

**Globalisation, Corporate Nationalism and Japanese Identity:  
Advertising Production and Signifying Practices of Nike and Asics**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Otago

Dunedin, New Zealand

November 2012

## Abstract

Drawing upon a theoretical framework that incorporates *corporate nationalism*, *glocalisation* and *Orientalism*, this thesis examines globalisation in relation to the production of Japanese culture and identity. Specifically, it investigates the economic and symbolic power of transnational corporations in signifying, and consequently re-articulating, national culture and identity through their advertising activities within the global context. Methodologically, the study uses a multi-perspectival and multi-method approach as informed by the ‘circuit of culture’ (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997; Jackson, 2008; Johnson, 1986/1987) to examine case studies of Nike and Asics corporations with a focus on their production and representation of advertising. More specifically, the case studies provide analyses of the contexts of production, advertising texts, and interviews with key ‘cultural intermediaries’ (Bourdieu, 1984; du Gay et al., 1997) to explore the nature, processes and contradictions of corporate nationalism.

The key findings include: (a) the reciprocity, interdependence and interpenetration of the global/West and the local/East within the contexts of advertising production; (b) the negotiations, accommodations and multiple regimes of mediation involved with both Japanese and Western cultural intermediaries within their practices of production and representation; (c) the usefulness of *glocalisation* and *self-Orientalism* to examine non-Western forms of culture, identity and subjectivity as reproduced through corporate nationalism; and, (d) the need for more research on the dialectic relationships between the global and the local, the West and the East, and the economy and culture as framed by the circuit of culture. Overall, this study identifies a gap between the economic-centred discourse of globalisation and actual signifying practices of advertising production by focusing on how Japanese culture and identity are re-imagined, represented and reconstructed by two global sport brands at the global-local and West-East nexus.

## Publications Arising from This Thesis

- Kobayashi, K. (2011). Globalization, Corporate Nationalism and Japanese Cultural Intermediaries: Representation of *Bukatsu* through Nike Advertising at the Global-Local Nexus. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. September 12, 2011, DOI: 10.1177/1012690211420202 (part of Chapter 5)
- Kobayashi, K. (2012). Corporate Nationalism and Glocalization of Nike Advertising in “Asia”: Production and Representation Practices of Cultural Intermediaries. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 29(1), 42-61. (part of Chapter 4)
- Kobayashi, K. (2012). Gurōkaruka to supōtsu kōkoku (Glocalization and Sport Advertising). *Taiiku no Kagaku (Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation)*, 62(5), 330-334. (part of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4)

## Acknowledgements

This thesis would never be completed, or even started, without a range of support and help from the people acknowledged below. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors, Steve Jackson and Mike Sam, for accepting me as a Ph.D. student in the first instance and being considerate mentors and light-and-warm hearted friends throughout my study. Steve is extraordinarily good at examining theoretical orientations and careful editing of texts whereas Mike has a special talent for instantly recognising the nature of problems and delivering practical advice. Together, they made an ideal team improving my thinking both theoretically and practically.

A special thanks goes to John Amis, my Master's supervisor, who opened the door for me to an academic career and has been an empathetic and trustful mentor throughout. I feel I owe a lot to a number of scholars including: Roland Robertson for his seminal work on globalisation and importance of the location of Japan within it; Jay Scherer for his contribution to the theoretical and methodological development of the frameworks and approaches used in this thesis; Etsuko Ogasawara for her help in gaining access to useful informants for this study. I am also grateful to all the participants in this study for their generosity of time for the interviews. All of those mentioned here among others have in many ways (re)shaped my thinking, approaches and arguments in this thesis.

My colleagues and friends are a source of inspiration and encouragement that enriched my intellectual journey of a Ph.D. They include Ik Young Chang, Adam Beissel, Josh Newman, Soo Ho Joung, Geoffery Kohe, Allen Hill, Currin Cooley, Sarah Gee, Cyrill Spale, Luiz Uehara, Minhyeok Tak, Lucie Schoch, Janelle Joseph, D Wood, Ryoko de Burgh-Hirabe, Haruko Stuart, Tadashi Iwami, Junichi Sugishita, Shogo Tanaka, Daniela Aldabe, Henry Johnson, Min Hooi

Yong, Zsombor Koszegi and Spike Xie. I specifically want to thank Ik Young Chang for uncountable discussions and conversations where he brought all his energy, wisdom and enthusiasm about sport and life. My appreciation also goes to the School of Physical Education and University of Otago for all the resources and funding made available to my study.

To my wife Yuko Kobayashi whom I first met during the fieldwork of this research in Japan, I am truly grateful to your support for my study/life and your belief in me. Regardless of whatever happens after this Ph.D., I am sure that we will love, cherish and support each other for our health and happiness. To my parents Teruo Kobayashi and Masako Kobayashi and grandmother Yukie Kobayashi, I would like to thank you for your understanding towards my pursuit of postgraduate education first in the U.S.A. and then in New Zealand. In particular, I would like to dedicate this work to my grandmother who has always had faith in what I can and want to do and has provided me with an exceptional amount of financial and mental support throughout my life. Without her support, none of my work here in this thesis would have been achievable.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

### **Names of Organisations**

AFC	Asian Football Confederation
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football
Nike APHQ	Nike Asia Pacific Headquarters
NZRU	New Zealand Rugby Union
W+K	Wieden+Kennedy
W+K Tokyo	Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo

### **Job Titles**

AD	Art Director
AE	Account Executive
CD	Creative Director
CM	Communication Manager
CW	Copywriter
DA	Director of Advertising
DP	Digital Producer
MM	Marketing Manager
SM	Supervisor of Marketing

## List of Key Japanese Terms

<i>Anime</i>	Animation or cartoon
<i>Bukatsu</i>	Extracurricular school activity
<i>Bushidō</i>	Way of the <i>samurai</i> or <i>bushi</i>
<i>Geisha</i>	Female Japanese entertainer
<i>Jūdō</i>	Japanese form of martial art
<i>Kanji</i>	Adapted Chinese characters
<i>Manga</i>	Comics
<i>Nihonjin-ron</i>	Discourse of Japaneseness
<i>Otaku</i>	People who are obsessed with <i>anime</i> , <i>manga</i> or video games
<i>Samurai</i> or <i>bushi</i>	Warriors of feudal Japan
<i>Sumō</i>	Japanese form of wrestling
<i>Tansu</i>	Japanese chest of drawers
<i>Wa</i>	The <i>kanji</i> of <i>wa</i> (和) denotes both Japaneseness and teamwork or harmony
<i>Wakon yōsai</i>	‘Japanese spirit, Western learning’, a slogan of the Japanese modernisation project

## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Globalisation and Production of Japanese Identity

Japan is of great sociological interest not because it is ‘unique’ and ‘successful,’ but because it fulfills the function in the contemporary world of the society from which ‘leaders’ of other societies can learn how to learn about many societies. *That* is what makes Japan a global society, in spite of claims to the contrary. (Robertson, 1992, p. 86, emphasis in original)

Two decades ago, Roland Robertson (1992) published his seminal work which emphasised the importance of culture, individuals and non-Western perspectives to the study of the multidimensionality and complexity of globalisation. In particular, Robertson (1992) presented Japan as a good example of a society that incorporated ideas and cultures of Others, including early medieval China and modern Western nations, to eventually contribute to the formation of global consciousness and interdependency. This point of view effectively challenged the dominant tendency of globalisation theories in reproducing discourses of economic determinism, cultural homogenisation and Western superiority. However, despite his insistence and some notable exceptions (e.g. Allison, 2006; Befu, 2003; Condry, 2006; Iwabuchi, 2002), the cultural dynamics of Japanese interactions with the West has continued to be kept on the margins of scholarly theorisation of globalisation. Indeed, to date, the dominant discourses of globalisation—such as ‘borderless world’ (Ohmae, 1990), ‘cultural imperialism’ (Tomlinson, 1991), ‘empire’ (Hardt & Negri, 2000), ‘new imperialism’ (Harvey, 2003), ‘globalisation’ (Ritzer, 2003), ‘global modernity’ (Dirlik, 2003) and ‘flattened world’ (Friedman, 2005)—reinforce the view that national boundaries and cultures are destined to be subsumed under a single, homogenised entity of Western- or American-dominated capitalist economy.

However, as Robertson (1992) insists, the recent and concurrent dominant discourses of globalisation significantly reduce the importance of local, non-Western forms of agency, resistance and activities and, in turn, overlook dialectic relationships between the global and the

local, between the West and the East and between economy and culture. As such, this thesis aims to bring Robertson's (1992) focus back to the discussion about globalisation by (re)locating and (re)situating Japanese identity, culture and experience that, I argue, are not just informed by, but also dialogically inform, the processes and practices of the global cultural economy. Notably, Japan serves as a strategic site to examine *cultural-economic* aspects of globalisation because of its seemingly contradictory development as a technologically-driven economy with a sense of cultural co-existence or hybridisation that is located between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, and the East and the West. In this context, Japan's economy, technology and transnational corporations are often regarded as part of the capitalist formation of the global economy whereas Japanese culture, identity and traditions are separately viewed as victims, or passive recipients, of Western capitalism and modernity. However, this arbitrary dichotomy between economy and culture largely undermines the actual ways in which local/non-Western and cultural aspects of economic activities play a pivotal role in constituting the global fields of cultural production and consumption.

One concrete way to investigate the links and contradictions between Western-dominated global economy and Japanese culture/identity is by attending to particular cultural and economic activities of transnational corporations as framed by the concept of 'corporate nationalism' (Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005b; see Chapter 2 for a discussion of its theoretical development). The theoretical framework of corporate nationalism recognises the economic and symbolic power of transnational corporations as one of the obvious manifestations of globalisation given their capacity to transcend national borders not only to produce commodities and services but also to signify ideas, cultures and identities. In this sense, the notion of 'the nation' as 'an imagined community' (Anderson, 1983), that once was mobilised largely by the state to draw political boundaries and legitimise its sovereignty, is now increasingly reproduced as a commercial and branded sign of distinctions through which consumers can express and share identification,

lifestyle and pleasure. In other words, modern cultural life has been so saturated by media and information technologies that ‘the nation’ as a form of both personal and collective identification has been re-imagined and reproduced through contemporary mediascapes including television, movies, magazines, digital media and advertising.

While production and consumption of advertising and promotional/consumer culture have been disseminated beyond Western society, less is known about how they have been embraced, negotiated and localised by non-Western actors. Hence, in contrast to previous studies of corporate nationalism, this thesis goes beyond Western contexts by analysing Japanese culture and identity as they were represented through advertising by both Japanese and Western transnational corporations and their promotional partners within the cross-national contexts of production. Advertising is of interest to this analysis for three reasons. First, advertising plays a pivotal role as a form of commercial communication that links production with consumption. Second, advertising itself has become part of popular culture where tastes, preferences and lifestyles are signified, legitimised and reshaped. Third, modern advertising has historically been disseminated from the West but is increasingly a vital part of production, consumption and everyday life in non-Western nations, including Japan. In this sense, advertising serves as an important subject of globalisation in terms of how it is practiced, structured and indigenised to form a pivotal part of modern, yet non-Western, cultural-economic ways of life.

In this light, what follows are case studies of specific branded forms of Japanese culture and identity produced and represented by Nike and Asics through their advertising campaigns. Sport brands provide fruitful cases because: (a) sport is a form of popular culture and lifestyle which is globally disseminated, practiced and mediated; (b) sport is a physical and corporeal spectacle that has been mobilised and popularised by the media, marketing and advertising; (c) sport is performed and embodied as a form of nationalism through which national identity is expressed and contested; and perhaps most importantly, (d) “sport is an ideal conduit of

promotional culture because in many ways it mirrors the idealized version of capitalism; that is, it is based on competition, achievement, efficiency, technology and meritocracy” (Jackson, Andrews, & Scherer, 2005, p. 10). Arguably, the conjuncture of sport, advertising and national identity constitutes a strategic site for an inquiry into corporate nationalism and global sport brands.

Overall, my study examines the process of corporate nationalism through an analysis of advertising production of global sport brands in order to gain insights into the interactive position of Japan in complementing, negotiating and challenging Western hegemony as located between the global and the local as well as between the West and the East. The aim is to identify the ways in which Japanese forms of particularity, subjectivity and cultural nationalism are both re-shaped by, and are re-shaping, globalisation. Consequently, this study of corporate nationalism interrogates the social, cultural and symbolic dimensions of power relations and struggles within the global field of cultural production through “the intensive analytical and empirical *interdependencies* of the global and the local, or the universal and the particular” (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009, p. 31, emphasis in original).

### **Purpose of the Study, Research Questions and Methods**

The purpose of the study is to examine the ways in which Japanese culture and identity are represented and reconstructed through advertising production by global sport brands, namely Nike and Asics. Guiding this study is an overarching main research question along with more specific sub-questions. The main research question is: How do transnational corporations represent and reconstruct popular imaginaries of Japan, including those associated with sport, in the process of corporate nationalism? Here, representation has two meanings: standing *in the place of* and standing *for* (Hall, 1997a). In other words, the former describes the ways in which signs of Japanese culture and identity are re-presented *within* advertisements whereas the latter

means to symbolise, or be ‘representative’ of, Japanese culture and identity *beyond* the advertisements. The two meanings of representation are implicated in differences between objectivity and subjectivity and between public and private—though they are not so much contradictory as complementary to each other in actual practices of representation.

To help direct this overarching question, the following six sub-questions are used: (a) what are the historical, political-economic and socio-cultural contexts within which we can locate the process of corporate nationalism?; (b) what are the contexts of production in the process of corporate nationalism?; (c) what are the unique features of sport that make it an attractive promotional vehicle for transnational corporations—and how do transnational corporations use sport as part of the process of corporate nationalism?; (d) how are Japanese culture and identity constructed out of both similarity and difference with respect to Western nations?; (e) what role do advertising agencies as cultural intermediaries play in the process of corporate nationalism?; (f) what evidence of disjuncture and resistance exist with respect to corporate nationalism?

The specific advertising campaigns examined in this thesis are: (a) Nike’s *Where is the Next?* (released in 2007) that was produced across the national markets of Asia and the Pacific; and (b) Asics’ *Made of Japan* (released from 2006 to 2010) that was developed as part of global campaigns for its Onitsuka Tiger brand. These two campaigns offer points of contrast for this study of corporate nationalism because they represent different directions of cultural flows—from the global to Japan (and Asia) and from Japan to the global. Accordingly, they require additional conceptual frameworks—‘glocalisation’ (Robertson, 1995) and ‘self-Orientalism’ (Dirlik, 1996; Iwabuchi, 1994)—to better comprehend the different cultural dynamics operating between the two contexts of production of Japanese culture and identity. The Nike case study exemplifies a strategy of glocalisation through which an American-based transnational corporation strategically incorporates elements of local youth cultures within its ‘glocal’ advertising campaigns for the national market of Japan (and Asia). On the other hand, Asics’ case represents a strategy of self-

Orientalisation through which a Japanese transnational corporation adopts European representations of its own national culture and identity to capitalise on European consumers' desire for consuming coolness and the exoticism of Japanese Otherness.

With respect to methodology, this study extends a 'multi-perspectival' approach (Kellner, 1995; see Chapter 3 for re-conceptualisation) to accommodate interpretive, critical, dialogic and reflexive approaches along with multiple methods: namely, contextual analysis, textual analysis and interviews with advertising practitioners. By conceptualising the advertising practitioners involved in the campaign production as 'cultural intermediaries' (Bourdieu, 1984; see Chapter 2 for re-conceptualisation), the case studies illuminate how advertising texts, embedded with branded signs of Japanese culture and identity, are constructed through intense negotiations under particular conditions of production as part of the 'circuit of culture' (Johnson, 1986/1987; see Chapter 3 for re-conceptualisation). In combination, the case studies explore the links and contradictions between theories of globalisation and actual signifying practices of the cultural labourers by focusing on the moments of production and representation of advertising. Through the re-conceptualisation of key methodological concepts used to examine corporate nationalism, this thesis re-orchestrates them to help conduct studies of corporate nationalism in particular and of cultural production (and consumption) and globalisation more generally.

As such, this study will be of particular interest to scholars involved in sociology, cultural studies and marketing/management studies of globalisation, modernities/modernisation, Orientalism, national identity, nationalism, media/advertising, popular culture, sport and Japan/Asia. Furthermore, this study may be of benefit to scholars who employ multi-methodological approaches to cultural production, representation and consumption from non-Western, Eastern or Asian perspectives.

## **Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following the introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 maps previous literature on globalisation, corporate nationalism and Japanese identity. More specifically, it reviews key theories, discourses and debates within sociology and cultural studies about globalisation, modernisation, national identity, media and sport. It attempts to locate and situate Japan within these various discourses to illustrate how studies of Japanese culture and identity may be helpful to challenge some of the dominant perspectives and normative assumptions within the theoretical debates. In doing so, it examines, re-organises and re-conceptualises, where appropriate, key concepts and terminologies for this analysis of cultural production in order to build on the existing body of knowledge. Chapter 3 outlines the study's methodologies including explanations of a multi-perspectival approach and the circuit of culture model. In addition, this chapter explicates the selection of case studies and multiple methods utilised along with the limitations and challenges of the study.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are devoted to the case studies focusing on the advertising campaigns produced and circulated by Nike and Asics. Two different aspects of the Nike case study are addressed in Chapter 4 and 5 respectively. Chapter 4 analyses the complex division of creative labour within the Asian context of production. More specifically, it engages with theoretical debates about the links and contradictions between the concepts of corporate nationalism and glocalisation by empirically examining the creative processes associated with the strategy of corporate glocalisation that was employed by an American-based transnational corporation to negotiate the global-local nexus in the Asian national markets. Moreover, it suggests that the complex creative process associated with corporate glocalisation requires an analysis of what Cronin (2004b) calls 'multiple regimes of mediation' that articulates the complexity of power relations and struggles among creative institutions and labourers.

Chapter 5 analyses Japanese sporting identity represented within the Japanese context of production. Specifically, it focuses on Nike's representation of *bukatsu* (extracurricular school activity) within the Nike's *Where is the Next?* along with *bukatsu*-related advertising and marketing more generally. Given the centrality of *bukatsu* for Japanese sporting youth, its cultural significance in reproducing Japanese values, morals and spirits is located within the historical and contemporary contexts of Japanese physical culture. Rather than abstractly discussing *bukatsu* as mediated texts, it empirically examines the ways in which such texts are constructed, or conditioned, by particular subjectivities and reflexivity of Japanese creative labourers employed at the local subsidiaries. It confirms that these individuals were in privileged positions to reflect on their own identities and experiences as part of the signification, encoding and distribution processes.

Chapter 6 offers a case study of the production of Asics' global advertising campaigns for its sub-brand Onitsuka Tiger. In contrast to the Nike case, it is a Japanese-based transnational corporation promoting and representing its own 'country of origin' culture and identity across the global markets in order to take advantage of the globalisation of Japanese popular culture. The case of Asics' global advertising production necessitates a theoretical extension of corporate nationalism because of its unusual simultaneity of a 'global' and 'non-Western' corporation. Thus, drawing on the concept of self-Orientalism, and self-Orientalisation, this chapter attempts to make sense of intense negotiations between Asics Headquarters and its European promotional partners beyond the West-East division with respect to producing 'cool/authentic' representations of Japanese culture and identity.

Finally, Chapter 7 provides a conclusion to reflect on the study's significance and implications. It begins by presenting the key research findings and points of my argument regarding the concept and process of corporate nationalism. Subsequently, I highlight my theoretical contributions to the key concepts used in this thesis and offer potential practical

implications for citizens, scholars and practitioners. Lastly, the chapter offers several recommended avenues and directions for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Mapping the Fields of Globalisation, Corporate Nationalism and Japanese Identity

Most theories of globalization ... are reductive, undialectical, and one-sided, either failing to see the interaction between technological features of globalization and the global restructuring of capitalism or failing to articulate the complex relations between capitalism and democracy. Dominant discourses of globalization are thus one-sidedly for or against globalization, failing to grasp the contradictions and the conflicting costs and benefits, upsides and downsides, of the process. Hence, many current theories of globalization do not capture the novelty and ambiguity of the present moment, which involves both innovative forms of technology and economy and emergent conflicts and problems generated by the contradictions of globalization... (Kellner, 2002, p. 289)

Given its complexity, studies of globalisation and corporate nationalism demand multi-disciplinary engagement with literature from various fields including history, anthropology, sociology, political economy, cultural studies, media studies and Asian studies. As Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram and Tincknell (2004) note, “Mapping the field is part of being effective as an intellectual” (p. 68). Accordingly, this chapter begins with a conceptual map of corporate nationalism and reviews literature in the key fields of the study (see Figure 1).

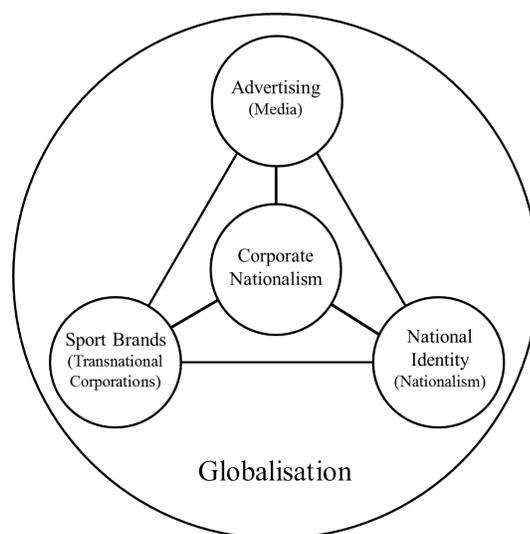


Figure 1: Conceptual Map of Corporate Nationalism

As illustrated, the broadest framework of this thesis is globalisation. Under this conceptual framework, three concepts are identified to constitute the key components of corporate nationalism: Sport Brands (Transnational Corporations), Advertising (Media) and National Identity (Nationalism). The three concepts correspond to the three fields of literature on transnational corporations, media and nationalism. Previous studies in each field have undergone substantial modifications and adjustments of theoretical formations with respect to the dynamic transformations of technology, politics, cultures, social networks and communication modes through the accelerated interconnectivity and interdependency within the context of globalisation. In this sense, while the fields of literature are separated for analytical purpose, they are in reality increasingly intertwined, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Following this conceptual map, this chapter is divided into five sections: (a) Globalisation and Japan; (b) Sport Brands (Transnational Corporations); (c) Advertising (Media); (d) National Identity (Nationalism); and (e) Corporate Nationalism.

### **Globalisation and Japan**

To begin, I review the key theories and characteristics of globalisation selected on the basis of their particular relevance to sociology, cultural studies and Japanese identity. In response to Kellner's (2002) concern noted in the opening quote to this chapter about the predominantly one-sided arguments about globalisation, my primary intention is to seek possibilities of going beyond the polarisation between the global and the local as well as the West and the East by identifying the interactive location of Japan. For the past few decades, globalisation has become a popular term predominantly referring to the deregulation of international trade, investment and financial flows and the associated expansion of economic power of corporations. In contrast to such economic-centred discourses of globalisation, my focus is however given to *socio-cultural*

and *cultural-economic* practices and relationships between the global and the local and between the West and the East.

One of the discussion points about the socio-cultural understanding of globalisation that has reached some consensus among scholars is that our sense of time and space has been significantly modified. In earlier theorising of globalisation, David Harvey (1989), for instance, eloquently conceptualises this as ‘time-space compression’:

As space appears to shrink to a ‘global’ village of telecommunications and a ‘spaceship earth’ of economic and ecological inter-dependencies – to use just two familiar and everyday images – and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is, so we have to learn to cope with an overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds. (p.240)

Due to the rapid advancement of media and information technology, our contemporary way of life is increasingly interconnected with cross-national commodities, mass communication and popular cultures, thereby reinforcing our imagination of ‘the global village’ (McLuhan, 1964) or other equivalents of global homogeneity. Likewise, Roland Robertson (1992) refers to globalisation as “both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (p. 8). The latter part of the definition signifies the shift in our way of living, thinking and imagining that has been increasingly influenced by the global consciousness, structural forces and social relations. Hence, it is no surprise that many scholars share the view that such a shift in our sense of time, space and consciousness is associated with the acceleration of *interconnectivity* and *interdependency* of capital, technology, places, people, products, services, processes, images and cultures on a global scale (Appadurai, 1990; Beck, 2000; Giddens, 1990; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009; Hall, 1991; Harvey, 1989; Held & McGrew, 2007; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999; Lash & Urry, 1994; Morley & Robins, 1995; Robertson, 1991, 1992, 1995; Robertson & White, 2005; Tomlinson, 1991, 1999; Urry, 2003).

Whereas the acceleration of interconnectivity and interdependency has altered, and is altering, our senses of community, society and nation, they do not seem to guarantee the formation of a homogeneous, ‘global society’ and ‘global culture’. Indeed, what is revealing in contemporary society is the complex and contrasting nature of globalisation that has produced more access, opportunities and pleasures for certain groups of people, yet more conflicts, exclusions and discontents for others. For instance, the advancement of communication technology (e.g. the internet, email, Skype and Facebook) has provided enormous opportunities for users to obtain information, knowledge and commodities as well as to extend their social, business and academic networks beyond national boundaries. On the other hand, it is in this sense that local communities, traditions and identities are constantly challenged and altered by the same force of media and communication technology that is rendering geographical and physical distances less significant.<sup>1</sup>

According to Beck (2000), “The world society which, in the wake of globalization, has taken shape in many (not only economic) dimensions is undermining the importance of the national state, because a multiplicity of social circles, communication networks, market relations and lifestyles, none of them specific to any particular locality, now cut across the boundaries of the national state” (p. 4). Moreover, as Morley and Robins (1995) assert, “the media create new ‘communities’ across their spaces of transmission, bringing together otherwise disparate groups around the common experience of television, and bringing about a cultural mixing of here and there” (p. 132). Although the media *per se* cannot determine the new formations of imagined communities, this claim has immediate relevance to this study’s central framework—corporate nationalism—that supposes the central role of corporations in creating or reinforcing new dominant senses of national communities and identities.

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<sup>1</sup> Global communication, social networking and business trades of goods and services arguably contribute to “the weakening or dissolution of the connection between everyday lived culture and territorial location” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 128).

To theorise the socio-cultural aspects of globalisation, it is useful to analytically distinguish the global and the local and examine their relationships in terms of temporality, spatiality and identity. Notably, many scholars point out intensified tensions, interactions and interpenetrations of forces between the global and the local (Barker, 1999; Giulianotti, 2005; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Hall, 1991; Morley, 1992; Morley & Robins, 1995; Robertson, 1992, 1995; Robertson & White, 2005).<sup>2</sup> One general perspective views globalisation as a form of dominance of the global over the local, thereby forming a homogeneous world while eroding local/national boundaries, communities and cultures. This sense of the global as a dominant force is particularly symbolised by the formation of ‘global’ institutions including transnational corporations (e.g. McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, Nike and Toyota), global organisations (e.g. the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and the International Monetary Fund) and macro-regional associations (e.g. the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

However, this view has been countered by those who highlight the capability of the local to resist, negotiate and appropriate the forces of the global (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009; Hall, 1991; Iwabuchi, 2002, 2010; Jackson & Andrews, 1999; Morley, 1992; Morley & Robins, 1995; Robertson, 1992, 1995; Robertson & White, 2005; Tomlinson, 1991, 1999). Similarly, critical arguments can be made towards proportions of so-called ‘global’ institutions such as the United Nations which is “primarily *international* as distinct from global bodies, dependent for their existence on the continuing structure of the nation-state system” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 103, emphasis in original). In particular, the nation has remained as one of the most potent sources of political sovereignty and solidarity and continues to provide a sense of ‘home’, fulfilling a

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<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, the forces of the global and the local may be described as those between globality and locality (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Robertson, 1992, 1995), between homogenisation and heterogenisation (Andrews, Carrington, Jackson, & Mazur, 1996; Appadurai, 1990; Barker, 1999; Eriksen, 2007; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Robertson, 1992, 1995) and between universalism and particularism (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Harvey, 1989; Robertson, 1992, 1995).

collective need for affirmation and security of one's life and values (Hirst & Thompson, 1999; Morley & Robins, 1995; Silk & Andrews, 2001; Smith, 1990, 1995, 2001; Tomlinson, 1999). For instance, Scherer and Jackson (2010) suggest that "while globalization encourages a limited role for government and public services, it does not imply the demise of the nation state per se, but rather a transformation of its role and authority" (p. 11). As such, it is fair to say that the local and the nation have actively transformed their own spatiality, culture and identity in response to the forces of globalisation.

Therefore, rather than polarising the forces of the global and the local, what is needed is to explore how they interact and are negotiated and articulated (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009). It is also important to empirically identify and examine evidence of disjuncture, resistance and struggles because it is where certain hegemonic forms of domination and privilege are subtly but surely formed, negotiated and contested in practice. Moreover, although globalisation can be analysed generally in terms of interactions between the global and the local, it needs to be considered as multi-dimensional and multi-directional to precisely and concretely attend to its complexity (Appadurai, 1990; Beck, 2000; Donnelly, 1996; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009; Houlihan, 2008; Jackson, Scherer, & Silk, 2007; Robertson, 1992, 1995; Robertson & White, 2005; Tomlinson, 1999).

While this type of categorisation may be defined differently by various scholars, we can broadly identify a range of dimensions of globalisation including economic, social, political, cultural, technological, ecological, communicative, religious and ideological (Beck, 2000). This thesis specifically focuses on, but is not restricted to, the cultural-economic dimension and interrogates "culture as a source of power, difference and emancipation, closely connected with social movements and cultural critique" (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 24). On the other hand, the important directional cultural flows of globalisation for this study include Westernisation, Americanisation and Japanisation. In particular, Japan has actively appropriated technology,

culture and knowledge of the West to negotiate its position within the Western- or American-centred world order. Accordingly, the following sub-sections discuss the notion of ‘hegemony’ as one way to view the global-local and West-East relations and to locate the unique position of Japan for complementing, negotiating and resisting Western hegemony.

### *Western hegemony and popular culture*

Despite the differences in their focus, the dominance of the global has been most enthusiastically debated in relation to global capitalism and modernity (e.g. Dirlik, 2003; Giddens, 1990; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Harvey, 1989; Wallerstein, 1974), global economy and market liberation (e.g. Friedman, 2005; Ohmae, 1990, 1995, 2000), global media networks (e.g. Castells, 1996; McLuhan, 1964; Schiller, 1989), global standardisation of products and services (e.g. Levitt, 1983; Ritzer, 1993) and global consumer culture (Featherstone, 2007; Horne, 2006; Tomlinson, 1991, 1999). While the seemingly-overwhelming force of the global can be captured by such terms and concepts, the existing economic-centred theories of globalisation have often been mistakenly equated with underlying assumptions of ‘cultural homogenisation’ which “presents globalization as synchronization to the demands of a standardized consumer culture, making everywhere seem more or less the same” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 6).

Therefore, criticism towards a one-dimensional, mono-causal economic approach has been levelled against discourses of cultural imperialism, Westernisation and Americanisation (Barker, 1999; Storey, 2010; Tomlinson, 1991, 1999).<sup>3</sup> As such, Storey (2010) argues that these

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, in line with Levitt’s (1983) notion of global standardisation, business consultant Kenichi Ohmae (1990, 1995, 2000) suggests a convergence of consumer cultures across different national markets. Although his emphasis was on the regionalisation of economies into a Triad (Europe, North America and Asia) rather than global homogenisation, his radical claims of ‘the borderless world’ and ‘the end of nation state’ have been subjected to criticism from various fields of study (Hirst & Thompson, 1999; Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005a; Tomlinson, 1999). Tomlinson (1999), specifically, points out that such a view “involves sociological reductionism and mono-causal logics precisely characterizing a one-dimensional approach” (p. 15).

economic-centred discourses unnecessarily contribute to “the reduction of the world to an American ‘global village’” where,

everyone speaks English with an American accent, wears Levi jeans and Wrangler shirts, drinks Coca-Cola, eats at McDonalds, surfs the net on a computer overflowing with Microsoft software, listens to rock or country music, watches a mixture of MTV and CNN news broadcast, Hollywood movies and reruns of *Dallas*, and then discusses the prophetically named World Series, while drinking a bottle of Budweiser or Miller and smoking Marlboro cigarettes. (p. 161)

Although this *complete* global imposition of American cultures and lifestyles has not been quite evident in the rest of the world, this comment highlights a particular critique of the global *dominance* of American corporations, media and cultural products. For example, Morley and Robins (1995) assert that American transnational corporations and media conglomerates have been a major force in “shaping a global space of image flows” (p. 32). However, such prevalence of American media, corporations and cultural goods cannot be simply translated into a world of single, homogeneous culture.<sup>4</sup> In the words of Storey (2010), it cannot be simply assumed that “commodities are the same as the culture; establish the presence of the former and you can predict the details of the latter” (p. 162). Rather, cultural goods and media representations are interpreted, consumed and appropriated differently across various global markets and consumers, leading to the creation of new meanings and lifestyles through reworking of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds in specific localities.

In the same vein, a discourse of ‘empire’ (Hardt & Negri, 2000), one of the more sophisticated accounts of globalisation, fell short by failing to recognise the dynamics of the local, and particularly non-Western, cultures in constituting diverse, and newly emerging, cultures across the globe. Urry (2003), for instance, critiques Hardt and Negri’s (2000) work as “a remarkably undynamic account of self-reproducing global relations” (p. 128) because “they do

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<sup>4</sup> As opposed to an essentialist view, American culture itself should not be considered as fixed or permanent. Rather, it consists of diverse cultures integrated to form a particular unity over a long history of cultural hybridisation (Nederveen Pieterse, 2009).

not explain what happens to nation states or to ‘societies’ within such an ‘empire’” (p. 129).

Therefore, although it is of course important to discuss the dominant formation of global capital and deterritorialisation of imperial power like an ‘empire’, what is also needed is the inclusion (not exclusion) of more empirical analyses of perspectives, roles and (re)actions of the local and the national within such discourses.

Indeed, a key shortcoming of the homogenisation thesis and other equivalents is the view of the local and the national as vulnerable, marginalised and passive victims of the, *seemingly* unchallengeable, global economic forces and relations. As such, Japan, as well as other non-Western nations, does not seem to be a meaningful site for serious academic scrutiny because sooner or later, the entire globe will be homogenised, becoming *like* other Western, modern and capitalist societies. Although these discourses would not suggest a *complete* transformation of the ‘Japanese’ into the ‘Western’ (e.g. abolition of Japanese culture, language and identity), assumptions of homogenisation tend to overlook the active roles of Japanese people and cultures in constituting the global fields of cultural production and consumption. Therefore, this one-sided, abstract approach needs to be supplemented, and sometimes challenged, by the analysis of the dialectic relationship between the global and the local.

One way to understand this dialectic relationship is Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) concept of ‘hegemony’. A key interpretation of hegemony in cultural studies is that popular culture serves as a crucial site of social struggles with “a contradictory mix of forces from both ‘below’ and ‘above’; both ‘commercial’ and ‘authentic’; marked by ‘resistance’ and ‘incorporation’, involving both ‘structure’ and ‘agency’” (Storey, 2010, p. 171). To put it differently, Stuart Hall (1981) calls this field of popular culture “a sort of constant battlefield” (p. 233). As Hall (1981) contends:

there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganise and reorganise popular culture; to enclose and confine its definitions and forms within a more inclusive range of

dominant forms. There are points of resistance; there are also moments of supersession. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle. (p. 233)

Therefore, the concept of hegemony does not guarantee either stability or permanence of dominance by a particular group or culture but instead asserts that dominant forms are constantly challenged and possibly superseded by popular forms of other groups or cultures. In this sense, the concept of hegemony should be distinguished from the *undialectical* discourses such as cultural imperialism and homogenisation. According to Raymond Williams (1980):

This is why hegemony is not to be understood at the level of mere opinion or mere manipulation. It is a whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, our ordinary understanding of the nature of man and of his world. It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. (p. 38)

Thus, understanding hegemony requires careful analyses of practices, experiences and struggles of those who construct certain social realities through a complex set of incorporation, resistance and negotiation and ultimately attempt to legitimise their worldview, morality and truth over others.

Accordingly, global or Western hegemony is not viewed as absolute determination of a single form of culture and society but as being challenged, negotiated and influenced by the local or non-Western forms, albeit differently among various local and national contexts under the forces of globalisation. This is not to deny the *current* and *recent* dominance of the West over 'the Rest' but to direct our attention to often-overlooked practices, experiences and perspectives of the non-West in actively responding and reacting to such domination. This in turn challenges the dominant tendency of media studies to reproduce, though perhaps unintentionally, the paradigm of 'the West speaks and the Rest listen' without carefully considering the active roles of non-Western actors and cultures. Thus, this thesis argues that non-Western actors are not, and therefore should not be assumed to be, passive readers, audiences and consumers because they

often serve as producers of popular cultural forms that may constitute counter-hegemonic forces and discourses within the contemporary context of cultural-economic globalisation.

Consequently, it is essential for a comprehensive analysis of globalisation not to exclude practices, experiences and perspectives with respect to other cultural flows including Japanisation, Hispanicisation, Islamisation and even Easternisation (Campbell, 2007; Donnelly, 1996; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009; Iwabuchi, 2002; Nederveen Pieterse, 2009; Robertson & White, 2005). In particular, the rise of the Asian economies including China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea represents a visible challenge and threat to the hegemonic construction of the global economy by the West (Morley & Robins, 1995). In the case of Japanisation, this cultural flow has been epitomised by the global presence of Japanese products (e.g. cars, motorcycles and electronics), food (e.g. *sushi*, *sashimi* and *tempura*), sports (e.g. *sumō*, *jūdō* and *karate*) and a range of other popular cultures (e.g. *anime*, *manga*, video games and TV programs) (Iwabuchi, 2002). Most importantly, these non-Western cultural flows, practices and experiences also constitute a sense of reality, though with different sets of meanings, values and embodiments from Western perspectives. The following sub-sections further explore discourses of Western hegemony by locating Japan at the nexus of the global-local and the West-East.

#### *Japan at the global-local nexus*

One strategic site to explore the complex dynamics of globalisation is the global-local nexus. For Morley and Robins (1995), globalisation is associated with “new dynamics of *re-localisation*” or “the achievement of a new global-local nexus, about new and intricate relations between global space and local space” (p. 116, emphasis in original). Thus, the concept of the global-local nexus asserts various articulations of spaces, cultures, institutions and identities between the global and the local. According to Morley and Robins (1995):

The global-local nexus is about the relation between globalising and particularising dynamics in the strategy of the global corporation, and the ‘local’ should be seen as a fluid and relational space, constituted only in and through its relation to the global (p. 117).

While the concept of ‘the global-local nexus’ can be widely used across political, economic, social and cultural contexts (Alger, 1988), this comment highlights the importance of global corporate strategy to influence, and even restructure, particular localities. This relationship between globalisation and the cultural power of transnational corporations is similarly addressed by Hall (1992b) who nonetheless emphasises the dialectic influences between the global and the local:

Globalization (in the form of flexible specialization and ‘niche’ marketing) actually exploits local differentiation. Thus, instead of thinking of the global *replacing* the local, it would be more accurate to think of a new articulation between ‘the global’ and ‘the local’. This ‘local’ is not, of course, to be confused with older identities, firmly rooted in well-bounded localities. Rather, it operates within the logic of globalization. However, it seems unlikely that globalization will simply destroy national identities. It is more likely to produce, simultaneously, *new* ‘global’ *and new* ‘local’ identifications. (p. 304, emphasis in original)

The strategy of global corporations to incorporate local elements for their business operations, and marketing in particular, has been variously called ‘flexible specialisation’, ‘niche marketing’, ‘mass customisation’ and ‘product differentiation’. This thesis focuses on a particular term to refer to this strategy—that is ‘glocalisation’. Glocalisation was originally coined in the business world as a marketing strategy but applied and developed by Roland Robertson (1995) as a theoretical concept for a socio-cultural analysis of globalisation. Robertson (1995) conceptualises glocalisation as challenging the dominant discourses of globalisation solely as a homogenising force by highlighting “the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local, or – in more abstract vein – the universal and the particular” (p. 30).<sup>5</sup> Robertson (1995) thus argues that two *seemingly* opposing trends of

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<sup>5</sup> Glocalisation is one among many theories that view the relationship between the global and the local as fluid and

homogenisation and heterogenisation are “in the last instance, complementary and interpenetrative; even though they certainly can and do collide in concrete situations” (p. 40). Moreover, Robertson (1992, p. 100, emphasis in original) locates glocalisation as one manifestation of what he calls “*the particularization of universalism*”—that constitutes, together with “*the universalization of particularism*”, the twofold process of globalisation.<sup>6</sup> The theoretical concept of glocalisation is important for this thesis not just because it highlights dialogue and reflexivity between the global and the local but because its development involved Japan for two reasons.

First, the concept of glocalisation stems from its etymological origin as ‘*dochakuka*’, meaning ‘indigenisation’ in Japanese, and its adoption in Japanese business practices. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (1991), glocal is thus defined as:

Formed by telescoping *global* and *local* to make a blend; the idea is modelled on Japanese *dochakuka* (derived from *dochaku* ‘living on one’s own land’), originally the agricultural principle of adapting one’s farming techniques to local conditions, but also adopted in Japanese business for *global localization*, a global outlook adapted to local conditions... By the late eighties and early nineties Western companies had observed the success of Japanese firms in doing this while at the same time exploiting the local conditions as well; this came to be called *global localization* (or, at first, *dochakuka*), soon abbreviated to *glocalization*. It proved to be one of the main marketing buzzwords of the beginning of the nineties. (p. 134, emphasis in original)

Hence, the role of Japanese corporations has been fundamental in the global popularisation of glocalisation strategy and practice. In the context of the post-Second World War era when American corporations exported their products in association with American lifestyle and values, Japanese corporations chose, or had to choose, a strategic decision not to emphasise Japanese

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relational. Such theories include ‘reterritorialisation’ (Morley & Robins, 1995; Tomlinson, 1999), ‘cultural hybridisation’ (Barker, 1999; García Canclini, 1995; Kraidy, 2005; Nederveen Pieterse, 1995, 2009), ‘creolisation’ (Hannerz, 1991; Houlihan, 1994) and ‘re-localisation’ (Morley & Robins, 1995). These theories suggest that the dynamics of cultural globalisation need to be studied and theorised from a comprehensive viewpoint encompassing the global and the local, and the West and the non-West.

<sup>6</sup> For Robertson (1992), the particularisation of universalism “involves the idea of the universal being given global-human concreteness” while the universalisation of particularism “involves the extensive diffusion of the idea that there is virtually no limit to particularity, to uniqueness, to difference, and to otherness” (p. 102).

cultural attributes of their exported goods due to the negative image as an ‘axis of evil’ associated with the war (Iwabuchi, 2002).

Instead, due to the lack of capacities and resources for mass production to pursue economies of scale, Japanese corporations localised their operations not only for marketing and advertising functions but also for many parts of their management across respective international markets in order to overcome the particularity of Japanese language, culture and management practice.<sup>7</sup> For example, du Gay et al. (1997) discuss Akio Morita’s, a former president of Sony,<sup>8</sup> idea about ‘global localisation’:

Akio Morita has often referred to these various dynamics of the ‘global-local nexus’ as a process of ‘global-localization’. This he has presented rather benignly as a policy in which the company makes use of local talent whilst being sensitive to local cultural differences... In addition to ‘caring for the community’, Sony has frequently presented ‘global-localization’ as involving ‘decentralized management’ – a practice of devolving ‘investment decisions, research and development, product planning and marketing’ to enable local people to do things ‘on the spot’... But for some staff this has not necessarily involved large degrees of local autonomy. Despite the abstract and universal significations of the term, the ‘global’ still has an identifiable headquarters that continues to exert a large degree of control, particularly over budgets and financial decisions... (p. 80)

Thus, from the point of view of Japanese corporations, or at least of Sony, glocalisation represents less of a marketing tool to superficially incorporate local elements for differentiation than a transnational practice of decentralised management to delegate decision making for local matters to local managers while retaining global control over financial and strategic decisions. In contrast, Western corporations including Coca-Cola, Nike and McDonald’s as early adopters of glocalisation practices applied the concept mainly for strategic promotional purposes—popularised by the slogan ‘think globally, act locally’—in order to customise their products and services to meet local tastes and needs (De Mooij, 2003; Leiss, Kline, Jhally, & Botterill, 2005;

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<sup>7</sup> These strategies drove the Japanese corporations to build an economic model in which their quality products, particularly for automobiles and electronics, were produced by flexible production systems in Japan and then marketed and distributed by their overseas local partners in accordance with the local needs, tastes and distribution channels during Japan’s so-called era of ‘economic miracle’.

<sup>8</sup> Sony is often credited as one of pioneering corporations for glocalisation strategies (Dicken & Miyamachi, 1998; du Gay et al., 1997; Iwabuchi, 1998; Morley & Robins, 1995).

Silk & Andrews, 2001). Perhaps, these different embodiments of glocalisation between Japanese and Western corporations are indicative of the different ways in which Nike and Asics manage their cultural economies across global markets. Notwithstanding such an assumption of differences, it is important to investigate the contexts of corporate activities within which the concept originated since the corporate strategy of glocalisation manifests and articulates complexities of the global cultural economy at large.

Second, as asserted by Robertson (1995), the development of corporate glocalisation strategies needs to be located within the socio-historical context of Japan—“a country which has for a very long time strongly cultivated the spatio-cultural significance of Japan itself and where the general issue of the relationship between the particular and the universal has historically received almost obsessive attention” (p. 28). In his earlier work, Robertson (1992) points to Japan’s capability of glocalisation in relation to the universalism-particularism continuum:

Japan’s crystallization of a form of ‘universalistic particularism’ since its first encounter with China has resulted in its acquiring paradigmatic, global significance with respect to the handling of the universalism-particularism issue. Specifically, its paradigmatic status is inherent in its very long and successful history of selective incorporation and syncretization of ideas from other cultures in such a way as to particularize the universal and, so to say, return the product of that process to the world as a uniquely Japanese contribution to the universal. (p. 102)

In other words, Japan is well known for cultural eclecticism or historical hybridisation of Other’s cultures and, perhaps less known, for contributions to cultural hybridisation at the global level. For example, Japanese cultural hybridisation has been associated with the historical adoption of cultural and political practices such as governmental policies, religions, philosophies, arts and music from China (particularly from the Tang Dynasty (618-907)). During the time of modernisation, this type of culture hybridisation was practiced by the Meiji government (1868-1912) which adopted European (especially French, British and German) systems, policies and technologies to reconstruct the nation as a modern, economic and military superpower. As

Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) assert, the principle philosophy of Japanese modernisation was “encapsulated in the implicitly glocalist aphorism, *wakon yōsai* (‘Japanese spirit, Western learning’)” (p. 180, emphasis and macron added).<sup>9</sup> Thus, Japanese modernisation was associated with the process of selection and reproduction of Japanese traditions, histories and identities that re-defined the imagined community of ‘Japan’ as a modern nation-state both to align itself politically and technologically in equal terms with, and to distinguish itself culturally and spiritually from, the Western rival states.

After the Second World War, Japan’s cultural hybridisation has been most significantly influenced by Americanisation across various realms of culture including fashion, music, sport and other popular forms. Through these interactive processes between the West and the East, foreign cultures have been translated, adapted and indigenised within Japanese society to form new articulations of different cultural elements and meanings. As Japan has never been colonised by foreign states, the Japanese history of cultural hybridisation can be distinguished from the cultural (ex)changes forced by colonisation and thus characterised by ‘voluntary acceptance and acculturation of foreign cultures’ (Kozakai, 1996), or perhaps more radically ‘*self*-colonisation of culture’ (Yoshioka, 1995). As such, Robertson (1992, p. 85) argues that “Japan is a vital and unavoidable topic for theorists of globalization” because it has a long history of glocalisation and hybridisation practices—the ways in which one society can learn from, or even appropriate, cultures of more dominant Others.

To this point, Beck (2000) also recognises the methodological significance of the glocalisation approach because “the sociology of globalization becomes *empirically possible* and necessary only as a ‘glocal’ cultural investigation of industry, inequality, technology and politics”

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<sup>9</sup> *Wakon yōsai* is written with ideographs for ‘Japan’ (和), ‘spirit’ (魂), ‘foreign (or the West in this case)’ (洋) and ‘talent’ (才). ‘才’ can be interpreted in some ways according to what one refers to. For example, it can be translated into “technologies” (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 9) and “learning” (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, p. 180).

(p. 49, emphasis in original). Consequently, Japan offers a strategic site for an academic analysis of the co-presence and interpenetration of the global and the local as well as the West and the East. The next sub-section focuses on the location of Japan at the latter nexus.

### *Japan at the West-East nexus*

Broadly, the economic, political and cultural dominance of the West is arguably best epitomised by the spread of Western capitalism to the rest of the world (Dirlik, 2003; Giddens, 1990; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Harvey, 1989, 2003; Morley & Robins, 1995). The expansion of Western capitalism has meant that nation-states have been “pressed to stay ‘open’ by the forces of media, technology, and travel which had fuelled consumerism throughout the world and have increased the craving, even in the non-Western world, for new commodities and spectacles” (Appadurai, 1990, p. 305). As a consequence:

global capitalism has in reality been about Westernisation – the export of Western commodities, values, priorities, ways of life. In a process of unequal cultural encounter, ‘foreign’ populations have been compelled to be the subjects and subalterns of Western empire, while, no less significantly, the West has come face to face with the ‘alien’ and ‘exotic’ culture of its ‘Other’. Globalisation, as it dissolves the barriers of distance, makes the encounter of colonial centre and colonised periphery immediate and intense. (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 108)

For non-Western nations like Japan, capitalism and consumerism are viewed as the ideas of Western origin while the incorporation or imposition of them within non-Western societies is characterised as ‘Westernisation’. In this process, non-Western nations have been increasingly integrated within the system and logic of Western-led global capitalism and consumerism that have reproduced, re-defined and re-shaped the world order of the dominant West/North and the subordinated East/South. As such, Harvey (1989) asserts that “Capitalism did not invent ‘the other’ but it certainly made use of and promoted it in highly structured ways” (p. 104).

The Western domination of global capital, economy and markets has been justified, strengthened and naturalised by a particular set of ideologies or what Edward Said (1978)

famously termed Orientalism—“a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 3). For Said (1978), Orientalism was constructed on “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” and stabilised as “the result of cultural hegemony at work” (p. 7). Central to the theory of Orientalism are Western dominant discourses of the East/Orient as “irrational, aberrant, backward, crude, despotic, inferior, inauthentic, passive, feminine and sexually corrupt” (Macfie, 2000). According to Hall (1992c), Orientalism contributes “the formation of the ‘discourse’ of ‘the West and the Rest’” (p. 276) in which “‘The Other’ was the ‘dark’ side – forgotten, repressed and denied; the reverse image of enlightenment and modernity” (p. 314). Such a discourse, as Hall (1992c) argues, also (re)defines certain characteristics of Western society:

By ‘western’ we mean the type of society discussed in this sense: a society that is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern. Such societies arose at a particular historical period – roughly, during the sixteenth century, after the Middle Ages and the break-up of feudalism. They were the result of a specific set of historical processes – economic, political, social and cultural. Nowadays, any society, wherever it exists on a geographical map, which shares these characteristics, can be said to belong to ‘the West’. The meaning of this term is therefore virtually identical to that of the word ‘modern’. (p. 277)<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, arbitrary distinctions between the modern West and the traditional East were imagined and represented by drawing symbolic boundaries between, for example, Christianity and others (e.g. Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism), capitalism and communism, modern and pre-modern, reason and superstition, and the civilised and the barbarians. Tomlinson (1999) succinctly explains this historical construction of the dualism between the modern/superior West and traditional/inferior East:

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<sup>10</sup> The problem of the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’ is “crude and simplistic distinctions and constructs an over-simplified conception of ‘difference’” (Hall, 1992c, p. 280) between and within them. It is worthwhile to point out that Hall (1992c) critically addresses an influence of the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’ in theorising society and culture: “it has been argued by some social scientists that *both* Marx’s notion of ‘Asiatic’ mode of production and Weber’s ‘patrimonial’ form of domination contain traces of or have been deeply penetrated by, ‘Orientalist’ assumptions. Or, to put it in our terms, both models provide evidence that the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’ is still at work in some of the conceptual categories, the stark oppositions and the theoretical dualisms of modern sociology” (p. 315, emphasis in original).

Modernity is said to replace tradition historically and to occur first in Europe and in significant points of European colonial expansion, most obviously the United States. The tradition-modernity dualism thus becomes the single, universal story of human development, thereby placing the West in the van of history. Not only does this dualism obliterate different non-western histories, it may be subtly transposed from a historical description to one of current cultural distinctions: modernity seen as the cultural property of the West, and tradition as the defining cultural deficit of the 'rest'. (p. 64)

Said's (1978) critique of Orientalism sparked discussions about historical and contemporary representations of the Other not only within studies of post-colonialism but also across a range of scholarly disciplines.<sup>11</sup> However, while Orientalism is undoubtedly a valuable approach to problematise the historical construction and stereotyping of the Orient within Western historical narratives and imaginaries, Said's (1978) critique has also been challenged and criticised in some ways (see Macfie, 2000). One of the problems in Said's (1978) critique of Orientalism is his own construction of the modern West and the traditional East as an unchallenged condition with one-way power relations. In other words, the clear-cut, thus unrealistic polarisation of the Orient and the Occident has been called into question for its obscurity of reciprocity, complexity and hybridity between them (Iwabuchi, 2002; Varisco, 2007).

Here, the approach of cultural hybridisation is helpful in taking account of long-term perspectives of cultural exchanges, crossovers and hybridity (Barker, 1999; García Canclini, 1995; Kraidy, 2005; Nederveen Pieterse, 1995, 2006, 2009). For instance, Nederveen Pieterse (1995) insists the need to locate Western dominance in a wider historical context without underplaying cultural influences of the Other:

European and Western culture are *part* of this global *mélange*. This is an obvious case if we reckon that Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the

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<sup>11</sup> Despite its significance across various fields of study, only a handful of scholars within the sociology of sport have employed Orientalism, or Occidentalism, as a theoretical framework in order to examine Western, or Eastern, representations of the Other. These analyses have generally involved the media's negative stereotyping of specific cultural groups including Muslim (Jaireth, 1995; Jiwani, 2008; Malcom, Bairner, & Curry, 2010), Asian (Hong, 2007; Stoddart, 2006), Māori (Falcous, 2007) and Japanese (Hogan, 2003).

recipient of cultural influences from 'the Orient'. The hegemony of the West dates only from very recent times, from around 1800, and, arguably, from industrialization. (p. 53, emphasis in original)

In this light, Hobson (2004) contends that “none of the major players in the world economy at any point before 1800 was European” (p. 74). The major economies before the nineteenth century include China, India, the Ottoman Empire and Persia. According to Nederveen Pieterse (2009), “As a late-comer Europe was an importer of cultural and other goods, which shows in the *mélange* character of early European culture” (p. 142). Therefore, Enlightenment civilisation, which has constructed one of the most important narratives and identities for European modernity, has its roots in a mythical Greek civilisation which was indeed influenced by the Oriental cultures (Hobson, 2004; Morley & Robins, 1995).<sup>12</sup> In this sense, Robertson (1992) considers the pre-modern civilised formations as “sequences of ‘miniglobalization,’ in the sense that, for example, historic empire formation involved the unification of previously sequestered territories and social entities” (p. 54). Although “it is necessary to emphasize that globalization is not equated with or seen as a direct consequence of an amorphously conceived modernity” (Robertson, 1992, p. 8), it is also plausible to consider that globalisation ‘took off’ during the period from the 1870s to the mid-1920s when “the increasingly manifest globalizing tendencies of previous periods and places gave way to a single, inexorable form centered upon the four reference points, and thus constraints, of national societies, generic individuals (but with a masculine bias), a single ‘international society,’ and an increasingly singular, but not unified conception of humankind” (Robertson, 1992, p. 59).

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<sup>12</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2006) went as far as to suggest that “the Orient came first and the Occident was a latecomer” (p. 411) in what is referred to as ‘Oriental globalisation’ (see Frank, 1998; Hobson, 2004; Nederveen Pieterse, 2006). Although such a notion of Oriental globalisation helps to challenge the Eurocentric view of globalisation, attempts to claim either the East or the West as the first ‘developer’ seem to be tautological and futile due to different perspectives about how to interpret the historical origins of ‘development’. However, the historical and contemporary discourses of the West-East dichotomy demands further investigations (see Featherstone & Venn, 2006; Nederveen Pieterse, 2006).

Furthermore, this view of globalisation as cultural hybridisation offers two important implications for the discourse of Orientalism. First, this long-term historical perspective of cultural reciprocity and appropriation warns of preoccupation with the fixed territorial view of cultures (e.g. Western, Eastern, European, American, Asian and Japanese).<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to consider the imagined cultural spaces of ‘the West’ and ‘the East’, or ‘the Occident’ and ‘the Orient’, as hybrid forms historically incorporating various cultures and thus by no means fixed or permanent. Nevertheless, over centuries, the cultural elements of the Others integrated within the hybrid forms have gradually been naturalised and normalised to the extent the hybrid nature is largely concealed and forgotten within a popular consciousness (Morley & Robins, 1995).

Second, the East/non-West/Orient has not always been a passive victim of Western domination. Not only was the non-West dominant over the West before nineteenth century, it is actively challenging the modern domination of the West by incorporating, appropriating and hybridising particular cultural elements of the West to cultivate their own versions of modern development. As non-Western nations have become more modernised or Westernised, this equation between the modern and the West has been increasingly challenged and destabilised. Specifically, in today’s context of globalisation, contemporary cultural artefacts and media representations have been produced, exchanged and consumed all over the world with unprecedented speed and scale in comparison with Said’s (1978) historical analysis of those intellectual discourses and traditional media. Highlighting the limitations of existing analysis of Orientalism within sport studies, Giulianotti (2005), for instance, insists that:

...the Orientalism thesis possesses some inherent weaknesses. Its distinctive determinism ensnares any claim to critical reflexivity or creative agency. From the Occidental viewpoint, Orientalism has a boomerang effect in sport that Said could

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<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, when searching for the origins of cultures, it is inevitable to find oneself returning to the same dilemma that, according to Nederveen Pieterse (1995), “hybridization is in effect a tautology: contemporary accelerated globalization means the hybridization of hybrid cultures” (p. 64).

not anticipate: non-Western cultures acquire Orientalist self-understandings that actually assist in defeating Western rationalism. (p. 202)

As Collins (2007) argues, Japan was the first non-Western nation, or ‘modernised Orient’, to host the Olympics in 1964, representing “the perfect ‘meeting-point’ of the East and the West” (p. 365). Japan’s rapid modern development positioned a nation of the non-West economically and technologically equivalent to, but culturally distinct from, Western nations. As Morley and Robins (1995) assert:

Western social science has understood ‘modernisation’ as a unilinear process of economic and social transformation, stretching from the cultural and intellectual world of seventeenth-century Europe to the post-1945 United States. It finds the emergence of Japan as an economic superpower hard to reconcile with this model (based as it is on a Euro-American definition of modernity). (p. 160)

In this sense, Japan is an important site for analyses of globalisation since it was the first non-Western nation to modernise its own society by incorporating, indigenising and re-inventing selected aspects of the West. Moreover, Japan’s co-existence of the old and the new, the traditional and the modern and the East and the West has posed a question in the conception of modernity and modernisation. For instance, as opposed to the dominant discourse of Japanese modernity in which the West ‘opened’ Japan for a path to modernisation, Ikegami (2005) concludes that “Tokugawa [a feudal government] Japan was moving towards its own versions of ‘proto-modernity’, or ‘modernity before modernization’, in the dimension of cultures of sociability” (pp. 373-374).<sup>14</sup> In short, the view of globalisation as Westernisation or Americanisation has been narrowly constructed by the underlying assumption of modernisation as a unilinear process of human progress and a destructive force to local/national cultures, traditions and values in the non-West.

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<sup>14</sup> As such, drawing from an example of *Japonisme*—the influence of the Japanese arts on Western modern artists such as Monet and Vincent van Gogh, Nederveen Pieterse (2009) similarly argues that “Japanese popular art was modern before European art was” (p. 84).

As Nederveen Pieterse (1995) puts it, “One way around the problem of modernization/Westernization is the notion of multiple *paths* of modernization, which avoids the onus of Eurocentrism and provides an angle for reproblematising Western development” (p. 48, emphasis in original). Likewise, several scholars suggest the use of terms such as ‘multiple forms of modernity’ or ‘modernities’ to accommodate different modernising experiences of the non-West (Eisenstadt, 2000; Featherstone, 1995, 2007; Tomlinson, 1999). Accordingly, Featherstone (2007) suggests:

alternative modernities points to the view that modernity today offers people around the world the opportunity to engage critically with their own hybrid modernities. Not the end of a single master narrative for modernity, the end of modernity or coming of postmodernity, but instead the absence of a governing centre produces latitude for multiple variation and ‘creative adaptation’ in a range of sites. (p. 174)

Nevertheless, like any other concept, these notions of multiple and alternative modernities have also been contested. Dirlik (2003), for instance, claims that “Ideas of multiple or alternative modernities, conceived along cultural boundaries, seem quite benign in recognizing that modernity may follow trajectories other than the European, but they have little to say on what such multiplicity of trajectories may mean in terms of contemporary configurations of global power” (p. 287). Therefore, Dirlik (2003) prefers to speak of ‘global modernity’ (in singular) to emphasise the current domination and structuring power of Western capitalism without any realistic alternatives manifested for new ideological formations.

However, he nonetheless recognises the ‘decentralised’ nature of contemporary global capital in “the situation of global modernity, when the identification of modernity with Western European and North American nations and regions has broken down; allowing for alternative cultural claims on the modern, and reconfiguring the temporalities and spatialities of capitalist modernity” (Dirlik, 2005, p. 158). Thus, what are needed are empirical and dialogic analyses of *practices, embodiments and conditions* of non-Western individuals and institutions who embrace,

indigenise and hybridise selected aspects of Western capitalism and modernity to eventually ‘reconfigure’ the formations of global consciousness and cultural economy.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, the perspectives of glocalisation and cultural hybridisation explain why experiences of modernisation vary from culture to culture because modern technologies, ideas and lifestyles have been indigenised, or hybridised with indigenous cultures, to create new forms of cultural experiences and practices within various local and national contexts of the non-West. The next section discusses a crucial role of transnational corporations in re-imagining our cultures and identities as part of globalising their operations beyond national boundaries.

### **Sport Brands (Transnational Corporations)**

The birth of transnational corporations marked an important turn in Western capitalism, transcending national borders in order to produce and distribute products and services on a global scale. This section reviews literature on corporate globalisation, McDonaldisation and cultural economy to illustrate the increasing prominence of global corporations, and sport brands in particular, in (re)constructing the global economy as well as cultural activities of everyday life in contemporary society. Arguably, over the past three decades, economic and cultural power has significantly shifted from nation-states to global financial institutions such as the World Bank, global media conglomerates and transnational corporations (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Castells (1996), for instance, notes a remarkable shift in the 1980’s when the neo-liberal movement towards deregulation and market liberalisation through reorganisation of trade relations, international production and distribution transformed the nature of markets and, for the first time in history, created “a unified global capital market, *working in real time*” (p. 43, emphasis in

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<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Dirlik (2003) suggests that “If ‘multiple modernities’ is to fulfil the promise of a more historical understanding of culture, what is needed is a more precise consideration of the units of culture in their seemingly ceaseless historical motions” (p. 287).

original). Lash and Urry (1994) share this view of the power shift in which “the decline of the national state in the process of globalization means that ‘hierarchies’, especially in transnational firms, have a more enhanced role to play in the new economic arrangements” (p. 22).

In this context, deregulatory processes and technological advancement have enabled corporations to transcend national borders, thus becoming more ‘global’ or transnational, by acquiring lower-cost production sites and new markets for further growth.<sup>16</sup> It is in this sense that Morley and Robins (1995) argue that: “Transnational corporations remain the key shapers and shakers of the international economy, and it is the ever more extensive and intensive integration of their activities that is the primary dynamic of the globalisation process” (p. 109). For Beck (2000), globalisation “means that corporations, especially globally active ones, can play a key role in shaping not only the economy but society as whole” (p. 2). While there are many interpretations of the consequences of the global domination of corporations on our society, the next sub-section focuses two particular perspectives: McDonaldisation and cultural economy.

#### *McDonaldisation and cultural economy*

One of the influential social theories for interpreting the cultural consequences of corporate globalisation is George Ritzer’s (1993) McDonaldisation. Ritzer (1993) defines McDonaldisation as “the process whereby the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world” (p. 19). Drawing from Max Weber’s notion of an ‘iron cage’ or rationalisation and bureaucratisation of modern society, Ritzer (1993) argues that every sphere of our lives is becoming more like the operation of a McDonald’s with respect to its principle of maximising efficiency, calculability, predictability and controllability of labour through standardisation of products, services,

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<sup>16</sup> This rise of so-called ‘global commodity chains’ (Frenkel, 2001; Harrison, 1994; Korzeniewicz, 1994) is one of the manifestations of corporate transcendence over national regulations that have drawn public dissent and criticism for the unethical labour practices in overseas production sites.

processes and even lifestyle. This assumption is consistent with Levitt's (1983) advocacy of the strategy of global standardisation of products and services for corporations to expand their business beyond national borders in the 1970's and 1980's.

While the theory of McDonaldisation is useful to identify the logic of corporate rationalism and associated social problems of modernised societies across the world, it has been criticised for its reduction of culture to economic and managerial rationalism. As such, one key point of critique is aimed at its neglect of the diverse, hybrid nature of McDonald's operations and consumption practices across different cultural contexts. Nederveen Pieterse (2009), for instance, critiques the dominant interpretation of McDonaldisation as one variation of cultural imperialism and suggests that "it would make more sense to consider McDonaldization as a form of intercultural hybridization, partly in its origins and certainly in its present globally localizing variety of forms" (p. 53). Likewise, Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) contend that:

Ritzer's analysis may underplay the highly varied ways in which McDonald's restaurants, or other paragons of rationalization, have originated or been introduced within different historical and cultural contexts. The *modus operandi* of McDonald's restaurants was in significant part inspired by the White Castle fast-food chain founded in 1921... Moreover, different social practices and cultural impacts obtain in McDonald's restaurants in Asia compared to North America; for example, in terms of unseated customers 'hovering' at the tables, or promoting hygiene standards across all local restaurants... (p. 44)<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, as Robertson and White (2005) argue, McDonald's serves as a vehicle for glocalisation that cultivates "their own particular variation on the *universality* of McDonald's" (p. 354, emphasis in original). As discussed in the previous section, the globalisation of corporations has simultaneously required glocalisation processes and practices in order to accommodate local/national cultures, values and sensibilities within various contexts of the local.<sup>18</sup> Firstly

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<sup>17</sup> Their understanding of multiple interpretations and appropriation of McDonald's practices was drawn from *Golden Arches East* edited by Watson (1997). This collection of essays on McDonald's in East Asia provides insight into the ways in which American fast food lifestyle has been not only adopted but also domesticated, or glocalised, to create its own new style of consumption, experience and practice in each cultural setting.

<sup>18</sup> As Andrews and Ritzer (2007) note, "Rather than seeking to neuter cultural difference through a strategic global uniformity, these transnational corporations have acknowledged that securing a profitable global presence

cultivated by Japanese corporations and secondly adopted by Western corporations in 1990's, the strategy of glocalisation has become part of 'regular' discussions for any globally-minded strategists of transnational corporations today. In other words, transnational corporations have faced and realised the 'irreducible' importance of the local particularities for both production and consumption when expanding their operations globally.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that these views of glocalisation and cultural hybridisation do not deny the essential theoretical elements of McDonaldisation—rationalisation and bureaucratisation as characteristics of modernisation—but acknowledge that the cultural dimension and dynamics cannot be reduced to economic and rational determinism. Accordingly, there is a need to take into account difference and variety in hybrid social and cultural forms that are produced by McDonaldisation when it is adopted and glocalised in different local contexts. In other words, this managerial rationalism of global corporations has not always been successful in various contexts of the global cultural economy. For instance, against Levitt's (1983) assumption of 'rationality' in consumer behaviour, de Mooij (2003) argues that "The assumption of rationality is increasingly regarded as unrealistic and places consumers outside a cultural context" (p. 184). Likewise, Horne (2006) asserts that "The *global* rationality of cultural corporations seeking economies of scale in the manufacture of taste is opposed by *local* knowledges that diffuse, subvert and appropriate commodities and services for 'irrational' styles" (p. 123, emphasis in original).

This disparity between corporate rationalism and irrationality of consumer tastes, desires and behaviour is further implicated within the broader dynamics and tensions between the economic and the cultural. It is in this sense that economic imperatives of global corporations are challenged and negotiated by cultural sensibilities of local societies. According to Robertson, (1992), "capitalism has to accommodate itself both to the *materiality* of the heliocentric global necessitates operating in the languages of the local" (p. 141).

world, with its inherent space-time contingencies, and to the *culturality* of human life, including the ‘making sense’ - indeed the ‘construction’ - of the geosocial contingencies of in-group/out-group relations” (p. 173, emphasis in original). As opposed to the rational model of mass production of the same goods across different markets to achieve economies of scale, corporations have realised, for instance, the need to adopt the ‘irrational’ model of lifestyling—“tailoring or customizing a product to the lifestyle of a particular niche or target market segment” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 66). From this view, the rapid growth of the service sectors and rising number of occupations for branding, marketing and public relations function to accommodate ‘irrationality’ of consumers “because they are situated at the intersection of conflicting economic and cultural demands” (Goldman & Papson, 1996, p. 18). In this context, commodities are produced and consumed not only for fulfilling basic needs of people (e.g. food, home and clothes) but also for signs of brands or “a ‘commodity aesthetic’ so that styles expressed beauty, individuality, status, pleasure, and the fulfilment of desire” (Goldman & Papson, 1996, p. 188).

Similarly, Bourdieu (1984) suggests there has been an expansion of what he calls the ‘new petite bourgeoisie’ whose occupations relate to the production of symbolic and cultural goods. Bourdieu (1984) argues that this newly emergent class of occupation cultivated the new form of aestheticism “by conferring aesthetic status on objects or ways of representing them that are excluded by the dominant aesthetic of the time, or on objects that are given aesthetic status by dominated ‘aesthetics’” (p. 47). This new, commerce-inspired form of aestheticism based on contemporary fashion, lifestyling and branding represents symbolic challenges, negotiations and struggles of ‘tastes’ of younger generations against those of the older fraction within the dominant class.<sup>19</sup> Although Bourdieu’s (1984) analysis was based on the class relations in France,

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<sup>19</sup> According to Bourdieu (1984), “changes in posts (and their occupants) are inevitably accompanied by a whole effort at *symbolic restructuring* aimed at winning recognition in representations and therefore by a permanent struggle between those who seek to impose the new system of classification and those who defend the old system” (p. 310, emphasis added).

Featherstone (2007) draws upon and extends his analysis to understand the global phenomenon of what he calls ‘aestheticisation of everyday life’. Like Bourdieu (1984), Featherstone (2007) points out the increasing number of symbolic workers who have promoted “an art of living in which their body, home and car are regarded as an extension of their *persona* which must be stylized to express the individuality of the bearer” (p. 59, emphasis in original).<sup>20</sup> In other words, this symbolic production of tastes, signs and lifestyles through branding and marketing has become a key *cultural-economic* activity and practice for corporations. Thus, modern society has been increasingly influenced by the ‘cultural economy’ (du Gay & Pryke, 2002) of transnational corporations and the symbolic consumption of distinctive tastes, lifestyles and identities.

The notion of cultural economy recognises the importance of cultural elements in economic activities as well as economic elements in cultural activities. According to du Gay and Pryke (2002):

Instead of viewing a market or firm as existing prior to and hence independently of descriptions of it, the turn to culture instigates a reversal of this perception, by indicating the ways in which objects are constituted through the discourses used to describe them and to act upon them. (p. 2)

du Gay et al. (1997) provide two reasons for this emphasis of ‘culture’ in economy. The first is “*substantive* (i.e. concerned with matters of empirical substance) in that it refers directly to the increased importance of cultural practices and institutions in every area of our social lives” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 1, emphasis in original). The growth of culture and creative, including sport, industries is particularly emblematic of this development of cultural economy because they are driven by the social and cultural needs and desires for information, communication, aesthetics and entertainment. As du Gay and Pryke (2002) assert, “service work is a contingent assemblage

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<sup>20</sup> This point is similarly addressed by Harvey (1989) who contends that “The acquisition of an image (by the purchase of a sign system such as designer clothes and the right car) becomes a singularly important element in the presentation of self in labour markets and, by extension, becomes integral to the quest for individual identity, self-realization, and meaning” (p. 288).

of practices built up from parts that are economic and non-economic (but always already cultural) and forged together in the pursuit of increased sales and competitive advantage” (p. 4).

The second is “*epistemological*, in that it is primarily concerned with matters of knowledge” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 1, emphasis in original). In other words, it involves,

...the ways in which the ‘making up’ or ‘construction’ of economic realities is undertaken and achieved; how those activities, objects and persons we categorize as ‘economic’ are built up or assembled from a number of parts, many of them supplied by the disciplines of economics but many drawn from other sources, including, of course, forms of ostensibly non-economic cultural practice... (du Gay & Pryke, 2002, p. 5)

Hence, the use of the term, cultural economy, alerts us to the need to take culture seriously for an intellectual analysis because “cultural processes were deemed rather ephemeral and superficial” and “often assumed, particularly by Marxist theorists, to be ‘superstructural’, being both dependent upon and reflective of the primary status of the material base and thus unlikely to provide social scientists with valid, ‘real’ knowledge” (du Gay et al., 1997, pp. 1-2).

Nevertheless, we should not replace the assumption of ‘economy determines culture’ to ‘culture determines economy’ but to inform the interdependency and interpenetration of the economic and the cultural in contemporary cultural production and consumption. Nixon (1996) is particularly eloquent in this point:

the relations between “the economic” and “the cultural” are not best conceptualized as the effect of an autonomous, primary domain of practices and processes (the economic) on another “relatively autonomous” domain of practices and processes (the cultural). Rather, as I have suggested, it is more useful to emphasize conceptually the interdependence of economic and cultural practices and their relations of reciprocal effect in the sphere of cultural production. (p. 199)

Within the context of the global cultural economy, marketing and branding have become prioritised as central activities for corporations to identify perceived needs and drive consumer desires by creating a sense of loyalty and emotional ties to their brands. Sport, in particular, has proven to be a powerful vehicle for the media and corporations, including sport-related entities such as the International Olympic Committee, seeking to distinguish their brands by associating

with particular sporting events, teams and celebrities. Accordingly, the following sub-section discusses the brand histories, marketing strategies and organisational characteristics of two global sport brands—Nike and Asics—given that they serve as case studies for this thesis.

### *Nike and Asics*

One of the most emblematic industries that represents forging of the economic and the cultural is the sport industry. Not only is sport a form of popular culture and corporeal spectacle that has been globally popularised, practiced and mediated beyond various linguistic, religious and cultural differences, but also “sport is an ideal conduit of promotional culture because in many ways it mirrors the idealized version of capitalism; that is, it is based on competition, achievement, efficiency, technology and meritocracy” (Jackson et al., 2005, p. 10). Given such a mutually reinforcing relationship between globalisation of sport and capitalism, it is no wonder that sport brands like Nike and Adidas have been driving forces for creating new symbolic meanings, values and lifestyles by articulating the economic agenda of corporations with creative and cultural activities of sport-oriented celebrity endorsements, sponsorships and advertising.

By conceptualising contested terrains of symbolic production as ‘sign wars’, Goldman and Papson (1996) assert that “No industry affords a better example of sign wars than the athletic shoe industry” (p. 38). Because of the significance of symbolic and cultural activities of sport brands especially Nike, Goldman and Papson (1998) devoted their intellectual work to write a book entitled *Nike Culture* in which they claimed that Nike and Wieden+Kennedy (W+K), an advertising agency, “stand out as leaders in what may be described as a cultural economy of images” (p. 1). They continue:

*Nike* advertising does more than simply sell shoes as commodities, it gives voice to important cultural contradictions that define our era. In this regard, we see *Nike* advertising as representative of a newly unfolding stage of commodity culture mixed with cultural politics. (Goldman & Papson, 1998, p. 3, emphasis in original)

Although Nike is largely credited for cultivating new styles of sport branding, marketing, advertising and lifestyling, the corporation would not exist today if its start-up business operation was not supported by Asics, a Japanese sport brand. Indeed, these two brands offer interesting crossovers and contrasts that provide different materials and angles for the analysis of corporate nationalism and cultural economy. According to Kobayashi, Amis, Irwin and Southall (2010), unique contrasts can be made for their strategic foci between marketing and craftsmanship; and between their countries of origin (American and Japanese). First, Nike who once was proud of manufacturing a product shifted its corporate vision and culture to emphasise creation of symbolic values and lifestyles, thereby marking a stark contrast to Asics whose focus has largely remained on improvement of functionality and technology. Philip Knight, one of the co-founders of Nike, famously noted the company's transformation from a sporting goods manufacturer to a marketing brand: "For years, we thought of ourselves as a production-oriented company, meaning we put all our emphasis on designing and manufacturing the product. But now we understand that the most important thing we do is market the product" (quoted in Willigan, 1992, p. 92).

Nike was founded in 1964 as Blue Ribbon Sports whose primary business was to import athletic footwear from Onitsuka Corporation, the forerunner of Asics, and distribute them in the U.S. market. Although their contract ended in dispute in 1971, Nike was able to inherit Onitsuka Corporation's knowledge of the athletic footwear business and strategy of producing technologically superior products for top athletes. The departure point for Nike towards a marketing-centred approach was in the early 1980's when,

Reebok came out of nowhere to dominate the aerobics market, which we completely miscalculated. We made an aerobics shoe that was functionally superior to Reebok's, but we missed the styling. Reebok's shoe was sleek and attractive, while ours was sturdy and clunky. (Philip Knight quoted in Willigan, 1992, p. 92)

Therefore, Nike's loss in the aerobics market to Reebok triggered the corporation to make a key shift on their strategic focus from producing commodities to creating symbolic values, identifications and lifestyles. From this pivotal turn onward, advertising has functioned as a central promotional tool for Nike to create emotional and spiritual connections of the brand with consumers. As Philip Knight states, "Our advertising tries to link consumers to the Nike brand through the emotions of sports and fitness. We show competition, determination, achievement, fun, and even the spiritual rewards of participating in those activities" (quoted in Willigan, 1992, p. 99). Whereas Western competitors such as Adidas, Puma and Reebok followed this 'Nike way' of prioritizing branding, marketing and advertising, Asics has retained its philosophy of craftsmanship and consequently been left behind the competition with respect to branding and marketing within the cultural economy of the sport industry.

Second, even though they are now referred to as 'global' or 'transnational' corporations, the differences between 'Japanese' Asics and 'American' Nike remain crucial in understanding the different managerial and strategic approaches that they pursue in their global operations. In this sense, their contrasting management styles and corporate cultures may provide insightful differences in the ways in which corporate nationalism is formed and practiced. For instance, in relation to the first point about Asics' focus on craftsmanship, Kobayashi et al. (2010) offer a few interrelated reasons for the Asics' delay in responding to this turn of marketing emphasis in the sporting goods industry. One reason is that Asics was more concerned with the domestic competition against Mizuno and others and largely overlooked the business trends overseas. Another is that Japanese sports and sport celebrities were much less popular in the global markets in comparison with Western counterparts, thereby positioning Asics less favourably for attaining superior sporting signs to associate with.

However, perhaps the most important factor is the cultural and strategic differences in their corporate philosophies with respect to 'making things'. For example, Nike's strategic

approach is epitomised by Philip Knight's comment: "There is no value in making things any more. The value is added by careful research, by innovation and by marketing" (quoted in Klein, 2000, p. 197). This statement clearly contrasts with the philosophy of Asics as noted by Kihachiro Onitsuka, the founder of Asics:

Nike is a trading company and Asics is a maker. Therefore, Nike does not have its own factories. Instead, resources are invested in product development and marketing. For example, Nike captured the consumers' minds with the strategy of using Tiger Woods as Nike's exclusive promotional vehicle in exchange for an enormous amount of money, which really represented the American way of doing business. Furthermore, Nike mass-produces its goods by fully exploiting cheap labor in developing countries, mostly in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, Asics prioritizes technical skill the most. Although we also have production bases overseas, we manage those factories on our own (quoted in Kobayashi et al., 2010, pp. 1346-1347)

While Asics does use subcontractors for production in Asia, what is significant in this comment is that Asics intentionally resisted 'the American way of doing business'—at least at some point of their corporate history—and distinguished itself from Nike by categorising itself as a 'maker', prioritising technical skill and Japanese craftsmanship. Similarly, Kiyomi Wada, a former president of Asics, made the following statement in 2003 insisting that Asics' employees,

go back to the starting point and rediscover the importance of adhering to the fundamentals of manufacturing, which is essential as a maker. Then, we could strengthen our brand which focuses on the arena of competition sports. We continue to put an emphasis on technology and functionality, which are our brand values. We need to develop and provide the products which only Asics can create. (quoted in Kobayashi et al., 2010, p. 1347)

In contrast to the previous comment by the founder of Asics, this statement denotes the strategic shift of Asics to emphasise its focus on technology, functionality and craftsmanship *as a way of branding*. In other words, as opposed to resisting the American promotional tactics of marketing and branding altogether, Asics eventually employed them to communicate its brand identity of Japanese authenticity, craftsmanship and cultural values. Nevertheless, despite increasing similarities in their branding and marketing tactics, discourses of Japanese corporate cultures and management styles have continued to be reproduced and reconstructed to mark

distinctions from rival Western brands. As Kobayashi et al. (2010) highlight, one way to make sense of this is to consider the influences of the *ie* (family) structure that was derived from Confucianism and still lingers within Japanese corporations and society as a whole, thereby serving as a distinguishing point of Japanese systems and cultures of management.

Without wishing to essentialise certain cultural values and practices as ‘Japanese’, it is important for studies of corporate nationalism to investigate the relationships between ‘transnational’ corporations and their ‘countries of origin’ and how they are reflected in ever more pervasive cultural practices of branding and representing ‘the nation’. In this sense, the ‘Japaneseness’ of Japanese corporations is by no means fixed or permanent but rather flexible and temporal—formed through discursive practices within respective contexts. For instance, du Gay et al. (1997) point to the notions of ‘miniaturisation’, ‘an aesthetic of simplicity’ and ‘attention to detail’ as characteristics of Japanese cultural products represented by the Walkman, Sony’s portable audio device:

we can say that this might be due less to the ways in which it *reflects* the timeless essence of some Japanese tradition than it is to the ways in which Japanese designers create products that come to be represented as typically ‘Japanese’. It is through such products as the Walkman that miniaturization comes to be associated with Japan rather than through miniaturization that a Japanese essence is inscribed onto the Walkman. (p. 74, emphasis in original)

Similarly, “the idea of ‘Japanese technology’” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 27) does not guarantee either its historical continuity of technological superiority or future possibility of further technological advancement but rather represents a *temporary marker* of ‘Japan’ through signifying practices of branding, marketing and advertising. In the context of the Western-dominated global cultural economy, Asics as a Japanese sport brand occupies a unique position of promoting, albeit rather contradictorily, both Western corporate capitalism as well as Japanese aesthetics, cultures and philosophies. Indeed, it is important to understand how Asics challenges Nike in its cultural politics of representation by both incorporating and resisting ‘the American

way of doing business'. In this thesis, selected advertising campaigns of Nike and Asics are examined as case studies as part of wider analysis of corporate nationalism and the representation of Japanese identity.

### **Advertising (Media)**

Following the discussion of cultural economy and sport brands, the third section reviews literature on advertising in particular and the media more generally. During the 1930's, the Frankfurt School led by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer initially developed the social theories focused on ideological effects of mass media and communications. The formation of these theories was influenced by the historical context of the pre-Second World War era in which nation-states used the mass media for propaganda in an attempt to build people's consent to the state's justification of violence to ethnic minorities and wars against other nation-states.<sup>21</sup> Given their fear about the expansion of international fascist movements in Germany, Italy and Japan, this perspective was largely driven by determinist understandings of economic and symbolic power of the mass media in imposing ideologies and political interests of a handful of powerful state and corporate elites on the general public. Although this view is now considered too rigid and simplistic to understand the globalization of the media, what is significant about these studies are the implications of political-economic and socio-cultural impacts of the culture industry as a major institution capable of reproducing and influencing contemporary societies and cultures centred on the media.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, there has been a backlash in cultural studies against this predominant view of the mass media as unchallenged hegemonic tools for the cultural politics of state and

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<sup>21</sup> According to Kellner (1997), "It was thus an era of mass production and consumption characterized by uniformity and homogeneity of needs, thought and behaviour producing a 'mass society' and what the Frankfurt School described as 'the end of the individual'" (p. 14).

<sup>22</sup> Kellner (2003), for instance, contends that "The media are a profound and often misperceived source of cultural pedagogy: They contribute to educating us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire—and what not to" (p. 9).

corporate elites. In particular, criticism has been directed at its determinism of ideologies and reduction of the general public as ‘cultural dupes’. For instance, Scherer and Jackson (2010) argue that “This entirely pessimistic analysis reduces individuals to the characteristics and imperatives of advertising, and regards advertising as culpable of creating false needs while encouraging people to seek pleasure(s) in the market via consumption” (p. 43). Hence, the studies of audience reception of the mediated texts opened a new window for alternative interpretations such as an ‘active audience’ and frameworks for re-theorising influences of the mass mediated culture (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Ang, 1985; Barker, 1999; Fiske, 1987, 1989; Morley, 1992).<sup>23</sup> However, instead of falling into cultural pluralism of audience readings, it is important to empirically examine various sets of power relations at the moments of production and consumption through which dominant ideas, discourses and cultures are accepted, resisted and negotiated, often in a contradictory way.<sup>24</sup>

This section focuses specifically on advertising as part of the media as well as popular culture. According to Jackson et al. (2005), “advertising is at the forefront of the expansion of the global economy and postmodern promotional culture” (p. 2). Similarly, Lash and Urry (1994) suggest “As other culture sector firms become increasingly like advertising, advertising is itself becoming more like a culture industry” (p. 139). In other words, studying advertising has implications for the larger fields of the media production and consumption of culture and identity because advertising has played a central role in the formation and expansion of the global culture industry. In particular, this section reviews and discusses key concepts to investigate the cultural circuit of advertising: representation, articulation, cultural intermediaries and the field of advertising production.

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<sup>23</sup> David Morley, one of the early theorists to advocate audience research, asserts that these studies provided “a way to ‘operationalize’ a study of the extent (and limits) of ideological or cultural hegemony, as manifested in the forms of media consumption” (interviewed in Jin, 2011, p. 127).

<sup>24</sup> In this sense, dominance needs to be viewed as “a *set of relationships* that are everywhere in cultural *transactions*, cutting across the social divides, hinging together cultural spaces” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 143, emphasis in original).

### *Advertising: Representation and articulation*

Modern advertising was substantially developed in the nineteenth century when individual agents acted as media space brokers to sell advertising space in newspapers to corporations. These brokers later became institutionalised as a legitimate profession, in the form of advertising agencies, which characterises the modern form of corporate communication with consumers. Raymond Williams (1980) identifies the fundamental shift of advertising to the modern form as follows:

...in the last forty years and now at an increasing rate, it has passed the frontier of the selling of goods and services and has become involved with the teaching of social and personal values; it is also rapidly entering the world of politics. Advertising is also, in a sense, the official art of modern capitalist society: it is what 'we' put up in 'our' streets and use to fill up to half of 'our' newspapers and magazines: and it commands the services of perhaps the largest organized body of writers and artists, with their attendant managers and advisers, in the whole society. (pp. 184-185)<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, as the annual Cannes and other award festivals for advertising and creativity indicate, advertising has been increasingly acknowledged as “a form of artistic expression in its own right and as an inspiration to the arts in general” (Leiss et al., 2005, p. 16). Thus, it is fair to consider advertising as a contemporary, commercial form of ‘art’ that has transformed spaces of everyday life and senses of aestheticism.

Raymond Williams (1980) calls advertising ‘the magic system’ because it is “a highly organized and professional system of magical inducements and satisfactions, functionally very similar to magical systems in simpler societies, but rather strangely coexistent with a highly developed scientific technology” (p. 185). Hence, modern advertising not only attempts to persuade consumers to purchase commodities for their material needs but also invites consumers to acquire social meanings, status, identification and fantasy through association with brands. du Gay et al. (1997), for instance, contend that “The language of advertising – and representation in

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<sup>25</sup> In a similar vein, Harvey (1989) argues that “The deployment of advertising as ‘the official art of capitalism’ brings advertising strategies into art, and art into advertising strategies” (p. 63).

general – operates as much on fantasy and desire as it does on rational choices and so-called ‘real’ needs” (pp. 25-26). It is in this sense that advertising has been in part blamed as being a capitalist tool of production for developing and enhancing the cultural patterns of driving *excessive* and *unnecessary* human desires for consumption leading to a range of social and ecological problems.

The general effects of modern advertising practices on culture, society and the environment are beyond the scope of this study; rather the focus is on how social meanings, identifications and fantasies with respect to ‘the nation’ are produced and consumed through advertising campaigns within the sport and advertising industries. Indeed, previous studies argue that advertising serves as a driving force in cultural reproduction of identities in relation to, for instance, nationality, gender, sexuality, race and social class (du Gay et al., 1997; Goldman, 1992; Goldman & Papson, 1996, 1998; Jackson & Andrews, 2005; Leiss et al., 2005). As du Gay et al. (1997) assert, “representation is not so much about reflecting the identities we already have as telling us what sorts of identities we can *become* – and how” (p. 39, emphasis in original).

Roland Barthes (1972) provides the seminal semiotic study of the ideological effects of advertisements and argues that advertising (re)produces ‘myth’—an inflection—that naturalises certain meanings and interpretations as part of the formation of a dominant discourse. As Hall (1992c) argues, myths or “certain descriptions, even if they appear false to us, can be *made ‘true’* because people act on them believing that they are true, and so their actions have real consequences” (p. 293, emphasis in original). Drawing on Barthes (1972), Williamson (1978) examines many examples of advertising texts and attempts to illustrate the ideological process in which “a product and an image/emotion become linked in our minds, while the process of this linking is unconscious” (p. 30). From this view, advertisements signify dominant ideas, values and meanings of the privileged to determine our readings of them and reproduce and naturalise a

symbolic order of the dominant class.<sup>26</sup> However, Williamson's (1978) work has been criticised for ignoring the complexity of mediations within a production context as well as the multiplicity of readings within a consumption context.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to the practice of what he calls “one-side productivist reading” (Hall, 1983, p. 71), Stuart Hall (1980) introduced a more plausible model of encoding-decoding in order to illustrate that dominant or preferred meanings are accepted, resisted or negotiated by decoding practices of audiences (see Chapter 3 for more explanation). In other words, communication can fail because of “the *lack of equivalence* between the two sides in the communicative exchange” (Hall, 1980, p. 131, emphasis in original). Therefore, this model provides ‘no guarantee’ or “no necessary correspondence” (Hall, 1980, p. 136) between any communicative exchanges. Indeed, Hall (1985) contends that “The principal theoretical reversal accomplished by ‘no necessary correspondence’ is that determinancy is transferred from the genetic origins of class or other social forces in a structure to *the effects or results of a practice*” (p. 95, emphasis added).

Thus, in contrast to the models of ideological determinism, Hall (1996b) offers an alternative theory of ‘articulation’—that is “a cultural transformation... through a reorganization of the elements of a cultural practice, elements which do not in themselves have any necessary political connotations” (p. 143). According to Hall (1996b):

An articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? So the so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’. The ‘unity’ which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social

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<sup>26</sup> The manipulative power of advertising has been also discussed in psychological terms for, for example, subliminal stimuli (Leiss et al., 2005). Leiss et al. (2005) note that “The advertisers were rightly offended by this accusation of manipulation for what they felt was legitimate persuasion” (p. 10). For advertisers, this distinction between manipulation and persuasion has become one of focal points in advertising debate since “Manipulation involves outright deception (lying or falsehood), whereas persuasion is supposed to harbor only allowable exaggeration and embellishment” (Leiss et al., 2005, p. 10).

<sup>27</sup> For instance, Soar (2000) asserts that Williamson's (1978) readings are derived only from her own subjective reading without considering possibilities of alternative readings or interpretations.

factors with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. Thus, a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects. (p. 141-142)

Therefore, the theory of articulation points to a need to understand different elements, practices and conditions of meaning-making activities through which textual representations are encoded and decoded as meaningful signs and discourses from various points of view.<sup>28</sup> From this view, media texts can be encoded and decoded in association with various arbitrary linkages or re-articulations within specific political-economic and socio-cultural contexts of production and consumption. In other words, media texts represent “the arbitrary closure” (Hall, 1992a, p. 278)—that is characterised by a temporal unity as the result of signifying practices under certain conditions and subjected to a range of alternative readings, appropriation and re-articulation.<sup>29</sup>

By understanding communication as a practice of articulation, advertising is considered to provide real consequences of communicative exchanges as discursive practices because it plays a pivotal role in linking production with consumption (du Gay et al., 1997; Jackson et al., 2005; Scherer & Jackson, 2008a). In other words, advertising serves as a key site for both producers and consumers to rework socio-cultural meanings and discourses associated with particular commodities, brands and lifestyles in the contemporary cultural economy. Therefore, a cultural artefact such as an advertisement needs to be viewed and analysed as constructed and negotiated by various institutions and individuals at different moments within the ‘circuit of culture’ (see Chapter 3 for more explanation). Although communicative exchanges guarantee ‘no necessary correspondence’, it is important to recognise unequal power relationships between producers and consumers. Thus, the next sub-section focuses on advertising practitioners—or cultural

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<sup>28</sup> Similarly, du Gay et al. (1997) argue that “cultural meanings do not arise *in* things but as a result of our social discourses and practices which construct the world meaningfully” (p. 14, emphasis in original).

<sup>29</sup> In this sense, practices of decoding and consumption should be regarded as no less significant as political activities than encoding and production of discursive meanings and representations.

intermediaries—because “Those who produce the discourse also have the power to *make it true* – i.e. to enforce its validity, its scientific status” (Hall, 1992c, p. 295, emphasis in original).

### *Cultural intermediaries and the field of advertising production*

Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1993, 1996) offers some key concepts for this study including ‘cultural intermediaries’ and ‘field of cultural production’. Drawing on Bourdieu (1984), Featherstone (2007) elaborates on the concept of the ‘new cultural intermediaries’ in reference to “the expansion of particular occupational groups specializing in symbolic goods who acted as both producers/disseminators and consumers/audiences for cultural goods” (p. 35). As it corresponds with the expansion of the cultural economy in which sign values are regarded as central to production and consumption, this newly emergent class of occupation cultivated the new markets of popular cultures and tastes through negotiation and legitimisation of their sense of aesthetics and lifestyle. While there has been considerable discussion and debate about Bourdieu’s (1984) intended conceptualisation of cultural intermediaries (du Gay et al., 1997; Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Negus, 1997, 2002; Nixon, 2003),<sup>30</sup> with respect to this thesis I draw on the concept of cultural intermediaries to denote the three dimensions of ‘intermediary’ activities of advertising practitioners.

First, they mediate legitimate, or ‘high’, culture and popular, or ‘low’, culture. This is the closest sense in which Bourdieu (1984) uses the term but also largely maintained by Featherstone (2007) in his use of the term. Second, they mediate production and consumption. This dimension has been developed and widely used by du Gay et al. (1997), Featherstone (2007), Gee (2009), Horne (2006), McFall (2002), Negus (1997, 2002), Nixon (2003), Scherer and Jackson (2010)

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<sup>30</sup> Hesmondhalgh (2006) in particular argues that Featherstone (2007) and others misread and misuse Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of ‘new cultural intermediaries’. However, his ‘re-definition’ of cultural intermediaries as ‘critics’ seems to be narrower than how Bourdieu (1984) describes it. To me, Bourdieu (1984) seems to refer to cultural intermediaries as a class fraction that mediates legitimate (established bourgeois) tastes and popular (mass produced) tastes as “moderately revolutionary taste-makers” (p. 326) who cultivate middle-brow culture.

and Soar (2000). A central contention of this second dimension is that symbolic creators including advertisers, creatives, designers and marketers play key roles in shaping contemporary cultural flows given their capacity to reproduce common sense, cultural meanings and symbolic boundaries. In this sense, du Gay et al. (1997) assert that cultural intermediaries are “groups of workers who play an active role in promoting consumption through attaching to products and services particular meanings and ‘lifestyles’ with which consumers will identify” (p. 62).<sup>31</sup>

Third, and particularly significant for this study, cultural intermediaries mediate supra-national, national and local cultures. In the context of the global cultural economy, these advertising practitioners have been at the forefront of commercial mediation with and representation of cultural Others. In particular, advertising agencies have long played a mediating role in clients’ advertising strategies to negotiate different local markets within and beyond the division of the West and the East (e.g. Japanese corporations partner up with Western advertising agencies and Western corporations partner up with Japanese advertising agencies). For instance, in the case studies used in this thesis, Western advertising agencies mediate the corporate representation of Japanese culture and identity for both Western and Japanese consumers. Given their position as symbolic experts of representing historical memories, cultures and identities through advertising, the significant influences of their activities to the multi-directionality and multi-dimensionality of global cultural flows need to be taken seriously for analyses of globalisation and corporate nationalism. These three dimensions of mediation associated with cultural intermediaries cannot be clearly separated in actual practices of cultural representation and therefore require careful analysis of how each function is practiced in conjunction with others within particular contexts of production.

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<sup>31</sup> In addition, Soar (2000) points out that there have been various terms to describe this occupational class of symbolic workers or creators including the ‘cultural mass’ (Bell, 1976), ‘service class’ or ‘new (postmodern) class fraction’ (Lash & Urry, 1987), ‘cultural specialists’, ‘cultural entrepreneurs’, ‘para-intellectuals’, ‘symbolic specialists’, ‘new tastemakers’ (Featherstone, 2007). Nevertheless, ‘cultural intermediaries’ seems to be the most eloquent term to represent those who mediate a gap between cultural production and consumption.

More specifically, particular references to cultural intermediaries in this thesis are given to the individual advertising practitioners at global headquarters, regional and local subsidiaries, advertising agencies, production companies and other local institutions who are involved in the production of advertising campaigns for Nike and Asics. With respect to the three dimensions of intermediary activities as ‘new tastemakers’, cultural intermediaries are implicated within the conjuncture of three discourses: (a) counter-cultural or popular cultural representation against a more established, dominant culture; (b) reflexive incorporation of consumers’ tastes, lifestyles and identities within production; and (c) counter-hegemonic representations of Japan against Western cultural hegemony. Furthermore, drawing on Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of ‘habitus’, some scholars argue that unconscious dispositions, preferences and tastes of advertising producers need to be analysed to precisely understand their socio-cultural positions within the culture industry and the influences of their habitus on practices of advertising production (du Gay et al., 1997; Featherstone, 2007; Horne, 2006; Nixon, 1996, 2003).<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, Bourdieu (1993) conceptualises the field of cultural production as ‘a field of forces’ or ‘a field of struggles’ (p. 30). As he further explains:

The field of cultural production is the area *par excellence* of clashes between the dominant fractions of the dominant class, who fight there sometimes in person but more often through producers oriented towards defending their ‘ideas’ and satisfying their ‘tastes’, and the dominated fractions who are totally involved in this struggle. (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 102, emphasis in original)

He divides the field of cultural production into the sub-fields of small-scale or restricted production (art-driven) and large-scale production (commerce-driven) and bases his analysis in the former.<sup>33</sup> As such, although Bourdieu (1993) asserts the importance of an ideal boundary and

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<sup>32</sup> Nixon (1996, 2003), for instance, emphasises the importance of the predominance of masculine and heterosexual identities of cultural intermediaries in shaping the culture of creative production. Likewise, Horne (2006) asserts that tastes, values, lifestyle and identities of cultural intermediaries have tremendous influences on “the production of contemporary consumer culture as a way of life” (p. 120).

<sup>33</sup> In Bourdieu’s (1993) analysis, his description of restricted production is often oriented towards autonomous, ‘pure’ artistic production in contrast to large-scale production that is characterised by heteronomous, commercial orientation (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). However, Hesmondhalgh (2006) counters that “Bourdieu presents an overly

symbolic struggles between these sub-fields, this arbitrary division between the spheres of ‘heteronomous’ economic production and ‘autonomous’ artistic culture has been blurred by what he calls ‘political complicity’ of the new petite bourgeoisie and cultural intermediaries.

As Bourdieu (1993) acknowledges at one point:

The characteristics of the commercial enterprise and the characteristics of the cultural enterprise, understood as a more or less disavowed relation to the commercial enterprise, are inseparable. The differences in the relationship to ‘economy’ considerations and to the audience coincide with the differences officially recognized and identified by the taxonomies prevailing in the field. Thus the opposition between ‘genuine’ art and ‘commercial’ art corresponds to the opposition between ordinary entrepreneurs seeking immediate economic profit and cultural entrepreneurs struggling to accumulate specifically cultural capital, albeit at the cost of temporarily renouncing economic profit. (pp. 82-83)

Since Bourdieu (1993) offers little understanding of the sub-field of large-scale production, Hesmondhalgh (2006) asserts that “Large-scale production might be more differentiated than Bourdieu’s work suggests, and the relations of heteronomy and autonomy might sometimes be more fluid and complex than he implies” (p. 221).

Despite such apparent concerns for applying Bourdieu’s (1993) analysis to the large-scale, mass production, Hesmondhalgh (2006) points out its usefulness for analyses of the field of popular music production as one example of such a site. This study also considers Bourdieu’s (1993) analysis of the field of cultural production analogous to articulate symbolic struggles and power relations within ‘the field of advertising production’ (e.g. Chávez, 2012). In this sense, Nixon (2003), for instance, contends that “debates about creativity are always informed by struggles over the authority of certain institutions or social actors to confer recognition upon a cultural practice or form and include the tensions between groups of protagonists to legitimate

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polarized picture of autonomy versus heteronomy” and suggests that “there is now a huge amount of cultural production taking place on the boundaries between sub-fields of mass and restricted production; or, perhaps better still, that restricted production has become introduced *into* the field of mass production” (p. 222, emphasis in original).

certain kinds of difference and novelty” (p. 10).<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to attend to the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the context of cultural production by empirically analysing creative labour processes because of their immediate relevance to the ways in which ‘the nation’ and national identities are re-imagined and reconstructed through the media with respect to corporate nationalism.

### **National Identity (Nationalism)**

In this fourth section, I explore previous literature on the concepts and discourses of the nation-state, nationalism and national identity. Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s (1983) notion of the nation as an ‘imagined community’, this section illustrates the arbitrary relationship between the nation and the state that has been forged by the modern construction of the nation-state system but is now increasingly subjected to the symbolic power of transnational corporations and media conglomerates. Anderson’s (1983) argument directs us to the important rise and role of the modern mass media in (in)forming nationalism through the (re)production of discourses of a national unity based on shared national history, culture and identity that effectively conceal ‘different’ ethnic and cultural groups within. While ‘the nation’ largely remains as a primary space and identification for many in contemporary society to associate with their sense of home, belonging and patriotism, it needs to be problematised for its production of Others to justify the use of violence and exploitation of Others. In particular, the latter part of this section focuses on the historical context of the modern construction of ‘Japan’ and contemporary representations of Japanese identity as re-imagined through interactions and mobilisation of similarity and difference between ‘Japan’, ‘Asia’ and ‘the West’.

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<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Negus and Pickering (2004) argue that the view of “creativity operating ideally as a free play of productive forces” is too simplistic because it “obscures the actual asymmetries of power and resources that distinguish those involved in various sectors and spheres of cultural production around the world” (p. 58).

## *The nation and nationalism*

For Benedict Anderson (1983), the nation is “*imagined* because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 15, emphasis in original).<sup>35</sup> This notion is important because it points to the ‘unnaturalness’ of the nation-state that has been forged through the modern articulation of conceptually different entities: ‘the nation’ as an imagined community and the state as a political sovereignty. As Barker (1999) argues, “The nation-state and national identity as collective forms of organization and identification are not ‘naturally’ occurring phenomenon” but “are particular contingent historical-cultural formations” (p. 64). The modern nation-state system was first developed in Europe and expanded to the rest of the world, simultaneously shaping ‘the world order’ of which European nation-states were positioned at the top as the vanguard of ‘civilisation’ (Smith, 1991). In this context, the state elites mobilised and articulated the idea of ‘the nation’ through nationalism that is defined by Smith (1991) as “*an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’*” (p. 73, emphasis in original).

This historical-political formation of the nation-state is characterised by, according to Bauman (1990), “cultural intolerance; more generally, by nonendurance of, and impatience with all difference” (p. 161). Hence, ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural differences were exploited by the state elites to produce fear, hate and antagonism towards Others to mobilise a national mass into large-scale conflicts including the subsequent two World Wars. Specifically, the rise of modern nationalism was associated with two key mechanisms for legitimising the

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<sup>35</sup> Negus and Pickering (2004) critique Anderson’s notion of an imagined community established by the mass media because “They evade the question as to whether such putative links have any substantive relevance for the imaginings of the viewer, listener, reader or purchaser of a product” (p. 78). This thesis along with the circuit of culture model acknowledges that the nation as an imagined community is contested, negotiated and transformed not only by the culture industry and media representations but also by a range of consumers, political bodies and other cultural groups.

righteousness of the state's violence and exploitation exercised through the discursive formation and governance of an imagined community.

One is Othering—identifying, signifying and excluding Others from an imagined community. Here, differences from Others in terms of language, culture, religion, race and history were signified to justify the imagined boundary between 'us' and 'them'. In essence, the process of Othering reinforces the sameness of 'us' within a national community by drawing fear, hatred, mistrust and misunderstanding towards 'them' as other cultural groups. Notably, Othering does not occur only between states but also *within* a state—a process Morley and Robins (1995) call “the purification of space and of identity” (p. 23). During this process, the state elites extruded and marginalised “elements that compromised the ‘clarity’ of national attachment” (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 23). This involved exclusion or eradication of ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities from the national popular imaginary in order to eliminate potential threats towards the ideological construction of a homogeneous national culture and identity.<sup>36</sup> Thus, we need to recognise the discursive aspects of ‘pure’, ‘homogeneous’ and ‘authentic’ national culture and acknowledge that “every culture has, in fact, ingested foreign elements from exogenous sources, with the various elements gradually becoming ‘naturalised’ within it” (Morley & Robins, 1995, pp. 129-130).

Another mechanism of modern nationalism is (re)production of national culture, history and identity. Smith (1990), for instance, asserts that “many of today's nations are built upon the basis of pre-modern ‘ethnic cores’ whose myths and memories, values and symbols shaped the culture and boundaries of the nation that modern elites managed to forge” (p. 180). This process is also known by the notions of ‘the selective tradition’ (Williams, 1980), ‘the invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), ‘wilful nostalgia’ (Robertson, 1992) and

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<sup>36</sup> Similarly, information, communication and material exchanges beyond the national boundaries were strictly controlled and governed by the state elites through processes of ‘filtration’ and ‘purification’.

‘retraditionalisation’ (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001), that emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a form of cultural politics to legitimise power and governance of the nation-state. Raymond Williams (1980), for instance, argues that only a tradition of a dominant culture,

...is always passed off as ‘*the tradition*’, ‘*the significant past*’. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. Even more crucially, some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture. (p. 38, emphasis in original)

Therefore, the modern nation building was largely associated with reproduction of historic and cultural icons, symbols, rituals, norms and memories through articulations of arbitrary elements of national imaginings in various historical and cultural contexts to shape collective and homogeneous national identities. These ideological practices for the cultural politics of ‘the nation’ were particularly influential when the state elites had monopolistic control over the media production and national telecommunications networks (Smith, 1990).<sup>37</sup> To this point, Anderson (1983) contends that mass communication through the print media was central in the process of standardising and disseminating vernacular languages, customs and values, thereby providing the conditions for the creation of a national consciousness.

From this view, national culture is considered less as an organically emerging collective way of life than as a cultural-political formation of discourses. As Hall (1992b) notes:

Instead of thinking of national cultures as unified, we should think of them as constituting a *discursive device* which represents difference as unity or identity. They are cross-cut by deep internal divisions and differences, and ‘unified’ only through the exercise of different forms of cultural power... One way of unifying them has been to represent them as the expression of the underlying culture of ‘one people’. Ethnicity is the term we give to cultural features – language, religion, custom, traditions, feeling for ‘place’ – which are shared by a people. It is therefore tempting to try to use ethnicity in this ‘foundational’ way. But this

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<sup>37</sup> According to Smith (1991), “The task of ensuring a common public, mass culture has been handed over to the agencies of popular socialization, notably the public system of education and the mass media” (p. 11).

belief turns out, in the modern world, to be a myth. Western Europe has no nations which are composed of only one people, one culture or ethnicity. *Modern nations are all cultural hybrids.* (p. 297, emphasis in original)

Hence, it is suggested that there is no benign formation of the nation-state because “Most modern nations consist of disparate cultures which were only unified by a lengthy process of violent conquest – that is, by the forcible suppression of cultural difference” (Hall, 1992b, p. 296). This is no different to the formation of Japan as a modern nation-state.

For Japan, the unwelcomed visit of the ‘black ships’ led by Commodore Matthew Perry from the U.S.A. in 1853 symbolically marked the turning point towards modernisation or by another name Westernisation. Threatened by superior military forces of the West, the Edo Shogunate, the feudal government at the time, was urged to open its trade relations with foreign countries and eventually ended its over two hundred years of isolation policy. After the Edo Shogunate was overthrown by the oppositional *samurai* groups mainly consisting of those from Satsuma (current Kagoshima prefecture) and Choshu (current Yamaguchi prefecture) domains, the Meiji government was subsequently established by mobilising the Emperor as a sovereign and symbol of state’s legitimacy in 1868. Before the period of modernisation, it is fair to say that there was a lack of consciousness of Japan as a political unity and collective cultural identity within the general public because, in the pre-modern, insular society, people had stronger identifications with regional domains (e.g. Choshu and Satsuma) and classes (e.g. warrior, peasant, artisan and merchant). As such, the Meiji government centralised political power to transform the nation into an economic and military superpower through the re-definition and reconstruction of history, space and identity of a modern Japan. According to Robertson (1992):

...when ideas have been imported, most dramatically during the early Meiji period..., they have been ‘decontaminated’ and rendered Japanese through a variety of practices, including the practice of not importing many sets of ideas concerning the establishment of new institutions from a single foreign source. (p. 95)

One of the key slogans and philosophies of the Meiji government was the aforementioned *wakon yōsai*. This philosophy represents their intentions for actively adopting Western systems, science and technology while simultaneously raising a national consciousness of Japan across different local communities or former domains.<sup>38</sup> In this context, the glocalising and hybridising practices were mainly undertaken and guided by the national leaders most of whom were warrior-class men from Choshu and Satsuma. In other words, this group, consisting of a dominant minority, was privileged to advance their own interests and cultural politics in the selection and reproduction of discourses of Japan as a homogeneous society—thereby obscuring a diversity of ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures, customs and values across various localities.

One of the most significant ideological movements was the signification and positioning of Shintoism as a national doctrine. In doing so, the government separated Shintoism from Buddhism. Despite the fact that these were historically syncretised, the government re-articulated Shintoism with the deification of the Emperor and the myth of Japanese ancestry rooted from his family tree. As Smith (1991) argues:

the metaphor of family is indispensable to nationalism. The nation is depicted as one great family, the members as brothers and sisters of the motherland or fatherland, speaking their mother tongue. In this way the family of the nation overrides and replaces the individual's family but evokes similarly strong loyalties and vivid attachments. Even where local allegiances are tolerated and real families given their due the language and symbolism of the nation asserts its priority and, through the state and citizenship, exerts its legal and bureaucratic pressures on the family, using similar kinship metaphors to justify itself. (p. 79)

Mobilisation of Shintoism was pivotal for the government to create a national consciousness of the imperial unity and legitimise the authoritarian style of Japanese national governance.

Another important aspect of cultural politics of the national leaders in the Meiji period was the signification of spirit, morals, virtues and values of Japanese warriors—*bushi* or *samurai*.

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<sup>38</sup> Under threats of Western colonisation, this urgent need to modernise Japan resulted in the Meiji government being “particularly prone to various dilemmas as to which images of modernity should guide them and from where, in relation to the important issue of national identity, they should select the pieces of such images” (Robertson, 1992, p. 12).

As the government needed to transform a mass population into military forces, *bushidō* (way of the *samurai*) served as the discipline of Japanese men and an important part of education for the Japanese youth.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the ideals of *samurai* and the principles of *bushidō* were promoted through education, the media and popular culture including sport.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it is no coincidence that views of *bushidō* were popularised, romanticised and mobilised to reinforce the discourses of Japaneseness and nationalism particularly at the times of the Sino-Japanese War, Russo-Japanese War and later Second World War. To analyse the cultural politics in the contemporary production of Japanese culture and identity, it is important to understand the mechanism of identification and system of classification, difference or distinction.

### *National identity and Japan*

According to du Gay et al. (1997), “any system of classification”, including cultural identification,

...is a *system of differences* in which the meaning the various elements have is *relational*. In other words, objects have no meaning of themselves but only in relationship to other objects within the classificatory system. So, for example, the object ‘sun’ only gets to mean what it does in relation to the object ‘moon’, or the word ‘mother’ only means what it does because the words ‘father’, ‘daughter’ and ‘son’ also exist. (p. 116, emphasis in original)

While differences themselves do not offer inherent meanings, it is a signifying practice that makes the differences meaningful in relation to a sign system. It is also important to emphasise that ‘difference’ is *ambivalent* because it can be perceived positively and negatively. As Hall (1997b) elucidates:

Marking ‘difference’ leads us, symbolically, to close ranks, shore up culture and to stigmatize and expel anything which is defined as impure, abnormal. However,

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<sup>39</sup> The irony of these discourses, including the discourse that ‘Japanese men are sons of *samurai*’, is that the majority of the Japanese population were actually peasants, not warriors who arguably accounted only for 5-10 per cent of the nation.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, Guttman and Thompson (2001) exhaustively analyse the histories and development of many sports in Japan and argue that Japanese sports such as *sumō*, *karate* and *jūdō* are more or less retraditionalised through the modern invention of tradition.

paradoxically, it also makes ‘difference’ powerful, strangely attractive precisely because it is forbidden, taboo, threatening to cultural order. (p. 237)

It is this interplay between similarity and difference that is essential in any discursive formation of cultural identity. For instance, ‘oneness’ of cultural identity is often contradicted by often-concealed differences within. Because any cultural identity is never fixed but fluid and relational, it is understood less as a state of being than as a process of ‘becoming’ through interplays of similarity with, and difference from, other cultural identities (Barker, 1999; Hall, 1990).<sup>41</sup> In other words, cultural identity refers to a particular temporal positioning with “an arbitrary and contingent ‘ending’” (Hall, 1990, p. 230) that is always subjected to ongoing dialogue and signification for potential changes. This temporal positioning of a particular meaning may or may not be naturalised to the extent it *seems* to mean something by itself.<sup>42</sup>

In this light, cultural studies has recognised the need to question uniformity of cultural identity and provided theoretical lenses to examine particular power relations and struggles in the discursive formations of cultural identity through the politics of cultural signification, hybridisation and naturalisation. Barker (1999), for instance, contends that “This anti-essentialist position does not mean that we cannot speak of identity; rather, it points us to the *political* nature of identity as a discursive *production* and to the possibility of multiple and shifting identities where discourses of class, age, gender, nationality and race are ‘articulated’ together” (p. 28, emphasis in original). Amongst a repertoire of cultural identities, national identity can be classified into one of ‘territorial’ or ‘spatial’ identities. Specifically, national identity was “a key feature of industrialization and an engine of modernity” (Hall, 1992b, p. 292) and has remained as one of the most influential identities in the contemporary context of globalisation.

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<sup>41</sup> As Hall (1990) notes, “as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather – since history has intervened – ‘what we have become’” (p. 225, emphasis in original).

<sup>42</sup> According to Hall (1997b), “‘Naturalization’ is therefore a representational strategy designed to fix ‘difference’, and thus *secure it forever*. It is an attempt to halt the inevitable ‘slide’ of meaning, to secure discursive or ideological ‘closure’” (p. 245, emphasis in original).

As Gellner (1983) asserts, “Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such” (p. 6). The modern nation comes to be often represented as ‘one people’ despite the fact that “not only can this people never meet together, but also they are fundamentally *different* in terms of class, gender, sexuality, race, age, political persuasion and morality” (Barker, 1999, p. 29, emphasis in original). For this reason, Smith (1991) argues that “any attempt to forge a national identity is also a political action with political consequences, like the need to redraw the geopolitical map or alter the composition of political regimes and states” (p. 99). Furthermore, Hall (1990) asserts that it is important to regard “identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (p. 222).

Thus, inquiry into the politics of national identity requires empirical analyses of how ‘the nation’ is discursively produced, signified and represented as an essential attribute for everyone in modern society. Likewise, the important territorial discourses and identities already described in this thesis, including ‘the West’, ‘the East’, ‘Europe’, ‘Asia’ and ‘Japan’, are by no means fixed nor permanent but subjected to changes in their meanings through cultural practices of ‘re-articulation’. As the forces of globalisation destabilise the existing symbolic boundaries of these territories, national identity is also contested, interpenetrated and reconstructed through increasing interactions with other territories and identities such as global, supranational, regional and local (Hall, 1991; Morley & Robins, 1995).<sup>43</sup> These dynamic interactions between territorial identities and cultural nationalism are exemplified by the modern politics of Japanese national identity.

Japan is often viewed as ethnically, socially and culturally homogeneous from both inside and outside the nation-state. Inside Japan, there has been continuous ideological reproduction of

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<sup>43</sup> This process is perhaps best described by the theories of ‘deterritorialisation’ and ‘reterritorialisation’ which suggest that cultural identities can be reconceptualised beyond their ties to geographical locations (Appadurai, 1990; Featherstone, 1995; Morley & Robins, 1995; Tomlinson, 1999).

what is called *nihonjin-ron*—cultural nationalism that signifies ethnic purity and cultural distinction, and even superiority (Morley & Robins, 1995; Robertson, 1990; Yoshino, 1992). Through this process, the mythologies of Japanese ethnic purity and homogeneity have been reproduced within literature and mass media while simultaneously excluding the ethnic and cultural diversities from the popular imaginary. In doing so, the minority ethnic and cultural groups such as Ainu, Okinawan/Ryukyuan, *zainichi* Koreans (Koreans living in Japan), foreign-born Japanese and *burakumin* (untouchables) have been subsumed under the myth of Japanese homogeneity. Historically, an essentialist discourse of Japanese ethnic purity can be traced back to Yamato sovereignty which is believed to emerge in the west of Japan during the third or fourth century. Since the constitution and development of Yamato is unclear and disputed among scholars, recurrent representations of Yamato as the Japanese origin serves as a foundational myth—“a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not ‘real’, but ‘mythic’ time” (Hall, 1992b, pp. 294-295).<sup>44</sup>

Not only is the popular discourse of Yamato as the origin of Japan limited by a lack of historical evidence, it is important to note that ‘Japanese’ people in the third or fourth century were already ethnically and culturally *hybrid*.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, there has been the ethnic hybridisation of historically ‘foreign’ people from Emishi/Ezo (present northern east of Japan) and Ryukyu (present southern island of Japan) within the modern development and politics of ‘Japan’ as a nation-state. Notwithstanding an increasing number of ‘Japanese’ children through international marriages and foreign-born, naturalised citizens who make up the current population, the essentialist discourse of Japanese ethnic purity and homogeneity remains intact as

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<sup>44</sup> As Hall (1992b) notes, “National identity is also often symbolically grounded on the idea of a *pure, original people or ‘folk’*. But, in the realities of national development, it is rarely this primordial folk who persist or exercise power” (p. 295, emphasis in original).

<sup>45</sup> According to Hammer et al. (2006), “modern Japanese are descendants of the two populations who produced the Jomon and the Yayoi cultures” (p. 48). The Jomon people, the first major migrants from other Asian regions, came to Japan more than 12,000 years ago and lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle whereas the second wave of migration from Korea came more than 2,000 years ago and brought another ethnic groups called Yayoi who expanded wet rice agriculture (Hammer et al., 2006).

an ideological myth that reproduces and reinforces political, ethnic and cultural nationalism (Denoon & McCormack, 2001; Lie, 2001; Yoshino, 1992).

The aforementioned slogan and philosophy of the Japanese modernisation project, *wakon yōsai*, neatly encapsulates the principle of modern Japanese identity construction through interplays between similarity with and difference from both ‘Asia’ and ‘the West’. In other words, it consists of two seemingly contradictory ideas: (a) Japan is *different* from Asia because it is economically developed, modern and civilised like the West; and (b) Japan is *different* from the West because it maintains a distinctive Japanese culture which is substantially influenced by historical hybridisation of traditional Asian systems, cultures and philosophies (e.g. Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism). For example, Iwabuchi (2002) argues that “Japan is unequivocally located in a geography called ‘Asia,’ but it no less unambiguously exists outside a cultural imaginary of ‘Asia’ in Japanese mental maps” (p. 7). In particular, these contradictory ideas were shaped as part of the rapid modernisation process in response to the discourse of Western superiority (Robertson, 1990).

By adopting and applying the Western view of the Orient as uncivilised, underdeveloped and backward, modernised Japan has viewed other Asian countries in a similar way within a discourse of what some scholars call ‘Oriental Orientalism’ (Iwabuchi, 2002; Kikuchi, 2003; Robertson, 1998). For example, the Japanese expansionist ideology of the Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and colonisation of other Asian nations before and during the Second World War were justified and legitimised by two similarly contradictory discourses: (a) Japan can/should unite Asia because the Japanese are *similar* to other Asians in physical appearance, language and culture; and (b) Japan can/should subordinate other Asian nations because modernised, civilised Japan is *different* from backward, inferior Asia.

Also, it is worthwhile to acknowledge that, against Western Orientalism that reinforced “the characterizations of the Japanese as monkeys and apes”, Japanese imperialism produced “an

*occidentalism* which centred upon claims as to the selfish individualism, materialism, decadence and arrogance of westerners (particularly Americans)” (Robertson, 1990, p. 192, emphasis in original). To this point, Robertson (1990) contends that “Japanese identity largely rests on a form of occidentalism, since in functional terms China was the original ‘Occident’ for Japan and the concern with the west since the sixteenth century has been constituted by a generalization of ‘China’ so as to encompass the western world, particularly since the 1850s” (p. 193). Therefore, an essentialist discourse of Japanese identity—*nihonjin-ron*—can be considered in part as a political attempt to locate Japan outside the Oriental-Occidental dualism by Orientalising other Asian nations and Occidentalising Western nations.

In this regard, the Meiji elites of Japan re-articulated its national identity with *wakon yōsai* by exploiting the unique status of being the only modernised Asian nation in the late nineteenth century. As a result, similarity with and difference from other Asian nations were interchangeably emphasised and mobilised depending on their strategic aims to legitimise certain political interests, decisions and actions. However, this modern construction of Japanese identity has been called into question since the 1990’s when other modernised Asian nations including China, India, Singapore and South Korea emerged. According to Iwabuchi (2002), “As the rise of other Asian economies has deprived Japan of its unique position as the only non-Western nation to achieve a high degree of industrialization and modernization, Japan needs to come to terms with the increasingly visible gap between a discursively constructed ‘backward Asia’ and the rapidly developing economic power of geographically specific Asian nations” (p. 16). This relational and fluid location of Japanese identity between ‘Asia’ and ‘the West’ confirms the historical shifts of its meanings for political convenience and the possibilities of ongoing and further re-articulations. In contrast to the state-led nationalism that was central in the modern construction of Japanese national consciousness, the contemporary era marks ‘disorganised’ forms of nationalism because the imagined community of ‘Japan’ is variously interpreted and

represented by different political, commercial and cultural entities both inside and outside the geographic location and sovereignty of Japan.

*The contemporary cultural politics of 'Japan'*

Globalisation, as Hall (1992b) asserts, “does have a pluralizing impact on identities, producing a variety of possibilities and new positions of identification, and making identities more positional, more political, more plural and diverse; less fixed, unified or trans-historical” (p. 309). As the links between the nation and the state have been destabilised, national identity is increasingly re-imagined and re-defined in various spaces (e.g. television, movies, arts, music, sports and advertisements) by various entities (e.g. global and national media corporations, advertising agencies, national and sub-national organisations, and historians, writers and artists). Given the previous discussions of Anderson’s (1983) assertion about the impact of print technology on the fundamental construction of national consciousness, it is then possible to consider that contemporary re-constructions and re-articulations of national identity are increasingly influenced by a new structure of time and space as reconfigured by the new media technologies of television, the internet and other electronic devices.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in this study, the nation is conceptualised as a political entity, located within a geographic space and having a form of state structure, but also as an imagined community to highlight the increasing importance of ‘the nation’ as a form of commercial representation and identity.<sup>47</sup>

Given that most of today’s societies have been increasingly characterised by Western, predominantly American, media culture and corporations, it is no surprising that Japan has been represented in the global media as an ethnic and cultural Other through the discourse of

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<sup>46</sup> For Tomlinson (1999), the role of the media has become central for identity formations because “media and communications technologies have cultural significance not only in terms of the messages and representations they carry, but in their capacity to structure our experience and use of time and space” (p. 116).

<sup>47</sup> While ‘the nation’ can be viewed as a ‘free-floating signifier’, it would be misleading to underplay the significance of geographical locations and political boundaries. Rather, it is more plausible to consider ‘the nation’ to be (re)constructed by various articulations including geographical, political, commercial and cultural.

Orientalism. In other words, global information and image flows have served as potent vehicles of the Western views of human values, histories, cultures, and knowledge, thereby representing the Others in a somewhat exotic, grotesque and mythical fashion (Daliot-Bul, 2007; Moeran, 1996b; Morley & Robins, 1995). Leiss et al. (2005), for instance, point out a general tendency in how the East is represented in Western advertising:

The East is a convenient symbol of difference for the Western mind, thus provides an opportunity to examine or reaffirm one's "self." It is interesting that advertisers continue to draw upon such stark binaries as East and West when the processes of globalization have so severely challenged them. (p. 541)

For example, Japanese traditional symbols and images such as *samurai*, *sumō* and *geisha* have long been incorporated as signs of exoticism within Western advertising and media (Daliot-Bul, 2007; Kogure, 2008; Moeran, 1996b).

Although Japan has been an exotic and mythic Other located in the 'Far East' since Marco Polo's book about his travels to the East during the fourteenth century,<sup>48</sup> the Western imaginaries of Japan were significantly transformed during the twentieth century when Japan emerged as the first modernised nation from the Orient. In particular, Japan's rapid economic and technological development after the Second World War destabilised the Western identification with its economic and technological superiority. However, despite its economic and technological equivalence to, or even superiority over, many Western nations, Morley and Robins (1995) argue that Japan continued to be viewed as exotic and grotesque—if not inferior, backward and irrational—within a discourse of 'techno-Orientalism'.

The ideological dimension of techno-Orientalism is effectively a reduction of the Japanese into inhuman objects such as 'robots', 'workaholics', 'economic animals' and 'Yellow Threat' (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 154). For Morley and Robins (1995), the Western

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<sup>48</sup> As Hall (1992c) notes, "Marco Polo's *Travels* with its tales of the fabulous wealth of the East played a decisive role in stimulating the European imagination to search for a westerly route to the East, a search that became increasingly important" (p. 288).

representations of Japan through techno-Orientalism “reinforce the image of a culture that is cold, impersonal and machine-like, authoritarian culture lacking emotional connection to the rest of the world” (p. 169). Moreover, the discourse of techno-Orientalism has coincided with, and been complemented by, Japan’s own ‘techno-nationalism’ that has been embodied and represented particularly by Japanese transitional corporations—most notably the automobile and electronics industries—who built a global reputation for technological capability and superiority (Kogure, 2008). Indeed, ‘high-tech quality’, as du Gay et al. (1997) argue, have become “code-words for its ‘Japanese-ness’” (p. 27).<sup>49</sup> Japan’s fetish with technology, machines and robotics is also manifested in the ways in which robots are represented by Japanese popular culture. As opposed to the image of advanced and futuristic machines as ‘enemies’ of the human race or symbols of dystopia, often found in the Western films—such as the series of *Terminator* (1984, 1991, 2003), the series of *Matrix* (1999, 2003) and *I, Robot* (2004), Japanese comics and animation have often depicted machines in a positive light or even as ‘friends’ (e.g. Astro Boy and Doraemon) (Hornyak, 2006).

The perceived inhuman culture of Japan is also symbolised and signified by the discourse of *otaku*. *Otaku* usually refers to people who isolate themselves at home for long periods of time, frequently dissociating from reality and immersing themselves in a virtual reality or their own imagined worlds of *manga* (comics) and *anime* (animation) (Morley & Robins, 1995; Newitz, 1994). While *manga* and *anime* have grown in global popularity, the term *otaku* has been popularised among Western fans to express and celebrate their identification with *otaku* culture regardless of the negative etymological origin of the term in Japan (Napier, 2001). As a result, the global popularity of *manga* and *anime* as part of Japanese popular culture drove the Japanese

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<sup>49</sup> For example, some Japanese transnational corporations made enormous investments in developing humanoid robots as promotional vehicles of their advanced technologies (e.g. Honda’s ASIMO, Sony’s QRIO, Fujitsu’s HOAP and Toyota’s partner robots). Specifically, Honda’s commitment to robotics appears remarkable as it developed the world’s first Brain-Machine Interface technology in 2009 that enables control of a robot by human thought alone. Honda’s ASIMO has been frequently featured in television commercials and other promotional campaigns to promote technological advancement of the company apart from its main products of automobiles and motorcycles.

government to promote ‘nation branding’ (Dinnie, 2008) in association with ‘soft power’ and ‘cool Japan’. In short, there has been a growing tendency of mutually reinforcing interplay and interpenetration between Western Orientalism and Japanese cultural nationalism in reconstructing contemporary representations of Japanese culture and identity.

One important site for the cultural politics of ‘Japan’ through which Japanese cultural nationalism is re-articulated is sport, and sport nationalism. Indeed, sport has been examined by scholars for its role in resisting global forces, reinforcing national mythologies and identities and renewing people’s consciousness of who ‘we’ are (Andrews & Ritzer, 2007; Bairner, 2001; Cho, 2009b; Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Guttmann & Thompson, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002; Jackson, 1994, 1998; Jackson & Andrews, 1999; Maguire, 1999; Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 2001; Rowe, 2003; Rumford, 2007; Tomlinson & Young, 2006). As Eric Hobsbawm (1990) recognises:

What has made sport so uniquely effective a medium for inculcating national feelings, at all events for males, is the ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation as symbolized by young persons excelling at what practically every man wants, or at one time in life has wanted, to be good at. The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people [for the case of soccer]. The individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself. (p. 143)

Likewise, Bairner (2001) argues that “sport continues to play a greater role in the maintenance of distinctive national identities than in the construction of some uniform global identity” (p. 175).<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, even though sport mega-events like the Olympics and FIFA World Cup declare the transcendence of racial, gender, religious and political differences, “today’s staged presentations, and mediated representations, of the Olympic Games have consistently been forums for the

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<sup>50</sup> One of the discourses that link sport and the nation is, as Bairner (2001) points out, ‘national sports’ that “either confirm the exclusive character of the nation or, more commonly, reflect a contest between ethnic and civic representations of the nation” (p. 167). In this regard, national sports provide insight into the particular corporeal representations of nations and their contradictions: American football in the United States, ice hockey in Canada, rugby in New Zealand, Gaelic games in Ireland, skiing in Norway, *taekwondo* in South Korea, table tennis in China and *sumō* in Japan.

accommodation and advancement of highly nationalized interests and concerns” (Andrews & Ritzer, 2007, p. 143).<sup>51</sup>

Likewise, some scholars have noted the intensified nationalism in Japan and Korea associated with the 2002 FIFA World Cup (Manzenreiter & Horne, 2002; Shimizu, 2004). Moreover, while Japanese sporting national teams and individuals are not always strictly ‘Japanese’, there has been a tendency for them to be represented by the mass media with respect to Japanese excellence, virtue and characters. For instance, Chiba, Ebihara and Morino (2001) suggest that the foreign-born, naturalised Japanese soccer players were represented by the media as ‘more Japanese than the Japanese’ to embody and signify the Japaneseness of ethnic and cultural Others. In the context of globalisation, national sporting bodies and identity are becoming increasingly important and complex issues as nation-states seek out elite athletes to represent them through naturalisation or acquisition of dual nationality (Hargreaves, 2002; Houlihan, 2008; Jackson & Haigh, 2008; Maguire, 1999). Consequently, sport nationalism can be seen as “a form of historicist culture and civic education, one that overlays or replaces the older modes of religious culture and familial education” (Smith, 1991, p. 91). It is at this conjuncture of the media and sport, and popular culture, whereby ‘the nation’ is increasingly re-articulated through corporate nationalism.

### **Corporate Nationalism**

This section elaborates on how the previous fields of literature support the concept of ‘corporate nationalism’ as a particular framework through which to study globalisation. Since corporate nationalism has been of particular interest to the sociology of sport community, this section reviews previous literature on sport and corporate nationalism with respect to similarities

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<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Sage (1990) claims that “Important national and international events like the Super Bowl and the Olympic Games are incorporated into a panoply of political ritual that serves to remind people of their common destiny” (p. 76).

and differences in focus, methodologies and key arguments. In addition, it briefly outlines how my case studies compare and contrast with previous studies.

In the context of the global cultural economy, there has been an increasingly shared sense of commonality in experiencing modern lifestyle based on the same commodities, services, technologies and media across national borders.<sup>52</sup> Although this is not to deny the important legitimacy of state elites in politically representing the nation and structuring economic and cultural policies, it highlights that commercial entities including transnational corporations have come to the fore as key shapers of the economy, culture and identity. Therefore, “Within the discourse of global consumerism”, as Hall (1992b) continues, “differences and cultural distinctions which hitherto defined *identity* become reducible to a sort of international *lingua franca* or global currency into which all specific traditions and distinct identities can be translated” (p. 303, emphasis in original). In turn, national identity, as one example, has been increasingly influenced by commercial representations, branding and lifestyling of our everyday experiences through ongoing transformations of contemporary cultural life.<sup>53</sup>

Likewise, Urry (2003) elaborates stating that “the notion of nation has significantly become more a matter of branding, as nation has become something of a free-floating signifier relatively detached from the ‘state’ within the swirling contours of the new global order” (p. 87). It is in this sense that Urry (2003) argues that “there is a move from banal nationalism to brand nationalism in the new global order, especially at moments of global celebration and consumption” (p. 107). While Billig (1995) conceptualises ‘banal nationalism’ as an ideological force of marking, privileging and naturalising certain forms of everyday representations and practices as ‘national’, Urry (2003) extends it to suggest that “such banal nationalism is

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<sup>52</sup> As Hall (1992b) notes, “Cultural flows and global consumerism between nations create the possibilities of ‘shared identities’ – as ‘customers’ for the same goods, ‘clients’ for the same services, ‘audiences’ for the same messages and images – between people who are far removed from one another in time and space” (p. 302).

<sup>53</sup> Robertson (1992) also identifies this tendency that wilful nostalgia “is now being incorporated - for the most part capitalistically - into consumerist, image-conveyed nostalgia, the latter being wrapped into the global institutionalization of the universalization of the particular and the particularization of the universal” (p. 160).

increasingly consumed by others, compared and evaluated, and turned into a brand” (p. 107).

Indeed, it is a shared premise with the concept of corporate nationalism that focuses on corporate activities as central to such branding of ‘the nation’ through marketing, advertising and other promotional activities.

### *Theorising corporate nationalism*

Within the sociology of sport scholarship, the term ‘corporate nationalism’ was first formally addressed by the edited book, *Sport and Corporate Nationalisms* (Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005b). The introduction by Silk, Andrews and Cole (2005a) notes:

Simply put, and prefigured on the operations and machinations of multi-, trans- and supra-national entities, the politico-cultural nation of the nineteenth century has been replaced by the corporate-cultural nation of the twenty-first century. We have termed this process, *corporate nationalisms*, processes that are qualitatively distinct from those that helped to constitute the symbolic boundaries of maturing nation-states during the nineteenth century. As human civilization becomes increasingly corporatized, the nation and national culture have become principal (albeit perhaps unwilling) accomplices within this process, as global capitalism seeks to, quite literally, capitalize upon the nation as a source of collective identification and differentiation. (p. 7, emphasis added)

Thus, by using the term corporate nationalism, it is emphasised that the symbolic power of representing national identity has been largely shifted from state-led nationalism and propaganda of the nineteenth century to banal and branded forms of nationalism that are increasingly produced and influenced by transnational corporations of the twenty-first century.

The introduction of the book was largely drawn from a journal article by Silk and Andrews (2001) who extend Castell’s notion of ‘Toyotism’ to include the cultural realm (‘cultural Toyotism’) to refer to the phenomenon in which “the locus of control in influencing the manner in which the nation and national identity are represented becomes exteriorized through, and internalized within, the promotional strategies of transnational corporations” (p. 186;

reproduced in Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005a, p. 7).<sup>54</sup> According to this view, contemporary transnational corporations are capable of imagining, producing and disseminating particular signs as ‘national’ through their promotional activities on a vast scale across the globe. Despite the different terminology used, some of the fundamental conceptualisations of corporate nationalism used in this study are informed by the work of Silk and Andrews (2001) and reproduced by the work of Silk, Andrews and Cole (2005a).

Specifically, Silk and Andrews (2001) depict several examples of advertising campaigns from Adidas, Coca-Cola, Ford, Nike and Toyota to demonstrate how the national images, icons and cultures were commercially incorporated into promotional strategizing of transnational corporations. It is thus argued that one of the most influential sites and structures of localism is the nation which has remained as the most potent set of collective identities and therefore been mobilised by transnational corporate strategies for pursuit of capital accumulation. In short, their central contention is that “the logics and practices of transnational corporate capitalism are playing an increasingly influential role in the shaping of national cultures” (Silk & Andrews, 2001, p. 187).<sup>55</sup> Following their emphasis on the role of ‘promotional strategies of transnational corporations’ in re-imagining and re-shaping national cultures, this thesis employs the theoretical framework of corporate nationalism mainly to examine representations of the nation through branding, marketing and advertising.

In particular, sport appears to be a powerful symbolic vehicle for transnational corporations to overcome local and national barriers of particular languages, ethnicities, religions and cultures. Silk and Andrews (2001) provide several examples including Coca-Cola’s use of

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<sup>54</sup> Silk and Andrews (2001) contend that “the core aspects of Toyotism in a material production sense—flexible, adaptable, and globally contingent regimes of production—can be discerned within the corporation’s marketing and promotional strategies, in other words, the realm of cultural production on which the late capitalist order depends” (p. 189).

<sup>55</sup> It is also worthwhile pointing out their recognition that cultural intermediaries “of the global advertising industry play an ever more significant role in the process whereby the nation becomes imagined, understood, and experienced” (Silk & Andrews, 2001, p. 182).

cricket in India, McDonald's use of historical sporting memories and Nike's use of sporting heroes as national cultural signifiers through multinational, multivocal campaigns. Overall, Silk and Andrews (2001) assert that "sport is used as de facto cultural shorthand delineating particular national sentiments" (p. 191) and conclude that "sport is a globally present, but locally resonant, cultural practice that transnational advertisers mobilize to negotiate the global-local nexus" (p. 198). Given intensified sport nationalism in the context of globalisation, it is not surprising that several scholars have devoted their attention to articulations of sport and national identity through advertising (Grainger & Jackson, 2000; Jackson, 2004; Jackson, Batty, & Scherer, 2001; John & Jackson, 2011; Perry, 2005; Scherer & Jackson, 2007, 2008a, 2010; Silk & Andrews, 2001; Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005a). Moreover, sport's centrality as both a symbolic representation and commodity of national identity in the global cultural economy is evident in what has varyingly been described as the 'sports/media complex' (Jhally, 1989), 'global media-sport complex' (Maguire, 1999), 'media sports cultural complex' (Rowe, 2004) and 'media-advertising-sports complex' (Jackson et al., 2005; Scherer & Jackson, 2008a). Therefore, these intricate and mutually reinforcing relationships between sport, media and national identity arguably deserve specific attention for analyses of corporate nationalism.

Subsequently, the most extensive and detailed case studies of corporate nationalism have been conducted by Scherer and Jackson on Adidas' sponsorship of the All Blacks, an iconic national rugby team in New Zealand. Here, a global corporation, Adidas, used one of the nation's most powerful entities to strategically negotiate local conditions, sensibilities and cultures. Indeed, rugby is widely regarded as the national sport whereas the All Blacks serves as a potent national icon and identity for New Zealanders (Jackson & McKenzie, 2000). Jackson et al. (2001), for instance, describe the context where rugby in New Zealand was rapidly professionalised, commodified and mediatised through the New Zealand Rugby Union's (NZRU) contracts with

News Corporation for broadcasting in 1995 and Adidas for sponsorship of the All Blacks in 1997.

In the words of Jackson et al. (2001):

For a variety of reasons 1995 became the pivotal moment where the value of rugby union as a global television commodity was recognised. Ultimately, the tri-nation rugby unions backed by Rupert Murdoch's media empire won out and rugby was quickly transformed into an entertainment spectacle: faster, sexier and increasingly global. (p. 186)

Recognising the cultural significance of the All Blacks, Adidas was committed to (g)localisation through promotional strategies that linked their marketing and advertising with authenticity, traditions and history of the All Blacks (Jackson et al, 2001; see also Scherer & Jackson, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). With central themes of 'black' and 'tradition', the initial Adidas advertising attempted to invoke "a sense of the honour and pressure associated with living up to the success and heritage of the All Blacks' rugby history" (Jackson et al., 2001, p. 193). Most importantly, Jackson et al. (2001) highlight the complex nature of the global-local nexus by exploring an example of the local resistance to the corporate construction of national or local identities.

A case in point was the commercial incorporation of indigenous Māori culture, and *haka* (pre-game war challenge) in particular. The cultural resistance was most evident when the Ngati Toa tribe filed "an intellectual property lawsuit in order to prevent the unauthorised use of Maori cultural artefacts, icons and imagery by non-Maori interests" (Jackson et al., 2001, pp. 196-197; see also Jackson & Hokowhitu, 2002, 2005).<sup>56</sup> While this campaign featuring *haka* was commercially successful and celebrated by advertising professionals around the world or at least in the West, the tribe's challenge raised popular debates on the sensitive relationship between indigenous cultures and national identity in New Zealand. Therefore, Jackson et al. (2001) conclude that "it is clear that the appropriation of Maori cultural symbols and traditions for global

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<sup>56</sup> Although this lawsuit was not successful, in 2011 the NZRU signed an agreement with Ngati Toa acknowledging that the *Ka Mate haka* was invented by one of their ancestors.

profit will be vigorously challenged and resisted” (p. 198) and represent a form of ‘disjuncture’ at the global-local nexus.<sup>57</sup>

The term disjuncture was originally used by Appadurai (1990) to refer to the tensions arising from the intersection of cultural flows between five broad areas or ‘scapes’—ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes. Grainger and Jackson (2000) applied this notion of disjuncture “to refer more generally to the sites of incongruity, conflict and resistance that occur when global products and practices encounter local cultural contexts” (p. 111). For example, they illuminate cultural resistance towards the portrayals of ‘violence’ in the case of Nike and other sport-related advertisements in New Zealand. Although the Nike commercial was not disputed in other countries, it was banned by the New Zealand Advertising Standards Complaints Board who ruled that the commercial breached the codes for offensive advertising. The case highlights a contextual difference in perceptions of media violence and the general concerns towards excesses of American values, culture and commercialism. According to this conceptualisation, disjunctures can range from simple problems of translation, to clashes of cultural values and to subsequent cultural resistance and conflict at the global-local nexus. Another example of disjuncture emerged in response to Nike’s 2005 *Chamber of Fear* campaign that was banned by Chinese authorities “due to its unacceptable and offensive use of the dragons which are considered a sacred symbol in traditional Chinese culture” (Jackson, 2005, p. 1).

By building on these understandings of corporate nationalism, global-local nexus and disjuncture, the works of Scherer and Jackson (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010) cultivated a new approach to this body of knowledge. Their approach was characterised by the employment of theoretical and methodological tools and knowledge from cultural studies including the notions of ‘no guarantees’ (Hall, 1983), ‘articulation’ (Hall, 1996b), ‘cultural intermediaries’ (Bourdieu,

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<sup>57</sup> This relates to what Robertson (1992, p. 102, emphasis in original) calls “*the discontents of globality*” manifesting around the universalism-particularism axis of globalisation.

1984; du Gay et al., 1997) and ‘the circuit of culture’ (du Gay et al., 1997; Johnson, 1986/1987). In doing so, Scherer and Jackson (2007) problematize the general tendency in media studies to overemphasise the author’s subjective reading of media texts by arguing: “While certainly valuable, such textual perspectives tend to marginalize the range of socio-cultural and political economic processes that constitute the production of contemporary advertising campaigns including the work practices of cultural intermediaries who, through negotiated processes with clients, actively encode advertising product with a complex array of cultural meanings and narratives” (p. 269). Consequently, they suggest that advertising texts need to be examined in terms of how they are produced, represented, regulated and consumed at the global-local nexus.

Furthermore, Scherer and Jackson (2008a) acknowledge the importance of the context of production as one of the most powerful sites for articulating discourses within the circuit of culture. This, combined with interviews with key cultural intermediaries, offers as means to interrogate “complex social processes and power relations that can never be guaranteed” (Scherer & Jackson, 2008a, p. 508). Their careful and detailed analysis of the political-economic and socio-cultural components of cultural production reveals the producers’ conditions, codes and intensions that are valuable for both supporting and challenging particular views on corporate nationalism. For example, by examining the practices of cultural intermediaries from the NZRU, Adidas and Saatchi & Saatchi, Scherer and Jackson (2010) concur with the central idea about corporate nationalism through which cultural intermediaries play a pivotal role in,

producing and (re)producing cultural identities, including popular aspects of national heritage and tradition that are increasingly being attached to the brands of TNCs as representative of a whole way of life. Indeed, one of the cumulative effects of these practices is the ongoing naturalizing of discourses of consumerism that continually encourage New Zealanders to identify themselves as global consumers of world-class brands and products. (p. 20)

Scherer and Jackson (2010) also confirm that there were forms of local resistance: “national mythologies, of which discourses of corporate nationalism are only one aspect, are sites

of ongoing negotiation; sites where memories and other subjectivities can function in complete opposition to corporately-controlled message” (p. 39). This therefore highlights the idea of ‘no necessary correspondence’ (Hall, 1985) between the encoding/production of the cultural intermediaries and the decoding/consumption of audience for these particular advertising campaigns.<sup>58</sup>

On the other hand, while offering a critique of the capitalist mode of production, Scherer and Jackson (2010) also challenge the orthodox Marxist interpretation of production:

The imperatives that underscore the cultural and economic practices involved in the production processes of ads and operate in the industry in general, therefore, seriously contest the notion of a determining meta-narrative of sales and the unidimensionality of Marxist analyses. (p. 57)

Therefore, rather than falling into economic determinism and a ‘productivist reading’ of the cultural dimension, Scherer and Jackson (2010) offer an alternative approach to investigate the “the relations of power and privilege” (p. 83) and “cultural-economic set of limits and pressures” (p. 111) that constituted the fields and activities of advertising production.<sup>59</sup> Overall, what their findings tell us is that we need to take into account context, conditions and practices of production located within the circuit of culture for an analysis of corporate representation of the nation in particular, and media representation of cultural identities more generally. This thesis largely draws upon their theoretical and methodological approaches to probe the complexities of signifying practices by global corporations within contexts of advertising production.

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<sup>58</sup> However, they conclude that such resistance has no sustained power to bring the All Blacks back into the control of the local communities because “the All Blacks are now run as a commercial enterprise – one whose pursuit of new revenue streams and global audiences often outweighs previous commitments to the national culture and community” (Scherer & Jackson, 2010, p. 219).

<sup>59</sup> Such an approach reveals the importance of the local contexts of production. Scherer and Jackson (2010) thus argue that representation of the local “necessitates the anchoring of production firmly within specific local cultural communities” and “is facilitated by local familiarity and institutional collaboration thanks to a flexible network” (p. 120).

### *Case studies used in the study*

Within the context of the global cultural economy, marketing and advertising activities of transnational corporations have permeated production and consumption of modern cultural life not only in the West but also increasingly in the non-West. Thus, there is a need for research on corporate nationalism beyond Western contexts. As indicated by its rapid economic growth centred on technological advancements, Asia has been steadily developing its own cultural economies and consumer cultures that are similarly driven by corporate activities for production and representation of commodities, cultures and identities. Among the previous studies of sport and corporate nationalism, there has been only one account examining an Asian context (China) (Slack, Silk, & Hong, 2005).<sup>60</sup> This study focuses on Japan given that it has been one of the world's largest economies attracting numerous Western transnational corporations as well as helping to successfully develop many of the early non-Western transnational corporations in the global marketplace. These dynamics of the economic and cultural flows across the division of the West and the East have not been comprehensively explored by previous literature of corporate nationalism and therefore demand attention here.

More specifically, this thesis offers case studies for Nike and Asics' production of advertising campaigns that feature representations of Japanese culture and identity. Two major advertising campaigns were selected for the analysis: Nike's *Where is the Next?* and Asics' *Made of Japan*. The two cases offer vivid contrasts with respect to the ways in which 'Japan' was imagined and represented through transnational corporate strategizing of advertising campaigns because of the different directions of cultural flows—from the global to Asia (and Japan) and from Japan to the global. Thus, while both cases involve commercial representations of Japanese identity, they require different theoretical frameworks due to the different cultural logics

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<sup>60</sup> Perhaps for this reason, the previous studies of sport and corporate nationalism, with the exception of Slack et al. (2005), have not addressed discourses of Orientalism.

associated with their strategic practices: glocalisation and self-Orientalisation. On the one hand, the case of Nike advertising represents a flow from the global to Asia (and Japan) because Nike, as an American-based transnational corporation, utilised the strategy of glocalisation to incorporate elements of local culture within its promotional campaigns in order to attract local, Asian consumers. On the other hand, the Asics' case represents a flow from Japan to the global because Asics, as a Japanese-based transnational corporation, signified its own national identity in what is referred to as a process of self-Orientalisation through a series of global advertising campaigns.

The two contrasting ways of representing Japan between Nike's glocalisation and Asics' self-Orientalisation are not necessarily contradictory but rather complimentary within the ongoing re-construction of contemporary Japanese identity and culture more generally. Thus, these case studies explore the multiplicity and multidimensionality of contemporary Japanese identity formation as informed by practices, conditions and negotiations of corporate articulations at the global-local and West-East nexus. In contrast with previous literature on sport and corporate nationalism, this thesis offers unique contributions to the body of knowledge because it: (a) situates Japan as a counter-hegemonic culture to Western hegemony; (b) extends the theoretical possibilities of corporate nationalism by incorporating analyses of glocalisation and Orientalism; (c) (re)presents and examines the voices and perspectives of both Japanese and Western cultural intermediaries; and therefore, (d) challenges the dominant, Western-centred discourses of globalisation by revealing non-Western, Japanese subjectivities, identities and experiences that have been overlooked within literature.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology:

#### A Multi-Perspectival Approach and the Circuit of Culture Model

...profits are always dependent upon the ability of producers to *interpret* the changes in meaning that products undergo throughout their consumption. In this sense, production and consumption are not completely separate spheres of existence but rather are mutually constitutive of one another. What happens to a product in consumption has effects for producers and so on, in an ongoing cycle of *commodification* – where producers make new products or different versions of old products as a result of consumers’ activities – and *appropriation* – where consumers make those products meaningful, sometimes making them achieve a new ‘register’ of meaning that affects production in some way. In this sense, the meanings that products come to have are constructed in this process of *dialogue* – albeit rarely an equal one in terms of power relations – between production and consumption. (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 103, emphasis changed).

This chapter outlines the ontological and epistemological basis of the project and how that informs the use of a multi-perspectival approach and the circuit of culture model to investigate globalisation, corporate nationalism and Japanese identity. It is important for social science scholars to establish their own positions, or ‘positionality’ (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 49), with respect to certain disciplines, perspectives and paradigms since no research can be conducted without a particular point of view and associated biases (Kuhn, 1970). Guba and Lincoln (1994), for instance, assert that “Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (p. 105). In turn, a primary responsibility of socio-cultural scholars is to clarify their beliefs about ontology (what is the nature of reality?), epistemology (what is the relationship between the inquirer and what can be known?) and methodology (how can the inquirer gain knowledge of the world?) (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Establishing one’s own positions in regard to these

fundamental questions helps clarify the rationale for the selected methods and their customisation for the researcher's own specific ways to examine particular social problems. In this sense, a method is not a fixed tool or technique but "a whole philosophy or approach" such that "we must develop our own approach and methods suited to our specific aims and questions" (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 3).

It is therefore crucial to acknowledge the fluid, intricate and relative nature of social identities, relations and phenomena without single-mindedly limiting or closing interpretation within a fixed theoretical and methodological approach. Likewise, there is no particular methodology, method, practice, interpretation or perspective that can claim a 'universal truth' or a privileged position over others (Amis, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Following this philosophical consideration of the methodology, this chapter attempts to illuminate my own beliefs, positions and biases in relation to a particular construction of knowledge in this research text. More specifically, this thesis largely builds on the theoretical and methodological approaches to corporate nationalism developed by Scherer and Jackson (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010), which is informed by the work of Johnson (1986/1987), Kellner (1995) and du Gay et al. (1997). Hence, this study draws upon these methodological understandings for a multi-perspective approach using a circuit of culture model to examine the context of cultural production and representation. It also follows Scherer and Jackson's (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010) employment of three methods: contextual analysis, textual analysis and interviews with advertising practitioners. However, as revealed in the following sections, I offer some re-conceptualisations of the methodological concepts and a re-configuration of the methodological framework and its links with the concepts.

Overall, this chapter consists of five sections: (a) Methodological Approaches of the Study; (b) A Multi-Perspectival Approach and the Circuit of Culture Model; (c) The Selection of Case Studies and Methods for the Study; and (d) Limitations and Challenges. The first section of

this chapter provides a brief description of cultural studies methodology and outlines the specific methodological approaches used in this study. The second section justifies the employment of a multi-perspectival approach and the circuit of culture model for investigating the cultural production and associated cultural processes of advertising campaigns. The third section details the selection of two case studies, the three interrelated methods utilised and their links with the broader methodological framework of this study. Lastly, the limitations of the study are acknowledged along with the challenges experienced in order to alert future researchers to potential pitfalls for this type of research.

### **Methodological Approaches of the Study**

This thesis is strongly informed by theoretical and methodological approaches from cultural studies. Hence, it is worthwhile to briefly acknowledge the historical development of cultural studies at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1960's. The institution is often credited for the development of frameworks to study various forms of culture including working-class, minority, media and popular as legitimate sites for academic analyses. As a result, it widened the scope of inquiry into culture that was previously conceptualised only as so-called 'high culture'. As part of a response to earlier theorising of the mass media by the Frankfurt School solely as ideological and manipulative forces from 'above', scholars of the British cultural studies tradition instead highlighted the contexts of cultural resistance and struggle between and within various cultural groups characterised by a range of social attributes including class, age, gender, sexuality, nationality and ethnicity. Central to the projects of cultural studies was a political belief and intent in challenging, and eventually transforming, the dominant discourses constructed around the hegemonic politics of culture and identity. In doing so, cultural studies has destabilised the symbolic boundaries of academic disciplines and been recognised as

multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary.<sup>61</sup>

Along with the growth of cultural studies as a legitimate field of academic study, an increasing number of scholars in the sociology of sport have engaged with the multi-disciplinary field (Andrews, 2002; Giardina & Newman, 2011; Ingham, 1997; McDonald & Birrell, 1999; Silk & Andrews, 2011; Silk, Andrews, & Mason, 2005). By reading cultures as texts and representations where power is both exercised and challenged, those sport sociologists recognised the limitation of sport studies in establishing its own discipline and joined cultural critique at large through the shared theoretical and methodological approaches (McDonald & Birrell, 1999). Silk, Andrews and Mason (2005), for instance, suggest that sociology of sport is becoming “a component of a wider ideological critique that critically interrogates a range of sites in which the production of knowledge and identities take place” (p. 10). While theoretical and methodological approaches can be borrowed from cultural studies, there is no single or unified approach that defines how cultural studies should be conducted. This thesis, in particular, employs multiple approaches—namely ‘interpretive/constructivist’, ‘critical’, ‘dialogic’ and ‘reflexive’.

First, this study is *interpretive/constructivist* because it engages the multiple ways in which people interpret and construct their ‘realities’ of the social world differently from one another. It differs from the positivist approach which generally seeks out a universal and objective ‘truth’ by quantitatively measuring the world ‘out there’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Schwandt, 2000). The interpretive approach dismisses the claim that complete objectivity is obtainable and acknowledges that a researcher as a human being is inevitably affected and biased by her or his own worldviews, beliefs and cultural values.<sup>62</sup> From this view, we can observe, read and interpret

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<sup>61</sup> As McDonald and Birrell (1999) note, cultural studies challenges the “territorialization of knowledge by seeking theoretical models, methodological practices, and substantive questions that travel across disciplinary boundaries” (p. 285).

<sup>62</sup> For instance, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest the need to recognise “the value-laden nature of inquiry” (p. 4)

a range of human behaviours, social relationships and cultural meanings to form our understandings of particular patterns, similarities and differences within and between different contexts. Such an epistemological position allows a possibility for researchers to interpret multiple ‘realities’ of others through interaction, dialogue, learning and experience.<sup>63</sup>

Second, this study is *critical* because it challenges the dominant discourse of the nation-state as a historically congruent and inevitably coherent unity and problematises the contemporary re-formation of ‘the nation’ by the logic of profit maximisation and hedonistic consumerism.<sup>64</sup> In particular, Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) concept of ‘hegemony’ provides a useful framework for critical analyses because it “recognizes that the winning of popular consent is a very complex process and must be researched carefully on a case-by-case basis” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 309).<sup>65</sup> The concept of hegemony needs to be differentiated from determinist, Marxist theories because “hegemonic consent is never completely established, as it is always contested by various groups with different agendas” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 309). It is therefore important to clearly identify a context within which particular power relations are formed and thus investigated. Thus, critical media analyses need to address the contested nature of hegemonic and cultural struggles by acknowledging the various ‘realities’ for both dominant and dominated groups and individuals within relevant contexts. For Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), “The key to successful counter-hegemonic cultural research involves (a) the ability to link the production of representations, images, and signs of hyperreality to power in the political

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because these is “no value-free science” (p. 3). Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (2005) assert that “knowledge cannot be separate from the knower, but rather is rooted in his or her mental or linguistic designations of that world” (p. 202).

<sup>63</sup> Although final written texts provide and represent a form of a temporary closure of the researcher’s particular interpretations at the moment, interpretive activities of the researcher never end because of “the necessarily interpretive nature of culture and the fact that interpretations never produce a final moment of absolute truth” (Hall, 1997c, p. 42).

<sup>64</sup> According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), “A critical social theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy; matters of race, class, and gender; ideologies; discourses; education; religion and other social institutions; and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (p. 306).

<sup>65</sup> The concept of hegemony has been employed by sport sociologists to interrogate the complex nature of sport as a contested terrain of representations and practices of physical culture through which dominant ideas, values and meanings are accepted, resisted and negotiated within and beyond the realm of sport (Giulianotti, 2005; King, 2005; McDonald & Birrell, 1999; Plymire, 2005).

economy and (b) the capacity, once this linkage is exposed and described, to delineate the highly complex effects of the reception of these images and signs of individuals located at various race, class, gender, and sexual coordinates in the web of reality” (p. 311). Accordingly, this study examines the links between: (a) representations of national identity that are mobilised by transnational corporations as a powerful sign for their promotional activities; and (b) the highly complex contexts of production that are constituted by, for instance, the global division of creative labour, various creative processes of production and multiple ‘realities’ of the producers.<sup>66</sup>

Third, this study is *dialogic* because it constructs a particular interpretation of social phenomena by both *deductively* drawing conceptual frameworks from the existing theories and *inductively* incorporating insight from the practices and ‘realities’ of cultural producers within the field of advertising production. One way to articulate a gap between theory and practice is to focus on ‘praxis’, in Marx’s terminology.<sup>67</sup> According to Raymond Williams (1988[1983]), “praxis is practice informed by theory and also, though less emphatically, theory informed by practice, as distinct both from practice uninformed by or unconcerned with theory and from theory which remains theory and is not put to the test of practice” (p. 318).<sup>68</sup> In this sense, it relates to what Hall (1992a) calls “the dialogic approach to theory” that is used “to return the project of cultural studies from the clean air of meaning and textuality and theory to the something nasty down below” (p. 278). Moreover, an inductive approach to draw understandings from practice does not necessarily serve either an antithesis or subordinate to theory but

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<sup>66</sup> This study is also critical in a way to challenge the dominant academic discourses in relation to particular theoretical formations and sets of taken-for-granted assumptions. It is within this sense that cultural studies can be used “as a means of critiquing our own tradition building and, therefore, for critical self-reflection and renewal” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 9). From this view, new knowledge creation can be seen “as actually *constituting* social differences and power, as being intrinsically political in this sense” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 59, emphasis in original).

<sup>67</sup> As Johnson et al. (2004) point out, there have been “continued tensions between more inductive and more theory-led approaches in the literature on method” (p. 75).

<sup>68</sup> As opposed to a ‘Marxist’ tradition with an insistence on theory, structure and ideology, the notion of praxis reminds us of Marx’s emphasis on human sensuous activities and practices.

“foregrounds the shifting, changing nature of any enquiry, its ongoing and dialogic character, as well as the struggle to pose questions and listen for answers, to re-pose them, adjust method to question, see the method itself exert a pressure, stay open to others, as people, ‘sources’ or texts” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 2).<sup>69</sup> This dialogic research process is also interrelated to issues of a researcher’s reflexivity because “Epistemologically, dialogue with others is how reflexivity is secured” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 57).

This study is *reflexive* because it critically reflects on the ‘positionality’ (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 49) or presuppositions of the researcher and its relationships with the researched others. For Guba and Lincoln (2005), “Reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting” (p. 210).<sup>70</sup> As previously noted, interpretive practice substantially depends on a researcher’s point of view, the context of a research site, and available resources to select certain methods. From this standpoint, it is both appropriate and advisable to write in the first person in order to acknowledge that a researcher, as an instrument, is inevitably influenced by her or his social attributes including social class, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality (Amis, 2005; Patton, 1990). Thus, I openly acknowledge the potential influences of, for example, being a Japanese male with a fairly extensive academic background in two English speaking countries—the U.S.A. and New Zealand, on the selection and interpretation of theories, research designs and sources. While it is inevitable for a researcher to be confronted with her or his own biases, inclusion of a variety of views, perspectives and voices “can help a researcher to overcome the

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<sup>69</sup> According to Johnson et al. (2004), “Stressing practice foregrounds our agency as researchers, the differences we can make to a situation, both in what we do when we are researching (our relationship with those who are being researched, for instance) and the more distant effects of our work, such as the publications we produce” (p. 2). Therefore, a dialogic approach attempts to avoid one-sided accounts of either deductive or inductive inquiries by examining theory with practical evidence derived from researcher’s own interpretations of others’ ‘realities’.

<sup>70</sup> The position contrasts with a positivist approach in which “The removal of the researching self from the frame, and the separation of ‘self’ from ‘other’, stems from a belief in an objective world ‘out there’ that can be split off from the researchers’ lives and values” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 46).

tendency to write in the distanced and abstracted voice of the disembodied ‘I’” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 210).<sup>71</sup> Therefore, rather than objectifying Others from a particular viewpoint of a researcher, there is a need to carefully examine the subjectivity and reflexivity of the researched others avoiding the researcher’s preoccupations with stereotypes about them.<sup>72</sup> These methodological approaches—interpretive, critical, dialogic and reflexive—are subsumed and coordinated under my employment of a multi-perspectival approach.

### **A Multi-Perspectival Approach and the Circuit of Culture Model**

As already outlined, this study involves various theories, methodological approaches, research sites and the voices of actual advertising practitioners. One of the key tasks for a qualitative researcher is to strategically, but flexibly, choose and articulate different perspectives, methodological tools and empirical materials in a single study. In this thesis, this process is characterised by a ‘multi-perspectival’ approach (Frow & Morris, 2000; Kellner, 1995, 1997, 2003; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Scherer & Jackson, 2008a, 2010).<sup>73</sup> Kellner (1995), developing Nietzsche’s concept of perspectivism, emphasises the need for examining a variety of perspectives to avoid one-sidedness and partial vision of interpretation and inquiry. Since cultural

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<sup>71</sup> Indeed, understanding the researched others can be considered as an attempt to close the ‘temporal distance’ that is “a *necessary condition* of knowing and, then, a way of knowing better” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 55, emphasis in original).

<sup>72</sup> This analysis therefore concerns not only the reflexivity of a researcher to critically reflect on her or his own social and cultural locations within the research field but also “the *everyday* reflexivity of the researched, in the form of self-awareness or irony” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 56, emphasis in original). In other words, the reflexivity of research involves “dialogue with multiple others, including the internal dialogue with fragments of the self” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 58). As Johnson et al. (2004) summarise: “Reflexivity, then, involves acknowledging the limits and specificity of the social, temporal, spatial and subjective horizons of all research, including our own. In its stronger version, it also involves subjecting the position of the knower to the same *critical* reflection as that of the objects of the study – who, in turn, have their own projects of self-production. It involves asking who we are as researchers and why we are doing this work. It also involves attending to the conditions under which we engage in *dialogue* with others, not only listening to what they tell us but also recognizing their own reflexivity in response to our presence” (p. 56, emphasis added).

<sup>73</sup> This process is similarly addressed by some scholars as a ‘bricolage’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000; Nelson, Treichler, & Grossberg, 1992). *Bricoleur*, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), “produces a bricolage, that is, a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation” (p. 2). Johnson et al. (2004, p. 240) alternatively propose construction of ‘multisi(gh)ted texts’ that are informed by different research sites and perspectives to overcome researcher’s own biases and presuppositions.

inquiries provide no guarantees for the possibility of value-free, objective knowledge (Denzin, 2002), it is highly advisable for researchers to engage in dialogue with various perspectives in order to claim validity of their analyses and interpretations. More specifically, I employ a multi-perspectival approach for the purpose of expanding the horizons of my knowledge and experience by embodying interpretive, critical, dialogic and reflexive research practices. This point is particularly important for this study given that semi-structured interviews are used as a means for conducting dialogue with particular perspectives and subject positions of practitioners in the sport and advertising industries.

According to Kellner (2003), the development of a multi-perspective approach is in part a response to the limits of the Marxist ideology critiques that “are highly ‘reductionist,’ reducing textual analysis to denunciation of ruling class ideology” (p. 15). Likewise, Johnson (1986/1987) argues that “I do not see how any cultural form can be dubbed ‘ideological’ (in the usual marxist critical sense) until we have examined not only its origin in the primary production process, but also carefully analysed its textual forms *and* the modes of its reception” (p. 56, emphasis in original). In particular, Kellner (1997) encourages researchers to analyse a range of perspectives through,

more concrete and empirical analysis of the political economy of the media and the processes of the production of culture; more empirical and historical research into the construction of media industries and their interaction with other social institutions; more empirical studies of audience reception and media effect; more emphasis on the use of media culture as providing forces of resistance; and the incorporation of new cultural theories and methods into a reconstructed critical theory of culture and society. (p. 27)

Accordingly, this thesis provides an empirical and comprehensive analysis of textual representations and contexts of production including the multiplicity of subjectivities, perspectives and practices of cultural intermediaries.

A circuit of culture model can be considered as one way of framing how a multi-perspective and multi-method approach are conducted to examine cultural production and

consumption. Stuart Hall (1980) developed the concept of a circuit of culture that was modelled after the circuit of capital conceptualised by Karl Marx. Hall (1980) elaborates on a circuit of culture with his encoding-decoding model of symbolic exchange and communication. In this model, communication represents a “complex structure in dominance” through which symbolic meanings and codes are articulated at “distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction” (Hall, 1980, p. 129). In doing so, Hall (1980) offers three variations of codes—the dominant, negotiated and oppositional—to demonstrate the different ways in which representation is interpreted by the audience. Therefore, the encoding-decoding model opened up possibilities that encoded texts can be resisted, negotiated or appropriated in various contexts of consumption. According to Hall (1980), “The value of this approach is that while each of the moments, in articulation, is necessary to the circuit as a whole, no one moment can fully guarantee the next moment with which it is articulated” (pp. 128-129). In short, Hall’s (1980) model provided a theoretical break from a one-way flow of communication, or determination, characterised by the traditional mass communication models and offered an alternative to accommodate the complexity and negotiation within a hegemonic process of the cultural circuit.

Based on the encoding-decoding model, different models and versions for the circuit of culture have been developed by several scholars including Johnson (1986/1987), du Gay et al. (1997), Soar (2000), Johnson et al. (2004) and Jackson (2008). In contrast to the encoding-decoding model that was based on communicative exchanges, these models have expanded its understanding to the circulation of a cultural product, or ‘commodified object’, that is produced, represented, interpreted and used in everyday life. According to Scherer and Jackson (2008a), these models have provided “multidimensional methodological frameworks to guide the scholarly analysis of complex social processes and power relations that can never be guaranteed” (p. 508). As opposed to the “one-side productivist reading” (Hall, 1983, p. 71), they share a

fundamental logic that “the processes of production only provide a series of possibilities that have to be realized in and through consumption” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 59).<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, as they offer different emphases, this analysis specifically follows Jackson’s (2008) model that is reproduced as Figure 2 and refers to it as ‘the circuit of culture model’ throughout this thesis.<sup>75</sup>

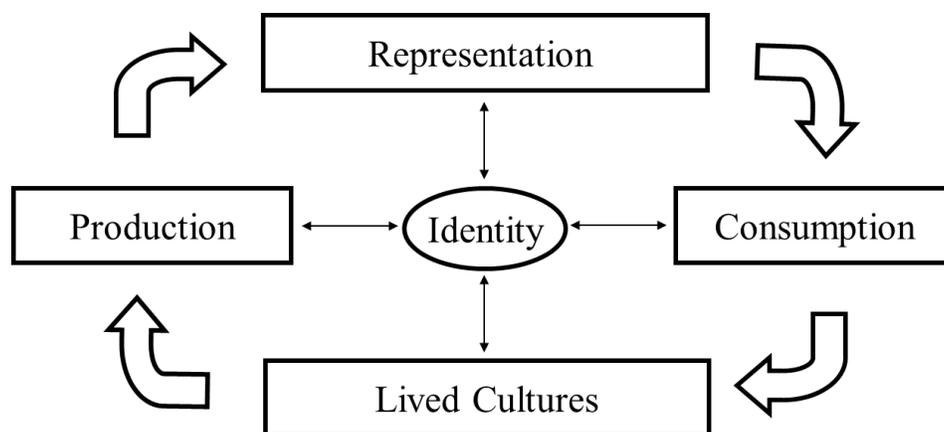


Figure 2: The Circuit of Culture Model (Jackson, 2008)

Since the models by Soar (2000), Johnson et al. (2004) and Jackson (2008) are extended or simplified versions of the model by Johnson (1986/1987), I first compare the similarities and differences between the models by Johnson (1986/1987) and du Gay et al. (1997). Perhaps most importantly, the model by Johnson (1986/1987) indicates a ‘clockwise’ cultural flow (as in Figure 2) which can be contrasted with the du Gay et al.’s (1997) model that does not specify a general order of cultural flows among the different moments. Johnson’s (1986/1987) model

<sup>74</sup> For Storey (2010), it is the insistence of Gramsci that: “It is not enough to celebrate agency; nor is it enough to detail the structure(s) of power; we must always keep in mind the dialectical play between agency and structure, between production and consumption” (p. 5).

<sup>75</sup> Jackson’s (2008) article describes the courses he teaches: PHSE 424: *Sport, Media and Culture* and PHSE 338: *Advanced Sociology of Sport* within the School of Physical Education at the University of Otago. This circuit of culture model was used as “a framework for the course to illustrate how ‘media sport’ and its related commodities (sport spectacle, sport celebrity, and sport promotional culture) are organised and impact on our lives” (Jackson, 2008, p. 97) in PHSE 424 that I attended in 2008.

designates this general direction of cultural flow through the four moments: Production, Texts, Readings and Lived Cultures. It is structured in a way to illustrate: (a) power relationships between Production and Readings; and (b) degree of abstraction/concretion between Texts and Lived Cultures. The first point denotes that producers have the power to abstract and represent culture as a public form of shared meanings that are then read, interpreted and consumed by the audience/consumers who are conditioned but nonetheless capable of translating them into personal and collective activities, pleasures and identities. The second point denotes that, at the moment of Texts with a high degree of abstraction, particular meanings are signified by producers to transform an object into a cultural artefact—something meaningful for identification, satisfaction and pleasures of consumers; on the other hand, at the moment of Lived Cultures, with its high degree of concreteness, these identifications, satisfaction and pleasures realised by the possession of the cultural artefact are shared with people or a group to form their own unique experiences and (sub)cultures.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast, the five processes or moments of du Gay et al.'s (1997) model—Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption and Regulation—do not constitute particular power relations and orders of cultural flows among them. They are rather structured equally to enhance understanding of symbiotic relationships between each other while locating a cultural artefact at the centre of analysis. In their words, to study a cultural artefact, “one should at least explore how it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 3). Therefore, their model is constructed to provide an analytical framework for cultural inquirers to do a ‘cultural study’ of a particular object/cultural artefact without designating a particular order

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<sup>76</sup> Johnson (1986/1987) refers to a television programme as an example of Texts that “takes a separated, abstracted or objective form, in the shape of the programme/text” and “comes at us from a special, fixed place, a box of standardised shape and size in the corner of our sitting room” (p. 51). Johnson (1986/1987) therefore concludes that “This separated existence is certainly associated with an intricate division of labour in production and distribution and with the physical and temporal distance between the moment of production and that of consumption, characteristic of public knowledge forms in general” (p. 51).

or flow of such an object/cultural artefact from one moment to another. Although du Gay et al. (1997) are of course highly conscious of power relations with respect to how their research object, the Sony Walkman, is produced, represented, regulated, consumed and identified, their model is not intentionally or unintentionally structured like Johnson's (1986/1987) to delineate a general and dominant cultural flows or order of the capitalist mode of production and distribution.

However, du Gay et al.'s (1997) emphasis on "the biography of a cultural artefact" (p. 3) is implicative given that this thesis examines the production, representation and circulation of an advertisement as a cultural artefact. Specifically, du Gay et al. (1997) argue that a popular cultural product can be viewed as a subject of biography, like an individual narrative of the life of a famous person that tells us a story of the product's own life cycle. To study this, we need to examine how a cultural object is transformed through different forms of social interactions and cultural appropriation at various moments and *simultaneously transforms* our relationships between people, meanings, cultures and objects. I also agree with du Gay et al. (1997) that "whilst we can divide production from consumption for the purpose of study, our analysis should make an attempt to understand how production and consumption are made to 'articulate'" (p. 52). Thus, they locate cultural intermediaries in a strategic position to fill, or articulate, symbolic gaps between production and consumption of cultural artefacts such as advertisements. Accordingly, this thesis draws on their use of key concepts such as 'cultural artefact', 'cultural intermediaries' and 'culture of production' as they are related to the circuit of culture.

Jackson's (2008) model is largely developed from Johnson's (1986/1987) but also influenced by du Gay et al.'s (1997) approaches. As it is explained elsewhere, "In brief, the circuit is a conceptual model that traces the life and meaning of cultural commodities as they move through various phases or moments including production, representation, regulation and, in turn, how they shape our lived experiences and identities" (Jackson et al., 2005, pp. 1–2). Despite

slight differences in terminology, perhaps even interchangeable between Texts and Representation and between Readings and Consumption without causing an analytical problem, Jackson's (2008) model shares with Johnson's (1986/1987) a 'clockwise' cultural flow through the four moments: Production, Representation, Consumption and Lived Cultures. It therefore suggests that symbolic 'meanings' embedded within cultural artefacts are (re)shaped in accordance with this illustrated order of circulation although the process can start at any moment.<sup>77</sup>

What differentiates Jackson's (2008) model from Johnson's (1986/1987) is its addition of the moment of identity at the centre of the circuit. The addition alerts us the centrality of identity, and identity politics, in the formation and circulation of culture. The two-way arrows from identity to other moments represent dialectic relationships—that is, identity *both* constructs the moments *and* is constructed by the moments. For instance, consumption of a commodity enables consumers to associate and identify with particular meanings, styles and tastes represented by the cultural artefact. However, such a process of identification through consumption is already *preconditioned* by existing identities of the consumers that have profound impacts on the multiple ways in which the cultural artefact is interpreted, consumed and used by different consumers in various contexts.

Moreover, this dialectic is also applicable to the moments of production and representation where not only do cultural producers (re)produce a range of our cultures and identities as public forms within the media and advertising but also their practices are inevitably shaped or preconditioned by *their own* cultures and identities. These producers' cultures and identities are often overlooked yet central in the production of a cultural artefact (du Gay et al., 1997). Therefore, their identities, cultural values and social relationships are in fact "raw material

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<sup>77</sup> It is worthwhile to note that Johnson et al. (2004) suggests that the circuit of culture may be better represented as "perhaps, more spirals than circuits" (p. 38).

for fresh cultural production” as part of “cultural *conditions* of production” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 47, emphasis in original). It is in this sense that Soar (2000) suggests the ‘short circuit’, an extended yet shorter version of Johnson’s (1986/1987) model. The short circuit of culture is described as “one in which the cultural intermediaries act as producers and consumers” (Soar, 2000, p. 431). It demonstrates that producers should not only be viewed from their professional roles but also as consumers and active members of particular communities in which they constitute their own lived cultures and shared meanings.

According to Soar (2000):

This circuit of meaning is short in two senses: Most obviously it is faster, suggesting that the cultural capital so carried is channelled back around to the intermediaries en masse long before it works its way into and through the public domain; furthermore, the notion of an electrical short circuit provides for the idea that this attenuated arrangement is perhaps detrimental to the functionality of Johnson’s larger, more conventional circuit. (p. 431)

To put it simply, Soar’s (2000) model has incorporated an ‘inner’ circuit (specific yet powerful circuit for cultural intermediaries within the culture industry) within the more general circuit of Johnson’s (1986/1987) (conventional circuit for a mass of the general public). In Soar’s (2000) model, the short circuit shares two moments with the conventional circuit—Cultural Production and Texts—but offers two different moments—Privileged Readings/Consumption of Intermediaries (versus Consumption/Reading More Generally) and Lived Cultures/Social Relations of Intermediaries (versus Lived Cultures/Social Relations More Generally) (Soar, 2000, p. 432).

With this model, Soar (2000) contends that consumption practices and lived cultures of advertising professionals are indeed more ‘immediate’, and thus privileged, “raw material for fresh cultural production” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 47) than those of the general public. However, these privileged forms of consumption by cultural intermediaries are by no means irrelevant to more general consumption because “cultural production always involves an appropriation and

consumption - or selection and interpretation - of cultural forms that are already in public circulation” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 246).<sup>78</sup> Thus, there is a need to study the short circuit of culture and its influences on the more conventional circuit and vice versa.<sup>79</sup> Beyond this analytical distinction, careful analyses of practices of cultural intermediaries will reveal how selected aspects of cultures, identities and tastes at the moments of consumption and lived cultures are incorporated into a cycle of cultural reproduction.<sup>80</sup> More generally, Soar’s (2000) concept of the short circuit is useful to overcome the tendency of neglecting the lives and practices of cultural labourers within previous analyses of cultural production. Accordingly, my case studies provide in-depth analyses of two key moments, *production* and *representation*, and explore the contexts of advertising production that are constituted, and conditioned, by multi-site and multi-level processes of creative communication and various practices of a range of different institutions and individuals.

### *Production studies*

Production studies of the media and advertising have been increasingly recognised for their importance in investigating *how* representation is constructed in contrast to *what* is represented and consumed. It is in part a response to the prevalence of ‘textualism’ that only

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<sup>78</sup> According to Johnson et al. (2004), the circuit of culture models “recover Marx’s stress on the *interdependence* of moments and the idea (Hegelian rather than structuralist) that such moments are *internally* related to each other” (p. 246, emphasis in original). To put it differently, they offer an opportunity to overcome a pitfall of ‘Marxism’ that “was weak in just the decisive area where practical criticism was strong: in its capacity to give precise and detailed and reasonably adequate accounts of actual consciousness: not just a scheme or a generalization but actual works, full of rich and significant and specific experience” (Williams, 1980, pp. 18-19).

<sup>79</sup> For instance, Scherer and Jackson (2010) confirm the usefulness of Soar’s ‘short circuit of culture’ model by highlighting that “the reflexive reincorporation of consumption information and critical public feedback following the 1999 RWC into the design and production processes of Adidas’s local marketing campaign in 2000” (p. 106).

<sup>80</sup> As Soar (2000) suggests, “Ultimately, the contradictions that exist between notions of structure on the one hand and agency on the other hand deserve to be investigated; we need not rely on a principled adherence to one at the expense of the other” (p. 433).

focuses on texts as research objects completely detached from contexts of production and consumption.<sup>81</sup> Johnson (1986/1987) critiques textualism as follows:

“The text” is no longer studied for its own sake, nor even for the social effects it may be thought to produce, but rather for the subjective or cultural forms which it realises and makes available. The text is only a *means* in cultural study; strictly, perhaps, it is a raw material from which certain forms (e.g. of narrative, ideological problematic, mode of address, subject position, etc.) may be abstracted. It may also form *part* of a larger discursive field or *combination* of forms occurring in other social spaces with some regularity. But the ultimate object of cultural studies is not, in my view, the text, but *the social life of subjective forms* at each moment of their circulation, including their textual embodiments. (p. 62, emphasis in original)

In light of his emphasis on ‘subjective forms’ instead of texts, comprehensive analyses of media representations need to carefully address different forms of subjectivities, identities and practices of individuals that constitute certain ‘realities’ at a particular moment of production or consumption. A researcher of cultural studies thus needs to be aware that “The isolation of a text for academic scrutiny is a very specific form of reading” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 67).<sup>82</sup> Rather than over-privileging one’s own reading, textual materials need to be examined for their ‘inter-textuality’, ‘inter-discursivity’ and ‘inter-subjectivity’ because “No subjective form ever acts on its own” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 67). It is therefore more plausible to envision that subjective forms are variously produced, represented, consumed and appropriated by interpretive practices of individuals who encode or decode texts from particular subject positions under particular conditions of their contexts. According to Johnson (1986/1987), “Context determines the meaning, transformations or salience of a particular subjective form as much as the form itself” (p. 67). This perspective is not meant to deny the usefulness of textual analysis as an effective tool for cultural studies but acknowledge a danger in over-privileging the researcher’s own subjective reading of texts and subordinating other moments such as production and consumption.

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<sup>81</sup> Kellner (1995), for instance, notes that “recent work in cultural studies has tended to ignore political economy and the production of culture and has been overtly textualist, or has focused narrowly and one-sidedly on ethnographic study of audience reception of texts” (p. 199).

<sup>82</sup> For Johnson (1986/1987), a textualist approach often reduces both “questions of production to the ‘productivity’ (I would say ‘capacity to produce’)” and “questions of readership... to the competencies of a textual form of analysis” (p. 63).

Nevertheless, the perspectives, conditions and social relations of cultural producers have often been absent in previous studies of media representations. For example, Mayer (2009) recently pointed to the relative absence of production studies that examine workers' roles, practices and subjectivities:

As a field of study, "production studies" captures for me the ways that power operates locally through media production to reproduce social hierarchies and inequalities at the level of daily interactions. Production studies, in other words, "ground" social theories by showing us how specific production sites, actors, or activities tell us larger lessons about workers, their practices, and the role of their labors in relation to politics, economics, and culture... It is ironic that as media industries continue to aggregate and dominate larger labor markets and audience shares, fewer production studies have actually addressed the real ways that local communities construct their subjectivities in the face of these consolidations of media capital and reconfigurations of media work. (p. 15)

This call for more comprehensive production studies has been echoed for studies of advertising. Despite an increasing awareness of the symbolic power of the advertising industry, several scholars point out a lack, or an oversimplification, of understanding about advertising's production of culture and, in turn, its culture of production (Cronin, 2004b; du Gay, 1997; Malefyt & Moeran, 2003; McFall, 2002; Moeran, 2002; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Nixon, 1996, 1997, 2003; Nixon & du Gay, 2002; Scherer & Jackson, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). McFall (2002), for instance, acknowledges that:

This production context is ...not simply a matter of what it was technologically, or even epistemologically, possible to do but should also be understood to embrace the cultural, economic and political dimensions of production. These dimensions have played a formative role in the final appearance of advertising throughout history. (p. 161)

Similarly, du Gay (1997) insists on the need to research cultural aspects of production because: "Processes of production are themselves cultural phenomena in the way that they are assemblages of meaningful practices that construct certain ways for people to conceive of and conduct themselves in an organizational context" (p. 7). The situation in the sociology of sport community is similar where there have been few comprehensive analyses of the production of

sport broadcasts, (e.g. Gruneau, 1989; MacNeill, 1996; Silk, 2001; Silk, Slack, & Amis, 2000; Stoddart, 1994) and advertising (e.g. Gee, 2009; Jackson, Gee, & Scherer, 2009; John & Jackson, 2011; Scherer & Jackson, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). According to Plymire (2005), “In the field of sociology of sport, about 70 per cent of all studies of media and sport examine media products while 20 per cent are production studies and less than 10 per cent are audience studies” (p. 144). Plymire (2005) reasons that the relative lack of production studies is due to their requirement of “access to sites of media production, and substantial commitments of time and material resources on the part of the researchers” (p. 144).

The neglect of producers’ conditions and subjectivities was discussed some time ago by Raymond Williams (1980) yet has not been adequately addressed for global, transnational communities of advertising production:

we should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of a practice. When we find ourselves looking at a particular work, or group of works, often realizing, as we do so, their essential community as well as their irreducible individuality, we should find ourselves attending first to the reality of their practice and the conditions of the practice as it was then executed. (p. 48)

Hence, rather than abstracting ideological production as a coherent and seamless process from ‘above’, cultural production studies need to take into account occupational communities and multiple ‘realities’ of advertising producers as part of the conditions of cultural practices.

Likewise, Johnson (1986/1987) recommends that:

we must look at cultural forms from the viewpoint of their production. This must include the conditions and the means of production, especially in their cultural or subjective aspects. In my opinion it must include accounts and understandings too of the actual moment of production itself—the labour, in its subjective and objective aspects. (p. 57)<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> According to Johnson (1986/1987), “*All social practices* can be looked at from a cultural point of view, for the work they do, subjectively. This goes, for instance, for factory work, for trade union organisation, for life in and around the supermarket, as well as for obvious targets like “the media” (misleading unity!) and its (mainly domestic) modes of consumption” (p. 45, emphasis in original). He continues that “The neglect of (structured) human activity and especially of conflicts over all kinds of production seems in retrospect the most glaring absence. Thus, although the conception of ‘practice’ was much invoked (e.g. ‘signifying practice’) it was practice quite without ‘praxis’ in the older marxist sense” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 64).

Following this analytical distinction, this thesis offers a comprehensive analysis of the moments of production and representation including objective aspects (e.g. structures, codes and social relations; see Chapter 4) and subjective aspects (e.g. producer's subjectivities, identities and tastes; see Chapter 5 and 6). While these aspects are more interrelated than independent in practice, the latter has been particularly overlooked by the mainstream production studies. Thus, an attention to labour practices and social relations of cultural production allows a more comprehensive, dialogic and empirical approach to the cultural circuit because such an approach articulates generally overlooked links between abstract and public forms of media representations on the one hand, and concrete and private forms of producers' experience, identity and lived cultures on the other. More critically, it interrogates who are more powerful as key decision makers and what kinds of meanings are privileged by those for representational practices within a particular context of advertising campaign production.

Of course, the focus on such practices of cultural intermediaries should not undermine the significance of audience research in terms of how media representations are interpreted, consumed and appropriated by audience as a means of (re)forming personal or collective identities at the moments of consumption and lived cultures. As such, although this study does not examine the moment of reading or consumption on the part of audiences, it does acknowledge "a *theoretical awareness* of other moments" (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 42, emphasis in original). That is, I recognise that this study of production and representation needs to be complementary to studies of other moments as part of more general analyses of the circuit of culture as a whole. In this sense, symbolic meanings encoded by cultural intermediaries represent what Hall (1992a, p. 278) calls "the arbitrary closure" that is subjected to resistance, negotiation and appropriation by audiences or consumers. The next section describes the selection of case studies and particular methods to empirically analyse their relevance to globalisation, corporate nationalism and production studies of advertising.

## The Selection of Case Studies and Methods for the Study

A case study approach is helpful to identify certain features, patterns, coherence and sequences of social and cultural activities and processes within the boundaries of the context (Stake, 2000, 2005). My initial strategy in selecting cases was to first search advertisements most relevant to my theoretical criteria with respect to globalisation, corporate nationalism and Japanese identity. The initial search examined television, advertising magazines and video websites (e.g. You Tube) as well as my own memories of advertisements. For instance, I subscribed to advertising websites and publications including *Adforum*, *Advertising Age* and *Creativity* to access their database of advertisements and insider discourses within the creative industry. At my original research proposal, I presented four advertisements as possible case studies: Asahi's 2009 *World Baseball Classic*, Asics' *Made of Japan*, Coca-Cola's *Ashita ga arusa* (There always is tomorrow) and Nike's *Where is the Next?*.<sup>84</sup> As I proceeded with further data collection and preparation for interviews, the cases of Nike and Asics appeared more feasible with respect to gaining access for interviews, thus offering more insights for my analysis of corporate nationalism.<sup>85</sup>

Following the initial search for advertising campaigns as central materials for case studies in this thesis, they were then analysed with three interrelated methods: contextual analysis, textual analysis and semi-structured interviews with key cultural producers/intermediaries (Gee, 2009; Gee & Jackson, 2010; John & Jackson, 2011; Scherer & Jackson, 2008b, 2010). As Johnson et al. (2004) contend:

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<sup>84</sup> While I do not claim that these were the most significant advertisements for representing sport and Japanese identity among all the existing advertisements around the world, I did my best to search for meaningful examples. Given the nature of the study and the focus on the depth of inquiry, the number of advertisements examined was deliberately small.

<sup>85</sup> I located the commercials for Nike's *Where is the Next?* campaign on YouTube (the commercial can be found at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZL3\\_aC\\_ZGY&list=PL8E7AF520E7FE0C76&index=21](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZL3_aC_ZGY&list=PL8E7AF520E7FE0C76&index=21)); the advertisements of Asics' 2009 and 2010 *Made of Japan* campaigns for its sub-brand, Onitsuka Tiger, through one of the subscription-based services mentioned above.

a multiplicity of methods is necessary because no one method is intrinsically superior to the rest and each provides a more or less appropriate way of exploring some different aspect of cultural process. Our analysis also implies that all methods have limits. If stretched beyond them, they mislead. Cultural analysts rightly resist the implication that the meaning of a text to a reader can be inferred from the conditions of its first production, especially from the fact that it is a mass-produced commodity. This stretches a political economy of production beyond its competence. Similarly, textual analysis of a media form cannot yield an account of production conditions, nor should we infer the way of life of a particular group from its public representation. (p. 42)

Although I categorise the methods into three types of analysis, these are not completely separate but interrelated and complementary activities in research practice. Thus, the three methods do not structure a strict order for the analyses. Rather, during my analyses and fieldwork, I have moved back and forth between the different methods in order to reflexively engage with theories, readings of texts and contexts, findings and various perspectives. Collectively, these methods elucidate how symbolic meanings of ‘the nation’ are encoded, represented, articulated and distributed at the moments of production and representation as part of the circuit of culture. Each of these analyses and their interrelationship are discussed below beginning with contextual analysis and its relationship to the circuit of culture.

### *Contextual analysis*

Cultural studies emphasises the importance of contextual specificity for studying a particular object, person, group, institution or culture. Hence, contextual analysis recognizes that all human interaction, communication and experience occur within a particular historical, political, economic and cultural context. Context, arguably, is interpreted on a continuum and as such can be as small as that of a household or as large as that of world history. As Hodder (2000) points out, “The boundaries of the context are never ‘given’; they have to be interpreted” (p. 711). It is the interpretive and constructive practices of human beings that make sense of similarity and difference in meaning between signs, cultural patterns and discourses across a variety of contexts.

In other words, contextualisation is a necessary set of interpretive boundaries within which a researcher develops an interpretive framework for analysis.<sup>86</sup>

As McDonald and Birrell (1999) assert, “Examining any text in isolation from larger historically specific concerns is therefore an ill-conceived focus, as signs are always incomplete without their contexts or interpretants” (p. 294). This is why there has been an increasing interest in utilizing the circuit of culture as a methodological framework since it requires at least some form of contextualisation within which to understand the production, representation and consumption of cultural texts including advertisements. To this extent, the circuit of culture reminds us of the important influence of context on the conditions of production—not only in terms of geographical location—but the historical and structural relations that impact on the lives and practices of cultural intermediaries. In doing so, it is important to avoid treating one context completely separate and overemphasising its independency from others because in our realities there always are crossovers and dialogues between and within different contexts (King, 2005).

Central to this analysis are advertising texts as cultural artefacts that need to be properly contextualised to interpret social relations and cultural activities of production and representation. Thus, the key contexts of this study are the advertising production of Nike and Asics with respect to how their promotional campaigns were constructed in association with representations of national culture and identity. Hence, the case studies are employed to inform theoretical debates on globalisation and corporate nationalism by empirically identifying and examining similarity and difference between the ways in which Japanese culture and identity were represented and reproduced by the American and Japanese transnational corporations within different temporal,

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<sup>86</sup> It is important to point out that a researcher needs to be critically aware of how her or his knowledge is acquired and developed within a particular context and reflexively examine her or his relationships with people, institutions and cultures within the context of research. As Johnson et al. (2004) argue, “Cultural formations have a geographical scope and location and researchers need to understand in what kind of local world they stand and *where* they are related, in social space-time, to the others they research. Sensitivity to *relationships* between dominant and subordinated spaces is especially important in a postcolonial world. The (qualified) dominance of Western knowledge beyond its spatial centres is a prime example of the need for such awareness” (p. 55, emphasis in original).

spatial, social and cultural contexts of advertising production within the global sport industry. More specifically, both global and local contexts of production were empirically examined by collecting and examining a range of formal and informal texts including press releases, newspapers, advertising-related journals and websites.<sup>87</sup>

Specifically, Nike's *Where is the Next?* advertising campaign was produced and consumed in 2007 across 'Asia' in general (see Chapter 4) and Japan in particular (see Chapter 5). General information about the campaign and its production was gathered first on the internet. In part, it was difficult to gather relevant data retrospectively in 2008 because the campaign was released and completed in 2007. The key sources of information in print include the press releases from Nike Japan (Nike, 2007), the advertising websites that provided the list of credits (e.g. advertolog<sup>88</sup>) and the website magazines that featured an interview with the creatives involved in the commercial production (www.honeybee.com). On the other hand, the Asics' *Made of Japan* advertising campaigns were produced from 2007 to 2010 first for European markets and then for global markets (see Chapter 6). General information about the campaigns and their production was gathered first on the internet. The key sources of information in print include the campaign website (www.onitsukatiger.com), the press releases from Asics and Amsterdam Worldwide (Amsterdam Worldwide, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) and the website magazines (e.g. openers.jp; www.fashionsnap.com). In contrast to the Nike's campaign, there was more information available on the internet for their promotion of the campaign since it was more globally-oriented and digital-media-driven.

The information gathered from a range of publicly available documents and websites were then contrasted with the textual analysis of advertising and the interview data to understand

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<sup>87</sup> These textual data were also used to prepare for interviews with the actual producers and in turn further investigated by confirming and contrasting with the interview data in order to enhance better understanding of the particular contexts of production and the perspectives of cultural intermediaries.

<sup>88</sup> This site can be found at <http://www.advertolog.com/nike/adverts/wheres-the-next-ronaldinho-japan-10002505/>

what aspects of culture and identity were either subjectively and selectively incorporated into, or excluded from, the construction of the advertising campaigns. For instance, the contextual analysis identified that Nike's television commercials from its *Where is the Next* campaign were mainly produced by the Japanese subsidiary of American advertising agency, Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo (W+K Tokyo). This highlights the link between actual industry practice and particular theoretical concepts including glocalisation, regimes of mediation and cultural intermediaries used in this analysis. Similarly, the contextual analysis identified that the Asics' *Made of Japan* campaign was centrally coordinated by the European partners and illustrated the possible application of self-Orientalism.

### *Textual analysis*

The textual analysis of this study offers my own readings of the representations of 'the nation' within the advertisements that are enhanced through analysis of the contexts of production and interviews with producers. Highlighting the value of studying texts and contexts, Plymire (2005) asserts that "texts and their meaning are constituted in specific social and cultural practices and contexts, and those meanings may, to a great extent, be read from the text—if we know the context in which the text was constructed" (p. 148). Similarly, Johnson et al. (2004) argue that "the analysis of publicly available texts depends on their temporary removal from the contexts of production and social use, though fuller analysis may attempt to repair these divisions" (p. 210). As part of the circuit of culture, my textual reading of 'the nation' within advertising represents a temporal signification of certain meanings particularly informed from the moments of production and representation.

Cultural texts provide concrete materials to work on for a researcher and often serve as evidence of a particular claim about how our society, culture and identity are represented and constructed. As Johnson et al. (2004) suggest, "Where contemporary cultural studies is

concerned, the effectiveness of textual analysis depends on a *general* engagement in the world as well as the collection and careful reading of key texts” (p. 176, emphasis in original). The key texts for this study are advertisements that are constituted by powerful representations of society, culture and identity ultimately serving to legitimise particular shared meanings as dominant or privileged discourses. As previously noted, other textual data for the case studies include background information about key creative personnel, target markets and creative processes of advertising campaigns from the internet, press releases and advertising-related journals.

One way to conduct a textual analysis is through semiotics—a method that was popularised by Roland Barthes (1972) as an approach to read ideological codes or meanings from structures and relations of signs within texts. Semiotics investigates how signs, constituted as a combination of signifiers and signifieds, represent particular ideas, social relations and cultural meanings of our realities. As Johnson et al. (2004) argue, “Because meaning is produced through the relationship between texts identifying the ‘rules’ or codes of the sign system becomes a way of determining what the meanings are and how they relate to each other” (p. 158).<sup>89</sup> The majority of sport-media studies, for instance, has utilised semiotics to critically examine the media texts of sporting celebrities, mega-events, marketing and advertising as part of a reproductive system of dominant or privileged discourses of gender, race, sexuality, class and nationality (Plymire, 2005). It is in this sense that McDonald and Birrell (1999) suggest that: “We advocate reading sport critically as a methodology for uncovering, foregrounding, and producing counter-narratives, that is, alternative accounts of particular incidents and celebrities that have been decentered, obscured, and dismissed by hegemonic forces” (p. 295). However, we also need to be wary of overdependence on a textual analysis as it has been suggested by the earlier discussion on the benefits of a multi-perspective approach and the circuit of culture model.

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<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) argue that “language is not a neutral and objective conduit of description of the ‘real world’ but rather serves to construct it in the form of discourses” (p. 284).

While it is important to recognise unequal power relations in signifying practices, texts vary in the nature and extent of their impact on the audience whose members are often quite diverse. As such, it is impossible to assert that any text or researcher, or a single reader, can determine *the* reading of a text. As Johnson et al. (2004) suggest, “We have to *offer* a reading – ‘This is how it reads to me’, from this point of view, taking account of these contexts but also ask ‘What do *you* think?’” (p. 185, emphasis in original). It is one thing to be confident in one’s own reading and make an offer of it, but it is quite another to claim the absolute truth and force one’s own reading to others. To acknowledge the representational power and limits of our own reading and writing, Johnson (1986/1987) suggests two strategies for a textual analysis:

First, the formal reading of a text has to be as open or as multi-layered as possible, identifying preferred positions or frameworks certainly, but also alternative readings and subordinated frameworks, even if these can only be discerned as fragments, or as contradictions in the dominant forms. Second, analysts need to abandon once and for all, both of the two main models of the critical reader: the primarily evaluative reading (is this a good/bad text?) and the aspiration to text-analysis as an “objective science.” The problem with both models is that by de-relativising our acts of reading they remove from self-conscious consideration (but not as an active presence) our common sense knowledge of the larger cultural contexts and possible readings. (p. 74)

By applying such understandings to the textual analysis of this study, I acknowledge that *my* readings of ‘the nation’ as represented within the advertisements is based upon a position informed by my knowledge and experience and that there are other possible interpretations.<sup>90</sup> In my case studies, the textual analyses were mainly conducted for the television commercials of Nike’s *Where is the Next?* campaign and the web commercials and sneaker-shaped promotional objects of Asics’ *Made of Japan* campaign. More specifically, the particular symbolic codes of ‘Japan’ were identified by key signifiers within Nike television commercials including ‘Japanese language’, ‘*bukatsu*’, ‘ramen noodles’, ‘locker room’ and ‘school uniforms’ (see Table 2 in Chapter 4). Likewise, key signifiers such as ‘Japanese popular culture’, ‘authenticity’,

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<sup>90</sup> My position as a Japanese male reading and representing Japanese identity therefore needs to be acknowledged and reflected upon critically in order to account for my own biases.

‘craftsmanship’ and ‘*tansu*’ featured in Asics’ web commercials. These symbolic codes provided concrete materials to discuss particular cultural elements of Japan in my interviews with the cultural intermediaries. In turn, this helped in the interpretation of how the meanings of ‘the nation’ were constructed within the particular contexts of production and subsequently represented in the advertising texts.

### *Interviews with cultural producers/intermediaries*

Since production studies without access to ‘insider’ knowledge tend to be written from a one-sided ‘outsider’ perspective, it was imperative to locate and examine the signifiers of ‘the nation’ as they were articulated by the producers’ particular ‘realities’ at the moment of production within the circuit of culture. In other words, the researcher’s own “reading must be open to the strangeness and specificity – or alterity – of the other’s reality and truths” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 236). For this purpose, interviews allow researchers to engage with the perspectives of interviewees through acquisition of insider knowledge about their cultures, views and lived experiences (Amis, 2005; Fontana & Frey, 1994, 2000).<sup>91</sup> Interviews provide not only an opportunity to interact with Others but also valuable data for textual extracts to illuminate their voices within academic texts. In the words of Amis (2005), “As well as providing evidence for particular claims, quotations provide color, add interest and enhance the legitimacy and credibility of the account” (p.131). Since the main concern of this thesis is *how* representation is constructed within a production context, interviews serve as a key methodological tool to gain credible behind-the-scenes information for the encoding of what is represented in the advertising texts. Consequently, the purpose of the interviews for this study is to understand the objective and subjective aspects of cultural production of ‘the nation’ from the perspectives of cultural

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<sup>91</sup> As Fontana and Frey (1994) argue, “Interview is a paramount part of sociology, because interviewing is interaction and sociology is the study of interaction”(p. 361).

producers who were directly involved in the development of marketing strategies and advertising campaigns for Nike and Asics.

Hence, following the initial selection of advertisements for research, my contextual analyses identified what organisations were involved in the campaign productions and who were credited as the main producers. Methodologically speaking, the first task for gaining access was to find a ‘gatekeeper’ who was in a position to be able to control access for interviews and a ‘sponsor’ who was an insider willing to support the process of conducting interviews (Amis, 2005; Fontana & Frey, 1994). Once I gained permission to conduct interviews, I attempted ‘snowball sampling’ in which a researcher finds suitable participants by asking previous interviewees for suggestions of who else to interview. My attempt in gaining access to the field serves an initial part of fieldwork which in this study represents research activities conducted within the fields of advertising production in Japan (3rd October, 2009 to 26th April, 2010) and the Netherlands (14-21 July, 2010).

Interviews can be largely classified into three types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 1994, 2000). This study mainly employs semi-structured interviews because: (a) unlike structured interviews, participants are provided with flexibility to express their perspectives beyond the frame of questions; and (b) unlike unstructured interviews, participants can prepare for and therefore feel secure towards interviews with provision of a list of questions beforehand. All interviews were undertaken by providing the main questions to participants in advance and were recorded with a digital voice recorder. Only one interview was conducted by phone while the other eight were conducted face-to-face at their work places. The interviews lasted between one to two-and-a-half hours. Furthermore, given my role as a researcher in collecting data during the fieldwork, my observation of their work places, social interactions and non-verbal signs was helpful in supplementing the interview data and contextual analyses.

Overall, the total number of the interviewees is nine: five involved Nike’s advertising campaign, *Where is the Next?*, and four involved Asics’ advertising campaign, *Made of Japan* (see Table 1).

Table 1: Description of the Interviewees

Job Title	Organisation	Nationality	Language of Interview	Sex	Date of Interview (day/month/year)
Director of Advertising	Nike APHQ	Japanese	Japanese	Male	8/12/2009
Supervisor of Marketing	Nike Japan	Japanese	Japanese	Male	13/01/2010
Digital Producer	Nike Japan	Japanese	Japanese	Male	13/01/2010
Account Executive	Daiko	Japanese	Japanese	Male	13/01/2010
General Manager of Marketing	Asics Headquarters	Japanese	Japanese	Male	18/02/2010
Marketing Manager	Asics Headquarters	Japanese	Japanese	Male	18/02/2010
Account Executive	W+K Tokyo	Japanese	Japanese	Male	12/03/2010
Communication Manager	Asics Europe	Dutch	English	Female	15/07/2010
Creative Director	Amsterdam Worldwide	British	English	Male	15/07/2010

The five people interviewed for Nike’s advertising campaign were from Nike Asia Pacific Headquarters (APHQ), Nike Japan, W+K Tokyo and Daiko, Japanese advertising agency. They were all Japanese males, and the interviews with them were conducted in Japanese and translated by the author.<sup>92</sup> The male dominance of the key decision makers in the Nike case may point to the ‘masculine’ cultures of the culture industry (Gee, 2009; Gee & Jackson, 2010; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Nixon, 1996, 2003). Although the interviewees in this case do represent a form

<sup>92</sup> The interview scripts translated by the author were then checked by my supervisors for grammar and flow. In this process, I did my best to ensure that the original meanings were not lost or modified.

of masculine identity in relation to the sport and culture industries, they can also be positioned as dominated ‘Asians’ who have been underrepresented in the global culture industry (see McRobbie, 2002b). The author attempted to interview key personnel in the construction of the *Where is the Next?* campaign through snowball sampling—that is, I did not deliberately seek ‘Japanese male’ participants.<sup>93</sup> The four people interviewed for the Asics’ advertising campaign consisted of two Japanese male representatives from Asics Japan, a Dutch female representative from Asics Europe, and a British male representative from Amsterdam Worldwide. The conversations were held in Japanese with the representatives from Asics Japan and in English with its European partners.<sup>94</sup> The Japanese transcripts were translated by the author.<sup>95</sup>

Although the number and diversity of the interviewees are admittedly limited, I was able to access those centrally involved in the production of the selected advertising campaigns. Since advertising campaigns are usually constructed on the basis of a small project team consisting of marketers at a client company and a creative team (typically including a creative director, copywriter, art director and account executive) at an advertising agency, the range of potential interviews with cultural producers/intermediaries for a particular campaign was necessarily restricted. Stated another way, it was extremely difficult to gain access to the specific ‘global’ or ‘glocal’ workers who lived in, and moved across, different countries and worked in, and moved across, different organisations or industries despite the fact that they worked together on the same project at a certain point of time. Given the highly protected nature of business information and the constraints of my research timeframe and budget, the nine interviews were nevertheless extremely insightful and valuable. Indeed, I have no doubt that my interviewees constituted most

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<sup>93</sup> Self-reflexively, it should be noted that the author’s subjectivity in relation to nationality (Japanese), sex (male), language (Japanese and English), and cultural background (*bukatsu* experience etc.) clearly played a key role in gaining access to the Japanese cultural intermediaries, interpreting their perspectives and analysing the data.

<sup>94</sup> Although English was the Dutch person’s second language, I tried to minimise grammatical corrections of the original script to retain the originality of the interview conversation and respect her way of expression.

<sup>95</sup> Self-reflexively, my cultural background as an international student, who was raised in Japan but spent a considerable time in Western higher education, enabled me to gain access to Asics and its partners, undertake interviews in Japanese and English, and provide empathy to both Japanese and Western cultural labourers.

of the key actors involved in representing Japanese culture and identity within the selected campaigns.

The interview data were coded in order to analyse similarities and differences between the various cultural intermediaries with respect to their intentions, interests and production conditions during the development of the campaigns (Creswell, 2003). For instance, the key codes included ‘*bukatsu*’, ‘Japaneseness’, ‘*wa*’, ‘local reality’, ‘Japanese youth’, ‘Asia’, ‘Ronaldinho’, ‘intimacy’, ‘affinity’ for the Nike case; and, ‘Japaneseness’, ‘Japanese heritage’, ‘Europe’, ‘fashion’, ‘lifestyle’, ‘tradition’, ‘craftsmanship’, ‘authenticity’, ‘modesty’, ‘*kanji*’ and ‘*tansu*’ for the Asics case. These codes were then categorised into different themes including ‘purpose and backgrounds of the campaign’, ‘roles of the advertising agencies’, ‘headquarters-subsidiary relationships’, ‘process of production’, ‘glocalisation/self-Orientalism’, ‘Japaneseness’, ‘marketing/branding strategies’, ‘media strategies’ and ‘reflexive incorporation’. The emergent themes were contrasted with my textual analysis and contextual analysis to (re)form particular interpretations of the links between their ‘realities’ of everyday work and theoretical concepts of globalisation and cultural production. In doing so, it was identified that the similarities (e.g. the purpose and backgrounds of the campaign) indicate the shared codes, representing a form of ‘common sense’ with respect to the context of production across the different institutions, whereas the differences (e.g. institutional roles, occupational roles and cultural identities) point to the independent codes, representing self-expression, self-interest and self-identification of the individual cultural intermediaries. In particular, the search for unwritten ‘codes of practice’ (Silk et al., 2000) was considered integral because they highlight how the representations were constructed in a particular way through a range of interactions between different institutions, social networks and agents. As Negus (1997) insists, “we need to understand how *structures* are produced through particular human *actions* and how *economic* relationships simultaneously involve the production of cultural meanings” (p. 84, emphasis in original). Thus, interviews with

cultural intermediaries help articulate dialogic interplays between theory and practice without pre-conditionally privileging either side.

## **Limitations and Challenges**

### *Limitations of the study*

This sub-section illuminates the limitations of the project including broader limits of qualitative research. Some of the most debated aspects of qualitative research, and therefore possible limitations for this study, concern credibility, validity, reliability, legitimacy and generalisability. As Frow and Morris (2000) acknowledge, “work in cultural studies accepts its partiality (in both senses of the term); it is openly incomplete, and it is partisan in its insistence on the political dimensions of knowledge” (p. 327). In other words, all approaches are inevitably “limited by a particular time, space and social horizon and also motivated, more or less consciously, by desire, interest and power” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 17). However, by recognizing partiality and positionality as a “condition for openness and dialogue” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 52), we can adequately address what contribution a particular research project can make to the body of knowledge and what conditions are associated with its findings and contentions. To increase credibility and reflexivity, a researcher needs to examine various types of theories, methods, data and perspectives.<sup>96</sup>

In this study, this strategic process is framed and guided by a multi-perspectival approach and the circuit of culture model.<sup>97</sup> This approach attempts to improve credibility, validity and legitimacy by: (a) contextualising particular discourses, representations and practices within the

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<sup>96</sup> For example, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that “The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (p. 5).

<sup>97</sup> This process is more commonly undertaken by qualitative researchers as ‘triangulation’ (Amis, 2005; Denzin, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 1990; Stake, 2005).<sup>97</sup> For example, Denzin (1989) identified four types of triangulation based on data, investigators, theories and methodologies. In this process, findings from one source are examined and compared with other data, interpretations of other researchers/evaluators, theories and methods in order to enhance the reflexivity between them.

circuit of culture; (b) employing multiple methodological approaches—interpretive, critical, dialogic and reflexive; (c) empirically examining various subjectivities, identities and experiences of cultural intermediaries from different institutions and contexts; (d) contrasting the cases of American and Japanese sport brands both of which represent Japanese identity within their advertising campaigns; and (e) exploring a range of inter-textual and inter-discursive data including those from interviews, corporate publications, journals, magazines, newspapers and the internet.

It is important to acknowledge that, like other approaches, a multi-perspectival approach and the circuit of culture model are not without its partiality and conditions. For instance, although my textual readings of advertisements are reflexively examined by my contextual analysis and interview data, they are still inevitably influenced by my own presumptions, values and biases and therefore may not be the preferred reading by audiences, producers or scholars.<sup>98</sup> In other words, the combination of multiple methodologies and methods does not guarantee the elimination or reduction of the researcher's biases but may still promote a particular worldview that is inherently subjective and partial. As such, I acknowledge the partiality of analysing the circuit of culture in this study specifically with respect to a lack of audience research for how the advertising texts were variously read, decoded, interpreted and used by a range of readers or consumers.

While my two cases provide suitable examples and unique perspectives to expand the body of knowledge, more research along with case studies needs to be conducted to examine, verify or challenge my findings and arguments emanating from particular cases. In this sense, I agree with Leiss et al. (2005) who maintain that: "Because such a procedure courts the danger of

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<sup>98</sup> It can be even argued that my own readings and interpretations of the representations of Japan overly reproduce and reinforce a certain way of representing Japan that may or may not be agreeable to others. It is also a legitimate critique that my own readings of contexts and selective use of the interview data may be derived and influenced by my presumptions, values and biases.

self-confirming results, the conclusions should, strictly speaking, be confined to those instances alone and not generalized to the entire range of advertising” (p. 166). This is not meant to deny the possibility of application of the knowledge and findings from this study to other contexts of advertising production but to caution that such application requires a considerable care. In a similar vein, interviewing as a method is not without a limitations with respect to credibility and validity. It is often, and unfortunately, true that “‘What people say’ is often very different from ‘what people do’” (Hodder, 2000, p. 705). Such concerns are particularly important when interviews are conducted with ‘people in power’ including those at powerful organisations such as governments and corporations that tend to provide only publicly-desirable, superficial and even fabricated information. There are also potential questions about the validity of a researcher’s selection of interviewees. The selection of interviewees was constrained by a range of factors including my limitations of time and resources and their work schedules and willingness to provide time for the interviews. For instance, I have mainly used snowball sampling to find useful informants on the basis of the interviewee’s social and professional connections rather than solely using my own selections.

The reliability and legitimacy of academic research texts can be enhanced by undertaking what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as ‘peer debriefing’ where peers play the role of ‘devil’s advocate’ “for the purpose of exploring aspects of inquiry that might otherwise remain implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). In this sense, against the positivistic and post-positivistic standards in ‘measuring’ the quality of qualitative research, this study is consistent with the methodological stance that takes account of multiple interpretations and perspectives in order to inform “strategies of understanding, engagement, and transformation that address the most demanding social problems of our time” (Amis & Silk, 2008, p. 463). Accordingly, the research processes and texts throughout this thesis have been scrutinised many times by my two supervisors who provided me with different yet highly valuable comments for revision of the

organisation, interpretations and arguments used. In addition, the articles based on Chapter 4, 5 and 6 were submitted to the student paper competitions within professional academic associations and hence they were reviewed by scholars with feedback used to improve my analysis. Moreover, the articles based on Chapter 4 and 5 have undergone further reviews upon the submission and eventual acceptance to peer-reviewed journals. In short, many parts of this thesis have been reviewed, and challenged when necessary, in turn, accommodating different scholarly views, comments and suggestions. Through these reviews and modifications, I believe these critiques have enhanced my understanding of the socio-cultural theories, methodologies and interpretive activities, ultimately strengthening my analysis.

### *Challenges of the study*

It is worthwhile to address the key challenges that I encountered during the fieldwork so that future researchers can be aware of and avoid potential pitfalls. An attempt to gain access by finding and communicating with ‘gatekeepers’ and ‘sponsors’ is usually a time-consuming process requiring many attempts at correspondence between a researcher and organisational representatives. Nevertheless, this is a necessary procedure for any interview-related research in order to find the ‘right’ informants. In particular, business organisations are often highly reluctant to disclose sensitive information concerned it may impact on their competitive advantages and organisational or individual reputations. Access to such organisations and individuals requires patience, time flexibility and commitment on the researcher’s side.<sup>99</sup> Ultimately, the interview is only possible if they accept the request from the researcher. Indeed, it is largely out of the researcher’s control and she or he is rather dependent on the gatekeeper and sponsor’s

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<sup>99</sup> Given the pivotal role of researcher’s social interactions in conducting interviews, “social skills can be more important in data gathering than skills of a more technical nature” (Amis, 2005, p. 121).

willingness and availability although there are strategies for enhancing one's chances.<sup>100</sup>

There were two different ways in which I gained initial access to Nike and Asics. For Nike, it was important to find a liaison and some form of social network associated with the company. Travelling to Japan for fieldwork in 2009, I attended the annual conference for the Japanese Association for Sport Management in Shiga where I was fortunate to meet Dr. Etsuko Ogasawara, who at the time worked at the Biwako Seikei Sport College (now at Juntendo University) and eventually was able to introduce me to a 'gatekeeper' who also served as a 'sponsor' at Nike Japan. This gatekeeper/sponsor further connected me with the Director of Advertising (DA) at Nike APHQ and the Supervisor of Marketing (SM) at Nike Japan for interviews. For Asics, from the information I gathered on the internet, I was able to identify key people who played central roles in branding Onitsuka Tiger at Asics Headquarters. When I travelled to Japan for fieldwork, I attempted to contact one of their corporate 'gatekeepers'—an original member of the marketing team involved in the 'revival' of the Onitsuka Tiger brand. He responded to me with his interest in participating in my project but insisted that this type of request had to go through an official meeting of the executives for permission. Perhaps, it is worthwhile noting a difference between Nike Japan and Asics in making the decision about whether to accept or reject my request for interviews. Whereas Nike employees responded to me with their own individual decisions, Asics employees were required by the company regulations to go through an organisational process to make decisions.<sup>101</sup> Although this is one minor part of

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<sup>100</sup> Even with well-planned preparation, there are no guarantees for access and subsequent success of interviews. This uncertainty along with unpredictable accidents during the process may cause a risk of jeopardising months of research preparations. These may include: (a) cancellation of interviews due to changes of their work schedule, natural disasters, accidents of transportations and their personal or family problems; (b) failure of carrying out interviews due to missing the meeting with interviewees, researcher's own health conditions and technological problems (e.g. recording device not working); and (c) refusal of disclosing the interview texts due to a lack of trust in the researcher to represent their voices, unsatisfaction or discomfort with the questions and organisational regulations or pressures.

<sup>101</sup> At Nike Japan, the interview with the SM was accompanied by his colleagues at Nike Japan and Daiko. The inclusion of the latter two people was not based on my request but his intention and preference, which in turn enabled me to reflect on their different roles and perspectives. This is a good example of unexpected, yet fortuitous, events that may emerge from fieldwork which may substantially influence the nature of data collection including

decision-making processes for such large-scale corporations, this must have larger implications with respect to how differently the two organisations make individual and collective decisions for other business matters including branding strategies.

It is one thing to gain access to a business organisation and quite another to have successful interviews and secure subsequent interviewees. In this sense, the first interview with the DA at Nike APHQ provided a harsh experience but good lesson for the subsequent interviews for my research. This interview was conducted by telephone given the distance between his location in the U.S.A. and mine in Japan. Within one hour of the interview, I could sense the interviewee's confusion and discomfort with the line of questions. It was evident that I had not done enough 'homework' to speak the language of professionals within the sport and creative industries.<sup>102</sup> During my interview, we struggled to share the meanings of key terms, concepts and ideas about advertising and representation due to our different backgrounds and knowledge bases. In other words, this gap in communication was largely generated by what may be referred to as a paradigmatic difference between the worlds of business and academia.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to my lack of professional knowledge and understanding of the creative industry, I felt that a sense of miscommunication was in part raised by the physical, symbolic and communicative distance of conducting a telephone interview. As I learned from the subsequent interviews, face-to-face interviews are much better tools for a researcher to facilitate better communication through non-verbal expressions and a sense of shared space. When interviews are

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selection of interviewees.

<sup>102</sup> The language here does not refer to national languages such as Japanese and English but that of technical jargon used within the industry. According to Fontana and Frey (1994), "The use of language and specific terms is very important for creating a 'sharedness of meanings' in which both interviewer and respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview" (p. 371).

<sup>103</sup> For example, for a sociological inquiry, it is important to understand what is excluded as well as included within media representations. When I asked about the selection process of ideas and representations for the campaign including what ideas were not selected and why, he seemed confused and answered that it was no different from a 'normal process' by which ideas were produced from communication with an advertising agency. It was not a 'good' question to ask to him but to W+K Tokyo because the advertising agency was the one that invested time and effort to develop those ideas and representations for the television commercials. Since I did not quite understand this 'normal process', I was not asking *right* questions to *right* person.

held at the interviewees' work places, they may not only be more relaxed within familiar settings but the researcher may also gain insights from physical and cultural space of production where they undertake everyday creative work. These unofficial data may not be directly used as evidence of a particular claim but nonetheless are helpful in understanding the culture and context of production as a whole.

Similarly, after conducting a face-to-face interview with the Marketing Manager (MM) at Asics Headquarters, it was much easier for me to gain access to personnel at Asics Europe and Amsterdam Worldwide through his referral. Although I could have conducted separate telephone interviews if necessary, I preferred face-to-face interviews because of language concerns and for the limitations of telephone interviews as highlighted in the Nike interview referred to previously. Moreover, visiting their work places was important for me to understand the social and cultural space of advertising production in Amsterdam—a place I had never visited.<sup>104</sup> In addition to the interview at Amsterdam Worldwide, I was fortunate to be given a tour at Asics Europe which provided me with some ideas about how their daily work operated within a particular space and culture. During the tour, I was struck by the contrast between the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and English-speaking environment of Asics Europe and the rather mono-cultural, Japanese-centric environment of Asics Headquarters. While an in-depth analysis of the differences in organisational cultures between Asics Headquarters and Asics Europe is beyond the scope of this thesis, there are certainly implications for the analysis of the negotiations between them for the advertising campaign construction.

In addition to the challenges of access to the research field, there were also considerations of ethics, privacy and confidentiality in relation to interviews. For this study, I addressed these issues by maintaining anonymity of the individual participants and trying to

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<sup>104</sup> As Johnson et al. (2004) note, an interrogation of cultural space for research “helps us to question the assumed homogeneity of locales as well as their implicit boundedness and suggest that cultural research needs to reflect more explicitly on the relationship between knowledge and spatiality” (p. 108).

represent their voices as accurately as possible in my writing. Below, I elaborate on these two points in relation to key challenges. First, there was a difficult decision to be made about how much anonymity is preserved for the participants. From an ethical standpoint, it is certainly advisable to prioritise their preferences. However, from a researcher's standpoint, a degree of anonymity may affect the credibility of the data, the analysis and the account as a whole. Consequently, there was some negotiation between myself and the interviewees regarding the level of anonymity.<sup>105</sup>

Second, a researcher needs to do her or his best to represent their voices as accurately as possible in academic writing.<sup>106</sup> An interview inevitably situates the power relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee in a particular way. That is, a researcher is an inquirer or knowledge seeker who has authority in producing and constructing academic texts while interviewees are the researched others who offer their information, perspectives and voices but only via interpretations by the researcher.<sup>107</sup> This unequal relationship between a researcher and the researched remains an important issue in qualitative research (Johnson et al., 2004). Here, criticality serves as a key concern for an inquirer of cultural studies because there is a tension as well as distance between academic knowledge, theory and authority on the one hand and practitioner's knowledge, practice and experience on the other hand.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> For instance, some interviewees were insistent on substantial anonymity while others preferred to leave the decision to me. From my perspective, it was important to gain permission to refer to them at least by their job titles and the names of their organisations because it would significantly increase the credibility, precision and significance of my arguments and account as a whole. Fortunately, I was granted permission to use the job titles and names of the organisations for all the participants in this study.

<sup>106</sup> Following Silk and Amis (2000), my approach in this sense is to “let the voices of the data speak for themselves” (p. 274).

<sup>107</sup> In this sense, cultural research involves the production of ‘intertextuality’—“realizations of the dialogue between the texts we study and the texts we make” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 76). Therefore, it is also true that my writing as text is open for various readings and interpretations of readers who may form different understandings about the contexts and perspectives of cultural production described within it.

<sup>108</sup> Interviews allow a researcher to maintain critical distance relatively easier than ethnography given a lower degree of involvement in participant's way of thinking, doing and living. Conversely, it also means that there is a greater danger of misunderstanding and misrepresenting their intentions, meanings and voices.

In this sense, I attempted to take great care by: (a) conducting interviews at their work places to understand not only their views on certain things but also, though admittedly partial, their ways of work and life; (b) returning interview scripts to the participants for confirmation and clarification;<sup>109</sup> and, (c) balancing my own texts and arguments with their voices or interview quotes. It should be also noted that the participants of the study represent particular points of view and voices that may or may not be applicable to their colleagues or representative of their own institutions or fields. Hence, it was important to recognise the difference between when they talked as representatives of their organisations and when they talked about their own personal points of view. Acknowledging the ‘irreducibility’ of participants’ perspectives, identities and lived experiences, a critical approach needs to address what is *behind* the subjective knowledge, activities and testimonies of the interviewees as part of the cultural conditions of production or consumption. In other words, a researcher needs to be honest, sincere and respectful of interviewees’ personal lives, knowledge and experiences and at the same time be able to critically reflect on them with respect to how they are related to, and implicated within, the wider politics of culture and identity.

As Johnson et al. (2004) suggest, we have to take considerable care when we quote interviewees:

The researched others should therefore appear as much as possible in their own terms and in their own words. So, in quoting the other (can we quote gesture or style?) the dialogic text will be relatively extended, superfluous even, because surplus quotation makes room for other interpretations, as well as giving space to the interpreted to interpret themselves. (p. 239)

Following this, I try to represent interviewees as much as possible in their own terms and words but not to quote them in unnecessary length in order to sustain the focus and flow of my analysis.

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<sup>109</sup> This process allows the participants to confirm what they said in the interviews and clarify them if necessary. Because of the spontaneous nature of interviews, an interviewee may say something that is neither intended nor meant to be public. Although valuable information may be lost from the study, it is more important to ensure the interviewees’ rights and reputations are protected and that we minimise the risk of misrepresenting their voices.

Overall, by carefully employing the above strategies for access to and communication with informants, I feel that I was able to respond to the challenges associated with the interviews and representation of their voices.

## Chapter 4

### Glocalisation and Multiple Regimes of Mediation:

#### Nike's *Where is the Next?* Campaign (1)

To begin an in-depth analysis into the dynamics of the global cultural economy and corporate nationalism, this chapter focuses on Nike's strategy of glocalisation in the contexts of advertising production for the Asia and Pacific markets. As discussed in Chapter 2, the discursive formation of 'the nation' is influenced by specific political, economic, social and cultural conditions of production. In particular, this chapter illuminates what Cronin (2004b) calls the 'multiple regimes of mediation' by examining "the precise *nature* of this commercial mediation and the detail of its practice" (p. 351, emphasis in original). To this end, it reveals the links between corporate nationalism, glocalisation and multiple regimes of mediation to understand how transnational corporations manage complex global divisions of creative labour through collaboration and negotiation with a range of local and 'glocal' institutions and individuals involved in the production and representation of advertising. In doing so, the analysis reveals the articulation between sport and national youth cultures in 'Asia' and exposes the commercial forging of commonality in "the experience of absorption of Western modern civilization and the practice of cultural indigenization of Western/American cultural influences" (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 67). It also manifests the changing relationships between the global, 'Asia', 'the nation' and the local through the glocalisation of the popular culture of sport.

More specifically, the aims of this chapter are to: (a) locate Nike's strategy of glocalisation within different cultural, media and sporting contexts of 'Asia'; (b) deconstruct a discursive chain of the symbolic codes of 'the nation' developed by various institutions and individuals; (c) empirically identify the conditions, negotiations and codes of cultural

intermediaries that influenced their practices of production and representation; and, (d) provide insight into the complex division of creative labour within the field of advertising production in particular, and the dynamics and complexities of glocalisation more generally. The chapter begins by outlining the specific theoretical frameworks employed in this chapter and their relevance to approaching and analysing corporate nationalism. Next, I provide a case study of Nike's Asia-wide campaign in order to analyse the context of their advertising strategy and the glocalisation processes linked to both television commercial production and media strategy. Finally, I provide a conclusion to highlight the key points, findings and their implications.

### **Glocalisation and Multiple Regimes of Mediation**

As the etymological development of glocalisation and its application to socio-cultural analysis of globalisation were outlined in Chapter 2, this section specifically explicates the links between glocalisation, corporate nationalism and multiple regimes of mediation. A key tenet of glocalisation as a socio-cultural theory is that dominant cultures are not necessarily eradicating the local; rather global ideas, practices and commodities are localised, leading to the renewal of local space, culture and identity and vice versa. Therefore, the theoretical strength and appeal of glocalisation is that it “critically transcends the banal binary oppositions associated with globalization, and so registers the societal *co-presence* of sameness and difference, and the intensified *interpenetration* of the local and the global, the universal and the particular, and homogeneity and heterogeneity” (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, p. 168). The theoretical debate on glocalisation has been complicated by Ritzer's (2003) re-conceptualization of homogenisation as the ‘glocalisation of nothing’ and heterogenisation as the ‘glocalisation of something’. As Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) contend, “Whereas Ritzer associates glocalization with processes of heterogenization and critical social agency, we understand the term as featuring the possibility of *both* homogeneity and heterogeneity” (p. 45, emphasis in original). Therefore, the

socio-cultural approach of glocalisation directs our attention to how the global and the local are *articulated* rather than polarised or opposed.

Notably, the concept of glocalisation has been increasingly employed within the sociology of sport community (Andrews & Ritzer, 2007; Cho, 2009a; Giulianotti, 2005; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009; Grainger & Andrews, 2005; Lee, Jackson, & Lee, 2007; Nishiyama, 2006; Weedon, 2012). Yet, despite increasing applications of glocalisation to sport, culture and society, cultural practices and processes of ‘corporate glocalisation’ have received little attention. Thus, it is important to investigate the contexts of corporate activities within which the concept originated since the corporate strategy of glocalisation manifests and articulates the complexities of the global cultural economy at large. Among the studies of sport and glocalisation, only Grainger and Andrews (2005) examined the context of corporate glocalisation. While their emphasis was on the global capitalisation of locality and resistance by the local, this chapter focuses on the practices of local cultural intermediaries through which ‘the nation’ is *articulated* by a transnational corporation. Following Giulianotti and Robertson (2007, 2009), it therefore explores glocalisation in order to investigate the reflexive and mutually reinforcing relationship between the global *and* the local.

More specifically, a key argument is that the corporate strategy and process of glocalisation necessitate that transnational corporations delegate encoding, distribution and other tasks to local cultural institutions and intermediaries given the specific nature of local advertising structures, social relations and cultural sensibilities. In other words, the production of national meanings and identifications are influenced or shaped by the complexity and multidimensionality of glocalisation processes or what Cronin (2004b) calls the ‘multiple regimes of mediation’. With this concept, Cronin (2004b) emphasises the importance of taking into account the complexity of strategic communications and power relations between cultural institutions and intermediaries in

constructing advertising campaigns.<sup>110</sup> For Cronin (2004b), the field of advertising production is constituted by a range of mediating activities not only between an advertising agency and its business partners but also within the agency including “the complex and sometimes fraught mediation of conflicting approaches that occurs in any one campaign between individual Creatives, Account Managers and Account Planners” (p. 357). As such, Cronin (2004a) identifies the different, but interrelated roles within an advertising agency as follows:

Creatives are art directors and copywriters who are responsible for generating ideas for the campaign and for producing the images and the copy (the spoken or written words in an advertisement). Account Planners write briefs for the Creatives that outline the scope and aims of the campaign, they analyse and prepare long-term strategy and lia[i]se with research companies. Account Managers are responsible for project management and finance and day-to-day contact with the client. Senior practitioners tend to be called Account Director, Creative Director etc. (p. 59)

Given the various roles involved in the production of an advertising campaign, it is important to identify how representations are constructed and distributed through particular power relations and negotiations among different institutions and individuals at different stages of production. As Bourdieu (1993) reminds us, we have to pose the question: “who is the true producer of the value of the work...?” (pp. 76-77) within a specific context of cultural production. This question is relevant not only to ‘pure’ artistic production as in Bourdieu’s (1993) analysis but also, or perhaps more so, to advertising production because of the highly complex nature of contemporary commercial mediation that has been expanded to take place on a global scale. Most importantly, this approach to advertising production as multiple regimes of mediation attempts to overcome a general tendency in media and advertising studies to view the field of cultural production “as a single homogenized mass” (Silk et al., 2000, p. 16), overlooking the actual complexity and multidimensionality of the context of production. It thus proposes that examinations of roles, experiences and perspectives of creative labourers help us understand the

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<sup>110</sup> Complexity of creative mediation is also conceptualised by Moeran (2009) as ‘motley crews’ and Condry (2009) as ‘collaborative creativity’.

messy and contradictory processes of advertising production that may have profound impacts on the final representations of advertising.

For instance, a variety of institutional conditions, codes and cultures of local intermediaries need to be taken into account as part of any analysis of global, glocal or multi-national advertising campaign production. In particular, this chapter explores a range of social relations, interactions and negotiations between a global headquarters, regional local subsidiaries, advertising agencies, local production companies and media organisations at different stages of production. Furthermore, the case study below identifies: (a) who is primarily responsible for encoding and distributing representations of advertising; (b) how their practices are informed and structured by various social relations, codes and cultures of the production; and (c) how their personal tastes, identities and lifestyles influence their production and representation practices. Consequently, the analysis reveals how forms of cultural capital, knowledge of cultural meanings and shared codes of cultural production are essential for those involved in encoding and representing national cultures and identities through the corporate strategy of glocalisation.

### **Case Study: Nike's *Where is the Next?* Campaign in 'Asia'**

#### *Context of the advertising strategy*

Nike's *Where is the Next?* campaign was launched in 2007 to coincide with the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Asian Cup that is hosted every four years to determine which team will represent the region at the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) Confederations Cup. In 2007, 16 national teams competed including Iran and Iraq from 'West Asia', Uzbekistan from 'Central and South Asia', Malaysia and Vietnam from 'Southeast Asia', China, Japan and South Korea from 'East Asia' and Australia. While FIFA has considerable geopolitical power to legitimise its symbolic sporting boundaries across the world, this mixture of political entities, ethnicities and cultures in 'Asia' and its sub-divisions as imagined by FIFA

certainly points to the representation of Asia as a contested terrain of boundaries, politics and symbolic meanings. In particular, Australia's move from the Oceania Football Confederation to the AFC in 2006 provides an interesting point of discussion as it challenges the discourse of 'Asia' which is typically defined by its non-white and non-Western Otherness. More generally, the geographical term 'Asia' has been constructed, imagined and contested as a symbolic and cultural space by various institutions from 'above', including FIFA and various global corporations, on one hand, and those from 'below', including national football associations and local corporations, on the other.

For the *Where is the Next?* campaign, each nation was generally represented through national signifiers without invoking an explicit idea of 'Asia'. Thus, the campaign points to the fragility and multiplicity of 'Asia' that is increasingly re-articulated through commercial representations of Asian history, culture and identity as a signifier of difference from the West. Iwabuchi (2002), for instance, asserts that commercial interconnections between Asian nations, including Japan, through media production and consumption have produced re-articulations of 'Asia' located between the forces of global capitalism and (re)actions of local cultures:

The increasing intra-Asian cultural flow precipitates (asymmetrical) connections between people in Japan and those in modernized (or rapidly modernizing) "Asia," not through reified notions of "traditional, authentic culture" or "Asian values," but through popular cultural forms which embody people's skillful negotiation with the symbolic power of West-dominated global capitalism. (p. 18)

As one of the influential actors involved in the politics of sporting representation in Asia, Nike APHQ, located in Beaverton, Oregon, U.S.A., was in charge of organising and overseeing production of the advertising campaign. Since the major economies of Asia are located in the East, corporate imaginings of 'Asia' are skewed to the wealthier nations in East Asia and the Pacific.<sup>111</sup> For this Asia-wide initiative in particular, national-level campaigns were implemented

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<sup>111</sup> The main target markets of Nike APHQ in general were Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Southeast Asia (including Singapore), South Korea and Taiwan.

in their target markets including the co-host nations of the Asian Cup: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Yet, the central part of the campaign consisted of four localised television commercials for the national markets of Australia, China, Japan and South Korea—the giants of the ‘Asian’ sporting economy.

The advertising campaign’s aim was to enhance Nike’s brand image across ‘Asia’ through multifaceted modes of communication. According to the DA at Nike APHQ, the primary idea was to use Ronaldo de Assis Moreira (more commonly known as Ronaldinho) as its endorser given that he was considered by many as the world’s best soccer player at the time. The DA at Nike APHQ revealed that the choice of Ronaldinho was almost unanimous:

I think there was nobody else. In fact, “who else could it be other than Ronaldinho?” [Wayne] Rooney [for example] hadn’t reached the top of the world. The No. 1 soccer player was Ronaldinho who was winning every award including Ballon d’Or, UEFA and FIFA for that year. The campaign would not have worked out if that was Rooney. It is different nowadays, but we wanted the top of the world at that time because it was our message of support for youth who dreamt to make it to the world stage. Hence, the point of our brief to Wieden+Kennedy was literally “Where is the next Ronaldinho?” Aren’t there youth who can be the next Ronaldinho from Asia? (personal communication, 8 December 2009).

An advertising brief is the crucial starting point in any agency’s communication strategy as it serves as a set of guiding principles for an entire production. Nixon’s (1996) analysis outlines what he found to be the key elements within an advertising brief:

First, the brief contained a characterization of the target consumers. Secondly, the brief listed the explicit objectives of the advertising and its role in the marketing process. Thirdly, it consisted of a “proposition” or “positioning statement”. Fourthly, the brief detailed supporting reasons for the proposition. Fifthly, creative guidelines or, what was generally called “tone of voice” were listed. And finally, any mandatory requirements or practical considerations were set out. (p. 107)

To put it more simply, a brief must address questions including: “Who are we talking to?, Why are we advertising?, What do we want to say?, Why should the consumer believe us?, What is the tone of voice?, What are the practical considerations?” (Nixon, 1996, p. 107).

The idea emphasised in the *Where is the Next?* campaign's brief was the use of Ronaldinho to capitalise on the desire of youth to become the world's best player. Thus, the DA at Nike APHQ insisted on a 'global idea' which,

...can be applied in Europe for example, but I will only talk about Asia here. The most common thing among soccer youth in any of the countries of Asia and the Pacific is a desire to become the No. 1 like Ronaldinho regardless of whether they like him or not. If they are asked: "Do you want to be like Ronaldinho?", almost nobody would say no. Of course, they might say that they have other favourite players or their positions are different from his, but the truth of sport is that everyone wants to be the top. If they were to be given all the skills that Ronaldinho has, I think nobody would refuse that. This is the greatest strength of the idea about the No. 1. This is exactly the reason that I said Rooney at the time was not suitable for this campaign... Neither [Hidetoshi] Nakata nor any others. Perhaps it is a universal idea to dream to become the MVP [Most Valuable Player] as well as the leader of the world champion team. While this can be true for anybody, there are various ways of thinking and barriers that are distinctive to each nation. If there are different paths to reach the goal, our job is to illuminate the paths by telling stories localised for each nation (personal communication, 8 December 2009).

This statement points to the articulation of the global and the local within the corporate strategy of glocalisation. First, the DA notes that Ronaldinho was viewed as having global appeal for male youth and hence he was suitable for global or multi-national advertising campaigns. In other words, Ronaldinho was represented as a 'global athlete', or 'transnational celebrity' (Giardina, 2001; Grainger, Newman, & Andrews, 2005), thereby serving as a dominant symbolic code that overcame national differences to carry Nike's message within and beyond 'Asia'. Here, the 'global idea' was articulated with being No. 1 by linking the global appeal of Ronaldinho, the universal desire of soccer youth and 'the truth of sport' by which the DA meant the celebration of the nature of competition and winning. This strategic use of Ronaldinho as a 'sign of the admirable' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 40) confirms that advertising "gets us to *identify* ourselves with the types of people or situations depicted in the advertisements" (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 25, emphasis in original).

Second, and by contrast, the DA was also conscious that there was a need to localise the campaign for each nation because cultures, structures and contexts of male youth soccer players differ considerably from nation to nation even within 'Asia'. With respect to the process of corporate glocalisation, it is important to note that the key marketing decisions made by Nike APHQ at the initial stage of the production were to: (a) target male youth soccer players in 'Asia'; (b) feature Ronaldinho in television commercials for the four major national markets; (c) align its schedule with the Asian Cup; (d) structure resource allocations including budgets; and, (e) localise television commercial content and media communication *without* determining *how* the campaign should be localised in terms of representation and circulation in each national market. In this sense, Nike APHQ set cultural-economic limits and conditions within which local cultural intermediaries could construct a "particular *imagined* consumer" (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 53, emphasis in original) with respect to the localisation of the campaign. This process of imagining and targeting particular consumer groups is "not secondary to the happy functioning of an economic relation already established in an autonomous economic sphere; it was a determinant of its existence" (Nixon, 1996, p. 115).

Contemporary advertising campaigns, including *Where is the Next?*, are often organised in a way to maximise efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of brand messages and images through various media outlets such as print, television, radio, internet, mobile devices, points of sales and other techniques rather than fragmentally sending different, and thus confusing, messages in separate outlets (Leiss et al., 2005). This promotional tactic is often referred to as 'marketing integration', or 'cross-media marketing'. However, such an extensive communication strategy and process require substantial collaboration and negotiations with external institutions including advertising agencies and media organisations. As such, in light of this study's focus on cultural representation, articulation and circulation of 'the nation', we need to distinguish the 'true' producers from 'Nike' as an abstracted and homogenized entity. In a very general sense,

W+K Tokyo, the Japanese subsidiary of global advertising agency W+K, was responsible for producing television commercials whereas Nike’s national subsidiaries in ‘Asia’ were responsible for managing the media strategy for their own national markets. However, this does not tell us much about the complexity of the division of creative labour nor does it specify the economic, political, social, cultural and symbolic dimensions of power relations between organisations and individuals as cultural intermediaries. It is to the latter group that I now turn.

*Glocalisation of the television commercial production*

After Nike APHQ established the marketing aim and concept of the *Where is the Next?* campaign, the subsequent phase was the production of the four television commercials each of which was customised to fit the national sensibilities of Australia, China, Japan and South Korea. For a general idea of the symbolic representations of ‘the nation’, Table 2 points out some key national signifiers from the commercial for each national market.<sup>112</sup>

Table2: Key National Signifiers in the Television Commercials for *Where is the Next?*

	Key National Signifiers
Australia	Club soccer game, national soccer team, Sydney Harbour Bridge, English language
China	Street soccer, numerous people and bicycles on the street, Chinese language
Japan	<i>Bukatsu</i> lifestyle, ramen noodle restaurant, locker room, Japanese language
South Korea	National flag, national soccer team, red-coloured soccer uniform, Korean language

<sup>112</sup> The advertising texts represented by television commercials were deconstructed in terms of symbolic codes of similarity (e.g. the same soccer celebrity and similar story lines including scenes of soccer performance and private life) and difference (e.g. languages, ethnicities and production locations). Consequently, these empirical materials enabled the textual analysis to identify the soccer celebrity featured across different television commercials as a symbolic code of ‘transnational’ appeal for the campaign’s target market—‘Asian’ youth. In contrast, differences were identified as national signifiers that were articulated with a symbolic code of the global to constitute ‘glocal’ sporting signs within the multi-national advertising campaign.

Briefly, these commercials represent Ronaldinho acting as a local youth who dreams of becoming ‘the next Ronaldinho’ within different national settings. National differences are signified by the main themes of the commercials where Ronaldinho, acting as a local youth, plays soccer in a club team (Australia), on the street (China), in a school (Japan) and supports national soccer teams on television (Australia and South Korea).

At the initial production of these television commercials, W+K Tokyo was central in constructing representations and narratives with the advertising brief provided by Nike APHQ. More specifically, the television scripts were drafted by the ‘American’ Copywriter (CW) and Art Director (AD) at W+K Tokyo. This confirms Nixon’s (2003) assertion that: “Art directors and copywriters occupy a pivotal place within the processes of cultural production... and it is clear... that their own cultural knowledge and dispositions can exert a particularly strong informal influence over the finished adverts” (p. 7).

According to the AE at W+K Tokyo, a key focus during the commercial’s production process was increasing a ‘sense of intimacy’ (*shinkinkan*). Given their lack of cultural capital and competency in local languages in representing ‘the nation’ within ‘Asia’, the ‘American’ creatives needed to fill the gap in communication between producers and audiences by conducting extensive research for particular symbolic signs that invoked a sense of intimacy for ‘Asian’ youth. For example, they indicated that they created the script for the Japanese commercial,

...based on our experience of engaging in everyday life of *bukatsu* youth... We provided a lot of details for each [version of commercials] based on serious background research for each nation like what kind of posters are in a locker room... although Ronaldinho was featured in all versions, we created them in a way local people would be able to recognise that “this is our nation”. With the basic advertising idea and story that fits any national culture, our task was to make Ronaldinho look like a local youth in that nation. (quoted in Honeyee.com, 2008, re-translated by the author)

While *bukatsu* and the representations of *bukatsu* in the television commercial for the *Where is the Next?* campaign are specifically investigated in the next chapter, it is worth briefly noting that *bukatsu* is a primary site for Japanese youth to participate in sport and can be considered as a ‘glocalised’ form of modern sport. Thus, it provides a unique set of cultural and sporting practices for Japanese youth to form a range of cultural identities including national and masculine (Masumoto, 2001). In this context, even though the ‘American’ creatives were in a privileged position of initial production, Japanese cultural intermediaries at Nike APHQ and W+K Tokyo were actively involved in the process of encoding symbolic meanings of the *bukatsu* lifestyle. For instance, the AE at W+K Tokyo recalls his input for the storyline of the Japanese commercial:

When the first presentation was delivered, [the DA at Nike APHQ] gave us feedback, saying “let’s try to search for the ways in which we can dig deep for insights into each country’s youth”... To respond to the feedback, [the CW and AD] started to ask questions to various people like “Hey, [the AE], are *bukatsu* youth usually going straight back to their home after practices?” I told them “I often went to eat ramen noodles with my *bukatsu* friends because I was hungry after the practices and my home was a bit far away”. And they said “Oh, yeah?” and, later on they actually incorporated the scene of a ramen noodle restaurant in the next presentation (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

The scene of a ramen noodle restaurant is used as a key national signifier and plays an important role with respect to the glocalisation of the television commercial (see Chapter 5). As Cronin (2004b) asserts, the production process “is implicated in consumption tastes and practices of the key actors in complex ways that cannot be separated from production decisions about the advertisement” (p. 355). My interviews with the local advertising personnel reveal that the subjective experiences of the Japanese cultural intermediaries were incorporated by the American creatives into their encoding practices for the Japanese commercial. According to Cronin (2004b, p. 356), the negotiation over the initial storyboards for a campaign is often “a tense moment”, or site of symbolic struggles, between the commercial imperative of a client and the artistic integrity of a creative agency (see also Negus & Pickering, 2004; Nixon, 2003; Soar, 2000).

In particular, what is at stake for an advertising agency is “the orientation of awards schemes” (Soar, 2000, p. 430). In other words, creatives are more driven by innovative and artistic values by which advertisements are judged for creative awards, whereas clients are more concerned about the effectiveness of the advertisements in relation to increased sales. Nixon (2003) alludes to the source of this tension:

This agitation stemmed from a perception, not entirely without substance, that ‘safe’ advertising – advertising that repeated well worn techniques of selling and promotion – was unlikely to win awards for a team. Being ‘edgy’ and ‘progressive’, on the other hand, more clearly fitted into the D&AD’s [the Design and Art Directors Association] vision of ‘creative excellence’ and (most especially) into the criteria by which the association and its jurors awarded its annual prizes. (p. 89)

Furthermore, Cronin (2004b) points out the importance of the mediating role played by an account manager who “takes the client’s comments back to the Creatives and presents the criticisms, comments and ideas as diplomatically as possible” (p. 356). For this campaign, the local cultural intermediaries, including the AE at W+K Tokyo, played an important role in mediating different interests, priorities and experiences in order to represent the ‘reality’ of local youth.

To accumulate knowledge about local youth cultures, their lifestyles, soccer environments and so forth, the global network of W+K served as a basic platform for quantitative and qualitative information gathering for the creatives. For example, the AE at W+K Tokyo describes the process of broadening subjective imaginations of ‘the nation’:

Since Wieden+Kennedy is truly a global company, there are many employees from, for example, South Korea, China and Australia... at different offices. [The CW and AD] made conference calls to our offices across the world to ask something like “what is the situation in your country?” Each office has its own planner who knows things such as details of the recent soccer scene in China, how many hours youth are spending for practice, which athletes they admire, and who are the up and coming athletes as well as demographic information about them (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

Continuing, he further emphasised that this correspondence for cultural and symbolic learning was regarded as essential:

If the reply is delayed, a whole production process has to be halted for a while. Because if we skip that process, a sense of intimacy would be lost... It is the lifeline of the spots and [the DA at Nike APHQ] would say the same (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

It is important to note that this understanding of a ‘sense of intimacy’ as ‘the lifeline’ of the commercial was shared between Nike APHQ and W+K Tokyo and potentially across the institutions involved in the television commercial production, thereby forming a key cultural code of the production. Following the identification of this code, American creatives needed to consult local cultural intermediaries not only for a source of inspiration and creativity but also for re-coding the subjective imagination of the Other. Thus, their communication represents a site of cultural negotiation between the aesthetic drive of ‘American’ creatives and the local experience of ‘Asian’ cultural intermediaries in the process of encoding the ‘local reality’.

After the commercial scripts infused with different local stories were drafted, W+K Tokyo looked for a director to film the advertisements. It was at this stage of the production that the ideas, including symbolic imaginings of ‘the nation’ scripted by the CW and AD at W+K Tokyo, were turned into (tele-)visual representations by the selected Director. A particular difficulty emerged from the fact that a two-dimensional script written by an agency and approved by a client needs to be translated into a three-dimensional format for the process of filming, and in turn re-translated into a two-dimensional space of a television commercial. Because of unexpected changes that often emerge during these dimensional translations and re-translations, it is not uncommon to have a finished advertisement that is quite different from the script originally approved by the client.

Moreover, given that directors for commercials are often hired from the film industry which operates with a different set of industry codes of production, the aesthetic values and

commercial imperatives of Nike and W+K often conflicted with those of film directors. For instance, the AE at W+K Tokyo indicated that there were cases where directors demanded full control over the commercial production including filming and editing whereas W+K Tokyo was committed to the specialisation of creative labour for each role including filming, mixing and editing. Thus, filming is one of the most intensive sites of negotiation within the production process which in this case involved at least three entities: a client, an agency and a director (and associated production companies). Their ‘collaboration’ is often temporary and characterised by “the struggle for recognition” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 106) given that each entity tends to compete with others within their own category in order to distinguish their respective brand.

Therefore, negotiations with commercial directors need to be taken into account within any analysis of the field of television commercial production. The AE at W+K Tokyo revealed W+K’s method of negotiation between a creative team and film directors:

We share the scripts with several directors and see how they interpret and express them. Because the scripts are left rather abstract, it gives a certain degree of freedom of expression to directors. So, for instance, one director might want to start filming from a scene of *bukatsu* youth wearing soccer shoes while another director might want to have them on the field from the start. To see their interpretations, we are provided with what is called a ‘treatment’ through which the director’s interpretation is expressed... Wieden+Kennedy works together with a director to create a storyboard so that decisions on a number of frames, wording, images, etc. can be made by either party according to the situation of each case... The person who works closest to a production company is a director... In fact, crew of the director become the production team. So, it is best to let the director choose people that he or she wants to work with. If the director says “I want to work with these people this time”, we would say “OK” unless there is a special circumstance (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

This comment identifies the crucial role of the Director in encoding the television commercials and therefore the importance of W+K Tokyo’s selection of, and negotiation with, the Director. For the *Where is the Next?* campaign, the local production companies (e.g. Local 81 for the production of the Japanese commercial) were not chosen by W+K Tokyo but by the Director in conjunction with an overall production company, Partizan. In this sense, the creative

work of an advertising agency is structured, restricted and negotiated not only by clients (Scherer & Jackson, 2007) but also by commercial directors and production companies who might encounter technical, political and budgetary problems during filming processes of television commercials. For instance, W+K Tokyo faced political and ethical pressures against the use of high school students in the commercial space in Japan. As the DA at Nike APHQ insists, “this campaign couldn’t have been as profound as it was without filming the real local youth” (personal communication, 8 December 2009). Therefore, although Nike’s intention was to represent ‘local reality’ by incorporating its target of junior-high and high school soccer *bukatsu* youth, the Japanese youth featured in the commercial were actually university students because of the regulations of school and the All Japan High School Athletic Federation.

The evidence provided in this section is consistent with McFall’s (2002) assertion that “advertising product emerges as the necessary, sometimes accidental, result of the constraints under which it was made” (p. 149). Furthermore, it is important to note that the negotiation processes illuminated here are only part of wider, more dynamic processes of marketing and branding of Nike as a whole. As Soar (2000) contends:

The creative team provides a promotional platform for a commodity that probably has already been the result of successive involvements by product or industrial designers and their model makers and then by packaging designers with illustrators, photographers, and typographers... [and in turn is] ...augmented by other promotional activities such as in-store displays involving point-of-sale designers and retail and shop-window designers, sales promotions involving art directors and copywriters working with a similar number of intermediaries, direct marketing involving art directors, copywriters, and even web-page designers. (p. 431)

Whereas this section has illustrated some of the many complex levels of cultural mediations involved in the glocalisation of television commercial production, there is another important phase—the circulation of the advertising materials through multifaceted modes of communication.

### *Glocalisation of the media strategy*

While the television commercial for the *Where is the Next?* campaign was created mainly by W+K Tokyo, the circulation of the advertising materials was largely handled by Nike's national subsidiaries in 'Asia' where the availability of communication technology and preferences for communication tools and styles varied from nation to nation. As the DA at Nike APHQ explains:

...there is a nation where mobile phone advertising cannot be used. In Australia, it is perhaps better to advertise through a website than a mobile phone. In China, there are many spaces that we can use for outdoor and print advertising. ...the local situations for advertising are quite different. Nevertheless, my role as a person who oversaw the campaign in Asia was to deliver an advertising idea and materials that could be applicable to any types of the media (personal communication, 8 December 2009).

Thus, while the television commercials and advertising materials for websites were distributed to each national subsidiary, the key decisions about the media strategy were delegated to local cultural intermediaries who possessed better understandings of local advertising structures, conditions and cultures. For example, Nike Japan and Daiko were responsible for developing the modes of communication including print, in-store promotions, websites and mobile phones in Japan.

Another key factor that needs to be emphasised at this point is that Japan has its own unique advertising industry in which two giant Japanese advertising agencies, Dentsu and Hakuhodo, dominate the market while Daiko, a second-tier competitor, struggles for recognition. With respect to this case, Daiko's role in the campaign was buying television commercial time spots and developing digital communication. In this context, Daiko was under pressure to do something new to gain recognition and distinguish itself from its competitors to survive in a highly competitive industry. As part of his strategy, the Account Executive (AE) at Daiko proposed the idea of mobile phone advertising on a particular digital platform, Mobage-Town, which was the largest gaming (with a social networking function) site in Japan:

At first, the brief for digital advertising from Nike APHQ mainly concerned PCs [personal computers] for the development of the campaign. Advertising materials prepared were centred on PC use versus mobile phones. However, although our target of junior-high and high school students may use PCs at their home, mobile phones are the best media to reach them and generate word of mouth among them. So, I made suggestions about the development of mobile advertising... At the time, there was a mobile site called Mobage-Town which was rapidly increasing the number of registrations from junior-high and high school students. I thought it would be a great fit with the campaign featuring Ronaldinho and suggested collaboration with Mobage-Town (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Thus, Nike Japan, cooperating with Daiko, worked with DeNA who ran the digital site to develop the content for mobile phones. This site enabled users to be updated every day with new information including a soccer technique to help youth to ‘play like Ronaldinho’. Since it was their first time ‘collaborating’ with DeNA, there was a substantial degree of uncertainty for Nike Japan and Daiko about whether this type of advertising ‘works’ and whether Japanese youth actually engage in interaction through mobile content. The Digital Producer (DP) at Nike Japan was nonetheless confident in the potential of mobile phone advertising:

Important features of a mobile phone include... interactivity and one-to-one communication. A mobile phone is a medium generally located within 30cm of a person, and junior-high and high school students always keep it on them. Knowing this, we wanted to provide content that enabled us to communicate with them for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As opposed to television content, mobile content can be renewed every day to connect with users (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Because “Meaning-making lies at the interface between culture and technology” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 23), this new mode of communication is transforming cultural life, including the very basis of national identity, via digital and virtual mediascapes. In other words, re-imagining of ‘the nation’, manifested here in the use of a multi-functional mobile phone by Japanese youth, is increasingly taking place through digitalisation of social interactions, media and lifestyle not only in Japan but elsewhere. While interactivity, flexibility and creativity enhanced by the use of mobile phones are regarded as key drivers of changing advertising from the traditional model of mass communication, there is also a growing concern among scholars about how this ‘ubiquitous

media' creates "greater possibilities for surveillance and recording by the state and other agencies, not just benign and friendly 'wireless environments'" (Featherstone, 2009, p. 3; see also Abe, 2009).<sup>113</sup>

Nevertheless, as opposed to a common assumption that advertisers are driven by 'newness' of whatever is technologically available and possible for advertising, a more important consideration for this campaign was the 'affinity' (*shinwasei*) between Nike's target consumers and their preferred media. The DP at Nike Japan points out the importance of this affinity by referring to the limitations of the so-called 'smartphone' which was yet to become mainstream:

As our main target is junior-high and high school students for the football category..., a device that the majority of them use is still a normal mobile phone, not a smartphone yet... We of course are aware of the potential for new technology such as iPhone and Android but would not go for them if they lack an affinity (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Hence, even though smartphones with even more spectacular and interactive functions were available for advertising communication, the intention of the local cultural intermediaries was to tap into the greater 'affinity' with 'normal' mobile phones. Consequently, because of the strong affinity between youth and mobile phones in Japan, mobile phone advertising played a pivotal role in the media glocalisation strategy developed by 'collaboration' among local cultural intermediaries including Nike Japan, Daiko and DeNA.

The important cultural factor of 'affinity', also played a key role in the circulation of the television commercial in Japan. The AE at Daiko stresses the importance of an affinity between the target market and specific television programs from which commercial spaces are bought:

As for television, we used both 'program' (*bangumi CM*) and 'spot' (*supotto CM*) commercials for the campaign.<sup>114</sup> ...as we knew that our target was soccer

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<sup>113</sup> Multi-functional mobile phones have become important tools of daily communication and media exposure for the Japanese in general and youth in particular. Featherstone (2009) conceptualises this type of interactive and mobile media as 'ubiquitous media', distinguished from 'mass media', that is "differentiated, dispersed and multi-modal" (p. 2) and "embedded in material objects and environments, bodies and clothing, zones of transmission and reception" (p. 3). As digital advertising has been widely viewed as 'the future of advertising', the Japanese community of advertising and creativity has been particularly keen to develop innovative ways of communication through the internet and mobile media.

*bukatsu* youth at junior-high and high schools, we chose soccer news programs like Super Soccer and Yabecchi FC which, we thought, had the highest affinity with them and was also suited for the commercial featuring Ronaldinho. For the program commercials in Japan, it is normally required by television stations to air for at least six months (two *kūru*), or otherwise the commercials cannot be aired. However, we negotiated with the television stations to air our commercial for just one or two months, and they accepted it. I guess, in recent years, they are becoming more flexible to allow such trials for advertising (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Such a negotiation process with media organizations is no less significant given that it influences whom, where, when and how commercials are exposed within the circulation of an advertising campaign. Daiko's struggle in the business of media buying was underscored not only by the rigid structures and regulations of television broadcasting but also by the dominance of Dentsu and Hakuhodo who have maintained close relationships with television stations and secured television commercial spaces for selling to advertisers.

For instance, Dentsu retains control over the distribution of television commercial space available to advertisers for major sporting events including the 2007 Asian Cup. The SM at Nike Japan, who expressed his disgust toward the bureaucratic nature of Dentsu, had to 'collaborate' with them because,

[the distribution of 'program' commercials for] Asian Cups are controlled by Dentsu. When Dentsu came to me with an offer of commercial packages, I said: "Isn't this too expensive?" And the person went: "Not at all, but okay, let me think it over". On a later date, the person came back with two options, A pattern and B pattern. They were indeed the packages for the Asian Cup but, to my surprise, added with the World Table Tennis Championship! (laughter)... I bet you can see how wrong it is to place this commercial for the World Table Tennis Championship. It is totally, totally against our marketing philosophy (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

This kind of misunderstanding and miscommunication between business partners is not uncommon in the field of advertising production. The SM's dissatisfaction with the revised offer—albeit cheaper than the original one with additional commercial spaces—offers another

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<sup>114</sup> Television commercials in Japan are categorized into two types: program commercials (*bangumi CM*, *teikyō CM* or *taimu CM*) that are sold in a unit of a specific television program and spot commercials (*supotto CM*) that are sold in a bundle of spots between television programs.

perspective on the importance of ‘affinity’. For the SM at Nike Japan, there was no conceivable fit, or affinity, between Nike’s target market and those watching the table tennis matches. Such a misplacement of advertisements was perceived to cause a loss of their marketing specificity and eventual distortion of the brand as a whole. In turn, the local cultural intermediaries at Nike Japan and Daiko were located at the centre of the glocalisation of the media strategy in Japan because of: (a) their knowledge about advertising conditions, structures and cultures; (b) their cultural legitimacy in selecting the locally preferred media; and (c) their negotiations in the local language with local companies including DeNA and television stations. In summary, this section discussed an important cultural code—affinity—and highlighted the processes of negotiations and struggles for recognition among local cultural intermediaries, that have a significant impact on when, where and how an advertisement is represented and circulated.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrates the utility of the concept of glocalisation to: (a) expose the ‘active’ forces of the local within the production of multi-national advertising campaigns; and (b) empirically examine the interactive processes through which the global and the local are articulated. In particular, it illuminated the context within which Nike’s *Where is the Next?* advertising campaign was localised through the multiple levels and sites of negotiations among a range of (g)local cultural intermediaries involved in encoding and circulating practices. In this sense, the enduring significance of ‘the nation’ demanded that a transnational corporation localised its operation for production and representation of advertising in accordance with local advertising conditions, industry structures, social relations and cultural sensibilities across different national markets in ‘Asia’. As such, it confirms that the corporate strategy and process of glocalisation plays an important role in the expression, reproduction and articulation of national cultures and identities thus serving as a key factor in the process of corporate

nationalism.

Moreover, the analysis of the conditions, negotiations and symbolic struggles within the field of advertising production provided insight into the theoretical debate on corporate nationalism and glocalisation in two ways. First, corporate glocalisation—through which ‘the nation’ is re-imagined and represented by promotional activities—requires substantial ‘collaboration’ and negotiation between various global entities and local cultural intermediaries. In this case study, it was particularly evident as representation and circulation practices were primarily undertaken by ‘local’ cultural institutions and intermediaries who were better positioned to articulate cultural and linguistic gaps between the production and consumption of sporting national identities in ‘Asia’. More specifically, the analysis identified the central roles of W+K Tokyo for constructing televisual representations, and Nike’s national subsidiaries for selecting and developing modes of communication. Likewise, for the circulation of the advertising materials in Japan, Nike Japan and Daiko played a central role in negotiating with external local organisations including the television stations and DeNA. These results are similar to Amis and Silk’s (2010) case study of a Guinness global campaign which concluded that “a local component that effectively negotiates national cultural sensibilities has become a necessary feature of Guinness’ strategic position” (p. 171).

While these findings confirm the complementary, interpenetrative and interdependent nature of the global and the local as emphasized by Robertson (1995), corporate glocalisation is nonetheless constituted by a range of strategic, economic, political, social and cultural tensions. Included amongst these tensions are: symbolic struggles for recognition, contradictions between economic and creative activities, and negotiations between global headquarters and local subsidiaries. For the case of *Where is the Next?* campaign in particular, the ‘American’ CW and AD at W+K Tokyo, who were central in creating initial representations of the television commercials, conducted extensive research by gathering quantitative and qualitative information

from their ‘Asian’ colleagues in order to fill the gap between the subjective imaginings of the creatives and the lived experiences of ‘Asian’ soccer male youth. While this ‘collaboration’ between a global corporation and an advertising agency is in reality “less a creative blitz than an often tense negotiation between the creative drive of agencies and the commercial imperatives of clients” (Cronin, 2004b, p. 355), this study identifies another significant site of symbolic struggles between an advertising agency and film directors. At the local level of production, it was further illustrated that the encoding and circulation of advertisements were in fact full of challenges, conflicts and negotiations with other external local institutions and agents.<sup>115</sup>

Second, in contrast to Ritzer’s (2003) re-conceptualization of glocalisation in association with heterogenisation, corporate glocalisation guarantees neither the autonomy nor the heterogenisation of local culture. For instance, the representations of the ‘Asian’ nations within the television commercials were largely developed and encoded by the ‘American’ CW and AD at W+K Tokyo. Their views of the ‘Asian’ nations were influenced, and therefore re-coded, not only by their qualitative research on ‘Asia’ but also by the cultural-economic limits and conditions set by Nike APHQ as well as their own habitus, perspectives and experiences as ‘American’. My analysis also suggested structural forces of the shared cultural codes of production that may have structured, directed or influenced the ways in which the advertisements were encoded, represented and circulated by the ‘glocal’ cultural intermediaries. Specifically, this analysis identified that: (a) the creation of a ‘sense of intimacy’ for local youth was integral to representing national sporting identities within the television commercials; and (b) an ‘affinity’ between the target consumers and their preferred media was very important for the cultural intermediaries to select and develop modes of communication.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> These struggles and negotiations emerging from the complex division of creative labour highlight potential implications for the dynamics of glocalisation processes related to the media, culture and sport more generally.

<sup>116</sup> While these cultural codes of production and circulation are contextual rather than universal, further research is required to understand if they are indeed dominant codes across the field of advertising production or specific only to

What is clear from these analyses is that corporate glocalisation and corporate nationalism operate through a range of global-local negotiations, struggles and collaborations that have a substantial influence on representation and publicly circulated advertisements. Thus, although the corporate strategy of glocalisation grants local cultural institutions legitimacy to play a central role in the construction of representation, the corporate re-imagining of ‘the nation’ is nonetheless complicated by the structural forces of the specific cultural codes of production as well as the particularities of identity and experience of the privileged local cultural intermediaries (see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of *bukatsu* nationalism within the culture of production).

Consequently, while it is a largely shared contention that Nike and W+K are ‘global’ companies which serve as key drivers of the global culture industry with tremendous symbolic power to represent sports, lifestyles and cultures on a global scale, this chapter suggests that there is no guarantee of correspondence between the encoding practice of producers and the decoding practice of consumers (see Scherer & Jackson, 2008a); nor is there any guarantee with respect to how the advertisements are encoded, circulated and articulated by a range of cultural intermediaries through the multiple regimes of mediation. Instead, it is more plausible to acknowledge that particular preferred meanings and discourses are articulated through a complex set of dominance, negotiations and struggles among various cultural institutions and intermediaries within the field of advertising production. In turn, the next chapter focuses on *bukatsu* as a particular form of national sporting identity and explores how the representational practices of Japanese cultural intermediaries were informed by their own identities, views and experiences of *bukatsu* for the production of Nike advertising in general and the *Where is the Next?* advertising campaign in Japan in particular.

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Nike and W+K’s strategy of glocalisation or this campaign. In other words, these codes may or may not serve as operational rules of the creative production process that are shared across the global culture industry. In this sense, given the complexity of the production, these cultural codes had to be shared across the multiple regimes of mediation “as conventional wisdom and the specific effect that they have on production operations” (Silk et al., 2000, p. 11).

## Chapter 5

### Japanese Cultural Intermediaries, Identity and the Representation of *Bukatsu*:

#### Nike's *Where is the Next?* Campaign (2)

Following the analysis of the multi-level and multi-site production process of Nike's *Where is the Next?* advertising campaign in 'Asia', this chapter examines Nike's representation of national identity that was substantially informed and influenced by the identities and experiences of the Japanese cultural intermediaries at Nike Japan and W+K Tokyo. In doing so, it explores *bukatsu* as a Japanese school system and youth physical culture constructed within the particular political, educational and cultural contexts of Japan. As such, the central contention of this chapter is that *bukatsu* serves as a primary site for the reproduction, articulation and reconstruction of masculine youth identity within the Japanese context of sport. In turn, the chapter examines how an 'American' company *articulated* and *legitimised* the meanings and representations of 'Japanese' physical culture through 'glocal' advertising in Japan.

The analysis is conducted through a specific inquiry into the production of the *Where is the Next?* campaign in particular but has implications for Nike's *bukatsu*-related advertising in general. Most importantly, I argue that the representational practices of advertising were significantly influenced and informed by the subjectivities—or subjective views, tastes and experiences—and reflexivity—or reflexive practices to learn from consumers and consumption—of the Japanese cultural intermediaries—all of which were essential to the cultural conditions of production. Overall, this chapter illuminates the context of marketing and advertising production in which *bukatsu* was expressed, embodied and re-articulated as a discourse of Japaneseness within the processes of glocalisation and corporate nationalism.

The chapter begins by overviewing the political, educational and cultural contexts of Japan within which *bukatsu* has been historically constructed and more recently commercially represented. Next, I explore the *bukatsu* lifestyle, identity and experiences of the advertising practitioners at Nike Japan and W+K Tokyo with respect to how these shaped their ‘Japanese’ subjectivity and in turn were used to authenticate and legitimise the use of *bukatsu* as a source of physical cultural nationalism within the culture of production. Following this, I illuminate some empirical examples of reflexive incorporation by the Japanese cultural intermediaries during the production process of the Japanese version of the television commercial from the *Where is the Next?* campaign. Finally, the conclusion provides implications of these findings to the understandings of corporate nationalism and globalisation.

### **Sport, *Bukatsu* and the Advertising Industry in Japan**

As briefly outlined in Chapter 2, despite the existence of forms of physical culture in Japan before modernisation, the concept of modern sport was imported from the West during the Meiji era (1868-1912). As the Meiji government aimed to reconstruct the nation-state as a military and economic super power, it implemented numerous strategies and policies to raise national consciousness across the rather dispersed domains of pre-modern times. Sport, in particular, was infused with traditional cultural principles, mobilised to cultivate nationalistic attitudes and developed primarily as school physical education to instil militaristic disciplines within the bodies and minds of youth (Horne, 2000; Inoue, 1999; Kiku, 2006; Kusaka, 2006; Shimizu, 2001; Sugimoto, 2001). Consequently, sport came to serve as a cultural signifier of Japanese traditional values, virtues and morals including *bushidō* that is characterised by “an emphasis on the moral excellence of Confucianism, a fighting spirit which was influenced partly by Zen-Buddhism, and a consciousness of shame” (Kusaka, 2006, p. 21).

For example, baseball was imported from the United States and transformed into what is referred to as ‘*samurai* baseball’ (Kelly, 2007; Kiku, 2006; Whiting, 1977, 1989). This indigenised form of baseball has been distinguished from the original American version by different styles, practices and embodiments of *bushidō*. According to Kelly (2007), a discourse of ‘*samurai* baseball’ has been mobilised to signify certain traditional Japanese values and attitudes as “one of many extensions of the image to define and discipline social roles in twentieth-century Japan (especially soldiers, students and workers)” (p. 198). Likewise, Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) point out the ‘glocal’ nature—or interpenetration of homogenisation and heterogenisation—of the cultural forms associated with Japanese soccer:

In general terms, homogenization is commonly associated with societal forms, while heterogenization is evident in the technical thresholds and coaching of Japanese players, the formal identification of supporter subcultures, or the national-based professional statuses of ‘foreign correspondents’ in the football media. Heterogenization is evident in the creolized styles of team names and supporter practices in Japan, the diverse transnational social relationships established by football journalists, and the varied cultural politics of supporter subcultures. (p. 182)

In addition, the Japanese national sporting teams have been increasingly named after, and associated with, the traditional imaginaries and imageries of Japan and Asia including: ‘Samurai Japan’ for the men’s baseball and ice hockey teams; ‘Samurai Blue’ for the men’s soccer team; ‘Ryūjin Nippon’ (Dragon God Japan) for the men’s volleyball team; ‘Nadeshiko Japan’ (a shortened version of *Yamato nadeshiko*, a traditional ideal of Japanese women) for the women’s soccer team; and ‘Hi no Tori Nippon’ (Phoenix Japan) for the women’s volleyball team.<sup>117</sup> This is consistent with Andrews and Ritzer’s (2007) comment that “within many national cultural contexts, newly transplanted sport forms were rapidly popularized and incorporated into local (communal, regional, but primarily national) sporting cultures and soon became perceived and

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<sup>117</sup> In particular, ‘Samurai Japan’ was repeatedly expressed and celebrated by the media as a symbol of the excellence of Japanese masculinity due to the victories of Japanese men’s baseball teams in the 2006 and 2009 World Baseball Classic.

experienced as authentic or natural expressions of cultural collectivity” (p. 139). In this sense, Japan has actively incorporated Western-originated sports as forms of modern physical culture not just to adopt the universality of sporting rules, structures and practices but also to signify Japanese traditional values, ideals and beliefs. Hence, sports in Japan were indigenised, or ‘glocalised’, to form modern, yet Japanese, physical cultures, bodies and identity under the intensive leadership and regulation of the government and educational institutions in the Meiji era and continue to (re)produce points of cultural similarity with and difference from the West today.

After the Second World War, school physical education was dissociated from militaristic disciplines while traditional principles, values and practices lingered in the current system and culture of *bukatsu* (Masumoto, 2001). *Bukatsu*, an abbreviated form of *bukatsudō*, refers to extracurricular school activities ranging from sports to other cultural practices such as music, theatre and traditional ceremonies. As evidence of sporting *bukatsu*’s (hereafter *bukatsu*)<sup>118</sup> popularity, approximately 76% of boys and 54% of girls in junior high schools belonged to some form of school-based sport organisation in 2007 (Nippon Junior High School Physical Culture Association, 2007).

Although there are a range of variations in the ways in which *bukatsu* is interpreted, practiced and experienced across Japan, some of the general characteristics of *bukatsu* include: (a) students commit to one sport organisation chosen from a variety of options and devote substantial time to individual/team practices throughout the year; (b) strict hierarchical relationships are emphasised not only between a coach and a player but also between a senior and a junior student; (c) *konjō-ron* or *seishin-ron* (a discourse of *gutsy* spirit) is glorified; (d) self-control, discipline and obedience are demanded; and, (e) teamwork, or collective effort, is valued over individuality. These characteristics certainly resemble, and form part of, *nihonjin-ron*—a

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<sup>118</sup> Given the focus on sport in this thesis, I use the term *bukatsu* with a particular reference to sporting *bukatsu*, which is also called *undō-bu*.

discourse of Japaneseness or cultural nationalism. In this sense, *bukatsu* can be regarded as the basis of what it might be referred to as ‘Japanese physical cultural nationalism’.

Because of the ‘Japanese’ characteristics, *bukatsu* arguably serves a crucial site for nurturing and shaping bodies and minds, in a form of cultural capital, ideal for a loyal and hardworking *sararīman* (Japanese business man)—and thus (re)producing a particular form of Japanese masculinity (McDonald, 2009; McDonald & Hallinan, 2005; Nakayama, 2006). The link between the masculine cultures of *bukatsu* and *sararīman* is strengthened by the discourse of *bushidō* with an emphasis on the loyalty, morality and values of *samurai*, male-only occupation from the pre-modern, feudal era. McDonald and Hallinan (2005), for instance, assert that school-based sporting experiences provide the Japanese youth with ‘spiritual capital’ to enhance social positioning by which their potential work opportunities are either extended or limited.

Also, it should be noted that the Japanese corporate world has largely remained male-dominated, and the masculine culture and disciplines of sporting *bukatsu* have also been emphasised in female counterparts (see also McDonald & Komuku, 2008). In more recent times, *bukatsu* has been used as a popular theme in the Japanese media including movies, television dramas, *manga* and *anime*. Within the popular imaginary, *bukatsu* is usually represented, and often romanticised, in terms of the beauty of romance, friendship, coach-player relationships, teamwork and victory through hard training within a unique setting of contemporary Japanese school life. As Kai (2000) points out, *bukatsu* not only reproduces structural forces in relation to physical, mental and cultural disciplines but also provides sites of cultural resistance, for example, to the traditional norms and dominant discourses of academic snobbery and urban development in Japanese society.

Consequently, *bukatsu* is located at the centre of youth physical culture, both reproducing and reconstructing national, and masculine, sporting identity in Japan. In this regard, *bukatsu* is a rich and strategic source of cultural material for Japanese cultural intermediaries to produce and

circulate a cultural artefact such as an advertisement that is particularly attractive and appealing to Japanese youth consumers. Given the importance of *bukatsu* as part of a unique cultural experience and identity for Japan's sporting youth, Nike's interest in *bukatsu* is unsurprising. Since Nike workers "pride themselves on *connecting* with athletes in terms of the authenticity of specific sports and their cultures" (Goldman & Papson, 1998, p. 36, emphasis in original), it is essential for Nike to collaborate with local workers, especially those who have experience and expertise of *bukatsu* to represent its 'authenticity'. In practice, it would be almost impossible for 'American' Nike representatives to communicate with Japanese consumers without collaborating with Japanese cultural intermediaries who can translate local languages, cultures, 'tastes' and 'styles'. In this sense, although *bukatsu* can be practiced and experienced differently based on sport categories, generations, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and geographic locations, certain representations of *bukatsu* have been legitimised and articulated by particular viewpoints of Japanese cultural producers and intermediaries through popular media and discourses.

In general, Western transnational corporations like Nike have been confronted with structural and cultural barriers of the Japanese media and advertising industries that have been dominated by their Japanese counterparts (Kawashima, 2006; Moeran, 1996a, 2002). Structurally, the Japanese advertising industry, and mass media in general, is quite insulated and monopolistic (Johansson, 1994; Kawashima, 2006; Moeran, 2002). In contrast to many other Asian nations where American and British advertising agencies tend to dominate their markets, Japanese advertising agencies have largely managed to resist and outperform their foreign competitors within the domestic industry and market (Moeran, 2002). The strength of the Japanese advertising agencies lies in their close ties with successful Japanese trans/national corporations and the domestic media organisations (Moeran, 2002). For instance, two studies, each of which analysed more than 2000 domestic commercials, found that approximately 90 per cent of advertising was controlled and produced by and for Japanese corporate clients; a statistic that

remained largely unchanged over 10 years between 1993 and 2003 (Hagiwara, 2004; Kunihiro, 2004).

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, the Japanese advertising industry has been dominated by two specific agencies: Dentsu and Hakuhodo. Part of the reason why Dentsu and Hakuhodo have been world-class advertising agencies,<sup>119</sup> despite a substantial lack of international business, resides in the fact that Japanese advertising agencies are legally permitted within the domestic market to handle competing accounts from the same industrial categories (e.g. Toyota, Honda, Subaru, Mercedes and Ford from the automotive industry)—a practice usually prohibited in many parts of the Western advertising world (Johansson, 1994; Moeran, 2002). Additionally, these giant agencies have established interlocking connections with a range of media outlets, especially with the domestic television stations, thereby exercising sustained and rarely challenged media buying power over both foreign and local competitors (Kawashima, 2006).<sup>120</sup>

Culturally, previous studies suggest that Japanese consumers prefer soft-sell, image-oriented approaches over hard-sell, attribute-oriented approaches which are more prevalent in the West (De Mooij, 2003; Johansson, 1994; Maynard, 2002; Mueller, 1987, 1992; Nakanishi, 2002). Although it is possible that these cultural contrasts have diminished due to increasing hybridity of Eastern and Western cultures under globalisation, some vivid differences are still evident in many aspects including negative attitudes of Japanese consumers towards the practice of comparative advertising which has been often regarded as disrespectful, and therefore harmful to brand images.<sup>121</sup> In addition, scholars argue that there has been a tendency in Japanese advertising to

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<sup>119</sup> Dentsu was the 1st and Hakuhodo was the 8th in sales within the global advertising industry in 2007 (Nikkei Kokoku Kenkyujo, 2008).

<sup>120</sup> This domestic alliance of the giant agencies and media conglomerates produced and nurtured the unique structure of television commercial space with a high proportion of 15-second commercials in contrast to 30- or 60- second ones as usually preferred in the West (Johansson, 1994; Kawashima, 2006). Arguably, such a shorter airtime of a television commercial has encouraged Japanese corporations to utilise celebrity-centred commercials to catch viewers' immediate attention rather than provide creative storylines (Nakanishi, 2002).

<sup>121</sup> For example, Apple's 2006 global campaign 'Get a Mac', in which Apple humorously portrays superior capabilities and attributes of Mac over Microsoft Windows, had to be localised and modified in the Japanese market

reinforce the homogeneity of Japanese ethnicity, culture and identity by reproducing the clear distinctions between the Japanese as ‘us’ and foreigners as ‘them’ (Kozakai, 1996; Kunihiro, 2004). In other words, Japanese advertising has reinforced, and been reinforced by, a dominant view of Japanese cultural nationalism that ‘Occidentalises’ the West and ‘Orientalises’ other Asian nations.

Thus, Japan exists as a distinctive symbolic and cultural space with respect to its advertising industry, whereby two major agencies vie for control of the marketplace. The structural and cultural implications of this configuration lead to global products and services becoming readily available, yet the promotional/consumer culture through which they are represented is largely dominated by Japanese corporations and advertising agencies. In particular, the following section illustrates how the *bukatsu* culture and identity embodied by the local cultural intermediaries plays a key role in representing local values, practices and experiences through the production of advertising and marketing in Japan.

### **Case Study: Representation of *Bukatsu* through Nike Advertising in Japan**

In order to understand the signifying practices of representation—both in terms of representing and being representative of *bukatsu* as a form of ‘Japanese’ school sporting practice and culture through Nike advertising, this section firstly discusses two aspects of cultural intermediaries: subjectivity and reflexivity. First, subjectivity of cultural intermediaries relates to their identities, values and perspectives that *shape* practices of encoding and circulating symbolic meanings but also *are shaped* under a variety of structural tensions and discursive formations (Jhally, 1989; Johnson, 1986/1987; Johnson et al., 2004; Newman & Giardina, 2008). According to Foucault (1982):

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due to such cultural sensitivity (Fowler, Steinberg, & Patrick, 2007).

There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his [sic] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (p. 212, emphasis in original)

This understanding about the double, and perhaps contradictory, meaning of subjectivity is important because cultural intermediaries are active practitioners of encoding and at the same time they are consumers of advertising and cultural products. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is indeed the key logic of Soar's (2000) formulation of the 'short circuit of culture' which highlights that the lived culture and experience of cultural intermediaries are more privileged than those of the general public to be incorporated into production and representation practices within the culture industry. As Nixon (2003) argues:

the cultural identifications of practitioners and the wider occupational culture in which they move will both provide resources for and set certain limits to the process of cultural production in which they are engaged. Thus, the subjective dispositions of key practitioners and the meanings, values and normative assumptions written into their occupational cultures will be important in mediating the process of reaching out to and connecting with consumers. It is this insistence, then, that has prompted me to ask: what is the social make-up of the core advertising jobs? What kind of values do these practitioners hold? What subjective dispositions and attributes animate their working lives? What kind of occupational culture do they work in? (p. 5)

While this chapter cannot answer all of the general questions posed above, it does offer insight into the subjectivities of Japanese cultural intermediaries with respect to how their identification with *bukatsu* was constructed through their own participation in, and experience of, Japanese school sports and reproduced through strategic communication with their Western business partners. In other words, their sense of distinction between 'Japanese' and 'Western' physical cultures were expressed, signified, legitimised and incorporated into the production of *bukatsu*-related advertising, marketing and branding. Hence, the analysis of subjectivities of cultural intermediaries explores what Johnson (1986/1987) calls "*the subjective aspects of struggle*" and recognises that "subjects *are* contradictory, 'in process,' fragmented, produced" (p. 69, emphasis in original).

Second, reflexivity of cultural intermediaries relates to their ability to learn from and reflect upon interests, values, lifestyles and cultures of consumers and ultimately to incorporate this learning or insight into their production and representation practices. It is also implicated in the short circuit of culture since cultural intermediaries need to somehow incorporate signs of identification to make their products attractive to their target market. Following Lash and Urry (1994), reflexivity is used here with an emphasis on “aesthetic reflexivity in the sense of allegory and symbol as a source of the self in everyday life” (p. 61). In this sense, cultural intermediaries have been at the forefront of a search for more artistic, authentic, exotic, stylish and therefore ‘distinctive’ signs of identifications and cultures in response to the increasing consumer demands for acquisition of symbolic values through the consumption of brands (Goldman & Papson, 1996). It is within this context that “Whole areas of lifestyle and consumer choice are freed up and individuals are forced to decide, to take risks, to bear responsibilities, to be actively involved in the construction of their own identities for themselves, to be enterprising consumers” (Lash & Urry, 1994, p. 61).

However, Nixon (2003) warns against the general notion of reflexivity proposed by Lash and Urry (1994) and suggests that “it is clear that the increasing importance of ‘reflexivity’ at work (for some managers and groups of workers at least) is a product of particular processes of organisational reform that have sought to shape workers as autonomous, self-regulating individuals” (p. 20). It is therefore important to empirically and concretely illuminate how individual or collective practices of cultural intermediaries result from reflexive incorporations of particular ‘realities’ informed by their own subjectivities, experiences and learning. In the context of the advertising industry, ‘creative’ activities of cultural intermediaries are derived “not so much in sudden bursts of absolute originality” (Nixon, 2003, p. 80) but from reflexive practices shaped by their aesthetic senses, industrial codes of regulation and experiences in familiarity and difference within a specific local context of cultural production. Thus, this analysis also involves

“the *everyday* reflexivity of the researched, in the form of self-awareness or irony” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 56).

To illuminate the context in which Japanese cultural intermediaries negotiate the representation of *bukatsu* through Nike advertising, the first part of this section examines the subjectivities of two particular advertising personnel who were involved in the production of several *bukatsu*-related marketing and advertising campaigns including Nike’s *Where is the Next?*: (a) the SM at Nike Japan and (b) the AE at W+K Tokyo. While they are not the only Japanese cultural intermediaries who mediate strategic communications between the production, representation and circulation for Nike marketing and advertising in Japan, the interview data suggest that their understandings, experiences and identities of *bukatsu* provide them with legitimacy to talk about physical cultures, consumer preferences and marketing strategies in Japan. The second part of this section elucidates how their *bukatsu* identity, culture and experience influenced the encoding practices for advertising by illustrating an example of the television commercial from the *Where is the Next?* campaign.<sup>122</sup>

#### *Bukatsu nationalism: subjectivities of local/Japanese cultural intermediaries*

In Japan, an ongoing challenge for Nike is the fact that the *bukatsu* market has been dominated by Japanese sportswear corporations, most famously Mizuno and Asics. In particular, since the end of the Second World War, Mizuno and Asics have nurtured local business relationships with schools by manufacturing and providing school-related sporting goods (e.g. clothes, footwear and equipment for physical education classes). When Nike Japan was established as a national subsidiary in 1981, Mizuno and Asics had already cemented business

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<sup>122</sup> Television has been the most influential form of mass media that has (re)shaped dominant views, values and identities of the Japanese since the end of the Second World War (Yoshimi, 2003, 2005). As such, television commercials are regarded as a strategic medium for investigation of media discourses of cultural representations and identities (Hagiwara, 2004; Kozakai, 1996; Kunihiro, 2004).

relationships and distribution channels with Japanese schools, sporting organisations and sporting goods retailers.<sup>123</sup> In this context, Nike Japan has played a central role in cultivating the *bukatsu* market by translating and mediating its cultural uniqueness to Nike World Headquarters.

The SM at Nike Japan, who personally experienced baseball *bukatsu* in his youth and had worked at Nike Japan for about eight years, reflects on his own understanding of *bukatsu* and emphasises *bukatsu*'s significance shared across the Nike organisations in the dialogue below

(KK is the interviewer):

SM: When we talk about the uniqueness of Japanese sports, *bukatsu* must be on the top of the list. For instance, every time a foreign person is assigned to Nike Japan, we start by explaining to him or her about what *bukatsu* is.

KK: That's interesting. How do you explain?

SM: As I told you earlier, it's about teamwork, school life and so on.

KK: Do they actually go to a school to see *bukatsu*?

SM: Of course, we let them go and observe what is unique about *bukatsu*. For example, soccer in Japan is usually played on dirt or hard ground. Although that seems unbelievable to foreigners, it is quite common in Japan. Moreover, not only do newly assigned foreigners go to watch *bukatsu* but also visitors from Nike World Headquarters do. In fact, *bukatsu* has entered the English vocabulary across the entire Nike organisation.

KK: I see. *Bukatsu* cannot be translated in English but has to be used as it is?

SM: *Bukatsu* is a common language within Nike.

KK: So, that is like *sushi*, isn't it?

SM: That's right. You got it (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Thus, similar to culturally-specific Japanese terms including *sushi*, *sake*, *jūdō* and *sumō* that have entered into the everyday English vocabulary, *bukatsu* has been recognised by Nike as a distinctively 'Japanese' physical cultural practice and identity. It is important to recognise that *bukatsu* as a local language provides the SM with a sense of cultural competence and legitimacy

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<sup>123</sup> Kobayashi et al. (2010) also suggest that there are differences in taste and preference between Japanese and American consumers that serve as symbolic and cultural barriers for American corporations to do business in Japan.

and arguably an advantageous position over foreign marketers and managers from Nike World Headquarters from which to communicate with Japanese *bukatsu* practitioners. In this local sporting context, he represents knowledge and experience of *bukatsu* and ‘lets them go and observe’ *bukatsu* to legitimise his understanding, tastes and sense of cultural distinctions.<sup>124</sup>

Acknowledging the danger of romanticising local identity, my intention is to elucidate how local cultural intermediaries’ ‘subjective’ understanding of *bukatsu* drives marketing and advertising of *bukatsu* for Nike.

The SM is one of those at Nike Japan, who has the privilege to reflect on his experience, though not without constraints and negotiations. The SM at Nike Japan offers his perspective on *bukatsu* in relation to Japaneseness:

SM: It’s about *wa*, the *kanji* (adopted Chinese characters) of *wa*.<sup>125</sup>

KK: *Wa*, is that right?

SM: The character that is also read ‘*nagomu*’ (to feel at ease). I think *bukatsu* is about *wa*, not anything else. So, [for example] some Japanese youth soccer players I know who play for overseas club teams primarily concern their own careers because they do not want to finish their careers within the local clubs. Therefore, they care about individual performances more than their team’s wins or losses. On the other hand, Japanese high-school *bukatsu* youth have to give priority to their teams, and also there is of course a shared idea of self-sacrifice for the team. (personal communication, 13 January 2010)

While the discourse of *wa* articulating Japaneseness with teamwork or harmony has stirred considerable discussions among scholars and journalists (e.g. Ito, 1998; Whiting, 1989), *wa* remains a key signifier of (re)defining what it means to be ‘Japanese’ in contemporary society.

As opposed to essentialising *wa* as a Japanese youth’s inherent characteristic, the SM’s comment above suggests that *bukatsu*, as social institution and practice, *disciplines* youth to form and

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<sup>124</sup> Self-reflexively, this dialogue is facilitated by sharing the same subjective-position between the interviewer and interviewee. That is, embodiment and performance of *bukatsu* identity which is subjected to Western cultural hegemony and Westernisation of Japanese physical culture. In this sense, I am critically aware that this dialogue may reproduce the discourse of *bukatsu* nationalism in a similar way that *nihonjin-ron* has been discussed by Japanese intellectuals.

<sup>125</sup> The *kanji* of *wa* (和) denotes both Japaneseness and teamwork or harmony.

nurture their tendencies for teamwork and self-sacrifice in contrast to Japanese youth playing for overseas clubs.

Thus, the SM's sense of distinction in *bukatsu* enables him to claim legitimacy to talk about Japanese culture, sports and business relations with respect to strategic discussions for Nike's advertising production. For instance, the SM elaborated on his sense of distinction for representing Japaneseness as follows:

SM: When representing something Japanese, I think there are two types, official Japaneseness and everyday Japaneseness.

KK: That's interesting.

SM: So, it is necessary to select an appropriate one according to particular situations and meanings rather than presumably placing one over another.

KK: That's according to your sense, right? Not based on any manual?

SM: No. Let's take an example, Mount Fuji.

KK: That's clichéd.

SM: That's clichéd, isn't it? Yet, Mount Fuji is most beautifully pictured from an anterior angle and that is easy to understand what it is. However, if one goes to the base of the mountain, shoots the slope of Mount Fuji with the surrounding forests and says "this is Mount Fuji", that would be really difficult to recognise. So, it is our job, let's say, to present things that can be normally and naturally accepted. That is challenging. In other words, it has both potential for merits and risk of damages.

KK: Do you mean that clichéd images are not preferred?

SM: Well, of course clichéd images can be better in certain cases but difficult to handle like a double-edged sword (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Based on these observations, the 'official' Japaneseness may correspond to dominant representations of Japan that are generally accepted and understood by both those inside and outside Japan. These dominant images include Mount Fuji, *samurai*, *geisha* and *sumō*, all of which have been clichéd and in many cases used within the discourse of Orientalism signifying the Otherness of Japan. Conversely, 'everyday' Japaneseness may correspond to 'banal' or

‘mundane’ aspects of lived experiences of the Japanese. As opposed to clichéd representations of Japan, this everyday, ‘banal’ Japaneseness is readily—and therefore *normally* and *naturally*—accepted as part of contemporary Japanese cultural identity. For the SM, the ‘official’ Japaneseness may be useful under certain circumstances but largely avoided for Nike advertising because it is often perceived as dull, uncool and unstylish particularly by Nike Japan’s target market, style-conscious *bukatsu* youth. However, the difficulty of representing ‘everyday’ Japaneseness is also apparent because the banality of the *bukatsu* experience varies among individual practitioners and is thus contested as a generic form of representation. Since there is no particular manual, guideline or instruction regarding how to ‘correctly’ represent Japaneseness, Nike has to largely rely on Japanese cultural intermediaries including the SM and their ‘subjective’ senses of authenticity, banality and coolness in Japan.

W+K Tokyo has been another organisation that is actively involved in how *bukatsu* is represented through Nike advertising. The AE at W+K Tokyo also personally experienced baseball *bukatsu* and had worked for more than five years solely on Nike accounts. As the AE experienced *bukatsu* and has retained his passion for sports, his *bukatsu* identity influenced his choice of a career in the creative industry. His motives to work with Nike are worth quoting at length:

AE: Well, you know, I entered the organisation by saying “I want to work for the Nike account”.

KK: Really? Was it because of sports?

AE: Sports as well. I think I am a little bit different but I cannot work for something that does not produce positive meanings. For example, if I were to work for Alico (American Life Insurance Company), though we do not have such a client, I probably won’t be able to figure out positive meanings. I would ask myself the question, “so, what is it good for?” It would be too painful.

KK: What do you mean by ‘producing positive meanings’?

AE: For instance, we created newspaper ads when Hideo Nomo achieved 200 wins... Hideo Nomo’s pitching form was pictured in the ads with the tagline,

“Hideo Nomo is always holding his chest out”. And the copy goes like, “When I am about to give up, goof off or throw out, I am embarrassed to watch Hideo Nomo’s pitch”. When I have good ads like that, I send them to my old school and others, expecting the viewers to be motivated by them.

KK: Do you mean that you try to inspire them?

AE: Right, it is so important to get a moment of inspiration. I had this illusion back then that I lived for this kind of inspiration because I wanted to be a professional.

KK: In baseball?

AE: I really wanted to become a professional baseball player though I was far below such a level. As I wanted to be involved in baseball or other sports, I wondered what would keep me motivated on a daily basis. That must be inspiration and imagination. So, as my school was in a country side, it would have made much a different environment if a lot of inspirations were coming in. That’s why I send ads when we make good ones. I can imagine how motivated I would be to practice harder if I had them at my time.

KK: Does it mean that you have been inspired by Nike advertising? Did you want to return the favour to Nike?

AE: Did I start working for Nike because I had been inspired by Nike? I don’t think I particularly liked Nike advertising. But there is such a thing as the spirit of Nike athletes, you know?

KK: Which athlete, for instance?

AE: I loved Hideo Nomo... Then, I came to think that I wanted to work at a place where I can send such inspirations. As you can see, there are a lot of soccer campaigns going on because of the World Cup. In the end, it is very important, and almost must-do, to make profits by selling products. However, ultimately, I hope those soccer youth in Japan are inspired by our stories or messages to push themselves in everyday life to make it to and empower the Japanese national team. I always try to be conscious of my own way of involvement in sport. So, it is painful to do something meaningless. It would make me sick to work for something like “beer, a poster ad, some hundreds yen, ‘boom’” (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

This dialogue reveals some of the dispositions, tastes and sporting identities that influenced him in choosing to work for W+K Tokyo and facilitating strategic communication with Nike. He notes that he was a *bukatsu* boy who dreamt of becoming a professional baseball player from a country-side school. Such a dream was represented by Hideo Nomo who realised

the ‘American dream’ by becoming the first Japanese star player in the U.S.A.’s Major League Baseball. Although his primary job is the generation of profits for an ‘American’ company and agency, his desire to inspire *bukatsu* youth is derived from *bukatsu* nationalism, his Japanese sporting identity and national sentiment for the success of the Japanese national team. A dream, sport, national identity and advertising are thus articulated in his worldview to provide him with ‘pleasure at work’ (Nixon & Crewe, 2004).

This notion of ‘pleasure at work’ needs to be understood in the context of creative and culture industries where creative labours tend to, or have to, accept the individualised, transitional, competitive and unpredictable nature of their work (Lash & Urry, 1994; Lee, 2011; McGuigan, 2010; McRobbie, 1996, 2002a, 2002b; Nixon, 2003; Nixon & Crewe, 2004; Ursell, 2000). For instance, McRobbie (2002b), drawing from her own study about young designers, argues that one of the key reasons for their passion to work is “the pleasure with which individuals enter into this kind of work, notwithstanding low pay (sometimes no pay), extraordinarily long working hours (many of my respondents mentioned regularly working through the night) and volatile and unpredictable patterns of work” (p. 109). Similarly, Ursell’s (2000) work on television production may provide a wider implication to the cultural industry as a whole:

The pleasure goes beyond a concept of job satisfaction, if by that term is meant satisfaction in a job detailed and overseen by an employer. Television work is not invariably just a job: it can be a labour of love... Even under contemporary conditions of intense competition and pressure on costs, television production can be a type of work which allows for the exploitation, expression and actualization of the sensual dimensions of subjectivity. (p. 821)

In this sense, the AE at W+K Tokyo engages in ‘pleasure at work’ through his attempts at ‘producing positive meanings’ that are intended to inspire *bukatsu* youth to practice harder, realise sporting dreams and eventually contribute to the national success of Japanese sporting teams and individuals. He recognises that his idealistic intentions may not be straightforwardly expressed through advertising because the company has to ‘make profits by selling products’.

However, he appears contented by the fact that he avoids ‘painful’ work involving the communication of ‘meaningless’ messages despite the uncertainty of his future career in the creative industry that is marked by “the absence of structures that facilitated smooth career development and progression” (Nixon, 2003, p. 73). This latter point is supported by Nixon’s (2003) finding that:

creative people often suggested that they did not see themselves staying in advertising all their working lives. They aimed to establish themselves in advertising and then saw themselves moving into video and film production on the basis of contacts they had made. (p. 90)

In fact, less than three years after its release, the AE was the only member of the creative team involved in the *Where is the Next?* campaign who remained at W+K Tokyo. The two creative directors, art director, copywriter and another account executive either moved to other offices or left the agency—evidence that there is considerable uncertainty involved with careers in the creative industry.

In sum, the *bukatsu* identity is central for the Japanese cultural intermediaries (both the SM at Nike Japan and the AE at W+K Tokyo) to work for Nike marketing and advertising and their personal ‘Japanese’ and ‘*bukatsu*’ experiences are used as forms of cultural distinction to claim legitimacy of representation over Western workers and cultural capital to enhance individual careers within and across the industry. This subjectivity of the Japanese cultural intermediaries entangled with their *bukatsu* culture, experience and identity shapes the ways in which they negotiate authentic and stylish representations of Japanese physical culture within the *bukatsu*-related advertising and marketing production for Nike. The next section explores how such subjective understandings of *bukatsu* are reflected within the creative process of a particular advertising campaign.

*Bukatsu represented: Reflexivity of local/Japanese cultural intermediaries*

As an example of Nike's advertising campaigns featuring *bukatsu* as a theme and signifier of local culture, this sub-section focuses on the television commercial from the *Where is the Next?* campaign which was localised for the Japanese market. The commercial was designed to depict a typical day for a Japanese high-school male student, named Hiroshi, compressed within 30 seconds. Specifically, it represents the *bukatsu* lifestyle of a Japanese soccer youth, played by Ronaldinho, through social interactions with his friends, coach and mother. Here is a brief description of the commercial:

The scene starts with Hiroshi brushing his teeth, looking at himself in a mirror and saying: "I want to be a professional soccer player someday". His reflection in the mirror becomes Ronaldinho. Hiroshi, hereafter played by Ronaldinho, goes to school by train and participates in a soccer *bukatsu* practice. His coach talks about him saying: "Hiroshi is quick and creative, but he doesn't listen to me!" Hiroshi then has fun with his teammates in a locker room and goes to eat ramen noodles with them. Hiroshi returns to his home and kicks a soccer ball against a wall in his room for more practice. His mother, upset with the noise he makes, yells: "Stop it! This is enough!" Hiroshi is determined: "No matter what people say, I will do it." The audience then sees text on the screen, "WHERE'S THE NEXT RONALDINHO?", followed by Nike's trademark swoosh logo.

While deliberately denotative, this description aims to provide a general idea of what Nike is trying to achieve through the commercial. According to the DA at Nike APHQ, which was responsible for overseeing the production of the campaign across Asian markets, Nike's intended message or code of the campaign was "you can make it to the top of the world like Ronaldinho" (personal communication, 8 December 2009). This message was then localised for the Japanese market by situating a global icon, Ronaldinho, in the local cultural setting of *bukatsu* within the television commercial. Hence, a key function of the commercial was the articulation of

‘the reality’ of youth *bukatsu* life with their dream to become like Ronaldinho. In other words, it represents the ‘banality’ of a *bukatsu* lifestyle infused with Ronaldinho, as a ‘sign of the admirable’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 40), thereby producing a hyper-real spectacle of local experience.

As such, the DA at Nike APHQ explained that:

An important part of the Japanese one was *bukatsu*. As I recall, the essential idea was that the main character expressed himself in his *bukatsu* team. So, as you can see in the commercial..., it was important to portray a person who is crazy about soccer, obsessed with soccer and doesn’t really listen to what others like his coach and girlfriend say, but knows what he wants to do and has a strong will to get better. So, I guess Japaneseness is most strongly shown in the practice of *bukatsu*, isn’t it? (personal communication, 8 December 2009)

From the viewpoint of *bukatsu* as a signifying practice of *wa*, teamwork and self-sacrifice, as mentioned by the SM at Nike Japan above, it might appear odd to find the individualistic attitude of Hiroshi in the *Where is the Next?* commercial. However, Nike’s celebration of individualism in its marketing and advertising has been well-known. For example, Goldman and Papsen (1998) emphasise “the Nike moral vision of sport as an anchor for moral individualism” (p. 80). In particular, one scene depicts Ronaldinho kicking a soccer ball on the train on his way to school. Given that even the use of mobile phones on a train is discouraged due to disturbance to the public in Japan, kicking a soccer ball, or any forms of physical activities, on a train would be easily condemned by many, especially adults, as immoral, outrageous behaviour.

However, Nike’s promotion of individualism is skilfully interwoven with Ronaldinho as a sign of global sport celebrity to the extent that such an act of potential public disturbance may be *normally* and *naturally* accepted by youth as an expression of individual freedom, creativity and commitment to sporting excellence in order to ‘make it to the top of the world like Ronaldinho’. In this sense, although *bukatsu* is generally considered to discipline collective values and conformist attitudes among Japanese sporting youth, it also serves as a site of youth resistance informed by Western individualism against the dominant cultural norms of Japanese collectivism. More importantly, the commercial articulation of Nike’s brand with cultures, experiences and

‘realities’ of *bukatsu* youth emerged less through imposition of American values by American managers than through incorporation and embodiment by the Japanese cultural intermediaries.

Nevertheless, since *bukatsu* is practiced and experienced by different individuals in different ways, the banality of a *bukatsu* lifestyle remains a contested terrain of representation. From the perspective of the SM at Nike Japan, “the most difficult part I think is to represent normally what we normally see” (personal communication, 13 January 2010). For him, representation of banal reality therefore is not an easy task because it requires cultural competence in the sense of distinctions, tastes and identifications that are appreciated by Japanese *bukatsu* youth. For instance, he picked the scene of the ramen noodle restaurant as the most symbolic part for Japaneseness insisting that:

Considering the scene at the ramen noodle restaurant for example, approximately 85% of the Japanese population would have an image of a ramen noodle restaurant close to what is represented in the commercial, right?... There is a chef making noodles, a television located in the back, a counter and tables for four customers at the opposite end of the counter and so forth. Perhaps, though I do not have any statistics, at least 80% of Japanese ramen noodle restaurants are something like that (personal communication, 13 January 2010).

Although the generalisability of his sense of the ramen noodle restaurant as a ‘typical’ representation is questionable, as he admits an absence of ‘objective’ statistics, what is evident is that his subjective understandings were reflected in the commercial. Perhaps, to apply the aforementioned SM’s sense of distinction, ramen noodles represent ‘everyday’ Japaneseness given that they are fairly affordable and consumed daily by students in contrast to *sushi*, for instance, which represents a more ‘official’ Japaneseness or a dominant representation of Japanese food, especially in Western society. In other words, ramen noodles were chosen because they were perceived more as a natural or normal part of a *bukatsu* youth’s everyday life.

Of course, there is no guarantee that every *bukatsu* youth, or the majority of *bukatsu* youth, goes to eat ramen noodles on their way home after *bukatsu* practices. Some might prefer *udon* noodles, *soba* noodles or *donburi* (rice bowl dish), all of which can be symbolically

‘Japanese’, while others might prefer going back home to have dinner with their families. As revealed in Chapter 4, the inclusion of the scene was based on the personal experience of the AE at W+K Tokyo as a *bukatsu* youth. To be clear, my point here is not to judge whether this representation is ‘correct’ or ‘authentic’ but to highlight the fact that the subjective views, tastes and experiences of Japanese cultural intermediaries were incorporated into the representation of *bukatsu* lifestyle in the *Where is the Next?* campaign.

However, it is important to note that local cultural intermediaries are conscious that self-reflexive incorporation of *bukatsu* knowledge and experience in advertising may or may not be sufficient to represent ‘the reality’ of contemporary soccer *bukatsu* youth. For instance, there are conceivable differences in the *bukatsu* experience of contemporary Japanese soccer youth and the memory of middle aged (presumably 30’s-40’s) cultural intermediaries of their own experiences as *bukatsu* (baseball) youths. The AE at W+K Tokyo acknowledges the importance of addressing such generational and cultural gaps by studying their target market through ethnographic research:

If we are doing a campaign for *bukatsu*, we know that contemporary *bukatsu* is different from the *bukatsu* I experienced more than ten years ago. In order to see the world through their eyes, we have to engage in their way of life by synchronising ourselves with the rhythm of their everyday life. While we gather general data like a daily timetable of *bukatsu* youth, we think it is more important to spend time with them by, for instance, walking to school together... For instance, we walk with a youth to a station in the morning, get on a train and talk with him, or listen to the conversation with his friends. While he is in the school, we wait outside until lunch time when we are allowed to get in... We observe everything to understand what their interests are... we usually do [this type of research] before a campaign. Although the period could be short, you can find out something insightful from a particular moment, you know? It could be something that’s really trivial like “Aha, he kicks a soccer ball while eating lunch!” or “He said it’s lunch time but he goes to his *bukatsu* locker room to lift weights for practice!” Many little things that go usually unnoticed by [quantitative] research can be realised through the process (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

For the *Where is the Next?* campaign in particular, their research suggested that:

...the Japanese youth at the time preferred to be unique only a bit, you know? While they wore the same school uniforms and similar vinyl bags for *bukatsu*,

little things like key chains were fashionable... because they really loved sort of custom-made ones for differentiation, you know? In fact, when we did research for insight [through focus group discussion] everyone came with his own favourites such as a misanga and other good luck charms. So, because the youth in the commercial admired Ronaldinho, we made key chains in the shape of his iconic hand sign (personal communication, 12 March 2010).

Given that such key chains made specifically for the advertisement are hardly visible in the finished commercial, this comment shows how far W+K goes to gain insights about their client's target audience and how active they are, in turn, to integrate them within the creative process of producing a television commercial. Like W+K, many corporations and advertising agencies have developed their own approaches for “‘taking the role of the other’ to attempt to understand audiences as *they* are thought to see the world” (Zafirau, 2009, p. 192, emphasis in original). In this sense, the W+K Tokyo's ethnographic research on contemporary *bukatsu* youth can be viewed as a means to learn ‘authentic’, ‘cool’ and ‘new’ signs of *bukatsu* such that they can stay “on top of ever-evolving popular tastes” (Zafirau, 2009, p. 197).<sup>126</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to note that this reflexive incorporation is limited by a number of factors including: (a) the period of ethnographic research is constrained by the timeframe of a campaign; (b) school regulations and family privacy allow only partial access to youth; (c) representation of the participants is limited in terms of geographic location; and, (d) interpretations and ‘insights’ vary among researchers who observe the objective, material reality of contemporary *bukatsu* youth. Acknowledging that these limitations apply to most, if not all, types of qualitative research, the key point here is that local cultural intermediaries draw upon their own subjective experiences and articulate these with selected aspects of contemporary *bukatsu* culture in their practices of reflexive incorporation and representation of Japanese sporting identity within Nike's *Where is the Next?* campaign.

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<sup>126</sup> As Zafirau (2009) contends, producer's generation of audience knowledge has been key to the media production and representation yet underplayed in production studies.

## Conclusion

This chapter explored the corporate re-imagination of ‘the nation’ by examining the links between the representation of *bukatsu* and the national sporting identity of Japanese cultural intermediaries through Nike advertising in Japan. The analysis suggests that *bukatsu* serves as a significant site where Japanese youth define and confirm their cultural identities through blended experiences and embodiments of Japanese traditional principles, sporting practices and youth culture. In this context, although *bukatsu* was reproduced and represented by an ‘American’ company, local, Japanese cultural intermediaries at the national subsidiary and advertising agency played an active and pivotal role in articulating and legitimating meanings and representations of Japanese physical culture and lifestyle through Nike’s ‘glocal’ advertising campaign within the process of corporate nationalism.

More specifically, the *ex-bukatsu* practitioners at Nike Japan and W+K Tokyo reflected their subjective understandings of *bukatsu* in communicating a discourse of *bukatsu* nationalism to Nike World Headquarters. In doing so, they articulated their *bukatsu* experiences with national sporting identity and legitimised its significance for marketing and advertising for the Nike brand in Japan. In this sense, their subjective position as Japanese workers was reproduced through strategic communication for advertising with the global headquarters as well as daily interactions with Western corporate structures, norms and practices. The analysis of the creative production of the *Where is the Next?* campaign, for example, illustrates that the lifestyle of *bukatsu* represented in the commercial reflected not only subjective senses, tastes and experiences of the local cultural intermediaries but also the findings from ethnographic research on contemporary *bukatsu* youth by W+K Tokyo.

For the local practitioners, this reflexive, yet subjective, incorporation of contemporary *bukatsu* signs are integral to representing the authenticity of ‘banal reality’ that was infused with a sign of the admirable, Ronaldinho, to produce a hyper-real spectacle of *bukatsu* lifestyle.

Acknowledging the limitations of such reflexivity, these findings certainly support that experiences, cultures and identities of cultural intermediaries are reflexively, yet subjectively, incorporated into the moment of production as key constituents for representation within the ‘short circuit of culture’. This point of reflexivity via subjectivity of cultural intermediaries is particularly important given that it not only justifies the usefulness of the circuit of culture model but also opens up discussions about the concrete ways in which consumption *informs* production—the position effectively challenges the Marxist assumption of ‘production determines consumption’ or ‘base determines superstructure’. Indeed, there has been a slow accumulation of case studies that denote the reflexivity between the creative work of advertising and consumer’s conditions, perspectives, lifestyles and cultures (Amis & Silk, 2010; Cronin, 2004b; du Gay et al., 1997; Gee, 2009; Moor, 2008; Scherer & Jackson, 2007, 2008a, 2010; Soar, 2000).

Despite all the emphasis on the national sporting identity and practices of the local, Japanese cultural intermediaries, it is important not to forget about how they are subjected to a variety of hegemonic codes including the global culture industry, corporate capitalism and masculinity. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the *uncritical* celebration of *bukatsu* needs to be challenged based on its tendency to reproduce and normalise a range of problematic practices including: (a) the male-dominated corporate world including the media conglomerates; (b) exploitive codes of labour practices including those in the creative industry; (c) strict social and seniority-based hierarchies; and, (d) ‘banal’ and ‘branded’ forms of nationalism. Arguably, those symbolic meanings and representations of *bukatsu* are never fixed but encoded, regulated and consumed within the circuit of culture, in turn articulating and re-shaping the relationships between sport, youth and gender (masculine) identity in Japan. This chapter has illuminated the context of glocal production where Nike’s representations of *bukatsu* were negotiated and re-coded by the subjective views and reflexive practices of Japanese cultural intermediaries.

As Robertson and White (2005) argue, globalisation “pertains not just to the big phenomena of sociocultural life but also to the small aspects such as the life cycles of increasingly protean individuals” (p. 352).<sup>127</sup> This approach of combining a macro analysis of cultural globalisation and a micro analysis of the identities of cultural intermediaries is useful to interrogate non-linear, complex and interdependent relationships between the global and the local, the West and the non-West, and the modern and the traditional. According to Hall (1992c), “if we use the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’ we will necessarily find ourselves speaking from a position that holds that the West is a superior civilization” (p. 292). In other words, the presumption of the cultural homogenisation thesis that Japanese culture and identity are destined to vanish as a consequence of Westernisation is inevitably tied up with the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’. Rather than preconditioning non-Western individuals to be passive Others, it is important to recognise how their identities and cultures make profound impacts—though often invisible at the glance—on global media representation and consumption as well as how they are at the same time shaped by the regulations and cultural norms of Western corporate practices. This chapter in particular revealed the pivotal role of Japanese cultural intermediaries in constructing the ‘glocal’ representations of *bukatsu* beyond the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’.

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<sup>127</sup> In his earlier work, Robertson (1992) similarly contends that “There has been a marked tendency in many discussions of the world-system, world society or whatever, to ignore individuals - more precisely, the contemporary construction of individualism - for the apparent reason that globalization of alleged necessity refers to very large-scale matters, in contrast to the ‘small-scale’ status of individuals” (p. 104).

## Chapter 6

### Self-Orientalism and the Representation of 'Japan' at the West-East Nexus:

#### *Asics' Made of Japan Campaign*

This chapter examines another case study but with respect to a largely overlooked form of corporate nationalism. Asics' production of a series of global advertising campaigns called *Made of Japan* for its Onitsuka Tiger brand offers an important site through which to extend the theoretical possibilities of corporate nationalism by incorporating analyses of Orientalism, and self-Orientalism or self-Orientalisation in particular. In doing so, this chapter enhances our understanding of the context of production and representation of national identity at the West-East nexus. More specifically, this chapter explores the complexities and contradictions of the collaboration and negotiation between the Japanese-based global headquarters and its European subsidiary and advertising agency in representing Japanese culture and identity through branding and advertising of Onitsuka Tiger. Thus, by conceptualising the Asics' strategy as 'self-Orientalisation', this analysis reveals the strategic process within which a Japanese transnational corporation accommodates, albeit through intense negotiation, European representations of Japanese authenticity and coolness as "the spectacle of the 'Other'" (Hall, 1997b, p. 225).

Although the Asics' campaigns for its Onitsuka Tiger brand were driven by the trends in fashion and lifestyle associated with the discourse of 'cool Japan' (Allison, 2009; Condry, 2009; Iwabuchi, 2008), not sport *per se*, almost all global sport brands including Nike, Adidas and Puma are involved in promotional activities that articulate sport with the broad area of fashion and lifestyle in order to expand their markets beyond the so-called 'sport industry' (Goldman & Papon, 1998). In this sense, the global production of Onitsuka Tiger as a lifestyle brand serves as a key site for examining the point of conjuncture between sport and lifestyle that has been reinforced within the global cultural economy. The chapter begins by outlining the theoretical

concepts of counter-Orientalism and self-Orientalism in relation to representations of Japanese culture in advertising. Next, the case study presents analyses of: (a) the context of branding Onitsuka Tiger including descriptions of the *Made of Japan* campaign; (b) Onitsuka Tiger's resistance towards Orientalism by representing Japanese authenticity; and, (c) ambivalence in European cultural intermediaries' representations of Japan. Finally, the conclusion highlights the significance and offers some implications.

### **Counter-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism in Advertising**

As discussed in Chapter 2, Japan has been represented, and often stereotyped, in association with its traditional symbols and signifiers in the Western media within the discourse of Orientalism. For instance, Moeran (1996b) acknowledges the proliferation of the Orientalist representations of Japan associated with *sumō* wrestlers, *geisha*, Mount Fuji and tea ceremony in Western advertising. To be clear, the use of Japanese traditional symbols and images itself is not so problematic when it clearly shows a high degree of understanding of and respect for Japanese traditional culture. Rather, what needs to be scrutinised are the ways in which representations of Japan are used to produce 'stereotypes', *distorted* and *offensive* images, which are often caused by a lack of effort in understanding the Other—that is, what we may call 'Orientalist' representations.

In contrast, Moeran (1996b) also discusses the notion of 'counter-Orientalism' that denotes the (re)actions of Japanese corporations to challenge Orientalist discourses within the Western media by articulating their own national and cultural identity with technological superiority, aesthetic perfection and authenticity (see also Moeran, 2003). As many Japanese transnational corporations have operated successfully in the global economy, such a discourse of counter-Orientalism asserts possibilities of self-representation that counters Western representations of 'Japan' as the Other. Arguably, this could provide an epistemological shift

from the deterministic view of Orientalism simply as a form of Western cultural domination over the Rest. From this counter-hegemonic view, counter-Orientalist practices of Japanese transnational corporations are considered as an attempt at “trans-coding” (Hall, 1997b, p. 270) to replace negative representations of ‘exotic and erotic Japan’ with positive representations of ‘cool and techno-futurist Japan’ (Moeran, 1996b; also see Daliot-Bul, 2007).

However, what appears to be counter-Orientalist practices may actually be the result of a different form of representational practices informed by the notion of ‘self-Orientalism’ (Dirlik, 1996; Iwabuchi, 1994). Self-Orientalism refers to a wilful (re)action of non-Western individuals and institutions to play the Other—that is, Western portrayals of non-Western cultures and identities—in order to strategically gain recognition and position themselves within the orders and norms of Western-dominated global society. As such, self-Orientalism has a dual function of complimenting and countering Western hegemony. On the one hand, as Iwabuchi (1994) asserts, self-Orientalism is not “a passive strategy of the inferior” because “Japan’s strategy to construct and self-assert its national cultural identity has been the active exploitation of ‘the West’ which effectively counters Orientalism” (p. 52). In this sense, many Japanese transnational corporations have successfully positioned themselves as ‘winners’ within the global economy, even outperforming rival Western corporations, by adapting to Western capitalism and Orientalism.

On the other hand, Iwabuchi (1994) also acknowledges the limit of Japanese self-Orientalism in effectively countering Orientalism:

it would be also misleading to see Japanese self-Orientalism as a serious challenge to western Orientalism. On the contrary, the relationship between the West’s Orientalist discourse on Japan and Japan’s discourse on itself is characterised by a profound complicity. Both tend to use the Other to essentialise the Self and to repress the heterogeneous voices within. (p. 52)

This comment therefore highlights a ‘profound complicity’ between Western Orientalism and Japanese self-Orientalism in essentialising representations of Japan not only in the West but also within Japan itself. In other words, self-Orientalism has a side closely linked with cultural

nationalism that obscures the ethnic and cultural differences within a discourse of Japanese homogeneity (Dirlik, 1996; Kogure, 2008). This complicity is perhaps most evident in the mutually reinforcing relationship between ‘techno-Orientalism’—Western representation of robotic, machine-like and inhuman Japan—and ‘techno-nationalism’—Japanese self-representation of technologically superior Japan (see Chapter 2).

To put it differently, self-Orientalism can be more easily understood as a form of self-stereotyping. According to Hall (1997b), “*Stereotypes* get hold of the few ‘simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized’ characteristics about a person, *reduce* everything about the person to those traits, *exaggerate* and *simplify* them, and *fix* them without change or development to eternity” (p. 258, emphasis in original). Therefore, stereotyping Japan involves the reduction of its culture and identity to particular ‘fixed’ representations such as *samurai*, *geisha* and *sumō* by excluding the possibility of various ways to understand, interpret and represent the nation. Within discourses of Orientalism, ‘Japan’ is stereotyped and turned into sexual, exotic and funny objects for Western consumption. Such stereotypes of the Other facilitate “the ‘binding’ or bonding together of all of Us who are ‘normal’ into one ‘imagined community’; and it sends into symbolic exile all of Them – ‘the Others’ – who are in some way different – ‘beyond the pale’” (Hall, 1997b, p. 258). Thus, non-Western practices of self-stereotyping legitimise and reinforce Western representations of the Others to achieve particular strategic purposes including social integration into the West and economic success in Western markets.

Within the global advertising industry, Japanese transnational corporate practices of self-Orientalism or self-Orientalisation have been pervasive given that they have frequently hired Western advertising agencies to construct marketing and advertising campaigns both in Western markets and at the global level. Since a primary purpose of advertising is communication of values, signs and identities of brands and products, a lack of ability both to speak in English and

to understand cultural trends in the West means that Japanese workers and corporations are positioned less favourably for communication with global consumers and thus require substantial assistance from Western advertising agencies. In this context, processes of self-Orientalisation are largely operated by Western advertising agencies who represent Japanese culture and identity on behalf of Japanese corporations within advertisements in Western or global markets. Dirlik (1996) asserts that the process of self-Orientalisation creates confusion between subject and object:

in the very process of understanding an alien culture, orientalists need in some measure to be “orientalised,” if you like, which brings orientalists closer to the Other while distancing them from the society of the Self. If only as specialist or expert, the orientalist comes not just to speak about but also *for* the Other... the distinctions between self and other, or subject and object, crucial to the analysis of orientalism, become blurred though not necessarily abolished. (p. 101, emphasis in original)

While processes of identification at the personal level is difficult to be analysed and perhaps better informed by psychological analyses, it is important to take account of the flexible and changing nature of cultural identity. As Hall (1992b) insists:

identity is actually something formed through unconscious processes overtime, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth. There is always something ‘imaginary’ or fantasized about its unity. It always remains incomplete, is always ‘in process’, always ‘being formed’. The ‘feminine’ parts of the male self, for example, which are disavowed, remain with him and find unconscious expressions in many unacknowledged ways in adult life. Thus, rather than speaking of identity as a finished thing, we should speak of *identification*, and see it as an on-going process. (pp. 287-288, emphasis in original)

Thus, it is both possible and appropriate to consider Western cultural intermediaries’ *identification* with Japanese culture as well as Japanese cultural intermediaries’ *identification* with Western culture, both of which can take place in their private lives and business activities. This micro-level analysis of self-Orientalisation processes and practices is necessary to address the question of representation in self-Orientalism by identifying reciprocity, crossover and hybridity between the cultural divide between the West and the East. In turn, such an approach

offers possibilities for overcoming the preoccupation of the Orientalism thesis with the West-East polarisation.

### **Case Study: Negotiating Japanese Identity at the West-East Nexus Within Asics Global Advertising Production**

#### *Context of branding Onitsuka Tiger*

Asics Corporation has two main brands: (a) Asics, which is focused on athletic performance; and (b) Onitsuka Tiger, which focuses on fashion and lifestyle. Onitsuka Tiger was originally established by Kihachiro Onitsuka, the founder of Onitsuka Corporation—the forerunner of Asics, as an athletic shoe brand in 1949 in Kobe, Japan. As Onitsuka Corporation aimed to expand its business beyond athletic shoes, it merged with two other Japanese sportswear companies to become Asics Corporation as a producer of general sporting goods in 1977. Upon the consolidation of different brands, Onitsuka Tiger, along with the others, was terminated and replaced by a single uniform brand of Asics. In other words, Onitsuka Tiger had become the nostalgic memory of the entrepreneurial spirit of Kihachiro Onitsuka until the brand was ‘re-discovered’ by European fashion leaders, brokers and consumers around the beginning of the twentieth first century.

There were two key developments in Europe that eventually led the revival of the Onitsuka Tiger brand. One is the ‘retro sneaker’ boom; the other is the ‘cool Japan’ boom. Therefore, the fashion trends of the retro, old-fashioned styles coincided with the trends of Japanese popular culture, collectively offering a rare opportunity for Asics to re-produce the original models of Onitsuka Tiger sneakers in the fashion-conscious markets of Europe. Consequently, Onitsuka Tiger was officially re-established as a lifestyle brand in 2002, though with a small project team at Asics Headquarters. The Japanese project team faced two main challenges: (a) a lack of understanding of the European contexts where Onitsuka Tiger happened

to gain sudden popularity; and (b) a lack of expertise in fashion and lifestyle branding due to the Asics brand's strong historical links with athletics and performance excellence. These challenges at Asics Headquarters explain why the branding of Onitsuka Tiger was mainly developed by its European subsidiary and advertising agencies. Indeed, a top member of the Onitsuka Tiger branding team publicly stated that the Onitsuka Tiger brand was "Japanese-born and European-raised" (Reco Orland, 2009).

A key moment for the burst of Onitsuka Tiger's popularity came from Hollywood in 2003 when the Quentin Tarantino-directed movie *Kill Bill* featured the main character played by Uma Thurman wearing Onitsuka Tiger sneakers. *Kill Bill* was one of several other movies at the time, including *Lost in Translation* and *The Last Samurai* (both of which were released in 2003), that put Japanese popular culture on the maps of Hollywood in particular and therefore global popular culture more generally (Allison, 2009). Nevertheless, the inclusion of Onitsuka Tiger sneakers in *Kill Bill* was not the result of Asics' strategic use of 'product placement', but of the request of Quentin Tarantino who was known to be a fan of Japanese films (Nichigo Press, 2010). As a director, Tarantino wanted to draw upon the costume motif from *The Game of Death* (1972) in which the main character played by Bruce Lee wore Onitsuka Tiger shoes. This fact supports the view that the popularisation of Japanese popular culture in general, and Onitsuka Tiger in particular, was driven less by strategic approaches of the Japanese government, corporations and cultural producers than by the Western interests in consumption of, and association with, 'Japan'.

In this context, the American and European subsidiaries of Asics responded to the trends of retro sneakers and Japanese popular culture on their own, independently from Asics Headquarters. The MM at Asics Headquarters explains:

MM: For Onitsuka Tiger, its revival was first triggered by the fashion buyers and stores who wanted to revive the old models of our shoes and sell them as fashion items in the U.S.A. and Europe. So, it was not strategically initiated by Asics.

KK: So, it was rather led by the subsidiaries of Asics, right?

MM: Initially, yes. As we gave them a go at selling those old models as special orders, they got very popular and we got swamped by the increasing demands from various places. Eventually, Japanese buyers and stores heard about it and followed suit.

KK: Because Onitsuka Tiger became popular in Europe.

MM: It all started with the buyers who wanted to sell them. It was not intentionally coordinated by Asics but driven by the market demands.

KK: Do you think it was caused by ‘cool Japan’ or the Western interests in Japanese culture?

MM: I think that’s part of it. Another was the vintage or retro boom that increased the popularity of retro sneakers. In the result, the consumer demands were so overwhelming that each of our subsidiaries responded on its own for the respective market. So, the Japanese headquarters, which is supposed to lead the rest of the group, was left behind while the American and European subsidiaries achieved successful outcomes.

KK: So, that was the reason why Japaneseness was represented rather fragmentarily across the different markets including the U.S.A. and Europe?

MM: So, it was rather ‘strange Japan’ from the Japanese eyes although it was produced by a Japanese company. (personal communication, 18 February 2010)

Because of the recent surge in the popularity of Onitsuka Tiger in Western markets, the European and American subsidiaries of Asics were geographically and culturally closer to the emerging markets and consumers of the brand. At this stage, these subsidiaries undertook, or were allowed to undertake, their own productions of advertising and marketing of Onitsuka Tiger using some elements of Japanese popular culture *without* consent or approval from the Japanese headquarters. The images of Japan featured in their advertisements included *samurai*, *sushi* and *bonsai* that were articulated rather ‘strangely’ from a Japanese perspective as expressed by the MM at Asics Headquarters in the quote above. From the viewpoint of Orientalism, their use of ‘cool Japan’, allegedly promoting positive images of Japan within the Western media, may be problematic given that the signifying practices were nonetheless motivated and derived from the Western desire to consume ‘Japan’ for the spectacle of exotic Otherness. For the MM, it was

problematic because it differed from the ways in which his company wanted its Japanese brand to be represented.

There were two major dilemmas for Asics Headquarters. First, while the Japanese headquarters was in a legitimate position to promote the authenticity of the ‘Japanese’ brand, it had to rely on its Western subsidiaries and advertising agencies to properly respond to Western consumer demands for symbolic acquisition of ‘cool Japan’ in order to sustain and enhance the popularity of Onitsuka Tiger in overseas markets. The MM at Asics Headquarters lamented the reality that large-scale Japanese corporations and advertising agencies (e.g. over 1000 employees) are outperformed by small-scale Western advertising agencies like Amsterdam Worldwide (about 30 employees) with respect to constructing global-level advertising campaigns largely due to the dominance of English as the global language:

I think the reason why a group of 30 people can do the job is that their official language of work is English given that the agency is located in Europe with its workers from 13 different nations. It’s in the Netherlands, but everything including internal documents at the agency is conducted in English. There’s no document written in Dutch, for instance. That’s normal because English is the common language, you know? In Japan, everything is conducted in Japanese. It takes more than twice as long just to translate English into Japanese and vice versa. English is never an official language in Japan. That’s true for us and for Japanese advertising agencies. Can all the workers at Asics speak in English? No. So, we are facing a big hurdle to overcome. It is very difficult for us and Japanese advertising agencies alike to manage global advertising and marketing... So, although there are global companies like Toyota and Honda in Japan, I think it is similarly impossible for them to have Japanese advertising agencies to manage their global accounts. (personal communication, 18 February 2010)

Therefore, the MM at Asics Headquarters suggests that the English language provides ‘a big hurdle’ not only for Asics but also for many, if not all, Japanese transnational corporations and advertising agencies to construct global advertising and marketing campaigns. Because advertising essentially functions as a medium of communication with consumers, the lack of English-speaking ability of Japanese corporations and advertising agencies forces them to rely on English-speaking cultural intermediaries to speak about their brands and products—even their

own national culture and identity—on their behalf in English-language-dominated Western or global markets. For Asics, its emphasis on the authenticity of Japanese culture and identity therefore had to be translated by Asics Europe and its advertising agency Amsterdam Worldwide (known as StrawberryFrog Amsterdam until 2008) who were better positioned to communicate with European and Western consumers.

Second, the Japanese headquarters was challenged by its Western subsidiaries for its legitimacy to take a leading role in marketing and branding within the organisational dynamics of cultural-economic power relations. The General Manager of Marketing at Asics Headquarters explains:

Japan (the headquarters) had led the global marketing strategy while investing in local optimisation overseas until around the time (the beginning of the twenty first century). For example, Japan directly managed the sponsorship contracts with marathon events and various national volleyball teams that we used to have a lot. This era lasted quite a long time. And then, this relationship was reversed and now Japan is having a tough time for its business. Although our marketing department proposes ideas from time to time about how much we invest in advertising, which athletes or events we sponsor and what media we use, they are ultimately examined and decided by the senior management who considers the Asics group as a whole. So, although our total sales have increased, the rapid increase in our overseas sales coincided with the stagnation of our Japanese sales. It was the point of time when we realised that Japan was no longer able to sustain substantial leadership and shifted our strategy to prioritise branding for managerial efficiency and effectiveness. It was in 2001 when the formal direction was made to emphasise the branding of Asics [instead of prioritising product development] and, after much ado, in 2007 when we introduced the new brand mark as part of the brand renewal. That was also when we began to make a clear distinction in branding between the aspects of global consistency and localisation. (personal communication, 18 February 2010)

As the Asics' overseas sales have outgrown its domestic sales since 2003, the overseas subsidiaries have been able to enhance their voices within the Asics group with respect to the global operation and branding of Asics. In particular, Asics Headquarters was pressured by the Western subsidiaries to shift its strategic focus from product-driven to market-driven—that is, to follow the 'Nike way'. According to the Communication Manager (CM) at Asics Europe:

Asics, if you compare to Nike and Adidas, for today, they (Asics Headquarters) are still very much product-driven instead of marketing-driven, that's what we see the competitors started already quite some years ago, if not ten or fifteen years ago, with a marketing approach that, of course, Nike is very good in that, and Adidas as well. That's still something that we need to learn how to do that better. I think that is also a challenge within a Japanese company because Japanese companies overall are more product-driven, and making sure to produce the best quality products, and having the right procedures, and streamlined organisations, etc... So, maybe a development department of a Japanese company, you've people working always on new technologies and new ways on how to construct a shoe and how to assemble it where actually Nike would start with what is the need of consumer and what is the type of product that we can really position in a market to gain sales. So, it's a different starting point. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

She continues to explain why a sport brand should distinguish itself by a 'style', not quality:

...today it's becoming no matter what kind of industry you working in, car industry or electronics, the technology is available for almost everybody. So, it's becoming more tough to really differentiate on technology levels and that is also what we in the sport industry realised. Aesthetics, being different by attitudes, or the services that you give or, let's say, the heritage we are coming from, that becomes more and more important to differentiate yourself. Because all the companies have access to research and development centres and can make the best shoes if you like or have the best designers. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Consequently, the revival of Onitsuka Tiger marked a turning point in the parent-subsidiary relationship because its popularity, driven by Western consumption for fashion and lifestyle, seriously contradicted the corporate traditions of the Japanese headquarters for focusing on functionality of athletic and sporting products.

In this context of branding Onitsuka Tiger, Europe Asics and Amsterdam Worldwide have played a central role not only in constructing its advertising materials for the European markets but also in formulating its global advertising strategy and branding as a whole. In 2007, Asics Europe launched a pivotal campaign called *Made of Japan* in which a sneaker-shaped diorama, as a central promotional object, articulated Onitsuka Tiger as an athletic shoe brand—or

the logo, ‘Tiger stripes’—with some elements of Japanese culture.<sup>128</sup> This diorama was designed by a popular artist, Gary Baseman, who decorated it with Japanese small, retro toys or collectibles. Thus, a series of *Made of Japan* campaigns started off relatively small-scale with the print advertisements of the Gary Baseman’s shoe, which were primarily produced for the European markets. Having been praised by peers in the Asics group, *Made of Japan* was then promoted as a global campaign in 2008. The 2008 campaign featured a sneaker-shaped diorama called ‘Electric Tiger Land’ that represented Tokyo’s urban cityscape at night with neon signs, trains and highways. It utilised multi-media platforms including print advertising, in-store promotion and web commercials across and beyond European markets. The themes and ideas of the 2007 and 2008 campaigns were autonomously developed by Asics Europe and Amsterdam Worldwide.

Nevertheless, the more *Made of Japan* was positioned and established as a global campaign, the more challenging the selection of themes and development of ideas became because the European cultural intermediaries were then required to take into account suggestions and negotiations from Asics Headquarters. Therefore, since 2009, Asics Headquarters has been involved in the production of *Made of Japan* campaigns mainly by: (a) coordinating a global meeting where representatives from Asics Headquarters and its overseas subsidiaries discuss potential themes and ideas of campaigns; (b) engaging in day-to-day communication about the campaign production with its European partners; and (c) approving or disapproving proposed

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<sup>128</sup> When I first analysed the texts of web commercials for the 2007-2010 campaigns obtained from a database and other video websites, I experienced some confusion in reading the representations of Japan because they were not based on dominant representations of Japan either in the West (e.g. *samurai*, *geisha* and *sumō*) or in Japan (e.g. shrines/temples, tea ceremony, cherry blossom, *bukatsu* and a range of Japanese popular culture including TV programs, celebrities, movies, *manga* and *anime*). In a sense, they were seemingly challenging stereotypes of Japan yet providing new representations that looked quite strange to me. In particular, I wondered: (a) why Asics, as a Japanese company, needed a Western advertising agency to represent Japanese culture; (b) how key decisions were made between Asics and Amsterdam Worldwide; and therefore (c) how power relations between Japanese workers at Asics and Western workers at Amsterdam Worldwide were manifested during the construction of the representations of Japan within the advertisements.

themes, ideas and strategies. The CM at Asics Europe describes the nature of its communication process with Asics Headquarters over years:

Asics Europe has always been in the lead with Amsterdam Worldwide when we started working together with them to establish Onitsuka Tiger, and we still are. So, four years ago, we said “Okay, lifestyle is not just a regional or country matter”. As soon as you go for lifestyle but also for performance, it is global. Nowadays, communication is global. So, whenever you want to learn about brands, you go online and you can read or find whatever you want to discover. And also, people in fashion in general travel quite a lot, getting inspired by different regions. So, you cannot have different messages across the globe. It needs to be more consistent. That’s where we started to work more closely with the global team where often Europe has been in the lead but we make sure that we try to align on the global level more and more. That’s still an ongoing process... But, on the other hand, Asics Japan, the headquarters, is working closely together with Europe because in Europe the lifestyle trends are more in the lead, let’s say, than in Japan although in Europe we all look towards Japan to get inspiration and being inspired of whatever we do. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Likewise, the Creative Director (CD) at Amsterdam Worldwide elaborates on his position in alliance with Asics Europe:

...from an agency point of view, part of the challenge is articulating the ideas at an early stage. So, you get buy in from all the different regions because I think between us as an agency and [Asics Europe], you know it’s a pretty small team, like [the CM at Asics Europe] said, we know each other pretty well and we’ve been working together for a long time. So, I think we have quite an open relationship about we can present stuff to you, you can understand and kind of see where we’re gonna go with it and we can explain very openly what our worries about it are, our concerns and things like that. So, that’s easy. But then, to get to a point where America is on board, Japan is on board, Australia is on board and all the other markets are on board, that’s quite difficult because we have to be very careful on how you sell the idea, how you sort of articulate it and how you make sure that you’re answering everyone’s different requirements because, you know, a requirement in Japan might be that they need to sell a lot of apparel for example. And yet in the States, they might want to focus on footwear. In Germany, they might want to focus on retail whereas in France they want to buy a lot of the media in magazines. So, there’s lots of different people wanting lots of different things, and you have to make sure that work you propose ticks all the right boxes. That is a real challenge, every year. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Through such intense negotiations with Asics Headquarters and its overseas subsidiaries around the world, the *Made of Japan* campaigns continued to be central to Onitsuka Tiger’s global branding in 2009 with a theme of the Zodiac; and in 2010 with a theme of *tansu*, or a

traditional Japanese chest of drawers. Thus, the development of Onitsuka Tiger's branding represents a process of self-Orientalisation because a 'Japanese' brand accepts, embraces and accommodates—often through negotiation—'European' representations of Japanese culture and identity. To explore the dynamics of internal communication and negotiation between Japanese and European symbolic workers, the next section focuses on the 2010 *Made of Japan* campaign to illuminate a specific context of production of Japanese authenticity.

### *Resisting Orientalism by representing Japanese authenticity*

One of the aims for Asics Headquarters with respect to communicating with its European partners was to prevent the Japanese brand from simply being portrayed by Orientalist imaginaries of 'exotic and cool Japan' in contrast to the headquarters' emphasis on Japanese authenticity. Since authenticity has become a key cultural code in the cluttered landscape of advertising (Goldman & Papsan, 1996; Moeran, 2005; Peterson, 2005), Japanese authenticity provides a focal point of brand differentiation for Asics when competing against Western brands like Nike, Adidas and Puma. For instance, the MM at Asics Headquarters points out the pervasiveness of the Orientalist use of Japanese images in the West particularly around the beginning of the twenty first century:

MM: Around the time, there were a lot of mistaken representations of Japan that I encountered overseas. For instance, there were T-shirts with illegible *kanji* on them.

KK: That's right. There are also a lot of *kanji* tattoos that don't make sense.

MM: I think there still are. Yet, around that time, they were more pervasive and even regarded as 'cool'. That is not what Onitsuka Tiger is supposed to do, is it?... So, we came to realise that our mission as a Japanese brand was to introduce authentic Japan as part of what we do. Since 2002 or 2003, we thus had produced at least one item every year with a traditional design, craft technique or anything else that represents authentic Japan not only for the Japanese market but also for the overseas markets. (personal communication, 18 February 2010)

This strategy can be understood in terms of counter-Orientalism because Onitsuka Tiger, as a Japanese brand itself, attempts to counter Orientalist imaginaries of Japan by representing Japanese authenticity. In other words, it is a practice of “trans-coding” (Hall, 1997b, p. 270) in which a Western imagination of ‘Japan’ is re-coded or re-articulated with ‘Japanese authenticity’ by a range of products, marketing initiatives and advertisements. However, Asics Headquarters delegated most of the creative work of constructing representations of ‘authentic Japan’ for marketing and advertising to Asics Europe and Amsterdam Worldwide during the development of the *Made of Japan* campaigns.

As the European partners understood the sensibility of the Japanese brand representing its authenticity, they tried to differentiate their approach from the Western brands who also adopted signs of Japanese culture for their products and advertisements. As such, they adopted a rather critical position towards the apparent, overtly Orientalist use of Japanese cultural elements by fashion brands like Superdry. Superdry is a British-based corporation that mainly produces casual fashion wear targeted at young consumers in Western markets. According to the CD at Amsterdam Worldwide, “they have a lot of these little Japanese characters in their logos. They are very outspokenly kind of Japanese” (personal communication, 15 July 2010). In other words, Superdry’s logo, products and advertisements feature particular aspects of Japanese culture mixed with a Western style of casual fashion. The problem with Superdry’s use of Japanese characters was obvious given that words were often mis-spelt or made no sense from a Japanese perspective, thereby showing a lack of effort to understand the Other.

Hence, the European cultural intermediaries consciously attempted to avoid falling into an Orientalist approach as a means to differentiate the Onitsuka Tiger brand from rival Western brands:

CD (at Amsterdam Worldwide): That was a very conscious decision that we made very early on together where, I remember, we made two image boards like “This is Onitsuka Tiger” and “This isn’t Onitsuka Tiger”, “This is Japan” and “This

isn't Japan". So, on the "NOT Onitsuka Tiger" board was, yeah, *manga*, *sumō* wrestlers, you know?

KK: *Geisha*.

CD: *Geisha*, and all of those can-be-pop types of things.

CM (at Asics Europe): Which is interesting. But, we felt we don't want to communicate Onitsuka Tiger being that because that's obviously expected. But, we want to share the values that are important for Japanese or important for the country. What we think is that we try to investigate that through our Japanese connections. Sometimes successful, sometimes not (laughter). (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Thus, their 'Japanese connections' served as important sources of Japanese authenticity and therefore legitimised European cultural intermediaries' representations of Japanese culture and identity on behalf of the Japanese headquarters.

The most emblematic of the *Made of Japan* campaigns in terms of Japanese authenticity was the 2010 campaign which was developed with a sneaker-shaped *tansu* or Japanese chest of drawers made of paulownia as a central promotional object. As Goldman and Papson (1996) contend, "Authentic production has long been associated with craft production" (p. 149). The aim of Asics Europe and Amsterdam Worldwide was to represent the Japanese craftsmanship of cabinetry by collaborating with Ogura Tansu Ten, a renowned paulownia *tansu* maker with over two hundred years of tradition in Kamo, Niigata—the city known for its high-quality production of paulownia *tansu*. The CM at Asics Europe emphasises the importance for incorporating the 'authentic' views, skills and experiences from Japanese designers, suppliers and collaborators who can make up for a lack of legitimacy in the European representation of authentic Japan:

...for us being European, we do feel that we can trust more their findings and their perception and what they would suggest because they were born in Japan and they were raised as being Japanese. For us, it feels more comfortable to go with them than with a different supplier. And I had a feeling, but that's my personal feeling, that you could see the different level of, let's say, proposals that they would give either because their suggestions on how to execute either a film or a diorama, the level of detail that you thought "Okay, this makes sense and we can trust that there will be also a Japanese eye looking at it and making sure that it's right". It was with *tansu* shoe in the end how we made the decision comparing proposals

from, let's say, an American, compared to the Japanese traditional *tansu* manufacturer. Where you do see pros and cons being maybe a less known company versus a very established designer, then you say "Okay, for us is the brand more relevant that we make sure that it comes also from the heart of Japan rather than being a well-known designer". (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Nevertheless, a major challenge for the European cultural intermediaries to collaborate with 'authentic' Japanese producers, designers and manufacturers is a greater risk of miscommunication and misunderstanding due to geographical, cultural and linguistic gaps. As the CD at Amsterdam Worldwide describes:

Every time we do one of these projects, there's a huge risk. We try to minimise that risk as much as possible by being very, very clear with a brief. So, we give it to people, meeting them and forming a relationship with them. When we had this one, [the CM at Asics Europe] and I were both in Tokyo and met with Ogura-san, the guy who runs this *tansu* company. And I think..., it's good to have a face-to-face meeting, something that's very important when you're briefing people on jobs because you have to understand whether they are really passionate about it or whether they really understand what you are talking about. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

For instance, the geographical distance between the European cultural intermediaries in the Netherlands and Ogura Tansu Ten in Japan made it difficult to periodically check on the process of crafting the sneaker-shaped *tansu*. There were also large linguistic and cultural gaps because no one at Ogura Tansu Ten spoke fluent English or knew about the business of advertising. As it was the first time for Ogura Tansu Ten, or perhaps any *tansu* producer, to craft a sneaker-shaped *tansu*, there was a high degree of uncertainty for both parties about how the finished product should look and feel. These geographical, linguistic and cultural gaps were mediated by the workers at Asics Headquarters who could speak in both Japanese and English and understand both contexts of Japanese craftsmanship and Western advertising practices. In short, the attempt to acquire authentic Japanese sources and materials resulted in a range of communication complications requiring translators of both language and culture to minimise the risk of miscommunication.

Another challenge for the European cultural intermediaries was that they also needed to be aware of how their representations of ‘authentic Japan’ would be perceived by Western consumers. In other words, the authenticity of Japaneseness itself may not be attractive enough to Western consumers and therefore may require hybridisation with or transformation into something ‘cool’ or ‘interesting’ for commercial success. According to Nixon (2003, p. 89), advertising agencies tend to distinguish themselves from their conservative client companies by promoting ‘edgy’ and ‘progressive’ expressions in order to win awards in the creative industry. In this light, the CD at Amsterdam Worldwide elaborates on the logic of branding through the three step process:

One of the things we always ask between us and [the CM at Asics Europe] and we always try to get to with the campaigns is “what do we want people to think when they see it?” The first thing is Onitsuka Tiger because you see the stripes or you see the branding. The second thing is Japanese because it has to have that sense, that aura about it whether it’s blatantly Japanese or there’s Japanese lettering involved, something that makes you feel that you are looking at something that is not European. And thirdly, we want to tell a story which is relative specifically to that particular concept. So, you know, with *tansu* as an example again, the first thing you see ... is a profile of a shoe, so you know it’s a shoe company with the stripes you recognise them. The second thing you see is this kind of cabinetry which just for Western people you associate that style with Asia and Japan. I think the same in Japan as well... And the third thing is you say “Wow, there are doors in there. It looks interesting and kind of intriguing, what’s going on in this craft?” because its images in this kind of wood shop environment is dark and something interesting going on. So, you kinda want to find out a bit more about it. So, that’s the three steps involved. And anything more, if we’ve gone much more vague or if we’d taken the story to another level and detached ourselves from the reality of the wood working and the details and I don’t think people would be interested in it because they wouldn’t have taken the first association. So, you can’t stray too far. You can’t be too overly conceptual with visuals and what you show to consumers because they won’t engage with it. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Thus, the sneaker-shaped *tansu* was constructed to articulate the brand (the logo— ‘stripes’), Japaneseness (authentic craftsmanship) and an ‘interesting’ story (exploration into ‘the reality of the wood working’). In this sense, Japanese authenticity had to be represented in a ‘cool’, ‘interesting’ or ‘entertaining’ way as a *necessary* function of branding in order to attract young Western consumers who desire to attain distinctive signs for their fashion, lifestyle and

identities. In the words of Goldman and Papson (1996), “Advertising has always struggled with issues of authenticity because advertising has frequently been associated with hype” (p. 141). Consequently, the *tansu* craftsmanship was re-discovered by the European cultural intermediaries as a national symbol of Japanese authenticity and re-coded as a ‘cool’ signifier to form signs of ‘authentic/cool Japan’ as part of Onitsuka Tiger’s branding.

The creative process was negotiated, mediated and eventually accepted by the Japanese cultural intermediaries at Asics Headquarters. In this sense, Asics’ self-Orientalisation can be considered as a strategy to find a middle ground between ‘authentic Japan’ endorsed by the Japanese headquarters and ‘cool Japan’ desired by Western consumers, whereby the negotiations between European and Japanese cultural intermediaries are central to determining how (un)authentic and (un)cool representations of the Japanese brand should be. For instance, the MM at Asics Headquarters stated that:

Their perspective is interesting. Their point of view is interesting. So, there have been cases where I indeed found their ideas interesting and other cases where I found them far off the mark... So, we both have a chance of getting unique and interesting ideas on the one hand and risk of getting extremely odd ideas on the other hand. However, if we try to avoid the risk, then we would lose the chance, too. (personal communication, 18 February 2010)

This comment highlights a dilemma for the Japanese cultural intermediary; that is, whether to be conservative and use ‘authentic’ images which might be boring or to use ‘interesting’, but potentially ‘unauthentic’ representations of Japan, as part of the Onitsuka Tiger brand. In this case, ‘Japan’ was imagined not only by the Japanese but also by the non-Japanese cultural intermediaries. Ultimately, as Iwabuchi (1994) argues, “‘Japaneseness’ has maintained its precarious unity not only by differentiating itself from an ‘Other’ but by being differentiated by the Other... ‘Japaneseness’ has to be ‘imagined’ by the Other as well as by its own members, though differently” (p. 51). Accordingly, the creative process of Asics’ Self-Orientalisation served as a site of intense negotiation between such forms of Japaneseness which were imagined

differently by the Japanese and European cultural intermediaries. In the next sub-section, it is further illustrated that the process of self-Orientalisation promotes personal-level identification of cultural intermediaries with the Others as part of representational practices and processes of advertising production.

### *Ambivalence in European cultural intermediaries' representations of Japan*

As the European cultural intermediaries worked with a Japanese brand to represent Japanese culture and identity, they had to undertake extensive learning of Japanese culture, customs and values through everyday interactions with their Japanese colleagues and partners in addition to knowledge accumulation from multiple sources including books, films and the internet. In other words, they had to try to put themselves in the position of Japanese people and their way of life, business and communication. For the CM at Asics Europe in particular, her occupational identity has been strongly associated with her embodiment, performance and representation of Japaneseness through internal and external communication for the Japanese brand. This process involved personal struggles with her identity between her personal history being born and raised Dutch and her occupational role which required her to speak about Japanese authenticity to European colleagues and consumers on behalf of a Japanese corporation.

The ambivalence between the 'private' (e.g. personal history) and 'public' (e.g. occupational role) identities of the European cultural intermediaries was clearly evident during my interview. Hence, their sense of Self and Other often interchanged according to how they represented themselves, for instance, as Westerners, Europeans, Dutch, British or Japanese. More specifically, when they talked from the standpoint of Asics Europe or Amsterdam Worldwide, these organisations were referred to as 'us' in contrast to Asics Headquarters in particular, and the Japanese in general, as 'them'. Their cultural and educational backgrounds, or what Bourdieu (1984) calls habitus, are certainly one of the most influential elements in shaping their

interpretations and imaginings of Japan as a Western Other. Their personal identities were therefore shaped as Westerners, Europeans, British or Dutch within particular contexts of family upbringing, education and media through which the non-West was typically represented in association with exoticism, eroticism and barbarism.

For instance, the 'British' or 'English' CD at Amsterdam Worldwide is reflexively aware of the influences from the (techno-)Orientalist discourse of Japan through the Western media:

I'm speaking from a point of view of an English person. This is quite subjective, my point of view... You know, it's a very unique perspective of a way of life over there. All the associations come from, for my generation that's from the 80's when, you know, all the cool digital watches, electronic gizmos, keyboards, computer games, Nintendos and all that stuff, and that's Japan. So, when I was growing up, it's always this kind of far-off distant country that was making cool things that I didn't really understand. As I got older, the perception is grown with music and fashion and stuff like that... So, you get a kind of very funnelled view of Japan, a very sort of focused view which doesn't represent Japan at all, really. But what you see through the media, through TV and to some extent through the internet, is quite particular. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

In other words, the European cultural intermediaries themselves were active consumers of particular forms of Otherness of Japan promoted by the Western media throughout their own lives. Such consumption practices must have been consciously or unconsciously reflected in re-imagining 'Japan' as informed by Soar's (2000) 'short circuit of culture'. However, their imaginings of 'Japan' were also re-coded and trans-coded as they worked for a Japanese brand, communicated with their Japanese partners and learned about Japanese culture at first hand. In this sense, the occupational or public role in representing a Japanese brand necessitated the European cultural intermediaries to enhance their legitimacy of representation by embodying and performing Japanese culture and values.

Therefore, it was not surprising that when they talked from the standpoint of Onitsuka Tiger, the 'Japanese' brand was referred to as 'us' as opposed to its competing, mostly Western, brands as 'them'. This occupational performance as Japanese is clearly embraced and manifested in the comment below by the CM at Asics Europe:

Onitsuka Tiger is ... really the authentic Japanese sport fashion brand. Where we want to communicate through products and ideally through everything we do, the Japanese heritage, but it should be also relevant for the consumer today. So, authentic Japanese, but that doesn't say it needs to be all retro. It can also be new executions but still respecting our Japanese heritage, customs or craftsmanship, the way how things are produced. And that should also differentiate our product offer in the market but also our communication. So, *we want to show that we are Japanese*. We don't want to shout it out loud but follow the way that, we feel, that fits also Japanese personality... Japaneseness for the Asics company represents that you don't scream that you are a great brand. But you are modest about it. So, that's for both, Asics and Onitsuka Tiger. If we want to show our craftsmanship and quality of the products, then with Asics, it's the technologies that go into it, and it's the understanding of what the human body needs in order to achieve or perform at the best of your ability. For Onitsuka Tiger, craftsmanship or quality is more in the detail of making a very nice product, stylish and clean. (personal communication, 15 July 2010, emphasis added)

The Japanese personality that she emphasises and embodies here refers to modesty, honesty and humbleness of a Japanese company that speaks less about itself in marketing and advertising. Asics claims that they refrain from aggressive marketing extravaganzas like its rival Western brands because of this cultural sensibility (Kobayashi et al., 2010). Similarly, the CD at Amsterdam Worldwide highlights the importance of honesty in representing Japanese culture by acknowledging its hybrid nature:

...you can't look at Japanese culture without accepting there's a lot of influences from different parts. I think that's part of the honest and humble kind of approaches to Japaneseness that Onitsuka Tiger portrays because if we were to say "No, *sumi* (monochrome painting), that's Japanese" or "No, the Zodiac is Japanese", you know, that is not honest. That sort of honesty proves that we kind of know what Japaneseness is or Onitsuka Tiger knows what Japaneseness is. It would come across as foolish for Onitsuka Tiger to say this is Japanese without acknowledging where it came from because that proves knowledge of your history, your roots and your heritage. And to prove your knowledge of heritage proves your Japaneseness, I think. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

Although he used the different forms of subjects—'we', 'Onitsuka Tiger' and 'you', this comment essentially argues for their legitimacy to represent Japaneseness based on their embodiment of Japanese values (e.g. honesty and modesty) and knowledge of Japanese heritage, culture and identity. As Nixon (2003) asserts, "the work-based identities of creative people were forged through social rituals and cultural practices that were not narrowly work based, but spread

into the domain of leisure and personal life” (p. 167). In other words, occupational identity is not completely separated from but actually informed by personal identity and vice versa. Thus, the consequence of in-depth engagement, performance and embodiment of Japanese culture is that the European cultural intermediaries consciously or unconsciously internalised some aspects of Japaneseness beyond occupational performances and relations—that is, they were more or less ‘Japanised’. As Dirlik (1996) notes, the Occident “‘orientalised’ himself or herself in the very process of entering the ‘orient’ intellectually and sentimentally” (p. 113). Consequently, Asics’ self-Orientalisation promoted the ‘Westernisation’ or Western representation of a Japanese brand and the ‘Japanisation’ of occupational identity, and perhaps to a lesser degree personal identity, of the Western cultural intermediaries.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explored Asics’ self-Orientalisation process of constructing ‘authentic/cool Japan’ within the *Made of Japan* global advertising campaigns. Two reasons were offered to explain why the Japanese headquarters had to rely on its European partners to represent, or speak for, its own national culture and identity. First, the revival of Onitsuka Tiger brand was undertaken in response to the rising demands from the European markets for the original models of Onitsuka Tiger sneakers as signs of ‘retro and cool Japan’ by fashion-conscious consumers. Because such demands were driven by the consumer desire to acquire Japanese cultural elements as part of their ‘unique’ and ‘interesting’ fashion styles, the European cultural intermediaries were positioned closer to the cultural sensibility of European fashion and lifestyle in order to capitalise on the demands for ‘cool Japan’—in contrast to ‘authentic Japan’. Additionally, a lack of English speaking ability positioned a Japanese corporation and advertising agencies in an adverse position with respect to West-East communications and the production of global advertising campaigns.

Second, the European partners were in ongoing negotiation with Asics Headquarters to promote a market(ing)-driven approach in line with Nike and other leading Western brands. Thus, while Asics Headquarters has always been reluctant to accept what they perceive as ‘the American way of doing business’ in contrast to their philosophy of craftsmanship where ‘the product speaks for itself’, they have been enticed to relax their stance on a market(ing)-driven approach (Kobayashi et al., 2010).

Through the contextual analysis including interviews with the Japanese and European cultural intermediaries who were actively involved in negotiating the encoding of Japaneseness from different cultural backgrounds and perspectives, the case study supports the two fundamental mechanisms of self-Orientalism as proposed by Iwabuchi (1994) and Dirlik (1996). First, self-Orientalism has a dual, and often ambiguous, effect on power relations between the West and the East/non-West. The case study, for instance, demonstrated that the revival and popularisation of the Onitsuka Tiger brand brought the opportunities for Asics to achieve real economic gains in Western markets and simultaneously to expand its business into the markets of fashion and lifestyle beyond its focus on sporting and athletic goods. More generally, the corporate practices of self-Orientalisation have arguably enabled Japanese corporations such as Asics, Toyota and Sony to become ‘transnational’—by speaking in English and accepting Western advertising practices, for instance—and eventually to outperform their rival Western corporations. Indeed, the globalisation of Japanese transnational corporations was followed by the economic success of other Asian nations including China, Singapore and South Korea, all of which have contributed to the counter force to Western *economic* hegemony.

Conversely, self-Orientalisation seems to be a less feasible strategic tool to counter Western *cultural* hegemony given that the Japanese transnational corporations have to largely rely on their Western partners to communicate with Western and global consumers about their own brand values and identities. Therefore, as Iwabuchi (1994) argues, such representations of

self-Orientalised ‘Japan’ may function to (re)produce both distinctions *from* the West—in a way to reinforce Western cultural hegemony—and homogeneity *within* Japan—in a way to reinforce Japanese cultural nationalism. Nevertheless, I further suggest that there were intense negotiations to find a middle ground between ‘authentic Japan’ endorsed by the Japanese headquarters and ‘cool Japan’ desired by European consumers, whereby European cultural intermediaries were located at the centre of the self-Orientalisation of ‘Japan’.

Second, self-Orientalism confuses a sense of subject and object and therefore blurs who represents ‘the nation’ for whom. This was particularly evident at the personal level of identification with ‘the nation’ as embodied and performed by the European cultural intermediaries. During my interview, the European cultural intermediaries interchangeably referred to themselves as ‘us’ to represent personal identification with European nations, languages and cultures on the one hand; and occupational identification with Japanese brand, culture and identity on the other.<sup>129</sup>

By embodying, performing and articulating the authenticity of Japanese values, culture and identity, the European cultural intermediaries nonetheless struggled with the ambivalence in their representations of ‘Japan’ emerging from a cultural gap between their personal experiences as Europeans, or Dutch or British, and their public role as the representatives of a Japanese brand. In other words, they attempted to enhance their legitimacy of representation by *learning* what Japaneseness was from their Japanese colleagues and in turn *teaching* their interpretations of what Japaneseness was to their European colleagues. I suggest that this process of learning, teaching and experiencing Japaneseness promoted ‘Japanisation’, or perhaps ‘de-Europeanisation’, of the European cultural intermediaries—albeit the degree of which may have varied among individuals according to how much they were involved in such a process.

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<sup>129</sup> As Hall (1996a) contends, “The ‘self’ is conceptualized as more fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple ‘selves’ or identities in relation to the different social worlds we inhabit, something with a history, ‘produced’, in process” (p. 226).

In sum, this case study challenges the binary construction and one-way power relation between ‘superior West’ and ‘inferior East’ as presumed by the discourse of Orientalism. As such, the analysis of corporate practices of self-Orientalisation suggested that there were complex processes of reciprocity, hybridity and negotiation occurring between the Orient and the Occident in constituting a dual effect on cultural-economic power relations and a dialectic formation of cultural identities at the West-East nexus. Nevertheless, while the economic and technological superiority of the West has been substantially compromised by the rise of Asian economies, this chapter identified that Orientalism as a source of Western cultural hegemony remains relatively strong. Indeed, despite the global success of Japanese transnational corporations, they have struggled for representation and communication across Western and global markets because they have to rely on Western advertising agencies to speak on their behalf—in conformity with English as a globally dominant language and Western business practices as globally dominant norms.

Consequently, one implication of the analysis of self-Orientalism within this study is that corporate nationalism is not only exercised by Western corporations who utilise the cultures of Others as a means to (g)localise their products, services and advertising but also non-Western, Japanese corporations who seek to represent their own national culture and identity. Moreover, when Japanese transnational corporations produce global advertising or marketing through which their own national culture and identity are represented, those representations are likely to be constructed through intense negotiations between Japanese and Western cultural intermediaries. Although Western advertising agencies are better positioned than Japanese corporations and advertising agencies to provide effective advertising and marketing communication within the Western-dominated global economy and market, it is important to note that Japanese cultural intermediaries are proactive in negotiating Orientalism—especially when they speak about their own cultures and identities. Such cross-cultural communication between Japanese corporations

and Western advertising agencies necessarily entails struggles and negotiations over symbolic representation due to the vast differences in linguistic, gender, ethnic, national and other cultural elements.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

This thesis has explored globalisation, corporate nationalism and Japanese identity by focusing on the advertising production and signifying practices of two global sport brands Nike and Asics. In particular, case studies were conducted based on two specific advertising campaigns, Nike's *Where is the Next?* and Asics' *Made of Japan*, to understand how Japanese culture and identity were interpreted, negotiated and represented by a range of cultural producers and intermediaries from different institutions within the cross-national contexts of cultural production. Using in-depth analysis of cultural production as located within the circuit of culture, the case studies revealed several key findings and implications for theories, practices and methodologies with respect to globalisation and corporate nationalism.

In this concluding chapter, I first address key research findings by reflecting upon the main research question and sub-questions proposed in Chapter 1. Secondly, I highlight my theoretical contributions to the understanding of the key concepts used in this study: a multi-perspectival approach, the circuit of culture, cultural intermediaries and globalisation. Thirdly, the chapter outlines some of the potential practical implications for citizens, scholars and advertising practitioners. Finally, recommendations for future research are presented.

### Research Findings

The overarching main research question for this thesis asked: How do transnational corporations represent and reconstruct popular imaginaries of Japan, including those associated with sport, in the process of corporate nationalism? The two case studies used in this thesis have illuminated two different contexts in which advertising campaigns were constructed to represent and reproduce Japanese culture as potent signs of popular and 'cool' identification. In this sense,

two additional theoretical frameworks—glocalisation and self-Orientalism—helped articulate the different ways in which Japanese culture and identity were produced and represented with respect to corporate nationalism. Consistent with previous studies of corporate nationalism at the global-local nexus, the case study of Nike advertising representing the Japanese physical culture of *bukatsu* revealed a process of (g)localisation in response to local sensibilities, conditions and cultures in Japan. In contrast, the case study of Asics' global advertising revealed that Japanese culture and identity were represented and reproduced not only by Western transnational corporations through the strategy of (g)localisation but also by Japanese transnational corporations to capitalise on Western consumers' identification with Japanese culture as signs of distinction and coolness. This strategy of self-Orientalisation, in contrast to glocalisation in the Nike case, prompts a reconsideration of the *variations* of corporate nationalism.

What the Asics' case represents is a *global* form of corporate nationalism in which a particular national identity is represented and reproduced by a global corporation in the global market and media. The global form is perhaps more easily understood with respect to the earlier discourses of Americanisation, or cultural imperialism, through which American corporations globalised their business by representing American values, cultures and lifestyles—signifiers of 'freedom', 'luxury' and 'coolness'—especially in the 1950's and 1960's. In contrast, although Japanese corporations avoided any emphasis on their Japaneseness in the context of the post-Second World War era, the rising popularity of Japanese popular culture and retro sneakers in Europe, that emerged around the beginning of the twenty-first century, provided an opportunity for Asics to promote its brand globally by representing its own 'country of origin' culture and identity.

In particular, the growth of Onitsuka Tiger, as a fashion and lifestyle brand, helped Asics to explore possibilities of a market(ing)-driven approach and extend its business beyond the company's speciality in the athletic and sport market. Because the development of brand

popularity was centred in Europe, the creative process for constructing representations of Japan was largely undertaken by the European cultural intermediaries who were better positioned to articulate the brand with the desire of European consumers. I referred to this Asics strategy as ‘self-Orientalisation’ (Dirlik, 1996; Iwabuchi, 1994) because, as a Japanese transnational corporation, Asics accepted and accommodated—albeit through intense negotiation—European representations of Japanese culture and identity as they were desired by young European consumers seeking to acquire symbolic signs of ‘cool Japan’ or stylish Otherness. Therefore, this case suggests that corporate nationalism operates through discourses of Orientalism, or Western cultural hegemony, such that Japanese transnational corporations have to ‘self-Orientalise’ representations of their national culture and identity by relying on Western cultural intermediaries in the process of global advertising and communication.

In turn, the Nike case, along with previous studies of corporate nationalism at the global-local nexus, represents a *glocal* form of corporate nationalism in which a particular national identity is represented and reproduced by both a global corporation and its local partners for the purpose of (g)localisation in the local market and media. In particular, Chapter 5 examined how Nike’s campaign was localised to appeal to Japanese soccer youth as a specific target market by incorporating local physical culture and lifestyle. Here, *bukatsu* provided important material for the cultural intermediaries, and a key point of discussion, given its central location within Japanese youth sport and school life. In the national context of Japan, the local subsidiary and advertising agencies played a central role in representing Japanese culture and identity through the process of glocalisation. Therefore, corporate nationalism in Japan operates under existing forms of national identity that can be celebrated and mobilised by particular local groups who are privileged to signify their own sense of (physical) cultural nationalism.

In addition to the global and glocal forms, there is a *local* form of corporate nationalism in which a particular national identity is represented and reproduced by a local corporation in the

local (or ‘country of origin’) market and media. Presumably, local forms of corporate nationalism were more commonly produced across various nations, including Japan, before the end of the Second World War. During the first and second World War eras, states and corporations cooperated in the national interest using the media to mobilise citizens through discourses of nationalism. Although corporate globalisation was accelerated after the Second World War, local forms of corporate nationalism continue to be produced in contemporary society as exemplified by such promotional initiatives as ‘Buy American’ (Frank, 1999).<sup>130</sup> Of course, this is not specific to the American context but pervasive in many other nations.<sup>131</sup> It is also worthwhile to note that many local or national brands are now increasingly subsumed under the umbrella of a global brand through mergers and acquisitions, thereby creating a range of global-local interactions and negotiations.<sup>132</sup> Ultimately, we need to be able to articulate how these local, glocal and global forms of corporate nationalism interrelate, interact or, in some cases, how they are contested as part of the ongoing discursive process of constructing ‘the nation’ more generally.

While the three different forms of corporate nationalism are separated for analytical purposes, we should expect to find evidence of interpenetration and crossover between them in practice. For instance, a global form of culture, representation or commodity often consists of inter-local or inter-glocal forms as parts that make up a whole. In this sense, the Asics’ case demonstrates that the ‘global’ production of the *Made of Japan* advertising campaigns was

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<sup>130</sup> For example, Chevrolet, a car brand of American corporation General Motors, has produced a range of advertising campaigns that invoked American national sentiment and patriotism including *The Heartbeat of America* in 1987, *An American Revolution* in 2004 and *Our Country, Our Truck* in 2006.

<sup>131</sup> In Japan, the two major beer brands have been principal sponsors of Japanese national sporting teams: Kirin for male and female soccer and Asahi for male baseball. Their engagement in sport sponsorship represents the construction of what has been referred to as the ‘holy trinity’ (Wenner & Jackson, 2009)—the connection of beer, sport and masculinity. However, the cases of Kirin and Asahi also highlight another dimension—the intersection of local forms of corporate nationalism, sport nationalism and the holy trinity.

<sup>132</sup> For example, Molson, a Canadian beer brand renowned for its ‘I am Canadian’ advertisements, merged with Coors to become more of a transnational brand. Speight’s, a NZ beer brand renowned for its ‘Southern Man’ advertisements, was acquired by Lion Nathan which is now owned by Kirin Breweries (Japan). In this sense, a fruitful site for future research would be to examine the link and difference between different ‘glocal’ forms: (a) a global company localising its brand; and (b) a global company gaining ownership of local/national brands through mergers and acquisitions.

mainly operated by the ‘glocal’, European cultural intermediaries who constructed the ‘glocal’ forms of Japanese culture to mediate the gap between the demands of the ‘global’, Japanese headquarters and ‘local’, European consumers. Even though the Asics’ case was primarily investigated with the theoretical framework of self-Orientalism, it can also be viewed from the perspective of glocalisation. That is, the *Made of Japan* campaigns represent a form of ‘globalisation of the glocal’ because the glocal forms of Japanese culture were eventually produced in the global market and media, or more simply they were ‘globalised’.

Likewise, local forms do not always remain local but may be transformed into glocal or global forms “through multiple interactions in unpredictable and non-linear consequences at the emergent global level” (Urry, 2003, p. 80). As Urry (2003) asserts, “both the so-called global and local levels get transformed through billions of iterations that are irreversibly over time drawn towards, and are remade through, this glocalizing attractor” (p. 15). For instance, the historical contextualisation of *bukatsu* in Chapter 5 revealed that it was constructed as a Japanese, glocalised form of Western-originated sport during the rapid modernisation of the Meiji era. Thus, it suggests that ‘local’ forms, as generally perceived and defined by the public, actually turn out to be inter-local or glocal when their histories of cultural hybridity are scrutinised.

Another key research finding from this thesis is the centrality of cultural intermediaries and their negotiation in the process of corporate nationalism. More specifically, my case studies revealed that advertising agencies played central roles in the production and representation of advertising campaigns for both Nike and Asics. Although it is contingent on specific contexts of production, my case studies support Nixon’s (2003) view that ‘creatives’ (copywriters and art directors), or sometimes creative directors, are primarily responsible for the encoding practices of advertising. Hence, they are good examples of the context of advertising production where “informal knowledge about the consumer and the cultural identifications of the practitioners both intervened in the construction of a creative strategy” (Nixon, 1996, p. 114). I argued that these

were all cultural conditions of production that influenced the creative processes of representation and corporate nationalism.

In turn, there is a need to identify the key practitioners, understand the nature of their practices, and how their cultures of production influence the production of culture and commodities. It is expected that a more nuanced understanding of key practitioners' identities, cultures and habitus may help us articulate why certain representations are selected and constructed for advertising. As Nixon (2003) points out, creatives are often driven by the pursuit of newness and creative imagination that challenge cultural conventions, norms and conservatism and in turn intentionally or unintentionally shock or surprise viewers of advertising. Nevertheless, their creative practices are constrained by a range of negotiations with, for instance: (a) client companies which require attainment of certain economic targets or improvement of a brand image within the constraints of budgets, resources and schedules for advertising production; (b) internal workers who advise or negotiate certain aspects of creative processes (e.g. account planners, media planners and creative directors); and (c) external partners including film directors, production companies and media organisations that may prefer tastes and styles that are different from, and may be contrary to, those of the creatives.

In particular, the two case studies illuminated the multi-level and multi-site processes of negotiation within the contexts of advertising production. In Chapter 4, this process was conceptualised as 'multiple regimes of mediation' to explain the complex and dynamic ways in which Nike's *Where is the Next?* campaign was strategized, encoded and distributed by a range of different institutions and individual labourers. It was evident that these negotiation processes influenced and conditioned the practices of encoding and distributing the representations of national cultures and identities through Nike advertising in 'Asia'. Chapter 5 detailed the context of production in Japan where the Japanese cultural intermediaries formed and expressed *bukatsu* nationalism out of struggles for the representation and legitimacy of Japanese physical culture.

More generally, the adoption of the glocalisation strategy has increased the complexity of (mis)communication not only between producers and consumers but also *within* production due to the global division of creative labour.<sup>133</sup>

Similarly, as Chapter 6 demonstrated, Asics' process of self-Orientalisation involved negotiation between contrasting visions of 'authentic Japan' endorsed by the Japanese headquarters and 'cool Japan' desired by European fashion leaders and consumers, with European cultural intermediaries called upon to find a resolution. Although the *Made of Japan* campaigns were originally constructed and launched for the local or regional markets of Europe, its upgrade to the global level entailed their negotiation with the Japanese headquarters, as a managerial authority, who insisted on communication of the core values and authenticity of the Japanese brand. As such, Japanese identity was constructed and represented through a range of specific conditions and intensive negotiations between various institutions and individuals at different levels of global, glocal and local production.

In short, the study suggests the need to move beyond the view of the context of cultural production "as a single homogenized mass" (Silk et al., 2000, p. 16). Therefore, concurring with Hall (1985), I assert that there was 'no guarantee' or 'no necessary correspondence' between either: (a) the encoding practices of producers and communication receptions of consumers; or (b) a range of cultural intermediaries within the context of production as part of the circuit of culture. As my case studies demonstrate, key decision-making processes at the moments of production and representation were rarely unidimensional (e.g. economic determinism), univocal (e.g. dictatorial decision without negotiations) or unidirectional (e.g. one way communication from headquarters to local subsidiaries). Instead, my case studies revealed the central role of (g)local advertising agencies, rather than 'global corporations', in the production and

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<sup>133</sup> Likewise, the prevalence of glocal products, services and communications implies that there are increasing cross-cultural discussions, negotiations and conflicts taking place between global headquarters and local cultural intermediaries within the contexts of glocal production.

representation practices of advertising. This is not to deny unequal power relations between, for instance, global headquarters and local subsidiaries, advertisers and agencies, and producers and consumers but to suggest that they do not guarantee closures or “the absolute predictability of particular outcomes” (Hall, 1983, p. 84).

The fact that there are often intense negotiations during advertising production confirms that there may be forms of cultural conflict and resistance through the process of corporate nationalism. In fact, the cross-national, cross-ethnic and cross-cultural communications between global headquarters and its overseas subsidiaries were contested in forms of symbolic struggle and conflict due to the vast differences in their first languages, nationalities, ethnicities and cultural values. Hence, I pointed out that there was a danger in abstracting ‘Nike’ and ‘Asics’ as single entities for producing everything without taking account of the ‘irreducible’ differences among various institutions and individuals within such simplified units.

For example, even my cursory look at the culture at Nike Japan, where the majority of workers were Japanese, revealed a strong foundation of Japanese language, culture and identity that influenced everyday business activities and communication. In turn, the cultural-economic way of life at Nike Japan differed from that at Nike World Headquarters (or other Nike subsidiaries). Similarly, as noted in Chapter 3, I observed a stark contrast between the Japanese-dominated culture of Asics Headquarters and the ethnic diversity of Asics Europe. One part of the evidence of this stark contrast is the language of everyday business activities. At Asics Headquarters, communication was predominantly conducted in Japanese, thus excluding non-Japanese speakers from key business meetings and decision-making processes within the organisational context. Conversely, the multi-ethnic, multi-national and multi-cultural workers at Asics Europe used English as their common language, and often as their second language, for

most of their daily internal and external communication.<sup>134</sup>

Indeed, these forms of cultural conflict—through miscommunication and misunderstanding—among cultural producers and intermediaries are not unusual in everyday business operations because “these ‘misses’ are so common (across the range of a whole society) that we might well call them normal” (Johnson, 1986/1987, pp. 46-47). The two case studies used in this study are particularly instructive for how these forms of conflict and negotiation were manifested in the everyday practices of cultural intermediaries because they involved the dynamics of cross-cultural communication between the global and the local as well as between the West and the East. Since forms of conflict and negotiation within the context of cultural production are often invisible and unknown to the public, it is the responsibility of researchers to reveal them by empirically investigating power relations among a range of institutions and individuals involved in the production.

In order to interrogate power relations within the context of production, researchers need to be aware that interviews with practitioners often provide institutionally acceptable answers and a uniform voice which obscures different perspectives, processes and positions among cultural intermediaries (Scherer & Jackson, 2008a). Thus, cultural analyses need to be *precise* when examining the “difference *in* complex unity, without this becoming a hostage to the privileging of difference as such” (Hall, 1985, p. 93, emphasis in original). Ultimately, we need to be able to articulate the relationships between forms of conflict and negotiation at the moment of production and forms of disjuncture at the moment of consumption with respect to: (a) whether the former functions to prevent or to reinforce the latter; and (b) whether there is any correspondence between the former and the latter at all.

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<sup>134</sup> Another example of this contrast is that Asics Headquarters operated with a more ‘formal’ business culture in which employees tend to wear suits versus the more ‘casual’ business culture of Asics Europe where most workers dressed casually.

## Theoretical Contributions

### *Multi-perspectival approach*

Kellner (1995, 1997, 2003) conceptualised the multi-perspectival approach to include examinations of a variety of perspectives—through political, economic, historical and empirical analyses of cultural production and consumption—to overcome one-sidedness and partiality of any single way of interpretation. Such an approach has been complemented by the various models of the circuit of culture acknowledging the multiplicity of interpretive activities at different moments including production and consumption (du Gay et al., 1997; Jackson, 2008; Johnson, 1986/1987; Johnson et al., 2004; Soar, 2000). For instance, Scherer and Jackson (2008a, 2010) demonstrated how such an approach was helpful in illuminating the complex relations and negotiations between different perspectives of cultural intermediaries as part of critical inquiry into the production of corporate nationalism in New Zealand. To build on their use of a multi-perspectival approach, I extended it by embodying interpretive, critical, dialogic and reflexive research practices. Therefore, this thesis illuminated not only the structural forces and social relations of production but also the subjectivities, identities and cultures of cultural intermediaries as *conditions* of production. As previously noted, the latter were largely overlooked in previous studies of corporate nationalism in particular and cultural production in general.

My, admittedly partial, addition of dialogic and reflexive aspects to the multi-perspectival approach was important because they enabled me to gain ‘insider’ knowledge through the dialogues with advertising professionals. More specifically, they helped me interpret the ways in which their values, tastes and identities were reflexively, yet subjectively, incorporated within the creative processes of advertising production. By understanding and emphasising the ‘irreducible’ identities and cultures of cultural intermediaries, it can be argued that the process of corporate nationalism has produced multiple sites of cultural politics, symbolic struggles or negotiations between global-local or Western-Eastern practitioners within the global or glocal contexts of

advertising production.<sup>135</sup> The politics of culture and identity within the context of cultural production demands further investigations of how the power relations and struggles of cultural intermediaries influence the ways in which representations are constructed under particular conditions of production.

### *The circuit of culture*

In Chapter 3, I outlined the different models of the circuit of culture and explained why Jackson's (2008) adaptation of Johnson's (1986/1987) and du Gay et al.'s (1997) models was particularly appropriate for this study of corporate nationalism. Jackson's (2008) model indicates the centrality of identity, and identity politics, in the formation and circulation of culture and its dialectic relationships with other moments of production, representation, consumption and lived cultures. Accordingly, the case studies of Nike and Asics highlighted the influence of personal identities of cultural intermediaries on the production and representation of advertising—or the public forms of cultures and identities. In other words, the case studies enabled an exploration of “the intersection of public and private forms” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 72) that influences practices, relations and conditions of production as it is located within the circuit of culture. Moreover, the personal identities of cultural intermediaries were informed or shaped by their own lived experiences in the specific contexts of their own family upbringings, educational backgrounds and work careers.

As Hall (1985) asserts, “there is no experiencing *outside* of the categories of representation or ideology” because “It is in and through the systems of representation of culture

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<sup>135</sup> As Silk and Andrews (2001) contend, it is often perceived that “the locals produced within this context are routinely little more than transnational corporations’ commercially inspired inflections of local cultures. As such, they are liable—though certainly not preordained—to be superficial and depthless caricatures of national cultural differences” (p. 187). I do not deny that cultural representations of advertising tend to be superficial, depthless, exaggerated and unrealistic given that they are designed to catch the attention of mass consumers for surprise, pleasure and entertainment. However, what my findings also infer is that such superficial images and imaginaries may have been produced through intense negotiations by *real* people who struggle for recognition of their work and representation of their own cultures and identities during the creative processes.

that we ‘experience’ the world: experience is the product of our codes of intelligibility, our schemas of interpretation” (p. 105, emphasis in original). Therefore, it is important to understand how experiences of cultural intermediaries are shaped by ‘the systems of representation of culture’. For instance, *bukatsu* nationalism in the glocal context of Nike advertising production in Japan was (in)formed by the specific embodied sporting experiences of the Japanese cultural intermediaries within the system, culture and lifestyle of Japanese school education and physical activities. Likewise, the encoding practices of the European cultural intermediaries for representing ‘authentic/cool Japan’ was either consciously or unconsciously influenced by their own life-long engagement with Western, and often Orientalist, media representations of Japanese traditional and popular culture.<sup>136</sup>

In turn, my contribution to the general analysis of the circuit of culture relates to a need and emphasis for investigation of forms of subjectivity and reflexivity involved at each moment of the circuit. At the moment of production, for instance, producers’ forms of subjectivity and reflexivity, informed by their socio-cultural positioning, impact on the ways in which particular cultural artefacts are designed and produced. Their ‘positionalities’ are constructed by similarities and differences in, for instance, gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, class, taste and sense of aesthetics. In particular, cultural intermediaries can relate to or learn about the needs, desires and preferences of specific target markets by reflexively examining socio-cultural gaps between producers and consumers. Consequently, I argued that the subjectivity and reflexivity of cultural intermediaries are central to the conditions or preconditions of cultural production.

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<sup>136</sup> The pivotal location of experiences, cultures and identities of advertising practitioners within the context of production leads us back to the earlier discussion in Chapter 3 about Soar’s (2000) ‘short circuit of culture’—“one in which the cultural intermediaries act as producers and consumers” (p. 431). My case studies support the usefulness of this model to understand how their production and representation practices were informed by their own consumption practices, experiences and cultures. They also highlighted the points of interaction between the ‘short’ and ‘general’ circuits of culture by revealing the ways in which the cultural intermediaries not only reflected on their own lived experiences but also conducted both quantitative and qualitative research to find out what could be more appealing and attractive to their target consumers generally (e.g. *bukatsu* youth and European consumers of Japanese popular culture).

As Johnson (1986/1987) suggests:

The conditions of production include not merely the material means of production and the capitalist organisation of labour, but a stock of already existing *cultural* elements drawn from the reservoirs of lived culture or from the already public fields of discourse. This raw material is structured not only by capitalist production imperatives (i.e., commodified) but also by the indirect results of capitalist and other social relations on the existing rules of language and discourse, especially, class and gender-based struggles in their effects on different social symbols and signs. (p. 55)

Indeed, a cultural artefact such as an advertisement needs to be viewed as constructing, and being constructed by, inter-subjective, inter-discursive and inter-textual forms of culture and identity. By exploring and refining the circuit of culture model, cultural analysts can develop “a holistic practice involving various points of entry, modes of analysis, and types of intervention” (Soar, 2000, p. 416). In other words, such an approach allows us to identify precise points of where socio-cultural problems emerge and where intervention can be most effectively undertaken through resistance against, negotiation with or support for particular forms and movements of socio-cultural and cultural-economic activities at a particular moment.<sup>137</sup>

### *Cultural intermediaries*

As discussed in Chapter 2, the term, cultural intermediaries, has been contested in its meaning and use among scholars and was central to my thesis and case studies. My re-conceptualisation of cultural intermediaries involved three different dimensions of ‘intermediary’ activities, which were located as follows: (a) between ‘high’—established and artistic—and ‘low’—popular and youth—cultures (the closest to the use of Bourdieu (1984)); (b) between production and consumption (developed by Featherstone (2007) and others); and (c) between

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<sup>137</sup> In this way, research can be transformed into “practice, or praxis in the strongest sense, aimed at social betterment or emancipation and seeking to overcome the splits between the subjects and objects of research and between science and politics” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 51). To be clear, this point is made to highlight the value of the circuit of culture in research and to enhance social and cultural movements that help us construct a fairer, more democratic and creative society.

global, national and local cultures (developed within this thesis). For instance, in the case study of Nike advertising in Japan, the cultural intermediaries mediated *bukatsu* in three ways: (a) as a popular form of *youth* physical culture; (b) as informed by the cultures and experiences of *consumption*; and, (c) as an authentic sporting identity of *Japanese* people. Likewise, the Asics case pointed out that their representations of ‘authentic/cool Japan’ was informed by: (a) *Japanese popular* culture rather than more established, clichéd images; (b) the context of European *consumption* of Japanese culture; and, (c) intense negotiations between the *Japanese* headquarters and its *European* partners.

Analyses of the three different dimensions of ‘intermediary’ activities of cultural intermediaries are important because of their central role in articulating, legitimising and, in some cases, resisting particular forms of culture and identity as ‘the popular’ within the ongoing formation of the global cultural economy. In many ways, W+K and Amsterdam Worldwide can be considered as two of the “avant-garde of advertisers” (Goldman & Papsen, 1996, p. 4) who have driven the discourse of ‘aestheticisation of everyday life’ (Featherstone, 2007).<sup>138</sup> Indeed, my case studies demonstrate that the global division of creative labour has intensified interactions, negotiations and struggles between multiple ‘realities’ of different cultural producers and intermediaries through *daily* strategic communication and decision making processes within the context of advertising production.

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<sup>138</sup> As Bourdieu (1984) characterised cultural intermediaries, or ‘new petite bourgeoisie’ more generally, with the avant-garde, young and revolutionary middle class, we need to continue to investigate if this characterisation has any relevance to the existing occupational groups or if the term is in fact meaningful for analyses of global, glocal or local cultural production and consumption. In particular, Bourdieu (1984) is concerned that moral imperatives have been suppressed by the modern lifestyle centred on aesthetic pleasures through material and symbolic possessions. However, such a general assumption needs to be examined for its validity by empirical and concrete analyses of how particular forms of culture and morality are constructed, challenged or transformed by what he calls the “ethical avant-garde” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 365) in any given context. Although my findings may be limited for generalisation, the creative labourers at the advertising agencies were younger (30’s and 40’s), more liberal and individualistic than the managers (50’s and 60’s) at the client companies. Nixon’s (1996, 2003) work also confirms this tendency of creatives to be young and avant-garde.

## *Globalisation*

In this thesis, the primary focus was on re-articulation of glocalised and self-Orientalised ‘Japan’ as it was located between the structural forces of the global/West and (re)actions of the local/East. The two case studies revealed a range of collaborations, negotiations and struggles between the Western and Japanese cultural intermediaries through the multiple regimes of mediation within the context of transnational advertising production. As Johnson et al. (2004) argue:

The public representations of the economy that appear in media or academic texts leave out its hidden sides and subjugated standpoints. They may therefore produce too deterministic (and fixed) a view of a system rather than seeing *economic relationships as conflicts that lead to change*. Major changes in economic life have often sprung from popular movements and worker resistance – movements for factory regulation or shorter hours forced capital to find new ways to make profit, trade union strength and social-democratic state policies in Western countries forced company relocations to ‘Third World’ nations. (pp. 147-148, emphasis added)

Therefore, the existence of struggles, negotiations and conflicts in production and representation practices should not be overlooked because it may lead, or have already led, to major changes in the ways in which the global cultural economy is interpreted, resisted, negotiated and re-structured. This view allows us to investigate globalisation with a more nuanced approach where: “Culture is more than a *product* of economics, it *finds* economies in different ways” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 150, emphasis in original). Indeed, culture is not necessarily subordinate to the economy but dialectically influences, and is influenced by, the economy.<sup>139</sup>

As globalisation is often interpreted in relation to global capitalism and the homogenisation of economic institutions, the ‘cultural’ activities of transnational corporations serve as a focal point of discussion about how culture is incorporated by economy and vice

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<sup>139</sup> The view of economy as more contingent and dialectical “allows us to grasp ‘the economic’ as being always *more* than *capitalist* social relations – including forms of power around gender difference or racialization, for example, and non-capitalist forms of production and use” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 137, emphasis in original).

versa.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, the tensions between economy and culture are epitomised by everyday negotiations between aesthetic senses of advertising professionals and commercial imperatives of senior management for construction of advertising and cultural goods as part of the creation of profitable brands. As such, this thesis argued that advertising campaigns—as cultural artefacts crafted to negotiate the global-local and West-East nexus—served as key cultural-economic materials from which we can empirically analyse the dynamics of globalisation. Moreover, an in-depth inquiry into the context of advertising production revealed that glocal cultural intermediaries were centrally located between the economic visions of transnational corporations and the cultural demands of local consumers. Accordingly, it is suggested that the activities, cultures and identities of cultural intermediaries deserve specific attention for studies of the globalisation of economy and culture—that are analytically separated, yet empirically *incorporated* and *articulated*, in practice (du Gay & Pryke, 2002).<sup>141</sup>

In this sense, ‘Japan’ continues to be an important site for studies of globalisation because of its ambivalent position in both complementing and challenging Western cultural-economic hegemony. In other words, ‘Japan’ can be viewed both as the local (e.g. being subjected to Westernisation of culture and society) and, though less frequently, as the global (e.g. globalisation of Japanese corporations and popular culture). As argued throughout the thesis, the interactive location of Japan at the global-local and West-East nexus has served as a driving force for (re)forming the global cultural economy. For instance, the pioneering role of Japanese corporations in cultivating the strategies of glocalisation and self-Orientalisation demands careful analyses of how Japanese subjectivity, identity and culture have influenced or shaped the ways in which Japanese corporations manage their cultural economies differently from Western

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<sup>140</sup> Such discussion relates to “the apparent dichotomy of commerce versus creativity whereby cultural production is characterised in terms of a conflict between the two: commerce (industry) is posed as perpetually in conflict with creativity (the artists, producers, directors, novelists)” (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 46).

<sup>141</sup> Similarly, Robertson (1992) insists that “both the economics and the culture of the global scene should be analytically connected to the general structural and actional features of the global field” (p. 51).

corporations. As this thesis insists, such an inquiry cannot be properly answered without considering the central roles of both Japanese and Western cultural intermediaries in communication—or filling a lack of equivalence in language, taste and culture—between global producers and local consumers through everyday struggles, contestations and negotiations within the global field of cultural production.

Likewise, sport is confirmed to be an important signifier and vehicle for both producers and consumers to associate with individual or collective senses of taste, distinction and identity in the context of the global cultural economy. While sport has been disseminated globally, (g)local adaptations of sport across different parts of the world have produced various senses of distinction for local or national communities to express and represent their own identities, cultures and experiences (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, 2009). For the Nike case study, I highlighted the importance of *bukatsu* as a local form of sporting culture or *bukatsu* nationalism that was mobilised and reflexively incorporated by (g)local cultural intermediaries within the context of production. For the Asics case study, although sport was not the central theme for the production and representation of its global advertising campaigns, the analysis revealed that there were tensions within the process of articulation between the sport brand and Japanese popular culture because of a global tendency to perceive Japanese popular culture in relation to ‘inactive’ and ‘nerdy’ images of *manga*, *anime* and *otaku*—which evidently contradict physically ‘active’, ‘cool’ and ‘sexy’ images of sport.

More generally, the articulation of sport with popular culture needs to be located within a wider context of cultural economy where various forms of culture and lifestyle, including sport, are increasingly incorporated into commercial production and consumption through branding. In this sense, sport brands are at the forefront of exploring the possibilities of sport to integrate, or be integrated by, other forms of culture and, in turn, re-defining the discourses of ‘sport’ in including and excluding certain forms of physical culture. For instance, it is well known that Nike

has endorsement contracts with athletes in many ‘new and emerging’ sports (e.g. skateboarding, snowboarding and other types of so-called ‘action sports’). In my case study of Asics, the Onitsuka Tiger brand was re-established as a fashion and lifestyle brand with an emphasis on Japanese culture and identity. Its representation of Japaneseness with non-sport aspects of Japanese popular culture—as opposed to Japanese sports such as *sumō*, *jūdō* and *karate*—also challenges and blurs the symbolic boundaries between sport, fashion and national culture.

### **Practical Implications**

This analysis identifies a number of implications with respect to how we can negotiate the forces of globalisation and corporate nationalism in practice. For citizens and society in general, the thesis informs our own ‘complicity’ in creating and sustaining a promotional/consumer society in which everything, including national culture and identity, is commodified through commercial production and consumption. Lash and Urry (1994), for instance, assert that symbolic violence is not only imposed by producers but also promoted “through the complicity of producers *and* consumers” in which “the consumer takes on the role of agent of aestheticization or of branding” (p. 15). Moreover, as the circuit of culture model indicates, our ways of consumption have direct and indirect impacts on commercial production as part of the “cultural *conditions* of production” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 47, emphasis in original). My case studies strongly suggest that information, practices and experiences of consumption were reflexively incorporated into the production and representation of advertising. Indeed, the strategies of glocalisation and self-Orientalisation proved to be most effective when they are informed by cultures, identities and consumption practices of the target markets or consumers.

These findings are not trivial because they offer evidence that ‘our’ (consumers) decisions and practices of consumption concretely influence ‘their’ (producers or corporations) decisions and practices of production. Of course, elements of our cultures, experiences and consumption

practices are fairly or unfairly appropriated and incorporated by privileged cultural intermediaries for the production and representation of advertising. However, one could argue that our everyday practices of consumption and identification with brands are *implicit* manifestations of political decisions and actions. In other words, they denote particular forms of the cultural politics by supporting or refusing certain cultural-economic ways of life. As Storey (2010) contends, “Consumption involves the *making* of culture; this is why it matters” (p. 140, emphasis in original).

For critics, scholars and policy makers, this thesis offers insights into different points of negotiation with, and intervention into, the field of advertising production and the circuit of culture. Rather than viewing a ‘global corporation’ as an abstracted entity, *precise* points of constructive critique allow us much more effective ways of intervention. For example, when advertising production is conducted in global or glocal contexts, it is likely that there are multi-level and multi-site negotiations involved between various institutions and individuals, whereby ‘glocal’ advertising agencies are often central to practices of encoding and distribution. By understanding the process of multi-level and multi-site negotiations, scholars and policy makers can identify, for instance, exactly where and how codes of ethics are supported or violated—and therefore how to promote ethical practice within the production of culture.

For advertising practitioners, the thesis offers some helpful principles for representational practices of advertising. First of all, it is important for advertising practitioners to realise that “Those who produce the discourse also have the power to *make it true* – i.e. to enforce its validity, its scientific status” (Hall, 1992c, p. 295, emphasis in original) and to bear full responsibilities of their cultural representations and practices. As noted earlier, the examples of disjuncture point to a need for global corporations to seriously understand and take account of local relations, cultures and sensibilities (Grainger & Jackson, 2000). When representing cultures or identities of groups geographically and culturally distant from advertising practitioners, it is strongly recommended

that practitioners critically reflect on their own paradigms, views and identities in reproducing or challenging particular stereotypes of such groups. In this sense, my two cases demonstrate how such reflexive-learning and -incorporating processes are actually conducted and possibly enhanced in the cross-national contexts of advertising production. While their representations of Japanese culture and identity are by no means ‘ideal’ or ‘perfect’—indeed, it is debatable whether such a thing exists, there may be some important lessons to learn for other advertising practitioners who seek to draw upon elements of Japanese culture as part of their representational strategies.

### **Future Recommendations**

This section summarises and clarifies how the findings arising from this thesis may help inform future research. First, this thesis suggests that globalisation needs to be researched by: (a) combining a macro analysis of structural formations of political economy and a micro analysis of socio-cultural relations, activities and identities of key individuals and communities; and (b) encompassing analyses of both global-local and West-East (and/or North-South) relations, interactions and negotiations. Moreover, future research on corporate nationalism needs to address different forms—global, glocal and local—that are produced within various cross-cultural contexts of production and consumption. By examining how global corporations are located at a wide range of global-local nexi, we may gain a better understanding of new strategies being employed along with new forms of resistance, accommodation and negotiation. In particular, this study’s exploration into Japanese culture, representation and identity provided different angles to approach corporate nationalism by incorporating two of the major theoretical concepts of globalisation—glocalisation and Orientalism. These additional frameworks are not exclusive to analyses of ‘Japan’ but can be extended to analyses of other contexts, especially those in the non-West.

More specifically, it is suggested that any comprehensive analysis of production and representation of a global, glocal or multi-national advertising campaign needs to take into account a wide range of social realities, struggles and conditions of creative labourers whose subjectivities are differently reproduced with respect to their own habitus, gender, nationalities and positions within their cultural institutions and industries. The approach taken within this thesis advocates for empirical investigations of forms of subjectivity and reflexivity of cultural intermediaries in order to articulate how their identities are formed within specific socio-cultural contexts and, in turn, how their identities inform their creative, and reflexive, practices of production and representation of advertising. Such a cultural-economic approach also helps identify the ways in which local forms of culture, identity and relations actively influence practices and processes of global or glocal production of advertising and, in turn, the process of corporate nationalism.<sup>142</sup>

Given that this thesis identified the central role of advertising agencies and creatives in mediating a range of cultural-economic activities in the production of advertising campaigns, we need to gain a more precise picture of who works at advertising agencies, what the nature of their work is and how their work is structured and conditioned in comparison to client companies—especially those in executives or senior management positions.<sup>143</sup> For instance, Nixon (2003) contends that “it is not possible to understand the organisation of creativity and creative jobs in advertising without grasping how these jobs were rooted in gendered workplace cultures” (p. 163). Thus, more research on the influence of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, class

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<sup>142</sup> Another recommendation is that our knowledge of corporate nationalism could be enhanced by more extensive explorations into Bourdieu’s (1984, 1993, 1996) concepts including ‘cultural intermediaries’, ‘the field of cultural production’ and ‘the field of power’.

<sup>143</sup> For example, Nixon (2003) asserts that creative labourers are characterised by “their distance from notions of company loyalty and incremental advance within one organisation” and “their embrace of entrepreneurial and individualistic ways of working” (p. 91). Indeed, there is a curious link between creativity, individualism and youth identified by several analyses of advertising practices and practitioners (Negus & Pickering, 2004; Nixon, 1996, 2003; Nixon & Crewe, 2004).

and educational background are necessary to gain a general picture of how particular forms of hegemony and social exclusion are manifested in the advertising industry.

From my interviews with the advertising practitioners, the following comment of the CM at Asics Europe highlights various relations of hegemony within the context of the sport and creative industries:

...in general worldwide, agencies are there to try to push the boundaries and to be more ... challenging in extremeness of the message... Companies can sometimes be reserved or more conservative, or individuals depending where you are coming from. If you used to work for a car company in Europe, you might be more conservative than when you worked for a fast-moving consumer goods company or when you worked for a sports company where overall, in general, the mentality is more open-minded etc. I found those are quite challenging to see “Okay, is this a difference between Japanese versus European cultures?, or is it because there is an older guy working together with a young student just coming out of university and being very creative?, or is it different industries?” That is also a very interesting, challenging area we need to try to find out what is really going on. (personal communication, 15 July 2010)

To put it simply, she was confused about how to rationalise her personal struggles with the masculine and conservative cultures of her parent company. Of course, it is fair to assume that her personal struggles were likely to be caused and reinforced by multiple tensions emerging from differences in perspectives and experiences related to gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, taste and lifestyle between her and her business partners or bosses in Japan.<sup>144</sup> This assertion about various relations and forms of hegemony existing within the industry has wider implications for, and links with, a variety of jobs in the culture industry including designers, artists, photographers, musicians, dancers and movie and television production workers—all of which may or may not be subsumed under the concept of cultural intermediaries.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Nevertheless, my subjective observation, interpretation and experience based on my fieldwork are limited and cannot really be generalised and thus need to be further examined by future research including those of statistical analysis of proportions of ethnic, national, gender and linguistic differences between the headquarters and their subsidiaries; between different companies; and between different industries.

<sup>145</sup> For instance, there have been studies of the television and fashion industries that denote the individualistic, flexible and insecure nature of cultural labour (Lee, 2011; McGuigan, 2010; McRobbie, 2002b; Ursell, 2000).

Moreover, more work is required to refine the methodologies and methods used in the analysis of globalisation, corporate nationalism and cultural production and consumption. Future research could address the value of using reflexive and dialogic approaches as part of a multi-perspectival approach in particular, and studies of globalisation and corporate nationalism, more generally. Future research could also examine and, if necessary, refine the various models of the circuit of culture (du Gay et al., 1997; Jackson, 2008; Johnson, 1986/1987; Johnson et al., 2004; Soar, 2000) in terms of how they help clarify complex relationships and guide both theoretical and empirical analyses. This thesis further suggests that future research investigates the subjectivity and reflexivity of actors as a means to interpret particular personal and collective forms of cultural identity at each moment of the circuit—production, representation, consumption and lived cultures.

For instance, it is important to examine the subjectivity and reflexivity of actors—most notably consumers or ‘prosumers’ (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Toffler, 1980)—at the moments of consumption and lived cultures. The need for studies of consumption is highlighted by this and previous analyses of corporate nationalism, given that most have been dominated by production-and-representation-centred approaches and perspectives. It is hoped that additional research on contexts and perspectives of consumption and lived cultures will provide some new understandings of how cultural artefacts are negotiated and appropriated by consumers—and prosumers—and in turn how production is, or in some cases is not, informed by consumption.

Finally, it is hoped that this thesis offers useful theoretical and methodological approaches for future scholars to study how globalisation, corporate nationalism and cultural economy are incorporated and articulated particularly in non-Western contexts. Since our world is increasingly globalised, Western academia will need to critically reflect on how their own privileges emanate from the global dominance of the English language, and Western culture and paradigms.

Consequently, there is a need to understand the challenges and implications of Westernisation in

order to promote the globalisation of mutual understanding, respect, compassion and educational cooperation (Featherstone & Venn, 2006; Jackson, 2010; Kemple & Renisa, 2009). Globalisation and Westernisation have an immediate impact on the life of almost every person and community in today's world; as such, they have real effects with respect to the role of identity and culture in society and everyday lived experience of individuals.

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