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# How Italian and Spanish consumers make sense of their consumption of glocalised products.

Qualitative Analysis of the Criteria for Choosing a Coffee Outlet from a Consumer  
Perspective using Starbucks as a Reference.

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<b>Thesis purpose:</b>	How Italian and Spanish coffee shop goers make sense about their choice of a coffee outlet, that is, how consumers manifest those expressions of cultural heterogeneity, when they have the possibility to choose between Starbucks and a more locally connotated coffee shops, and the influence of glocalization
<b>Methodology:</b>	Qualitative methodology
<b>Theoretical perspective:</b>	Glocalization, effects of globalization, linking value, co-creation, brand community
<b>Empirical data:</b>	Semi-structured and in-depth interviews, content analysis
<b>Conclusion:</b>	How Italian and Spanish consumers make sense of their coffee outlet choice: (1) trusting the global retailer because of its efficiency, reputation and standardization (2) appreciating a specific range of products because of their quality, ethnicity, or consumer contribution (3) fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace (4) using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reviving local traditions Starbucks in Italy presented an higher degree of glocalization compared to Starbucks in Spain, that maintained its hegemonic brandscape. Local coffee shop patrons opposed to global coffee shop retailer because of their willingness to return to their local roots.

## Abstract

The introduction of global brands in local markets is described in literature as having multiple effects, most notably, to produce homogeneity and conflicting discourses. When the global brand is strong, and has what has been defined as hegemonic brandscape, there is usually a polarization of consumers in groups, some opposing the global brand on political or ideological grounds, others aestheticizing the consumer experience related to the global brand. The global brand competes with local offerings, often deeply rooted in the local culture, and in certain cases it transforms its customer experience into a glocal customer experience, drawing elements of the local culture into the global brand's customer experience. In such a competitive landscape, how do consumers make sense of their choices, adhering to the new global, to the legacy, or to the adapted glocal consumer experience? Previous studies have investigated this phenomenon in certain conditions and cultures, we are using theoretical framework of globalization to contribute to these analyses. We chose Starbucks because it is a hegemonic brand and it provides a fertile ground for observing these customer behaviours in Italy and Spain, two countries with strong, pre-existing coffee shops customer experiences and a different degree of acceptance of global brands.

Keywords: Globalization, Glocalization, Hegemonic Brand, Heterogeneity

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## 1. Introduction

The world is constantly changing around us, and these changes are impacting our daily lives. One force that drives some of these changes is the action of marketers from global brands who “work on the relationships between brand experiences, satisfaction, trust and loyalty” (Sahin, 2011, page iv). Our lives are constantly affected by the action of global brands so much that many key moments in our daily lives are strongly influenced by their presence. Therefore, daily activities, such as consumption of food and beverages, have been accordingly adapted to the constant exposure that an individual has to the messages coming from these global brands. Retail coffee and snacks store industry is no exception, with global food retailers who are very attentive to how their customers perceive their brands in the light of the changing attitudes of consumer, e.g., for topics like social responsibility (Crespo & Ignacio, 2019). Therefore, coffee and snacks store retailers need to understand what lies behind the consumption choices of their potential customers.

*“Businesses risk losing customers when traditional product-based features, attributes, and benefits are no longer differentiated. Offsetting that risk requires taking a more customer-centric approach to the brand and business. This entails developing a far deeper understanding of the customer than can be gained through traditional demographic-based research”* (Sena & Petromilli, 2005, page iii). This process would lead retailers to entice their customers with tailor made offers that aim at stimulating consumption (Grewal, 2019). This process may affect the very concept of global branding, based on different needs expressed by different cultures, and it is interesting to find what is the relationship between customer’s consumption choices and the global brands market strategies in the global context. To restrict the field of the study we have chosen to explore the coffee retail industry, looking at how Starbucks’ patrons make sense of their choices when it comes to choosing a coffee shop in two countries, Italy and Spain, which are known for their coffee culture. Thus, we aim to uncover why Italian and Spanish consumers choose Starbucks rather than a local coffee shop and the meaning they attribute to their consumption at Starbucks rather than at local coffee shops. Starbucks seemed a logical choice as a subject of this study because it is a global brand that, by going global was able to be successful in some countries that were already coffee dominant like Spain and Italy.



## 1.1. Background

To develop a full understanding of Starbucks' market strategy we first need to introduce the concept of Glocalization, which comprises two phenomena: globalization and localization. Glocalization is often explained through the phrase "think globally and act locally" (Sucháček, 2011). This paradigm can be confirmed by Starbucks Spain CEO, Alvaro Salafranca, when he explains their strategy in the country "*we develop a local role, because we understand the country, we operate the shops, they put their heart, their soul and the philosophy that is behind the concept*" (Velázquez-Gaztelu, 2007). Furthermore, replying to the criticism related to the fact that Starbucks undermines local culture by competing with local coffee shops and bars, Alvaro Salafranca defends Starbucks and replies "We do not have a feeling of going on the rampage, nor do we intend to. We try to be local. We run a global brand with local employees serving local customers in local cities. We want to become someone else in the neighbourhood" (Velázquez-Gaztelu, 2007). These statements are aligned with the findings that show how, nowadays, most of the large market players are simultaneously intensely local and intensely global (Swyngedouw, 2004). The process of glocalization is adopted by large companies, such as Starbucks. Starbucks strives to maintain its global brand identity, with its standardized methods into the local markets where they operate to have a better relationship with the local customers, with the objective of getting more profit for the enterprise (Sucháček, 2011). The phenomenon of Glocalization can be really related with the global Youth Culture, which is a manifestation of a transitional, market-based ideology that is manifested through a dialectic exchange between structures of common difference (Wilk, 1996). The adaptation and objectification of these structures in each local context is what is also defined as "Glocalization" (Robertson, 2001). Companies that adopt glocalization strategies, are normally companies whose main target population is the youngest part of the adult population, as in Starbucks case.

Youth Culture is being then glocalized in many European countries, where the Western Lifestyle is perceived as a myth (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). Young people mainly do that by adopting lifestyles that they perceive as originating from the United States. This plays an important role on certain societies, where young consumers are imitating an upper global social class structure, rather than imitating upper classes of their own countries (Holt, 2004). Globalization makes glocalization possible, and Youth Culture is heavily influenced by these

two phenomena. Appadurai (2003), by using the landscape metaphor, analysed global cultural economy, by listing five “*scapes*”, or flows.

Moreover, we should also bear in mind that globalization affects more dimensions than glocalization. In many countries, the local population responds to this trend by taking some elements of external cultural influence and modifying them in a way that makes them compatible with the local culture. This is known as “Brand Creolization” (Hung, et al., 2007). Through our research we try to understand how Italian and Spanish consumers make sense of their choice of coffee outlet. We will investigate the motivations and causes that make them consume at large branded coffee chains such as Starbucks or, on the contrary, at local coffee shops more in line with their local cultures. Glocalization implies that the global always becomes localized, and the local, globalized (Thompson & Arsel, 2004). During our research, we have targeted a young population between 18 and 35 years of age, and we did so because scholars have pointed out that young consumers tend to reinterpret and rework global cultural practices and meanings into their local contexts (Povlsen, 1996). We will also try to understand the role influence of glocalization and globalization on consumers’ choice and to what extent has Starbucks glocalized or maintained its hegemonic brandscape in the choice of Italian and Spanish consumers.

## 1.2. Relevance of the research problem

Globalization can be considered as one of the most relevant phenomena of the contemporary world. Globalization evolved fast in recent years and became a critical component in global processes and shaped relations worldwide, creating an environment different from whatever the humanity had experienced before. Not only the influence of globalization was strong on local processes, but, more recently, it has been observed how local processes are also impacting globalization, which is important for this research (Sucháček, 2011).

The arrival of a new global brand in a local market is inevitably starting a discourse about globalization and its effect on the local legacy businesses, often polarizing the discussion around two opposite positions, one aestheticizing the new entrant, and the other demonizing it as a colonizer of local cultures and a destroyer of wealth (Falk, 1999).

Selling standardized products and services used to be a successful and profitable strategy for global companies, but it has run its course. Nowadays, it has become essential for global

corporations to adapt global products and services to the market of destination, taking into consideration certain aspects such as cultural, socio-economic, and political factors to meet consumers' needs and include the different cultures into the company's philosophy. Customers are interested in brands that are global and local at the same time because they want to be able to consume a global product but still feel connected to their own culture (Grigorescu & Zaif, 2017).

More specifically, the late entrance, compared to other countries, of Starbucks in the Italian market, which happened in 2018, speaks about the need for global brands to understand in depth how consumer in a certain market make sense of their offering (Olivetta, 2017).

The research can, therefore, be useful to companies in the retail industry who want to invest in Italy and Spain, and, more generally, not only to global brands who want to adapt their business model to a local culture, but also to local businesses that want to understand how to respond and adapt to the entrance of a global brand into their competitive space. The existing studies (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Maguire & Hu, 2013) are not focusing on those two countries, nor on local environments with strong and traditional consumer experiences in the coffee shops segments. Thanks to the analysis about how Spanish and Italian consumers make sense of their choice of Starbucks rather than a local outlet, they can better adapt their business strategies to meet their clients' needs in the specific geographical area of interest.

Furthermore, our research topic is also relevant by a theoretical point of view. Because of the growing importance of globalization, and of its adverse phenomena, it is essential to see and analyse the phenomenon from various perspectives. There is the general tendency to see globalization as a large-scale phenomenon that causes the homogenization of society, destroys other cultures in favour of one dominant culture and increases the socio-economic gap of society. This is not, however, always true, and this bias is in part due to the common "mythology about globalization" people have (Klein, 1999). Such a distorted and misleading idea about globalization involves the obsolete view of the "bigger is better" and "more is better". This view of globalization that put us in front of two choices, our nation, or our planet, is no longer acceptable because it fails to acknowledge the reality of regions and clusters (Moore, 2001). This also leads to consider a globalized approach to sociology, a de-ethnocentrization, or the loss of relevance of the Western way of life. To correct this, it

is necessary to further explore and elaborate the concept of *glocalization*. This concept gives a heterogeneous perspective of globalization and contributes to the understanding that a major part of the promotion to locality is done from outside (Featherstone, al 1995).

### 1.3. Purpose

To describe the purpose of our research, it is essential to refer to the study conducted by Thompson and Arsel (2004) focused on the cultural heterogeneity, the resurgence of local identity, reinvention of local history and revival of the indigenous language effects produced by globalization (Bly, 2007). More specifically, it reveals how consumers manifest those expressions of cultural heterogeneity. The concept of hegemonic brandscape, "*a cultural system of servicescapes that are linked together and structured by discursive, symbolic, and competitive relationships to a dominant experiential brand*" perfectly highlights the influence that Starbucks had over the customers of local coffee shops (Thompson & Arsel, 2004: p.632).

Scholars have recently found that, in contrast with the homogenization theory, consumers often reappropriate themselves of the meanings of the global brands to their own ends, thus creating new cultural associations, discarding incompatible ones, and transforming others to match with cultural and lifestyle patterns (Hannerz, 1996). The term glocalization indicates the effects produced by globalization on consumers' cultural daily life, from global brands to mass media (Wilk, 1996). The authors conducted a study in a large metropolitan city and interviewed the patrons of some local coffee shops to understand how they make sense of their choice to enjoy their customer experience in a local coffee shop rather than at Starbucks.

What emerges from the interviews, and the author's analyses, is that the patrons of local coffee shops are against Starbucks mainly because of their anti-corporation feelings. However, there is the need to further investigate certain aspects that are not covered by this study. First, to include the perspective of those customers who chose Starbucks instead of the local coffee shops, would add valuable insight about customer behaviour and the effectiveness of Starbucks brandscape. Second, the fact of conducting the study in Europe, and more specifically in the Mediterranean countries of Italy and Spain, would add an element of novelty, mainly because these two countries have a strong pre-existing coffee

culture that may play against the global brand introduction and development adding different motives to the customer choices than anti-corporate feelings.

#### 1.4. Research questions

Our Master Thesis will look at how Italian and Spanish coffee shop goers make sense about their choice of a coffee outlet, that is, how consumers manifest those expressions of cultural heterogeneity, when they have the possibility to choose between Starbucks and more locally connotated coffee shops, and the influence of glocalization.

Therefore, the research questions investigated in this thesis are the following:

1. Why do Italian and Spanish consumers choose Starbucks rather than of a local coffee shop, and what meaning do they attribute to their choice?
2. What is the role played by glocalization, and the degree to which Starbucks has glocalized, or maintained a hegemonic brandscape, in the choices of Italian and Spanish consumers? What is the influence of globalization on local coffee shop patrons?

Because research regarding the reasons behind the consumers choices is still emerging, the existing literature in this field is limited. Therefore, to contribute to the previous literature from Thompson and Arsel, and fill this identified gap, we aim, with these research questions, at providing an interpretation of these choices in the light of theories that have been created to explore globalization and other related phenomena.

#### 1.5. Outline of the Thesis

Our thesis is laid down in seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces our work by giving some background of the market dynamics that are influencing the behaviour of global brands in the food retail sector, and their customers. Following this, we introduce the research topic and its purpose, resulting in the related research questions and their limitations. Furthermore, the Chapter 2 aims at providing the reader with a comprehensive theoretical background of the research topic. In Chapter 3, the research context, we explain how our research fits into the general discourse about globalization, glocalization and hegemonic brands.

Chapter 4 presents our methodology and the research approach, how the data for this research was collected and analysed. Chapter 5 presents and analyses the results and findings

of the field research prompting a first, high level answer to the research questions. Chapter 6 will provide to the reader an in-depth discussion of our research findings through the filter of the existing literature. The final chapter presents an overview of our theoretical findings and research limitations and suggestions for further research.

The appendix includes the interview outline, the respondents' personal information and visuals depicting the different types of outlets where the interviews were taken.

## 2. Literature and Theoretical Review

This chapter will give an overview of the previous literature relevant to our research topic and research questions.

Thompson & Arsel (2004), have analysed the intersection between local cultures and global brands in a paper investigating how the hegemonic influence that Starbucks exerts upon the local coffee shops industry and how this creates, at the same time, aestheticized and politicized anticorporate identifications in the coffee shops patrons. The study relates contextualised meanings, ideals, experiences of the patrons, to existing theories about brand hegemony and glocalization, but limits its field of research to a single geography, in a context where local traditions do not play a significant role. Maguire & Hu (2013), have studied how consumers make sense of a global brand, and what their engagements with that brand can tell us about the interplay between the global, the local and the glocal in the consumption of foreign goods. The results of this previous study report attraction toward foreign consumer goods, globalness perception and quality and cultural connection among the reasons for patrons' choice of Starbucks.

One of the principal issues linked to the concept of globalization is the very meaning of the idea of globalization. The general perception of globalization is that it is a large-scale macro-phenomenon, and to ignore the local and micro-sociological effects of globalization. The cliché is that globalization consists in the triumph of cultural homogeneity, which is 'bigger is better' and that local values and cultures are destroyed by it. This also leads to consider a globalized approach to sociology, a 'de-ethnocentrization'. To correct this, it is necessary to introduce the concept of *glocalization*.

### 2.1. Hegemonic brandscape and Glocalization

To have a full understanding of the concept of globalization, it is useful to go through the concept of hegemonic brandscape developed by Thompson and Arsel (2004). According to the consumer research literature, the brandscapes indicate the consumer's active construction of personal meanings and lifestyle orientations derived from the symbolic resources provided by a group of brands (Sherry, 1998). This definition of brandscape is used to reconfigure a consumer centric definition to include the hegemonic influences that

global experiential brands exercise on their local competitors and the meanings consumers derive from their experiences of these global landscapes (Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

A hegemonic brandscape is a cultural system of servicescapes that are merged and structured by discursive, symbolic, and competitive relationships to a dominant and market-driving experiential brand. The hegemonic brandscape, besides structuring an experience economy market, also influences consumers lifestyle and identities by assuming the role of a cultural model that consumers follow (Pine, 1999). A cultural model is a cognitive that is shared by cultural groups (D'Andrade, 1990). The reason cultural models are socially shared is their objectification through public discourses, material objects and physical environment (Miller, 1998). A cultural model influences individuals' actions through conventionalized social practices and the exercise of material objectification. Likewise, a hegemonic brandscape includes a system of objectified meanings that consumers can include into their view of the world and attribute a broad variety of interpretative and identity constructive meanings.

When universalizing and localizing tendencies are present at the same time, then it is the case of a phenomenon known as glocalization. According to Askegaard and Eckhardt (2012), glocalization also indicates the re-appropriation of cultural practices in their places of origin. This cultural appropriation consists in the use of symbols from a culture, artifacts, genres, and technologies by people belonging to a different culture (Rogers, November 2006). Thus, through a process of re-appropriation, those symbols, artifacts, and technologies are made by people their own in their places of origin (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012). A consequence of glocalization is the emergence of a "third place", that occurs when companies can organize, include, and promote cultural differences (Wilk, 1996).

## 2.2. Effects of globalization and Hybridity

The globalization cultural practices have resulted in the McDonaldization and Americanization of the world. One critical perspective that emerges from globalization is the homogenization of cultural experiences. It is generally viewed as pessimistic, because supports the dominance of one culture (usually Western culture) that threatens and eventually leads to the disaggregation of local identities and cultures (Arnould and Thompson, 2018). The McDonaldization theory by Ritzer (2000) argues that companies' mere interest in increasing their profits through unilateral homogenization, resulting in the production of standardized social forms that are centrally developed and controlled, such as the classical



and stereotyped hamburger offered by McDonald restaurants. Products that are standardized have become omnipresent in our society due to the supremacy of rationalization and the dimensions of the fast-food restaurant, or of the McDonaldized systems, which are efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control. The dimension of efficiency indicates the capability of companies to satisfy customers' needs in the best available way, a compromise between the optimum for the client and an optimum for the company. Workers in a McDonaldized system, similarly to their customers, execute their tasks in an efficient way, by following all the steps according to a predefined process. Calculability highlights that in McDonaldized systems predominates the quantity of products sold and services offered over their quality. Thus, there is a sort of equivalency between quantity and quality. At the centre of workers' attention there is the rapidity in which they execute their tasks. Predictability is the guarantee that services and products will remain the same in all the times and different outlets and countries. Therefore, the products and services customers find in McDonaldized systems are high predictable.

Globalization, however, does not always produce an effect of homogeneity of cultures, but sometimes causes heterogeneity. According to Ger & Belk (1996), in fact, there are four types of reaction to globalization in local contexts: return to local roots, consumer resistance, local appropriation, and creolization. Due to marketization of global goods by multinational companies, local effect of globalization in the less industrialized countries (LIC) can lead to a radicalization of ethnic and religious movements or to geographic nationalism. Globalization can also cause the consumer resistance in local contexts as well as the return to roots and the revival of local traditions.

A further reaction to globalization is the appropriation of global consumer goods and the reconfiguration of their meaning in their local context. To conclude, globalization can lead to creolization, which is a sort of "melting pot" where different cultures merge together and form a new product that presents characteristics of different cultures (Ger & Belk, 1996).

Hybrid cultural products are created by the encounter of local and global influences. In this context, pre-existing structures or practices that assume different forms are combined to bring into being new structures, objects, and practices (Canclini, 1995). Hybridization encloses a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. To narrow our focus, deterritorialization indicates a process or cultural pattern that is taken from its native social

context and applied to a new one in a different territory. On the other hand, reterritorialization is related to the appropriation of this cultural pattern to the point of making it one's own. This happens through the production of a new form in the new society and geography (Yazicioglu, 2010).

### 2.3. Linking value and brand communities

By consuming something, consumers can attribute a meaning to the product or service and on the base of that build their own identity projects or those that belong to their community. To maintain a community alive, what is essential are the creation, strengthen and the maintained of communitarian sentiments in the groups. Trough the attribution of meaning, the brand or product becomes something more than just a simple commodity (Arnould & Thompson, 2018).

The theory of linking value developed by Cova (1997), discusses that consumers have the role to extract utility (benefits) from a product in exchange of the money they pay for that product. Therefore, nowadays the value of a product does no longer consist in only its quality, function, and physical characteristics, but also in its capability to convey socially meaningful experiences to consumers, to generate *communitas* and sociality. Consequently, organizations' actions should focus on enabling consumers to consolidate community links and promote a feeling of belonging to a tribe or membership. The market of linking value generates groups of co-creating consumers that can be either tribes or brand communities.

Co-creation is defined as 'one of the core services provided by market offerings that is either implicit or explicit social links to groupings that are themselves products of the development of a market-mediated society (Arnould & Thompson, 2018). According to the practice theory discussed by Schau (2009), members within brand communities co-create value with the help of a series of practices, which are regrouped in four categories: social networking, community management practices and product development.

The creation of value that builds a connection between a company and consumers can have the objective to bring innovation to the brand and further improve it. To add on that, value co-creation between a company and a brand community is considered as a social process having an active and creative nature that is source of advantages for both consumers, or brand community, and companies. As discussed by Pongsakornrungrungsilp & Schroeder

(2011), in fact, consumers who take part in brand communities, 'by acting as providers and beneficiaries, thereby co-creating value for themselves, for brand communities, and for organizations', assume an effective role in the process of value co-creation.

As disclosed before, consumer tribes and brand communities are two types of co-creating groups. Consumer tribes are temporary naturally formed groups where the members of the tribe identify with some similarities between each other (Caru & Cova, 2007). By belonging to the tribe, members can take part into activities, such as interest, hobby, or passion, that otherwise they wouldn't be able to experience in other contexts. On the other hand, brand communities don't belong to any specific geographic area and show a structured set of social relationships among members (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Brand communities, unlike tribes, are not temporary but last longer and are more consolidate, and present three main distinguishing features, which are the sense of belonging to a group, evidence of rituals and traditions within the brand and a sense of obligation to the community and its members. Like the concept of consumer tribes, that of brand community points out the creation by consumers and fans of a network of social relations and of a group of shared meanings around brands (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Lastly, there are other characteristics that distinguish brand communities. The first is that brand communities rely on interaction, which can be either face to face or virtually. Secondly, members of brand communities are given a sense of identity.

#### 2.4. Brand globalness and perceived quality

The framework of associative network model constructed by Keller (1993) has at the centre the brand associations elaborated by consumers. Perceived quality, reputation, and other types of proprietary brand assets, such as patents, are all examples of brand associations that can impact on consumer's brand evaluation directly and on preference indirectly (Aaker, 1991).

Previous research regarding global branding shows that brand globalness constitutes a specific brand attribute that, like other attributes, is considered during a consumer's process of evaluation (Dimofte, 2008). Moreover, a study conducted by Steenkamp on American and Korean consumers, Steenkamp (2003) shows clear evidence that perceived brand globalness is positively associated with high quality in prestige. The perceived high quality of a brand is also associated with a greater likelihood of purchase by consumers.

The presence of the brand in multiple international markets, therefore, can be interpreted by the consumer as a clear signal of quality and prestige. In the same way, if consumers know a brand is used also by consumers coming from other areas of the world, the brand can be perceived as of a higher quality. Consequently, the global attribute can lead to the increase of a brand's value in relation to some factors, such as the stage of maturity and category of the brand, and the consumer's main characteristics.

## 2.5. Co-creation and prosumerism

In the 2000s, with the contribution of a study conducted by Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2000) started to take ground a new concept shifting the economic value creation from the company's research and development department to the interaction of the consumer with the firm. This new concept is known as co-creation and explicates in the idea that the production of value through the interaction between the company and the consumer is the result of the collaboration by both in the manufacturing of product and services. According to Foster (2011), the type of engagement represented by co-creation has been defined as a trend and phenomenon observed in corporations producing goods, services and experiences with the close collaboration of the creativity of consumers, which use their intellectual capital, and in exchange consumers get what is produced, serviced or processed. By adopting those kinds of actions, firms manage to exploit consumer labour and at the same time they avoid eventual risks related to the emergence of undesired consumer behaviours.

Consumers, therefore, in the co-creation process shift from a passive role, in which they purchase what the company wants to sell them, to an active role than engage and involve them in the production. In their article, Humphreys & Grayson (2008) discuss about the *prosumption* phenomenon, which indicates that in the co-creation process the consumer becomes both a consumer and a producer, thus, a *prosumer*. A post-modern critique highlights in relation to the co-creation that consumers construct their identities using what they purchase or consume. This identity creation consists in a productive process of value creation rather than of value destruction (Baudrillard et al., 1976). Consumption can be considered a form of production because it is an *inherently transforming process* (Firat, 1995). On the other hand, consumption is a 'productive process' because the 'consumer's identity and self are produced and reproduced via consumption, and therefore production continues during the moments of consumption" (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993).

### 3. Research Context

Our research is part of the general ongoing scientific discussion about Globalization and its consequences. Certain global brands show extremely aggressive, expansive, and dominant attitude, and, as of today, Starbucks is the epitome of these global brands behaviour, having replaced McDonalds in the laymen's mental image of a colonizing and levelling global brand. These global brands are traditionally not only perceived, but also described, in literature, as predatory by Falk (1999) versus established local markets, as bullies by Klein (1999) against smaller companies, colonizers and annihilators of local cultures (Ritzer, 2011). These concerns are part of a broader discussions, fed by fear, of an ever growing standardized, homogeneous, and distinctly Western, if not outright American, global consumer culture (Mazzarella, 2003; Smart, 2010).

Contrary to this narrative, there is growing evidence that, far from steamrolling local cultures and replacing local businesses these global brands in general, and Starbucks in particular, are producing unforeseen effects where they operate. These effects appear to stem from the different meaning that local customers give to the global brands, seen through the lens of their local cultures and lifestyles (Hannerz, 1996; Miller, 1998), leading to forms of hybridization that led researchers to coin a new term, Glocalization (Miller, 1998; Ger & Belk, 1996; Robertson, 2001). Other studies are considering how global brands are influencing the cultures in the local markets, or, in other words, have a hegemonic role in that market (Askegaard & Csaba, 2000; Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012; Askegaard & Csaba, 2000; Ustüner & Holt, 2010). This is one of the aspects that we wish to investigate in our research questions. To further explore this hegemonic role of a brand, and the concept of glocalization, Thompson & Arsel (2004) have defined the concept of hegemonic brandscape, starting from the concept of brandscape, that is "*consumer's active constructions of personal meanings and lifestyle orientations from the symbolic resources provided by an array of brands*" (Thompson & Arsel, 2004, p. 632). According to Thompson & Arsel (2004), Starbucks' hegemonic brandscape is tied to their iconic cultural status, constructed by a mix of image, language, experiential interactions and even of oppositional discourses against the brand itself. With their work Thompson & Arsel (2004) have conducted experiential interviews to explain the hegemonic influence that Starbucks exerts upon the socio-cultural settings of local coffee shops by means of its market-driving servicescapes and the related

oppositional discourses that live in the local culture. Maguire & Hu (2013) examine how local consumers engage with foreign brands, by focusing on their perceptions and experiences as customer of Starbucks in their country. In their work they look at the accomplished meaning of foreign brands: how local consumers make sense of Starbucks, and what their engagements with the brand can tell us about the interplay between the local, global and glocal in the consumption of Western goods. They suggest that their findings can shed light on the role of foreign brands in the problems of individual and collective identity formation. Izberk-Bilgin (2012) investigated how certain peculiar aspect of a local culture, religion and ideology are prominent forces shaping consumption, how religion, myths, and ideology intertwine in the marketplace, informing attitudes toward brands; our work is the prosecution of these studies.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Philosophical Foundations

To clearly understand the outcomes of our research, it is very important to be aware of the different philosophical approaches, positions and assumptions that influence our data collection as well as our analysis. Research philosophy plays a crucial role in our thesis, because it directly impacts on research design and on how the quality of the design proposed might be judged (Bell & Bryman, 2007; Easterby-Smith, et al., 2015). Hence, we proceed with the discussion of our philosophical assumptions of ontology and epistemology we refer to in our research, with the objective to create more clearness for our readers. Ontology is related to the existence and nature of reality, whilst epistemology focuses on the theory of knowledge and supports researchers in the understanding of the best methods to gain knowledge about the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith, 2015).

It is necessary for our research purpose to consider that there are several truths, different opinions, and various ideas to be discovered, and there is not only one answer to be considered the right one. Therefore, we reject certain philosophical assumptions, such as that of realism, which supports the idea that there is only a single truth regarding the understanding of reality and argues that it is not possible for researchers to directly access this reality (Putnam, 1987). Furthermore, realism claims that once the truth has been discovered it is absolute and not liked to further observations (Easterby-Smith, 2015). Certainly, this is also not the case regarding our study. Considering, in fact, that we are investigating on how consumers make sense of glocal coffee shops such as Starbucks, rather than local coffee shops, we expect that it is not possible to explain and analyse this socio-economic phenomenon only through a single truth. There can be several ways Italian and Spanish consumers make sense about those two categories of coffee shops as well as different meanings they attribute to their consumption in those places. To add on that, we are also convinced that once we have found the results, they might change over time in relation to additional studies or observations. Our study, therefore, can be properly explained through the adoption of the philosophical assumption of relativism, according to which many truths are presented, and facts depend on the point of view of the observer (Bell & Bryman, 2007; Easterby-Smith, et al., 2015).

Regarding the choice of epistemology, we consider social constructivism to be the most suitable approach to our research. The perspective of social constructivism considers reality not as objective and exterior, but as constructed by people during their everyday interaction with others (Easterby-Smith, 2015). Thus, social constructivism concerns the way people make sense of the world, for instance by sharing their experiences with other people (Berger & Luckman, 1996; Watzlawick, 1984; Shotter, 1993). Therefore, we are referring to a type of approach that has been defined by Habermas (1984) as an interpretative method, and our focus, typical of this approach, is on how people are thinking and feeling (Easterby-Smith, 2015). This is also the reason we chose to use in-depth interviews as a method to gather data.

## 4.2. Research approach

After having provided an explanation of the epistemological and ontological philosophical approaches that we consider for our research, we present the organization of the research approach. Thus, this chapter is focused on the research aims leading to the research questions and after that gives a detailed description of the adopted research methods.

### 4.2.1. Research Questions

Our thesis deals with the phenomenon of how Italian and Spanish consumers make sense of *glocal* products referred to the Starbucks case. We want to find out what leads Italian and Spanish consumers to choose either Starbucks or a local Italian or Spanish coffee shop, and the role played by glocalization and globalization.

Existent research by Arsel and Thompson (2004) investigates the reasons why patrons of a local coffee shop located in a large metropolis are not willing to consume at Starbucks and instead choose the local coffee shops. However, what is missing is academic research that focuses on understanding why consumers choose Starbucks and why they choose a local coffee shop instead of a global retail chain, and how do they talk and what they think about those two categories of coffee shops. Furthermore, there are no previous studies of the same type that have been conducted on Italian and Spanish consumers, and especially in countries that like Italy and Spain have a strong pre-existing coffee shop customer experience. There is a considerable research gap that we aim to cover with our research for the master thesis. Our goal, therefore, is to investigate why Italian and Spanish consumers choose Starbucks or local coffee shops and the meanings that they attribute to their consumption. To uncover this research problem, we will use the following research questions to fill the research gap:



1. Why do Italian and Spanish consumers choose Starbucks rather than of a local coffee shop, and what meaning do they attribute to their choice?
2. What is the role played by glocalization, and the degree to which Starbucks has glocalized, or maintained a hegemonic brandscape, in the choices of Italian and Spanish consumers? What is the influence of globalization on local coffee shop patrons?

#### 4.2.2. Research Methods

To answer our research problem regarding how Italian and Spanish consumers make sense of glocalized products, with a special focus on Starbucks and on local coffee shops, we will adopt the method of semi-structured interviews of customers frequenting Starbucks and local coffee shops. As a next step, the reasons for the choice of the interview as a qualitative method are explained and elaborated.

According to (Grove, 2016), qualitative research consists in a systematic and subjective approach that enables to point out and explain experiences in a daily life context and to attribute them a proper meaning. Given this definition, it seems appropriate to adopt this approach for our research problem, considering that to understand why consumers go to Starbucks rather than to a local coffee shop, we need to see how they talk about the two categories of coffee shops. Additionally, it must be highlighted that qualitative research allows to undercover behaviours, different perspectives and life experiences of people interviewed (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002).

Furthermore, the previous study we are referring to is also using a qualitative approach. Using a quantitative approach, in fact, would be very limiting in terms of the obtainment of satisfactory and explicative results for our research. Lastly, within qualitative methods we decided to choose in-depth interview, because being more effective and less structured, it allows to extract more detailed and in-depth information compared to other data collection methods such as the survey.

#### 4.3. Data Collection

The following part discusses our data collection methods and procedures in-depth and elaborates upon how we ensured the credibility and reliability of our empirical study. First,

a short sample overview will be presented and afterwards the reasons for choosing in-depth interviews as our qualitative method will be discussed.

#### 4.3.1. Data Sample

The data collection for the research was done through the conduction of semi-structured in-depth interviews with people selected according to two specific predetermined criteria, which match the specific target of Starbucks, and the fact that young consumers tend to reinterpret and rework global cultural practices. The criteria are (1) Being of age between 18 and 35 years old, (2) Being of Italian and Spanish nationality. The Italian participants to our interviews were chosen during a two-day visit at Starbucks in the centre of Milan, whereas the Spanish participants were recruited through social networks. When choosing the participants, we ensured that they knew the brand and that had been to Starbucks or to the local coffee shop at least once. This, in fact, fundamental for them to be able to properly talk about their coffee shop. Looking at our sample it can be stated that most of the interviewees consider going to the coffee shop as a significant aspect of their daily or weekly routine. Only one of the interviewees did not consider going to the coffee shops as important in his daily life.

#### 4.3.2. Interviews

According to existing literature (Easterby-Smith, 2015), we conducted 13 interviews, that, in the case of the Italian participants, took place at Starbucks and in some local coffee shops in the centre of Milan. The Spanish participants were recruited through social networks, such as Facebook groups, and their interviews were conducted on Zoom.

Each interview lasted about 45 minutes, depending on the amount of information the participants were able to share with us. Before starting the interviews, we considered the notification to the respondents about the confidentiality and anonymity rules, and we asked for their permission to record the interview. The first half of the interview was focused on questions about personal interests, life goals and coffee habits, whilst the second half was aimed at understanding participants' expectations and thoughts regarding both coffee shops in general and the specific coffee shop in which we conducted the interview. Overall, our interviews were based on what and how questions with some probe questions and a few leading questions to confirm our initial hypothesis. The main questions were, for instance, "what are the most important aspects that you considered in the choice of this coffee shop?",

“How do you feel when you go there?”, “What values does this coffee shop communicate to you?”. To avoid eventual bias, we did not tell our interview participants that our research is aimed at understanding how consumers make sense of glocal coffee shops rather than local coffee shops, but we simply told them that the interview was about their perception of the coffee shop. Only at the end of the interview we asked them about their opinion on what a local coffee shop can offer that a global or glocal cannot, or vice versa. The main challenges of our interview were related to obtaining trust from participants, considering that most of them did not know us before. According to Easterby-Smith (2015), obtaining trust is fundamental to ensure that the participants of the interviews will provide researchers with the sought information. To do that, we ensured to have a proper social interaction with the interviewees. Jones (1985) maintains that people tend to associate a certain degree of meaning and significance to the specific research situation in which they are embedded. Therefore, the answers provided by the interviewee are influenced by how the situations are defined. Beside social interaction, we also made sure to use an appropriate attitude and language to appear professional but at the same time humble and sensitive, to not convey any message of judgement to our interviewees.

#### 4.4. Source Analysis

In line with the procedure regarding the preparation of qualitative data discussed by (Easterby-Smith, 2015), after data collection, before moving to the qualitative analysis, we proceeded to the transcription of our recorded interviews. Because our interview respondents were from Italy and Spain, being our research based on the market of those countries, the interviews were conducted in our native languages and therefore were translated into English. During the translation process we carefully ensure to maintained unaltered the meaning of the interview answers. To interpret our qualitative data, we decided that content analysis was the most appropriate approach to adopt. Content analysis aims at drawing systematic inferences from qualitative data that have been organized by a set of ideas or concepts (Easterby-Smith, 2015). As the first step of our content analysis, we determined some criteria allowing the selection of relevant material based on our research questions. Successively, the selected material passed through a process of analysis to highlight the emerging factors or concepts considered relevant to answer the research questions. Finally, we built a table to organize ideas and respondents, such as that designed by Miles &

Huberman (1994). For our research we adopted an abductive approach, and thus the data were collected and analysed when we were still conducting theoretical research. This approach was fundamental in our research because it contributed to the obtainment of the quality of results derived from our research.

## 5. Results & Findings

In this section we will present the analyses of the data collected with the interviews. We will preserve the original statements of the interviewees to give to the reader the opportunity to receive them as they were presented to us, in an effort ensure data integrity throughout the presentation of our findings. To provide a key for reading the results, we have organized and structured the answers by country and then divided them in six thematic groups, which gather similar reasons why the patrons make sense of their choice:

*Table 1 - Thematic groups emerged from the interviews*

<b>Thematic Group</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Trusting the global retailer because of its efficiency, reputation, and standardization.	The respondents believe that a global, highly successful, well organized and efficient company that is in control of their processes must produce good quality products and services.
Appreciating a specific range of products, because of their quality, ethnicity, or consumer contribution.	This group contains answers from patrons that make their choice because they seek for typically American, intranational or local styled products, respectively.
Fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace.	The respondents are all mentioning the fact that they need a 'third place' beyond their work or study place and their domicile, where they can spend time working, studying or, more simply, reading or browsing the internet.
Using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reviving local traditions.	The outlet is seen by these respondents as a bridge to other places, whether these are foreign, exotic places or aestheticized version of the traditional local place.
Feeling a responsible consumer because of their choice.	These patrons feel that their outlet of choice is committed to the respect of the environment and other

	ethical principles and feel good when they elect them as their supplier of choice.
Fulfilling idealistic or political motives.	These respondents tend to have an aprioristic view of one type or the other of outlet, which is often driven by a political, ethical, or religious orientation.

Some of these thematic groups contain responses from one national group only, other from both groups, some groups contain answers gathered only from Starbucks' or from local coffee shops patrons.

### 5.1. Findings from Italian Patrons interviewed at Starbucks

#### *Trusting the global retailer because of its reputation*

Some of the patrons interviewed cited reliability and trustworthiness as the reasons why they chose Starbucks over local coffee shops. For example, Federico mentioned that because Starbucks is a global retail chain, their quality is the same everywhere in the world, it is consistent, it has always a certain minimum high level and his experience at Starbucks is always meeting his expectations:

*“So, let’s say that Starbucks is a place where I tend to go, especially when I’m in a new place, I must say, because Starbucks, being a chain, allows you to have a level of quality that is always aligned in any part of the world where you are. Whether you are in Rome, in Milan, in Paris or even overseas in America, Starbucks products will always be of a certain good level. You know what you get”* Federico

Francesca states that Starbucks quality is very high, and that the fact that it is an international brand makes her feel safe. To Francesca the success of the business itself is a form of quality guarantee, implying that it’s the other consumer’s choice the best indicator for quality:

*“Any product I choose at Starbucks has a very high quality. Since it is an international chain, I am sure I will find quality products, so I am on the safe side. If they weren’t good, then they wouldn’t have been able to expand globally as they did. So, when I go to Starbucks, I already know what to expect”* Francesca

And Leonardo believes that the company's reputation is essentially at the base of his choice, the fame and the reputation, the global footprint are all pointing at quality, reliability, and trust:

*“Quality is for sure important in my choice of Starbucks because they offer good quality drinks. And considering that it is a company that has a good reputation, is very famous and has stores all over the world, therefore I expect a company of that level to have a good standard and to be a company I can trust ... that is, I feel I can have more trust in Starbucks than trying a bar I've never seen in my life”* Leonardo

These patrons consider Starbucks a trustworthy retailer where they can safely enjoy a product that is consistent all over the world and they all agree that this is directly correlated to the global brand nature of Starbucks and that the guarantee comes from its success and its reputation.

*Appreciating a specific range of products, because of their quality, ethnicity, or consumer contribution*

Some respondents attribute a high value to their customer experience because not only they like the broad range of products that Starbucks is offering to their patrons, but also the possibility to co-create these products adapting them to the customer's needs:

*“I think that Starbucks has a great variety compared to normal local bars, because usually if you go to local bars, they give you three or four options (espresso, cappuccino, and tea), instead at Starbucks you can even create your drinks based on your preferences”.* Laura.

*“Starbucks cares about its customers. They allow people to vote regarding the ideation of new products or to express their thoughts and opinions concerning their service in general...I got involved in this a few times”* Leonardo.

Even writing their name on the cups is perceived by some of the patrons as a positive and likable customer experience and a form of product customization:

*“I really enjoy the customer experience here at Starbucks. I like the fact that they write your name on the cup, and I also really like the*

*unique environment and the furniture you find, which always includes a sofa where you can relax while drinking coffee.” Francesca*

*“When I go to Starbucks, I know I will have good service. Then I feel... how can I say... curious about whether they will be able to write my name correctly on the glass” Laura*

From Federico’s and Leonardo’s statements it can be understood that customers generally feel that the brand is able to satisfy all their needs and feel listened by the company. Therefore, customers believe that the company, by focusing on them, can better succeed at providing them with good solutions:

*“Surely Starbucks communicates a great creativity to me because having such a wide range of products allows yourself to vary, and I think that, behind this fact, there is a great study of what may be the various needs of people and being able to solve all these needs of people with such a wide offer means that the company cares about its customers. Let's say that Starbucks studies what are the new trends or in any case the new crucial factors regarding the market” Federico*

It is also appreciated the fact that Starbucks has a hybrid product range, comprising both clearly typical Italian, unequivocally American or international items:

*“At Starbucks I have a lot of choice. I can have a snack with a “cornetto” (croissant baked according to the Italian style) or a “focaccia” (Italian bread with oil), or I can eat more foreign things, such as brownies or typical American chunky cookies” Leonardo*

*“Starbucks can satisfy different customers’ needs. When I go there, I can choose between Italian products and original American or other foreign types of food” Laura*

Federico declares that he doesn’t consume Starbucks’ products only at Starbucks, but even when he is at home, he uses his accessories purchased at Starbucks stores in different places around the globe. Therefore, his Starbucks’ experience does not end once he leaves the store, but continues to be present in some parts of his daily life and allows him to have great memories of his time spent abroad:

*“One thing that Starbucks offers more than the other places is the availability of merchandise, so all the accessories that are sold inside the store are still a pretty good thing because, for example, I always have breakfast with a glass of iced tea, and I always drink this iced tea in a Starbucks glass. This is a positive factor because having bought this glass in America, it also reminds me of the experience I had lived at the Starbucks overseas”* Federico

*Fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace*

What emerged from some of the interviews is that most of patrons, when choosing a bar don't consider only the coffee or food consumption aspect, but they are also interested in a place where they can do different other things, such as working, studying, or reading. Federico, along with Laura, takes into consideration and considers relevant to his bar choice the fact that Starbucks can offer a comfortable place where customers can spend quite a long time being comfortable and having all the services capable to satisfy their needs:

*“What I like of Starbucks is that it allows you to have an area where you can spend your time, perhaps for working or studying, because I know that, for example, the Wi-Fi is free, you can find power outlets to charge the laptop and the bathroom is always available. This maybe allows you to spend several hours inside the bar, not necessarily just to have a coffee, but also to do other activities in your life, and therefore allows you to find a place that can be considered pleasant and enjoyable”* Federico

*“When I look for a bar, besides making sure they offer a wide variety of food and drinks, because I will be spending quite a lot of time there, I generally pay attention whether the bar has power outlets and free Wi-Fi, and Starbucks is able to provide me with those things”* Laura

Some respondents, such as Leonardo, consider the space provided by Starbucks as a suitable place to study. In fact, in an unfamiliar environment, he would pick Starbucks as a first choice because he is sure to find the proper space that he needs to study:



*“Starbucks has a large space where there are always plugs for the laptop or telephone, free Wi-Fi and they are equipped with sofas, chairs, and tables, so it is quite comfortable as a space. If I must decide where to study and I'm not familiar with the city where I am, for sure I think I would go to Starbucks if there were a Starbucks near where I am” Leonardo*

*Using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reviving local traditions*

From Francesca's answer it can be understood that she enjoys going to Starbucks and to find people that share some similarities with her. Additionally, Starbucks allows her to feel closer to her favourite place:

*“By going to Starbucks, in every Starbucks store I go, I find people who are like me and that have my same interests. These are people like me who are cosmopolitan, they like to travel, to come in touch with different cultures and appreciate things that are different” Francesca*

*“I feel connected with the world in general being when I go there, thus I feel happy when I go to Starbucks” Francesca*

Federico, who is passionate about other cultures and diversity, frequents Starbucks not only for purchasing products, but also to experience a totally different environment from that he usually finds in other coffee shops:

*“I have travelled a lot in my life, and I consider myself as an international person. I like to spend time with people from different countries. Surely, by this point of view, the environment is interesting at Starbucks because is also frequented by many foreigners, and therefore the people you find there are different compared to those you might find in a local or neighbourhood bar [...] at Starbucks you find many more nuances, you find people who come from different cultures, and they have different ways of behaving and dressing. So going to Starbucks is a great opportunity for me to come across this international environment” Federico*

It can be said that Starbucks is considered more than just a simple coffee shop to consume food and drink, but it also functions as a sort of cultural bridge, connecting consumers to the world and to foreign cultures.

*Feeling a responsible consumer because of their choice*

Leonardo claims to be interested in the sustainability aspects of Starbucks and that he would be able to pay a premium price for purchasing products that come from sustainable sources:

*“Starbucks seems to have quite a good reputation, and even the sustainability aspect helps Starbucks to have an even more positive reputation because anyway you know that maybe you pay a little more for a drink but at the end you know it comes from resources that are eco-sustainable, so the repercussion is quite positive”* Leonardo

Laura shows to be engaged in Starbucks’ sustainability practice of reusable cups, and she is also interested in the ethical aspect of how the company does business:

*“Starbucks as a company seems very sustainable to me. Whenever I go to Starbucks, they always have this shelf where you can buy a cup and you can use it to refill your drinks when you return to Starbucks. I like the fact that you don't have to buy another glass, but you can use the glass you already have. So, it seems to me a very sustainable company... even their coffee is ecological and is taken with fair trade. It seems like a company that tries to do business sustainably”* Laura

Both patrons, therefore, think that they are acting responsibly towards the environment and the society by choosing Starbucks as their favourite coffee shop.

## 5.2. Findings from Italian consumers interviewed at local coffee shops

*Using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reviving local traditions*

Camilla tells about her experience at a local coffee shop in Milan, Hygge, and expresses the reasons she chose this place, instead of Starbucks.

She is not only interested in the range of products offered by the coffee shop, but she wants to choose a coffee shop that is adding something more to her customer experience by being themed:

*“I certainly like bars that have a "concept", that is, for example...those unique bars where there is a particular theme [...]. I like to go to Hygge because I feel like I am traveling because...let's say that the bar is set up with different maps of the world and travel pictures hang on the wall, and therefore you really feel like you are in a travel dimension. It almost seems to be abroad” Camilla*

*Using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reviving local traditions*

Further than simply looking for a place to have a cup of good coffee, Camilla also takes into consideration whether the coffee shop offers a well-equipped space enabling her to comfortably spend some hours and to do many different activities, such as working, studying, and resting, Martina has similar preferences:

*“When I must choose a coffee shop, I also consider if it has power outlets for the laptop, so I can work or study. It is nice there because there are certain special tables...they are low and you can sit on pillows, so it is a very informal environment but at the same time it is suitable to work with your computer or for those who must study”*

*Camilla*

*“I usually go to coffee shops with a quiet environment where I can study and that offer free Wi-Fi and power outlets to recharge my laptop” Martina*

*Appreciating a specific range of products, because of their quality, ethnicity, or consumer contribution*

When choosing a coffee shop, Camilla is interested to a place that sells beverages which are more in line with her Italian roots. She doesn't show an interest in consuming more international and unconventional products and she gives value to the unicity of a customer experience, Martina takes the local origin of the products as a guarantee for good quality, and standardization and internationality as synonymous of low quality, industrial made products.:

*“This bar does not sell products...let's say that are standardized and typical of the chain coffee shops, but it offers unique dishes that they*

*invented here, and sells coffee conform to the Italian style, like espresso from a moka machine, or American coffee, but doesn't have particularly weird things like marshmallows on top of the coffee. It has more classic things let's say, so in my opinion the place can better satisfy Italian customers” Camilla*

*“International chains do not have all this variety of Italian pastries that local bars have... in local bars the brioche are homemade, while in international chains they are more industrial and are the same everywhere. In local bars you will certainly find more particular products that do not sell in the chains. People go to international chains because they are more fashionable. Instead, people who go to local bars are interested in having a real local experience” Martina*

*Fulfilling idealistic or political motives*

Camilla expresses the enjoyment to find herself in a coffee shop which is characterized by a special and unique environment and claims an adversity towards the consumption in globalised and international chain coffee shops. In her customer experience she values, above all, the unicity and cosiness of the coffee shop:

*“Ah, surely it can offer me an original environment because it makes me feel like I am in a place I have never been to. It makes me feel like I am in a unique and refined environment. At Hygge the products are unique, and the dishes are invented by them, so I don't feel this feeling of familiarity like you can be at McDonald's or other chains, which is a sickening familiarity after a while because of too much globalization. So Hygge (Image 8) makes me feel in a nice and original place, a feeling that international chains are unable to give me. It is a sense of uniqueness that you only find there, that is, I know that I go there and not anywhere else” Camilla*

### 5.3. How Spanish customers interviewed make sense of Starbucks

*Trusting the global retailer because of its efficiency, and standardization and reputation*

Four out of our six interviewees in Spain mentioned the word “Efficiency” in their responses. They see Starbucks as an efficient organization. Some of them also used words such as “robotic”, and “automatic”:

*“I appreciate Starbucks’ efficiency: because they are wearing uniforms they stand out in the crowd and you cannot confuse them with patrons, and when lines are forming, they act fast. I have a friend who worked at Starbucks and she told me that everything there is really automatic, that’s why I suppose they have a good result at the end, you can like it - or not like it - as a customer, but I do like it, because, as I have said before, I am not looking for socializing, I just want to get my stuff done, I am not looking for a personalized service, maybe other people do, that’s not my case”* Judit.

One of the interviewees used the word “control”. Armand compared Starbucks with Fast Food Restaurants, finding positive the fact that everything is standardized and predictable as factors that fluidify his customer experience:

*“The efficiency in this retail chain is renowned, you don’t usually have to wait for a long time, also you have many of options and you know that any Starbucks has the same offer, the products offering, that’s mainly the only positive thing I would say, you know that all Starbucks look the same, and it will be quick service, you won’t have to wait for a long time, you can always grab your coffee and leave the coffee shop, I would say efficiency, control and the same offer everywhere”* Armand.

Judi finds Starbuck’s standardization positive, and soothing; she realizes that it’s the result of a precise design that required intense study and preparation:

*“Really good, everyone is calm, it’s a work atmosphere, quite cool, the colours, the different types of chairs, the furniture itself, the space*

*itself, how they attend to you, they ask your name, you can appreciate that it is a standardized retailer, there's work behind it" Judi.*

The reputation and prestige enjoyed by the Chain is, for some of the Spanish respondent a guarantee of high quality, which qualifies going to the coffeeshop as a special treat:

*"Because Starbucks is a global company, it has a better quality and more prestige than other coffee shops. When I go there it's a special occasion for me because it's like giving myself a present" Judit.*

Despite the higher cost of the coffee at Starbucks, some of the interviewees recognize that, because of the trust in the brand and the additional value added by the other elements of the offering, like the cosy interior design, it is worth it.

*"If you go to Starbucks, because it is a large, international chain, you know you're going to get a good coffee, but, on the other hand, it is expensive. I would also say, they have good decoration, comfort, and a high standard, so that's also a good point for it" Marveen.*

*Fulfilling idealistic or political motives*

Some of our interviewees mentioned the fact that because Starbucks has a clear American connotation, they favour it as it represents for them a way to live like their cultural target model:

*"I would say that I like Starbucks because it is an expression of American culture" David.*

*"At Starbucks the coffee cups are really large, you know, in America quantities are exaggerated, they always do everything in "XL" size, everything it's really American" Judit.*

Conversely other interviewees stated that the American habit of living at an accelerated speed was a social relationship killer and that they disliked this aspect in Starbucks:

*"Yeah, I would say yes, it's very American, the American way, you usually go, your coffee at your own, you have your pc when you work at Starbucks or you just take it away, in front of your computer, you take it to the office, I don't like too much because I feel it removes the*

*social aspect, and if we have to meet my friends for a coffee I wouldn't go there, unless I don't find anything else open" Marveen.*

*"I associate Starbucks with the American culture, always in a rush, at any time of the day, you grab your coffee before work, you're having a break, it works a lot like the American society in the sense of fast food places and all of this kind of stuff, I mean it's not a place I would stay for a long time, they're like establishments made for paying for your coffee and then continue with your daily routine" Armand.*

Starbucks was defined by many interviewees as a place for more affluent people. When we asked them what they think who the typical patrons are most of them agreed that it is a group of people with high spending capacity, a stable income, and the ability to choose well their products, a segment of the population that they would like to belong to:

*"Overall, I think that they are people with fixed income, with high salaries, they prioritize a good coffee, more expensive one, rather than going to a local coffee shop, in general they're people with high economic purchase power" Judit.*

Armand thinks that, most likely, people with low income are not amongst the patrons, only middle and higher classes of society can afford being there:

*"[...] people with low income don't go there, it's more like a middle class, maybe people with high income, if they have to grab a coffee, they will go to Starbucks rather than to a traditional coffee shop, because it gives more value, it's quite the opposite than traditional coffee shops" Armand.*

Marveen also thinks that if you're a regular consumer of Starbucks is because "you're probably doing well, so it looks good to go to Starbucks".

*"[...] when you go to Starbucks, you're probably well-off, so it looks good to go to Starbucks, I think that's the reason some people do it, I think it's like kind of a poche thing to do" Marveen.*

#### 5.4. How Spanish customers make sense of local coffee shops

##### *Fulfilling idealistic or political motives*

Some of the interviewees declared that they were choosing local coffee shops over Starbucks because of their anti-corporate feelings, and that they preferred to finance local businesses rather than multinationals:

*“[...] in small coffee shops, the quality of the coffee is better, furthermore, I'm starting to develop a kind of feeling that giving my money to this small coffee shops, is better than giving it to large companies like Starbucks” David.*

##### *Fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace, or the need for a social venue*

Most of our Spanish respondents agreed that Spanish local coffee shops favour socialization amongst patrons due to a more familiar environment. Some mentioned “the culture of being together”. In the eyes of these respondents a traditional Spanish locale has much better chances to favour socialisation rather than a Starbucks-like global retailer that is perceived as a ‘grab and go’ place:

*“The atmosphere in Spanish coffee shops is family-oriented, unlike that of chains like Starbucks where everyone grabs a cup of coffee and then leaves. In the Spanish ones, it's like...the coffee is an excuse to talk to someone else, to sit at the table, speak about your daily things, discuss soccer, politics or whatever you want to, that's the culture of being together, here in Spain” David.*

Armand, who emphasizes the differences between local *cafeterias* and Starbucks. The Spanish culture is based on sharing, socializing, and interacting with whomever is around, while Starbucks is seen as an individualistic customer experience, selfish and un-social.

*“[...] a bar, like tapas bar, or something like that, that's the ultimate Spanish place to go, rather than retail chain coffee shops” Armand.*



## 6. Discussion

In the following section we will present the reasons that lead consumers to choose their favourite coffee shop, choosing between a local outlet or Starbucks, here exemplifying a global retail chain, in Italy and in Spain. Secondly, we will shed light on the differences between Italian and Spanish consumers and the role played by glocalization. The results will be presented and discussed referring to our findings and to the literature introduced with chapter 2. In line with our abductive approach, our research findings will be discussed in relation to the findings already portrayed in the literature and similarities as well as discrepancies will be pointed out. This is our starting point to answer to our research questions, complementing previous studies, which contributes to the existing literature.

Because our research aims at understanding the various reasons lying behind the choice between a globalised, a glocalised, or a localised offering, the next section will discuss the themes we found in our research, namely: (1) Trusting the global retailer because of its efficiency, standardization and reputation, (2) Appreciating a specific range of products, because of their quality, ethnicity or consumer contribution, (3) Fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace (4) Using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reaction to globalization, (5) Feeling a responsible consumer because of their choice, (6) Fulfilling idealistic or political motives.

### 6.1. How Italian and Spanish Patrons of Starbucks and of local coffee shops made sense of their consumption of glocalised products

#### *Trusting the global retailer because of its reputation, efficiency, and standardization*

From the interviews of both Italian and Spanish patrons it emerged that one of the reasons for choosing Starbucks is the high degree of trustworthiness that customers have towards the brand. Trustworthiness indicates the extent to which a brand is an honest source of products (Li et al., 2011). Some of the interviewees claimed that they elect Starbucks as their coffee shop because they believe that the global presence of the company and its achievements infer that they can offer products and services characterized by a high quality. Additionally, the high degree of reputation reached by the brand also plays an important role in the determination of their choice. Customers, therefore, have the belief that the company will always be able to meet their expectation of purchasing a reliable product.

This finding is in line with the framework of associative network model by Keller (1993) according to which perceived quality, reputation, and other types of brand assets, are elements that can affect consumers' evaluation of a brand. Reputation is defined by Fombrun (1996) as the company's ability to meet the expectations of all its stakeholders, included customers.

Therefore, the good reputation of Starbucks lead patrons to think that the products or services they get will be in line with their expectations.

Previous research conducted by Dimofte (2008) shows that perceived brand globalness is a brand attribute that is taken into consideration during a consumer's evaluation process. From our findings, brand globalness resulted to be a very relevant element that the interviewees take into consideration in their evaluation of Starbucks. Additionally, according to Steenkamp (2003) there is evidence that consumers tend to associate perceived brand globalness with a high level of quality and prestige. This properly applies to Italian Starbucks patrons, who claim that because Starbucks has many retail points worldwide, they expect and believe that their offer must be of a high quality.

In addition, Spanish patrons interviewed claimed that they like the efficiency and the standardization of Starbucks, and those are some of the reasons they choose Starbucks. Those Starbucks' characteristics they mentioned can be reconducted to two of the four dimensions found in the McDonaldization systems in the *McDonaldization of society* work by Ritzer (Ritzer, 2000). Therefore, based on the patrons' answers, Starbucks presents some characteristics that can make it similar to a McDonaldization system. According to the dimension of efficiency, McDonaldization systems are efficient and follow all the steps in a predefined process. That reflects how Spanish patrons described the high level of efficiency at Starbucks, claiming that they can rapidly manage the long lines forming in the store and successfully serve the customers in the best way. Some patrons mentioned that they appreciate that Starbucks offer is the same everywhere and standardized, and this can be explained with the predictability dimension, which explains that in McDonaldized system customers find the same products and services in all the places.

*Appreciating a specific range of products, because of their consumer contribution and ethnicity*

The theory of co-creation ideated by Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2000; 2002) can be adopted in explaining the finding. This concept affirms the idea that the production of value through the interaction between the company and the consumer is the result of the collaboration by both parts in the manufacturing of products and services.

Starbucks patrons enjoy that they get involved by the company in different activities of value creation. The fact that Italian Starbucks patrons interviewed take part into the process of creation of new products through online platforms, build up their drink according to their personal preferences and taste and personalize their Starbucks cup by writing their names on the cup are all examples of co-creation. Customers employ their creativity and imagination in the creation of the product that they will consume. In line with the previous literature by Humphreys & Grayson (2008), customers, therefore, have no longer a passive role, which implies that they consume what the company impose them to consume, but they acquire an active role that involves them in the production of the product, and this enhances their customer experience. Thus, Starbucks patrons are no longer simple consumers, but in this context, they become *prosumers* (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008), that implies that they are producers and consumers at the same time. This is an element of value creation for both Starbucks and its patrons: Starbucks can ensure to create a product that will satisfy the customers and therefore will avoid possible negative reactions by them, whilst customers obtain a product that can better reflect their identity, considering that consumption is a 'productive process' because the 'consumer's identity and self are produced and reproduced via consumption, and therefore production continues during the moments of consumption" (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993).

In addition, by co-creating, Italian Starbucks patrons interviewed, in line with the linking value by Caru and Cova (2007), don't consume products only because of their intrinsic quality, function and physical characteristics, but are also able to extract benefits, in this case represented by the meaningful experience that they make through their involvement in the production of the product that they will consume. However, this aspect of co-creation did not emerge in the Spanish Starbucks patrons' interviews.

*Using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reaction to globalization*

What we found about Starbucks as a bridge of connection to the world can be observed by a brand community perspective. According to Muniz & O'Guinn (2001), brand communities are a group of non-geographically bounded relationships among the individuals using a certain brand. The members of a brand community show a sense of togetherness, they feel connected with each other and can create rituals and traditions (Albert M. Muñoz & O'Guinn, 2005). The Starbucks patrons that we interviewed exhibit some characteristics that are typical of brand communities. They go to Starbucks not simply to consume the products and the services they get, but also to be part of a different environment that they feel they belong to. In fact, they go to Starbucks because they can be surrounded by people that come from different cultures and countries, and because they all value the same customer experience, they feel a sense of togetherness and a connection amongst themselves. They all share similar values, such as the passion for traveling and the fact of being cosmopolitan people. Furthermore, Starbucks patrons also have their rituals, that can be drinking a cup of coffee, spending time at the coffee shop to study or work. They perceive Starbucks not to be a geographically bounded entity, e.g., American, but a place, that goes beyond borders and cultural barriers.

Globalization can lead to creolization, that is, *'the meeting and mingling of meanings and meaningful forms from disparate sources'* (Ger & Belk, 1996: p. 290). Our interviewees demonstrate appreciation for the possibility to meet people from different cultures and to have a consumer experience that mingles Italian and American classics like, respectively, focaccia and muffins, with original and distinctive creations that merge elements from different cultures, like Starbuck's Pink Unicorn Frappuccino (Image 9).

The meeting of local and global influences has been described by the anthropologist Néstor García Canclini, under the name of hybridization, as *'socio-cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices'* (Canclini, 1995: p. XXV). Italian Starbucks patrons are recognizing the value of a hybrid offering because it is offering them far more flexibility and choices than the traditional local service offering that is more limited not only in variety but also in the ability to add a positive emotional dimension to their customer experience, opening their horizons to different consumer cultures without moving from their

place. However, the aspect of creolization and hybridization of Starbucks did not emerge in the Spanish Starbucks patrons' interviews. On the contrary, Spanish patrons interviewed perceived Starbucks as merely American rather than glocal or with different ethnic products like in the case of Italian Starbucks patrons, and some of them considered it as an aspect that adds values, while others disliked that.

Ger and Belk (1996), illustrating the complex local interpretations of globalization, identify four types of reactions globalization can bring about in local contexts: return to local roots, consumer resistance, local appropriation, and creolization. Some of the Italian and interviewees who chose local over Starbucks showed a reaction to globalization consisting in the return to local roots and in the revival of local traditions. They mentioned the fact that they were not at ease with what they deemed to be an 'exotic' menu list and expressed their favour for a return to the local and traditional products. Spanish local patrons expressed their preference for a place in which they can find the sense of togetherness and the social interaction typical of Spanish local coffee shops. Those cases are all linked to a return to local roots. Globalization can also result in consumer resistance in local contexts. Rejection of global brands can emanate from nationalist ideologies, environmental concerns or from the rejection of hegemonic brandscapes (Pine, 1999): one of the interviewees said that she was 'nauseated' by the uniformity and 'sickening' conformity of the global retail chains, and one Spanish local patron showed consumer resistance to global retailers, by saying that they prefer to support local businesses.

#### *Fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace*

Certain scholars have pointed out the decline of informal public life due to an erosion of public places for daily socialization and demonstrated that this is negatively influencing a good life. According to this theory, to have a good life people should have a balance among three different types of experiences: their home, the workplace and the third place defined as place settings for informal public life (Oldenburg, 1999). A third place can belong to many different categories of social places, and these include coffee shops, that have become intimately linked to the social life of consumers, gathering individuals beyond the realms of home and work. This concept of third place is different from the third place found in (Wilk, 1996). This is confirmed by many of the Italian Starbucks patrons interviewed, who are expressing appreciation for the possibility to spend time at Starbucks above and beyond the time needed to consume the products that they have purchased, and spend this time studying,

reading, listening to music, or engaging in conversation with individuals that they believe share their same values and appreciation for this customer experience. The need for a third place emerged also as a need of Italian non-Starbucks goers. The local coffee shop interviewees defined the same criteria of comfort and technological infrastructure otherwise expressed by Starbucks patrons for choosing her favourite local coffee shop. However, the aspect of the third place did not emerge in Spanish patrons' interviews.

#### *Feeling a responsible consumer because of their choice*

Research suggests that firms should take care of environmental and social concerns, and to integrate these into the business in the same way that financial concerns are present. Starbucks is an example of a company that has shown commitment to CSR programmes whilst still attracting criticism (Roper & Fill, 2012). Some of the Italian Starbucks patrons interviewed reported that between their main reasons for choosing Starbucks, there is a clear trust in their CSR policies, made visible by their choice of recycled and recyclable materials, and the adherence to fair trade principles. For these patrons the choice to have strong CSR policies which are implemented results in a sense of trust and safety that enhances their consumer experience.

However, this aspect concerning the preference for socially responsible retailers did not emerge in the Spanish Starbucks patrons' interviews.

## 6.2. Differences between Spain and Italy and role played by glocalization

To understand some of the differences between the interview results in Italy and Spain, it is useful to trace a brief history of how Starbucks entered the Spanish and, much later, the Italian market, and how their strategies and their tactics for entering these two countries related to the way their potential customers would have chosen to accept their globalized product.

Starbucks entered the Spanish market in 2004, the company was initially focused on the four cities in which it had a presence but had a national vocation. Starbucks had broken the traditional model of cafeteria in Spain: no noises of cups, no screams, no cigarette smoke (Image 7). This was radically different from the local model of noisy, crowded, and hectic bar (Image 10).

Starbucks landed for the first time in Italy in 2018 with few shops in Milan. The first opening was the Reserve Roastery in Piazza Cordusio (Image 1, Image 2). Other shops followed suite in Milan later in 2019 and 2020 (Image 6), and more were opened in Rome and in other large Italian cities such Venezia, Bologna, Firenze, Verona, Torino. For their first shop in Milano, a 19<sup>th</sup> century building had been transformed in the third Roastery in the world, after those of Seattle and Shanghai. The new outlet was furnished with unique pieces of Italian art and craftsmanship, Carrara marbles, signature Italian coffee machinery, and was inaugurated with an exclusive show including La Scala’s dancers dancing in the central piazza Cordusio of Milano (La Repubblica, 2018). The following day, when the shop opened to the public long queues formed outside the building, and bouncers had to be hired to control the flow (Image 3), the public waited hours to get in and grab a cup of coffee. Local products from Princi, an iconic (Image 4) Milanese bakery chain had been included in Starbuck’s offering, creating a hybrid offering. In both cases, in Spain and Italy, Starbucks had partnered with local companies well introduced in the foods and beverages retail market.

Table 2 - Synopsis of relevant customer experience components discussed by the interviewees.

Customer Experience Component	Italian Coffee Shop	Spanish Coffee Shop	Starbucks	Comments
Espresso made by barista in front of customer	Yes	Yes	Yes	This was the key feature in all cases.
The specially arranged interior where the customer flow through the store is controlled and quick	No	No	Yes	A controlled and quick flow was appreciated by some patrons, especially by Italians, less by the Spanish.
Interior designed for international taste	No	No	Yes	This was appreciated more by Italian patrons.
Specially arranged furniture to foster a feeling of community	Yes	Yes	Yes	In different ways, all patrons gave importance to this element, but with different interpretations.
Take out cups offer	No	No	Yes	This was not mentioned as a reason for choosing a coffee shop by either group.
Broad product list and patrons participating to the personalization	No	No	Yes	This was appreciated particularly by the Italian interviewees.
Quick service	Yes	Yes	Yes	A common trait for all the responders, even if they stay long at the outlet, they want to be served fast.
Names handwritten on the cup	No	No	Yes	This was felt by the Italians as a valuable element of personalization.

Wi-Fi Instore, power outlets	Some	Some	Yes	Most of the interviewees from both sides saw the presence of work/study infrastructure as an important element for their decision.
Good Quality Coffee	Yes	Yes	Yes	This was not a differentiator, as it was expected from all outlets.
Consistent quality	N.A.	N.A.	Yes	The Italian respondents were mostly convinced that global brand and quality of the product were going hand in hand.

We have found, when analyzing the interviews, differences between the answers of the Spanish and the Italian respondents: several Spanish patrons were pointing at the strong American connotation of Starbucks, whilst Italian Starbucks patrons perceived Starbucks as a melting pot of different cultures and expressed their appreciation for the diversity of the products offered, varying from Italian to international. This could be due to the small size of the sample, or to the fact that Starbucks entered Spain 10 years sooner than Italy, probably because of the strength of the Italian culture when it comes to coffee consumption, but it had, in that country, a more standardized approach to the expansion. Italy started with a highly visible tribute to the local culture and strong adaptations to their standard model.

From our analysis, therefore, it can be highlighted that Starbucks in Italy has produced an effect of heterogeneity, where the global, or better the glocal brand Starbucks has not destroyed a different culture, but it has managed to produce a “third place” in which it organizes, includes, and promotes cultural differences (Wilk, 1996). Thus, Starbucks in Italy is a successful case of glocalization. On the other hand, Starbucks in Spain resulted in the production of homogeneity, because Spanish patrons perceived Starbucks as merely American, and did not see any connection of Starbucks with their culture like Italian patrons did. There is, therefore, the emergence of a homogenization in which dominance of one culture, the American culture, which leads to the disaggregation of another culture, which is the Spanish culture (Arnould and Thompson, 2018). Spanish Starbucks’ patrons’ lifestyle and identities are influenced by a hegemonic brandscape.



## 7. Conclusions

This master thesis aims at investigating how Italian and Spanish coffee shop goers make sense about their choice of a coffee outlet, that is, how consumers manifest those expressions of cultural heterogeneity, when they have the possibility to choose between Starbucks and more locally connotated coffee shops. Thus, the research questions were formulated to shed light on what leads consumers to choose Starbucks or a local coffee shop and the meaning they attribute to their consumption. We are investigating the role played by glocalization, the degree to which Starbucks has glocalized or maintained a hegemonic brandscape in the choices of Italian and Spanish consumers, and the influence of globalization on the choice of local coffee shop patrons.

With the first research question we identified themes throughout our empirical research representing a complementary contribution to previous literature. According to our findings, we extend and integrated previous literature (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Maguire & Hu, 2013) with the following topics: (1) trusting the global retailer because of its efficiency, reputation and standardization (2) appreciating a specific range of products, because of their quality, ethnicity, or consumer contribution (3) fulfilling the need for a third place other than home and workplace (4) using the outlet as a bridge connecting to the rest of the world vs. reviving local traditions (5) feeling a responsible consumer because of their choice (6) fulfilling idealistic or political motives.

These themes represent how Italian and Spanish consumers make sense of their choice of coffee outlet, and answer to our first research question. The analysis of some of these themes led to the answer of the second research question, regarding the role played by glocalization and the degree to which Starbucks has glocalized or maintained a homogenic brandscape in the choices of Italian and Spanish consumers, and the role played by globalization on local coffee shop patrons' choice. From our interviews it emerged that Starbucks in Italy is glocalized, whilst Starbucks in Spain resulted to be more in line with the effect of homogeneity induced by globalization. Additionally, our research extends previous literature (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) by revealing that both Italian and Spanish local coffee shop patrons showed a rejection of the hegemonic brandscape represented by global coffee shop retailers, mostly motivated by their willingness to return to their local roots.

## 7.1. Theoretical contribution

Concerning the previously mentioned themes, our theoretical contributions can be identified as being extensive and comprehensive in comparison to the very limited existing literature in the field of globalization and its consequences and of how consumers make sense of their coffee outlet choice (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Maguire & Hu, 2013). Therefore, with this thesis, we position our work in this research gap.

Combining both research questions with all the previously mentioned relevant themes, we uncovered new aspects of how patrons of Starbucks make sense of their consumption choice, besides those already discussed in the previous literature relative to the perceived globalness of the brand and to the brand as a global bridge. The new aspects we found on how Starbucks patrons make sense of their choice consist in the trust of the global brand because of its efficiency and standardization connected to the McDonaldization theory, in the appreciation of the brand due to its involvement of customers linked to co-creation theory and in feeling a responsible consumer by choosing a retail that applies policies of corporate social responsibility. The finding about a higher degree of glocalization of Starbucks in Italy compared to Starbucks in Spain, connected to the late opening in Italy due to cultural barriers, adds an element of novelty to the previous literature. Furthermore, we explained the already existing aspect of Starbucks as a global bridge by using the theory of brand community, which has not been adopted by previous literature to explain the same aspect. Lastly, in addition to the previous literature (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), beside the anti-incorporation feelings of local coffee shop goers, we found that Italian and Spanish local coffee shop goers' resistance towards global coffee shop retailers is due to their preference for local products and traditions and thus, it is linked to a return to local roots, which is one of the possible reactions to globalization.

## 7.2. Research limitations and suggestion for future research

One of the hurdles that the researchers had to overcome was to conduct field interviews. This was due to several reasons, firstly patrons are quite busy, either because they use the coffee shop as a place where to spend their lunch break when at work, or because, when at the coffee shop, they spend their time in activities like studying, working remotely from their PC or smartphone. It is difficult to obtain from these people a quality time window to complete properly the interview. In addition to this, the interviewing activity may not be welcome by the staff, that often is stopping the recruitment activity and asking the researcher to leave the premises. This leads inevitably to collect a relatively small number of interviews, however, due to the qualitative nature of the interviews, the authors believe that it can still represent a significative sample. There is an additional consideration thought, the fact that the busy patrons have turned down the interviews may have led to a bias artificially restricting the sample to a less heterogenous population. For future studies it is highly recommended to reach out for the owners, or the management, to agree on the interviews and to prolong the interview time considerably to include a more diverse population.

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## 9. Appendix

### 9.1. Criteria for inclusion in the interviews

In this section additional information regarding the methodology and the findings are presented. First a short overview of our sampling criteria and a sample overview is provided, before moving on and presenting the rather broad topic guide for the conducted interviews is shown. Furthermore, additional findings from our empirical research regarding positive aspects, as well as a more in-depth introduction to the sample is provided.

Criteria	Applicable
Nationality	Spanish or Italian
Age	18-35
Number of visits to Starbucks	At least once

Table 3 - Criteria for inclusion in the interview

### 9.2. Sample Overview

Name	Nationality	Sex	Age	Profession
Leonardo	Italian	M	21	Student
Laura	Italian	F	23	Student
Federico	Italian	M	25	Financial Controller
Francesca	Italian	F	28	Human Resources
Camilla	Italian	F	22	Student
Martina	Italian	F	24	Communications Specialist
Mikhaela	Spanish	F	27	Receptionist
Judit	Spanish	F	27	Dentist
Marveen	Spanish	M	28	Computer engineer
David	Spanish	M	35	Communication Specialist
Armand	Spanish	M	22	Student
Antonio	Spanish	M	28	Industrial engineer

Table 4 - Sample interviewees overview

### 9.3. Topic Guide for Interviews

a) Personal questions (same for both cafés):

- What is your age?
- What is your occupation?
- What is your level of education?
- What is your family status?
- What can you tell me about your interests?
- What can you tell me about your goals in life?

b) Questions about **coffee habits** (same for both cafés):

- Do you make coffee at home?
- Is coffee important for how you live your daily life?
- How do you prefer to drink coffee? With friends or alone? In the cup or take-away glass?
- What can you tell me about the reasons you drink coffee?
- How do you recognize yourself in the typical Italian/Spanish coffee culture?

c) Questions related to the **coffee shop experience in general**

- Would you say that going to a coffee shop is important for how you live your daily life?
- When you want to drink a coffee, what are the most important aspects you consider in the choice of a coffee shop?
- How important is the price for you in the choice of the coffee shop?
- How important is the quality of coffee in your choice of a coffee shop?

d) Questions related to the **specific coffee shop experience**

**General**

- How do you feel when you go to this coffee shop?
- What can you tell me about the factors that make you choose this café?
- What are the values that the coffee shop communicates to you? Do you feel part of those values?

- What do you think are the typical customers who are loyal to this coffee shop? Could you describe them in terms of general socio-economic characteristics? Do you consider yourself like those typical loyal consumers?
- What can you tell me about the reputation of this café?

**At Starbucks:**

- What does the brand of this café communicate to you? What are the values that you attribute to the brand? Do you feel part of those values?
- What can you tell me about the cultural aspects that pop up in your mind when you think about this café? Do you associate this café with the American culture/values?
- What extra benefits you find in Starbucks that local coffee shops do not offer?

**At the local coffee shop:**

- What extra benefits you find in this coffee shop that international coffee shop chains, such as Starbucks, don not offer?
- What can you tell me about the cultural aspects that pop up in your mind when you think about this coffee shop? Do you associate this café with the traditional Italian/Spanish culture?

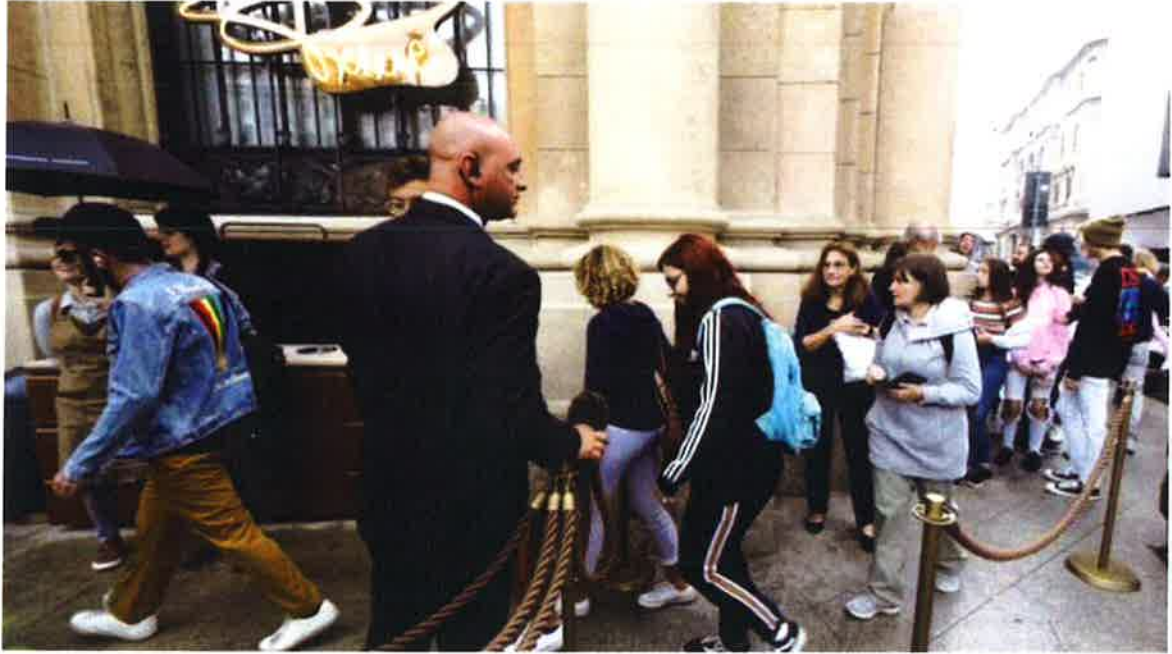
## 9.4. Images



*Image 1 - Reserve Roastery Milano - Outside view*



*Image 2 - Reserve Roastery Milano - Inside view*



*Image 3 - Milan Reserve Roastery inauguration day, long queues, and bouncers*



*Image 4 - Princi Bakery - Interior of one of the shops in Milano*



*Image 5 - Princi's corner at Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Milano*



*Image 6 - Starbucks shop in San Babila, Milano*



*Image 7 - Starbuck shop in Rambla Canaletas, Barcelona*



*Image 8 - Hygge coffee shop in Milano*





*Image 9 - Starbuck's pink unicorn frappuccino*



*Image 10 - A Spanish traditional tavern*