, the major above the line assets are produced at headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. And they are created in-house with an in-house creative team.” However, some of this work, says Sebastian, does happen in consultation with an advertising agency. When asked about whether all of the global advertising and marketing campaigns are created in the United States, Sebastian said “the global stuff, yes.” He admitted that “we haven't had one yet at Under Armour - where a piece of work was created, say out of our Amsterdam office, and we decided to pick it up and use it globally. That hasn't happened yet.” In sum, Sebastian said, “Basically, major above the line, 99% of that is coming out of the U.S.” Similarly, Aiden, brand creative executive, Airbnb, mentioned that the overwhelming majority of this creative team resides in San Francisco at the company headquarters and that they just hired creatives in both Singapore and London, but they typically work on more “regional projects.” Paolo, Airbnb, also confirmed that while he works with regional marketing leads across the United States, Asia, and Europe, he maintains control of global “strategy and creative quality and creative production.” Micah, Account Manager, TBWA, also confirmed that when teaming up with Airbnb to work on “Never a Stranger” and “Is Man Kind?,” they worked most closely with the U.S.-based team and especially Paolo, who was responsible for most of the strategy.
However, Micah was quick to add that although most of the work had come from the U.S. headquarters that it wasn’t “out of the question” that the creative or strategy could originate from another locale. Because Micah is part of TBWA and TBWA has a vast global network of offices and almost unlimited resources on a global scale – he said that if, for example, China had a need for some creative it could hypothetically come from China. But, at least one informant from each company made some reference to this “possibility,” but no one shared an example where major creative strategy was developed outside of the United States. Many of my informants presented themselves as open to the idea, but their decision-making patterns suggested otherwise. It seems as if the preference is for the high-level work or “above the line” content to originate in the United States with the U.S.-based team, despite seeming openness toward other contributors. This production process is problematic, adding to the ambivalent nature of the glocal approach, in that while operating this way provides an opportunity for streamlining, it simultaneously marginalizes voices from regional markets—voices that global producers say they vehemently “value,” yet don’t invite to the decision-making table.

Thus far, this section has focused on the ways in which Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour have similarly approached the way in which they advertise to global audiences. However, because these companies all operate in different industries there are some notable areas of contrast or issues specific to each company that are worth exploring briefly. When it comes to diffusing cultural products globally, Campbell Soup, for example, deals with an incredible variance in price point based on region. When they
attempt to diffuse product information one of the challenges that they are up against is the
trend of what they call “small food.” To that end, Chris, Campbell Soup says

The whole notion of a big food company is kind of a cliché at this point. What
consumers are making choices on are small brands that they can feel a connection
to, whether that connection is geographic [or] whether it's heritage or history.
Small is going to be better in terms of brand innovation. You'll see that in terms of
[things like] ingredients.

Chris shared, for example, a recent campaign by Starbucks, in which they launched a
cherry tart. “It wasn't just a cherry tart, it was a Michigan cherry tart. People having any
connection... ‘Oh, yeah, I've been to Michigan. I've been there during cherry season.’
They immediately have a conception of what that looks and tastes like.” Chris contends
that companies are starting to design and innovate against these “local” or familial
connection.

Similarly, Tony, an executive in the Campbell’s culinary division, said that he is
responsible for tracking global food trends and considering how they will play into
Campbell’s portfolio of products over the next 5 years. Ironically, he laments that as
society becomes more and more globalized, finding true authentic tastes can be a
challenge. When asked if the trends he is predicting for the next several years are “not
typical American tastes,” he said that’s correct, however, “Our bigger problem is that the
world is shrinking so much it becomes more and more difficult to find real authentic taste
and flavor.” The irony is not lost in that transnational companies are so often seeking to
lump audiences together to sell product that in the mix distinct pieces of culture are becoming increasingly muted. It is worth pausing to consider the weight of these subtle effects of a globalized society.

Another distinct factor influencing the diffusion of global branding lies in the nimbleness – or lack thereof – of a company. To move sprightly is often viewed as an advantage, especially on a global scale. Both Airbnb and Under Armour are significantly younger companies than Campbell Soup. While Under Armour, “The Start-Up,” was founded in 1998, Airbnb, “The Collaborative,” was founded most recently in 2008. Both companies began when the internet was widely available and adopted across the United States, and thus, both of these companies operated – from their inception – as part of the e-commerce age. (As a point of reference, Amazon.com was founded in 1994.) In stark contrast, Campbell Soup was founded in 1869—an entire century before the internet was even invented. As many of my Campbell Soup informants alluded to – although they view their company history as an integral piece of their brand, it can slow down the speed at which changes take place. In fact, even though Campbell Soup has owned Arnott’s Biscuits since 1997, they have not made any attempt to leverage their popular Tim Tam chocolate biscuit until 2015 when CEO Denise Morrison reorganized the entire company to better support global efforts. Same with Pepperidge Farm’s Goldfish; although Goldfish is available in a handful of countries outside the United States, until 2015, Campbell Soup made no effort to coordinate their global efforts or leverage that brand in
regions where it will likely succeed. All that has changed, however, despite the late arrival to the global advertising scene.

Together, these examples show how three successful brands operationalize and execute global campaigns. The global central intelligence model, in which the major above the line visual, content, and strategy come from the headquarter office, with diffusion made possible through networks and partnerships—both formal and informal—around the globe, is the preferred method amongst my informants, pointing to the effectiveness of a glocal approach. However, this approach is deemed effective, and perhaps efficient, precisely because regional (read non-global) input is altogether negated, or, at best—minimized, from the global decision-making process. Heavy reliance on consumer insight teams, global agencies, and global design hubs halfway around the world signals the significance of vetting long-term partners, having processes in place that foster appropriate cultural fit, and filling teams with globally-experienced executives. In addition, the complexity within which the production of global advertising takes place cannot be understated, despite suggestions that an amalgamation of cultures is reducing the need for variation in global campaigns.

**Glocalization: Nuancing Campaigns & Cultural Difference**

While the previous section considered the ways in which global stakeholders seek to capitalize on points of convergence amongst audiences, this second section underscores the ways in which global stakeholders believe they must adapt and glocalize their campaigns to adequately resonate with audiences with diverse needs and behaviors.
Proponents of glocal consumer culture argue that global consumers “draw from all available global and local, new and old sources as they use products to position themselves in the local age, gender, social class, religion, and ethnic hierarchies” (Ger & Belk, 1996, p. 294). Because glocalization is a hybrid mixture of homogenization (convergence) and heterogenization (divergence), advertisers take great care in nuanced their campaigns in hopes to resonate with regional audiences while simultaneously aligning globally. This is not to suggest that a myriad of campaigns is created and executed in order to fulfill this task, but instead, global stakeholders do everything in their power to retain an overarching global brand platform or a form of standardization (see Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011), while at times, localizing the campaign in subtle ways. Additionally, because these companies have vast global networks in place, some of the structural challenges in global promotion have already been figured out. However, a capable global infrastructure is only one piece of advertising in a global matrix, and executing glocally is not without its challenges, as several informants shared.

In the following sections, I will first explore how informants characterized the ways in which corporate headquarters engage with their regional offices around the world. Second, I will reveal how global stakeholders use glocalization to address cultural differences amongst their audiences and how they navigate these differences through nuance strategies both on a macro and micro level. Additionally, this section underscores how deeply complex operating in a global marketplace can be and how crucial it is that multiple stakeholders collaborate and “buy in” in order for an advertising campaign to
even begin to take shape. In turn, this section highlights how all of these decisions impact the promotional and creative process and more importantly the seeming dilution of cultural difference.

**Engaging with Global Counterparts**

Because Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour were specifically selected for this project due to their recent engagement with a global campaign or were in the midst of initiating a global campaign, all of these companies had a fully integrated global brand campaign as their end goal. However, my informants agreed that even the most high-level campaign needs some degree of localization, especially in new markets. Yuan, Global Advertising, Campbell Soup recounted one of the most sophisticated models she ever encountered, at a previous role with P&G. She said, in her experience, what worked best was “Clarity of decision-making and deciding up front what things would be decided on a global or regional basis and what things could be localized… I’d say generally, unsurprisingly, the more upstream you were in the strategy, the more global you could be.” She said, for example, in a global piece of business, the top eight things on the list were decided globally, then the middle 10 or 15 were decided regionally, and the last 20 items were decided upon by local teams. “It created a lot of clarity. That is the cleanest model I've ever seen. Honestly, even with that discipline, it was still a lot of messiness… still a lot of human and interpersonal dynamics.”

Pushing Yuan further to share some of the challenges in this kind of arrangement, she said sometimes it lies in perspective. She shared that occasionally this engagement
feels a bit like the loss of control to a local marketer. She claims that it’s important to give local teams enough freedom to personalize campaigns to their own needs “because local teams who aren’t used to working that way, they feel a loss of control. They feel like, ‘Oh, if I don't get to decide everything, it's never going to work in my markets.’”

Yuan argues that what companies that do it well begin to learn is “actually there’s some freedom that some of those ‘big questions’ have been dealt with globally, and then you get to be creative and you get to put your spin on it, sometimes in more interesting ways.”

Yuan’s take on this partnership, however, is wholly informed by her perspective from the strategic, global table. To a local marketer, a loss of strategic control might be considered an exclusion from the campaign’s core. Thus, this kind of engagement is a top-down approach despite Yuan’s recognition that regional teams can add significant value.

Similarly, Sebastian, Under Armour, defined the engagement with global counterparts in this way: “The more consistent you can make it the better, especially global. We are global. There is someone sitting here right now in Maryland who is texting, tweeting, and communicating over Facebook with somebody in Dubai and France.” To simplify it, explains Sebastian,

There is above the line and below the line. If you think of above the line as like TV and major digital like homepage takeovers, mastheads…99% of that is coming out of the U.S. But there are event marketing activities that take place, there are social that goes on. There is tons of digital that focuses specifically on a product or technology story. There are in-store assets. Then a whole slew of
marketing assets. A lot of the hero art is produced in the U. S. and it can be adapted to make sense internationally as well.

Of course, both Yuan and Sebastian’s perspectives on glocalization tensions are informed by their seats at the global headquarters table, as strategic thought leaders who have vetted and crafted strategic campaigns meant for the global consumer, with a belief that some cultural differences are not important enough to highlight in the advertising mix. Arguably, they have bought into the central intelligence model and find it an effective way to produce advertising content on a global scale. However, as Yuan, and several other of my global informants see it, there is actually plenty of room for creativity at the local level.

…Say a, shaving, kind of campaign. They think there's a big global platform - like if men don't shave as much, the sort of scruffy look is very popular right now, is the big global platform, but when they roll it out in India versus rolling it out in Russia versus rolling it out in Singapore, the local teams actually have a lot of creative license over what they can do, and I think local teams sometimes underestimate how much creativity is there to be had if they focused on what they can control rather than always thinking to fight the global and the regional would say, "No, I disagree with that decision," rather than saying, "I accept this decision, and I'm going to go make the best of it in my market."

Similarly, Mark, Campbell Soup, echoed Yuan’s perspective on engagement with local/regional counterparts in saying that ideally the tone and emotional benefits of a
product are vetted and put into a global communication platform, or a standardized campaign. However, he says that despite creating a common communication platform at a high level that works across multiple regions and has content that is accessible with few differences, two of the biggest remaining factors are “local, cultural considerations and local competitive considerations [which] will drive us to obviously execute a little bit differently, right?” Continuing he says, “…Maybe we don't want to show very Western-looking people in Eastern countries and vice versa if it doesn't look like it's locally appropriate. It has to feel like it resonates with the local country.” Underscoring the balance between global and local, Mark says one of the hardest things to discern as a global stakeholder is “whether the global insight on a brand is a universal truth or it's just something that is local.” As an example, Mark says s’mores, as a concept, “is something that's very American. It's not easy to translate that idea into countries where people didn't have that campfire experience. It's heritage. That doesn't mean they wouldn't like the flavor of a s’mores product, but it's a little bit trickier.” Chris, Campbell Soup, relatedly reflects Mark’s comments on finding that balance of engagement between the global and local in saying, “The challenge with innovating globally is making sure that you have the local insight. Two things, one is the local insight about what the local consumer cares about and then more importantly, understanding the local competitive environment.” Chris argues that, in particular, local competitors can make for a hostile environment. “They're all typically very aggressive competitors and when someone new comes into the
market, you're going up to someone else's sandbox. They'll put on a very aggressive attack against you when you come into a new market.”

What both Mark and Chris’ comments pinpoint is that global producers believe that understanding the local competitive market is key to earning a piece of the market share. What is noteworthy is that much like online websites use consumers’ information to sell them more products (see Turow, 2011), global stakeholders seek to learn as much about the local competition in order to steal away a portion of their market share and lure new audiences. Research is mixed on how consumers across the world feel about American brands infiltrating their shelves. In one ethnographic study on the infiltration of Starbucks in Turkey, Izberk-Bilgin (2008) found that consumer resistance manifested in a powerful way in response to what they perceived as the cultural imperialist nature of global brands like Starbucks, McDonalds, and Shell. However, other research on consumers, increasingly aware of their own globality, shows that global-oriented consumers are more likely to hold a positive attitude toward global brands (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 2006; Steenkamp & de Jong, 2010; Zhang & Khare, 2009). In fact, some consumers might welcome a mix of product choices. In tandem, however, more national-oriented consumers are more likely to hold consumer-ethnocentric beliefs (Keillor, Hult, Erffmeyer, & Babakus, 1996; Westjohn, Singh, & Magnusson, 2012), thus amplifying the challenge of assessing local markets for globally ambitious brands.

When it comes to engaging with global counterparts, Paolo, Airbnb, said that his role is to strategize and develop the global creative. He says “we sort of develop things
here [at headquarters] and then produce and adapt for our priority markets.” He said he
does get involved with major regional work “on anything that's of, you know, the right
amount of investment. So I might also consult on regional advertising campaigns if
there's a significant investment or significant visibility then I'll work with the regions on
that too.” Aiden, Airbnb, described his role similarly to Paolo’s in that while he does
have some counterparts around the world, most of the global “sign off” on brand creative
comes through his office in San Francisco. In engaging with regional teams, Aiden says
they have marketing directors in Singapore and London, in addition to smaller, local
teams that cover some regions such as Sydney, Sao Paulo, Milan, and Paris. Something
like the “Is Mankind?” campaign originated in San Francisco, in partnership with
Chiat/Day, said Aiden, but he then connects with some of their global teams to
“understand what kind of media opportunities might be in market around the world that
we would want to place, to see what kind of cultural impact it could have, especially for a
piece like this…”

In contrast, Vance, International Accounts, TBWA Worldwide, has a unique
perspective on Airbnb’s presence in the global/local nexus. He, and many other
informants who work at or with Airbnb, used the not-so-subtle term “community driven
super brand” to describe what Airbnb is. Vance says

There are plenty of other models where, like the Coca Cola model, it had a global
strategy, it had a global positioning, let's say “open happiness” for example. It
sounds pretty intimate what friends of mine did. They had such strong regional
management that marketing kind of fell within that. What they had was a plan to negotiate with each region as to how they would articulate “open happiness.” You could argue therefore they localized it in a more relevant way to the local audience. If you find Airbnb, you find that actually the brand itself and the way the company works, a community driven super brand, it's solving the problem itself. It's actually just by its very nature, hyper local, multi local. It, by its very nature, comes out of the local experience of people. The extent to which you show that in marketing - obviously, it's not possible to do 1,000 different versions of a film you make - but it is possible, I think, to generate a feeling that captures the community's aspiration.

The collaborative nature of Airbnb, in some ways, does set them apart from other global brands, but perhaps, more poignantly, signals the rise of the impact of the sharing economy. Because their hosts reside around the world they are at once global and local, almost a hybrid amalgamation of the two, providing them with a unique position in the global advertising matrix. However, thus far, most of their global campaigns have originated in the United States, although a notable point is that David, Head of Community, Airbnb, conducted extensive, qualitative work interviewing hosts and guests from around the world to help formulate and solidify their global positioning statement, “Belong Anywhere.”

While the previous section looked at the models used to operate glocally, these examples highlight the tensions and complexity within which global producers must
carefully navigate. Advertising production on a global scale is complicated, especially when one’s job is to simultaneously capitalize on points of convergence amongst audiences, while setting one’s own company apart, highlighting points of divergence, amongst a market full of competitors. To that end, this is precisely why carefully engaging with global counterparts is so pertinent to having and sustaining global success, since obstacles become bigger and challenges more complicated in a global landscape. However, the way in which my informants spoke about their relationships with global partners, leads me to believe that the partnership is an asymmetrical one in which “engagement” can take many forms—one of which is simply falling in line.

**Addressing Cultural Differences**

To reiterate, glocalization is a strategy employed by advertisers to simultaneously align with a global brand initiative (standardization) and yet feel relevant to local audiences (localization). Wind, Sthanunathan, and Malcolm (2013) maintain that a *glocal* advertising strategy is one in which there is a local adaptation of a universally embraced core idea that could resonate “in any market anywhere in the world.” Global advertisers are now, more than ever, seeking to standardize their advertising campaigns, yet many regions and cultures necessitate some variation, at least in execution (Akaka & Alden, 2010; Taylor & Okazaki, 2015). Researchers have found that advertisers view standardization on a continuum (Moriarty & Duncan, 1990) or more akin to contingency perspectives (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1999) in that while standardization is the goal “the desirable degree of standardization depend[s] on case-specific environmental factors”
(Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011, p. 28). As part of this project, the actual process of adapting campaigns was best explained by Blake, Senior Producer, TBWA/Chiat Day in Los Angeles. Although Blake was the lead producer for several commercials for Airbnb, he has also worked with numerous clients who seek to grow their global footprint; therefore, he had some unique insight into how brands approach glocal advertising. He said,

> We call it *transcreation* – they (regional offices) transcreate that creative idea, or concept, into a way that will work with the nuances of their market. That’s usually how we make it work. Sometimes, no, but in an ideal world - yes. That’s the thing… you can’t make just one thing that works everywhere in the world…and if you do it’s going to be so middle of the road that no one’s going to pay attention to it.

When asked further about the future of global advertising, Blake continued, saying, “People are going to start doing a lot more transcreation. They’re going to have that singular messaging but they’re going to tweak it more so it’s more appropriate.” I followed-up on this conversation by asking Blake how an organization does transcreation well, to which he replied, “I think they need to have an understanding of the core idea. They need to have access to the elements that were used to create the actual piece, not just a copy …and they [need to] have a little bit of leeway to test that creative for transcreation to happen.” Micah, Chiat/Day, corroborated Blake’s perspective saying that one of the advantages to working with a global advertising agency like Chiat/Day is that
they can take the brand strategy and express it across various cultures keeping in mind numerous cultural sensitivities. This was a bit of a “pitch,” but mirrored current industry trends in global advertising nonetheless.

Although scholars frame this process of advertising globally in terms of standardization (Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011), contingency theory, global consumer culture positioning (Akaka & Alden, 2010), or glocalization (Maynard, 2003; Robertson, 1992, 1995), Blake’s description of transcreation mirrors the work of scholars and reflects the way in which producers theorize and think about engaging with regional audiences on a global scale. For example, Yuan, Campbell Soup, had a thought-provoking take on her work and the work of global producers in saying, “Just remember, there’s no global... There's no place known as the globe. The globe is comprised of the local markets.” She says global advertisers need to keep this kind of thinking at the forefront, “because sometimes at the corporate center, you get very divorced from the reality of being in-market and fighting that fight day in and day out. I think there needs to be a sort of healthy respect on both sides.” The transcreation process is exemplified by Under Armour in their “I Will” campaign, which is their overarching global brand platform, run all over the world. Sebastian, Under Armour, explains

As an example, let's say the brand guideline is for a vertical image you want to use in the window of a store, you've got 'I will' running across the upper left hand corner, the logo, ‘the heart beat’ is in the upper right hand corner. Bottom right hand corner you have the name of the athlete, under that you have fonts and the
Sebastian says that the brand guidelines are decided upon by the global team, but that countries can make requests for athletes they think align with the brand. He also shared that it varies based on country and sport, meaning that basketball might be a big global sport, but perhaps snowboarding is only relevant to a few regions. The idea is that regional markets have a “toolbox of training storytelling” and then international components, or athletes, are plugged in that might make sense for each market such as Jamie Roberts from WRU, the Welch Rugby Union, Lee Henney, the Sao Paulo futbal club, or Michael Phelps, because “he’s in the brand and the Olympics are coming up.” Sebastian says the global team puts all of these brand guidelines together and a potential roster of athletes and essentially says, "Countries, you pick from this. If Canada comes back and goes, God you know this one snowboarder is really hot right now, is there any way we can add him or her? Then they can have a discussion.”
As the previous examples show, in creative ways, advertisers carefully craft their messages to nuance ever so slightly in an effort to resonate with various cultures and regions. In the same vein, Mark, Campbell Soup, was explaining to me how Tim Tam (a chocolate cookie originating in Australia) is advertised around the world, and I asked him whether the “core value” attached to a Tim Tam was advertised differently for an American audience and an Indonesian audience. He said at a high level – no, but there’s a variation on the relationship particularly in Asian cultures. Mark explained saying

We definitely see this in China and Hong Kong where we're going to market. There's a little bit of a different balance of the “what's in it for me.” There's a very special personal feeling that people get from eating a Tim Tam, that they've grown up with, and all the wonderful things associated with that. “I'd love to share one with my best friend because I'm so great and she should share it too.” In Eastern cultures, because of the different attitudes it's a little less of that. It's probably a little bit more that “I feel good because I did something for you,” so the best friend notion just has a bit of a different nuance on how I guess you'd say it.

Mark, also shared an example from a competitor, Oreo, in which he thought they did respectable work in nuancing some of the cultural sensitivities in their campaign. He stated that historically Oreo’s have been associated with the “core human universal” of “passing down a ritual.” “You twist it; you dunk it. From parent to child.” In developing markets, where the Oreo brand is not as familiar, Mark says, “it was actually the child
who would teach the parent the ritual because it made more sense that ‘I learned something new in school today,’ but you would still have that same special parent-child moment.” These displays of transcreation underscore the advantages of taking a glocal approach—by nuancing a global brand position, brands can incorporate locality in meaningful ways.

Paolo, Airbnb, cautioned, however, that transcreation is not always as easy as just subbing one athlete or celebrity in for another, or changing a background to look like a new location. When asked about some of the obstacles in doing global work Paolo said, “the quality of transcreation is difficult and subjective and hard to evaluate. I don't speak 29 languages; I speak one language. When I look at a back translation, it can be challenging to understand.” For example, Paolo joked that one of their campaigns from 2015 called “Never a Stranger” was about their belief that when you travel on Airbnb you don't feel like a stranger. He said, however, in German and French, “stranger roughly translates as foreigner, so Never a Foreigner is not a great campaign to run! Sometimes you come up with an idea that you really love for a U.S. audience that you want to globalize and that can be challenging.” In sum, despite the advantages of a glocal approach in addressing cultural difference, challenges persist, particularly given the global nature of the work.

My interviews also turned up some unique obstacles that arise as a result of engaging with numerous audiences and cultures around the globe. Because Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour all operate in tremendously different industries and
in a variety of different regional mixes, their challenges are in some ways unique to their company, location, and industry, but, in other ways, the challenges persist despite the line of work they are in. In the same vein, David, Airbnb, met with over 400 Airbnb stakeholders to include employees, hosts, and guests, to uncover a deep understanding of the meaning of the Airbnb brand. In doing so he found some subtle nuances amongst various cultures. He explained that he “on purpose” went to Asia. He said the reason he wanted to go to Asia, specifically Korea, Japan, and China, was because he knew that attitudes toward the self, belonging, family, and home were different than in the States and other parts of Europe. He says, for example, “home and family are the same words in Chinese, Mandarin…that brings with it a lot more baggage than elsewhere.” David nuances it for me saying, “the whole point about Asia is Confucianism and Taoism, they have a more interesting, well, not more interesting, but they have a different attitude to what home means, what belonging means, and especially what the self means.” In China, he says, “when you say home, it also means family, and so then you need to ask, ‘Well, what does family mean?’ Family means, basically, it was described to me as love, hate, fear.” Unpacking his work, David says, “Because, especially China, after the One Child Policy, there's a very complex relationship between children and parents, which of course is not at all part of European experience or American experience.” However, even after all his interviews and focus groups, David concluded that the varying views of home and family by his Asian stakeholders were not significant enough to alter their company
mantra “Belong Anywhere.” As he puts it, “the desire to belong is a human universal, and it transcends culture.”

Tangentially, glocalization approaches, in addition to its impact on cultural messages, can also influence the production of cultural products. Trent, Under Armour, shared a parallel story about working with a Japanese company to develop a new technology and how that impacted the Japanese footwear industry on a larger scale. He shared that Under Armour built a shoe called the Drive Clutch Fit, which incorporated a new technology. Throughout this process, Under Armour worked with a Japanese company called Dome, who also had their own basketball shoe. How they play basketball in Japan, says Trent, is very different than in the States. “They're in very humid conditions without air conditioning…so the shoe has to be much more breathable, has to drain out easier. The Japanese market prefers a much lighter shoe… but it also has to be extremely supportive. It's a very different kind of shoe.” As part of his work in a globalized world, Trent was tasked with figuring out how to take this new technology and make it function in the Japanese market. After a period of collaboration, they were able to figure out how to make the technology work and were having success. In fact, four or five months later, Trent says, “I wasn't following their market, but they came back and said thanks for helping us out with this, because this shoe's suddenly number one in the marketplace for us.” He said, “by taking the story of the Clutch Fit technology, which helps the shoe form up around your foot, and being able to extrapolate that and make it function on a shoe that's specifically for the Japanese market was very successful for
them.” Although Trent, and the work of his team, impacted the Japanese footwear market in a way he did not anticipate, this example underscores that finding the right partners and networking informally reflects a compulsory sociality that is an integral part of conducting global business. Despite the positive bent of this example, navigating in a global matrix is not without its fair share of obstacles.

**Challenges Navigating in a Global Matrix**

When engaging with counterparts around the world, there are often obstacles and challenges that simply do not exist in domestic markets. These are challenges that go beyond cultural differences, realized directly as a result of operating in a complex global ecosystem. Trent, footwear development, Under Armour, spoke about some of the logistical challenges in moving their footwear product internationally. I asked Trent if designing for a global audience changes the way he approaches footwear development. He said, “Yes and no. I would say yes, from the standpoint of functionality, because some markets, foot morphology is different. In Asia, the Asian foot has a higher instep. You have to adjust your patterning for that.” Continuing he said, the approach changes slightly for the women’s market. “The women's heel is much narrower than a man's. You have to be able to make sure that you've adjusted your patterns for that…it's more about patterning a fit from that standpoint.” Furthermore, Trent spoke to some of the external factors that dictate doing business on a global scale in saying one of his biggest challenges is managing duty rates around the world. He explains
Every country has their own set of tariffs and duties. We tend to build shoes based on what's the best duty rates we can achieve for importing into the United States. Sometimes that means that... you're building in that specific location. Some markets, you get closed out of because of where you've built the shoe or because the duty rates change. For instance, say the duty rate in the United States, for a leather duty shoe, is about 8%. For a synthetic shoe it's 20%, but if you take that same shoe and try to sell it in Japan, their duty rates are opposite. They charge you more for leather. Then you basically are redoing the shoe, redoing the pattern, to make it look the same, but with a different set of materials, so that you can get a favorable duty rate going into the country. South America's a whole other beast because you've got the duty block down there, or tariff block. If you're trying to import shoes from China into Brazil, Argentina, or Chile, you're looking at anywhere from 50% - 100% duty rates, which makes a shoe prohibitively expensive. If you can make the shoe in Vietnam, you don't have to worry about that.

Because trade restrictions are crucial to global business operations, understanding how to navigate the complex tariff system is paramount.

More than just a logistical challenge, engaging with global counterparts means creating and then sustaining a web of interconnections in which product conception, manufacturing, exports, promotional regulations that vary from country to country, and eventual product arrival to consumers all function in global harmony. Harvard business
professor, Willy C. Shih (2016) argues that “long gone are the days of vertical integration when a manufacturer could make everything itself.” He says, for example, only a handful of companies have the capabilities and manufacturing facilities to make the LCD touchscreen in the iPhone; “Since there is no supply chain in the United States, you couldn’t make it in America if you wanted to…” Furthermore, Shih (2016) contends that multi-tiered global supply chain processes succeed when manufacturers are close to their suppliers, when the infrastructure is in place to support efficient logistics, when availability of labor is confirmed, when proximity to the market is advantageous, and when government-imposed tariffs and restrictions are minimized. This means that creating and then moving product around the world is a complex process that produces a ripple effect impacting various parts of the business from product creation to manufacturing to distribution. These processes, ultimately, can have a huge impact on determining and defining target audiences, and the messages that they receive.

Trent’s excerpt calls attention to some of the factors that go on behind the scenes, but tangentially impact how a product can be advertised. These kinds of issues simply do not exist in domestic markets. While Trent shares some of the logistical challenges from a shipping and trade standpoint, Rhett, Under Armour, speaks to some of the challenges related to media rights when operating in multiple markets. He says, for example, the “Charged By Belief” commercial featuring Stephen Curry and Jamie Foxx, featured Curry playing in several NBA games for the U.S. version. However, says Rhett, “We don’t have rights to air that footage in China. We at Under Armour had to go in and
recreate that spot utilizing our own footage that replaced all the NBA footage.” Rhett stressed that managing this kind of process is “a lot. Just knowing what your specific rights are in terms of creative development. If you want to use NBA rights then there's restrictions around that, so you just kind of have to be mindful of that as well.”

Lastly, Chris, Global Research and Development, Campbell Soup, touches on the reality of profit margins and how they can vary widely depending on the region, which, in turn, creates some unique challenges for companies like Campbell Soup. Chris explains that in Indonesia, they sell a chocolate chip cookie via a brand called Good Time Cookies. In Indonesian, to put it in perspective, the total snacks market is about $1.7 billion in sales. “If you can imagine, because of the level of income of most consumers over there, it's all very low-priced products. To put that in reference, 48% of that $1+ billion in sales is sold at a five cent and ten cent price mark.” Chris says, from a technology perspective, he and his team have to figure out how do they make a “really good tasting chocolate chip cookie put it in a package, ship it out to the distributor or the salesperson and still make money, even though the sales price is only 10 cents? That's pretty incredible when you think about it.” Together, these examples underscore some of the navigating that global stakeholders must do before they can seriously strategize an overarching global brand platform. If consumers are expecting a specific leather shoe, but duty rates make that shipment cost prohibitive, then advertisers must plan their campaigns accordingly to reflect these challenges. The juxtaposition between this kind of process versus a domestic one points out the advanced preparation that must go into a
long and arduous process of advertising globally. Moreover, all of these obstacles are in addition to addressing cultural differences between and amongst target audiences, as well as developing the right formal and informal networks to diffuse global advertising and branding to audiences around the world. These challenges are discussed next, however, in the third and final section of this chapter.

**Networks and Partnerships: Diffusing Global Advertising and Branding**

**Developing a Formal Network**

Previous models of advertising considered a multinational approach—an approach where clients worked with agencies in the regions in which they advertised (Dan, 2011; Kanso, 1991; Weinstein, 1977). For example, Coca-Cola would work with an agency in Germany to advertise to German audiences, and an agency in India to target Indian audiences, and so on. This is not to suggest that the agency had local origins, but instead that the agency had a local office. Dan (2011) says that before the advent of the internet it made sense for an agency network to have upwards of 100-200 international offices to ensure satisfactory local execution, but with market maturity and technological advances it became unnecessarily duplicitous to have hundreds of employees doing the same work in different locations. Furthermore, although the agencies were technically part of a larger network, they operated independently, thus further complicating the process.

These factors, however, barely touch on the amount of time and effort that goes into managing these relationships from the client’s side. When asked about the decision
to work with a global advertising agency with an expansive network, Sean, Campbell Soup, spoke about some of the challenges with working with different agencies in different parts of the world. He said “higher ups” decided to work with a global agency who could then tap into their local offices.

There was another part on that which is vitally important… I think not only from the agency side, but also from my counterpart. So, if there would be an agency responsible for creative, there would also be a marketing or a brand-manager in each of those markets, that was my peer or my counterpart; and it was vitally important to have them vetted and bought into the idea. You can imagine, if I have a brand in the U.S., I've got me and the agency; but then you multiply that by the four countries with the agency counterpart and the brand counterpart... if each one of those individuals was not aligned - or not buying in - then you kind of had a point of failure.

Sean verbalizes the challenges of working with multiple agencies as opposed to working with a global partner who operates from a centralized model, thus streamlining strategy, communication, and creative content. Similarly, Oscar, Global Product Development, Campbell Soup, expresses the potential lack of efficiency when working with multiple agencies. “There's limitations on how effectively the creative strategy will get executed given different agencies and different objects.” On the other side of it, says Oscar, the global, centralized model has its advantages as the global agency acts as the “connoisseur of the strategy, of the creative from one market to the next.” Oscar explains
That's more of where we've landed at because for example, BBDO does Tim Tam in Australia and has a global presence, and in each of the home markets [we] would work with agencies that have a global reach. We want to put a premium on having a strategic partner that can be the brains for a market.

Oscar also remarked that this arrangement affords smaller “connoisseur markets” less challenges because the core strategic creative, as well as the appropriate resources, are provided for them through the global network. Working with multiple agencies also lacks economies of scale and forces the client to take a larger financial hit, which, as indicated through my interviews, are some of the primary drivers for working with a globally capable agency network.

The process of selecting an agency, however, is a detailed, complex, time consuming process—one that both advertisers and organizations take seriously. While the purpose of this research is not to go into great length about the actual ins and outs of the selection process, this project does seek to illuminate how both formal and informal networks are cultivated globally and the resultant implications. Dan (2013), writing for *Forbes*, claims that the single most important factor in selecting an advertising agency is “discerning the compatibility of cultures.” He claims that companies and their respective senior marketers are often side-tracked by notable past accomplishments or “marquee” names at agencies, when, in reality, evaluative measures should invoke a cultural lens. By doing so, advertisers should be able to uncover an agency’s core values, which, according to Dan (2013), is an integral piece to building a stable, long-lasting partnership. This
quest for the “right” global partner is characterized by Wittel (2001) as *network sociality*. Drawing on the “network society” of Castells (2000), Wittel (2001) argues that these kinds of relationships are not defined by “mutual experience or common history,” but instead manifest “on a project-by-project bases, by the movement of ideas” (p. 51). One of the ways network sociality is characterized is by “ephemeral and intense relations,” which poignantly characterizes the partnership between a brand and an agency or global partner in preparing for a new advertising campaign on global initiative.

This kind of “cultural fit” is exemplified by the way DesignStudio handled the rebrand for Airbnb. Jason, a Creative Director, DesignStudio, spoke about the careful preparation that went into designing the global rebrand for Airbnb in saying that every piece of creative work they do is “rooted in strategic rigor.” Their strategy, says Jason, is to approach clients as “blank sheets of paper and we become real sponges.” From the onset, they make it clear that they could never know as much about a company or an industry as the people who work there. So, in turn, Jason says they talk to as many different people as we possibly can. “We learn as much as we can about how the organization is set up, it’s ambitions, the competitive state, the culture, trends that might be affecting the business, the brand’s ambitions for the business, the [the] impact technology might have.” In an interview with an account executive with experience at three major advertising agencies, however, she talked about some of the challenges in marrying the client’s needs with the needs of the agency. Using a metaphor, she said the relationship can be likened to that of a heart. The accounts team, she says, “is the blood
that flows through everything because you’re the liaison between client and agency. You need to ensure the client’s needs are met, but you also have to be representing the agency and make sure the agency’s needs are met.” She also hinted at strategies used by advertising agencies to attempt to win over clients.

A typical team you would have your creative team; you may have very high level interaction by the executive creative director. They are involved in key creative decisions. It depends on how involved in the business and in the client they are, and how client-facing they are, based off of how important the client is. Clients really feed off of strategists because they're very smart, and they say really smart things.

As the findings from my interviews with both in-house teams and the teams that makes up the personnel at advertising agencies show, building a formal partnership has numerous advantages, but the relationship is often a fragile one, especially in a time where the client/agency partnership is as ephemeral as the environment around them. In fact, as early as the 1990s, longstanding agency/client relationships were terminated, which further strained and complicated the building of formal networks (“Information Superhighway,” 2005).

While Airbnb works with global agencies to produce and diffuse the production of culture by way of campaigns, they also use a model in which the advertising executives, who sit at headquarters in San Francisco, act as the stewards of the global creative. Paolo, who leads all of the advertising for Airbnb, says while he works with
regional marketing leads in North America, Asia, and Europe, their responsibilities differ in a fairly significant way. “They're much more pinchy with their local ops like their business partners in region. There's much more of a marketing focus for them, whereas, a bulk of what I spend my attention on is strategy, creative quality and creative production.” Under Armour also takes a similar approach in that much of the creative content for the global audience is produced in close conjunction with headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland.

However, in the case of Under Armour, much of their creative advertising is produced in-house. Rhett, a basketball category marketing executive, shared that their global network works a bit differently than other global brands (because creative is mostly in-house), albeit for the same reasons and with a similar result. Even when companies aren’t employing a global advertising agency, they still attempt to structure their networks in a way that positively impacts global cultural product diffusion. Rhett says that because he sits in a global role, it’s his job to “make sure the regions are covered.” He has a counterpart who’s a senior executive in the international marketing category who acts as Rhett’s liaison. “I'm not actually having to go to all the different country marketing directors, I can just go to him. He helps disseminate and cascade information to them and vice versa, so he's the funnel so to speak.” In addition, nurturing these relationships also ties to building the right teams with the right mix of skillsets in order to facilitate the production of culture in a way that connects with international audiences. Uriah, a digital marketing executive, Campbell Soup, commented on the
challenges of building the right team. He said he’s learned to value highly skilled teams, meaning “highly current” with “modern skillsets.” The CPG industry, says Uriah, is an old one, with “a very set process for how consumer packaged goods companies go to market. It's been tried and true.” However, Uriah believes the industry is facing a period of change where “things are moving so quickly and they're developing so quickly that I don't think we as an industry have kept up.” Because of the pace at which these shifts are happening, Uriah thinks it's imperative “to make sure everybody in your organization stays as current and modern as possible, but it’s just really hard. It's also really hard to change those skillsets overnight. It's important to do constant iterative learning to stay current.”

In the last thirty years, the biggest advertisers have experienced a seismic shift in moving from a multinational advertising approach to a global one (Levitt, 1983; “History:1980s,” 2003; O’Barr, 2008). This shift refers to not only the way companies are engaging advertising agencies, but also to the ways in which companies are thinking about diffusing their products globally. When asked why Campbell Soup has taken so long to go global, Oscar, Global Product Development, Campbell Soup, said that before the reorganization, two of their largest biscuit businesses, Pepperidge Farm in the U.S. and Arnott’s Biscuits in Australia, were part of entirely separate business units. “There had been some, absolutely had been some…Campbell's collaboration and sharing across but never the type of cohesive global strategic effort behind our biscuit businesses that we were looking for.” Not holding back, Oscar suggests that the
single biggest driver for the creation of the global biscuits, snacks division was the… delayed albeit…but it was the realization that we just weren't operating with the type of scale - both in terms of the brands that we have that weren’t being delivered in a large part of the world, but also the expertise or resources we have that was duplicated in the U.S. business as well as in the Arnott’s business in Australia. It was just the desire to be far more excellent in how we market these promising brands on a global basis.

Oscar’s comments underscore the way a global mindset is deeply infusing the way companies are thinking about how they arrange their business units and starts to unpack how advertisers are reconceptualizing audiences in a global marketplace.

In particular, the complexity of a decentralized model and the challenges associated with a global, centralized model of advertising have given way to a glocalized approach. Transnational companies want the benefits of a global campaign, namely the economies of scale (Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011), with the crucial nuances of a regionalized approach—and they want the process of concept to market implementation to move faster than ever. When asked how they “globally validate” their campaigns, Beau, of DesignStudio, the firm that launched Airbnb’s global rebrand, touched on the capacity of a global agency to diffuse cultural products through a glocalized approach saying they outsource their “global validation” to a company with an expansive global network. They take the designs and “essentially spread them across the globe” to their network, their different offices, or to people that they work with. The company that
globally validates the designs then breaks it down into the different elements. “What were the connotations attached to the logos? Did it make them feel good? …How did the color make them feel? Did it make them feel warm? Did they feel cold? It was very kind of anecdotal and conversational responses.” This kind of work is being conducted both internally and externally at transnational companies and their respective global agencies. While Airbnb worked with an outside agency, Under Armour conducts most of their consumer insights in-house, and Campbell Soup utilizes both in-house and external consumer insight teams to diffuse their campaigns around the globe. In fact, Campbell Soup, as part of their recent restructuring, has a high-level executive whose job is to “own” global insights. “His job is to work with all the local countries to really understand at a deep level how that brand is understood and viewed and whether the positioning needs to be nuanced a little bit or a lot,” says Mark, a Campbell’s marketing executive.

What emerged from my interviews is that a lot of dollars, time, and resources are being exerted to make sure that the consumer insights yielded are accurate, of quality, and actually do reflect audience behaviors. Although previous studies (Li & Shooshtari, 2006; Ricks, Arpan, & Fu, 1974) have indicated that advertisers do not do their due diligence in terms of research on international audiences, my informants felt otherwise. In fact, the dependence on the consumer insights group has increased significantly over the last several years (Dan, 2013). However, there seems to be a heavy reliance, by clients and agencies, on “global gurus,” as if one person could actually understand the behaviors
of all the cultures in the world. This is problematic for a variety of reasons, but most simply because it is a task too vast for any one person.

Additionally, scholars (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 1999; Anholt, 1997) have cautioned that enlisting the services of a global agency is not always advantageous for the client in that the client gives the agency too much money, too many resources, and essentially puts too much stock into one partnership. If the project goes a rye the client is then “stuck.” From the agency’s perspective, a misstep in one region might be forgiven by the client because they are doing so much global business that reassessing the entire partnership might seem like a daunting, exhausting task—so big that the client dismisses the possibility quickly. Clearly, the advantage to this approach to global diffusion of cultural product lies on the agency side, but signals the significance of finding that balance in cultural fit when building formal partnerships.

**Nurturing Informal Relationships Around the Globe**

Beyond resources of a global scale, many of my informants spoke about the importance of networking. This interpersonal mode of communication exists in stark contrast to developing a global reach as it considers the more micro, or interpersonal, approaches to getting work done. Tom Farley (2015), president of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), defines networking as building relationships with interesting or influential people regardless of the immediate benefit of these connections. Additionally, scholars have illuminated the ways in which building interpersonal networks—such as through individualization, removing “historically prescribed” social situations (Wittel,
2001), through intense self-promotion and public relations techniques (McRobbie, 2002), or by intentionally seeking out others doing the same kind of media or cultural work to combat isolation (Gill, 2002)—has been viewed as a personal and professional advantage in creative careers, despite not being overtly prescribed in most job descriptions. Although, at the same time, this kind of informal networking can exacerbate existing social hierarchies.

When asking Tony, an executive at Campbell’s Global Culinary & Baking Institute, about shifting mindsets toward a more global audience, he contended that his work is now easier thanks to his global network. “I’ve always considered my role to be global. It’s a lot easier to be global now because I have the networking and the relationship built. [The culinary industry] is a small world; you start to interact and meet more people.” The “small world” effect was evident in that when asking Tony about how he partners with chefs in Southeast Asia he said it “works out great” because the lead chef in their Southeast Asia location is one of his former students at the culinary institute, and they have a great working relationship. Yuan, an integrated marketing vice president, Campbell Soup, similarly emphasized the value of building relationships and pointed to the importance of cultivating the right team. She says you could have all of the data in the world, “but if there wasn't a trusting productive relationship between different work teams, it all would crumble apart, in my humble experience, but I'm a client service person, so you would imagine maybe I would maybe overestimate interpersonal relationships…” Yuan’s comments underscore some of the ways that global producers
depend on and leverage interpersonal relations (see Wittel, 2001), despite having various formal policies, procedures, and processes in place to execute their global initiatives.

Farley (2015) contends that networking is too often viewed as transactional, when in fact, the benefits of a business relationship can often be latent. Several of my informants stressed the significance of cultivating relationships across their organization and also across their industry. When asked how he keeps a pulse on global trends impacting his industry, Chris, Global Research & Development, Campbell Soup, shared that the employees at the four labs he runs globally are a well networked group. “It's part of just how R&D folks are wired. We're sort of a collegial group so we tend to stay connected within the circles of influence and the circles of thought leadership with different disciplines.” In asking further about how those partnerships are fortified, Chris said

It's the same way that you partner with anybody that you have a vested interest in the outcome, which is you build relationships, you build joint objectives and targets. You discuss what work needs to be done to get the job done and you agree who's going to do what. There's really no rocket science to it. It's just maintaining good relationships and learning how to run projects effectively. It's funny, usually the biggest hurdle is the time zone difference. A lot of these projects where you have people spread out across the globe working on one project ... It can be either a hurdle or an advantage. If you think about it, if you
have a lab in Connecticut and a lab in Sydney, Australia, in effect, you have a lab that's open twenty-four hours.

Similarly, when asked how he accomplishes his work on a global scale, Footwear Development Director at Under Armour, Trent said networking is key, especially in recruiting resources overseas. Trent says they try to develop long-term relationships with their vendors and other stakeholders overseas, because “a lot goes into it. There's the tooling, the investment in plant and facilities, the need to ensure that you have a partner that you can work with regards to ensuring your social responsibility requirements, environmental requirements, those kind of things.” Trent suggests that all of these processes go much more smoothly if “you're with someone that you know you can be with for a longer term, and that you can trust, and they have the banking wherewithal, that they're not going to go belly-up on you and things of that nature.”

In discussing global partnerships with Trent, he reflected on changing trends in global production processes and how even a $4 billion company, like Under Armour, relies heavily on other companies. He said

From an international perspective, you're looking at your build locations. The world thinks everybody goes to China for the cheap labor, but the reality is China, as a country, is not a cheap labor market anymore. We still build shoes; a lot of people still build shoes there, because they have the infrastructure there for it. They have the secondary vendors, the tertiary vendors. They have the R&D facilities. They still have the industrial infrastructure in place that still gives them
the advantage to still be there, even though it's an expensive place to build. We build the majority of our shoes in China, Vietnam, and Indonesia. We do development work. We don't own any of our factories. Not yet, anyway. Most brands do not own their own factories. Most brands use what they call OEM manufacturing or Original Equipment Manufacturers. We consider the OEMs our partners, because without them, we have nothing to sell.

An OEM is defined as a manufacturer who makes a product, but that product is marketed and sold by another company, in this case, Under Armour (Inc Magazine, n. d.). As Trent emphasizes, without a positive working relationship with these manufacturers, the process of diffusing global cultural product would be nearly impossible. Likewise, advertising executive for Airbnb, Paolo, when asked about the challenges of operating in a global space, said “Oh God, there's so many... Working with partners in London and Singapore sometimes it's just about having the face time in building relationships and ensuring that we are able to keep things productive, that's very functional.”

What is most compelling about these findings is that much of the literature surrounding global advertising suggests that technological forces bring about a greater ability to diffuse advertising or that the tenets of globalization have single-handedly ushered in a global audience (Hegde, 2011; Kalliny, 2012). While technology and globalization have no doubt characterized global advertising to a great extent, what is surprising is that my informants were adamant that the tried and true art of networking still persists as an effective method of “getting work done.”
Furthermore, and even more interestingly, the value of face-to-face networking and relationship building still seems to trump other communication channels, even in globe stretching endeavors. Beau from DesignStudio, in fact, was adamant that interacting with Airbnb executives face-to-face was one of the reasons they were selected to launch Airbnb’s rebrand. He said “Something we really believe in here is face to face meetings and establishing human relationships.” He contends that Skype and video calls and other video chat applications are great tools enhancing communication, especially on a global scale, but for presenting the company, “for us it could only really work in one way and that’s in face to face where you can really strike up a relationship.” Beau reflected on the impact of this decision to fly from London to San Francisco in saying, “We learned afterwards that we were one of the few agencies to do face to face. Even for other agencies in America. That initial action really put us on a good platform and took us through to the official pitch round.” Gregg (2010) describes the kind of behavior required by global stakeholders as a form of “compulsory sociality,” an enforced conviviality in order to expand one’s personal network. Although rarely overtly prescribed for working with people and organizations around the globe, this “standard practice” does contribute to a constant pull to build and expand one’s personal network, often times at the expense of building real friendships (see Cockayne, 2016; Gregg, 2010). Further, Cockayne (2016) suggests that networking is a performance showcasing one’s human capital, demonstrating both the capacity for doing the work and the attitude and eagerness toward that work. What these interviews suggest is that social networking
is viewed as an extension of one’s work and although mostly unremunerated, building
social and human capital through networking is expected, encouraged, and can often
contribute to ease of business transaction or better business results.

Building both formal and informal networks globally is only one piece of
diffusing the production of culture around the globe. Whereas what we’ve discussed so
far focuses on the structures necessary to physically move product, advance ideas, and
orchestrate diffusion on a massive scale, the actual conception of global advertising
campaigns plays a critical role in the glocalization process. When considering how global
companies seek to diffuse their brands, and more specifically, their advertising, to
audiences around the world my informants describe it as a delicate balance between
emphasizing the ways that consumers are all alike and nuancing the ways in which
regional audiences differ. Yuan, Campbell Soup, talks about the balance in saying

It does make it a little bit more interesting, because I guess you want that line
between looking for similarities and points of convergence versus points of
difference and divergence, and when you sit in a local market, the tendency is
always to sort of emphasize how your market is different than when you sit in a
global. I’ve sat in both local roles and regional roles, and so when you sit in a
global role you're always trying to look for the commonality. Somehow you have
to navigate that matrix of decision-making to decide what you're going to do.
Yuan, like many other of my informants, discussed further various models that she has
used and explored and how those have impacted her approach to global advertising.
Although none of my informants used the term “glocalization” what they were describing was essentially a form of glocalized approaches to global advertising diffusion.

In sum, the previous three sections underscore how diffusing branding with a glocal approach means concurrently conceptualizing audiences as mostly similar to better activate a truly global campaign and all the while paying attention to certain cultural differences in order to better resonate with a variety of regional audiences. The process of glocalizing, or transcreating campaigns is a difficult, complex, and sticky one. Together, these remarks and excerpts on conceptualizing the processes of global advertising suggest that global stakeholders see more advantages in highlighting less. In other words, reducing campaigns down to “core human universals,” choosing not to translate global taglines with lots of reiterations, and exploiting points of convergence allows global stakeholders to create campaigns that reach the maximum size audience.

Although audience construction is discussed more fully in Chapter 6, it is worth briefly underscoring how these findings build on and extend the work of other scholars who have also investigated the ways in which audiences are constructed by producers. Because a glocal advertising strategy necessitates a local adaptation of a universally embraced core idea, global advertisers seek to standardize their advertising campaigns as much as possible (Akaka & Alden, 2010; Taylor & Okazaki, 2015, Wind, Sthanunathan, & Malcolm, 2013). In doing so, global producers work productively, as Ang (1991) suggests, toward the idea of an audience. Political economist Dallas Smythe (1977) first conceptualized the commodification of audiences for advertisers, and Ang’s (1991) work,
similarly, brings to the forefront the role of audiences in industrial production. While Ang’s (1991) work underscores the way that audiences must be wooed by television producers (for advertisers), this work suggests that audiences must be wooed by brands in order to help spread their content and product. Ettema and Whitney (1994) call the process through which global producers and media institutions categorize and define audiences as “audiencemaking,” although Ang (1991) cautions that because audiences cannot be coerced into being members of an audience, “audiences must constantly be seduced, attracted, lured. How to get an audience is, willy-nilly, the institution’s key predicament, even though this is not always acknowledged as such” (p. 18). This is fully realized by the ways in which advertisers are constantly trying to “engage” with consumers on a wide variety of platforms, recognizing the rise and significance of participatory culture.

Despite an apparent uptick in interactivity between advertisers and consumers, however, Duffy (2013) and Serazio (2013) both conclude that the apparent shift of power from advertiser to consumer is exaggerated, as the previous examples reveal that global advertisers carefully curate and manage their work processes in order to attract the right kind of audiences. This so-called “right audience,” however, is a fictitious conjuring brought to the forefront by massive amounts of data, as Turow (2006, 2011) predicted. In fact, cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1958) said, many decades ago, “There are in fact no masses, there are only ways of seeing people as masses” (p. 57). However, despite considerable attention and criticism by scholars (Ang, 1991; Duffy, 2013; Ettema &
Whitney, 1994; Smythe, 1977; Turow, 2005, 2006, 2011), pointing out the fallacies in constructing audiences as large masses, these findings suggest that global advertisers and other industrial producers see it as a useful, albeit flawed, way to “get work done,” particularly because of the massive scale of their audience (Turow, 2005) and the permeating nature of existing mental schemata, or ways of thinking, in which producers must, as a byproduct of their job or industry, synthesize large amounts of information.

Additionally, what the previous examples reveal is that what makes the glocal approach so powerful is that it gives even the most globally minded producer leeway to let regional markets adapt campaigns as they see fit, nuancing the approach for audiences whose behaviors diverge across the globe. While standardization is not a new concept to global advertising (see Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011; Levitt, 1983), the complexity of the process has compounded significantly due to the rise in technological advances, clutter, participatory culture, and global consumer culture. This complexity has, in turn, prompted transnational companies to rely heavily on partners and agency who can supplement their global processes. This operationalization of glocalization, or put simply the “think global, act local” mentality allows global stakeholders to advantageously navigate the complexities, policies, and idiosyncrasies associated with diffusing a global brand.

However, this in not to suggest that the process of transcreation is a straightforward one. On the contrary, the process of developing a global brand, writing a brand story that reflects the values of the company, nuancing the campaign to fit key
regions, working with regional offices to ensure appropriate brand campaign execution, and all the while cultivating a loyal community is a process that few brands across the world do well. Furthermore, the complexity and speed at which these processes ignite and spread to various constituents is fundamentally different than previous eras. To that end, what these findings signal to industrial producers is that a glocal approach has been found fruitful and relevant for global advertisers and this method is able to embrace dynamics of a global/local nexus in a way that other approaches to global advertising simply cannot. What drives all of the strategic processes and decisions, however, is a deep rooting in a global worldview, maintaining a macro view with the propensity for predicting audience behavior, and capitalizing on significant points of convergence, yet being able to relinquish control when necessary.
CHAPTER 5

THE GLOBAL STORY:

THE STORIES WE SELL - TO CONSUMERS, TO OURSELVES

Advertisers and other global stakeholders, by the very definition of their job, seek to create in ways that engage consumers on an emotional level. The creative process for global stakeholders takes many forms from incorporating Thai food trends into the next canned soup (and making sure it tastes “delicious” after a year) to creating hidden elements in sneakers for consumers to find over time to casting the “perfect” actress for a global-wide advertising film. Many scholars and popular press journalists (Deuze, 2006; Dan, 2013; O’Barr, 2010; Shirkey, 2008; Turow, 2011) believe that the transformational shifts ushered in by technological advances and globalization have signaled the “death” of traditional advertising or the one-to-many approach. This shift, brought on by the interactive nature of new and emerging media like social media and mobile apps and the “lack of credibility” of advertising among audiences (Deuze, 2006), has cultivated an environment where the dynamics between advertiser and consumer have fundamentally changed. To that end, building that coveted “deep” relationship with consumers means engaging and nurturing them on a deep, emotional level. Researcher Sarah Banet-Weiser (2011) says, “When [a brand] story is successful, it surpasses simple identification with just a tangible product; it becomes a story that is familiar, intimate, personal, a story with a unique history” (p. 4).
Storytelling is a deeply ingrained part of life. People empathize with others through stories, people are spurred into action through the stories of others, and people are also moved to resentment or retaliation through stories. In fact, research suggests that “…people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically” (Hiltunen, 2002; Weick, 1995; Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008). In tandem, storytelling has always existed in advertising. Jon Mowat (2015) contends that “storytelling is embedded in the human psyche, and we’re wired to respond to great storytellers, which is why the future of branded content marketing should continue to focus on making humanistic connections.” While advertising has seen monumental shifts in the modes of distribution and its relationship with consumers, the way in which it tells its stories has changed too. One of the emergent themes from this project was the emphasis on storytelling by advertisers for consumers. This kind of storytelling, however, stretches far beyond a simple narrative to the explanation of how a product is actually made, the unpacking of how consumers might benefit from a brand experience, or the incorporation of emerging technologies that might bolster a story. Storytelling also becomes more complex when working with a global consumer culture where preferences and behaviors converge and diverge as quickly as they started. Yet, the stories must be aligned with the company’s values while all the while meeting the narrative and identification needs of a vast audience. Storytelling has never been more complex. Or, more riveting. It is with this brief underpinning that we turn to the findings from my interviews related to storytelling. First, I will describe and analyze how global stakeholders conceptualize the role stories
play in their work. Second, I reflect on the way stories inform the corporate and creativity identity amongst global stakeholders. Lastly, this section concludes with an analysis of what informs and propels stories in a global matrix, with a particular focus on dynamics of quality and new and emerging technologies.

**The Stories We Sell**

Storytelling is an art form advertisers take incredibly seriously. Storytelling is thriving in a post-Internet era through robust, targeted, and creative branded content. Jan Godsk, Founder, Ideatakeaway in Denmark, a creative consultancy, and an inaugural juror (in 2012) at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in their Branded Content category, defined branded content as “…often associated with entertainment-type content, such as creative video advertising. The aim is to resonate with the consumer on an emotional level rather than focusing on the actual product and USPs” (as quoted in Taylor, 2013). Additionally, he makes a distinction saying that branded content campaigns are not the same as content campaigns. He says, in juxtaposition, content campaigns are “…more focused on the product or service and the content is usually more rational and informative…and unlike branded content, ROI is more about lead-generation and sales than building a positive image of the brand” (as quoted in Taylor, 2013).

A trend in global advertising, storytelling through branded content was illustrated by Sebastian, Global Brand Marketing, Under Armour, who described the process of conceptualizing and getting more intentional about telling the “Under Armour story.” He said that as recently as 2012, Under Armour ran as many as seven different campaigns.
He said, “They didn't have the meaningful way to breakthrough and they had different tag lines and it was very disparate. There were obviously common elements and common tonality, but at the end of the day…there wasn't a really cumulative effect.” Sebastian said that advertising with multiple campaigns in a single year had several disadvantages, the biggest of which was consumer recall. Because there was no continuity, consumers could not remember what the previous campaign was or which company it was for, and basically, each time they started a new campaign they started from ground zero.

Sebastian recommended to Under Armour executives, “Let's go to three campaigns a year with media weight that can break through, with some commonality ...whether it's a mnemonic, a tagline, or a character like Jamie Foxx, something that connects the pieces of work.” Under Armour executives realized, as Sebastian did, that the lack of continuity in storytelling was negatively impacting their engagement with consumers.

The next phase of Under Armour advertising was developed under the company global tagline of “I Will,” meaning athletes must will themselves, through hard work and determination, to success. This global marketing campaign was launched in 2013 to bring “…to life the passion and determination that drives all athletes and Under Armour’s commitment to engineering innovative products that provide real performance advantages” (PRNewswire, 2013). Sebastian continued, saying in 2013 and 14 they made the switch to three major campaigns. Sebastian said “I think the success was the focus from a media perspective. Where we kind of fell down was that connection, making them still connect strongly enough.” He said one of the motivations for 2015 was to make a
stronger, more united connection with their audience. That driver manifested into the “Book of Will” campaign.

That each of the stories we would tell would be a chapter in that book. One of those stories of will, the will of an athlete, was Stephen Curry's story. In this case, his signature shoe was a focus but it was really around the will of Stephen Curry. Another one, around Manteo Mitchell, who broke his leg during the Olympics [and his will] to finish the race. Or Natasha Hastings, who is battling to come back. It shows their stories in the ‘Book of Will.’ The idea is to continue that, just as with a book, the chapters build on one another.

Under Armour’s spots in the “Book of Will” campaign highlighted the story of Under Armour’s global mantra, “I Will.” And, just as Sebastian suggested, the next campaign, or book, rolled out by Under Armour over the course of late 2015 and early 2016, called “Rule Yourself,” continues to build on Under Armour’s “story” through chapters, each one highlighting their values, and everything global producers told me Under Armour stands for as a company – from their employees, to their products, to their marquee athletes like Stephen Curry, Misty Copeland, Michael Phelps, and Tom Brady.

Just as Under Armour sells the story of “will” to accomplish seemingly insurmountable physical feats, Airbnb sells the story of “belonging.” As described by Aiden, a brand creative executive, Airbnb’s “Belong Anywhere” is similar to Under Armour’s “I Will” in that it is in some ways the essence or mission of what the brand (and, in turn, the company) stands for. Campaigns are then created under the umbrella of
these company mantras or global brand platforms. The “Belong Anywhere” mission statement was developed with painstaking care by Airbnb stakeholders, which included the help of agency DesignStudio, among others. Paolo, Head of Advertising, Airbnb, when asked about belonging said, “The company realized we needed to evolve, we needed to figure out what it is that we were in the business of.” To do this, Airbnb conducted a great number of interviews with employees, hosts, and guests, to try to figure out “what is it that we do that no one else does. What do our hosts provide, what is our vision for the world, what are our values? …We really believe when you stay with a local host, it creates a feeling of belonging.” In addition to Paolo’s take on the subject, David also commented on Airbnb’s mission and how it informs their storytelling.

David was an interesting interview because at times he seemed annoyed that I was asking him seemingly repetitive and insignificant (in his mind) questions about his work. As a global leader of community for Airbnb, David really functions as a special projects director for Airbnb executives carrying out work that struck me as mostly internal facing. However, after lethargically giving me the same answer (i.e., “belonging is a human universal” or “everyone just wants to feel at home”) he said something profound about the nature of traveling and belonging, which in turn was really played up in one of their campaigns called “Never a Stranger.” When asked what “Belong Anywhere” means he said, “Basically what “Belong Anywhere” means is the ability to be yourself anywhere in the world.” But then he finally nuanced this a bit more for me saying,
The result of feeling like you're at home, but there's a second transformation that happens, which is interesting. So, you're feeling at home in someone else's home, you can be your full self like you normally are only at home when surrounded by friends, people, and familiarity. You can be in Japan, say, as a western person, a very foreign culture, but you can feel at home and like your normal self in Japan if you stay with Airbnb, and with a host. What that also does, though, is there's a juxtaposition of opposites. There's a paradox. You feel at home, but you're in a very alien, strange place. What that does is that it tends to get you to do things that you would never do at home, because it makes you... People use lots of "er" words. I'm freer. I'm braver. I'll say yes to things I would normally say no to at home, like if I'm in a bar or a restaurant and someone says, ‘Hey, we're going to blah, blah, blah, we'd like you to join us.’ If I was at home I'd probably say, ‘Nah, I'm going to go home early, get some sleep, go to work in the morning.’ Whereas when you're in a foreign place, you say yes, because you're on an adventure, but you have the confidence to say yes because you feel rooted and grounded and in a home-like environment.

What both of these accounts from Under Armour and Airbnb underscore is the way in which storytelling, often in the form of branded content, reverses what has traditionally been known about creating campaigns. Avi Savar, Big Fuel founder and creative head, and president of the inaugural Cannes Lions Branded Content and Entertainment category in 2012 says,
Traditional advertising is about delivering features, benefits, and a USP through a product story, and then finding creative ways to connect that to people. Branded Content is sort of the reverse of this. It's about starting with people stories first, so what are the things that can help brands connect with the hearts and minds of their audience, and then thinking about how you can creatively link that to your product (as quoted in Kirby, 2014).

Although the campaigns in this project are overtly advertising content, I argue that the way in which global producers think about branded content is in fact the way in which global stakeholders are now conceptualizing more traditional advertising campaigns. Because audiences are so diverse, global stakeholders are attempting to boil their advertising all the way down to what they deem “human universals” to sell a particular story in such a way that makes global advertising feel more like a motivational workout video or an inspiring travel documentary. This reversal impacts the production process at the site of origination so much so that global advertisers are now thinking as much about their stories, starting with people stories first, their hearts and minds, and secondarily focusing on the product or service they are trying to sell.

For example, Tyler, Global Communications, Under Armour, when asked about the future of global advertising responded by saying you can’t underestimate the significance of having compelling content on the marketing side, because he says “as hard as you work, as much as you can grind it out, if there's not the products or the story that's compelling and of interest and is actually adding value to consumers, you're only
going to see so much success.” Tyler’s comments mirrored what Savar (Kirby, 2014) said about rethinking the nature of the relationship between people and brands. Tyler predicted that in the future the promotional, or *storyselling* side of selling products will be just as important as the product itself. Tyler said, “I think there’s a lot of conversations that are happening early on with the different marketing functions and product teams around that, as opposed to, ‘Hey, we made this, tell the story…’ I think the more brands and products are working together from the beginning, the more effective you’ll be. You can't create something and then kind of retro fit a story to it.” Tyler’s phrase *retro fit* is worth pausing on because I too believe the brands who story sell well are thinking about the product second and the community first.

This shift, in turn, is related to Banet-Weiser’s (2011) unpacking of *authenticity* in branding and likewise, Serazio’s (2013) *guerilla marketing* techniques. Essentially, story selling is advertising that feels deeply intimate—it doesn’t feel like advertising at all. When asked, ‘what have you learned in your time and role at Under Armor that you will be sure to implement going forward?’ Sebastian said, “Number one would be storytelling.” He said he believes this is something Under Armour does “extremely well” by “establishing that emotional connection.” He says, “I think with so much messaging out there in the marketplace – so much of it falls on deaf ears because so much of it is shilling a product, or what have you…so storytelling is so huge.” Banet-Weiser (2011) suggests that global consumers welcome brands into the deeply intimate parts of their life, while Naomi Klein (2009) argues vehemently against the cooptation of culture by
brands. As this project is solely focused on the producers of cultural products, I can only speak to that side of the equation. However, my informants, like Sebastian, believe that consumers, if nurtured properly, are open to at least hearing the story, and that means that brand curators must constantly tell the story, “authentically,” and in new and exciting ways.

In contrast to both Under Armour and Airbnb, Campbell Soup is just now embarking on their global endeavor. In March of 2015, CEO, Denise Morrison reorganized the entire company into three divisions. One of these divisions, Global Biscuits and Snacks, includes the Campbell Soup offerings that they deem to have the most potential to sell globally, or in their words, the products that are most “globally aspiring.” These include the company’s Pepperidge Farm, Arnott’s and Kelsen businesses (Campbell Soup, 2016). However, like Under Armour and Airbnb, Campbell Soup is already seeking out the ways in which they can tie human emotion to their products in a way that resonates with a global audience. Chris, Global Research & Development, Global Biscuits & Snacks Division, shared how they, in the past, have tied Milano cookies to a consumer experience by capitalizing on the recent food trend of salted caramel. Chris shared that the Milano brand is based off of what they call “a moment for me.” He says, “for moms, this is a chance to really sit, have an indulgent moment of peace, quiet, and kind of tranquility from the day, if you will. Usually, that experience is connected with hot beverages, so tea or coffee.” When salted caramel started to become “very hot in the hot beverage category, because you see Starbucks and everybody else
doing it,” continued Chris, “…That's when we said, ‘Now is the time where Milano can play,’ because moms will recognize, ‘Oh yeah, salted caramel, I got that in my Starbucks.’ It makes sense that Milano will do that because the eating occasion kind of overlaps.” Because the Milano brand is associated with this “a moment for me” concept, the activation with salted caramel made sense, but more significantly, the advertising was still focused on that universal human emotion, not the fact that Milano was launching a new flavor. Even though Campbell Soup lags behind Airbnb and Under Armour in breadth and sophistication of global advertising campaigns, their cultural production processes also underscore producers’ acute focus on highlighting human stories first, product stories second.

In addition, I wanted to find out, however, how a global stakeholder begins to conceptualize a campaign on a global scale. Oscar, global category development for the Global Snacks and Biscuits Division, Campbell Soup, said to me, “What we start with is, what does the brand stand for and what makes it unique, both competitively but also from a consumer connection stand point.” Researcher Banet-Weiser (2011) defines the practice of branding as “a complex economic tool, a method of attaching social or cultural meaning to a commodity as a means to make the commodity more personally resonant with an individual consumer” (p. 4). This is precisely what my informants sought to do, as is, they believe, part of their job description. The way audiences see themselves, argues Banet-Weiser (2011), is deeply in relationship with brands—so much so that individuals’ relationships with brands are impacting how they see integral pieces of their
inner core, what makes up each person’s *authentic self*. “The process of branding,” argues Banet-Weiser (2011), “impacts the way we understand who we are, how we organize ourselves in the world, what stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. While commodities are certainly part of branding…the process of branding is broader, situated within culture.” (p. 5). To that end, what is fundamentally different than a decade ago is that global stakeholders are on an incessant quest to brand human emotion in such a way that it attempts to encompass the entirety of all global consumers. Furthermore, consumers seem more open to brand infiltration of their “authentic” selves than ever before, a welcome shift to global stakeholders.

For example, Vance, international accounts executive for TBWA Worldwide, compared Uber to Airbnb as both have grown out of the sharing economy. (Again, a new dynamic brought on by social media tools and technological advances in the sharing of information.) Albeit a rather lengthy example in which I felt subject to what Katherine Sender (2004) calls “the pitch,” I nevertheless felt that Vance poignantly pointed out how a well nurtured consumer can protect and bolster a brand; however, it is only feasible because the brand has been seemingly carefully curated to feel “authentic” to said consumers. Vance says the shared economy, “therefore, community driven” companies—“they build a product for a small number of people that works, that creates a fantastic product experience. That's kind of chapter number one.” That product experience is “so awesome,” says Vance, that users show it to their friends and they show it to their friends, and so on.
The product experience itself is reinforcing because it's so brilliant, like Airbnb is lovely and Uber is so efficient and Jordache is so fast and Amazon is so one click. I think they're just self-perpetuating that [companies] can be forgiven for thinking that [they] don't need to invest in a brand, that actually it is going to continue to self-perpetuate and that the role of the brand is like a 20th century company.

Vance makes a joke, letting me know, that he understands his comments are self-serving. He says, “Obviously, I'm a brand person so I would argue that that's not the case… because I would probably be out of a job.” Continuing, he says, that what happens is that companies “absolutely can” get through stage one and stage two and maybe even get into stage three without really too much focus on what the brand stands for, “on what the emotional territory is that you want to occupy.” But, says Vance,

I would argue once you’ve gone past that and you then suddenly become big…you have the potential for this brand to be adored, [but also] the potential for a distance to be created between my personal feelings for the product experience, my sense of connection with the community such as Uber drivers, who are always really nice and they've got water and it's all lovely and it's not smelly, ugly drivers that hate me and say ‘Get out, right?’

Vance’s point here is that a brand story can fill the gap with a powerful narrative, but if a company doesn’t take the lead—for example, Uber has no real defined mission, value system, or hook to endear audiences despite their massive size and worth—someone else will. What Vance is arguing for is that in the age of social media if company leaders
don’t define their own brand, the “community” or consumers will define it for you. Sometimes this is fine, but sometimes it can be fatal to a company’s sheer existence.

Vance, of course, advocates for brand building, suggesting that by building a brand following, the resulting community can be a powerful ally; he says, “The community is awesome because it can protect you but I think it needs to be nurtured. It needs to be helped, curated. It needs to be encouraged with good storytelling.” Vance says that a happy community can act as millions of spokespersons, which can have a “terrifically powerful force that is genuine and heartfelt.” He argues that over time this carefully curated community will meet you on a deep, emotional level and eventually they’ll get to the point where they’re saying, “you know what? I’m just an Airbnb person. I really love those guys. They really care about the world.” In sum, the essence of Vance’s comments is that a brand can be and certainly is powerful, but perhaps it is the community that makes a brand so powerful in the first place. As global advertising producers see it, the community, in the interactive advertising world of the 21st century, doesn’t mind being sold to as long as the selling feels authentic and they find value in the exchange. Prior studies have indicated that the brand preferences, brand usage, and even brand loyalty of audiences are determined by the extent to which brand personality and meaning is consistent with their self-concept (Lin 2010; Westjohn, Singh, & Magnusson, 2012). In exchange for an authentic experience, the community can provide protection, but as Vance says, they must be “encouraged with good storytelling.” Vance, however, in closing, said “…But I worry about it being authentic and it being connected to the
product experience and the community. I think in the end all brands will go there, technology ones or not.”

But, what does selling authenticity look like? How does a company sell a story so convincingly that the community finds it be authentic, despite campaign origination in a headquarter office literal and figurative miles away from target audiences? With heavy reliance on consumer insight, as all three companies underscored, these lofty corporate ideals get executed in nuanced ways that make advertising processes distinctly different for a global audience than for a domestic one. For example, two instances emerged in which selling the story “authentically” seemed paramount for the global stakeholders in this study.

First, when asked about target audiences, or who their target markets are, advertisers and marketers often rattle of groupings of humans that they believe are either most interested in their product or those people who should be most interested in their product. I asked Trent, Footwear Development, Under Armour, who the target audience is for the Curry One shoe, to which he replied that his consumer was Stephen Curry. Trent went on to say, “That's my consumer. My consumer is Stephen Curry. I want him to be happy with his shoe. He's going to wear it, and he's the best player in the NBA.” Trent said, “I've got to make sure that what I'm building for him is going to perform to his expectations, and then after that...it's basically making sure that we get the good stories...All the good stories properly embellished onto the shoe.” Trent builds on the comments of other informants by not only emphasizing the importance of storytelling in content, but
storytelling in *product*. I asked him how telling the product story varied for a global audience. He said

> We try to sell a global story. It's the same story no matter where you go. The advertising will change. How they tell the story from an advertising perspective may change a bit because it's like the graphics will change, the colors will change to match the sensibilities of the market they're trying to sell into, but you're still telling the same story of great athletes performing, and how our product is able to help enhance your performance, because the whole thing is about making great product for athletes everywhere.

What Trent is suggesting is that to the Under Armour consumer, Stephen Curry is more than a commodity. What global stakeholders at Under Armour bank on, is that Curry epitomizes something “authentic” for consumers, something that “feels real.” Global story sellers then hope, in turn, that if he endorses a shoe, his fans, along with Under Armour’s followers, are more likely to buy in to the Under Armour story. On a global scale, however, as Trent remarks, the story stays the same. The story of Stephen Curry and the story of Under Armour transcend national borders because as several informants remarked and Banet-Weiser (2011) substantiates, consumers want to engage with advertising and companies that feel deeply authentic.

Secondly, one of the ways that “Belong Anywhere” was activated was through a commercial campaign called “Is Mankind?” The commercial showed a baby wobbling
down a hallway toward a glass door, in which the sun was brightly shining in. The narrator says

Is man kind? Are we good? Go see. Go look through their windows so you can understand their views. Sit at their tables so you can share their tastes. Sleep in their beds so you may know their dreams. Go See. And find out just how kind the hes and shes of this mankind are.

When asked about the campaign Aiden said they brainstorm different ways that they can communicate the brand. “Some are more kind of like practical. Some are more philosophical. Some are more cultural.” It was an interesting process, shared Aiden, “because we had designed this campaign and then it was kind of later in the game when we realized that we wanted to stretch beyond just the word “mankind” and actually think about humanity, and incorporate womankind and transkind.” Aiden said it was a bit of an “Ah Ha!” moment for Airbnb because they realized that what they wanted to say could stretch beyond just the word mankind.

Vance, TBWA Worldwide said the Mankind commercial was a values-driven campaign to exemplify Airbnb’s position that man is kind. He said that selling a story with this sort of lofty, philosophical view of the world was not an easy one. He shared, “Of course, the news is full of stories where man is not kind, and the Airbnb community had the really unique opportunity to just open people’s eyes again to the possibly that man is kind…” and to try to show audiences that “you can have somewhat of a personal experience yourself and some kind of a journey that you'll go through. …we're not
kidding around like we all actually care about this stuff.” As part of the values-driven approach to storytelling, Vance said we localized that somewhat but it was basically a treatise. It was a kind of this is what we believe and the baby was, I know it was just a white baby with blonde hair. We were like ‘should we do an Asian baby? Oh, whatever, it's fine.’ These are just judgements you make. There's always an argument on the other side. There's always a ‘we need to shoot a black baby, an Asian baby’ and you're like ‘no, I'm just talking about, you know what, it's okay.’ We did do a lot that was very interesting in terms of sexuality and openness to different forms of mankind because we launched on Caitlin Jenner's ESPN thing and did the transkind…womankind. That was to make sort of the mankind thing exists without a white baby.

The two previous comments reference “transkind,” a subtle (or not so subtle) advertising story Airbnb told when Caitlyn Jenner, formally known as Bruce Jenner, received the Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the ESPYs in 2015. To coincide with her honor, at the end of the “Is Mankind?” commercial airing that summer, the text mankind, flipped to womankind, then to transkind. Airbnb, CMO, Jonathan Mildenhalliv called it a “bit of an Ellen moment,” meaning that when Ellen first came out advertisers turned in the opposite direction, but now that several years have gone by no one thinks twice about a lesbian host (Mceleny, 2015). He said instead of running in the opposite direction, as many advertisers did in fear of offending pockets of consumers, Airbnb decided to “run towards
it.” So, when Starcom gave Airbnb the opportunity to run their commercial “Is Mankind?” right after Caitlyn Jenner gave her acceptance speech, Mildenafil seized the opportunity saying, “We want it to genuinely feel as though the 7 billion people in this world can belong anywhere.” (Mceleny, 2015).

This final example by Airbnb brings to a head the way advertisers feel about selling consumers the story – while they express a desire to be authentic…nothing is off limits. Outwardly, critics and consumers mostly applauded Airbnb’s nod to Caitlyn Jenner and transgender people, but the reality is that this very personal decision and intimate part of someone’s life was fodder for advertising content. Selling is what advertisers do, and although the field of advertising is creative and interesting and thought-provoking, at the end of the day it still exists to either make consumers aware of a company’s existence, their “values,” or to ultimately sell you something. Story selling, however, resonates with audiences in a way previously unseen as consumers embrace branded content and companies that seem to align with their own values (Banet-Weiser, 2011). In fact, when it comes to storytelling on a global scale, perceived brand globalness (PBG) can be a distinct advantage for brands (Akaka & Alden, 2010). Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) examined the impact of PBG on brand purchase likelihood and discovered a positive association with “perceptions of both brand prestige and brand quality” (Akaka & Alden, 2010, p. 44). In other words, the more “global” a brand is perceived by consumers the more positively the brand is viewed in relation to quality and prestige. (Akaka & Alden, 2010).
What is perplexing is how global stakeholders seek to storytell on such a massive scale. As my informants shared, the only way to sell a story to a global consumer is to whittle a campaign down to “human universal truths” and this means stripping the story of other potentially important characteristics. As producers, global advertisers and stakeholders, however, play a pivotal role in telling cultures’ stories and many of these stories are told from the headquarter office. Sebastian, Under Armour said their international business has gone from 3% to 11% of their overall business in less than three years. When asked if all the Under Armour stories for a global audience came out of Baltimore he said they mostly do, but, “There will certainly come a day when we will want to tell a story out of Amsterdam, out of England, Brazil, or what have you…around the world or that particular athlete. And it may make sense for that country to take the lead on the storytelling.” Except this hasn’t happened globally, despite an obvious push toward international work. To that end, it prompts me to ask if the stories that advertising writes are the ones that prevail, what will be left out as time goes on? Or, perhaps the question is who is left out? Presently, I’m not sure global producers have given this issue much thought. What they care about is connecting with audiences now by selling stories. Scott Donaton, Chief Content Officer, Digitas Studios (2015) said, “The golden age of advertising may be coming to a close, but the golden age of storytelling is just getting started.”

The Stories We Sell Ourselves
Just as storytelling is an integral piece of selling products and services around the world, storytelling is also an integral piece of developing corporate cultures. Stories, in fact, can have just as profound of an effect *internally*, on employees, on one’s own identity because, the stories we sell ourselves—about our work, the greater impact of our work, and our place in the organization—might be the most influential stories of all. For example, Trent, Footwear Development, Under Armour, when asked how he partners with the marketing team said they imagine their work with a building metaphor, or, as they all it *architecture*. “Each item is like… its own floor. You say this particular shoe or this particular [item]... Occupies this specific floor in a building, and here's all the key attributes of that.” He gives me an example saying, “Basically, it's going to be lightweight, fast for the fast consumer. The consumer's an alpha-male, who likes to set his own tone… It's verbiage and it's inspirational photographs from the market, from the consumer. It's like telling a great story.” What Trent’s comments reflect is that narrative, or storytelling, often helps organize work processes, even complex processes that start in Baltimore and work their way to Vietnam and China for prototyping, and then back to the United States for testing, and then out to Indonesia for production. Stories can help guide processes in ways that sheer information can’t always accomplish. This, in turn, makes stories an integral piece of the production of culture puzzle.

Corporate communication is a robust area of study and, in turn, provides many useful terms in the corporate communication, integrated marketing, and management literature that refer to the employee-employer relationship. The term that comes the
closest to what my analysis revealed would be employee loyalty, although what I experienced was more profound than that. However, employee loyalty is an appropriate starting place. Despite changing expectations of employee loyalty (Kumar & Shekhar, 2012), it is still a desirable trait by employers. Loyalty is “the willingness to make an investment or personal sacrifice to strengthen a relationship” (Reichheld, 2001); or, in other words, loyalty is “giving one’s best when attached to a particular organization” (Kumar & Shekhar, 2012, p. 101). Scholars debate the appropriateness of giving or expecting loyalty in contemporary corporate settings with some scholars (Baron, 1991; Carbone, 1997; Duska, 1997) firmly rejecting the appropriateness of loyalty for employees, although some scholars qualify their position saying employee loyalty is inappropriate in some cases (Hajdin, 2005). In contrast, on the other hand, some scholars (Schrag, 2001; Corvino, 2002; Mele, 2001) defend the appropriateness of employer loyalty.

To that end, what I experienced during my interviews felt like an amalgamation of employee loyalty and what Katherine Sender (2004) calls the “pitch.” Sender (2004) says “the pitch’ describes, most typically, the process whereby ad creatives introduce a new campaign to clients – selling ideas to sell products” (p. 244). As both Sender (2004) and Serazio (2013) experienced, my informants often promoted their own ideas of glocal methods – whatever they may be – and attempted to sell me on them in the process. For example, several of my Airbnb informants frequently used phrases such as “…all 7 billion of us” or “humans just want to belong.” In parallel, several of my Campbell Soup
informants used the term “delicious” to describe their work. A soup or biscuit is not “good,” or even “flavorful” or “tasty”—it was *always* delicious. And lastly, the global stakeholders from Under Armour used the word “team,” which naturally stems from the sport world, and hence their industry, but they used it in multiple, corporate ways including “teamwork” and “teammates,” referring to themselves and their global counterparts. While I don’t believe my informants were directly coached to use these terms, I do think corporate culture and executive leadership played a big role in how these global advertising leaders articulated their work and their place within that work. This is not to suggest that the entirety of the interviews felt like a pitch meeting, but in some ways, I did feel as if by agreeing to speak with me my global stakeholders felt that they, in turn, “agreed” to an opportunity to promote their own work and their own ideas (potentially on their own terms) rather than more straight-forwardly answering my questions. Navigating these kinds of responses resulted in additional follow-up questions and a “steering” of the conversation back to the question at hand. Interestingly, what came out of my interviews with global stakeholders across three global brands is a strong sense of what I call, *Kool-Aid loyalty*.

Kool-Aid loyalty goes beyond employee loyalty. Kool-Aid loyalty feels a bit like a pitch, but with an ethos conveying that my informants genuinely bought into the messages they told me, to the stories they spoke about, and to the mission that they quested after. Much like “drinking the corporate Kool-Aid” suggests that employees buy into the corporate ideology, Kool-Aid loyalty suggests that these global stakeholders are
not only devoted and committed to the company, but that their devotion extends beyond loyalty to a way of life. This finding was consistent across all organizations and intensified the higher up the informant was in the organization. The global stakeholders who participated in this study used verbiage that suggested their deeply ingrained commitment in the global promotion of their respective brand. I’m not suggesting that my global informants are simply cogs on a wheel doing whatever is asked of them; in fact, I’m suggesting the opposite. Because my global stakeholders have such Kool-Aid loyalty to their organizations, their creative, their execution, and their data-driven intellect are outstanding, “authentic,” and efficient as a result of their Kool-Aid loyalty. On the other hand, I am suggesting that the pitfalls with this kind of loyalty are that it provides rose-colored glasses through which they process information.

For example, Paolo, Head of Advertising, Airbnb, reflected on how he and his team came around to “Belong Anywhere” and the impact that he believes Airbnb, and in turn, his promotional work, has on the world. He says, “We gathered around for weeks and weeks and weeks and felt like we got to something that was both reflective of the product, but also of why we think home sharing is something that has the ability to create a better world. We really do believe that.” He continued saying, “when you sit down with someone and understand their point of view, it can change you. We'd see those stories every day… It's like you change by meeting people with different points of view, right?” Paolo said that interactions such as this give guests a broader sense of what the world is like. “You become more knowledgeable, more accepting... It really was just about our
values, but in a way it was related to the product, what we think our community does for people and, frankly, for cities and neighborhoods.” Further corroborating how deeply Airbnbers believe their work impacts the world, Aiden, Airbnb, said that “Belong Anywhere” is “the company's mission and what every employee is working towards;” and, he said, “what unites us as employees, as Airbnb hosts to travelers, is the mission of the company, which is we want to create a world where all seven billion people feel like they can belong anywhere.” As these comments underscore, Kool-Aid loyalty is at once a product of an organizational culture that simultaneously informs and shapes the culture from which it hails. What makes Kool-Aid loyalty so dangerous, however, is precisely its insular perspective.

When asked if he could tell me a little bit more about how “Belong Anywhere” informs how he targets global audiences, Aiden said it’s not something they just “cooked up,” but instead came out of what they heard from their community. “We heard some really powerful stories about their experiences, and the effect that these experiences had on them. Ultimately, the notion of belonging came from those stories.” Referring specifically to the “Is Mankind?” commercial, he said when they saw the creative work, they realized that it could have a broader cultural impact. “It became less about targeting audiences that either were familiar with Airbnb or aligned with us in terms of values. It became more about making more of a kind of like cultural statement.”

Taking the whole notion of “Belong Anywhere” one step further David, Airbnb, shared a conversation he had with Airbnb co-founder, Brian Chesky. He said, “Brian
said, ‘Belong Anywhere. It's great. It's right. It's what we're all about, but I don't think I know exactly what it means. Or how to implement it. And if I don't know, then I bet no one else does.’” Brian asked David to help define “Belong Anywhere” by going out again and talking to hosts, guests, employees and travelers to better understand the mission of the organization on a deeper level. David’s work reflects what Joyner (2012) calls storymining. Joyner asserts that storymining is different that organizational storytelling; she says while typical organizational storytelling is used as a way to encourage the telling of stories or as a communication tool, storymining “involves gathering stories and mining their content to ‘bring to the surface’ a deeper understanding of the adaptive and cultural aspects of the system. These aspects, or cultural levers, can then be used to inform action” (Joyner, 2012, p. 628). To that end, the role David fills at Airbnb was created to storymine and storysell internally, indicating the significance of cultivating a loyal culture and loyal employees, and I would venture to say that Airbnb global stakeholders believe this is just as important as storytelling to their “guests” or consumers. This internal, insular focus fosters a robust Kool-Aid loyalty, which in turn bolsters and emulsifies the organizational culture.

To further illustrate the lengths to which Airbnb goes to develop and nurture their culture and thus employee loyalty, David shared with me a project he’s working on called “Inside Out.” He argued that it’s nearly impossible to deliver “Belong Anywhere” if “we don’t live it, breath it, and deliver it internally.” He said as a pilot they sent 45 employees on their own Belong Anywhere Transformation Journey for 2-3 nights. These
experiences were paid for and employees were asked to document their experience, “to make them conscious of this whole idea of belonging anywhere, so that they could come back and understand Belong Anywhere not just intellectually but emotionally through their own direct experience.” He said he’s currently working on the proposal to roll this out to all 2,000 employees and every new employee thereafter. Another part of the “Inside Out” program is a class to teach Airbnb hosts how to create a feeling of belonging for their guests. David said they could easily run a campaign about Belonging Anywhere, but it would be superficial without rallying up internal stakeholders. He said solely running a big campaign is not the way to go. “What we're trying to do is, actually, consciously, and deliberately deliver it daily to every single guest by operationalizing it.”

Although the premise of David’s work was to advertise internally, this information was eventually converted to external advertising campaigns. I followed up with David by asking how his work informs the work of their advertising agency partners to which he responded, “I developed, if you like, the brand strategy. It's more than a brand strategy, almost, though. It's the DNA. It's what the brand's going to stand for for the next hundred, two hundred years if it still exits.” Suggesting that “Belong Anywhere” is as essential to Airbnb’s existence as DNA is to humans poignantly depicts how deeply those that work at Airbnb are sold on their own ideas and their own mission. At the end of our conversation I made a comment about how David seemed to function as a corporate researcher, to which he replied that he does not see himself that way. He said
I see myself basically as... a guardian and promoter of the vision of creating a world where seven billion people can belong anywhere. I'm only using research as a means to an end. It's getting insight to achieve that goal. That's all, so I'm a missionary, if you like, or an apostle.

What these examples from Airbnb demonstrate so acutely is that the story selling happens just as frequently and powerfully internally as it does externally. In fact, it is the story selling internally that seems to drive corporate cultures that thrive. Beamish and Beamish (2015) contend that, “Stories like these help create the real culture and values of an organization and drive the behavior of people within the organization” (p. 191). In addition, as previously mentioned, one of the ways that “Belong Anywhere” was activated was through the “Is Mankind?” commercial featuring the wobbly baby. Micah, an account manager, Chiat/Day advertising agency, said that this commercial pays homage to a purist perspective, “the purist way to think about living in harmony on the earth – all seven billion of us.” While Airbnb had the most distinct processes for storytelling on a global scale, both Under Armour and Campbell Soup invoked internal storieselling as well in distinct, and perhaps, prophetic ways.

In regards to the stories we sell ourselves, one of my interviews at Campbell Soup was with Tony, an executive at Campbell’s Global Culinary & Baking Institute. Tony is a trained chef, has worked in various restaurants, has traveled the world, and works closely with the C-Suite at Campbell Soup to develop their product offerings. Reflecting on how his role impacts the organization he says, “everything that I do is built around making our
food taste delicious. I'm consciously inspiring and educating internally and externally to help people more understand about the authenticity of the food and where the global economy gold standard is.” He shared that his work helps their executives and scientists “better understand authentic original recipes and the astronomy of the dish before we can make large amounts that are safe and delicious.” He shared an example of how this internal inspiration takes place using paella soup. He says it starts by having chefs build a brief “all about paella.” Then, “We would do saffron, and rabbit, and snails, and sausages and see what the real paella is. Maybe it would be squid and paella, maybe it would be vegetarian paella. Ultimately, we know that those might not be in the product that we make for our consumers, but that's where we want to start.” Tony said in addition to his other responsibilities, “My role is also to continually help promote a culinary passion for food and to build a culinary voice so that people think about food all the time here at Campbell.” Tony’s work seems to have sustainable influence, as Chris, Campbell Soup, shared that ideas about new flavors and products come from anywhere in the organization. He said that via an “innovation portal,” akin to a virtual suggestion box, all employees from the entire company around the globe can submit ideas. “The reality is in the bakery business, people working on the manufacturing floor... they don't view themselves as just hourly labor. They view themselves as bakers.” He says that many of these employees have long tenure with the company, “so they've seen recipes and products come and go and they tend to have deep insight about what's good and what's not good, so we tap into them as well.”
While Tony’s role includes “promoting a culinary passion,” Brock, one of Under Armour’s first 20 employees shared the leaps and bounds Under Armour has taken since their start in 1996. His candid story about the early days of Under Armour in which they “cashed in favors,” used all their friends in their first commercial because they couldn’t afford any big name athletes, and didn’t necessarily get permits to shoot video or use public space all feed into the culture, and in turn, the success, at Under Armour.

Sebastian, adding to Brock’s take says, “we still have a lot of folks who are employee number 1, 2, 3… sitting right there at headquarters. Given that it’s such a strong strong culture right here at headquarters, I think that’s been a lot of it.” Brock, however, because he was one of the first few employees at Under Armour, which now employs well over 11,000 people, has first-hand knowledge of Under Armour’s “fight” to be recognized in the sport and fitness apparel space. Other, newer employees, however, have benefitted from these and other stories that characterize Under Armour as an “overlooked” or “dismissed” underdog. In the same vein, Patrick, a basketball category marketer, Under Armour said, “We really look to our athletes for inspiration, and it's important to tell their story but at the same time tell our brand story. Those two link very well together. When that happens, it's very magical.” Patrick said in the early years, Under Armour was dismissed as a “football company.” Over time, however, the brand has started to make an impact. People are taking notice, similar to Stephen Curry.

He was not highly recruited, he wasn't highly touted coming out of high school.

He wasn't a physical specimen from a size standpoint, just a regular player,
regular kid that worked really hard. He obviously has some special gifts, but his journey, just like ours, are very similar. He had to believe in himself in order to achieve his success because no one believed in him, just like Under Armour had to believe in itself as well in order to overcome many challenges.

Even the way that my global stakeholders from Under Armour talk about their work and their colleagues all stem from a sport metaphor. Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) say that metaphors allow employees to understand abstract subject matter in more finite, familiar terms. They contend that “our behavior reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience” (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001, p. 276). This rings true at Under Armour as my informants talked in tones and with verbiage that suggested they had a “chip on their shoulder,” because they see themselves as having been overlooked or dismissed by teams, athletes, and sporting goods stores until more recently. And while Sebastian, says the “pace is unbelievable,” Under Armour has doubled in revenue to almost $4 billion in 2015, the number of “teammates” has doubled, and their international business is “up over 95% over last year” making up roughly 11% of their revenue, Under Armour still metaphorically operates with the underdog story guiding their actions. It informs their work, informs their global advertising (and the athletes they choose to endorse their products), and aligns and resonates with consumers around the world—despite the fact they are now a well-regarded global brand in the fitness apparel space.

Storytelling internally, however, reaches beyond corporate walls and often informs important relationships. DesignStudio, who spearheaded the rebrand for Airbnb,
spoke with me about how they approached their meetings with Airbnb as they were pitching for the work. Beau, a principal at DesignStudio, said, they wanted to show Airbnb that they “were an agency that could understand Airbnb.” As the relationship grew, Joe Gebbia, one of Airbnb’s co-founders, and a few designers came over to London and they had Brian Chesky on video call. Beau said, at the time, in their London office they had some empty studio space. They decided to turn it into a listing.

We made it look like when Joe Gebbia turned up he was walking into a listing. And that listing was actually placed onto Airbnb. And what it did is... it was a little bit of something that showed we were an agency that wanted to not only do brilliant work for them, but really wanted to understand them as a client. It was that kind of process, that really… showing we could be a partner. Not only was it brilliant work that we presented... [it] led to winning the pitch and forming a relationship with them.

Of course, agencies pitch for business and that is a large part of their work, so familiarizing themselves with a client is to be expected. In fact, it’s expected to be done well, or as Ben says “brilliantly.” What’s noteworthy is that the agency played a large role in organizing the story and likely disseminating the story both internally and externally, thus fortifying the culture in a more concrete way than before. Story selling, then, can become more deeply ingrained in a culture as a result of putting in place formalized processes to tell the story. In other words, some corporate stories develop
organically, but others are carefully curated with help from experts, and this can have long-term advantages.

Lastly, because global stakeholders are always trying to be one step ahead of their consumers, as is literally part of their job description, the ability to predict stories, both internally and externally, emerged as a theme in my research, which is fundamentally different than advertising processes even a decade ago. What makes this process new is that previous models of advertising focused very much on the product and predicting what products or services consumers might need or want in the future. Shifts in feedback mechanisms and technological delivery platforms have altered the product-story process in that predicting the story, or the trend or the values on the rise across various cultures is just as important – *if not more important* – as the actual product itself.

Take the case of global food trends for Campbell Soup. Chef Tony, Campbell Soup, said he’s predicting Filipino food to become more popular globally. “There's a restaurant called Tuk-Tuk in Manhattan and now Seattle so I think that Filipino food hasn't really hit the market yet. That was something we had as a trend last year, we'll continue to watch.” Tony says that chefs love the idea of cooking with fat. “It seems like everything is continually taking fat out, taking fat out, taking fat out. So I think that might be a fun area for us to start thinking about.” He says they keep tabs on spices from around the world, different kinds of pork, restaurant trends—all to try to predict how these products might fit and bolster their brand story. Chris, Campbell Soup, talks about other trends on the horizon. “You'll find toast items on fancy restaurants in New York City, it's
really interesting. We track all of that, and the inputs come from social media, from advertising, it comes from networks within the culinary community, all sorts of areas.” In a more formal process, Chris says, “we have a group of folks who, as an addition to their day job, they just sort of track and look at those things and analyze them, and then identify what they think is going to be the next big thing on the culinary side.” Trend hunting, not unlike Frank’s (1998) cool hunting, can have a powerful influence on stories, which in turn can influence everything from product design, hiring practices, and advertising campaigns. It is these stories that we sell ourselves that have the strongest appeal, but also have the most room for error – the most room to foster a Kool-aid kind of loyalty.

Loyalty, in the traditional sense, means that you are committed or devoted “no matter what,” meaning that even if the employer does something you are not in favor of you still retain a loyal, committed position. While I’m not suggesting Kool-Aid loyalty is equivalent to blind loyalty, Kool-Aid loyalty does imply a core belief and a “buying in” of the corporate ideology that informs decision-making, processes, and audience construction. Airbnb has a service to sell, yet the stories they sell tend to leave out some of the awful, tragic ways that people exploit another’s eagerness to “belong” (see www.airbnbhell.com). Even more troubling, Airbnb has recently come under intense fire for “widespread discrimination,” which doesn’t feel very collaborative to me (McPhate, 2015). Campbell Soup, on the other hand, has lots of products to sell, but faces challenges when stories don’t adapt to the world around them, stagnating in products and
processes of days gone by. Moving slowly, behemoth-like, has its consequences. Under Armour tells stories of shaking the chip off their shoulder, and while their sales are still dwarfed by Nike, with almost $4 billion in revenue in 2015 they are one of the top 10 selling brands in the United States and the #2 fitness label behind Nike (Fitzpatrick, 2015); but, their *storyselling* succeeds on the “we’re just the little underdog,” the start-up brand – not the story that says “we’re successful and we know it.”

In sum, the stories global stakeholders sell themselves—about their work, their impact, their reach, their reward—are carefully curated, purposefully leaving out parts of the story that don’t align with the “authenticity” of their brand. What ends up being lost in this carefully curated storytelling process is a critical eye about potential pitfalls in product or service design, hiring practices, messaging, employee relations, media placement, publicity events, and marketing, to name a few. What’s even more disconcerting is that consumers can often be misled, taking a story at face value, not being privy to the parts of the story too scary to tell.

**What Informs and Propels Stories in a Global Matrix**

The previous two sections revealed how storytelling, storymining, and storyselling seem to be driving not only advertising conception and execution, but also how global producers identify themselves within their work. In addition to the role that stories play in advertising processes, it’s imperative to underscore what informs and propels those stories in a global matrix. While advertising has long been associated with a meaning-based phenomenon (see Domzal & Kernan, 1993; McCracken, 1987), and
advertisers are fully aware that their mission is to “connect” or “engage” with consumers (see Jain & Roy, 2012) (so that consumers buy products or services), the global stakeholders in this project were adamant that the propelling of stories happened in two distinct ways. First, storytelling, as described by my informants, was indistinguishably linked to quality – of product/service and advertising content. Second, storytelling in a global matrix is made possible through technological advances that have fundamentally changed advertising’s relationship with the consumer.

**Stories Propelled by Quality**

As my informants shared the ways in which they characterized their work in a global matrix, it became evident that they felt that quality was inextricably linked to their work, and often times in multifaceted ways. Quality emerged as an important driver for global cultural producer in two ways. First, quality emerged in the way my global stakeholders talked about the actual product or service they were selling; or in other words, the quality of the product experience. As previously mentioned, I asked Trent, Global Footwear Development, Under Armour, who his target consumer was for their signature Curry One shoe, to which he replied, “My consumer is Stephen Curry. I want him to be happy with his shoe. …He’s the best player in the NBA, and I’ve got to make sure that what I’m building for him is going to perform to his expectations.” Even though Trent continues saying that that is step one in a long and arduous process from product conception to store shelves, he reiterates the emphasis on product quality: “That's the pinnacle. That's the pinnacle shoe. That is, without a doubt, our best basketball shoe. It's
for Stephen Curry. When we designed and built it, we looked at it as first and foremost, it's for him.”

Since Trent’s role at Under Armour is uniquely positioned between product design and marketing, I asked him about some of the measures Under Armour takes to ensure quality. He described to me their process of “wear and physical testing” saying that all of the Under Armour factories have a laboratory, in addition to their own internal innovation labs. He said from a materials standpoint there are “pull tests, there's abrasion testing, there's traction testing, there's all different types of tests that we do to confirm that the materials will hold up to a certain specification, that the traction will perform in a certain specification...” He said that’s the physical testing side. On the wear testing side, “basically, you get some guys who are a size-13 or a size-15, because you'll want to beat up the shoe.” If there is a point of failure, says Trent, you want to see the failure in wear test. “A failure in wear test is okay, because that gives you an opportunity to identify the issue, come to the root cause of the concern, and then address it.” Failure outside of wear testing is not okay, however. “Wear testing is very important. Usually we'll get...anywhere from eight to 15 people into the shoe, and we try to get eight to 10 weeks of hard wear on a shoe. Essentially, what you're looking for is solid feedback.” Additionally, when asked about some of the challenges reaching a young audience in a globally-connect world, Patrick, Under Armour, said that while Under Armour is known as a great “on-court” brand, they have a lot of growth to do “off-court,” or in the “lifestyle”
Man, I got to be careful what I say... a lot of these kids have grown up or have been exposed in a large way to Nike or to our competitors. That has a strong influence... Nike...lives in lifestyle and it also lives in performance, whereas with Under Armour, we're really perceived and are a performance brand. We work on-court. We work on-field. But, what happens is once they're done on the field or on the court, we don't necessarily make that transition off the court because now there's the lifestyle and that component. We're halfway.

He said their competitors, and I got the impression that he meant Nike, “are 360.” And while Patrick said that Under Armour aspires to be a 360-brand, they don’t want to compromise. He says they don't want to ever lean and create an off-court shoe that happens to work on-court,” but instead, in staying true to their mission, “it's got to be a great on-court shoe that happens to work off-court. You got to keep your focus there.

You got to be real deliberate with how you approach things and not compromise the larger mission.”

Similarly, Chris, Campbell Soup, discussed how one of the primary roles within research and development is a focus on quality and promoting that quality through new products, recipes, and manufacturing processes. Craig shared that they will, at times, partner with marketing or their consumer insights group on new or innovation projects. He said then he and his team are responsible for “making sure we're using good food...
science principles and food safety principles, designing the recipe so that we can make a margin on it, we can manufacture it, it is safe for consumers to eat, but more importantly, it's delicious for consumers to eat.” With an acute focus on the quality of their offerings, Chris says his team will partner “with a team of master bakers and chefs to kind of instruct us on the design,” and reach out to legal to “make sure that we are adhering to all regulations involved.” He said, in addition to managing all these moving parts, they are “constantly looking at how we improve our recipes and processes and packaging to increase profitability for us, without sacrificing quality and taste and flavor for the consumer.” What these examples highlight is that quality is the responsibility of many work teams, and collaboration and formal processes ensure that quality is assessed from multiple perspectives. In turn, quality products foster quality brands, allowing for a more transparent link between the two.

Additionally, despite operating in vastly different industries, Airbnb similarly spoke about the importance of quality in the service they provide. David, Airbnb, spoke to one of the most important elements of the Airbnb experience, matching. In other words, how does Airbnb match the right host with the right guest? How do they foster a “good fit” between the two? David says, “We don't help them to do that right now on the website, but in the next two to three years we will. It will increase the number and quality of belonging experiences if we do better matching between hosts and guests.” The idea of matching, however, strikes me as a slippery slope, one that calls into question the buckets within which guests and hosts might be placed in, or, more importantly, not be placed in.
If brought to fruition, the decision-making process seems to reside more centrally with producers, perhaps robbing guests of options they might be interested in. Furthermore, David alluded to the idea that Airbnb was interested in the quality of an entire trip, not just the accommodation piece of traveling. Meaning that, “the moment you leave home to the moment you come back home, you should somehow experience, via Airbnb, a feeling of belonging. They should never, ever have to feel… all the horrible, alienating, and loneliness that [traveling] creates.” However, he buttons up saying, “I can't say more than that because it's confidential.” Vance, TBWA Worldwide, sums up the way in which the quality of the product experience is not only vastly important to global stakeholders, but moreover, is seen as a transparent part of a brand’s existence in saying,

There's no more lipstick on a pig, really. Don't ask me to do an ad that really, fundamentally, is just not a good fit… I think you have to think about what product behavior and experience you have, and what behaviors [you have] as a company, and how you show up in the world, then your communication and your brand will build on top of that, but not the other way around.

Interestingly, quality was defined in a nuanced way across the three companies in this study. Some of my global informants equated quality with a local or “familiar” experience, ironically, in what I refer to as the process of small advertising in a global matrix. Small advertising is advertising by a large company on a massive, global-wide scale, but is meant to feel small, local, familiar. This is an outshoot of glocalization techniques in that my global stakeholders believe that consumers want small brands; that
consumers believe that “small” is a better, higher quality product/service – because it is “closer to home” in some familial way. Global advertisers are creating against this connection in nuanced ways. For example, Chris, Campbell Soup, said one of the biggest trends in the global food industry is what he called small food. In other words, companies like Campbell Soup are trying to create brands that consumers can feel a familial connection to—a connection that feels smaller, closer to home. As previously mentioned, he used the example of Starbucks launching a cherry tart flavor, but not just any cherry tart—it was a Michigan cherry tart that people know and love. “Companies are designing against that connection.” As Chris sees it, “Small is going to be better in terms of brand innovation.” In tandem, Vance, TBWA Worldwide, talked about small advertising in terms of authenticity, which was a word often uttered by my global informants. To many of them, quality was necessarily equated with an authentic user experience. He said

The more people… the more sort of authentic, the less sort of, just sort of overly, just the last sort of assumptively arrogantly big and massive and global and follow me ness of advertising that you can smell a mile off. The more authentic somewhat locally driven reinforcing of my actual experience with that product. I think for me that's just huge.

He exemplifies his opinion by saying, “if I see a beautiful film for a brand…and it touches me, and then I go use it and it's a horrible experience…it's actually counter to what I just saw in the film, I actually hate your brand even more…” As the previous excerpts show, the global stakeholders who participated in my study, were adamant that
without a quality product or service to promote, their campaigns would be meaningless. Moreover, their work in global promotion would be undermined by a subpar product experience. Although at times, I felt that my informants took my call to opportunistically promote the excellence of their work, I also felt a strong sense of commitment in what they were saying.

The second way in which quality emerged as an important driver for global cultural producers is through quality of advertising content. Having a quality product to sell was only one part of the equation; the other part was ensuring that the graphics, the media weight, the celebrities, and the campaign itself was also qualitatively excellent in every way. For example, Rhett, Basketball Category Market, Under Armour, when asked what he’s learned in the process of going global said “the speed of social media is incredible. It's engaging but also…you need to be ready because you have to have so much content because the velocity at which consumers are consuming it is very, very rapid.” He said consumers get bored, but “bored is probably a strong word, but they just kind of move on. You got to continually have something fresh and something new that keeps them engaged and wanting to come back.” Patrick, also part of Under Amour’s Basketball Category reiterated Rhett’s point saying

We're going to have to really become a content company because the way you advertise now is not, here's product, here's person, here's why you should buy it. That linear way of doing things is not the same as now. It's like people don't want to be sold to. They want to engage in stuff and discover cool things in an organic
manner and to do that it's going through content. People want to be stimulated. It's imagery. It's the story. It's why Instagram is growing so fast because pictures tell a thousand words. You have a picture and then some story that's riveting, then you connect. That's what we're learning. Content can be passed and shared.

Tyler, Under Armour, said the same thing about what will make them excellent advertisers in the future. He said, advertisers can't underestimate the importance of having compelling content in the brand or marketing side, “because as hard as you work, as much as you grind it out, if there's not the products or the story that's compelling and of interest, actually adding value to consumers, you're only going to see so much success.” The excerpts are only a few of the many ways in which Under Armour underscores the need for quality content. What will continue to be a major hurdle for global advertisers, however, is keeping pace with consumer demand for a constant stream of content and, in turn, being able to marry quantity of content with quality content in ways that resonate with consumers. Balancing the two will likely add to the already exhausting workload and pressure placed on global producers.

While my informants from Under Armour spoke more broadly about quality content, others, specifically Sean, a consultant to the executive team at Campbell Soup, spoke in more defined terms about how creativity or creative leadership can inform quality content decisions, making global producers more successful. He says he thinks “right-brain thinking” in which he describes as “being much more attuned with the creative, being more discerning and understanding, free to being able to synthesize ideas,
and less, sort of, maybe, P&L-type, financial driven” will allow for a better understanding of consumers, ideas, and creative concepts. He says, “I just call it creative leadership. ...It's just becoming more and more evident that people who can think big, synthesize, understand the right-brain-creative-type skills is becoming more and more prevalent, and more and more needed.” Paolo, Airbnb, also shared that campaigns are built for many things, and a quality film or advertisement doesn’t necessarily need to build brand awareness. Instead, quality advertising content can showcase a brand’s values, which in turn attract “like-minded” consumers. He says

We get this very polarized point of view on the latest campaign where some people absolutely love it and they buy in and some people think it's just the most terrible thing they've ever seen and they'd like us to get over ourselves, like stop it. That's sort of what we want. A lot of other companies can rent homes. VRBO rents homes, Homeaway rents homes. We're really focused on creating a global community and being clear about our values as a community because that's something that no one else can replicate.

What my conversations with these informants underscore is that the days of spray and pray communication approaches have been retired in favor of quality work that is fundamentally different than pre-social media eras—advertising work of “quality” must now showcase the values of an organization, of its employees, and of its place in society. Because consumers are increasingly open to defining their authentic self in relationship to brands (Banet-Weiser, 2011), advertisers can coopt that intimate space by selling stories
that resonate with the inner core of consumers. Although researchers have long argued the validity of corporate values and citizenship (see Moon, Crane, & Dirk, 2005), apparently, consumers are either uninterested or ambivalent.

Moreover, from the perspective of a global producer responsible for bringing in and appeasing global clients, Vance, TBWA Worldwide, says

I do think that traditional sort of pitch that might give me a couple hundred million dollars and I'll go build your brand has to be so much more target connected now with the true, real product experience and the community and how you actually feel when you use the experience because there's just information out there about brands now. There's too much sharing going on. You can't create some false notion because it can be belied within 30 seconds of going on the internet. It's a very different model from before. Before it was like I got a product. Let me call an agency. Let's tell those guys that smoking's cool. Off you go. That's *Mad Men*.

What Vance so articulately points out is that good storytelling in a global matrix, is the perfect amalgamation between a quality product and quality brand content. Moreover, global producers assume that consumers are eager to hear and buy in to good, quality stories, but they also want the chance to participate in the storytelling narrative. The creation of quality advertising and branded content then must not only be constant, but must also allow audiences to take part in spreading the brand story. Social media and other interactive platforms have given consumers a voice in a capacity previously unseen.
This signals to the industrial production community not a loss of control, but perhaps more of a “loosening of the reigns.” However, it also signals that maintaining a strong grip on quality processes is paramount. With utmost transparency, the quality of a product must match the story global producers sell consumers, and global producers seem to recognize that. What they are unsure of is how and at what speed technology will shift the way stories are told.

**Stories Propelled by Technology**

Although technological advances in advertising have received significant press over the past 30 years (De Mooij, 2003; Deuze, 2005; Hill & Dhanda, 2002; Jay & Roy, 2012; Kreuter, 2013; Millington, 2015; Snoad, 2012; Thomas, 2015; Serazio, 2013), the global stakeholders who participated in this study believe that telling stories and having the right platform to do so are inextricably linked. While technology was previously viewed as a platform or a “tool” that helped advertisers reach their target audiences, technology is now the space in which advertising wants to live. Instead of being the road that advertising travels on, technological innovation is now the advertiser’s destination.

While technology or technological advances were sprinkled into almost every answer and discussion I had with my informants, what will be discussed here are chiefly the ways in which technology propelled storytelling on a global scale. I’m doing this because the impact of technology on advertising has been covered by many researchers and practitioners across a variety of outlets and disciplines (see Katz, Davis, Sparling, & Chen, 2015; Nielsen, 2012, Serazio, 2013). What is most relevant, and most noteworthy,
from this body of work, is how global producers of culture believe technology impacts their work, their relationship with consumers, and the future of their work. First, I will discuss the connections between storytelling, technological advances, shifts in media, and a global consumer culture. Second, I will share the ways in which global stakeholders are grappling with, and in turn, harnessing the resources afforded to them by technology in creative and revolutionary ways.

**Storytelling, media shifts, and the global consumer.** It’s no surprise that digital technologies have fundamentally changed the relationship between advertisers and consumers. Vance, TBWA Worldwide, says that previously there may have been a gap between brand and product, but that now

Technology is opening up people's ability to criticize and share. The Yelp thing about ‘they were rude’ in the restaurant or even the Uber about ‘I'm giving you a 4.9, not a 5.’ The feedback loop, the socializing, the commenting, I think that they all now mean that brand's behaviors are very tied in with product behaviors.

As previously mentioned, O'Barr (2008) says that there is more interactivity between producers and consumers in the contemporary global advertising environment than ever before. In addition, consumers have more choices than ever before – choices about which ads to watch or read, what brand environments they want to participate in, and to what degree. Vance says, “it's not *Mad Men* anymore…. We’re just so far from that now because I think the distance between the product experience and the brand is narrowed because of pure information.” What Vance, and many other informants, spoke about were
the ways that digital technologies and advances in technology have changed the nature of their work. Consumers expect dialogue and that the trend is just beginning (O’Barr, 2008). Although technology has given rise to numerous and constantly emergent opportunities to engage consumers, it has also posed remarkable challenges. In fact, the topic of technology often came up when asking informants about the challenges of advertising to global audiences.

The first challenge is related to the rise of new or emergent technologies and the slow decline (not death) of traditional media. Brock, Under Armour, reflects on how commercial dissemination has changed due to the rise of digital technologies. He says

When those first commercials came out, there was no YouTube. No one was streaming videos, so it was SportsCenter. It was ESPN or nothing, and we had to crack through that clutter, because that was our only avenue. Then the web started picking up a little bit, and we could be a little bit more nimble and take on the bigger guys without necessarily matching their media buy. That, coinciding with product placement on field and in movies and commercials, seemed to be kind of a launching point and the perfect storm for the marketing of the Under Armour brand.

He continues, indicating that advertisers, along with other practitioners and scholars, have been talking about digital for a long time, but the conversation continues because industries don’t always adapt as quickly as consumers. Brock says “it sounds like a cliché, but it really takes a long time to actually make that leap, and your seeing finally
the TV and digital spends really flip flopping in terms of the size of the budgets.” Jason, Global Advertising Services, Campbell Soup, admitted that he and his team spend a lot of time talking about the role of each channel. He queries, “what is the role of TV? What is the role of online video? What is the role of online banners? What is the role of social? What is the role of email? What is the role of the in-store environment?” He says there are “lots of conversations around what is the role of each medium, what is the role of each channel, and how do those roles come into play as they go through the decision-making cycle.” As an example, he says, “TV may be relevant for an individual at one stage of their decision-making, but it may not be very relevant, definitely not relevant, when they are driving on their way to the store.” I asked Jason if there was a time and place to advertise on television, to which he replied, “Yes, 100%.” He continued saying that based on recent data he’s seen, “most people would agree that while consumption of digital media has increased, consumption of television has not decreased.”

Mary Meeker compiles a now highly anticipated annual report on the state of the internet, the future of digital, and it confirms Jason’s data, although it varies by region. Meeker’s report breaks down daily distributions of screen minutes across several countries and the four biggest consumer markets of television are the United Kingdom (148 minutes), the United States (147 minutes), France (134 minutes), and Kenya (132 minutes) (Thompson, 2014). The countries who watch the least amount of daily television include China, Vietnam, Italy, and Thailand, all watching less than 90 minutes a day. However, Thompson (2014) claims that “Television is the new fireplace,” since
84% of Americans are doing something on their smartphones or tablets while watching TV, a confirmation that screen time is indeed up overall.

Brock, Under Armour, agreed with Jason’s take on the role of television saying that although all three companies seemed incredibly focused on digital and its potential for storyselling, Under Armour, uniquely positioned as a sports brand, has an enviable relationship with TV. Live sports, as it turns out, continue to be some of the only programming that consumers don’t like to watch after the fact. Brock says, “you can't say that TV is dead, because there are so many places in sports where live, televised sports are so important, and they're not watched on DVR. We say TiVo-proof. For us, there is a moment for television.” But, Brock continues saying that TV is only one part of their strategy. He said TV is vital to their brand, but “you have to be able to speak to athletes and connect with them visually and through other opportunities and other vehicles.” Specifically, Brock shares, that for them it’s YouTube. “Just the videos that were user-generated was so big for us, because so many of them would be featuring our product doing athletic feats. We were able to get that earned media impression by what we were doing just naturally and organically.” By “earned media” Brock is suggesting that YouTube videos featuring their products received a lot of publicity, or free exposure to the brand, in a way that is very different from owned media, like their website, or paid media, such as a targeted ad on Facebook. What has made advertising in the global marketplace so complex, as the previous examples show, is that while new and emergent technologies have increased in significance, traditional media, like television, have not
necessarily declined. Likewise, even though there seems to be more of a focus on earned media, the significance and relevance of paid and owned media has also not declined.

In fact, the shifting landscapes have just provided advertisers with more channels and challenges, and essentially a more pressing workload. One of my informants, an advertising account manager with experience at three advertising agencies in New York City, said when she moved to Droga5, initially, it was a great fit. She said because it was a small agency she got to be a part of everything. But as many small agencies do—they began taking on more and more responsibilities like social media work and “a lot of cool experiential and digital stuff.” In reflection, she said,

That's the expectations even from clients now: to be able to do everything... and the response rate is almost real-time needed. But advertising is a big ‘fake it 'til you make it’ industry... It's just extremely stressful and unnecessarily stressful at a lot of times, and a lot of taking on more work than what you should really be able to do because if you don't say ‘yes,’ somebody else can say ‘yes’ that has the capability to do it cheaper and faster. It's just exhausting.

As the previous quote underscores, the onslaught of digital, like websites, and social, like managing a Twitter account, brought changes to the agency-client relationship in major ways. Namely, the rise in digital has put more pressure on producers to respond to consumer and client requests in almost real-time. This arrangement adds to the already exhaustive amount of responsibility placed on global producers.
These technological shifts also brought about changes to the way advertising and marketing departments were structured. Yuan, Global Advertising, Campbell Soup, said that over the last ten years, “marketing has become so much more complex, much more fragmented, and the rate of innovation is so much higher.” She said previous production models employed specialist groups internally. However, Yuan reflects, “when digital became a thing, these digital teams would be sometimes almost in their own silo. They would be given a digital budget and then they would go do digital things…and they were very splintered off from the main organizations.” Over time, Yuan says, as digital matured, “you see a natural migration back of more mature digital tactics like websites and probably large parts of social, large parts of digital advertising, back into the normal toolkit of an average brand marketer…” She says the current model is more of a collaboration; “Digital is part of everyone's life.” Digital, as Yuan emphasizes, is now part of every global stakeholder’s toolkit. What seemingly should also be in every global stakeholder’s toolkit is an acute focus on mobile technologies.

The second challenge related to the fast-paced, ever-changing technological landscape within which advertisers must operate is how to incorporate mobile in a meaningful way that resonates with consumers. One of my informants at Airbnb suggested that no company is doing mobile well right now, yet almost all of my informants, when asked what are the biggest trends and challenges impacting your work on a global scale mentioned mobile. Patrick, Under Armour, for example, said, “I might be being extreme, but TV is not going to be the way you reach consumers any more. It's
your personal mobile device. That's will become your total source of communication” and Vance, TBWA Worldwide argued that “the democratization of the smart phone” has the power to bring together seemingly disparate communities making their realities seem “not that different.” And, perhaps most poignantly in regards to utilizing mobile technology for global advertising, Paolo, Airbnb, says

Mobile, in general, I think is something no brand has cracked in a really significant way and when you go even more global to think about how an audience uses mobile, it's more complicated…In the next five years, we may be doing mobile advertising that's every bit as compelling as a Super Bowl ad. That's kind of the benchmark, right?

To equate the cultural significance of a mobile ad with a Super Bowl ad seems like a lofty reach. Yet, technology has changed the way consumers view media channels, and, in turn, the potential of advertisers to deeply impact consumer behavior. Mobile also has a more significant relationship with global advertising, as opposed to domestic advertising, because as Mark, marketing executive, Campbell Soup claims, mobile, social—anything digital—has no geographic or national boundaries. Thus, the platform is there to unite and mobilize global audiences in ways previously unseen, especially because mobile is more likely to travel with people than any other technology (so far). For example, if a natural disaster happened in Portugal, Campbell Soup could send mobile ads to every person in their ecosystem making them aware of their efforts to provide non-perishable food items for displaced victims. They could do it in real-time,
with the potential to receive real-time feedback. Continuing, Mark, Campbell Soup, says any time a new connection point becomes available, “we have to figure out how to use it, but we have to figure out how consumers really want it and want to use it.” Mark says, China, for example, is the “furthest along in ecommerce and food, and so we can actually see that trend and how that could play out in Western markets in the coming years. The ability to connect mobile-y is just going to be exponential in its growth.”

It would seem as if my informants believe that mobile, and other digital technologies, will be morphed into larger branding strategies, just as digital strategies have become more normalized as part of an advertising or marketing brief, rather than operating in their own silo (as Yuan mentioned above). According to the Pew Research Center (Poushter, 2016), the percentage of adults that report owning a smartphone has risen significantly over the last two years, particularly in emerging and developing economies, which went from 21% in 2013 to 37% in 2015. By comparison, smartphone ownership in the United States stands at 72%, with those between the ages of 18-34 coming in at 92% in smartphone ownership. In fact, smartphone ownership, has skyrocketed globally with countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Chile, and Brazil increasing their ownership by over 25% (Poushter, 2016). Even Sebastian, Under Armour, points out what economists predicted, “I would say digital/mobile - that is huge. You have countries who are altogether skipping land lines and going straight to wifi. You look at India and Asia and it's all mobile.” To that end, harnessing mobile and other
resources afforded by technological advances is one of the ways that advertisers want to
tell their stories.

Yuan, Campbell Soup, touches on the link between mobile and a global consumer
culture saying

Mobile devices are the way that a large part of the developing world will access
information, access the Internet, access people. I think there's going to be large
parts of the world that skip over desktops… I also think it's going to be a much
more mobile-device-driven environment.

Yuan says these shifts change a lot about how they go to market.

Except for maybe the mobile providers themselves, I don't think marketing, as a
discipline, has fully internalized what it means that they're starting with that so-
called small screen or so-called first screen, when you design for other things first
and you next try to make it work in mobile.

Oscar, Campbell Soup, also spoke about the shift to “digital first,” meaning that smaller
markets and developing economies are skipping some traditional media and technologies
altogether. He says, “they're digital first… consumers are watching and interacting with
media and advertising in their own way of choosing. Not necessarily the way we
typically push it out.” He says the way that brands connect with consumers is
fundamentally different as a result of a “digital first” shift. When entire nations and
cultures skip old technologies, thus organically filling the gap between the “haves” and
the “have-nots,” the challenges, and opportunities, for global producers grow even broader.

But, herein lies the challenge for global stakeholders. They understand that technology is a powerful driver. They are aware that consumers are interacting with screens more, not less. They understand that mobile and smartphones are revolutionizing the space within which ads live. They also understand that the democratization of the smartphone has the capacity to mobilize global audiences in real-time, in ways previously unseen. But, advertisers, and other global stakeholders, are still questing after how to use all the technology efficiently and effectively, how to make sense of all the data, how to cut through all the clutter, and how to tell stories that make us all feel more human, not less, despite staring at a 4-inch screen.

**Storytelling in the digital age.** Global advertisers, like every other person with a stake in conducting global business, are trying to predict how consumers will engage with technology five years down the road. Paolo, Airbnb, says they are constantly trying to keep up with social media, to develop content specifically for certain platforms, to stay ahead of “what’s next.” For example, he says, “We looked at data the other day about the amount of video that's consumed vertically. How do we get in front of that? How do we produce content that I can view like this that still looks good instead of like that?” Since Paolo was one of two interviews conducted over video conference, Paolo shows me what he means by flipping his phone horizontally and vertically. Furthermore, global stakeholders suggested that they are not necessarily interested in advertising on various
media, apps, and channels, but instead seek to be a destination in and of itself. Instead of being the road that advertising travels on, technological innovation is now the destination. This section considers the way that global producers are grappling with technological innovation and underscores the impact this could have on global consumers. First, I will explore the ways that data is driving advertising decision-making, and second, I will dissect the innovative ways that data, information, and technological advances are providing new opportunities for advertisers, and in turn, allowing global stakeholders to harness the resources afforded to them in creative and revolutionary ways.

A reoccurring theme in my interviews was how to manage “big data.” Essentially, technological advances have provided platforms, channels, and unlimited resources for collecting data about consumers. This includes everything from your location, email, gender, and age, to details about what websites you visit, how often, and what purchases you are making. All of this, times millions of customers, results in massive amounts of data. My informants mostly agree that this can be incredibly useful information, but not all are convinced that the information is manageable or that they are currently doing a good job transferring all the available knowledge into advertising campaigns. Uriah, Global Social Media, Campbell Soup, said his biggest challenge is data rationalization, meaning that it is often an arduous process to marry the numerous data sets an organization might have – from owned, to purchased, to third party data sets. “Saying oh well this behavior that happened over here with this individual is actually the same person that opened up this email, is actually the same person on our social property. That
rationalization process is really challenging,” shared Uriah. The benefit to global stakeholders of wading through massive amounts of data is the ability to predict behavior.

When asking Uriah if he considered his approach very data driven, he said “Absolutely. 100% is data driven.” However, he admitted that “the data’s only valuable to me as it relates to a better understanding of the audience.”

On the other hand, global stakeholders constantly ask not only about how to handle massive amounts of information, but what are the ethics in doing so. Yuan, Campbell Soup, says “[Data] is both the holy grail of marketing and also like the nine levels of Dante’s Inferno, right? We could know everything, but should we know everything?” She suggests that there will be a breaking point at which “consumers either cry foul or demand compensation for their data.” She claims it’s “a fascinating yet thorny subject.” Yuan discusses the implications of data for various global markets saying

If you look globally, there’s a very big spectrum on the issue of data privacy, Europe being the most conservative, and much of the developing world being the least conservative, but they don't necessarily have the tracking mechanisms yet… China has a different attitude towards intellectual property altogether, so will that big audience, as they come online, will they be more or less willing to participate in this sort of quid pro quo of data for information? Then in many parts of the world, information has a very strong political aspect to it, right? The Arab Spring, all the rights. It becomes a political issue and not just a marketing issue.
Uriah also shared concerns about consumers’ relationship with data and how he predicts that relationship to shift in the coming years. He suggests that the way consumers think about their own personal data is “going to change pretty drastically.” Anecdotally, he said:

Think about the first day when Gmail came out, everyone was appalled at the idea that Google was scanning your emails and serving up ads to you based on that. Everyone forgot about it the next day and they’re like ooh, I get 8 gigs of data for storage? Wonderful. What they realized without realizing it was in that moment, they put a value on their data.

Uriah points out that this has been happening for quite some time, but previously the exchange has been more implicit. He claims that we have reached the point in time where data and technology are all converging “in such a meaningful way” that global stakeholders have to have that conversation explicitly now. “Before it was an implicit thing and you just forgot about it, you tuck it away, you feel comfortable. You’re selling your data. That’s exactly what we’re doing is we’re selling our data.” In tandem to cultural shifts in perceptions of data collection and usage, political and legal shifts have brought about an onslaught of data privacy laws. In the 1970s only 8 such data privacy laws were passed worldwide, but the eighties saw 13 such laws added, the nineties ushered in 21 new laws, and the 2000s and beyond have ushered in over 60 more data privacy laws worldwide from places like Malaysia, Mexico, India, and Peru to France, Finland, Germany, and Cyprus (Greenleaf, 2013). However, regulations on digital advertising in Europe are considered to be more rigorous than those in the United States.
(Delo, 2012), despite the Federal Trade Commission trying to wrangle in advertisers in a digital age (Serazio & Duffy, forthcoming). The uptick in these kinds of legal directives suggests that data has become a premium commodity worthy of legal action. Despite legal hurdles and other obstacles, however, the global stakeholders in this study believe that data is a valuable resource, and those who can lure consumers to share it and then, in turn, decipher it, can unlock some of the mystery in consumer habits and shopping preferences.

On the other hand, Jared, Global Advertising, Campbell Soup, reflects on what is lost when data is so prevalently driving advertising decision-making. He says that, “one of the issues that we in the industry will confront is how to balance data, science with art and creativity. That will become an increasingly bigger issue because I think it’s fairly easy to fall into believing that following the numbers and the data will lead to nirvana.” When it comes to selling a story, however, the ability to predict the kinds of stories that audiences might like and where they’d like to find them clearly has its advantages. To that end, it begs the question—how do global stakeholders respond when the story consumers want isn’t the one you’re selling? It is with this underpinning that I turn to the ways in which global stakeholders are attempting to harness data in meaningful, creative, and revolutionary ways for consumers.

Aiden, Brand Creative, Under Armour, said that as a result of data and technology, “advertising is getting smarter.” He said, “it's becoming more targeted, more interactive, including in traditional formats where you see, for example, billboards that
actually respond to who you are, your movement. There's an element of kind of smart advertising that we're seeing more and more of.” Much of this “smart advertising” is a result of the dynamics of convergence. Henry Jenkins (2004) explains that, “Media convergence is more than simply a technological shift. Convergence alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences. Convergence refers to a process, but not an endpoint.” His summation of convergence most certainly informs the way that the relationship between global advertisers and their audience has shifted due to media convergence. Moreover, global stakeholders are attempting to capitalize on media convergence in meaningful ways, namely through digital customization, geo-targeting, and by owning and managing their own media channels.

Global stakeholders believe that technological advances and stronger consumer insights have provided them with an opportunity to customize or personalize the brand experience for consumers. In fact, Rhett, Basketball Marketing Category, Under Armour, argues that advances in social media and technology can provide brands like Under Armour with an “almost one-on-one relationship” with consumers. He says, “It's something that I think that really is going to help with the deep engagement aspect of it, so that you can almost, I think personalize, but that's probably a strong word because there's billions and billions of people.” Similarly, Uriah, Campbell Soup, argues that the ability to provide digital customizations for consumers provides audiences with an “almost intimate” experience. He explains saying,
What I mean by that is, you can now target and react based on specific attributes as opposed to just to consumer segments. I could say, well great, if somebody likes vegetarian recipes and they came from this other page on the website, well then I'm going to serve them this…. You can create dynamic experiences truly for the individual based on their attributes. We hyper-focus on audience, but the key of the platform is to be able to serve any audience.

And lastly, when asking Trent, Footwear Development, Under Armour, about trends in the global marketplace, he said “customization with whatever.” He said this could include graphics, pictures, or material choice—specially designed for each individual consumer. He said, “I see, basically, a combination of mass production for the individual, the custom shoe, but more than just that. True, individualized shoes…”

Trent also shared that one of the ways that Under Armour could enhance the brand experience through customization is by bringing manufacturing back to the United States “in a large way.” I asked him to explain. He said, “You reduce your carbon footprint, because you don't have to be shipping things all over the world. You're closer to the market, so you gain back a month to six weeks of transit time when you're shipping stuff all over.” Despite the obvious ploy in green marketing, Trent continues saying, in turn, “You're closer to the consumer, so the consumer can become part of the process.” He shares how it might play out in saying

If you've got small manufacturing facilities in locations that can service a metropolitan area, you then have the opportunity to really expand the consumer
experience by bringing the consumer into a showroom and saying, ‘here's all these material palettes, what kind of materials do you like?’ and we can show them the colors, and then they can even ... There's going to be automation, they can push some of the buttons to get the machines running themselves.

Through these comments Trent unveils how consumer eagerness to participate might fundamentally shift production processes and the way brands engage and advertise to consumers. It is precisely this eagerness—not shifts in legitimate power—that is deeply impacting cultural production processes and the ways in which global stories are told.

One of the outshoots of the ability to personalize content and products for consumers on a global scale is the rise of geo-targeting, made more prevalent specifically by mobile phones and wearable technologies. In fact, xAd, a mobile advertising company and “global leader in location intelligence that drives retail sales,” announced in May 2016 that they have seen 100% year-over-year growth leading to a $250 million run rate for the company (xAD Achieves, 2016), which indicates the shift by global stakeholders to invest and partner with companies that can leverage mobile technologies. Geo-targeting, made possible on a broader scale thanks to the democratization of the smartphone, has a strong appeal to global stakeholders. For example, Sebastian, Under Armour, says that for quite some time “the ability to target has been getting better and better with digital coming on. With geo-targeting, we can target the weather and if it rains we can put around messaging for water rip gear.” Going one step further, Sebastian says
that while the ability to target based on demographics and psychographics and behaviors is great, the ability to geo-target and advertise situationally “is huge.” Continuing, he says

We know more and more at what times of day things are happening, at which particular times a day people are working out or running. Is there a particular message that resonates? We know the weather where they are, is this message about heat gear or cold gear or storm?

Sebastian says that the international piece of geo-targeting is not without is challenges. He says, “International collaboration [is] the hardest piece - to physically get one country to use an asset... Where do we store the images and video? How do they access it and how do we know who is accessing it? Rights management and the whole bit. That is all increasing dramatically.” Under Armour knows first-hand about the challenges in international collaboration as they recently acquired their third mobile app, Endomondo, a Copenhagen-based social network devoted to fitness with 20 million members - mostly outside the U.S. (Townsend, 2015). Bloomberg reported that Under Armour’s “digital ecosystem” now encompasses more than 130 million users (Townsend, 2015).

The other geo-targeting piece that goes beyond mobile is wearable technology. Although the late 2010s ushered in smartwatches, in 2014 only 10% of Americans said they had a wearable device (Bolton, 2015). At this point, Fitbit was the “poster child for a new wearable generation,” and while the Apple Watch was announced in September 2015, its launch date wasn’t until April 24, 2015 (Bolton, 2015). However, by late 2015, according to Forrester Research, 1 in 5 Americans owned or has used a wearable piece of
technology (Bolton, 2015). In fact, 2016 has been deemed the “year for wearables” a prediction toward mass adoption (Bolton, 2015; Grand View Research, 2015).

Likewise, Uriah, Campbell Soup, predicts that the biggest consumer trend is going to be the “quantified self,” referring to wearables, mobile technology, and “things to be able to track us and be able to target us and for us to learn about ourselves.” He continues saying, “It kind of goes back to that data piece - as we learn more about ourselves, we then have the option to be able to say to an organization, ‘well, if I tell you more about myself, can you give me something better in return?’” He said wearable technology has the most impact to provide companies and brands with an invaluable data set, and he thinks consumers might just go for it.

I’ve already got my DNA test, I have a wearable. I wear things when I go run so I can get stats. Now if I combine all of that, that's a really valuable data set to a lot of brands and companies. If I tell them that great, okay I've run this many miles a week, well then maybe Under Armour wants to send me better deals because they know I'm going to buy more clothes or Nike wants to send me more information on their newest shoes. That's relevant to me and I might be willing to share that in exchange for some value. I think this world of quantified self, I think that's going to be the most interesting space.

What Uriah, and others, have suggested, is that “wearables” will extend far beyond a smartwatch. In fact, Grand View Research (2015) predicts the wearable technology segment, to include wrist-wear, eye-wear, foot-wear, neck-wear, and body wear to
balloon to an estimated worth of over $70 billion by 2022, a significant increase from the $5 billion the sector was worth in 2012. To that end, global stakeholders believe that the adoption of technological advances early and swiftly can boost the quality of their data, can allow them to engage consumers even more “intimately,” and can lastly, provide a new platform for fostering that precarious relationship.

In an attempt to control the flow of information in an interactive age where brand managers are often times at the mercy of active, swift, and loud consumers, brands are now motivated to own their own media channels. As emphasized earlier – global advertisers want their brand to be the destination; they prefer not to advertise while consumers are on their way somewhere else. Sebastian, Under Armour, reflects on a producer’s view of new technologies saying that when social media first came on the scene, they were “completely panic stricken!” He reflects saying, “Wow, consumers can talk about us? The transparency! Now, from an opportunity perspective, I can have a two-way dialogue with my consumer and have them then share that message with their networks. It's huge.” It is this opportunist perspective that has driven producers to own their own media channels.

Rhett, Under Armour, suggests that there will be more and more companies purchasing or creating their own “owned media channels and really driving people to that versus maybe whether it's on broadcast or somewhere else, but getting people to come to you solely will be highly important.” He says Under Armour has their own apps, their
website, and a plethora of their own social network communities. He says, for him, it’s imperative to really take

a look at those communities and those ecosystems so that we're communicating to them. Right now, we have 130 million people within our ecosystem through the various companies that we own, and if you think about that, being able to advertise to a community of 130 million - that's huge. For us to be able to leverage that, and maximize that, and monetize it, I think that's another great way for us to speak with consumers.

Under Armour’s “ecosystem” is made up of the UA Record App, which is their in-house fitness tracking app; MapMyFitness, purchased in November 213 for $150 million; MyFitnessPal, purchased in February 2015 for $475 million; and Endomondo, a European fitness app, also purchased in February 2015 for $85 million. It also now has more than 160 million users (Epstein, 2015). In what appears to be a follow through of the information I received from Under Armour global stakeholders, they announced a new product called the Healthbox in January 2016. The Healthbox, priced at $400, includes three devices, the UA Band (wristband), UA Scale, and the UA Heart Rate chest strap (Epstein, 2015). Together, these devices can be easily and swiftly pared with all of the apps in Under Armour’s ecosystem. Oh yes, they can also be pared with Under Armour sneakers too. While Under Armour is setting out to “be” the fitness technology brand, their approach has broader implications for other brands, suggesting that making crucial connections on and off line not only has the potential to expand a brand’s
ecosystem, but even more so, those ecosystems becomes a place where users spend more time.

Despite the behemoth nature of Campbell Soup, they too are working on building out their ecosystem, perhaps even more formally – although not nearly as swiftly as Under Armour. Uriah, Campbell Soup, discussed the role and relevance of innovation labs at Campbell’s. The basic premise of the marketing innovation lab is “to help the organization find new and interesting ways to connect with our audiences.” He admitted that traditionally there was a strong focus at Campbell Soup on paid media, but the intention of the lab is to really drive non-paid media approaches to connecting with consumers. He said,

*That might mean, is there an interesting way for us to quickly and nimbly create compelling content such as videos? Is there an interesting way for us to maybe dynamically serve up different content based on audience or things that I’ve talked about before? Is there an interesting technology out there that we could leverage to optimize our content or channel mix?*

Uriah admitted that the lab has only been around for a year, but that there is a dual focus on consumer engagement and new, emerging technologies. He said the labs have Google Glass, Amazon Echo, and other forms of virtual reality like Oculus Rift. “We’re going to play around with those technologies to see if there’s a compelling experience we can create to provide value to the audience that then ultimately drive that high value call to action for us.” In an apparent follow through of the information Uriah shared, Campbell
Soup announced in October 2015, a Campbell’s Kitchen app, or skill, as Echo functions are known, ready for launch on the Amazon Echo (Wohl, 2015). The Echo’s voice service or “personal assistant,” Alexa, “suggest[s] recipes to Amazon Echo users based on preferences, the weather and what’s trending.” (Wohl, 2015). Ironically, Campbell Soup is one of the first consumer or food brands on Echo, and even more telling, the company admitted that funding was pulled from other marketing innovation projects to invest in the Amazon Echo skill “quickly” (Wohl, 2015).

What these examples exemplify so clearly is that the amalgamation of digital customization, geo-targeting, and wearable and emerging technologies indicate how technology is increasingly informing producers’ relationship with consumers. The implications for producers are vast as “surveillance becomes more ubiquitous, automatic, anonymous, decentralized, and self-reinforcing” (Parenti, 2003; p. 78). Even more so, the current landscape suggests that technology is an instrumental element in the storytelling puzzle, not just because stories exist in digital form, but because the technology is just as much a character in the story as anything else. Technology propels stories because we can carry it everywhere – even in our pockets, because we willingly share our data – like when we are near an Under Armour store, or because knowing more about our health, our emotional state, and our well-being – might mean selling our digital soul. (And, the data would suggest consumers are okay with that.)

In closing, storytelling is a deeply ingrained part of life – in all facets from personal to political to professional to emotional, and so on. Likewise, storytelling has
always existed in advertising. What the previous sections underscore is that storytelling will continue to be an invaluable driver for brands in a global matrix. First, *story selling* provides rich opportunities for global stakeholders, but also commodifies “authenticity” for the highest bidder, or the most lucrative audience. The environment, however, poses a risk to global stakeholders who might mistakenly tell the stories consumers want, rather than stories that align with their corporate values. When consumers are given too much voice, global stakeholders can be caught in the middle acting as a liaison between culture and the corporation, rather than a steward of the brand.

Secondly, while I suggest that partaking of the Kool-Aid loyalty is a dangerous act, it certainly has its benefits from an organizational culture perspective. I asked Tony, Campbell Soup, at the end of our conversation if this is what he thought he’d be doing when he first started out. He laughed and said no, we thought he’d be working in a restaurant. But then he said, “But I love it very much…I do want to have a legacy and be more impactful. This is an area I can be impactful. I love the idea of possibly saving the world, you know?” When employees feel valued and “buy in” to the mission of the organization, it can be a powerful propellant uniting an organization into future endeavors. Organizational culture, in fact, is a strong indicator of a firm’s “innovativeness and performance” (Matzler, Abfalter, Mooradian, & Bailom, 2013). On the other hand, even broaching the topic of corporate loyalty draws critics on both sides of the fence, as the merits of corporate loyalty are hotly debated. The winner in the corporate loyalty partnership tends to be the organization who wins by getting
employees’ energy, intellect, and time. What this research has reveals, and I believe, is that a fine line exists between a healthy corporate loyalty and a Kool-Aid loyalty, and while global stakeholders are trying their best to story sell to consumers, their brand is trying to story sell to them.

Lastly, any discussion of global advertising would be remiss without the mention of technological advances, specifically mobile, social media, and big data. What is fundamentally different about global advertising’s relationship with technology is that technology used to be the channel through which advertising flowed and now technological innovation is the destination. Advertisers are moving beyond demographics to sophisticated data tracking techniques that let advertisers know what you like, when you like it, how often, and to what extent. The irony lies in the fact that consumers seem open to exchange. Consumers are willing to provide Under Armour with a lot of data to learn more about their own health. Consumers are willing to provide Campbell Soup with information on their preferences in exchange for “personalized” recipe suggestions. What producers are concerned with, however, is how far consumers will go and when will they demand better or more compensation for their data?

The issue is compounded on a global scale when audience preferences and patterns vary amongst cultures and regions. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the implications of a data determinist perspective on the production of advertising campaigns and other pieces of promotional culture. What might be lost in an era where data drives all the decision making? How can global stakeholders mesh the creative and that data in
meaningful ways? How might data dupe global stakeholders? And, what are the implications for consumers? The next chapter finds answers to these questions by exploring the delicate relationship between global producer and global consumer.
CHAPTER 6

THE GLOBAL CONSUMER: THE GLOBAL TUG OF WAR BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND AUDIENCES

Tony is an integral piece of Campbell’s Global Culinary Baking Institute. In fact, he’s one of the leaders, which means that he and his team take on an enormous amount of responsibility for cultivating flavors, tastes, and new products for Campbell Soup. When it comes to thinking about Campbell Soup audiences, Tony shared the thought process behind one of Campbell’s most iconic products—chicken noodle soup. Historically, Tony says, chicken noodle soup is created with “white, perfectly square, dices of chicken breast.” He claims this is how American audiences expect to see their chicken noodle soup. As a chef, however, he muses “Where’s the dark meat or the side meat, or the other parts of the chicken?” In contrast, he says, the rest of the world eats much more than “choice pieces.” He says if you go to a place like Thailand and order chicken noodle soup it might have a coconut base or contain eggplant, and its likely going to be filled with shredded dark meat. “The rest of the world doesn't eat filet mignon, and chicken breast, only the choice pieces, they eat everything because they're poor countries and it's the soul food of their country.” Tony says he is constantly wondering what global audiences “expect their chicken meat to look like, and how big a piece of carrot should be, or if there should be onions.” Part of his role in the Global Culinary Baking Institute is to figure out the points at which global audiences converge in their food preferences, and
also ways to marry the varying points of divergence in a manner that satisfies a diverse set of consumers.

As the previous example reveals, global stakeholders strive to understand their audiences on the most intimate level possible—what their values are, how they think, what times of day they are most likely to snack and why, and what motivates them, along with a litany of additional insights. Global producers, in essence, want to know their audience. Yet, this strategic imperative is constructed on the belief that “the audience” is a real set of individuals, rather than a broad set of characteristics that may or may not hold true for a large portion of that audience. While Airbnb believes they can craft a travel experience that “feels like home,” Campbell Soup believes they can predict global food trends, and Under Armour believes they know what future athletes desire, it has long been recognized that “media audiences are industrially created and economically incentivized categories” (Duffy, 2013, p. 69). Ettema and Whitney (1994) call the process through which global producers and media institutions categorize and define audiences as “audencemaking.” The process of audencemaking is so tangible and important to global stakeholders that almost every global company engages with a robust consumer insights group. Most of my informants recognized the “value” of their consumer insights team when it came to defining and strategizing their core and emergent audiences; presumably, with the assumption that these insights allow global stakeholders to do their jobs better. For example, when it came time for Airbnb to create a new logo, or a semi-optic, for their rebrand, Beau, co-founder, DesignStudio, said they conducted broad testing of the actual
logo across a global network to see how global audiences would respond to it. “What were the connotations attached to the logos? Did it make them feel good? Did it make them feel bad? The color. How did the color make them feel? Did it make them feel warm? Did they feel cold?” Beau said, in some cases about “70% of people said it made them feel good or it made them feel warm.” This insight was powerful enough to stand for the company, its employees, and the entirety of its brand messaging for global audiences.

However, cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1958) said, over sixty years ago, “There are in fact no masses, there are only ways of seeing people as masses” (p. 57). And while scholars, media critics, and academics (Ettema & Whitney, 1994; Duffy, 2013; Turow, 2013; Williams, 1958) continue to point out the fallacies and shortcomings in this way of thinking, global stakeholders are industrially bound to this process, due in part to historical processes, but secondarily to the permeating nature of existing mental schemata, or ways of thinking, in which they must, as a product of their job, synthesize large amounts of information. However, the relationship, or perhaps more poignantly, the partnership, between advertising producers and audiences has shifted in powerful ways thanks to the proliferation of interactive platforms, Web 2.0 capability, and sharable content. These transformations are no doubt impacting the way advertisers and other global stakeholders conceptualize their audiences. The nature of the partnership between global stakeholders and global audiences can be explained in two related, but distinctly variant ways. This chapter first examines the way that global stakeholders think about
and characterize their core audience segments, and challenges related to doing so on a
global scale. Second, the lens shifts slightly to exploring the ways in which global
stakeholders depend on audiences—the ways in which their sheer survival is linked to
their need for audience cooperation.

**What Global Stakeholders THINK About Audiences**

The way that global stakeholders talk about, think about, and attempt to engage
with their audiences has shifted dramatically over the past several years as more
advanced tools and tactics have come on the scene to tell producers more about who their
audience is (Duffy, 2013; Turow, 2013). As mentioned in the previous chapter, big data
is driving much of the decision-making, and in turn, providing new insight on consumers.
However, to congeal storytelling and big data in a meaningful way, Airbnb says they
think about audiences more in terms of their *values*, rather than their demographic make-up.
Paolo, Head of Advertising, Airbnb, says they target a “mindset” rather than a certain
age or income level. “It was more like these are people who fundamentally believe the
world's a better place when we share and when we travel. There are people who want to
explore the world to develop a greater sense of who they are.” David, Head of
Community, Airbnb, sent me a video of a Ted-talk-style presentation he made internally
to the Airbnb community. In it he discussed at length the way an Airbnb traveler feels, or
in other words, what the Airbnb audience member desires when they travel. “Everyone
wants to belong, and when they're traveling, ideally people want to feel like they belong
there.” He said traveling can be exhausting and “dehumanizing.” Traveling, says David,
“involves going from feeling like a stranger, dealing with all the travel shit…all the alienating, dehumanizing experience that is modern travel, to flying and all that crap. Being a number, to feeling like you're at home in someone else's home.” David says an Airbnb traveler is different than other kinds of travelers; in someone else’s home an Airbnb traveler can relax, “feel psychologically comfortable, and in a safe space, to be the self you normally would be at home.” In contrast, David says, “Whereas if you stay in a hotel that doesn't happen. You are some version, or diminished version of yourself.”

Relatedly, Oscar, Global Category Development in the Global Biscuits & Snacks division, Campbell Soup, said that when launching products globally, they seek to attach products to core human emotions. In other words, as touched on in the previous chapter, global producers seek out an audience’s values and then attach a product to that value. He says in the case of Goldfish they attach the product to “the connection between a mother and a child, the growing independence of the child while they still want to be connected to mom. The mom wanting to have them experience a little bit of independence but wanting to take care of them.” Oscar shared that this emotional connection is strong in the United States, but consumer insight testing revealed this mother-child moment crosses cultural and geographic boundaries; it’s “universal.” Because they believe their consumer insights to be an accurate reflection of their audiences, Campbell Soup then intentionally advertises and brands globally against this connection.

In contrast to the approach of Airbnb and Campbell Soup in which they conceptualize audiences in terms of their value system or a mindset or a moment, Under
Armour shared a more targeted, specific way to conceptualize their audience. Underpinned by the work of Frank (1998) and Gloor and Cooper (2007) that examined the propensity of advertisers to identify and create a young, hip counterculture to target to, known as “cool hunting,” Under Armour targets “elite athletes.” Rhett, Basketball Category Marketing, said Under Armour is geared toward the “urban basketball player. The elite of the elite high schools, so somebody that is going to be playing in the NBA someday…” Sebastian, Global Brand Marketing, Under Armour, summed up the entirety of his role as, “making athletes aware of Under Armour and excited about Under Armour and ultimately bring them into the brand.” Patrick, also a marketer in the Under Armour Basketball Category, says they are targeting “kids 12 to 17” because they see themselves as “the brand of the next generation. It's that young kid who's growing up, who's clearly a basketball fan, enthusiast, and player—an elite level player.” Patrick says they target the top competitors, elite high school athletes who are being highly recruited because people look up to him. “We know that kid influences other kids on the team who are maybe not as good, but part of the team, as well as that younger kid who's looking to go to high school, who sees what that kid is doing, and what he's into.” Gloor and Cooper (2007) contend that if an advertiser or marketer can accurately pinpoint the trendsetting crowd or catalysts of cool, they can better cater their advertising to attract these kinds of consumers. To further ensure they attract the “right” kinds of consumers, Brock, Global Brand Creative, Under Armour, goes one step further saying, “We have athletes that we speak to and that we connect with. …We don't really say we have consumers.”
Under Armour is precisely utilizing cool hunting tactics by associating their products with the world’s top athletes. Even their verbiage and tone funnel into this particular mindset or approach to conceptualizing and thinking about their global audience. Some of their celebrity athlete endorsers include superstardom such as Stephen Curry, Tom Brady, Misty Copeland, Michael Phelps, Lindsey Vonn, and Cam Newton (Under Armour, 2016). Despite seeming to demonstrate a clear understanding of their consumers, the dynamics of a global consumer culture shift as swiftly as they form. Patrick, Under Armour, says they must be “surgical” in their approach. “Having a guy like Stephen Curry helps because he’s clearly a guy that can potentially go head to head, with him as a leading MVP in the NBA right now. His impact and influence is something to be reckoned with.” But, Patrick also says,

We don't have the ability to be every and anywhere. Where we show up, we want to make it count. We're like sharpshooters as opposed to having an Uzi and just spread ourselves everywhere. We got to be real ...and take out key targets versus racking up a bunch of bodies. That's our challenge because we're not as big. It's also a benefit because we can be more nimble and more responsive too at the same time. It's about turning what would be seen as a challenge into a positive and just keep chipping away.

Under Armour’s “sharpshooter” approach seems to have taken further effect on a global scale with more international athletes and teams now sponsored by Under Armour to include Dutch native and Manchester United superstar, Memphis Depay; Professional
Chilean Football Club, Colo-Colo; English Soccer Club, Tottenham Hotspur; Professional Mexican Football Club, Cruz Azul; and Japanese Soccer Club, Omiya Ardija (Under Armour, 2016).

Tyler, Head of Global Communications, Under Armour, who spearheads much of the PR work for Under Armour, building relationships with journalists, editors, bloggers, and “sneaker heads,” said one of the biggest challenges that he will face in the next five years is keeping a pulse on the influencer. He claims it’s not just traditional media outlets or editors who can “create awareness and momentum around a product or a new brand or just content in general.” Tyler says “there are people who follow people on Instagram who maybe don't fit into a traditional media box. They've got huge followings. You're starting to see brands tap into them more in a way that you haven't before.” Turow (1998, 2006, 2011) suggest that the quest for cool is a never-ending journey, except now advertisers are more advanced and more aggressively targeting the most desirable consumers.

“Knowing an audience” means being able to predict what they want from the products they purchase and how much they can spend. Advancements in tracking capability, SEO optimization, and available software have given advertisers even more insight into their audiences (Duffy, 2013). One of the big trends that Campbell Soup is working on addressing is what Chris, Global Research & Development, calls “simple food.” He claims their audiences are looking at the ingredient list on the products they sell, and “A.), They want to be able to recognize everything as something they might
have in their pantry. B.), They want fewer ingredients. They want to believe that they could have made this product [themselves.]” Chris says the value for audiences is two-fold: “The value proposition to them is that (A) they didn't have to go out and source all the ingredients and (B) they didn't have to spend time baking it or cooking it or preparing it. That's the value equation for folks.” Chris claims that part of his work in the global research and development group is to help create products against this small food connection. However, Tony, an executive in the Global Culinary & Baking Institute, cautioned that they don’t want to come off as too “edgy” or the “front runner” because, “we don't serve the one or 10% of America, we serve the 70 or 80% of America, or the world even. We want to be careful...we just want to make food that our consumers will love and understand.” Tony’s comments suggest that up to 80% of American audiences aren’t interested in trying “edgy” flavors—again, calling into question what might get lost or minimized in an age of convergence, assuming that just because audiences have previously preferred traditional flavors that they are not interested in new food trends or unique flavors. For global stakeholders, however, being able to predict audience behaviors, knowing what they’ll “love and understand” is part of what makes the industrial production of advertising so exciting.

Relatedly, Trent, Footwear Development, Under Armour, helps marketers and advertisers create against a specific price point, or a price threshold for different consumer markets. In other words, they design sneakers and sell them at a price they
think that a particular audience is willing to spend. He says the first thing that happens is called line architecture.

Line architecture is basically you're determining the line. You're saying I need three or four shoes at this low-end price point. Then, I have shoes at the medium price point that will be for team players. Then, I got some other price point where it's going to be for the flash players. Then you've got your ... Then I have this that I need for my college, then I'm going to need this for my signature players.

Trent says that in the beginning it’s just a blank silhouette, and so the team asks themselves what space the shoe is supposed to fill. “What stores are you going to sell it in, how many do you plan to sell, what are the key design characteristics or technologies that you're looking for, and most important is, who's the consumer for that shoe for that price?” As global stakeholders at Under Armour suggest, knowing your audience means knowing how much high school kids can afford, or how much the parents of high schoolers are able to shell out for that year’s sneaker. Uriah, Global Social Media, Campbell Soup, says, “There’s an interesting nirvana where we have these fully filled out 360 degree views of our audiences and it’s such a wonderful pipe dream, but there are lots of steps before we get there.” Suggesting the “ideal end stage” for global stakeholders, he says the marketing and promotional teams that do their research well, collect insight accurately and broadly, will eventually be able to predict consumer behavior. “We actually can start to say, well people like this are going to want this kind
of product or this kind of content, content used very broadly. We’d be ready for that before they even know they want that.”

The ways in which Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour conceptualize their audiences are quite distinct; yet together they signal how aggressive, worldwide approaches to research, product creation, data rationalization, and “cool hunting” may require a reconfiguration of audience segmentation when thinking about global consumers. Furthermore, what seems abundantly clear is that despite having access to more information on consumers, rationalizing that information into a “360 degree nirvana” requires the collaboration of many teams, often on different continents. Additionally, one of the biggest challenges to understanding global audiences is having a solid grasp on local insight and the local competitive environment. Chris, Campbell Soup, shared that every brand marketer has a horror story of when they had a brand that they thought could do really well in a new market because it was doing so well in other markets. “Then it was launched and they either didn't have the right insight to position the brand and product in a way that fits with what the consumer wanted or they didn't have a good read on how aggressive the competitive environment was.” Chris said breaking into new international markets is typically “very aggressive…you're going up to someone else's sandbox. They'll put on a very aggressive attack against you when you come into a new market.” To that end, global producers, whether targeting a mindset, a high school athlete, or predicting what you want to make for dinner tomorrow night, believe they can know their audience—even if it spans continents. Shifts in audience
construction are indeed tied to larger transformations in how audiences shop (online, overseas), how audiences view brands (the more global the better), and how audiences view themselves in relation to brands (inviting them into intimate spaces).

Unequivocally, global brands are constructing audiences in new ways, with new tools. How then, do brands cultivate an audience—an unabashed, supportive community of followers from all over the world?

“Cultivating a community” was a resounding theme among the senior global producers I interviewed. In particular, there is something about the word “community” that allows global producers to conceptualize audiences differently. An audience has historically been viewed as mostly passive, but even more contemporary definitions of audiences, in which they play a more active role, still place them in a less powerful position. A community, on the other hand, means everyone has a vested interest in the brand’s success—global producers and audiences alike. Aiden, Brand Creative, Airbnb queried, “How do you build a work today that you know will be meaningful and sustaining, and build not only brand awareness but brand love over time?” Brand love goes beyond brand loyalty. And love, ideally, goes both ways. To cultivate an audience then, means audiences need groomed, need to know why they should participate in your community, and most importantly, what the community stands for. Paolo, Airbnb, said, “A lot of other companies can rent homes. VRBO rents homes, Homeaway rents homes. We're really focused on creating a global community and being clear about our values as a community because that's something that no one else can replicate.” To that end, what
global producers are asking themselves, as Aiden pointed out, “How do we create advertising or marketing work that reflects the authenticity of that community of people?” Cultivating a community starts with your core audience—the people who really buy into your product and your brand and the impact of the quality of their experience spreads out from there until a robust community has matured.

One of the ways that Under Armour has set themselves apart from their competitors is by tapping into the youth market in an aggressive, “grassroots” nature. Under Armour was founded in 1996 and for many years embodied “the start-up” mentality through what they call “grassroots programs.” Their first ten years, in particular, were characterized as “pre-social media.” (For reference, Facebook was founded in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006.) Brock, Global Brand Creative, says of their core audience, that athletes are transient. Brock says pre-social media, information about their products “literally spread word-of-mouth from locker room to locker room. Sports is one of those things where [information travels] every level down from professional to high school kids, their travel league teams to summer league teams. It's so viral.” Of course, he is referring to viral before actual internet virality. Continuing, he claims that sports jobs are equally as transient: “Whether it's an equipment manager from Georgia Tech talking to the Atlanta Falcons, who then takes a job with the Oakland Raiders, who then is in charge of four other guys who get other jobs, and they're like, "Oh, you've got to try this Under Armour thing." Because so many athletes were talking
about Under Armour products, major retailers like Dick’s Sporting Goods and Sports Authority “had to come to us and say, "Hey, we want to carry your brand."

Patrick, Basketball Category, says they rely heavily on their grassroots division to help spread awareness of their brand. For the basketball division that means that Under Armour “partners” with high school, AAU, or club travel teams.

As we partner with the better high schools in the country, part of those deals is that they get product. We look at that as a marketing tool because they act as ambassadors to showcase the product. Kids are looking at what they're wearing, ‘that's pretty cool, where can I get that?’ The same thing for the AAU teams because they travel especially during the summer throughout the country. They're hitting east coast, west coast. If they're on a prominent program, you're getting a lot of eyeballs.

The ethics of this kind of grassroots programming have been called into question. Writing for SB Nation, a highly respected sports media brand, Andrew Sharp (2011) claims “For a solid 25 years now, AAU basketball has been a cesspool for corruption and deceit and conflicts of interest.” News about corrupt coaches and programs, backroom partnerships between high school teams and college coaches, along with promises of college basketball jobs for mentors, coaches, or “handlers,” are no surprise to those familiar with the AAU circuit (see Korman, 2015; Sharp, 2011; Thamel & Evans, 2015). Korman (2011) writes
The machine is greased by money from shoe companies… It’s true: Nike and Under Armour and Adidas are sponsoring these programs in hopes that top players will wear their shoes in college – by committing to a school they have an apparel deal with – and that the very best will want to sign long-term endorsement deals when they get to the pros.

Under Armour’s marquee athlete, Stephen Curry, a NBA superstar and the 2016 MVP, hosts basketball camps during the summer in which coaches and campers receive upwards of $2,000 in free Under Armour gear each (Kleps, 2014). While high schools and teams often debate the merits and drawbacks of inking deals with shoe companies, many are persuaded by monetary donations to athletic departments, free shoes, workout gear and travel bags (see Kleps, 2014).

On a more personal level, a contact of mine is a coach for an elite high school basketball team in the greater Philadelphia area and for the past five years he has received at least $350 in free gear due to contracts with Under Armour and Nike, depending on the year. He is an unpaid assistant coach. The players get about 50% more gear, including two pairs of high-end shoes. The ones Trent talked about. There was so much leftover gear last year that all the coaches’ wives were given a logoed track jacket valued at over $75. To that end, it begs the question as to what kind of influence shoe companies should have on athletes and what age is too young? Not all high school basketball players have the benefit of playing under coaches of integrity who have their best interests in mind; in fact, many do not, and I have witnessed “handlers” in action, first hand, riding the
coattails of young, naïve 17-year-olds, who are desperately in need of a mentor, an adult of character. And, despite college basketball long being considered a “dirty” game (Kleps, 2014; Thamel & Evans, 2015), there are thousands of ethical programs who view their partnership with a Nike or Under Armour has “purely for the kids” (Kleps, 2014).

The paradox comes in when the elite teams get the gear and the sneakers for free, but the mediocre teams are asked to pay upwards of $100 per person for the team shoe that year. This doesn’t include any other gear that the elite programs get like form-fitting undershirts, backpacks, socks, shorts, compression gear, warm-up suits, hats, sweatshirts, and the list goes on. Rhett, who works directly with Under Armour’s basketball line, says sponsoring teams and events though grassroots programming “allow us to speak with [players,] and interact with them, and develop relationships. That’s an important aspect for us as well.” By sponsoring only elite high school or AAU programs, however, Under Armour stays true to their “surgical” focus on top-tier athletes, subtly making sure their dollars aren’t spent on undesirable audiences.

Knowing a global audience, separating the “desirables from the undesirables” (a construction that has underlying implications for both producers and consumers) seems like a Sisyphean quest, yet global producers are eager to learn more about their communities. Vance, International Accounts, TBWA Worldwide, claims that building a global community is not as complex as many people think. He says the individual cultural interpretations of advertising campaigns or various product offerings are less important if consumers buy into the brand promise. “People just go, ‘I get it, I believe
that even though I might say it a little differently, I might articulate it a little differently and it might look a little different, I believe in that.’’ What is more, a well-defined audience is a powerful ally. “The community is awesome because it can protect you but I think it needs to be nurtured. It needs to be helped, curated. It needs to be encouraged with good storytelling.”

In sum, while the ways in which Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour attempt to define and delineate their audiences are distinct; together these examples represent nuanced shifts in how global producers conceptualize their audiences. Despite creating content and product on multiple platforms for a variety of different kinds of people, the approach seems rather similar to a domestic one, except the pool of potential community members is more disparate and complex, operating in different time zones. However, what is compounded on a global scale, in this kind of conjuring up of global audiences, is in fact the dilution of cultural difference, the suppression of nationalistic heritage, the subjugation of precisely the reasons that make traveling to other side of the world so exhilarating. Of course, data and storytelling play a big role in differentiating campaigns, yet the foundations on which these campaigns are created or the ways in which audience categories are conjured up vary little despite massive audience size and great dexterity in cultural habits, behaviors, and preferences. And while it seems that a robust consumer culture is drawn toward a global lifestyle, a cross-cultural connection, it would also appear that there’s a lot at stake in this type of arrangement. As Vance ironically summarized, “Everybody's going to follow the teenagers in the end anyway.”
In essence, what Vance is underscoring is that despite the fact that the “global consumer” is made up of endless variations of ethnicity, race, background, preferences, and behaviors, old habits die hard, old ways of constructing audiences continue to persist despite widespread criticism pointing out the fallacies in this way of thinking. The industrial bound thinking of global producers permeates the way they imagine their work and the audiences they seek to “know” in such a pivotal way that considering other models, schemata, data rationalization, or ways of constructing audiences seems unfathomable, out of reach, or altogether unnecessary.

**What Global Producers NEED from Audiences**

Coined in 1992 by Henry Jenkins, the term “participatory culture” has evolved from its original intent to describe the cultural production and social interactions of fan communities to a concept that now refers to “a range of different groups deploying media production and distribution to serve their collective interests, as various scholars have linked considerations of fandom into a broader discourse about participation in and through media” (Jenkins, Green, & Ford, 2012, p. 2). Jenkins, Green, and Ford (2012) suggest that previous work on participatory culture has stressed the distinction between the receptors (audiences) and the media creators (producers). As such, Deuze (2010) points out that historically media production has focused on political economy or the sociology of industry practices, while media consumption was relegated to an investigation of how audiences make meaning from media content. However, the continuous blurring of the real or perceived boundaries between producing and
consuming media, have arguably given way to a more interactive media environment (Deuze, 2010; Duffy, 2013; Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins, Green, & Ford, 2012). Today’s media environment is at once top-down and bottom-up integrating the brightest creatives with a mass of amateurs (Deuze, 2010).

Mark, a global marketing executive, Campbell Soup, talked about the rise in providing participative brand experiences for audiences. “The brand experience or consumer experience is much more around understanding where consumers are on their consumer journey and how they want to engage. So first, it's much more open. It's much more participative.” Like Serazio’s (2013) guerilla marketing techniques, Mark says, “It's much more I would say targeted but doesn't feel targeted, meaning there are people who just don't ever care about a Tim Tam, right? There are other people who would love it if only they knew.” To that end, a reverberating theme in my interviews with global stakeholders was their need for audiences to participate in their never-ending brand awareness initiatives. My global stakeholders didn’t frame it as a need, per say, but instead folded their comments in discussions around how to best reach and appease brand ambassadors, how to find opinion leaders or tastemakers, how to respond to the growth of user-generated content, how fast-paced their online and digital communications must be, and more broadly, the rise in influence of the consumer.

Rhett, Under Armour, claims that there is the potential for everyone to be a brand ambassador. He says, however, “You have to be careful in terms of how you cultivate those relationships with your consumers.” When it comes to social media, Under
Armour, in particular, keeps an open line of communication with “sneaker heads.” “You have [the] sneaker-heads [who are] really into the sneaker scene and making sure that we're partnered with them, that they have our information so they can fully talk about it and really help leverage any stories that we might have.” Not dissimilar from Duffy’s (2013) assessment of fashion blogging culture and its potential impact on consumers, bloggers, or in this case sneaker heads, because of their distance from the marketplace are often times “considered to be more authentic sources of information” than paid journalists (p. 101). Under Armour, in addition, has an entire entertainment division, which tries to “forge relationships with music labels or artists, what have you, and use that as a way to get products [to] taste makers or influencers.” A recent example, Under Armour provided branded product for and partnered with filmmaker Ridley Scott’s, *The Martian*, in what was hailed by some as a “very realistic brand partnership” (Beer, 2015). Under Armour created additional video content using the actors from the film depicting them working out, preparing for their mission to space, in Under Armour gear (Under Armour, 2016). Patrick, Basketball Category, Under Armour, sums it up saying, “They're just cool people… who dictate culture. The whole thing is about getting product before anybody else. That creates excitement, makes them feel special.” Global producers understand this process well and thus, forge advantageous partnerships giving sneaker heads, celebrities, and/or taste makers information first on new product releases or inviting them to exclusive press events. This, in turn, spreads their content far and wide.
Brand ambassadors are not necessarily celebrities or part of the media or entertainment industries; in fact, many of these ambassadors emerge from a company’s core audience. They emerge either organically or more strategically often times because of their influence on others, or their unique position as an opinion leader. Patrick admits that one of the reasons they target elite athletes is because their peers look up to them. “We target the top competitor, an elite guy who's a 16-year-old high school kid who's being highly recruited, and people look up to him. We know that that kid influences other kids.” Vance, TBWA Worldwide, claims a devoted community can act as brand ambassadors “by word of mouth, by product experience, by shared community, will spread the word as much as they need to. That brand will be their community.” Non-celebrity, in the traditional sense, opinion leaders, influencers, or brand ambassadors such as sneaker heads, culinary bloggers, or devoted, social-media-savvy consumers, can be a powerful tool for global producers, especially in a landscape characterized by digital advancements that have made the sharing, or spreading, of content across geographic and cultural boundaries easier than ever.

Together, these examples might seem to suggest that the position of the audience has increased in power, having more influence than ever before. Jenkins, Green, and Ford (2012) suggest an emergent model of participatory culture has come to fruition in which content is circulated, rather than distributed. In other words, media has historically been distributed, and thus, controlled by the commercial entities producing and selling it. However, a shift has occurred propagating a hybrid model in which simultaneous top-
down and bottom-up dynamisms result in a circulation of content, reconfiguring how content is shared across and among cultures “in far more participatory (and messier) ways” (Jenkins, Green, & Ford, 2012). Because audiences play such an integral role in the circulation of content, I believe their position in the producer-consumer relationship has changed—making them a necessary piece of the production process because they can provide credibility and disseminate cultural products, like advertising campaigns, around the globe in ways that brands simply cannot do.

A prevailing theme amongst the global producers I interviewed was the increasing power of the consumer. Brock, Under Armour, mentioned that “the YouTube sensation” brought about an opportunity to engage with fans in a way they had never fully experienced. “The videos that were really user-generated was so big for us, because so many of them would be featuring our product doing athletic feats. We were able to get that earned media impression by what we were doing just naturally and organically.” Micah, Account Manager, Chiat/Day, who worked the Airbnb account, said that part of his role is keeping a pulse on audience commentary via social media. He claims they are constantly making decisions about whether to engage and respond to consumer feedback on social media. He said they “don’t put much stock in one bad tweet or one bad article,” but they do, at times, step in to clarify their message if they feel it is being misconstrued.

Sean, Director Marketing Capabilities, Campbell Soup, claims “The consumer has more power and, yes, they are more connected. They can go online and find answers, or speak to each other. As that becomes more prevalent, as a leader you need to have a
better grasp of that.” Additionally, Beau, a principal, DesignStudio, when asked about what will be the biggest trend facing global brands in the next five years said Consumers are going to demand more from the brands that they buy into. A brand can't just make a good product; they also have to be a good company. And that goodness will be measured in things like how they treat the world, how they treat their staff, how they treat their supply chain. There's going to be an increasing layer of transparency around all of those things. They can't just say they're better they've actually got to be better because there's not going to be anywhere to hide.

The so-called shift in power to audiences has manifested through social media and other interactive, digital platforms. Uriah, Campbell Soup, recounted social media’s arrival saying, “As [social media] started to ramp up, people were all really excited because they’re like, wow, great, I can go on Facebook, I can build a community, I can interact with them for relatively little expense.” What is more, Brock, Under Armour, suggested that “nowadays” social media is the only channel in which audiences can get a real glimpse into an athlete’s opinion. “It's really the only time you truly get an athlete's opinion, is when it's spur of the moment, and it kind of gets out there, and then they have to retract a Tweet or pull it down.” Brock claims that when it comes to traditional media, the athletes are so well coached and “so well maintained by their teams, by their leagues, by their agents that you don't get a true look into the athletes. Now, with social media there’s still that opportunity to get a really unfiltered quote or feeling from them.”
What these examples reveal is that despite maintaining creative and production control of advertising content, global producers concede that their work is only as powerful, and as culturally relevant, as the consumers who share, spread, or circulate their content. The almost border-less, interactive global consumer culture provides a platform for sharing content almost anywhere on the globe, a distinction of significance from domestic campaigns. And while my global informants did not hint at relinquishing control of the creative and production processes, their framing of consumers suggests that they view the relationship as a partnership more than ever before.

A timely, burgeoning example of this (unequal) partnership is made no clearer than through the rise of the sharing economy. PwC economist, Robert Vaughan claims that, “The sharing economy is a result of long-term megatrends colliding together, driven mainly by advances in technology, source scarcity, and social change” (Carson, 2014). In fact, financial firm PwC estimates that global revenues from the shared economy are likely to hit $335 billion in 2025, up from $15 billion in 2014 (Carson, 2014). Beau, DesignStudio, said “The sharing economy kind of came out of nowhere over the last 5 years and completely changed the way that people interact.” The impact of the sharing economy has sent tremors through various industries, shaking up old traditions, industry leaders, and companies. In that vein, Beau remarked “Relaying that back to Airbnb, they now have 1.5 million listings on their website…I'm not sure that anyone in Hilton 5 years ago said ‘Guys, we've got a real problem here because the sharing economy is about to come.’” Airbnb, with a valuation of $25.5 billion, is one of the pace-setters for the shared
economy, and in turn, has ushered in shape-shifting approaches to the way producers think about audiences.

Vance, TBWA Worldwide, suggested that, “The way in which brands in the 21st century are building themselves is actually somewhat different than maybe even a decade or so ago of building.” He claims that Airbnb, in fact, is “the very best example” of a “uniquely local global brand” because “it's unbelievably community driven... It's not about creating some brand that’s separated from the people that use it, or even separated from the product experts.” Vance reiterated the importance of having a transparent brand experience because “there's too much sharing going on.” A now well-respected organizational communication concept is the idea that when leaders let employees feel like they are part of the decision-making process, they have a more vested, stronger commitment to the decision outcome (Miller, 2014). Perhaps part of the success of the sharing economy is that companies, such as Airbnb, as well as Uber and Lyft, those that make use of sharing a commodity, give users a chance to contribute to the brand experience in a powerful way—by actually having a say (in a listing or through their car service). “A cultural brand,” is how Micah, Chiat/Day, described Airbnb, because they “can respond to cultural events in the moment,” allowing them to “excel in the sharing economy.” The irony is that in a sharing economy, commodities get shared, but so does information, and that information is not always favorable. Airbnb, for example, has recently come under fire for “widespread discrimination,” in which hosts are 16% more likely to block people with black-sounding names from renting their rooms or homes
(King, 2016; McPhate, 2015). When it comes to building global brands, companies are engaging with global audiences on new turf, and with a fervor previously unseen as consumers are now holding brands more accountable than ever before.

In closing, on some level, the powerful rise of audiences is indeed accurate. Jay Rosen (2006), in an article entitled, “The People Formerly Known as the Audience,” suggested that while audiences used to be on the receiving end of expansive media systems, they have now graduated from simply wanting media when they want it, “to wanting it without the filler, to wanting media to be way better than it is, to publishing and broadcasting [themselves] when it meets a need or sounds like fun.” Indeed, the previous examples seem to suggest that global stakeholders believe that their work is now more wholly informed by audiences then in previous junctures. Even the core of what a brand or company stands for seems to be informed as much by audiences eager to make their mark as by founders who have poured their entire life into starting and growing a business, who might seemingly have a better sense of what the company is all about.

Brock, Under Armour, said when it comes to global promotion, the power of the community is “second to none, and it can supersede any kind of paid media that you would ever go with an agency to buy.” These, and other comments, seemingly suggest that “the community” is powerful, despite not exerting their power in obvious ways. Furthermore, as my global stakeholders see it, audiences—while not overtly in control—have more influence than ever on brands, on campaigns, and on the production process.
On the other hand, Duffy (2013), in her recent investigation into the changing audience dynamics in the magazine industry, claims the overall impact participatory culture has on producers is “rather modest in terms of power distributions” (p. 113). That assessment would also depict the power distributions in this project. She suggests that despite a reconfiguration of their audiences, due to technological and economic shifts, “sweeping changes” to the media landscape and professional spaces “are exaggerated.” Turow (2006) suggests that audiences are mostly being manipulated—some knowingly and some unknowingly, in that whatever audiences share is then turned into fodder for the next campaign. For global stakeholders, the more audiences share, the better their campaigns will be received. Even more brilliant, when audiences can “feel” like they contributed to a campaign, they can buy into the corporate ideology more fully and with a greater zeal. It’s apparent to me, then, despite brands wielding creative control, that although the power has not shifted to audiences, the game has changed. The rise of interactive and participatory culture has changed the rules. To that end, despite wide participation by audiences, creative control, particularly on a global scale, still lies firmly rooted with seasoned global producers. They just need audiences to do their part as well.
CHAPTER 7

THE GLOCAL APPROACH: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This dissertation is about glocalization. About the “what,” the “why,” and the “how” of global stakeholders and advertisers who localize and adapt global brands. I’m fortunate to have the fine works of other media and cultural industry scholars to draw upon as I sloughed my way through this research. In particular, scholarship on the transitional and effervescent nature of media work in the past decade has done much to inform my work (see Banet-Weiser, 2011; Deuze, 2007; Duffy, 2013; Serazio, 2013).

But, particularly in reflection on the meaning of this work, I understand that just as global producers see their work as boundary-less, so too do I struggle to find the boundaries in this work. Advertising that literally, not figuratively, but actually spans the globe—where does its impact end? How can I begin to articulate the ripple effect of such a powerful force? This is not to suggest that this work is so pivotal that it should be read and discussed widely, but rather the shifting dynamics of capitalism, neoliberalism, culture, emergent economies, technology, and advertising move so quickly and stretch so broadly that a number of processes, consumers, and producers will experience the effects of the powerful ripple of global advertising. So then, what are the effects, or the implications, of this work?

First, at the beginning of this research project I asked what approaches do global stakeholders, and advertisers, use to diffuse product information and branding to local audiences? As discussed in Chapter 4, diffusing branding with a glocal approach means
concurrently conceptualizing audiences as mostly similar to better activate a truly global campaign and all the while paying attention to certain cultural nuances in order to better resonate with a variety of regional audiences. The way in which global advertising producers conceptualize their work suggests that they see more advantages in highlighting less. In other words, syphoning campaigns down to “core human universals,” choosing not to translate global taglines with lots of reiterations, and lumping large groups of people together, despite seemingly significant cultural differences, allows global stakeholders to capitalize on points of convergence. While standardization is not a new concept to global advertising (see Ford, Mueller, & Taylor, 2011; Levitt, 1983), the complexity of the process has compounded significantly due to the rise in technological advances, interactive audiences, and global consumer culture. What this project reveals is that the glocal approach, the ability to manage two binary, yet codependent, constructions of how campaigns, or cultural messages, are conceptualized and diffused, is so powerful because it gives even the most globally minded producer leeway to let regional markets adapt campaigns as they see fit, nuancing the approach for audiences whose behaviors diverge across the globe.

Next, my interviews underscored that despite the democratizing effect of technological advances and the free flow of information, global producers found it imperative to have the right partners in place, meaning the right team of global leaders, the right global agency network, and the right local and regional offices, in terms of leadership, resource allocation, and location, in order to effectively diffuse information
and branding as needed. The infrastructure to run a global advertising campaign must reflect the complexity of the environment in which it flows. Ironically, after the conclusion of my interviews, Under Armour inked a deal with Droga5, their first ever agency of record (Richards, 2015), signaling perhaps their realization that a global advertising agency has the capacity to handle cultural message diffusion in a more efficient manner. Furthermore, despite seeing formal global partnerships as a significant advantage, many global stakeholders also saw tremendous value in nurturing interpersonal relationships. The paradox to the global diffusion of advertising campaigns seems to lie in the polysemic nature of the work, which prompts producers to cultivate their own global mindset while simultaneously looking for opportunities to optimize both their formal and informal networks. In addition, my global informants felt that navigating the complexities, policies, cultural sensitivities, and idiosyncrasies associated with diffusing a global brand was impossible without taking time to nurture, develop, experience, and grow one’s one global mindset. This ability to simultaneously have an awareness and openness to cultural difference and points of divergence while also exhibiting a proclivity for synthesizing big ideas (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002), however, is constructed differently based on a cultural producer’s individual professional and personal experiences and their place in the organizational system. What can be problematic is when global producers make production decisions based on their own experiences, and the outcomes don’t reflect wider audiences, or worse, don’t include entire regions, audiences, or groups of people. Consequently, global production
processes, cultural products, and eventual cultural messages are all deeply subject to these global mindsets.

The second question I asked was how do the aforementioned processes shape the creation and distribution of cultural products? As discussed in Chapter 5, storytelling, or *storyselling*, has a wide and strong ripple effect on the industrial production of advertising. What these findings revealed is that storytelling will continue to be an invaluable driver for brands in a global matrix. Storyselling provides rich opportunities for global stakeholders, but conversely commodifies “authenticity” for the highest bidder, or the most lucrative audience. The precarious environment poses a risk to global stakeholders who might mistakenly tell the stories consumers want, rather than stories that align with their corporate values. Additionally, while I suggest that partaking of the Kool-Aid loyalty is a dangerous act, it can be a powerful unifying characteristic when employees “buy in” to the mission of the organization, positively poising a company for future endeavors. On the other hand, the topic of corporate loyalty draws critics on both sides of the fence, as the merits of corporate loyalty are hotly debated. What this research has revealed is that a fine line exists between a healthy corporate loyalty and a Kool-Aid loyalty, and while global stakeholders are trying their best to sell to consumers, their brand is trying to sell to them.

In addition, any discussion of global advertising would be remiss without the mention of technological advances, specifically mobile, social media, and big data. What is fundamentally different about global advertising’s relationship with technology is that
technology used to be the channel through which advertising flowed and now
technological innovation is the destination. I cannot overstate the lengths to which brands
will go to innovate technologically in hopes to lure eager consumers into their
ecosystems. Once part of the “community,” advertisers move beyond demographics to
sophisticated data tracking techniques that let them know what these audiences like,
when they like it, how often, and to what extent. The irony lies in the fact that consumers
seem open to exchange—if, however, companies can provide some type of value in
exchange for consumer information. What producers are concerned with, however, is
how far will consumers go and when will they demand better or more compensation for
their data? The issue is compound on a global scale when national laws and digital
privacy policies vary as widely as audience behaviors. Perhaps most sobering, however,
is the implications of a data determinist perspective on the creative production of
advertising campaigns and other pieces of promotional culture.

Lastly, at the onset of this project, I asked how, then, do these processes impact
the way advertisers imagine and target their audiences? It’s easier for global
stakeholders to think of their audiences as faceless masses, ones that can be lumped
together; yet, the ways in which they characterize their audience suggests they strive to
know them more intimately. But this intimacy is fictitious, merely a mental schema that
helps global stakeholders “get work done globally,” an imagination that helps them
grapple with an exhaustive and expansive global consumer culture. Yet, technological
advances, namely social media platforms with its capacity to foster interactivity and user-
generated content, have no doubt altered the producer-consumer relationship. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2011) poignantly abridges the precarious relationship between producers and audiences in saying, “Brand managers often set the terms for brand cultures, but because brand culture is deeply cultural, it relies on the labor of consumers—“ordinary” people, creative producers, artists, laborers—as well as brand managers” (p. 215). The global stakeholders in this study are grappling with how to simultaneously control the labor of consumers, while seemingly giving them “power” to extend the brand as they see fit. The ability of global producers to harness consumer labor ebbs and flows, but the powerful rise of audiences is indeed accurate. In fact, the findings from this study seem to suggest that global stakeholders believe that their work is now more wholly informed by audiences than in previous junctures. Even the core of what a brand or company stands for seems to be informed, at least in part, by audiences eager to make their mark. However, I would argue that despite my global informants suggesting that audiences are more involved than ever, their engagement is tightly managed, under constant surveillance, and causes global producers a great deal of stress. Although global producers say they welcome the enhanced options for engagement, I suspect they do so cautiously, well-armed with sophisticated social listening tools to circumvent a crisis if need be.

On the other hand, the overall impact of participatory culture on producers has been characterized as “rather modest in terms of power distributions” by other scholars (Duffy, 2013, p. 113). Despite a reconfiguration of audiences in an interactive age,
“sweeping changes” to the media landscape and professional spaces “are exaggerated” (Duffy, 2013). To that end, despite wide participation by audiences, creative control, particularly on a global scale, still lies firmly rooted with seasoned global producers. The irony for global stakeholders, however, is that the more audiences share information about products or spread brand awareness, the more successful the campaign work is deemed, on a broader scale. When audiences can “feel” like they contributed to a campaign, that their immaterial labor is in some way valued, they can buy into the corporate value system, identifying more fully and with greater zeal. The most significant loss in this type of arrangement, in this kind of conjuring up of global audiences, however, is in fact the suppression of cultural difference, the suppression of nationalistic heritage, the suppression of precisely the reasons that make traveling to other side of the world, like to London or Thailand, so exhilarating. And while it seems that a robust consumer culture has an affinity toward a global lifestyle, a cross-cultural connection, it would also appear that there’s a lot at stake in this type of arrangement.

So, how then do these findings signal wider changes in the industrial production of glocal advertising? As I see it, there are four broader implications for media and cultural industry scholars.

First, a major thread underpinning the emergent themes in this project accentuate the industry’s subtle, yet profound shift from separate advertising, marketing, and promotional activities to one in which “branding” takes precedence in all global promotional work. Perhaps naïvely, I embarked on this project wanting to better
understand global advertising producers, but what I learned is that glocal advertising can only be understood in relation to a company’s global brand identity. The process of branding is typically understood as a “a method of attaching social or cultural meaning to a commodity as a means to make the commodity more personally resonant with an individual consumer” (Banet-Weiser, 2011, p. 4). As described to me by more informants, brands are meant to invoke a feeling or an emotion tied to a company or product; as Banet-Weiser (2011) parses out, “brands are actually a story told to the consumer” (p. 4). Although I argue that global stakeholders can’t know an audience intimately, when a brand story is successful, to the consumer, “it surpasses simple identification” rendering a familiar, personal experience (Banet-Weiser, 2011). Here is the sweet spot in which advertising alone is inadequate. However, the paradox lies in that even though the scope becomes more narrow, the work becomes “more difficult and stressful,” presumably because now all of a producer’s activities fall under the brand, and that’s a lot of eggs to put in one basket. Without a carefully crafted brand story even the most thoughtfully prepared, well-researched glocal campaign will fall short. Consumers must “buy in” to the brand story, the corporate values, before they can even consider whatever it is companies are shilling out.

This revelation came to a head when my informants suggested that the content they created was as important—if not more important—then the product or service they were selling. In other words, my informants from Airbnb felt that building a campaign that reflected their penchant for providing a place where “all seven billion of us can
belong” was just as important as ensuring a guest received the agreed upon accommodation for which they booked and paid. Similarly, my Under Armour informants suggested that in globally promoting the Curry One, Stephen Curry’s signature shoe, selling the Stephen Curry story—matching content about him for spreading, sharing, liking, and advertising to the actual sneaker, was just as important as ensuring the quality of the shoe itself. It’s important—no, imperative—because brand stories foster brand communities. Recall how Brock, Under Armour, underscored the polysemic approach that building a solid brand can afford a global company. He said there is nothing quite like

The power of building a community behind that brand. The momentum carries you, and if you do it the right way, and build it the right way and are true to your athletes and to who you are, your brand can withstand a bad commercial campaign or a bad product or bad PR, because the momentum is there and people will put up with it.

My informants, without hesitation, felt that on the global scale, even the soundest company, cannot sustain itself without a quality brand story.

These findings suggest that while specialized skills and talents are not in decline (like digital advertisers or social media strategists), what globally-aspiring brands need to consider is how to integrate, bolster, and find synergies amongst their promotional teams to create or strengthen a brand. In turn, because a “brand first” thinking has manifested, the way in which global producers are now constructing “traditional advertising” has
shifted in a global landscape. I argue that the way in which global producers think about branded content is in fact the way in which global stakeholders are now conceptualizing more traditional advertising campaigns. Because audiences are so diverse, global stakeholders are attempting to hone their advertising all the way down to what they deem “human universals” to sell a particular story in such a way that makes global advertising feel more like an inspiring cooking demonstration or a stimulating travel documentary. This shift impacts the production process at the site of origination so much so that global advertisers are now thinking as much about their brand stories, starting with people stories first, their values and beliefs, and secondarily focusing on the product or service they are trying to sell. After all, it is brands that foster allegiant communities, not lake homes, canned soup, or sweat-wicking t-shirts.

Second, one of the broadest challenges facing global advertising producers and other global stakeholders is how to manage “big data,” and relatedly, what will the implications be on creative license. As many of my global informants shared, data consolidation and data rationalization, the arduous process to marry the numerous data sets an organization might have – from owned, to purchased, to third party, are some of the most challenging steps to making data serviceable. To global stakeholders, the benefit to wading through massive amounts of data is the ability to predict consumer behavior. Recall that when asking Uriah, Global Social Media, Campbell Soup, if he considered his approach very data driven, he said, “Absolutely. 100% it’s data driven.” However, he
also said, “The data’s only valuable to me as it relates to a better understanding of the audience.”

While advertisers have been tracking consumer data for quite some time, (see Turow, 2006, 2011), the techniques have become vastly more sophisticated and consumers are increasingly willing to share their data in exchange for something valuable. For example, consumers are willing to provide a lot of data about themselves on Under Armour’s UA Record mobile app in exchange for personalized health information. But, these exchanges also suggest that the time has arrived for producers to be more forthright with their consumers about their data. Uriah claims that the producer-consumer relationship has reached the point in time where data and technology are all converging “in such a meaningful way” that global stakeholders must have that conversation explicitly. “Before it was an implicit thing and you just forgot about it, you tuck it away, you feel comfortable. You’re selling your data. That's exactly what we’re doing is we’re selling our data.” However, as online privacy issues continue to be paramount in public consciousness – in fact, a recent Pew Research report claims that 91% of adults feel they’ve lost control of how their data is used and collected (Rainie, 2016), data breaches become more and more normalized, and skepticism of big business remains high consumers might start demanding that advertisers be more transparent, particularly with how they are using their data.

The shifting dynamics in an age of informationalism might bring an onslaught of policy regarding the use and transparency of consumer data and additional measures for
opting out if advertisers don’t start monitoring their own industrial work. For example, Campbell Soup became one of the first food brands to launch an app, or a skill, on the new virtual assistant device Amazon’s Echo (Wohl, 2015). Users can talk to Echo and Echo’s personal assistant, Alexa, will suggest recipes that, conveniently, contain Campbell Soup products. Suggestions “factor in the weather and details such as food trends as well as what’s trending on its website” (Harris, 2016). The device, however, has recently come under fire for potential violation of the U.S. Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which regulates the collection and use of personal information from anyone under 13 (Harris, 2016). Amazon’s Echo has been touted as a device for everyone, despite apparent contradiction with privacy laws. This example, among other emergent devices and technologies, signals that the current arrangement of data into the work of global producers might need to be reconfigured in the near future, particularly as emerging technologies present new, uncharted challenges.

The other issue with big data lies in its implications on the creative license of global advertising producers. Recall the earlier statement by Jared, Global Advertising, Campbell Soup, in which he reflected on a growing concern that “it’s fairly easy to fall into believing that following the numbers and the data will lead to nirvana.” The implications of a data determinist perspective on the production of advertising campaigns and other pieces of promotional culture will have tangible, long-term ripple effects and producers are beginning to strategize how to grapple with this “unproductive bifurcation” (Prabhu, 2015). Kleinberg (2013) argues that data can be vital insight, but that “you’re
just as likely to find insight in the shower as you are in a spreadsheet.” He laments that asserting that all creative should be data-driven “is to consign your brand to the middle of the pack” (Kleinberg, 2013). Cheekily, he asks, can data tell you to hire Betty White? In contrast, agency heavyweight Sir Martin Sorrell of WPP argues that “it’s no longer enough to rely on the skills of a bygone era to concoct effective content” (Joseph, 2016). “The definition of creativity needs to change,” said Sorrell, “We’re not in the advertising business anymore” (Coffee, 2016). The bifurcation of these two approaches to global advertising work begs me to ask, what might be lost in an era where data drives all the decision making? How can global stakeholders enmesh the creative and that data in meaningful ways? How might data dupe global stakeholders? These and other related issues will continue to inform the productive work of global advertisers in the next installment of industrial work.

Third, a trend that kept coming up in my interviews, particularly when I asked my informants to predict what global advertising will look like over the next 5 years, was the concept of thinking small. At first blush it seems unrelated since Airbnb, Campbell Soup, and Under Armour are huge, global companies. Yet, as I asked global advertising producers and other stakeholders to tell me where their work is heading they told me they were “thinking small.” This strategy of small manifests in two ways. First, in a story previously shared, Chris, Global Research & Development, Campbell Soup, said one of the biggest trends Campbell’s is keeping a pulse on is what they call “small food.” He argues that consumers don’t want to buy their food from a big food company, they want
to engage with a “small brand that they can feel a connection to whether that connection is geographic, whether it’s heritage or history.” He used the example of Starbucks launching a cherry tart, but not just any cherry tart—it was a Michigan cherry tart that people have a familial connection to. Companies are beginning to design and strategize against these kinds of small connections. So surely the paradox is becoming clear—the largest companies want to tell stories, engage consumers in a way that feels small, local.

The advantage to a glocal approach lies in its “dynamic and effective collaboration between the developers of global strategy and local strategists and implementers” (Wind, Sthanunathan, & Malcolm, 2013). The implications for consumers are that instead of actually getting a Michigan cherry tart, they get the “almost authentic” version from their neighborhood corporation. It seems clear to me that a global company is still global despite positioning themselves otherwise and what might be at risk is local community in a real, non-imitation version.

The second manifestation of the strategy of small emerged mostly from my interviews with global producers who worked at agencies. The agencies in this study include Chiat/Day, DesignStudio, Pereira & O’Dell, and TBWA Worldwide. As such, their unique position as “experts” in advertising creation, design, and execution provide them with more of a “birds eye,” macro-level view since they are constantly working with multiple clients. Beau, DesignStudio, suggested that one of the biggest trends impacting global advertising is going to be “small brands” because they are going to be able to “innovate, agitate, and create more inventive products and not have any of the
legacy issues that any of the larger brands have.” Beau predicts that small brands will be able to bring products to market “at an increasingly quick pace” and consumers will latch on because they can work directly with the brands. He continues, saying:

The established hierarchy of brands is going to erode very quickly and people with good ideas are going to out front the people with the big bucks and the big brands. We'll start to see lots and lots of household names and I think Next is a really good example of that. A small product that came from an incredibly small team that's already got global recognition…which is incredible if you think about the different economies and scales that they've got.

The prediction of an influx of small brands and an increase in their influence weaves together several of the themes from this project including: how having the right team is more important than having a big team, how technology affords global advertising producers with ways to engage and cultivate a powerful brand community in ways previously unseen, and lastly, how storytelling has the power to set brands apart. The implications for the industrial production of advertising seem to suggest that the democratization of access to audiences and the means to do so might open the playing field to more competition, thus providing consumers with even more choices. To that end, I’m not convinced that my informants fully realize how quickly a small brand could erode their loyal base, with easy access to reach and the potential to engage with large audiences for relatively low cost. As Beau predicts, “the small people with the good ideas can really disrupt things.”
Fourth, and lastly, in some ways, this project, albeit primarily about glocalization and advertising production work, is about the relationship between an advertising producer and a consumer. That relationship is the bookends to this project. That relationship has profoundly shifted, due in major part to technological advances in communication, and thus the power of the consumer as a broader text clearly informs the way my global informants approached their work. Although it may seem that the changing dynamics of the producer-consumer relationship fit squarely into contemporary narratives of convergence culture, I’m actually suggesting a broader implication for the “power” of consumers. I argue that consumers, subtly, yet significantly, are now impacting the process and the production of global advertising work in new ways. It stems, in part, from what Vance, TBWA Worldwide, said, which is that people now have a “different kind of relationship” with brands and institutions then they used to, and because of that, “the level of transparency is not optional.”

For example, Chris, Global Research & Development, Campbell Soup, maintained that one of the biggest trends on his radar is what he called resource utilization. “You will see a lot of pressure on things like proteins. Beef is probably the first one that's going to be under attack in terms of how much water and land and resources it uses for its production.” In other words, consumers will demand that companies seek out different, more innovative ways of doing things.

In response to that, you'll see things like insects as a source of protein coming up. They're out there in the market now. You can buy cricket flour. There's brands
that are sold in Whole Foods that bake with cricket flour. You're going to see a shift in people making choices on brands that have a sustainability and good for the environment kind of approach.

To that end, Campbell Soup recently announced it’s investing $125 million in its own venture-capital project to fund food startups, “a move to keep up with the small, entrepreneurial companies that are driving food trends in the U.S.” (Gasparro, 2016). Presumably, this initiative is in response to changes in food trends and eating habits, such as the 2015 State of Modern Motherhood Report, by BabyCenter and the Interactive Advertising Bureau (2015), which claims that “millennial moms” care more about organic foods and simple ingredients than ever before, an increase of 300% since 2006. Furthermore, what Chris is suggesting is that as consumers become more privy to the undercarriage of companies, they will demand that these brands “behave” more respectably. The fallout for Airbnb’s “widespread discrimination,” for example, remains to be seen (McPhate, 2015), but the company has made strides to counter these reports by banning one host and hiring Laura Murphy, the former head of the legislative office of the American Civil Liberties Union in Washington, “to lead a review of Airbnb practices that it expects to conclude in September (Glusac, 2016). This kind of consumer “power,” the kind that prompts #AirbnbWhileBlack to trend, in turn, impacts the way a brand story is written, who writes it, where the story is shared, and more so, the ways global producers engage their consumers.
Relatedly, recall the comment made by Trent, Footwear Development, Under Armour, in which he suggested that manufacturing of footwear “will return to the United States in a large way.” In explaining his comment, he said that by doing so “consumers can become part of the process” by “bringing them into the showroom” and letting them pick their materials, colors, special graphics or even to “push some of the buttons to get the machines running themselves.” As the rise in participatory culture suggests, consumers, through their immaterial labor, are “open” to the empowerment (or exploitation) that brands provide them (see Duffy, 2010). If Trent’s predictions come true, the consumer experience, the producer-consumer relationship, would become even more intense as brand experiences—already ushering in new ways of exploring brands—become even more personal, intimate, “a mass production for the individual.” Yes, of course, the “power” of consumers manifests in the places you’d expect to see it 2016—through participation in corporate contests, using corporate hashtags, sharing videos featuring favorite brands, or signing your child up as a “brand enthusiast” or “brand representative” to showcase free gear on Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram, but this sort of participatory culture and interactivity is still controlled or governed by seasoned global producers and curated often.

To my delight and surprise, just this past June, Kevin Plank, Under Armour CEO, unveiled UA Lighthouse, “a 35,000-square-foot manufacturing and design center located near Baltimore” (Sharrow, 2016). Sharrow (2016) says, Plank “believes manufacturing can once again thrive in the U.S. And the sportswear maker sees itself playing a big role.”
It appears as if Under Armour is on their way to single-handedly enhance and intensify brand experience, giving consumers more “power” than in previous times. While it’s true that global producers now depend on audiences to bolster their brands more than ever, the impact of consumer voices is more broad, slowly, yet significantly seeping into the aspects of industrial production once hidden away from passive audiences.

**Final Thoughts**

In closing, I’m left considering the merits of a glocal approach to the production, creation, and diffusion of global advertising campaigns, which brings us back to the concept that launched this work, *glocalization*. Throughout this project I’ve drawn on a number of conceptualizations of glocalization, namely those from Robertson (1992, 1995), who argues that cultural globalization *always* takes place in local environments, for it is precisely locality that impacts the reception and reinvention of globalizing trends; Wind, Sthanunathan, and Malcolm (2013), who suggest that a *glocal* advertising strategy is one in which there is a local adaptation of a universally embraced core idea that could resonate anywhere in the world; and Maynard (2003), who defines glocalization as “the process whereby global corporations tailor products and marketing to particular local circumstances to meet variations in consumer demand” (p. 6). However, these definitions, while providing a solid foundation, fall short of addressing glocalization from the perspective of global advertising producers.

For producers, glocalization is a concept that helps them maintain binary, yet codependent conceptualizations of their work. Rather than glocalization simply allowing
producers to locally adapt a global idea, it allows them to create cultural messages that are at once local and global. In this way, glocalization functions as a theoretical approach to cultural production in a globalized society. Rather than acting as a lens to allow producers to create stories for consumers, glocalization informs each producer’s global mindset in a way so subtly, yet powerfully, that cultural products (like advertisements) are therefore a byproduct of creating and living and working through a glocal strategy. In this way, glocalization serves to undergird production processes at the site of origination.

What this project shows, then, is that glocalization, as a construct, is morphing to face new landscapes, and thus, the definition of glocalization must be adapted pragmatically and theoretically to address new and emergent challenges facing 21st century global producers.

Vast internet access, infiltration of media from other parts of the world, and exposure to other cultures and ways of life, for example, are challenging traditional definitions of “locality” in a digital post-Internet era. Additionally, shifts in consumer culture are also weakening ties to place, as an affinity for a global consumer culture manifests. These new challenges will reconstitute the way producers think about “global” and “local,” particularly if digital technologies, like smartphones, continue to provide consumers with influential narratives not native to their geographic community and minimize the cultural significance of geographic borders. These shifts, in turn, will transform the stories sold, the audiences engaged with, and the way glocalization is activated. And, although these and other challenges are likely to stretch glocalization in
ways previously unseen, I believe it will continue to persist as an advantageous construct for producers.

With that, globalization is here to stay, and as such, advertisers and brands must continue to strategize and address how to reach an expansive audience. As a strategic global advertising choice, glocalization can streamline a company’s brand platform by leaving the “high level,” strategic decisions to the global team, while letting regional teams execute, nuance, and “transcreate” the campaign in appropriate and relevant ways. In addition, in this age of neoliberalism, the glocal framework prompts global producers to find the right partners, meaning the right team of global leaders, the right global agency network, and the right local and regional offices, in terms of leadership, manufacturing, resource allocation, and location, in order to effectively diffuse information and branding to worldwide audiences. The infrastructure to run a global advertising campaign must reflect the complexity of the environment in which it flows. For example, despite Airbnb touting that Dublin, Ireland, was selected for their European headquarters because “it was an emerging technology hub” with a “tradition of hospitality,” critics suggest the choice is strictly due to corporate and territorial tax advantages, an outcome of conducting international business in a neoliberal marketplace (Worstall, 2013). What this study reveals, and I believe, is that glocalization is an often overlooked approach by advertisers and producers that has the ability to marry seemingly divergent audiences, tell global stories that feel local, and foster a “partnership” with eager audiences in an “authentic” way.
I genuinely think brands want consumers to like their products, to like them. More specifically, I believe that global advertising producers, want consumers to like their work, to appreciate their brand story, to participate in the brand story. I don’t second guess the passion that my informants shared with me. Critics of advertising, its economic and cultural significance, and its production processes might suggest that the work of global producers is merely to dupe consumers, but these global stakeholders, unequivocally, don’t see it that way. They see their work as pivotal, impactful, and deeply cultural.

However, despite the many advantages to engaging with a glocal framework, I offer some cautionary concerns. I am reminded of the several comments by my informants that despite the desire to reach audiences around the world and expand into new markets, the global strategy and creative control remained squarely the responsibility of the U.S.-based leadership teams (see Chapter 4). At least one informant from each company made some reference to the “possibility” of strategy or creative originating in another region, but no one shared an example where it had actually happened. In fact, Sebastian, Global Brand Marketing, Under Armour, said their international business has gone from 3% to 11% of their overall business in less than three years. When asked if all the Under Armour stories for a global audience came out of Baltimore he said they mostly do, but, “there will certainly come a day when we will want to tell a story out of Amsterdam, out of England, Brazil, or what have you…around the world or that particular athlete. And it may make sense for that country to take the lead on the
storytelling.” Except this hasn’t happened globally, despite an obvious push toward international work. Like Sebastian, many of my informants presented themselves as open to the idea, but their decision making patterns suggested otherwise. This pattern presents concern to me in that a glocal framework could be misconstrued, functioning merely as a façade for less inclusive modes of production, thus minimizing its real advantage if producers don’t take care in utilizing their partners.

Additionally, I was struck by a quote from Tony, my executive chef informant, who was talking about global food trends, suggesting that the biggest up-and-comers were “not typical American tastes.” He said, however, “My bigger problem is that the world is shrinking so much it becomes more and more difficult to find real authentic taste and flavor.” The conundrum here is that when global stakeholders story sell on such a massive scale, the only real technique, so far, is to whittle a campaign down to “human universal truths” and this means stripping the story of other potentially important characteristics. As producers, global advertisers and stakeholders, however, play a pivotal role in telling cultures’ stories and many of these stories are told from the headquarter office. To that end, it prompts me to ask if the stories that advertising writes are the ones that prevail, what will be left out as time goes on? Or, perhaps the question is who is left out? As Tony’s comment illustrates, as the world becomes more connected, more globalized, what important aspects of culture and community might be squashed altogether in favor of a global consumer culture? These trends could have long-lasting implications for consumer-audiences in that as certain values and stories are repeatedly
told in advertisings’ messages, other potentially important aspects of culture and society are not.

Presently, I’m not sure global producers have given this issue much thought, but as advertising continues to reach new shores, the issue will need to be explored more fully. Against this backdrop, the implications seem grave for local, regional, perhaps even national stories and cultures to thrive on a global playing field. Yet, the *glocal production of advertising*, in which both global and local might coexist and simultaneously inform each other, provides a small shred of hope that all this convergence (of cultures, of media, of stories) doesn’t necessarily mean a loss of difference, but instead signals a shift to a more nuanced way to incorporate difference in new, emergent, and authentic ways. This project, in turn, challenges, as other scholars have (see Darling-Wolf, 2015), the global/local binary – where the local typically acts as “the global’s presumptive victim, its cultural nemesis, or its coerced subordinate” (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008, p. 339), providing a new context within which to consider the role of global producers and global brands in this binary matrix. This is precisely why glocalization must continue to be considered with a critical eye, with more research, and by asking more questions about the work of global advertising producers and the resultant, global ripple effect.
An important point of distinction, while theories of hybridity are not identical to the concept of glocalization, they are related and thus it helps to inform what makes glocalization such a powerful process for advertisers. While hybridity is more closely related to academic literature, understood as the mutual constitution of the global, national, and local (Appadurai, 1996, 2013; Darling-Wolf, 2003, 2015; Kraidy, 2005), the term “glocalization” and the concept itself is more closely related to the advertising industry, and thus, this study. The usage of this term is strategic and appropriate given the context. Furthermore, glocalization also resonates more closely with the way that global stakeholders think about their role, the work(s) they create, and the impact of their work on both global production processes and global audiences.

All interviews were given pseudonyms.

This interview took place prior to China changing their One Child Policy to Two Children, which went into effective on January 1, 2016. However, the point is still valid given that those of age to rent are a by-product of the policy and its impact on culture.

His real name was used because this information was culled from a popular press article, not an interview.
REFERENCES CITED


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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE SOLICITATION EMAIL

Dear [insert advertising representative]:

My name is Susannah McMonagle, and I am a doctoral candidate at Temple University’s School of Media and Communication. I am currently pursuing dissertation research that examines advertising campaigns that reach different parts of the world, and I’m interviewing people at [insert respective organization] who have done interesting work with these kinds of campaigns.

I was hoping to possibly have a chance to talk with you to find out more about your work with [insert example campaign]. Please let me know if you’d be willing to participate in my research.

Thank you!

Susannah

Susannah K. McMonagle
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2020 North 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Cell: 330-704-5134
Email: tud08450@temple.edu
LinkedIn Profile
## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF INFORMANTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Rhett</td>
<td>Senior Category Director, Basketball</td>
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<td>Patrick</td>
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<td>Campbell's Soup</td>
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<td>Global Director for Social Media</td>
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<td>VP, Campbell's Global Culinary &amp; Baking Institute</td>
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<td>Account Manager</td>
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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule
(Some questions adapted from Serazio, 2013)

1. Where did the idea come from for this campaign? Were there any specific influences?

2. What were you hoping to achieve? How was the campaign “put together”?

3. What are the first actions taken when implementing campaigns in various locales?

4. What are the biggest cultural obstacles in getting this information to new audiences?

5. How are relationships formed with local partners? How do you determine which local organizations/promoters/agencies make the best fit?

6. How are decisions made about which strategies to use to carry out the campaign? How much influence do local partners have?

7. What audience did you have in mind for this campaign? What is it about that demographic that fits particularly well with this approach?

8. Were there any obstacles in identifying the audience’s values, beliefs, cultural idiosyncrasies? Were they overcome?

9. What have you learned about this process that you will be sure to implement going forward?

10. What trends do you see influencing global (glocal) advertising in the future?