

Exploring authenticity meanings in the global-local continuum: semiotic insights from the Måneskin case

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Abstract

Purpose – This article explores brand positioning and authenticity within the global-local continuum, utilizing the evolution of the Italian rock band, Måneskin, as a case study.

Design/methodology/approach – Employing Greimas's (1987) semiotic framework, I analyze social media and media articles on Måneskin's success, unveiling consumer perceptions of global, local and intermediate brand positionings and related authenticity dimensions. I particularly uncover a narrative centered on "global" versus "local" brand positioning and their counterparts (i.e. "not global" and "not local"), forming a semiotic square.

Findings – In the "global" perception, the band is evaluated in terms of conforming to global standards, while, in the "local" understanding, the emphasis shifts to connections to local roots. In the "glocalization" perspective (global and local), the band's activities are assessed concerning an integration between global conformity and local connections. The "glalienation" viewpoint (neither global nor local) is related to consistency, in the sense of being unique and avoiding a commitment to either global or local values. The data also highlight issues of inconsistency regarding brand positioning's contradictions, such as the band's incoherently merging local and non-local elements.

Originality/value – The proposed structural semiotics approach enriches previous theories by examining authenticity within global-local dynamics, offering insights into various authenticity dimensions and their interplay. It underlines shifts in authenticity perceptions and challenges binary brand positioning, advocating for strategic placement across the global-local continuum. Moreover, it emphasizes leveraging cultural elements and semiotics to effectively communicate authenticity.

Keywords Global consumer culture positioning, Local consumer culture positioning, Glocalization, Glalienation, Authenticity, Semiotics

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Globalization has become a central focus of scholarly discussions across various disciplines (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Appadurai, 1996; Ritzer, 2007; Steenkamp, 2019). The conversation has explored globalization's intricate challenges and opportunities for companies, institutions and consumers (Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019). Amid this dialogue, effective branding strategies have been a consistent theme, with scholars exploring the dichotomy of "global" and "local" brand positioning (Davvetas and Halkias, 2019; Nijssen and Douglas, 2011; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004). Traditionally, two main approaches have been discussed: "global consumer culture positioning" (GCCP), which emphasizes universal appeal and detachment from specific cultural or geographical origins, and "local consumer culture

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positioning” (LCCP), which involves connecting a brand with local cultural meanings and defending regional cultures (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Chen, 2016; Steenkamp, 2019). An alternative approach is “foreign consumer culture positioning” (FCCP), defined as a strategy associating a product or brand with its country or culture of origin (Chen, 2016), like French cosmetics or German precision engineering. According to Steenkamp (2019), however, when a country has a globally positive image in a specific category (e.g. Italian fashion, Swiss watches), FCCP could hypothetically be assimilated into GCCP.

Building on this debate, a more nuanced understanding is emerging in the literature, suggesting that globalization may, actually, lead to a more complex interplay of cultural flows. Page and Dalla Riva (2023), for instance, noted a surprising shift in music: European markets saw more local artists in their top ten songs after the rise of global streaming platforms like Spotify. This challenges the dominance of English-speaking global artists, suggesting that, in response to globalization, individuals might even strengthen their local identities (e.g. Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007).

Contrary to the conventional belief that globalization fosters homogeneity (Levitt, 1983) and in line with Robertson’s (1992) concept of “glocalization,” various scholars, such as Cleveland and Bartsch (2019), are therefore reinterpreting globalization as a dynamic interaction between global and local forces, giving rise to both universalizing (e.g. tendencies toward cultural homogeneity) and particularizing (e.g. tendencies toward cultural heterogeneity). This perspective understands the international arena as a complex context where people, goods and brands are part of continuous flows with diverse directions, ranging from the global to the local and vice versa (Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017; Thompson and Tamyah, 1999; Yazicioglu, 2010). These scholars conceptualize “glocal” brand positioning as a possible intermediate level between GCCP and LCCP (Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019; Thompson and Arsel, 2004). Moreover, by examining phenomena like K-pop (Chen, 2016), they challenge the assumptions of cultural practices solely originating in the West and then being adapted in the East (Sharifonnasabi *et al.*, 2020).

Building on this scholarly foundation, I delve into a case study to better investigate brand positioning across the global-local dichotomy. Specifically, I focus on the Italian rock band Måneskin (Danish for “moonlight”) and its recent international expansion. Consistently with Cleveland and Bartsch’s (2019) nuanced approach, which emphasizes the debate between these two binary opposites (Lévi-Strauss, 1978), I investigate consumer perceptions of brands dynamically traversing the global and the local, particularly underlining the key role of authenticity in shaping these perceptions.

Authenticity, broadly linked to genuineness, reality and truth (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Beverland, 2006; Grayson and Martinec, 2004), is a crucial factor for brands operating in an international environment. Thompson and Arsel (2004), for instance, illustrated how, compared to local coffee shops, global chains like Starbucks are considered less authentic expressions of local cultures. Authenticity plays also an important role in explaining the influence of Starbucks on Scandinavian coffee culture (Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007). Beyond coffee, authenticity is deemed key to understanding how consumers in India interpret the global-local fusion of yoga (Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012) or how hybrid cultural products, such as American Yoga, seek legitimacy (Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017). However, while previous studies touched on authenticity in the context of global and local branding, they did not systematically examine its role (Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Steenkamp and De Jong, 2010; Thompson and Tambyah, 1999; Yazicioglu, 2010). Consequently, my research is originally motivated by the need to explore the role of authenticity in this context.

I further note that previous contributions mainly took a static perspective, overlooking the nuanced aspects of the global-local dialectic. One viewpoint emphasizes how global brands establish authenticity through standardization, thereby fostering communal identities (Leigh *et al.*, 2006; McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). Conversely, another perspective highlights the

authenticity of local brands, citing consumer preferences in their favor (Steenkamp and De Jong, 2010). However, this dichotomous view overlooks the multidimensional nature of authenticity (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Moulard *et al.*, 2021; Nunes *et al.*, 2021). To address this, I suggest that the three key dimensions of authenticity identified by Lehman *et al.* (2019) – namely, *consistency* with internal values, *conformity* to a category’s social norms, and *connection* to specific entities – might hold varying importance in global and local domains. In other words, I propose that different dimensions of authenticity – rather than a singular one – may play distinct roles in global versus local brand positioning strategies.

Authors exploring the global-local dialectic and authenticity have also reported slightly divergent results. For instance, studies on yoga reveal how market actors might either create (Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012) or undermine (Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017) authenticity, depending on their efforts to purify practices imported from local cultures. These variations underline the need to delve into the different authenticity meanings to understand their relationship with both global and local strategies (Nijssen and Douglas, 2011; Zhang *et al.*, 2022). To address these gaps, I aim to answer two key research questions:

- RQ1. How does the interplay between global and local branding dynamics influence the meaning of authenticity?
- RQ2. How do these dynamics inform traditional notions of the global-local dichotomy in the realm of consumer perceptions of brand positioning?

I employ a semiotic approach, specifically the Greimasian semiotic square, to investigate the different dimensions of authenticity in the global-local context (Floch, 2001; Greimas, 1987). Semiotics, offering a systematic analysis of semantic categories and binary contrarities, proves valuable in identifying and interpreting cultural meanings attached to various signs (Humphreys, 2010; Kellner, 1995; Mick, 1986), including authenticity (Thompson and Kumar, 2022). Notably, Alden *et al.* (1999) highlighted the benefits of a semiotic approach in studying branding and its relationship to consumer culture; while both Strizhakova and Coulter (2019) and Cleveland and Bartsch (2019) advocated for examining the interplay between global and local positionings, suggesting semiotics as a potentially valuable methodology.

Regarding Måneskin’s rapid ascent from national recognition to international acclaim, with their most-played song, “Beggin,” amassing nearly 1.5 billion listens and “I Wanna Be Your Slave” reaching 950 million listens (Spotify data as of February 2024), I gathered data from social media sources and media articles discussing Måneskin’s escalating success. I then show that, when viewed from the “global” perspective, the band is primarily evaluated based on its *conformity* to global standards, while the “local” interpretation focuses on establishing *connections* with local roots. When considering the “glocalization” standpoint (involving both global and local elements), the assessment shifts to considering the band’s ability to *integrate* global conformity with local connections. In the “glalienation” perspective (neither global nor local), Måneskin is associated with *consistency*, indicating uniqueness and avoidance of a definitive commitment to either global or local values. Additionally, the data highlight *inconsistencies* in brand positioning, such as the band’s integration of both local and non-local elements in an incoherent manner.

In summary, my research contributes to theory in at least three ways. First, it extends international marketing theory by exploring authenticity within the dynamics of the global-local continuum, offering a structured framework that integrates various dimensions of authenticity. Second, it provides valuable insights into the interplay among different authenticity meanings, such as conformity and connection, by addressing conflicts and illustrating integration possibilities. Third, it examines the evolution of authenticity perceptions and pivotal shifts, particularly concerning connection with local culture and consistency. The case study of Måneskin also yields managerial insights, challenging the binary opposition of GCCP and LCCP and showcasing how brands can strategically position themselves across the entire global-local continuum. Furthermore,

it underscores the strategic significance of cultural elements within the global-local dialectic and suggests leveraging semiotics as a potent tool for communicating authenticity.

The remainder of this article comprises a review of relevant literature on the theme of authenticity, an overview of the research methodology, the presentation of findings and a discussion of both theoretical and managerial implications. I will then conclude by addressing the study's limitations and providing suggestions for future research.

Conceptual foundations

Authenticity in marketing and consumer research

Authenticity holds a pivotal role in marketing and consumer research, significantly shaping consumer behavior and brand dynamics (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Moulard *et al.*, 2021; Thompson and Kumar, 2022). Consumer culture theory, which asserts that consumer identities are primarily shaped by consumption activities and market offerings (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Holt, 1998, 2002), underscores the significance of authenticity in explaining consumer behavior. Grayson and Martinec (2004) emphasize the pervasiveness of consumer interest in authenticity, spanning personal possessions, foreign experiences, retail settings and brands. Recent research, as outlined by Södergren (2021), establishes brand authenticity as a critical asset in contemporary marketing strategies, positively impacting outcomes like brand trust, loyalty and equity. Over the past 25 years, considerable research activity has therefore delved into the antecedents, decisions and outcomes related to brand authenticity (Södergren, 2021). Morhart *et al.* (2015, p. 202), for instance, conceptualize brand authenticity as “the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful and true toward itself and its consumers, and to support consumers being true to themselves.”

Other contributions, however, provided various other definitions associating authenticity with different meanings (Södergren, 2021). Grayson and Martinec (2004) distinguished indexical authenticity (“something that is thought not to be a copy or an imitation,” p. 297) from iconic authenticity (“something whose physical manifestation resembles something that is indexically authentic,” p. 298), while Leigh *et al.* (2006) introduced an “existential” dimension, emphasizing the role of individual or communal experiences in authenticity perceptions. In the context of luxury wines, Beverland (2006) linked brand authenticity to six main attributes (heritage and pedigree, stylistic consistency, quality commitments, relationship to place, method of production and downplaying commercial motives); and so on. Accordingly, most scholars now agree that authenticity is a multidimensional construct (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Morhart *et al.*, 2015; Moulard *et al.*, 2021).

In this work, I refer to Lehman *et al.*'s (2019) review, wherein the authors present a parsimonious model relating authenticity to three fundamental dimensions. Furthermore, these three dimensions can easily be linked with other authenticity meanings explored in the majority of studies. The first dimension that Lehman *et al.* (2019) emphasize concerns “consistency” between internal values and external behaviors. This notion refers to how a brand's and a person's identity, or true self, are aligned with actual actions, unique identities and values (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Holt, 2002; Ilicic and Webster, 2016). Evaluating a musician's song for authentically reflecting its author's personality is a typical case in which this meaning is involved (Corciolani, 2014; Peterson, 1997). Nunes *et al.* (2021) describe this dimension by emphasizing the significance of a brand's intrinsic motivation, termed “integrity,” as well as the importance of distinction from the mainstream, referred to as “originality.” Meanwhile, Moulard *et al.* (2021) characterize it as “true-to-self authenticity.”

Another aspect of authenticity, deemed essential by Lehman *et al.* (2019), pertains to an object's “conformity” to social norms within specific social categories, such as music genres (Peterson, 1997). Often discussed as “iconic authenticity” (Ewing *et al.*, 2012; Fernandez and Lastovicka, 2011; Grayson and Martinec, 2004) or “true-to-ideal authenticity” (Moulard *et al.*, 2021), this dimension stresses the importance of products fitting accepted conventions and

erving as recognizable symbols of social codes and values of a particular category (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Buhr *et al.*, 2021; Negro *et al.*, 2011). Brands that achieve this conformity often enjoy widespread recognition and legitimacy (Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Humphreys, 2010; Nunes *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, brands often promote specific features, such as production methods (Beverland, 2006; Carroll and Swaminathan, 2000), to conform to category membership and legitimacy conventions (Jasovska *et al.*, 2023).

The third dimension of authenticity identified by Lehman *et al.* (2019) relates to the concept of “connection,” underlining the relevance of products or brands being deeply rooted in specific places, traditions, or communities. For instance, Frith (1991) highlights that authentic rock music, especially after the rise of The Beatles, has closely been associated with Anglo-American cultures. Consumers often relate authenticity to products deeply tied to geographic regions, celebrating local artistry and traditions (Beverland, 2006; Peterson, 1997) and evoking a strong sense of place and a connection to a brand’s unique origin (Newman and Dahr, 2014; Nunes *et al.*, 2021). Brands that celebrate cultural heritage, family traditions, or artisanal craftsmanship particularly establish “indexical authenticity” by maintaining a profound connection to their roots (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

Scholars have mainly approached the study of authenticity from epistemological, sociological and emotional-moral aspects (Södergren, 2021). This work aligns with the first perspective, which has often adopted a semiotic perspective to investigate authenticity.

Authenticity and semiotics

In Södergren’s (2021) literature review, it is evident that the majority of marketing studies on authenticity aim to categorize cues that consumers perceive as authentic in an object, such as a brand being considered authentic for representing integrity, traditions, or places. Semiotics is, therefore, a predominant framework for exploring the multifaceted meanings associated with consumer culture and authenticity (Mick, 1986). For example, Grayson and Martinec (2004) applied Peirce’s (1998) semiotics to authenticity in tourist attractions, connecting it with indexical and iconic cues. Fernandez and Lastovicka (2011) extended this to the consumption of fetish items, like replicas of famous musical instruments, while Ewing *et al.* (2012) demonstrated its relevance in “green” products. More recently, Thompson and Kumar (2022) utilized semiotics to investigate authenticity contradictions in “conscious capitalism,” a more socially responsible form of capitalism.

Thompson and Kumar (2022) argue that semiotics, specifically the semiotic square, serves as a valuable tool for identifying anchor points in the construction and potential contestation of authenticity across various entities, such as brands and influencers. They, therefore, highlight the role of semiotics in juxtaposing authenticity against inauthenticity, revealing crucial ambiguities and conflicts. For instance, they examine how conscious capitalist brands respond to the “elitist critique,” which questions whether these brands, essentially, use sustainability rhetoric to appeal to consumers willing to pay extra for products aligned with ethical values.

In line with Thompson and Kumar (2022), I utilize the semiotic square to identify semantic relationships pertinent to authentic market offerings. However, while these authors concentrate on discerning the authentic from the inauthentic to address marketing tensions, my focus lies in delineating alternative meanings of authenticity along the global-local continuum. Grounding my investigation into global and local brand positioning (Davvetas and Halkias, 2019; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019), I explore associated contradictions, complementarities and contrarities to articulate distinct authenticity interpretations within the global-local context.

Methodology

Research context

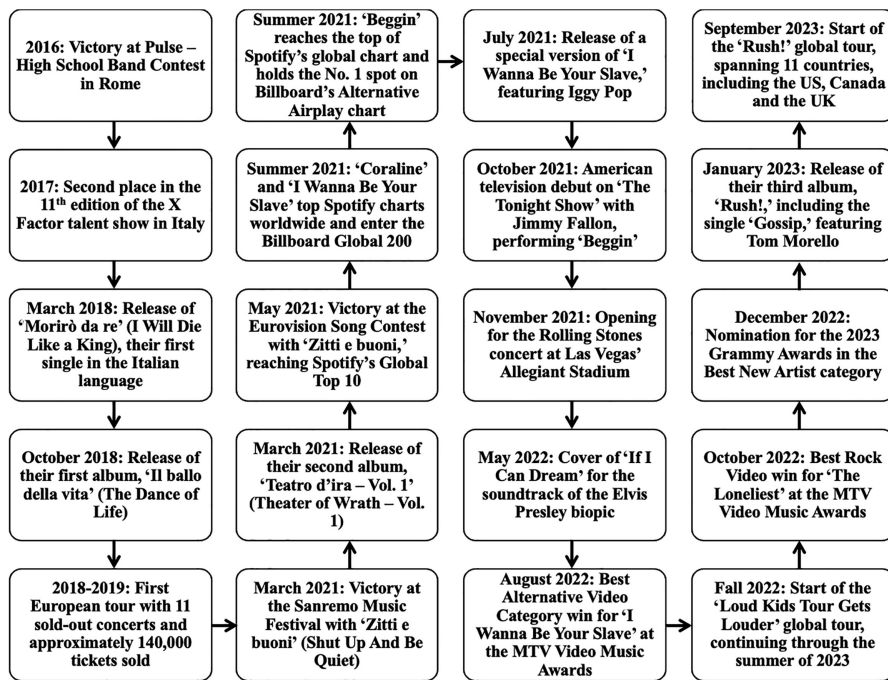
My investigation focuses on a musical band due to the considerable attention authenticity commands in the realm of celebrity brands (Ilicic and Webster, 2016) as well as music production

(Peterson, 1997) and consumption (Corciolani, 2014; Nunes *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, the music industry, despite being underexplored, is recognized for its influence on broader trends (Attali, 1985) and holds significance in globalization studies due to its ability to disseminate globally (Cruz *et al.*, 2023). Music, often acting as a blend of global and local elements, also offers a unique lens for examining the global-local dialectic (Chen, 2016; Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Yazicioglu, 2010). For example, The Beatles could be deemed a noteworthy case of a British band appropriating the rock and roll sound of Elvis Presley and various African American performers, incorporating unique elements from the emerging British beat of Liverpool and creating a mixture of global and local sounds. To this end, Hare and Baker (2017) investigated the creation of a South Korean version of hip-hop culture, witnessing that introducing various cultural markers, such as English usage or even African American slang, was crucial in authenticating hip-hop in a new cultural area. However, examining global success stories such as the two German bands, The Scorpions and Rammstein, reveals contrasting approaches – one adopting English for international appeal, the other adhering to the German language yet achieving global legitimation. New studies could, therefore, offer important insights into authenticity within the international music industry.

Måneskin, an Italian band consisting of Damiano David (vocals), Victoria De Angelis (bass guitar), Thomas Raggi (guitar) and Ethan Torchio (drums), serves as an apt case study due to its fast and exceptional global rise. Starting in 2016 with their victory in a local contest in Rome, the group gained national recognition in 2017. The release of their debut album, “Il ballo della vita” (The Dance of Life), in 2018, was already accompanied by an international tour. More importantly, in 2021, after winning the Sanremo Music Festival with the song “Zitti e buoni” (Shut Up And Be Quiet) and representing Italy at the Eurovision Song Contest, where they emerged victorious, they reached Spotify’s Global Top 10 – an unprecedented achievement for an Italian band (Povoledo, 2021). Måneskin’s rendition of “Beggin” went viral (Nugent, 2023), claiming the No. 1 spot on Billboard’s Alternative Airplay chart in the summer of 2021 (Kornhaber, 2022), and their international acclaim was further solidified with the release of a new version of “I Wanna Be Your Slave,” featuring Iggy Pop. Due to the success of these two songs, Måneskin even earned the title of the “biggest new rock band of 2021” (Brown, 2021) (see Figure 1 for a more detailed list of key events in the band’s history).

The band’s swift ascent has provoked opposing views among fans – some perceive them as a global entity, while others still view them as local musicians. This dichotomy presents a unique opportunity to understand how brands navigate the global-local continuum and the challenges they may encounter. The complexities in fan perceptions are amplified by Måneskin’s increasing focus on the American context and a growing global audience. In 2022, for instance, Måneskin achieved their second No. 1 on Billboard’s Alternative Airplay chart with the single “Supermodel” (Lamarre, 2022) and contributed to the soundtrack of the Elvis Presley biopic (Yossman, 2022). They then became the first Italian musicians to win an award at the MTV Video Music Awards (Rolling Stone Italy) and received a nomination for the 2023 Grammy Awards in the Best New Artist category (Lamarre, 2022). Notably, they increased the release of English songs to the detriment of their Italian production, leading many critics to accuse them of prioritizing mass appeal over authenticity (Nugent, 2023).

The case study gains additional significance when considering the historical challenges Italian musicians have encountered in achieving global recognition, particularly in rock music (Castaldo, 2022). However, Måneskin defied conventional narratives by positioning themselves as a “guitar band,” drawing inspiration from iconic artists such as Led Zeppelin, David Bowie and Red Hot Chili Peppers (Rolling Stone Italy). Consequently, the band’s struggle to introduce Italian rock to the United States, the country most traditionally associated with rock music (Attali, 1985; Frith, 1991; Yazicioglu, 2010), might also offer insights into the bi-directional cultural flows between central and peripheral countries (Chen, 2016), resembling processes observed in the adoption and adaptation of other cultural practices, such as yoga or coffee.



Source(s): Created by author

Figure 1.
Historical line of
Måneskin's most
significant events

In this regard, it is necessary to notice that I specifically observe Måneskin's attempt to establish themselves as a global band, with an emphasis on their pursuit of the American music market. While I acknowledge that global culture is not necessarily equivalent to American culture (i.e. the East-West dichotomy is more multifaceted than previously theorized (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Sharifonnasabi *et al.*, 2020)), I argue that this pursuit is especially significant in the realm of rock music, as it is often considered a crucial step toward achieving global recognition. Frith (1991), for instance, underscores the Anglo-American music hegemony, particularly associated with the English language and posits that success in the American market is a prerequisite for international acclaim.

Data collection

My research commenced with the construction of a robust *corpus*, inspired by Greimas and Courtès (1993), to semiotically analyze the interplay between the global and the local and their relationships with Måneskin's authenticity. I curated data from various sources, focusing on consumer online discourse, with a timeline spanning from the transformative summer of 2021 when Måneskin's cover of 'Beggin' went viral (Kornhaber, 2022) to September 2023. To ensure depth and diversity, I primarily examined Reddit, a platform known for fostering comprehensive discussions. Aligning with Cruz *et al.*'s (2023) approach, I applied a combination of general keywords (e.g. "authentic," "genuine," "originality") and specific phrases (e.g. "Italian songs," "Eurovision Song Contest," "United States") to identify relevant discussions. My analysis encompassed 171 threads (e.g. "More news for you US people," "We don't abandon Italian," "What do you think about them?") along with their associated comments and shared links from the "r/Måneskin" subreddit.

Expanding my scope, I incorporated Måneskin's official online platforms – Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Selection criteria were based on content impact measured by likes, comments and shares, with a specific focus on discussions related to my research topic. The analysis included 203 Instagram posts from Måneskin's official page, "maneskinofficial" and 117 TikTok posts from the band's official page, "therealmaneskin." Facebook contributed 74 posts from Måneskin's official page, "Måneskin," and an additional 48 posts from the "Måneskin Official Fan Club 🎸." On YouTube, I studied reactions to the 20 most popular videos on Måneskin's official page and user-generated content from other pages. Twitter data, automatically retrieved via NVivo, contributed about 1,500 tweets.

While my primary focus remained on final consumers, my pursuit of holistic insights led me to also delve into media analysis, a methodology akin to that employed by [Humphreys \(2010\)](#). On September 5, 2023, recognizing the significance of critics in shaping specific authenticity meanings (e.g. [Corciolani et al., 2020](#)), I thus downloaded articles containing the keyword "Måneskin" from the LexisNexis dataset. This dataset comprises global newspapers, newswires, magazines, journals and blogs, incorporating reputable sources such as The Independent, ANSA and Rolling Stone. Because Måneskin is an Italian band that gained international fame (especially in the United States), most of the articles about them are written in English or Italian. Therefore, I filtered articles not only by selecting those in English but also by extending to those in Italian, spanning the period from June 2021 to September 2023, and published in thematic domains like "entertainment and arts," "media and telecommunications," and "marketing and advertising." From an initial pool of approximately 3,000 documents, I selected the first 300 articles, sorted by relevance, amounting to 10% of the total. Examples of articles selected include "Måneskin: from the streets of Rome to the top of Europe" and "Is Måneskin the last rock band?" These articles were seamlessly integrated into my dataset.

To triangulate my findings across sources, I lastly conducted a Google search using the keyword "Måneskin" and examined the first 100 entries, following [Zanette and Scaraboto's \(2019\)](#) approach. This holistic strategy, combining social media, media articles and web pages, enriched my dataset and provided a comprehensive understanding. The total *corpus*, formatted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, comprised approximately 1,600 pages, laying the foundation for my in-depth analysis.

Data analysis

My interpretive analysis of consumer perceptions regarding Måneskin's brand positioning and its association with authenticity dimensions involved a careful process facilitated by NVivo. Adhering to [Spiggle's \(1994\)](#) approach, I started the analysis by coding the material – associating specific units of data (e.g. words, phrases) with broader categories of interest. During the initial review, through open analysis ([Corbin and Strauss, 2008](#)), I generated 64 first-order codes (e.g. "American icons," "childish lyrics," and "Italian songs better"), contributing potential insights to my research inquiries. This preliminary list of codes was revisited to add descriptive notes, with similar concepts merged into more abstract categories ([Miles and Huberman, 1984](#)). Following [Spiggle's \(1994\)](#) recommendations, after reaching a preliminary understanding, I collected new data (i.e. the media and web articles mentioned above) that were incorporated for similar analysis.

With a comprehensive understanding of the global-local dynamics, I conducted a subsequent review, specifically focusing on how authenticity manifests in discussions about Måneskin within the global-local dichotomy. This thorough examination helped identify authenticity dimensions such as conformity and connection. Additionally, it revealed that consistency, more prominently than the other dimensions explored, emerged in both positive and negative contexts, indicating its dual role in signaling uniqueness or (a lack of) integrity.

Refinement of the initial coding list into 11 second-order codes followed. These codes, illustrated in Table 1, represent the main topics derived from the data analysis and guided my theorization. To compile this final list, specific elements of the data (e.g. first-order codes) underwent reinterpretation, taking into account the entire dataset. This iterative process (Spiggle, 1994) played a crucial role in solidifying the notion that discussions about Måneskin often categorize the band as either global or local, giving rise to distinct authenticity dimensions and potential incongruencies.

Drawing inspiration from semiotic theory, particularly the works of Floch (2001) and Greimas (1987), I interpreted my findings by constructing Greimas's semiotic square. This fundamental tool, as highlighted by scholars such as Humphreys (2010) and Thompson and Kumar (2022), facilitates the exploration of specific categories in contrast to others. This analysis provided a structured framework to understand Måneskin's perceptions and associated authenticity dimensions within the global-local continuum.

It is essential to note that my interpretations mainly reflect consumers' views and are aligned with previous works conceptualizing authenticity as a subjective, socially constructed concept (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Lehman *et al.*, 2019; Leigh *et al.*, 2006). Accordingly, I did not employ any objective measures against which fans' perspectives are assessed, remaining consistent with the notion that authenticity is multifaceted and varies among individuals.

Findings

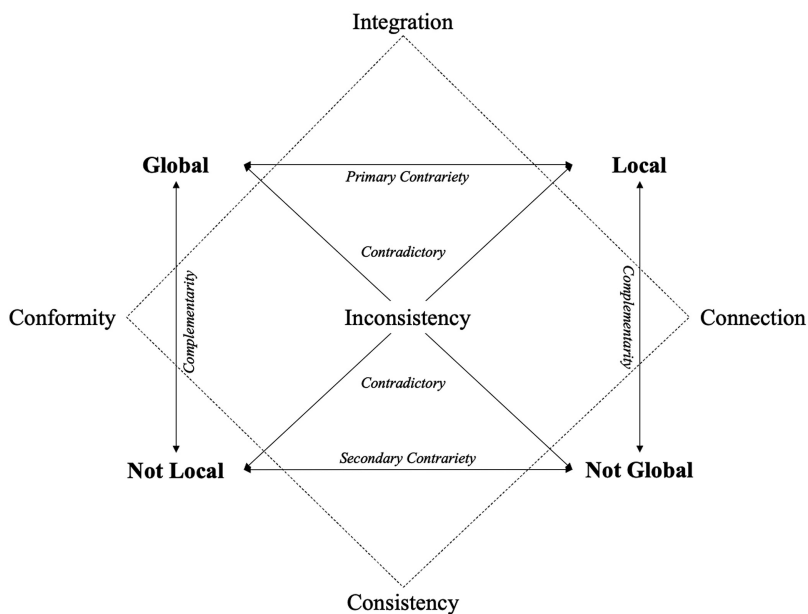
In this section, I employ the semiotic square (Greimas, 1987) as my primary analytical framework to investigate signs and symbols within domains associated with global or local cultural codes. This methodology aligns with previous studies highlighting the value of semiotics in understanding consumer culture (Mick, 1986), particularly in examining the global-local dichotomy (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Kellner, 1995; Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007). As depicted in Figure 2, I position "global" and "local" on the horizontal axis of the square. This approach facilitates the identification of the semiotic 3Cs (e.g. Thompson and Kumar, 2022): complementarity, contrariety and contradiction among "global," "local," "not global," and "not local" positions. Moreover, it aids in elucidating how these terms intersect with various authenticity meanings, such as conformity, connection and consistency.

| Category name | Exemplary words and phrases | Category frequency (Total occurrences) |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Global | Americanized vibe; Conquer America | 75 |
| Local | Italian songs are my favorite; Learn Italian because of them | 123 |
| Not global | American musical barriers; Zero airplay in America | 63 |
| Not local | Hated in Italy; Italy too conservative country for them | 92 |
| Global and local | Italianized rock; Red hot Måneskin pepper | 29 |
| Neither global nor local | Don't reduce them to languages; Whatever they make | 14 |
| Conformity | Recall; Remind; Sounds like | 136 |
| Connection | America; Local; Roots | 95 |
| Integration | Balance; Compromise; Match | 73 |
| Consistency | Atypical; Breakthrough; Unique | 92 |
| Inconsistency | Commercial; Incoherent; Sold-out | 146 |

Note(s): The frequencies of the categories are reported to provide a general understanding of the incidence of these dimensions in my sample. As my analysis relies on a qualitative interpretation of the data, I did not employ this information as a measure of the importance of these variables

Source(s): Created by author

Table 1.
Overview of main
categories



Source(s): Created by author

Figure 2.
Semiotic square
mapping of
authenticity
dimensions in the
global-local continuum

Following similar works that adopt a semiotic perspective (e.g. [Humphreys, 2010](#)), vertical arrows denote complementarity relationships between “global” and “not local” and between “local” and “not global” elements. In both instances, I show how each term is compatible with its counterpart (e.g. a “global” positioning aligns with a “not local” positioning). Subsequently, I illustrate how, in terms of authenticity, the relationship between “global” and “not local” primarily prompts discussions on *conformity*, while the relationship between “local” and “not global” elements stimulates conversations about *connection*.

Moving to horizontal arrows, I examine how terms may be defined concerning their opposites. The primary contrary relationship highlights the tension between “global” and “local,” wherein I explore how *integration* (i.e. a blend of conformity and connection) may reconcile this tension. Additionally, I differentiate how the secondary contrary relationship between “not global” and “not local” allows for *consistency* (a positioning constructed on dimensions unrelated to the global-local dichotomy). I, then, inspect diagonal arrows, which emphasize contradictory relationships between “global” and “not global” and between “local” and “not local.” In these cases, discussions about one term may prompt arguments about its opposing counterpart, leading to *inconsistency* issues. For example, a brand positioned as “local” could be criticized if non-local elements are unveiled about it.

Before proceeding, it is important to acknowledge that the various authenticity meanings I have identified in the data may also manifest in different domains beyond those described below. For instance, a follower might discuss whether Måneskin are not only more conforming but also more *connected* to global artists after sharing the same stage or participating in the same song production. However, the relationships I examine in detail, such as that between global positioning and adherence to global standards, are those that appear to be more prominent across the dataset.

Additionally, I anticipate that to support my discussion, I have incorporated selected quotations while ensuring the anonymity of the quoted individuals. All translations from Italian to English have been verified by a professional proofreader.

The complementarity relationship between “global” and “not local” and the role of conformity

Within the discussions surrounding Måneskin, a compelling complementary relationship emerges between the labels “global” and “not local.” This association is evident in consumer discourse, portraying Måneskin as a band that aligns more with global than local standards. Indeed, despite originating from Italy, a country not traditionally associated with exporting rock music, Måneskin’s music embodies American musical sensibilities, blending rock with elements of glam and punk. This fusion serves as a litmus test for their global positioning, prompting questions such as, *do Måneskin conform to global standards?*

As identified in previous studies, global positionings emphasize a product or service’s universal appeal, aiming to transcend geographical boundaries (Holt, 2002; Thompson and Tambyah, 1999) and resonate with consumers worldwide (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Steenkamp, 2019). Hence, from an authenticity perspective, GCCP appears to be potentially linked to the dimension of *conformity*, as it adheres to norms and codes of broad social categories (Lehman *et al.*, 2019). Global brands like Apple and Coca-Cola gain authenticity by aligning with commonly understood symbols, codes and values (Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Holt, 2002).

The consumers explored in this study support this perspective by evaluating Måneskin’s global positioning through comparisons of their songs to those of well-known Anglo-Saxon bands, as exemplified in a Reddit comment relating “I Wanna Be Your Slave” to hits by the Arctic Monkeys. This association underscores how followers perceive the band as authentic when they believe it produces music similar to that of other notable musicians in the same genre (i.e. “gives me huge Arctic Monkeys vibes”), which aligns with what other authors define as “iconic authenticity” (Ewing *et al.*, 2012; Fernandez and Lastovicka, 2011; Grayson and Martinec, 2004):

‘I Wanna Be Your Slave’ gives me huge Arctic Monkeys vibes, and songs like ‘Do I Wanna Know’ or ‘Brick By Brick’ are also simple, but they’re huge bangers anyway (comment to “I wanna be your slave sounds like Old yellow brick of Arctic Monkeys?” post, Reddit, July 11, 2021).

This post, notably, implies that showcasing similarities in music, style, or other attributes to iconic artists, such as the Arctic Monkeys, serves as a crucial benchmark for Måneskin’s global legitimacy aspirations. Indeed, research in social categorization shows that membership in specific categories is associated with enhanced legitimacy (Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017; Jasovska *et al.*, 2023; Negro *et al.*, 2011; Peterson, 1997).

Likewise, “Supermodel” is a track that is seen as specifically embodying (i.e. “replicating”) a rhythm popular in the United States. When evaluating this song, such musical resemblances elevate Måneskin’s global status as they align with the prevailing music trends of American bands (Frith, 1991). Another Reddit user expresses this viewpoint:

The song was an inspiration to the time that they spent in the States. [...] I wouldn’t be surprised if this song ends up on local radios but they did a really damn well job replicating that rhythm that’s so popular in the US right now (comment to “Re. People saying that Supermodel isn’t rock enough” post, Reddit, May 13, 2022).

This reference to the band’s experience in the United States confirms that authenticity, in this context, is chiefly linked to evoking a particular sound or style, which reinforces these artists’ credibility and legitimacy within the music industry. A journalist even compared Måneskin to The Beatles, who also appeared on the “iconic Tonight Show,” which – for both groups –

represented the first time on American TV. While the two bands have had different careers, each requiring analysis within its specific cultural context, the expression “emulating The Beatles,” used in the following article’s extract, is remarkable as it provides evidence that conformity to a standard is considered fundamental to evaluating Måneskin’s activities at a global level (e.g. in the United States):

Emulating the Beatles, the band made their first US TV appearance on the iconic Tonight Show, where host Jimmy Fallon announced the Stones gig (“Maneskin send NYC crowd wild in US debut,” ANSA Rome, October 28, 2021).

Aligned with perceptions of Måneskin’s adherence to global reference points (i.e. the band is regarded as “global”), as depicted in [Figure 2](#) (vertical arrow on the left side), the data *complementarily* underscore how the band’s style, linguistic choices and behaviors diverge from traditional Italian music standards (i.e. it is perceived as “not local”). Some consumers even label the band as “un-Italian,” signifying a departure from conventional Italian cultural norms or expectations, which can lead to dislike in their home country:

There are people who despise them because they are so famous or have an ‘un-Italian’ style (comment to “Måneskin haters in Italy?” post, Reddit, November 27, 2023).

How Måneskin is dissimilar from other Italian musicians is well explained in an extract from a New York Times article given below, which refers to the band’s early days. In particular, Måneskin’s win at the Sanremo Music Festival is portrayed as a significant turning point in their career. The festival is described as a national event with a preference for big melodic ballads ([Corciolani, 2014](#)), indicating that Måneskin’s rock sound was unconventional within this context. Italy, an Italian music journalist mentions, “has never had an idyllic relationship with rock music,” which makes the success of Måneskin – “a real rock band” – something that could not have been predicted:

The real surprise, for many Italian commentators, was Maneskin’s win last March at the Sanremo Festival of Italian Song, the national event that finds Italy’s Eurovision act. [. . .] ‘Nothing could be further from rock than Sanremo,’ said Massimo Cotto, an Italian music journalist and radio DJ. So there, too, Maneskin broke ground. ‘Italy has never had an idyllic relationship with rock music, it never became mainstream,’ said Andrei. ‘Maneskin’s win was unexpected, because they are a real rock band’ (‘They won Eurovision. Can they conquer the world?’ New York Times, June 16, 2021).

Beyond expressing through rock music, the divergence from Italian musical conventions extends to Måneskin’s lyrics and themes. Their songs often employ slang, swear words and insults in touching on topics such as identity, sex, difference and love. These themes and writing styles depart significantly from the traditional Italian singer-songwriter approach, which typically delves into themes like the human condition, the irrationalities of war and power, and marginalized individuals ([Santoro, 2002](#)). Accordingly, as in the next citation referring to “Supermodel,” consumers interpret Måneskin’s lyrical choices as a sign of non-conformity to Italian musical norms:

There is absolutely no way Italian songwriters wrote that, I’m sorry but no :) (comment to “Måneskin perform ‘Supermodel’ for the first time at Eurovision 2022” post, Reddit, May 14, 2022).

Moreover, although Måneskin has increased their production of songs in the English language, especially after gaining international recognition, they have, from the start, expressed themselves by using both Italian and English, in contrast to the prevalent use of Italian only in Italy. This linguistic choice, alongside other indicators, positions the band as more aligned with international than Italian models, as observed in another comment from Reddit:

Do people even realize their very first song they performed was in English?? Damiano likes writing in English. They are an international band now. Get over it!! (comment to “4 more tracks – how do you guys feel about it?” post, Reddit, January 15, 2023).

This post, notably, asserts that Måneskin is now “an international band,” indicating that their use of English contributes to their global appeal. It also urges others to “get over it,” meaning that the debate about language should not overshadow the band’s achievements or artistic decisions. This observation reflects a defense of Måneskin’s creative autonomy and freedom to express themselves in the language they feel most comfortable with, another important aspect I address below.

In summary, the complementary relationship between “global” and “not local” is delineated by various indicators that influence consumers’ perceptions of Måneskin’s music and activities. Specific signals underscore the band’s progression toward global recognition and legitimacy (Jasovska *et al.*, 2023), including their alignment with global musical trends and integration into American radio music, signifying an iconic form of authenticity (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). Concurrently, other cues suggest the band’s divergence from local Italian culture, such as their departure from Italian music, lyrical themes and language. Consumer assessments of Måneskin’s global (and not local) positioning are thus shaped by the concept of *conformity* to pertinent reference points (Lehman *et al.*, 2019), such as rock music (Frith, 1991) or Italian traditional music (Santoro, 2002).

The complementarity relationship between “local” and “not global” and the role of connection

While Måneskin’s strong alignment with global music has been widely acknowledged in the previous subsection, an opposing view also emerges from the data, suggesting that the band may not be truly global but rather local. As illustrated by the vertical arrow on the right side of Figure 2, another facet of the collected material delves into the Italian group’s local connections, associating Måneskin’s positioning with their “local” origins, while scrutinizing Måneskin’s global positioning and perceiving it as “not global.” This forms a *complementary* relationship between “local” and “not global,” which leads to questions such as: *are Måneskin connected to local roots?*

In this regard, the literature has observed how brands adopting a LCCP are mainly associated with preserving local cultures, norms and identities (Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019), resisting the homogenizing effects of globalization (Kellner, 1995; Ritzer, 2007). In terms of authenticity, this orientation seems to align with the dimension of *connection* to specific entities (Lehman *et al.*, 2019). That is, establishing links with relevant people, places, or times can represent another, key source of authenticity (Ewing *et al.*, 2012; Fernandez and Lastovicka, 2011; Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007). Grayson and Martinec (2004) particularly relate this dimension to the notion of “indexical authenticity,” wherein individuals deem an object authentic because they perceive a physical, spatiotemporal link between an entity and something valuable to them.

Many Måneskin fans, in fact, perceive their songs as deeply intertwined with the band’s narratives and heritage, forming a tangible link between the music and personal experiences. This connection, often synonymous with authenticity, is particularly pronounced in their Italian songs, which are viewed as sincere reflections of Måneskin members’ “stories and roots.” This sentiment is exemplified in comments such as:

Their Italian songs definitely deserve more acclaim and charting. Amazing on all aspects-lyrically, sonically, instrumentally. And I feel that they better show their stories and roots (comment to “r/popheads Album of the Year #33: Måneskin – Teatro d’Ira – Vol. I” post, Reddit, February 10, 2022).

The previous observation underscores the significance of Måneskin's Italian tracks, suggesting that they enable the artists to express themselves more profoundly, resonating genuinely with fans. In line with [Grayson and Martinec's \(2004\)](#) concept of "perceived evidence," which suggests that consumers may seek proof of a connection between an object and people, places, or times, fans sharing this perspective notably express a strong desire to uncover the real-life inspirations behind Måneskin's Italian songs. As illustrated in the following comment, they are particularly keen to determine whether the lyrics authentically portray the stories of actual places or individuals:

I've seen a Tik Tok about in which order Marlena's story is told. The name is mentioned in a couple of Måneskin songs, especially Italian ones. I don't speak Italian so I was wondering if anybody could explain the story here in English (comment to "r/Marlena's story" post, Reddit, February 10, 2022).

The previous quotation underscores the challenge posed by the language barrier, significantly hindering fans from diverse linguistic backgrounds from fully engaging with the music ([Chen, 2016](#)). However, it also sheds light on an intriguing aspect of the band's debut album: the inclusion of lyrics referencing a woman named "Marlena." For instance, in the song "Torna a casa" (Come Back Home), Damiano David passionately calls out to Marlena, prompting questions about her significance in the real lives of Måneskin members. Despite the band clarifying that Marlena is not a real person but rather a symbol of their music's central message – an ideal of freedom and creativity – fans continue to feel attached to her. This indicates, as demonstrated by [Grayson and Martinec \(2004\)](#) regarding Sherlock Holmes, that even connections to fictional characters or places can hold significant meaning for consumers. The notion expressed in the subsequent excerpt, that Marlena is "here forever, with all of us," also suggests a collective bond ([Leigh et al., 2006](#)) among fans who share the band's creative vision, experiencing the music as a communal and enduring presence in their lives:

I like to think Marlena never leaves. She is in all of their albums, Rush as well. Maybe she becomes more abstracted as they get older, but she is the creative essence who will fuel them for their entire lives. So don't worry. Marlena is here forever, with all of us (comment to "r/Marlena's story" post, Reddit, February 10, 2022).

Other fans similarly believe that the song "Coraline," from the band's second album, "Teatro d'ira – Vol. 1" (Theater of Wrath – Vol. 1), could recount the real story of the singer's girlfriend. In the next instance, a follower provides her understanding of the song, suggesting that it may be inspired by the singer's girlfriend and her experiences with "chronic pelvic pain:"

The song is about his gf, and I believe it's meant to be about her struggles with chronic pelvic pain and whatnot. She's super strong ... I seriously admire her so so so much (comment to "Coraline theory" post, Reddit, December 12, 2022).

This interpretation highlights the emotional connection that listeners can develop with the themes presented in music. Moreover, it denotes an attempt to decode the meaning behind the lyrics by drawing connections to real-world locations and searching for the genuine essence of musicians ([Beverland, 2006](#); [Newman and Dhar, 2014](#)). To this end, the lyrics of "Coraline" are also appreciated for their rich direct links to real-life experiences and connections to Rome, the city of Måneskin:

I heard somewhere that the verse about the walls is about one of the cemeteries in Rome or something like that (comment to "Coraline theory" post, Reddit, December 12, 2022).

Consistently with this view, certain commentators claim that the band struggles to become global because, while it authentically expresses its cultural roots (i.e. it is local), it lacks a significant connection to American music and culture (i.e. it is not global), which is crucial for

achieving worldwide music prominence. Music experts, for instance, have frequently criticized Måneskin, citing Italy's lack of recognition in the rock music genre. As given in the following quotation, they show their lack of appreciation by mentioning that Italy is more associated with luxury goods and cultural exports than with rock music:

In Italy, known more for exporting wine, cheese, Ferraris and designer fashions, not rock bands, Maneskin's 'I Wanna Be Your Slave' was getting nearly 300,000 streams ("Rockers enjoy blurring stereotypes," Telegraph Herald, August 8, 2021).

Some even question the band's level of familiarity with American music and society. An incident that drew substantial criticism was their performance of a song in the film "Elvis" which did not give any expression of condolences or sentiment following the death of Lisa Marie Presley, Elvis Presley's daughter, in January 2023. Disenchanted critics argued that this omission suggests that Måneskin participated in the movie production without a genuine connection to American culture and its people. Negative sentiments from consumers on this issue were quite explicit in comments such as: "No word for Lisa Marie Presley, thanks to Elvis you walked the Cannes red carpet, shame on you . . ." or "Not a single line in remembrance for Lisa Marie Presley: what a disappointment you are!" (comments to "A dream come true * #ElvisMovie #TCB" post, Instagram, May 24, 2022).

In summary, the assessment of Måneskin's positioning as either "local" or "not global" is heavily influenced by the notion of *connection* (Lehman *et al.*, 2019; Nunes *et al.*, 2021). While their English songs are typically discussed in terms of conformity with similar music, their Italian songs are celebrated for their deep connections to personal stories and Italian places, containing the real essence of the artists' life experiences (Newman and Dhar, 2014). As similarly noted by other authors (e.g. Fernandez and Lastovicka, 2011), authenticity evaluations may rely on acknowledging objective or symbolic links between an entity and valuable people, places, or times. Therefore, the evaluation of Måneskin's positioning as local relates to perceiving the evidence of meaningful connections with their local Italian roots and cultural identities, establishing an indexical link between the music and their actual lives (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). This observation is complemented by the acknowledgment that the band encounters numerous challenges in establishing a connection to American music and culture.

The primary contrary relationships between "global" and "local" and the role of integration

The tension arising from assessing Måneskin as either a global (not local) or a local (not global) band prompts a view that acknowledges a fusion of both elements, potentially resolving the *primary contrary* relationship introduced above (illustrated by the horizontal arrow at the top of Figure 2). In fact, while in the previous subsections, the concepts of "global" and "local" appeared to be perceived in competition with each other, an *integration* between the two concepts is also found in the data. This perspective interrogates the band's ability to combine global and local influences, inspiring questions like: *can Måneskin conform to global standards while remaining connected to local roots?*

Numerous fans, for instance, applaud Måneskin's worldwide success and understand the significance of producing English songs to maintain a presence in the global music scene. Nevertheless, they advocate for a better balance between global and local elements, suggesting that retaining an adequate number of Italian tracks would allow the band to strike a more harmonious fusion between global and local perspectives. A fan discussing Måneskin's forthcoming third album, "Rush!," precisely expressed the need for a good combination of English and Italian songs to cater to both international and Italian audiences:

I honestly hope it's still a mix of both; the songs in English are very important so that they can keep an active presence in international media. Even though the ones in English are a lot less impactful than the ones in Italian, personal favorites: 'Coraline' and 'Torna a Casa' (comment to "Hold on for a second 🍷🍷" post, Reddit, October 31, 2022).

This viewpoint indicates an appreciation for the band's ability to appeal to both international and domestic audiences, aligning with previous research focusing on "glocalization," which illustrates how brands can effectively position themselves between the GCCP and the LCCP, combining both perspectives. For instance, [Steenkamp and De Jong \(2010\)](#) explored consumer attitudes toward global products (AGP) and local products (ALP), associating the "homogenization" condition (characterized by consumers with high AGP and low ALP) with GCCP and the "localization" condition (low AGP and high ALP) with LCCP. They then identified two possible intermediate conditions: "glocalization" (high AGP and high ALP) and "glalienation" (low AGP and low ALP), which I address in the next subsection. Regarding glocalization, as also shown in studies on coffee ([Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007](#); [Thompson and Arsel, 2004](#)), yoga ([Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012](#); [Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017](#)) and music domains ([Hare and Baker, 2017](#); [Yazicioglu, 2010](#)), offering authenticity may present particular challenges for brands. As observed in the previous comment, consumers themselves recognize the delicate balancing act Måneskin faces in navigating their positioning across the global-local continuum ([Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019](#)).

One example of successfully striking this balance is apparent in the production of "Beggin," Måneskin's rendition of a song originally written by Italian-Americans that was already popular in the United States. Fans noted that, by revisiting this song, the Italian band maintained a *connection* with its original culture while also gaining exposure and *conforming* to a larger, global audience:

'Beggin' is a song most Americans know because it was written and performed by Italian Americans. My parents used to go see the group. I've known this song my whole life as it was made before I was born. Pretty much anyone who has a boomer in their life knows it. This is also the song they submitted for Grammy consideration. It opens them up to a broad audience on their first trip here (comment to "Yeah, beggin for them to be able to perform one of their original songs" post, Reddit, October 26, 2021).

Similarly, fans interpret Måneskin's positioning in the current music landscape as something in-between global music stars, such as Maroon 5 or Red Hot Chili Peppers, and local Italian music. They recognize Måneskin's musical identity while also noting some resemblance to American bands. One fan, for instance, commented: "#Maneskin is Italian #Maroon5, and I mean that in a good way" (comment to Twitter's post, March 3, 2023). Other supporters humorously label them as "Red hot Maneskin pepper," underlining their resemblance to the American band, yet stressing their distinctive style. In line with previous studies that delved into the intricate interplay between global and local influences on consumer culture ([Chen, 2016](#); [Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019](#)), these perceptions about Måneskin confirm how globalization can foster increased cultural heterogeneity, rather than homogeneity. Using the expression "Red hot Maneskin pepper" effectively conveys the idea of a band that differs from either the original Red Hot Chili Peppers and a strictly Italian band.

Journalists also acknowledge the efforts the band has made to define its specific sound. The following extract explains how, although Måneskin is reminiscent of Anglo-Saxon music, it incorporated Italian elements, such as acoustic guitars, in their music:

Their musical and visual elements feel reminiscent of seventies bands, like Queen, Fleetwood Mac, and ABBA. Everything that Måneskin has, including De Angelis's punchy bassline in 'Niente da dire' [Nothing to Say], Torchio's relentless drums in the Eurovision-winning 'Zitti e buoni,' and David's salacious flirtations while singing, all scream seventies rock. [. . .] Simultaneously, the band manages to include Italian elements in some of their songs, giving their discography a unique sound.

Emotional songs like ‘Torna a casa’ and ‘Coraline’ use more acoustic instruments, similar to the sounds of Italian folk songs (“From X Factor Italy to Winning Eurovision,” *The Spectator*, September 11, 2021).

As various authors have observed (Beverland, 2006; Leigh *et al.*, 2006; Nunes *et al.*, 2021), authenticity assessments can be guided by the integration of different dimensions, such as conformity to global elements (e.g. being “reminiscent of seventies bands like Queen, Fleetwood Mac and ABBA”) and local connections (e.g. using “acoustic instruments” and sounds evocative of “Italian folk songs”). In this sense, the previous extract parallels Peterson’s (1997) seminal analysis of Waylon Jennings’s fusion of a unique musical style, cowboy aesthetic and hillbilly roots.

In summary, while the previous subsections delved into the concepts of conformity and connection, we observe that in examining the contrasting relationship between Måneskin’s “global” and “local” dimensions, fans recognize the concept of *integration* between these two opposing categories. This echoes studies on how GCCP and LCCP may be combined from a “glocal” perspective (Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017; Steenkamp and De Jong, 2010). In fact, an appropriate balance of global and local identities, as shown in the production of “Beggin” or the original blend of rock music with Italian traditions, is particularly valued, aiding the band in navigating the global-local dialectic (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019). This notion also aligns with previous contributions that explore the interplay between global and local influences on consumer culture, identify intermediate positions and challenge traditional models of globalization (Chen, 2016; Sharifonnasabi *et al.*, 2020).

The secondary contrary relationships between “not global” and “not local” and the role of consistency

While in the previous subsection, I examined how the tension between Måneskin’s global and local positionings could be resolved by integrating conformity to global standards and local connections into a glocal positioning, I now explore a different perspective on Måneskin’s music that challenges the binary classification of global or local. This viewpoint portrays the band as neither strictly global nor local. As depicted by the horizontal line at the top of Figure 2, the *secondary contrary* relationship between “not global” and “not local” may become salient in followers’ discussions, unveiling an alternative way to transcend the global-local dichotomy, involving the dimension of *consistency*. In this case, the question guiding consumers’ perceptions does not involve references to global or local attributes; instead, it appears as: *are Måneskin something unique?*

As an example of how the Italian rock band may be associated with both “not global” and “not local” labels, in the following post, a critical consumer argues that the band has currently moved away from its genuine origin (i.e. “they are a very contrived band now”), without being very popular in America, either. Casting doubt on the band’s global status, the comment suggests that despite Måneskin’s efforts to *sell out* to the American market, they have not been successful in attracting American audiences:

They are a very contrived band now and they are not at all popular in North America. Their ticket sales are not good. Every show has thousands of tickets left. They kind of sold out to America and America wasn’t buying (comments to “Sooooo here’s what’s sure to be a controversial take, tho it shouldn’t really be. Rush kinda sucks” post, Reddit, May 9, 2023).

Noteworthy perspectives also emerge regarding Måneskin’s production in Italian versus English language, where some fans argue that the quality and significance of a song transcend the language in which it is written. They emphasize that lyrics are just one component of a track, and beyond whether they are in English (suggesting a global

positioning) or in Italian (indicating a local positioning), factors such as melody and rhythm also contribute significantly to its overall impact:

I included this question cuz I've seen a lot of people on here say their English stuff isn't as good as their Italian music. Personally I don't think it's a huge difference, their stuff is great either way. I do think their lyrics are better in Italian, but their English songs are still great lyrically and lyrics aren't all there is to a song (comment to "r/popheads Album of the Year #33: Måneskin – Teatro d'Ira – Vol. I" post, Reddit, February 10, 2022).

The previous comment acknowledges that there is extensive discussion on Reddit regarding the quality of Måneskin's English music compared to their Italian music. The author of this post, however, appreciates the band's music regardless of the language in which it is performed, which might represent a form of "glalienation," a term used by scholars to describe individuals who are disengaged from either global or local discourses (Steenkamp and De Jong, 2010). Studies have indicated that these subjects typically lack interest and have weak identification with both global and local communities. Yet, previous contributions did not specifically address whether these unengaged consumers resist consumption practices or anti-globalization efforts (Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019). In the domain explored in this study, I observe how some consumers, while not appearing consumption-resistant or anti-global, seem to contrast with those who firmly classify Måneskin as necessarily "global" or "local." They appreciate the band but do not simply align their evaluations with this distinction.

Since glalienation can be associated with the refusal of any symbols of culture, whether global or local (Steenkamp, 2019), in terms of authenticity, this perspective may go beyond the concepts of conformity, connection, or integration. More related to Lehman *et al.*'s (2019) concept of *consistency*, it could be linked to the idea of expressing a unique personality, unrelated to any standards or connections. It might be within this viewpoint that some followers resist the ongoing interrogation of the band's language choice. Instead, they defend Måneskin's right to select the language that resonates with them the most and express their preference for the band's music irrespective of linguistic issues.

This perspective becomes evident when consumers evaluate Måneskin's live performances. Some fans, in fact, believe that the quality of the band's live shows transcends the language of the songs. They find value in the band's musical features and their ability to establish a link with the audience during concerts, regardless of whether the songs are in Italian or English:

I wouldn't necessarily associate non Italian songs with soulless, for me 'For Your Love' is incredible and 'The Loneliest' is also very solid and quite emotional. Goes to show that it depends on the song as well and not only the language (comment to "Hold on for a second 🍷🍷" post, Reddit, October 31st, 2022).

Likewise, other comments highlight these musicians' talent in creating a unique sound, which is hardly comparable to that of other bands. The next extract reflects a fan's profound appreciation for Måneskin's music, emphasizing their unique qualities, impressive musical abilities and the emotional impact their music has on him:

My dad even likes this song (and that says a lot!) He actually likes Måneskin because they're not that "cookie-cutter" typical band. Lyrics, melodies, the sound. They're incredible! Måneskin is my absolute favorite band of all time (and I absolutely LOVE music – it's the biggest part of my soul) I CANNOT get over how fucking awesome Thomas' solo is!!! (comment to "Holy Shit 'The Loneliest' is such a banger" post, Reddit, October 7, 2022).

The expression "not-cookie-cutter," used in this quotation, is particularly interesting as it praises Måneskin for not conforming to the standard mold of a typical band. Notably, the idea

of appearing consistent, in the specific sense of *unique*, is often explored in the literature on authenticity (Moulard *et al.*, 2021; Nunes *et al.*, 2021), particularly concerning celebrity brands (Ilicic and Webster, 2016) or musicians (Peterson, 1997). A band, or a brand more generally, could indeed be perceived as authentic because it “is thought not to be a copy or an imitation” (Grayson and Martinec, 2004, p. 297). In this regard, appearing unusual without having any relationship with global or local reference points could be a strength, aiding the brand in creating a distinct positioning. Another Måneskin follower, consistently, expresses support for their creative freedom, prioritizing their “unique vibe” over the language in which they sing:

It's fine to hope for anything, in fact I do too because Italian is my favourite language! But I can't help but roll my eyes every time this discussion comes on because it happens so often, you know? And I think it's more than fair to grant a group of 20 year olds some creative freedom. I think as long as they have that extraordinary, sassy, unique vibe to them I'll be happy with whatever they make (comment to “Hold on for a second 🍷🍷🍷” post, Reddit, October 31, 2022).

In summary, a subgroup of fans challenges the secondary contrary relationship between “not global” and “not local,” reminiscent of the concept of “glalienation” (Steenkamp, 2019). They particularly resist the continued scrutiny of the band's language choice, supporting Måneskin's right to select the language that resonates with them. Authenticity, in this context, is mainly linked to the idea of *consistency* (Lehman *et al.*, 2019): a brand's uniqueness (Ilicic and Webster, 2016) and lack of direct associations with global or local reference points. Notably, the fusion between “not global” and “not local” appears as another way to overcome the global-local conflict, offering an alternative to the integration of global and local (i.e. glocal) illustrated in the previous subsection.

The contradictory relationships between “global” and “not global” and between “local” and “not local,” and the role of consistency

In the final subsection of the findings, I delve into the two *contradictory* relationships that may emerge between “global” and “not global,” as well as between “local” and “not local” positions, as illustrated by the diagonal arrows in Figure 2. The data, in fact, indicate that consumers often highlight the perceived contradictions between a local positioning and actions that do not align with *purely* local behaviors, or conversely, between a global positioning and behaviors that do not appear *genuinely* global. From an authenticity perspective, these discussions lead to questioning the band's *consistency*, but in a different way from that explored in the previous subsection. While above, consistency was associated with *uniqueness*, here, consistency is put into question due to a perceived lack of *integrity*, bringing up questions such as: *are Måneskin true to themselves?*

A frequently discussed topic that underscores the potential challenges arising from a perceived contradiction revolves around fans' evaluation of the band's growing emphasis on English-language songs (deemed “not local”) at the expense of their Italian repertoire (representing their “local” identity). Detractors are particularly concerned that Måneskin's pursuit of American radio airtime might lead to a significant departure from their style, making it difficult to distinguish their music from other mainstream American acts. This view is exemplified in the next post, which indicates a desire to preserve the authenticity of the band's music, suggesting that fans value artistic integrity over commercial success or mainstream appeal:

I'm just worried that their stuff is going to turn away from their style. I don't want them to get more concentrated on pleasing the American radio stations (comment to “Holy Shit ‘The Loneliest’ is such a banger” post, Reddit, October 7, 2022).

This tension echoes concerns identified in the literature, according to which global brands may overshadow local cultures, raising questions about the loss of cultural authenticity and diversity (Davvetas and Halkias, 2019; Kellner, 1995; Ritzer, 2007). Therefore, while moving toward a GCCP and conforming to perceived norms of quality, innovation and reliability (Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Jasovska *et al.*, 2023), Måneskin could lose their relevant and appreciated links to places, people and traditions (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Thompson and Arsel, 2004). This issue became remarkably pronounced after Måneskin's victory in the Eurovision Song Contest. Primarily, this achievement increased the band's chances of international popularity. However, while this accomplishment elevated their global status, it also raised significant questions about the musicians' consistency.

In this regard, the literature on brand authenticity has extensively documented how, beyond appearing unique, consistency also importantly relates to being honest, sincere and disinterested in commercial success (Beverland, 2006; Holt, 2002; Lehman *et al.*, 2019; Morhart *et al.*, 2015), which becomes crucial for human brands or celebrities (Ilicic and Webster, 2016), and can easily be undermined if consumers perceive that a brand has sold out (Corciolani, 2014; Frake, 2017). In another post reported below, a fan acknowledges that, after releasing "Teatro d'ira – Vol. 1," their second album (during the same period as their Eurovision victory), Måneskin, unfortunately, shifted toward producing "unauthentic" and inexpressive (i.e. "soulless") music:

I really, really hope we'll finally get more Italian songs. Everything after Teatro d'ira was just so unauthentic and soulless (comment to "Hold on for a second 🙏🙏🙏" post, Reddit, October 31, 2022).

This comment reflects a strong desire for Måneskin to return to their origins and produce music that resonates more authentically with their Italian identity, suggesting a preference for songs that evoke a sense of soulfulness and emotional depth. Accordingly, the increasing focus on the American market has attracted significant scrutiny due to the strategy's adoption of producing more songs in English. On the one hand, language barriers are a key challenge to be addressed in cultural industries' strategies for penetrating global markets (Chen, 2016). On the other hand, it is unusual for an Italian band to prioritize the English language over Italian, which is perceived as diverging from a local identity. Critics, specifically, argue that this approach could dilute their style and distance them from their roots. Moreover, as noted in the following excerpt, while Italian songs are associated with high quality and deep emotions, English ones are viewed as more "shallow" and superficial:

I'm afraid there will be more English songs, and I feel like they will lean into the sexual part more. I might be biased since I am Italian, but I think the Italian songs are a lot better. I personally find lyrics quite important, and Damiano David is definitely an amazing songwriter. Unfortunately, I feel like their English songs are a lot more shallow and the lyricism is lost. I just bleached my hair so I guess blonde girl haha (comment to "popheads Album of the Year #33: Måneskin – Teatro d'Ira – Vol. 1" post, Reddit, February 10, 2022).

It is thus apparent that fans harbor significant concerns regarding the escalating focus on the American market, fearing that it may not only yield more English songs but also precipitate a profound shift in the band's identity. For instance, there is apprehension that Måneskin might increasingly prioritize physical appearances and sex appeal – qualities often associated with international success – over the thematic depth conveyed through their lyrics. Consequently, the positioning cultivated through connections with local culture may be perceived as inconsistent, as it would seemingly prioritize global adaptation over maintaining local authenticity.

Måneskin's transition to English-language songs highlights the negative perceptions surrounding the band's pursuit of global recognition and the potential compromise of their local identity. However, even in a brand positioning primarily focused on conforming to

global standards, contradictions may arise, undermining the trustworthiness associated with it. [Cayla and Arnould \(2008\)](#), among others, emphasize the significance of maintaining a consistent brand identity for achieving and preserving global recognition. While less common in Måneskin's case, instances may occur where the band appears to be pretending to be "global" but leans more toward a "not-really-global" style. A notable example arises when, as some commentators argue, they exhibit limitations in singing proficiently in English. The singer is especially criticized for not mastering English singing perfectly, with some songs' lyrics even containing grammatical errors:

The lead singer doesn't speak a lick of English, and the music is a kind of cringe conventional rock. People hate on Måneskin because they are making English music with a terrible accent and mistakes in grammar (comment to "What is it with "rock" fans not liking Maneskin?" post, Reddit, August 7, 2021).

This post characterizes Måneskin's English-language music as "cringe conventional rock," indicating a strongly negative perception of their musical style and suggesting that some listeners may find their English-language songs less authentic or appealing compared to their Italian-language repertoire. Dissatisfaction is also expressed toward the lead singer's "Roman" accent, which is still audible when he sings in English, confirming that his inflection may affect the band's genuineness, particularly when not performing in their native language:

I don't think he has good pronunciation; you can hear the Roman accent right away. For English, just study with a native speaker teacher (comment in Facebook's "Måneskin Official Fan Club👉," August 29, 2021; translated from Italian).

In summary, these excerpts illuminate the potential challenges stemming from perceived contradictions in brand positioning along the global-local continuum and accentuate the significance of *consistency* in this regard ([Lehman et al., 2019](#)). Although Måneskin's case study offers more insights into the local-to-global path and related incongruencies (e.g. a lack of integrity perceived due to their language choice in songs), maintaining a consistent brand identity seems to be crucial for brands aiming to be perceived as authentic, regardless of whether they adopt GCCP or LCCP. Consistency may, indeed, involve not only an individual (or brand) being true to itself ([Holt, 2002](#); [Ilicic and Webster, 2016](#); [Morhart et al., 2015](#)) but also *remaining* true over time ([Corciolani, 2014](#)).

Discussion

Theoretical implications

This study's primary contribution lies in expanding our understanding of international marketing theory by clarifying the construct of authenticity and delineating its key dimensions within the context of global-local dynamics. Beyond showing that authenticity is inherently multifaceted (e.g. [Nunes et al., 2021](#)) and involves negotiations among various stakeholders, such as journalists and fans ([Corciolani et al., 2020](#); [Peterson, 1997](#)), I address potential conceptual ambiguities arising from these diverse meanings. To achieve this goal, I propose a structured framework that integrates various authenticity dimensions within a unique theoretical space. This approach not only enhances clarity in defining authenticity but also provides a more "context-specific" conceptualization, aligning with [Lehman et al.'s \(2019, p. 28\)](#) recommendation to consider the situated definitions of this construct "within dynamic cultural contexts" where consumers evaluate it.

Specifically, through an analysis of the dialectical relationship between the global and the local ([Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019](#); [Lévi-Strauss, 1978](#)), I contribute to unveil the diverse meanings assumed by authenticity within the global-local continuum. Considering the

dimensions identified by [Steenkamp and De Jong \(2010\)](#) based on levels of AGP and ALP, conformity emerges as a critical variable for brands in the “homogenization” condition (characterized by consumers with high AGP and low ALP). Māneskin serves as an exemplar, perceived as a global brand closely aligned with conformity to global norms within their social category. In contrast, in the “localization” condition (low AGP, high ALP), connection takes precedence, portraying the band as a local brand with genuine ties to specific cultural entities. Brands in the “glocalization” condition (high AGP, high ALP) should aim to integrate both authenticity dimensions, while positioning in the “glalienation” scenario (low AGP, low ALP) may be guided by consistency.

The present research can, therefore, contribute to a reconsideration of previous works, such as those discussing the evolution of yoga in the Western world, which presented slightly different perspectives on authenticity. For instance, [Askegaard and Eckhardt’s \(2012\)](#) study could be interpreted as suggesting that the global adoption of yoga, owing to its *integration* between Eastern and Western elements, is deemed authentic. On the other hand, [Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur’s \(2017\)](#) research, along with Gandhi’s purist stance, may relate to the perception of a potential loss of authenticity in the hybridization of yoga in the West, attributed to a lack of *connection* with its Indian version. While both articles address authenticity within the global-local continuum, the specific dimensions they explore may conceptually differ and be associated with diverse literature streams.

Another contribution of this article is to provide further insights into the relationships between different authenticity meanings, which is one of the elements of major interest according to various scholars in this field ([Buhr et al., 2021](#); [Lehman et al., 2019](#)). [Nunes et al. \(2021\)](#), for instance, addressed various potential tensions among alternative authenticity dimensions (e.g. conformity versus consistency), while [Fernandez and Lastovicka \(2011\)](#) examined how different meanings (e.g. connection and conformity) can reinforce one another. In the domain explored in this article, several relationships among authenticity dimensions emerge as a result of semiotic analysis. As depicted in [Figure 2](#), conformity to global standards and local connections represent two distinct and possibly conflicting brand positionings. When Māneskin aim to establish a global positioning, their assessment predominantly revolves around their conformity to these global norms ([Jasovska et al., 2023](#)), potentially indicating iconic authenticity ([Grayson and Martinec, 2004](#); [Peterson, 1997](#)). Conversely, in their pursuit of a local positioning, they are primarily evaluated based on their connections to local roots ([Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007](#); [Newman and Dhar, 2014](#)), signaling indexical authenticity ([Grayson and Martinec, 2004](#)). Consequently, these two alternatives represent distinct brand positionings and an emphasis on one (e.g. conformity to global standards) tends to diminish the association with the other (e.g. connections to local places).

While the semiotic framework enabled the identification of a conflict between conformity and connection, it also suggests how this tension could be resolved through the integration of these two dimensions, characteristic of glocal positionings. This study, therefore, contributes to previous research that explored the expansion of global phenomena like coffee ([Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007](#); [Thompson and Arsel, 2004](#)), yoga ([Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012](#); [Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur, 2017](#)) and music consumption ([Hare and Baker, 2017](#); [Yazicioglu, 2010](#)) across regions. In particular, by providing evidence of how cultural heterogeneity can emerge from the interplay between global and local influences, it aligns with investigations into cultural products originating in specific geographic areas, such as K-pop, which then extend to global markets ([Chen, 2016](#); [Cruz et al., 2021](#)). Māneskin’s case serves as a compelling example of how a local brand can transition to a convincing glocal positioning only by maintaining relevant references to local culture in its emerging global identity (e.g. the integration of the international with the native language appears to be key).

Furthermore, I found that the dichotomy between global and local might even be overlooked, as brands could be positioned neither as global nor local. This aspect is

particularly interesting considering that various authors have deemed globalization worthy of more attention. Steenkamp and De Jong (2010), for instance, observed that it can be not so infrequent to find consumers alienated from both global and local consumer culture, which makes it important to understand how brands should be positioned to target these individuals. I argue that, for brands navigating the global-local continuum, there may also be value in cultivating consistency (Nunes *et al.*, 2021; Peterson, 1997). Embracing uniqueness and distinctiveness, rather than conforming to global norms, connecting to local cultures, or integrating both of them, can become a strategic consideration to build a different type of authenticity that aligns with individuals disengaged from global or local discourses.

Finally, I offer potential insights into the temporal dimension of authenticity, a crucial aspect highlighted by Lehman *et al.* (2019) for future research in this field. They argue that authenticity is sometimes perceived as a permanent concept, while at other times, it emerges through continuous evolution or tension between contradictions. Specifically, changes in authenticity perceptions may stem from shifts in its conceptualization. For instance, Frake (2017) demonstrated how craft brewers, initially seen as *conforming* to a specific category, came to be viewed as *inconsistent* after commercial success. I expand on this idea by noting how *connections* may also give way to evaluations of *inconsistency* as international expansion takes place. In the case of Måneskin, targeting the American market led to a diminishing connection with its local culture, shifting consumer perceptions from local connections to inconsistency. Thus, it appears that consistency may assume a dual role, standing out among the other dimensions explored. While it is positively linked with *uniqueness*, it also frequently emerges in discussions that lead to negative evaluations. Brands may encounter criticism when consistency is questioned, especially if they were expected to embody specific values—such as conformity in Frake's (2017) study or connection in this research—but deviate from them, potentially implying a *lack of integrity*. Reflecting on the insightful inquiry posed by Lehman *et al.* (2019) regarding the constancy or evolution of authenticity, I therefore suggest that authenticity tensions may primarily arise from the challenges brands face in establishing and maintaining *consistency* over time.

Managerial implications

The case study of Måneskin offers valuable managerial insights into authenticity and brand positioning on both global and local scales. While some studies have suggested that global brands achieve authenticity through standardization and shared meanings (Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019), authenticity is also related to local brands due to their connection with local culture (Alden *et al.*, 1999; Chen, 2016; Steenkamp and De Jong, 2010). I contribute to transcending this binary opposition (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Davvetas and Halkias, 2019; Nijssen and Douglas, 2011) by illustrating how brands can dynamically position themselves along the entire global-local continuum while associating their positioning with the most appropriate authenticity dimension. This approach aligns with recent literature advocating for a more holistic understanding of brand authenticity (Bartsch *et al.*, 2021; Morhart *et al.*, 2015; Moulard *et al.*, 2021; Nunes *et al.*, 2021), particularly emphasizing the significance of regional and cultural factors as crucial determinants of authenticity perceptions (Carroll and Swaminathan, 2000).

For managers and artists expanding into international markets, I specifically emphasize the challenge of harmonizing global appeal with local authenticity, with language choices significantly impacting a brand's perceived authenticity (Chen, 2016; Hare and Baker, 2017; Yazicioglu, 2010). From my findings, adherence to established global standards emerges as a key factor in pursuing a global strategy. In the music industry, this might involve adapting musical styles to conform to prevailing global trends (Buhr *et al.*, 2021; Jasovska *et al.*, 2023; Negro *et al.*, 2011). Music managers could also consider the global familiarity of certain tracks

and strategically use covers of these songs to gain international exposure. Conversely, a local approach prioritizes cultivating connections to specific cultural entities, often involving the preservation of the local language (Beverland, 2006; Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Newman and Dhar, 2014). In the music industry, this insight encourages the inclusion of more cultural references in songs (Page and Dalla Riva, 2023). Moreover, songwriting in the native language may foster a deeper emotional connection.

Conformity and connection could then be merged to develop a glocal approach (Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012; Kjeldgaard and Ostberg, 2007; Thompson and Arsel, 2004). A powerful strategy in the music industry may involve blending global musical styles with local cultural elements, drawing from personal experiences and cultural references. Another approach can include evenly balancing the number of songs released in global and local languages. While English songs contribute to global visibility, retaining a significant portion of native language tracks should help maintain a connection with the local audience. Moreover, a positioning based on consistency could extend beyond language, encompassing other aspects not directly related to it. In the music industry, this might involve creating a unique musical sound or delivering impactful live experiences, as performances play a crucial role in establishing a direct connection with audiences, emphasizing the universal language of music.

In selecting among these strategies, maintaining consistency, in the sense of integrity, is essential in preventing negative consumer reactions (Beverland, 2006; Corciolani, 2014; Holt, 2002; Nunes *et al.*, 2021). Due to their rapid international growth, Måneskin has, in fact, been associated with various, sometimes inconsistent meanings, occasionally leading to undesirable feedback. While evolution is natural, it is crucial to implement changes gradually, avoiding sudden and drastic shifts that may confuse the audience. Developing the band's sound, style and image in a manner that feels like a natural progression could facilitate better acceptance by fans. Additionally, by particularly considering the tension between artistic integrity and commercial success, leveraging social media to sincerely interact with the audience – by sharing behind-the-scenes glimpses, personal insights and updates – could further reinforce the brand's narrative and perceived authenticity.

Finally, my research suggests leveraging semiotics to enhance authenticity in brand and artist communication (Floch, 2001). By comprehending elements such as lyrics, music style and language, crafting consistent authenticity narratives becomes more feasible. Delving into visual and symbolic cues, such as Måneskin's cross-dressing and theatrical performances, could further enhance the authenticity portrayal.

Limitations and future research directions

Among the limitations of this research, I acknowledge that it exclusively focuses on the music industry. While music serves as an illustrative and influential context in globalization studies (Chen, 2016; Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Cruz *et al.*, 2023), other domains may yield different insights (Nunes *et al.*, 2021). For instance, I explored the global-local tension by examining an Italian band's internationalization route toward the American market. This decision could be suitable for this case study (i.e. the American market holds a key role in global music (Frith, 1991)), but other domains might require a different conceptualization of global and local meanings (Sharifonnasabi *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, my investigation focuses on a single case (i.e. one musical band), limiting the generalizability of the results, particularly regarding various brand positionings across the global-local continuum. As highlighted earlier, different bands (e.g. The Scorpions versus Rammstein in Germany) may adopt different approaches to either become a global culture phenomenon or connect to their local roots. Therefore, incorporating multiple cases in the same study could enhance our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses associated

with the various brand positionings explored in this research. A longitudinal study tracking changes in fan evaluations of brand identity over time (e.g. Corciolani, 2014) could also provide insights into its evolution in response to global success and consistency contradictions.

Finally, while my research relied on qualitative analysis of consumer comments, combining interpretive methods with quantitative approaches, such as surveys or experimental analyses, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of individual perceptions. Surveys could offer better control over factors potentially explaining consumers' perceptions (Strizhakova and Coulter, 2019), such as their AGP or ALP (Steenkamp and De Jong, 2010). Questionnaires could also help identify different consumer profiles that, as illustrated in this study, exhibit similar perceptions of authenticity (e.g. primarily based on conformity versus connection) across the global-local continuum (e.g. Italian and American fans may hold distinct viewpoints). Experiments could further clarify the relationship between brand positioning (e.g. global versus local) and authenticity dimensions (e.g. conformity versus connection), as well as their potential interaction effects on marketing outcomes.

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