

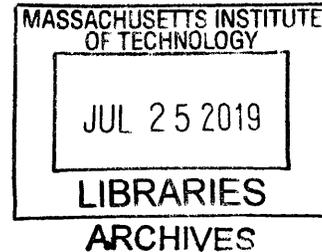
**The changing nature of professional work inside an incumbent firm in the age of social media:
Examining the challenge of coproduction**

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Management

Abstract

Advances in the Web, social media, and digital technologies are changing the nature of professional work inside incumbent organizations—often in ways that involve permeability of once-sealed boundaries, and usually in ways that require reconfiguration of long-held work practices. In this dissertation, I explore these issues drawing on data from a 24-month ethnographic study of an incumbent firm in the advertising industry (“AdCo”). During my study, AdCo continued to do traditional advertising such as television commercials, and it developed a strategic new offering called participatory ads, which involved using social media to coproduce an ad’s content with the audience. As I show, doing participatory advertising involved technical and political challenges both inside and outside the firm. In addition, and as can be common in firms experiencing the digital transformation of their industries, doing participatory advertising was also an occasion for AdCo members to reconsider what it meant to be in their business in the first place.

In Chapter 1, I focus on how coproducing ads with the audience created tensions between professional groups inside the firm. This tension was between Creative department members, who were accustomed to controlling the initial phase of ad-making where the “big idea” for an ad was developed, and Digital department members, who had long been regarded as a support department but who had critical expertise needed to develop high quality ideas for participatory ads. I show how it was only when Creatives used what I call *reconfiguring the sacred practices* that workgroups were able to develop high quality ideas and receive a client greenlight to launch. In Chapter 2, I focus on coordination between workgroups inside AdCo and the audience outside in the participatory advertising projects that launched. In participatory ads, audience members were unpaid, not professionally trained, participating for their own entertainment, and generally not even aware that they were part of a larger effort. Therefore, conventional mechanisms for coordinating work were unsuitable. I describe the importance of professionals using what I call *inspiring and harmonizing engagement practices* in order to motivate the audience to participate, and to do so in ways that were strategically beneficial for the firm. In Chapter 3, I review and synthesize various research streams that examine how firms are doing hybrid forms of work that involve using nonprofessional actors outside the boundary of the firm in their operations. I focus in particular on the challenges that professionals inside firms face when doing this kind of work, dividing these challenges into those related to willingness and those related to capabilities. This dissertation advances research on the changing nature of professional work in the age of the Web and social media, the production of collective creative work, and managing boundaries inside and outside of incumbent firms during digital transformation efforts.

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INTRODUCTION

Advances in the Web, social media, and digital technologies are changing the nature of professional work inside incumbent organizations—often in ways that involve permeability of once-sealed boundaries, and usually in ways that require a significant reconfiguration of long-held work practices (e.g. Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Barley, 2015; Benner and Tushman, 2015; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). In recent years, we have seen a burgeoning scholarly interest in phenomena like open innovation (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Felin, Lakhani, and Tushman, 2017; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018), and more participatory forms of production (Boczkowski, 2004; Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014). However, within the organizations literature, many of our theories—about professionals, coordination, power, collective creativity and innovation, to mention a few—remain rooted in ideas formulated in a technological and social climate that looked little like the one organizations operate in today (e.g. Schumpeter, 1934; Chandler, 1962; Thompson, 1976).

Much of the foundational work still applies—for example, decades ago, Thompson (1967) conceptualized organizations as open systems with extensive exchange with their environments, and posited that the management of uncertainty was an organization’s most profound challenge. This certainly rings true today. However, many of the mechanisms Thompson described for managing uncertainty, like buffering a firm’s technical core from it, may no longer be possible, or even desirable. In this dissertation, for example, I describe an incumbent firm that deliberately brought uncertainty into its technical core, in the form of coproducing its commercial offerings with everyday people over whom it had no direct control. The firm, like incumbents in a range of industries, did this to develop a strategic new offering that fit changing consumer tastes in a social media world. And in so doing, the firm challenged professionals at the technical core to significantly change how they did their work, and how they managed their relational boundary with others both inside and outside the firm.

Why focus on social media as a window into the changing nature of professional work inside incumbent organizations?

Social media are a group of Web-based technologies that allow users to easily create, share and evaluate content (Leonardi and Vaast, 2016), and they are having a transformative effect on the economy and society (Benkler, 2006; Jenkins, 2008). Of course, no new technology is completely unlike that which came before and, and we already know a great deal about

dynamics of new technologies and their impact on incumbent organizational and professional groups (e.g. Tushman and Anderson, 1986; Tripsas and Gavetti, 2000). What seems unique about social media, however, and what makes them interesting for organizational theory, is that these technologies are breaking down boundaries—such as those between producers and consumers, and between professional groups inside firms—in ways that we have not witnessed before.

While most laypeople and many scholars operationalize social media as “Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter,” social media are actually much broader. The term encompasses video sites like YouTube, social networking sites like LinkedIn, forums like Reddit, review sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp, and annotation and aggregation sites like Pinterest. Social media offer a distinctive set of affordances—meaning, they provide users with the potential for actions that might be impossible otherwise. The first and most defining of these is the ease with which everyday people can create, circulate and share content with one another (Benkler, 2006; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). For example, social media allow anyone with an Internet connection and free account on sites like Facebook or Twitter to broadcast their opinions publically for others around the world to see, or, if they so desire, for only those within a self-selected network to see. This would not be possible with broadcast media, where a small set of producers inside firms create content that is pushed to a vast audience (Benkler, 2006).

Social media offer other affordances too, such as visibility, persistence, editability and association between people and information, which, as Treem and Leonardi (2012) argue, in combination create a communication process that is new from what we have seen in the past. Social media allow for visibility in that they afford users the ability to make their behaviors, knowledge, and preferences that were once invisible (or hard to see) open for public display. Social media allow for persistent communication in the sense that the content created (e.g. a blog post) remains accessible in the same form as the original display long after the actor has finished his or her presentation. Editability, sometimes called rehearsability, refers to the fact that individuals can spend large amounts of time and effort crafting and re-crafting a communicative act before it is viewed by others. Associations refer to the established connections between individuals, between individuals and content, or between an actor and a presentation. Associations can be social ties, such as when social media users articulate a network of connections with which they will share information, or can be the ties between an individual and

the content they have created (e.g. a user name on a review site such as TripAdvisor). Thus, social media is that they have the potential to transform how individuals interact with one another, in their social lives and work lives, and how individuals outside firms interact with those inside.

To make clear why these affordances have a potentially transformative effect, it is useful to consider some of the ways of interacting that we take for granted today, but that would have been impossible in the past. There was a time when someone with a rare disease might have a single doctor to consult, a professional located perhaps several states away, with no one locally to turn to for advice on living with the disease (assuming it ever got diagnosed in the first place). Today, this same individual could go online and visit not just WebMD, but one of the many free communities where users can enter their symptoms and compare them with others'. In addition to potentially speeding diagnosis, this would allow the individual to connect and share information about how to live with the disease with others (Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Barrett, Oborn, and Orlikowski, 2016). To take another example, there was a time when, in making decisions about what hotel to stay in when traveling, one was largely dependent on guidebooks written by experts, or word of mouth advice from those in one's social circle. Today, however, there are myriad reviews sites where the opinions of hundreds of thousands of travelers around the world get aggregated and produce ever-changing, up-to-date hotel rankings (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014). In the past, after a bad experience, one might write a complaint letter to a hotel, or tell one's friends to avoid it; today, in writing a TripAdvisor review, a guest has the potential to affect a hotel's business for weeks, months potentially even years to come.

In sum, this ease of creating and sharing content is leading to higher levels of voice, information and the ability to connect than we have seen in the past. Whether these changes are positive or negative for society is something scholars continue to debate (Turkle, 2011; van Dijck, 2013). What is important for my purpose is to highlight that social media, once seen as sources of teenage distraction, are now deeply embedded in the fabric of everyday life not just for individuals of all ages, but for corporations, governments, and just about every other institution.

Within this context, my interest is the changing nature of professional work inside incumbent organizations. Because social media provide unprecedented levels of information, voice and the ability to connect to everyday people, they are breaking down historic barriers

between professionals inside firms and laypeople outside (e.g. Benkler, 2006; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). In many industries, professionals are seeing their jurisdictional domains and historically dominant stance relative to customers being chipped away (e.g. Barley, 2015). Most theoretically interesting for my purposes, though, are cases where social media allow for the integration of laypeople not as challengers or substitutes to professionals, but as collaborators in the performance of professional work inside organizations. We see this in many born-digital firms, such as TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe, but it is also increasingly a way that incumbent firms produce offerings in order to update them for an age where networked consumers often expect to create and connect with others as they consume professionally-produced goods (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Piskorski, 2014; Stollfuß, 2018). When professionals use social media affordances to integrate laypeople as co-producers of their work, however, tasks, roles, and dependency relations shift in ways that scholars like Emerson (1962) and Thompson (1976) did not have the occasion to consider.

In addition, and as I show in this dissertation, social media do not just alter *who* can be involved in firm production, but also *what* can be created. In the industrial economy of the past, firms focused on producing “finished goods to be consumed passively” (Benkler, 2006), and these goods were therefore “fixed and immutable” versus today, where they take on a more “inherently dynamic and malleable” or “generative” form (Yoo et al., 2012). Juxtaposing a conventional hotel guidebook with TripAdvisor’s rankings provides an instructive example of this contrast. Whereas conventional guidebooks containing hotel reviews are produced solely by experts and are released annually, TripAdvisor’s rankings are generated through the contributions of everyday people, are continuously updated by algorithmic means, and are characterized by a continuous state of becoming (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014).

Typically, studies that contrast traditional versus social media-powered work processes and products juxtapose incumbent versus born-digital firms. However, in an increasing number of industries, incumbent firms are using both traditional and participatory forms of production, taking what appear to be quite incompatible logics, and using them as the basis for value creation.

Why study an organization in the advertising industry?

The advertising industry is an ideal setting to study this phenomenon because for advertising firms, using social media to coproduce ads with active audiences is not simply a nice-to-have or a marketing ploy; it is a means of remaining relevant in the business.

Firms in the advertising industry—especially those like “AdCo,” the one I studied for this dissertation, which was founded in the 1940s—have experienced many waves of technological change. Advertising agencies develop and produce creative content to help clients promote their brands. Historically, this content was for broadcast channels like television and followed a “mass media” model, where a small set of centralized actors produced content and then broadcast it, in a unidirectional manner, to a captive audience. In the 1990s and 2000s, as Internet usage became widespread, incumbent firms developed digital advertising capabilities (e.g. websites, banner ads) since clients wanted integrated campaigns, where they could hire a single agency to do work across a range of channels.

By 2014, when this study began, incumbents faced a new series of challenges, like the emergence of big data and analytics to better track their ads’ effectiveness, heightened scrutiny from procurement departments, and the rise of social media. Social media represented a distinct challenge—and potential opportunity—for advertising firms because they, for the first time, allowed multidirectional, highly public interaction with the audience. In effect, the audience could not only “skip” an ad, they could “talk back” or, more threatening still, simply “talk” with one another, cutting advertisers out of the conversation about brands altogether. It is for this reason that social media challenged advertisers in a way that was distinctive from technologies past.

In this dissertation, I focus on the changing nature of professional work inside of AdCo as the firm developed a new commercial offering that involved co-producing ads with the audience. However, this is but one angle to AdCo’s story, and to the situation of firms in this industry. As books about the industry that have titles peppered with phrases like “Madison Avenue manslaughter” and “the epic disruption of the advertising business” make clear, firms in the advertising industry were, at the time of this study, attacked by a seemingly endless barrage of challenges (Farmer, 2015; Auletta, 2018). From Chief Marketing Officers’ increasingly short tenures (which meant agencies came up for review every few years versus every few decades), to advertisers’ “frenemy” relationship with companies like Google and Facebook, to the entrance of

born-digital ad agencies and nontraditional competitors, incumbent ad agencies were under siege. And the list goes on. All incumbent ad agencies were seeing their revenues shrink and were facing intense financial pressure. As with many firms experiencing the digital transformation of their industry, there was a clear sense, within advertising, that the Don Draper party days were over.

Yet, the need for clients to advertise their products remained, and in firms like AdCo, the work of producing ads went on, much of the work traditional (e.g. television spots, online videos, websites), but some of it quite new. In this dissertation, I use AdCo's push to develop a new advertising offering called participatory advertising as a lens into the changing nature of work inside the incumbent firms in the age of social media. AdCo's clients paid for these ads, and they involved professionals inside the firm using social media platforms such as Instagram to invite the audience to engage in an activity on behalf of a brand and then to post about it to their own social media profiles for their followers to see. An example of a participatory ad was a global scavenger hunt AdCo designed and managed for a wine company client, where wine casks were hidden around the world and the AdCo group used Facebook to release branded clues about their locations, with audience members documenting their "cask chases" for their Facebook friends. Another example, also for the wine company, was an Instagram contest where AdCo invited the audience to post photos and videos of themselves toasting a famous singer known for loving wine. The clients that paid AdCo to do participatory ads like these continued to have AdCo do traditional advertising work as well, but participatory ads were an important complement. While participatory ads in some ways bore little similarity to traditional ads—in terms of who was involved in production, and what was produced—they remained advertisements, the purpose of which was to project a desired image for the brand. Yet, this was especially challenging in participatory work since AdCo members had no direct control over the audience.

Participatory advertising is an example of a commercial offering whose existence hinges on audience engagement, and it is characterized by a blurring of the traditional distinction between producers and consumers. In this way, while it is part of the same social media-enabled trend towards using audiences in advertising (e.g. Doritos soliciting ideas for a Super Bowl ad from the crowd), it is also distinctive from conventional crowdsourcing. In participatory advertising, the "crowd" is not used to do what professionals inside ad agencies have always done, but in cheaper, better or faster ways. Rather, professionals inside the firm engage the

“crowd” to produce an advertising offering that is fundamentally different—as will be described in depth in Chapter 2.

The shift towards more participatory forms of production is not limited to the advertising industry. For example, entertainment companies have created a new breed of “social TV shows” that leverage social media platforms like Facebook and smartphone apps to invite the audience to engage directly with characters, and even to change the plot of a story as it unfolds (Stollfuß, 2018; Max, 2018). Moreover, while the trend towards more participatory forms of production started in content-based industries, it is not limited to these. For example, apparel companies, museums, even banks are experimenting with making their offerings more participatory (e.g. Piskorski, 2014; Westerman, Bonnet, and McAfee, 2014).

AdCo was an ideal research site because it was an opportunity to examine the older and new kinds of work side by side—to explore what changed and what did not for professionals working on participatory ads, what was most challenging, and what enabled new kinds of work to happen more or less effectively. Given my methods—I used an inductive, ethnographic approach well-suited to studying nascent phenomena (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989; Edmondson and McManus, 2007)—I cannot and do not purport to make any claims about AdCo’s success at adapting to its changing environment. However, by offering a rich picture of life inside the firm, showing how the work and associated relationships were changing, and leveraging variation wherever possible, I add to our empirical and theoretical understanding of the changing nature of professional work inside incumbent organizations in the age of social media.

Organization of the dissertation

In this dissertation, I show how the work practices involved in making a traditional versus participatory ad differ, as well as how doing the participatory work required an unsealing and reconfiguration of Creative department members’ boundaries with the audience outside the firm and Digital department members inside. Creative department members included copywriters and art directors, and these AdCo members had classic training in traditional advertising. Digital department members had titles like social media strategist and digital producer and had expertise in social media and digital interactivity.

In Chapter 1, I show how designing participatory ads challenged Creatives' most sacred task: generating an ad's "big idea." When generating an idea for a participatory ad, Creatives had to dismantle their historical boundary with the audience and also change how they interacted with Digital professionals inside the firm. I show how all of the Creatives staffed in the thirteen workgroups that attempted to make participatory ads during the time of my study were able to refocus their identities and change work practices relative to the audience, as the literature has shown to be important. However, only some workgroups had Creatives that allowed Digital members to participate in the sacred activity of ideation, which was critical for their accessing expertise needed to generate ideas for this new kind of ad. Drawing on sociological theories about the sacred in organizations, I show how some Creatives did this using what I call *reconfiguring the sacred practices*, and I demonstrate how this was essential for their developing a high quality idea, as measured by if they received a greenlight from the client to launch the ad. I also offer insights into when professionals at the technical core of firms may be more or less likely to use reconfiguring the sacred practices, suggesting the value of a workgroup setup that I refer to as characterized by *partial pressure*. I use these findings to contribute to the literatures on boundaries between core professionals, digital interactivity professionals and nonprofessionals in the age of the Web and social media.

Whereas Chapter 1 examines the ideation phase of participatory ads—when AdCo workgroups developed ideas and sought client approval to launch a project—Chapter 2 focuses on how the AdCo workgroups that launched their projects coordinated with the audience to produce the ad. In this chapter, I begin by showing how AdCo members coordinated the production of traditional ads. They did so by using coordination practices such as drawing on institutionalized roles and routines, and these practices have been described in the literature on the production of collective creative work. However, conventional coordination practices were unsuitable for coproducing participatory ads with the audience, not only because they were not professionals and unpaid, but because they were engaging for their own entertainment and often were not even aware of being part of any kind of larger creative effort. I describe how all six AdCo workgroups that launched participatory ads used *inspiring engagement practices* to elicit audience participation. However, only those that also used what I call *harmonizing engagement practices*, whereby professionals inside the firm strategically guided, shaped and steered audience participation, produced coherent creative work and had their projects nominated for

industry awards. I use these findings to contribute to the literature on collective creative production, the literature on social media and organizations, and I offer broader implications for research on the changing nature of work.

Chapter 3 is a theory piece, where I attempt to provide much-needed organization to the wide-ranging research streams that address how firms are using social media to do hybrid forms of work that involve nonprofessional actors. In the chapter, I begin by detailing how technological advances have led to a context where these hybrid models of getting organizational work done are possible and attractive. Next, I describe the disparate research streams that have considered the phenomenon of hybrid forms of working at the firm boundary, clarifying some of the similarities and differences between these literatures. Finally, I synthesize what we know about the challenges of working at the firm boundary, dividing these into those related to willingness, and those related to capabilities. I conclude with suggestions for future research.

In the final section of the dissertation, I offer brief concluding remarks.

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CHAPTER 1

Reconfiguring the sacred: Core professionals, digital interactivity professionals, nonprofessionals and digital transformation efforts inside incumbent firms

Abstract

As incumbent firms attempt to adapt to the digital transformation of their industries, many are using social media technologies to develop new offerings. As the literature has described, more participatory offerings require that professionals at the technical core of firms renegotiate their boundary with nonprofessionals outside. In this study, I show that developing participatory offerings can also require that core professionals renegotiate their boundary with digital interactivity professionals inside the firm. I use data from a two-year ethnographic study of an advertising firm (“AdCo”), as it developed a strategic new offering, participatory ads, that hinged on coproducing an ad’s content with the audience using social media. I track variation in the ability of thirteen workgroups, all with Creative and Digital members, to develop high quality ideas for this new kind of ad. In all of the workgroups, Creative department members changed how they managed their boundary with the audience as they “concepted” the ad’s central idea. However, in order to develop a high quality idea, as measured by receiving a client’s greenlight, they also had to change how they managed their boundary with Digital members, and only some groups’ Creatives did this. Managing this boundary involved a set of practices I call *reconfiguring the sacred practices*. My data suggest that a workgroup setup characterized by what I call *partial pressure* on core professionals to include digital interactivity professionals in their historically sealed-off tasks may enable these practices. Drawing on sociological theories about the sacred in organizations, I contribute to the literatures on boundaries between core professionals, nonprofessionals, and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent organizations in the age of the Web and social media.

In an effort to remain competitive—or even just relevant—in the face of the digital transformation of their industries, many incumbent firms are using emerging technologies to create value in new ways, and this is having a profound impact on professionals and their work inside these firms, especially for those at what Thompson (1976) called the technical core. For example, incumbent firms are increasingly using social media technologies to engage nonprofessionals as key participants in organizational processes, like innovation (e.g. Schlagwein and Bjørn-Andersen, 2014; Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018) and production (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Usher, 2016). Most studies have focused on how this new work challenges core professionals’ historic boundary with nonprofessionals outside of the organization (e.g. Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). Another, smaller set of studies not in the mainstream organizations literature suggest that doing more participatory work is also difficult because it shifts dependencies inside the firm—specifically between those at the technical core and digital interactivity professionals (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Usher, 2016). Despite the increasingly widespread practice of incumbent firms developing more participatory offerings, our empirical and theoretical understanding of how core professionals manage boundaries in this situation is still in a nascent stage. In this study, I ask: When and how do core professionals work with digital interactivity professionals in order to do new kinds of work that involve coproducing with nonprofessionals?

The literature on boundaries between professionals and nonprofessionals in the age of the Web and social media examines the shifting ground on which these parties interact (e.g. Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Barley, 2015). It shows how professionals can incorporate nonprofessionals as key collaborators in their work, provided they do identify-refocusing work, dismantle key boundaries, and adopt new work practices aimed at facilitation (e.g. Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). The literature on boundaries between core professionals and digital interactivity professionals inside organizations shows that core and digital interactivity professionals often struggle to work together, largely because core professionals do not allow digital interactivity professionals to influence how they get their work done (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018). This literature highlights the importance of top managers empowering digital interactivity professionals, by putting in place measures to protect them from those at the core (Boczkowski, 2004).

In my two-year ethnographic study of workgroups composed with core and digital interactivity professionals at an incumbent advertising firm trying to do a new kind of ad that hinged on audience engagement, all of these actions were taken, and yet I saw variation in the success of workgroups of Creative and Digital members trying to develop ideas for participatory ads. In this study, I use sociological theories related to the “sacred” and “center” in organizations to help situate the nature of the challenge that core professionals and the incumbent firms that employ them face, and how, under some conditions, sacred work can be reconfigured (Durkheim, 1912; Shils, 1961).

Boundaries between core professionals inside incumbent organizations and nonprofessionals in the age of the Web and social media

Advances in the Web and social media are changing the relationship between professionals inside firms and everyday people outside. We can see this when we consider the distinctive affordances—meaning, the potential for actions that might be impossible otherwise—that social media offer. The first and most defining of these is the ease with which everyday people can create, circulate and share content with one another (Benkler, 2006; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). For example, social media allow anyone with an Internet connection and free account on sites like Facebook or Twitter to broadcast their opinions publically for others around the world to see, or, if they so desire, for those within a self-selected network to see. This would not be possible with broadcast media, where a small set of producers inside firms create content that is pushed to a vast audience (Benkler, 2006). Social media offer other affordances too, such as visibility, persistence, editability and association between people and information, which, as Treem and Leonardi (2012) argue, in combination create a communication process that is new from what we have seen in the past.

Social media provide unprecedented levels of information, voice and the ability to connect to everyday people, and as a result, these technologies are breaking down historic boundaries between professionals inside firms and everyday people outside (e.g. Benkler, 2006; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). Various studies have shown how empowered nonprofessionals—whether consumers shopping for cars or travelers writing reviews on TripAdvisor—are chipping away at the historic dominance and jurisdictional domains of professionals inside organizations (e.g. Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Barley, 2015; Vaast et al., 2017). While some types of professional work are becoming obsolete in this context, there are a growing number of instances

where these technologies are being used to integrate nonprofessionals into organizational work, not as challengers or substitutes for professionals, but as collaborators. For example, this is the basis for the business models of many born-digital firms like TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe (e.g. Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Sundararajan, 2016; Barrett, Oborn, and Orlikowski, 2016). Most relevant for my study, however, are cases where this shift towards engaging nonprofessionals is forced upon professionals at the technical core of incumbent firms.

Studies in this stream highlight that incorporating nonprofessionals into their work, often at the behest of top managers, can be deeply threatening to core professionals' identities and cultural values (e.g. Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). For example, when NASA scientists with decades of experience were confronted with “crowd” members who could predict solar storms better than they could, this threatened their highly valued “problem solver” identity. In response, some scientists tried to defend their jurisdictional claim to problem-solving by engaging in activities like downplaying the value of non-expert solutions, and referring to e-mails related to open innovation as “spam” (Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). Similarly, when the Internet's search capabilities empowered patrons to bypass librarians—who had long prided themselves as “masters of search”—many librarians were threatened. As a result, many disparaged the Internet as filled with information from dubious sources and highlighted their unique ability to offer a single “best” result versus multiple options offered by search engines (Nelson and Irwin, 2014). Likewise, members of an innovation consulting firm rejected the practice of crowdsourcing because it ran counter to their epistemological stance (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016).

However, each of these studies highlights that core professionals can come to work in new ways, provided they refocus their identities to make space for non-professionals. At NASA, this involved some scientists transitioning from a “problem solver” to “solution seeker” identity. With librarians, it involved them shifting from a focus on being “masters of search” to being “connectors of people and information” (Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). A refocused identity is important because it enables professionals to change their work practices in ways that allow them to gain value from engaging with nonprofessionals. The literature suggests this involves two kinds of changes: dismantling historic boundaries, and facilitating new forms of exchange.

For example, Lifshitz-Assaf (2018) highlighted the importance of NASA scientists dismantling boundaries that involved keeping critical knowledge inside the firm, and also scientists' developing more open knowledge-sharing practices with actors outside and inside the organization. Nelson and Irwin (2014) showed how librarians, once they embraced the connector identity, dismantled the tight boundary they had once kept around the "once-sacred" domain of backend cataloguing and invited users to engage in this space. They also changed their work practices to facilitate a more "communal" approach to searching for information, where user participation enhanced versus denigrated the process. Similar dynamics of dismantling boundaries and facilitating exchange in new ways have been detailed in industries like news media, where journalists inside incumbent firms use "gate-opening" versus "gate-keeping" practices to facilitate versus prohibit information exchange with readers (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018).

Taken together, these studies explain how engaging nonprofessionals in their work can be threatening for professionals, and how the threat can be overcome. However, there may be more to the story than what this literature has presently discussed. For example, studies in industries like news media show that part of why it can be difficult for traditionally trained journalists to integrate the audience as co-producers of news is because this often involves journalists' newfound dependence on digital colleagues inside the firm, a situation which often generates conflict (Boczkowski, 2004; Williams, Wardle, and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011).

Scholars focused on the core professional-nonprofessional boundary have called for more research on "pluralistic organizational contexts" where intra-organizational politics and potential conflicts around what it might mean to engage external actors are likely to occur and affect important outcomes (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016). To make headway in this direction, and to enrich our understanding of how core professionals' work is changing in today's world, it is useful to turn to the literature on boundaries between core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent organizations.

Boundaries between core professionals and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent organizations

Scholars have studied the management of professional boundaries inside firms extensively. For example, studies have examined how core professionals protect their jurisdictional turf (Abbott, 1988; Bechky, 2003a; Metiu, 2006), how peripheral experts exert

influence on core professionals (e.g. Huising, 2014; DiBenigno, 2017, 2019), and how knowledge-sharing happens across professional boundaries (Lamont and Molnár, 2002; Bechky, 2003b; Carlile, 2004; Levina and Vaast, 2005; Kellogg, Orlikowski, and Yates, 2006). The swath of this literature directly relevant for my study is a much smaller body of work, and focuses specifically on the dynamics of boundary management between core professionals and those with expertise in digital interactivity inside incumbent organizations.

Though they have varying backgrounds, skills and position names (e.g. UX designer, social media specialist), digital interactivity professionals are those that help incumbent firms reconfigure their historic non-Web related offerings for a Web and social media-based environment where users actively produce as they consume information (e.g. Perry, 2010; Usher, 2016).¹ When incumbent firms enlist these professionals to help develop new offerings that hinge on audience participation, the situation is often part of a broader questioning of what it means to be in the business. In news media organizations, for example, incumbent firms are employing digital interactivity professionals to help “rethink what we even mean by ‘news’” (Carpini, 2017). This creates a particular dynamic inside these firms, and one that can be problematic for core professionals: “. . . the computer nerd once tasked with fixing email and shoveling content onto the website is now enrolled in coming up with new storytelling techniques, such as making news more interactive for users” (Usher, 2016; Lewis and Zamith, 2017).

From all we know about professionals and their intense desire to protect their jurisdictional turf (Abbott, 1988; Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno, 2016), it is unsurprising that core professionals often resist integrating digital interactivity professionals into their core tasks. Indeed, studies examining the boundary between core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent firms highlight that it is often contentious. Core professionals often do not want to work with digital interactivity professionals, who may pressure them to do their traditional work in new ways, claim that they can better manage uncertainty for the firm, or even question core professionals’ *raison d’être* (Boczkowski, 2004; Piskorski, 2014; Usher, 2016).

As a result, many of the mechanisms for working across professional boundaries put forth in the literature—even those related specifically to core and digital professionals—cannot work

¹ In this way, digital interactivity professionals should not be confused with professionals such as service design professionals (e.g. Fayard, Stigliani, and Bechky, 2016), who do not have expertise in social media.

in this scenario. For example, there is a relatively large stream of research on how the addition of digital technologies and their associated professionals change boundaries between groups inside organizations (e.g. Barley, 1986; Dodgson, Gann, and Salter, 2007; Barrett et al., 2011; Bailey, Leonardi, and Barley, 2012). These studies show that professionals often struggle to work together because of different epistemological approaches; because work tends to get more interdependent and complex; and because core professionals can be threatened by or fail to appreciate the value digital professionals can bring to the organization (e.g. Tripsas and Gavetti, 2000; Boland, Lyytinen, and Yoo, 2007; Dougherty and Dunne, 2012). They put forth mechanisms such as “creating common ground” (e.g. Dougherty and Dunne, 2012) as important, but these mechanisms are unlikely to work in highly contentious cases.

For this reason, scholars focused specifically on core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent firms highlight the importance of protecting and empowering digital interactivity professionals. This requires top management team support and can happen by granting them increased autonomy (Suddaby, Saxton, and Gunz, 2015), connecting them with top executives (Piskorski, 2014), or structurally separating them from core professionals, to protect their ability to get work done as they see fit (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004). Sometimes, structural separation takes the form of a partnerships outside the firm, as seen in Knight-Ridder’s work with Mozilla, where traditionally trained journalists and digital interactivity professionals not employed by Knight-Ridder worked well together, but this was because they self-selected to work with members of the other group (e.g. Lewis and Usher, 2016).

At my research site, top managers empowered digital interactivity professionals in ways that were in line with the literature, but they could not separate them when making a strategic new advertising offering that hinged on audience engagement because of the nature of the work: designing the central concept for these ads required both core professionals and digital interactivity professionals’ skills. Nonetheless, I saw variation in how core professionals managed this boundary, and in turn, how work unfolded. To gain insight into why this situation is so challenging, it is useful to visit sociological theories about the “sacred” and “center” in organizations and societies.

The sacred in organizations

Though we seldom think of organizations in these terms, many organizations have what Durkheim would call a religion: “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden” and these beliefs and practices unite members into “one single moral community” (Durkheim, 1912). Even in organizations rife with conflict, organization members often have certain activities, spaces or people who all in the “moral community” regard as imbued with particular virtues. These sacred entities are set apart from all else, and treated in special, ritualistic ways. Shils’ ideas on the “center” and the “periphery” in society build on Durkheim’s and can also characterize organizations and the sacred (Shils, 1961). Shils noted that every society, even the secular, has a religion, and what we might think of as a “center.” Like the sacred, the center is set apart and governed by elites who dictate the central values of the society. These elites “attribute to themselves an essential affinity with the sacred elements of their society, of which they regard themselves as the custodians.” Many members of the society also attribute to them that same kind of affinity, even though they are shut out of the “vital zone” of the center. Within an incumbent firm, we can think of core professionals as occupying the “center,” and as the doers and guardians of the firm’s most “sacred” activities.

Despite the seemingly untouchable nature of the sacred, the center, and the individuals that guard these spaces, change is possible. Shils in particular highlighted how the mass communication technologies of his time were creating a “modern” society that allowed for more widespread participation of “the masses” in the central value system. Thus, those formerly outside the center came to “share in the vital connexion with the ‘order’ . . . which was once thought to be in the special custody of the ruling classes.” Shils noted that “some persons will always be a bit closer to the centre, some will always be more distant from the centre” but the “greater density of communications have contributed greatly to narrowing the range of inequality . . . the peak at the centre is no longer so high, the periphery is no longer so distant.” This too can characterize changes happening today inside incumbent firms in the age of social media, where boundaries protecting core professionals at the center are becoming more porous—with respect to nonprofessionals and also digital interactivity professionals.

Durkheim also noted that change to the sacred is possible, because its symbolic nature means that it is always subject to questioning. Douglas (1966), writing about the division of

labor, echoed this idea, noting that “a community’s self-knowledge and the knowledge of the world must undergo change when the organization of work changes. When it reaches a new level of economic activity new forms of classification must be designed.”

Taken together, these ideas suggest that while organizations, particularly incumbent firms in longstanding industries, may have a well-entrenched system of beliefs and practices related to the sacred, change to the system is possible, and may be brought about by new communication technologies, as we see with social media.

METHODS

Research Setting

This paper uses data from a two-year ethnographic study of an incumbent firm in the advertising industry (“AdCo”). Advertising agencies develop and produce creative content to help clients promote their brands. Historically, this content was for broadcast channels like television and followed a “mass media” model, where a small set of centralized actors produced content that was broadcast, unidirectionally, to a captive audience (Benkler, 2006). In the 1990s and 2000s, as Internet usage became widespread, incumbent firms developed digital advertising capabilities (e.g. websites) since clients wanted integrated campaigns. By 2014, when this study began, incumbents faced a new series of challenges, like the emergence of big data and analytics to better track their ads’ effectiveness, and the rise of social media. Social media are distinctive from other new technologies ad agencies have faced because they break down the historic relationship between producers and consumers. In contrast to broadcast media, which afford one-way communication between a small set of producers of creative content and a vast number of consumers, social media allow consumers to become producers of their own content, and to share it (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Benkler, 2006; Orlikowski and Scott, 2014). When I entered the field, AdCo, like its traditional agency peers, was facing more financial pressure than in the past, and was experiencing pressure from clients to do new kinds of advertising work.

AdCo, which was founded in the 1940s, was an ideal setting for this study. In addition to being in an industry undergoing digital transformation, AdCo was experimenting with new kinds of offerings that hinged on engaging audiences using social media. In order to do this, AdCo was broadening the expertise of its employee base, adding digital interactivity professionals with expertise in areas like social media strategy and digital production to work with those classically

trained in advertising, like Creative department art directors and copywriters. While AdCo had employed professions that fell under the banner of “Digital department” for many years, the change when I conducted my study was that these professions were shifting, in the making of more participatory offerings, from serving as a downstream support department to a group essential for getting core work done. This meant that at AdCo I could examine how core professionals—in this case, Creative department members—managed their changing boundaries with two parties. The first was nonprofessionals (in this case, audiences), with whom they now had to coproduce ads versus uni-directionally push messages to. The second was digital interactivity professionals inside the firm, on whom they were now dependent to get their core work done.

AdCo had roughly 400 employees, spread across several offices, at the time of the study. As is typical of ad agencies, its employees were divided into large departments like Creative, Account, Strategy, Production, Digital, Human Resources and Legal. At AdCo, the Creative and Account departments were the largest. AdCo’s revenue was roughly \$120 million a year during the time of the study, and it had between ten and fifteen clients.

Ethnographic data collection

Using an inductive, ethnographic approach that is well-suited for developing new theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989; Edmondson and McManus, 2007), I studied a single organization to develop a rich understanding of micro-processes involved in my focal phenomenon (Van Maanen, 2011). I focused my data collection efforts for this paper on AdCo’s attempt to launch a new advertising offering called participatory ads. Clients paid AdCo to make these ads and they involved using social media platforms such as Instagram to invite the audience to engage in an activity on behalf of a brand and then to post it to their own profiles, for their social media connections to see. I sought to understand the ways in which doing advertising in this new, more participatory manner challenged conventional ways of working and interacting for AdCo members, particularly Creative department members, since they were the technical core.

Data collection at AdCo began in 2014 and carried on for two years. I got access to the company through the CEO, with whom I had a mutual contact. I had no prior affiliation with any AdCo members. I was given an employee badge, company email and permission to talk with

anyone at AdCo. For this paper, I observed 53 meetings: 22 meetings where AdCo members from the Creative and Digital departments worked on designing participatory advertising projects, 12 where they worked on traditional advertising projects, 10 companywide meetings that related to these ads or changes in the industry (e.g. one was titled, “What is advertising today anyway?”), and 9 departmental meetings. I also attended company social events such as happy hours. These observations enabled me to track thirteen participatory advertising projects that AdCo workgroups designed during the study’s timeframe. To preserve confidentiality of the clients and of AdCo, project names are disguised and some descriptions of the projects are slightly altered, with care to insure that sufficient detail is preserved for to illustrate what the work involved.

I also conducted 109 formal semi-structured interviews for this study, with members from all departments, like Creative, Digital, Account and Strategy, and with members of the top management team. Formal interviews averaged 60 minutes each and were conducted individually with participants in private offices or meeting rooms. Initially, I asked questions related to everyday work tasks, how the industry was changing and challenges involved in new kinds of work, and perceptions of and interactions with members of other departments. As the study progressed, my questions focused more on understanding why members behaved the way they did when working on participatory ads (e.g. why they did or said something at a meeting, or why they did not invite someone to a meeting).

I also collected company and industry documents, such as slide decks from town halls, emails sent from top managers to the employee base, and materials related to the participatory advertising projects whenever possible (e.g. photos of whiteboards, slide decks) (see **Table 1**).

----- Insert Table 1 about here -----

Data analysis

My research design enabled me to investigate when and how professionals at the technical core of an incumbent firm work across historically sealed boundaries between themselves and digital interactivity professionals in order to do sacred work in new ways when it involves coproducing with nonprofessionals. Data analysis was iterative and occurred in several phases.

Understanding the importance of boundaries and how they were changing When I entered AdCo, I had a basic sense of the changes happening in the industry, but I had never studied an advertising firm and spent my initial time at the site trying to understand where AdCo had been, and where it was going. I kept track of my observations in weekly memos. As I collected data, I coded my field notes in accordance with the guidelines from Miles and Huberman (1984), and was struck by a few things. The first thing was that AdCo members from all departments, not just Creative, seemed to treat Creatives' coming up with the "big idea" for an ad as a sacred activity. This struck me as interesting because it was not clear to me that others inside the firm could not perform this activity, or that it was the most critical determinant of an ad's success. Second, it struck me that boundaries were very important at AdCo—for example, the boundary between the Creative department and others was very clear, as was the boundary between Creatives and the audience in traditional ads.

Early on in my time at AdCo, the top management team began emphasizing the importance of the firm selling participatory ads to its clients. In a rather dramatic meeting, recounted in my Findings section, the newly hired Global Chief Creative Officer convened a meeting where he made the strategic importance of participatory ads unambiguous. He also emphasized how doing these would require significant changes in how Creative department members in particular were accustomed to working.

The push for participatory ads, and how this was challenging notions of the "sacred" (a word AdCo members sometimes used with referring to ideation) and boundary management became the key focus of my analysis. I consulted the sociological literature on the sacred in organizations to try to understand the nature of the challenge that AdCo had when it came to doing more participatory work. Participatory advertising projects involved two changes to Creatives' sacred task of ideation: the need to conceive of the audience differently (as co-producers versus passive recipients of information) and to engage with Digital colleagues differently (as participants in generating "the big idea" versus simply executing it).

Participatory advertising project outcomes In the second phase of data analysis, I examined the relative strength of the ideas that thirteen workgroups generated for their participatory ads during the time of my study. **Table 2** describes the thirteen groups' ideas. I

measured the strength of an idea using client greenlight because in order to receive a greenlight, workgroups had to demonstrate that the ad they had designed would well-represent the brand's image, that the audience would engage, and that it was technologically feasible. I was not authorized to speak with clients, but I followed up on groups' interactions with clients to understand why clients made the decisions they made. I used greenlight as my outcome measure versus something like a project's ultimate success (e.g. industry award nomination) because of my focus on how Creative managed boundaries with others on their most sacred activity of ideation. Since activities later in the work process of making participatory ads (e.g. curating user-generated content) were not long-held sacred activities for Creatives, using data from these activities would not answer my research question.

Only seven of the thirteen projects received a greenlight, even though all Creatives working on these projects expressed great interest in having their projects get greenlit so they could launch, and all clients targeted by the thirteen workgroups had hoped to do participatory ads. As I tried to understand this variation, I was struck by a puzzle: all of the Creatives staffed on participatory advertising projects did identity refocusing work and changed their work practices relative to the audience, as the literature suggests is important; but only some did the equivalent relative to Digital colleagues. It was not evident why this was the case, though it was evident that this was essential for receiving a client greenlight.

Reconfiguring the sacred practices In the next phase, I examined the practices that Creatives in some workgroups used to engage Digital colleagues. As noted, I had been reading literature on the sacred in organizations, and while in working on traditional ads, Creatives guarded the sacred space of ideation in line with what we would expect of elites at the "center," some Creatives working on participatory ads opened this space. I coded my field notes in hopes of capturing what this involved, and induced the practices of perforating the sacred, protecting the sacred, and pluralizing the sacred by theorizing about key activities. As I tracked how groups' ideas evolved over the course of the ideation phase, the importance of these practices became increasingly clear. Still, it was puzzling why some Creatives engaged in these practices and others did not since all Creatives professed similar sentiments about Digital colleagues at the project outset.

Workgroup setup characterized by partial pressure on core professionals As I tried to understand the variation in Creatives' behavior, I compared the project workgroups on all of the dimensions I could think of that might affect Creatives' willingness to let Digital colleagues into their sacred space of ideation. For example, I examined if perhaps some Creatives had worked with Digital members before, some Digital members were easier or harder to work with, or if something about the client or the project's complexity could explain the difference; but, these could not (see **Table 3**). The factor that emerged as different in a patterned way was if Creative and Digital members in the group were on average similar in level to one another (see **Table 4**). I went back to my field notes to look for explanations as to why this would matter. I saw that these Creatives found it hard to exclude Digital colleagues because their difference in power was not large, and they tended to regard those at a similar level as themselves as having knowledge that was useful.

----- Insert Tables 2, 3 and 4 about here -----

FINDINGS

In this section, I begin by describing how AdCo's Creative department members, as well as the broader organization, had historically collectively upheld something of a religion around the sacredness of coming up with an ad's central idea. I then show how top management's push for participatory ads challenged this system—with large implications for how Creative department members had to manage their boundary with the audience and Digital members. Finally, I show how and when some Creatives were able to develop quality ideas for participatory ads.

AdCo's Creative department and the sacredness of ideation

AdCo's business was to create advertisements for clients, and these ads were built upon what various people at the agency referred to as "the big idea." The idea for an ad dictated virtually everything about its development, and had long been regarded as the sacred part of the ad-making process. At AdCo, the processes surrounding the creation of an ad's idea took on a sacred, almost mystical quality—many across the organization used the word "magic."

Historically, Creatives' responsibility for generating ads' ideas, as well as their unchallenged control over the process of ideation, imbued with them special status, and an undisputed place at the firm's "center."

Creatives' beliefs and rituals relating to generating ideas AdCo's Creatives embraced their role as the creators and guardians of ideas. They derived identity benefits from this role and protected the sacred space that was the ideation phase of making an ad. Many Creatives noted that they perceived advertising to be "an art form" and that without a great idea, an ad "falls flat." They saw the big idea for an ad as "the most important thing" and used a variety of practices to set apart ideation from the more profane aspects of working at a company, such as attending meetings with members of other departments.

Many Creatives used rituals when "ideating" or "concepting." One bounced a red ball on a conference room table as he thought up ideas. Others left the office and walked around the city, or attended movies—licenses members from other departments did not take. Some sat in the company's top-floor lounge where de facto only Creatives went. Some used special pencils and pads of paper. Others woke up as early as 3am when trying to concept ideas, noting, "I can't stop myself." Many had developed systems where they texted themselves ideas right when they "struck"—which they noted could happen while in bed or at a bar with friends—so they would not be lost. As is common in the industry, many Creatives worked in pairs—art director, copywriter—and joked about these as being "like marriages."

What Creatives did not do when ideating is also significant. They often made a point of not thinking through what those in the industry called "the execution" (i.e. the specific way the idea is expressed, like the details of the script for a TV ad) too early on, or feasibility (financial or technological) sometimes at all, since feasibility was considered the more profane work of other departments. One Creative described, "I think a failure mode of a lot of people is they get too wrapped up into trying to think about the execution but the execution doesn't matter. We talk about that a lot here. Concept first, worry about execution later." At a meeting where several pairs shared their ideas with the Creative Director, a copywriter noted that actually making the ad "will cost millions of dollars" but he was not focused on this now since "there are engineers that build this stuff."

Creatives' work was deeply meaningful to them. "There is a bit of you, like deep you, in everything that you make," one said, while another noted, "the pressures are crazy and the hours are crazy" and "the only way you get up on Saturday or stay late on Sunday is that you really care about what you are making." Many talked about how they had wanted to be "writer writers" or had started their careers "giving Hollywood a shot," and had some self-consciousness about working in commercial art. As a Creative who said advertising was an art form remarked, "I'm not naïve. I get this is also a business. But I try to ignore that. If I play too much by the rules, my work suffers." All department members cared deeply about being regarded as highly creative. "I want people to constantly say 'he thinks the things I wish I thought of,'" one noted. A senior member of the department put it this way: "There are people who are like, 'theoretically I am a creative person here's this funny idea' but then there are those who actually do it. And we make these divisions when making talent assessments. I always tell the juniors, 'You know how you can tell I think something is funny? I'm laughing.' That's where the subjectivity comes in, but it is also where the real deal part comes in." I observed that part of being the "real deal" was keeping others out of the ideation process, as they were often perceived as trying to "water down" ideas.

Creatives' role as creators and guardians of the sacred afforded them a position of high power and status at AdCo. Many eschewed keeping an Outlook calendar, which was standard in the organization, and seldom did perfunctory tasks like schedule meetings. They were also paid more, on average, than members of other departments, a fact of which most at the firm were aware. More broadly, their role as idea generators at the center of the firm afforded certain privileges, such as the ability to dictate the actions of others. As a senior Creative told junior colleagues, "Always set a script somewhere you want to go, because the script will be better, but also once it's bought, it's gospel. So, it's sunrise in Tokyo!"

Creatives' management of boundaries inside and outside AdCo Creatives had an elaborate series of practices they used to keep other AdCo members out of the sacred space of ideation. For example, when an account person named Ron suggested an idea for an ad in a meeting [one I could not distinguish in value from the ideas Creatives had just proposed], a Creative joked it was "a roncept," making a joke out of the notion that Ron might suggest a valuable concept for an ad. Creatives sometimes referred to ideas generated by those outside of

the department as “nonconcepts.” Because they were viewed as not adding value at the ideation stage, Creatives tried to keep members from other departments out of concepting meetings. This was a source of anxiety and frustration for groups like Digital who, when working on traditional digital ads such as online videos, had little say in the development of content that they were asked to distribute.

Creatives justified keeping others out of the ideation phase by pointing out that those without artistic sensibilities did not understand the work. One, referring to Digital department members, noted, “They don’t understand the process or how to get to people [meaning, how to inspire an emotional reaction]. They don’t get it takes a certain amount of magic.” Creatives often contrasted their work and level of investment with members from other groups. For example, a Creative noted that account people “don’t lose sleep over it” when a piece of work doesn’t turn out well, while another said, “not to take away from anyone else’s job but we [Creatives] really expose ourselves when we show something we think is funny or good or heartfelt; but for others it’s not really like that.” Along these lines, another Creative commented, “That’s the difference between a creative environment and sort of a regular business environment. When you fail you fail gigantically and everyone sees it. It’s very kind of fucked up and high pressure when you’re someone like all of us who have a high need for validation.”

Interestingly, Creatives took what might appear to be fragile aspects of their position—the lack of licensing required to do the job, the highly subjective nature of their work—and used these as ways to cement their guardianship of the sacred. They talked about how judging ideas is something “you just kind of know” and requires “intuition” and is felt “in the gut.” One, referring to a Digital department member, said: “They think because it’s measurable that that is all that matters and should dictate the work. Whereas for me it’s about the quality of the message, it’s about these subjective attributes, and does it produce the response we want emotionally.”

Regarding how they engaged with the audience outside the firm, Creatives did not interact directly with the audience in the way that they did with their colleagues at AdCo. However, they had a clear sense of how the relationship should work when it came to traditional ads. They focused on the importance of getting the audience “to feel something” and conceived of their role as the artist creating an object that would accomplish this.

Others at AdCo affirm the sacredness of Creatives and their ideas While members outside of AdCo's Creative department were at times frustrated by Creatives' ways of working, most also abetted the maintenance of the patterns that frustrated them. Members in other departments talked about how they were attracted to the industry because of a desire to do "creative" or "fun" or "cool" work, and working with those they regarded as highly creative played into this desire (consistent with Koppman's (2015) work on advertising agency culture).

For example, many members of the Strategy groups had MBAs and prided themselves on their "quant" skills, often honed at consulting firms or working in industry, before they came to advertising to do something "more fun." Somewhat surprisingly, one of these strategists confided to me, "You need a strategy so what we [Strategy department] do is important. But sometimes a Creative gets an idea in the middle of the night and it's this amazing thing and it's not on strategy but it is perfect. In those cases, it's like, 'ok this is not on strategy but I'm going to fight for it.'" Another Strategy member said, "Creatives are creative because [pause to think] . . . there is this this physical manifestation. Like they make something you can see and feel and touch. We [in Strategy] do creative problem solving but it's different." Others, as with Creatives, struggled with the changing landscape of advertising, such as the proliferation of digital channels. An Account person said, "Digital is a lot of little stuff. In this new landscape it's like 'I tweeted' but who cares? Or not who cares but where's the love and the craft. There's not something you can show and feel."

Moreover, all members outside of Creative took pains to point out that they were not trying to claim they were creative in the way AdCo's copywriters and art directors were. For example, a Strategy department member, after noting that her department had lots of creative people in it said, "We are not *creative* like Creatives, right?" and when, early on in my fieldwork, I asked a Digital department member if he knew the details of an ad before it was made, he remarked, "God no, that's really secret. It's like a drug deal." While in some cases comments distinguishing themselves from "real creatives" were gestures of genuine respect, in other cases, frustration was evident. An account person said, "Sometimes she'll [Creative] be a raving bitch and say how this [ad] is her baby and we're all trying to kill it" and a Digital member noted, "He [Creative] can be an asshole. I cannot. It's part of the culture here that even if you're a junior Creative, you don't have to listen to anyone ever. When push comes to shove, all logic goes out the window and it is what they [Creative] want to do."

Even in these cases, though, the members tended to be not only highly deferential to Creatives in person, but reinforce the behaviors about which they had complained. For example, the same Account person quoted above went on to say she “loved” working in a creative industry and often sympathized with Creatives’ stresses like time pressures, noting “You can’t put van Gogh into a room and stifle him and then say, ‘go paint something amazing.’” She, like other Account people, routinely arrived early to meetings to carefully fix and re-fix how papers hanging on the wall that contained Creatives’ ideas were placed so that they looked just right when Creatives walked in.

Because of Creatives’ special role at the company, whenever someone else did something, even outside work hours, that might be construed as a creative pursuit, it tended to give pause to others—and not just in the Creative department. For example, a Digital member started a podcast related to creativity (in advertising and beyond) and it was featured on the display screens in conference rooms that usually showed things like the awards Creatives had won. People took notice. The podcast creator said, “All these people are coming up to me whispering they like the podcast and I’m like ‘you don’t have to whisper!’”

AdCo’s push for participatory ads and implications for the sacred

As with other incumbent firms in the industry, AdCo had for decades made an effort to build its digital advertising capabilities, an endeavor that was reasonably successful. At the time of my study, AdCo had a roster of high profile clients, and its ability to do integrated campaigns (i.e. where the client could employ a single firm to do all of its ads, regardless of the channel) was important for retaining them. As the cultural conversation increasingly took place on social media platforms, and as the social contract between advertisers and audiences changed, clients were increasingly interested in their advertising agencies doing more participatory forms of advertising.

Participatory advertising involves professionals inside the firm using social media platforms like Instagram to invite the audience to engage in an activity on behalf of a brand and then to post this to their own profiles, for their social media connections to see. The idea is to make advertisements that are more consistent with the culture of social media. As one scholar writing about the changes in the industry put it, “If mass media advertising had to interrupt content in order to reach audiences, social media advertising offers a different approach, both

philosophically and operationally: It tries not to seem overly commercial and instead operates, guerrilla-style, to blend seamlessly with social patterns, streams, and platforms” (Serazio, 2013).

AdCo’s top managers wanted the firm to start offering participatory ads in addition to its traditional broadcast and digital offerings. They hired a new Global Chief Creative Director, well-known in the industry for his work in both traditional and newer kinds of advertising, to help lead the charge. Shortly into his tenure, this Creative Director, whom I’ll call Matt, held a town hall meeting where he made clear the importance of doing more participatory ad work.

The provocative town hall meeting Most company-wide town halls at AdCo were an hour or less, but this one was over two hours long. As AdCo members entered the meeting space, the David Bowie song “Fame” played, and a large screen projected a slide that said: “You are here for one reason: To make AdCo the most creative agency in the world.” Matt began by saying “I’m going to talk about a lot of things: the current cultural context, what clients want and what peers are doing, and where we fall short. I want to be clear this is not personal. This is about business.”

Over the next two hours, Matt projected over 200 slides, many with just several words of text, and some containing video case studies. He talked about the need to “modernize” AdCo’s approach to advertising, and the pressure AdCo was facing from clients to do new kinds of work like participatory ads. He showed case studies of award-winning participatory ads such as the social media component of Apple’s “Shot on iPhone” campaign, and the “Interception” ad an agency did for Volvo during the Super Bowl. “The problem,” he said after showing these ads, “is we often operate as though our primary objective is a TV spot and not much else. I know this is a gross generalization so I apologize for the pockets where this is not true.” He talked about the importance of engaging the audience in conversations about brands, and viewing them as co-producers of ads’ content. He called for a “. . . shift from talking at the world to getting the world to talk.”

In describing the new work processes that would be required for such a change, Matt showed a diagram labeled “dinosaur mode” that he said “had become the current factory default setting” of the firm, where Creatives came up with an idea and handed it off to others. He then flashed a slide titled “adaptive organism mode” and talked about the increasing importance of

Digital department members playing a role in concepting ideas, and how “we need to start producing as we concept, and to think of production as a key part of concepting.”

He concluded by saying he wanted every client account group to start working in these new ways, and to strive to do award-winning work in every project they did. He noted that employees would get access to awards sites they could log in to see case studies of award winning work. He concluded by saying, “If you are not ready to work your ass off, you are a liability to this company and should leave.”

As Matt spoke, it was clear based on things like gasps and wide-eyed glances between people that this message was quite provocative for AdCo members. While the meeting was widely viewed as a referendum on the Creative department, Matt delivered the message in a rah-rah manner, with carefully selected music, videos, and humor spliced throughout to create a firm but inspirational tone. At one point Matt said “everyone we need is in this room.” The message was that people had to start working differently.

Implications for the sacred at AdCo The push to do more participatory ads, and the process changes Matt argued this would require, challenged what were once clear boundaries surrounding the sacredness of ideas, in four different and related ways.

First, Matt made clear that in more participatory forms of advertising, a great idea was important, but was not where the “magic” of the work happened; that was the process of mobilizing thousands of people around the world to engage. Second, as noted, there had long been a clear boundary between those inside the firm—who “talked at the world”—versus the audience, and this had to be broken down so that those inside the firm focused on “getting the world to talk.” Third, in addition to challenging who should take part in ideation, Matt’s insistence that feasibility was now a key component of a good idea challenged notions of “what” should be discussed as the big idea for an ad was concepted.

Fourth, Matt’s insistence that Creative could no longer “control” the ideation phase of a project when working on participatory ads challenged the idea that Creatives alone could do this work. When making broadcast ads like television spots, and when making traditional digital ads like online videos, Creatives were accustomed to developing the big idea without the help of Digital department members. In cases where Digital members were granted a bit more autonomy, such as when they did routine social media posts on behalf of a client, Creatives gave

them clear guidelines. For example, in one account, Creatives made a “tone book” that showed what the “voice” should be like, and even then they edited the work heavy-handedly such that everything “hummed to the same time.”

Creative and Digital professionals’ reactions to participatory ads Within the Creative department, the majority were excited about doing participatory ads. There were several reasons for this. First, many Creatives spoke of a desire to have their work “have an impact on the broader culture”— a gold standard in cultural industries, and participatory ads were a way of integrating their work into everyday people’s lives. One remarked how it was “exciting” to think of “designing something they [the audience] thinks is worth their time and their friends’ time to do.” Second, several Creatives noted that participatory advertising work seemed “freer” and thus was appealing. A Creative said: “What’s nice is you’re less constrained. It’s not like ‘ok where should we open this spot’ but more like ‘what the hell is it?’ The drawing board is bigger. You don’t even know what you are making.” Third, Creatives often compared participatory ads to more traditional digital work (e.g. banner ads), which they generally did not like as they saw it as “boring” or “meaningless” because they lacked a “story” and this made participatory ads even more appealing by comparison.

A minority of Creatives expressed a negative view of doing participatory ads. In referring to Matt’s town hall and the CEO publically saying that “the expression of creativity is evolving in today’s world,” one Creative remarked, “I call bullshit. I don’t know how something is more or less creative today than it was five years ago or two years ago or five months ago. With social media the audience is more stratified and so the work is more targeted and it’s a little different but in terms of judging creativity—I don’t see how that changes.” Another referred to audience-generated content as “just more shit being pushed into the abyss [of the Internet]” and said this was an attempt to “gather crumbs that might add up to something,” remarking how the “bread and butter” would remain TV. These more resistant Creative department members were not staffed on participatory advertising projects.

Within the Digital department, unsurprisingly, there was a high degree of excitement. Many Digital members had long argued that AdCo should be doing more participatory work. The only apprehension was from some members who questioned if the changes Matt said were needed would actually happen. For example, one said, “I think it is very, very easy to say that

everybody's going to have a voice. But you have to hire people who will do that, and punish those who do not. I'm not sure that is going to happen.”

All Creatives working on participatory ads reconfigure their boundary with the audience

In the months following the town hall, client account leaders created thirteen workgroups tasked with designing a participatory ad for a given client. These groups averaged eight members and had members from Strategy, Account, Creative and Digital, though members of Creative and Digital were expected to do the core design work (versus work like writing the creative brief that outlined the client business objective or managing the client relationship). Matt made it clear, in the town hall and email communications after, that Creatives were expected to seek input from Digital colleagues as they concepted ideas, though they could spend a short amount of time brainstorming alone before engaging them.

In all thirteen workgroups, I observed Creatives refocus their identities, dismantle their historic boundary with the audience, and develop new forms of exchange relative to the audience, as the literature has shown to be important.

Creatives refocused their identities The Creatives working on participatory ads expressed excitement about doing this new kind of work, and they embraced new identities as a result. More than one referred to the work as akin to “building a social movement” and several others used the term “shepherd” when referring to how they saw their role in orchestrating the large set of content that the audience would create. During a meeting with colleagues, one Creative remarked how the work was akin to being a “board game designer,” because it involved “thinking through lots of contingencies” and designing an activity that was inherently “fun” since “this [participating in a participatory ad] is totally voluntary [for the audience].” Since all of these Creatives also did traditional work as they worked on participatory ads, they still had an outlet for expressing their pure “artist” identity, and perhaps that eased the development of a new identity, which was one they genuinely embraced.

Creatives dismantled historic boundaries with the audience The refocused identities helped pave the way for practices related to dismantling what had been a thick boundary between Creatives and audience members. The most defining feature of this boundary was that it cast

Creatives as content producers and the audience as passive consumers of content. Now, however, Creatives broke down this boundary, in two ways. First, they focused on designing activities the audience could do versus making media objects they could consume. For example, a group working for a wine client brainstormed how they could take a line of legalese they were forced, by regulators, to have at the end of their commercials—“please drink responsibly”—and design a humorous, social activity around it. A group working for an identity theft protection client thought about how they could design an activity that conveyed how the client protected people, versus “just saying it.”

Second, the Creatives dismantled another aspect of the thick boundary between themselves and the audience by changing how they came up with ideas. Rather than starting with what would be of interest given their own artistic sensibilities and preferences, Creatives thought about what the audience cared about as a starting place. For example, the Creatives working for a bank client began their discussions talking about how millennials—the target of the ad—cared about relieving their student debt, and how they might design an activity related to this. Similarly, in another workgroup, Creatives working on a project related to raising awareness about what they conceived of as the dubious substances that big food companies put into foods talked about how lots of people care about this issue, though don’t have an outlet for affecting change, and they could perhaps change this.

Creatives facilitated new forms of exchange with the audience In addition to dismantling the boundary with the audience, Creatives explicitly talked about the importance of “giving something” to the audience in order to induce them to participate. Creatives on a beverage company project talked about how the “unwritten rule of ‘watch this and you get your show back’” was gone, and how they had to do something not just to entertain the audience, but from which the audience would actually gain something. For example, one of the groups working for the wine company was making a participatory ad involving celebrating the birthday anniversary of a famous singer known for loving the wine. Before they had figured out exactly what the activity was that they were designing, they talked about the details of the winner’s prize, involving a trip to Vegas with friends to visit the singer’s old haunts. As the groups thought through these new forms of exchange with the audience, they also considered how they could facilitate high levels of interactivity in the new kind of advertising. A group working for a

for-profit education client talked, for example, about how the participatory ad was a chance to “change the conversation” on the brand’s Facebook page, which had largely been negative, and how it was a way to start “a different dialogue” with the audience.

Despite similar boundary management with the audience, Creatives had different project outcomes

Only seven of the thirteen workgroups received a “greenlight” light from their client and were therefore able to launch their projects. Clients made decisions about which projects to greenlight based on: representation of the brand (i.e. does it help promote a desired brand image); likelihood of strong engagement (i.e. will the audience actually participate); and technological feasibility (i.e. can it actually work on social media platforms the client and AdCo do not control). All of these clients wanted to do participatory ads—as noted, this was the major impetus for Matt’s town hall—and all ideas proposed were within their budget expectations, but some clients were left unconvinced that the idea was sound. To understand the difference in projects’ ability to secure client greenlight—in essence, to understand why some ideas were viewed to be of a higher quality than others—it is important to understand the nature of interactions between Creative and Digital members of the workgroups.

Creatives’ views on Digital professionals at the project outset None of the Creatives working on participatory advertising projects expressed initial excitement about Digital playing a larger role in their sacred task of ideation. This was for three reasons.

First, Creatives had had interactions with Digital members in other kinds of projects, like traditional digital advertising work, and many had formed the impression that Digital members, while useful for some things, were not able to add value in the ideation phase of ad-making. One Creative said, “They aren’t the most creative people. They don’t have the sort of big, wild I want to be the next Hemingway ideas and that’s what you want [when coming up with an idea].” Another said, “Don’t get me wrong they are great at helping with execution but their skill is more like ‘take this big idea someone else had and apply it.’” Others remarked how it was important to keep the group “as lightweight as possible” early on, since this made for the best climate for coming up with ideas; “you can’t concept by committee,” one said. I refer to this as Creatives questioning Digital professionals’ *utility* in coming up with ideas.

Second, many expressed concern that Digital members sometimes tried to change their ideas, but did not have the “insight” to do this. Creatives often complained about members of other departments watering down their ideas, as indicated before, and they found this particularly frustrating with Digital members, who sometimes “act like they know everything when no one really has expertise in social media.” For example, one Creative talked about working on a project that involved Periscope, a live video-streaming app, and how they made the “mistake” of seeking Digital members’ input early on, because they criticized the idea and pointed out how it could be done differently, which was “annoying” because the Creative realized, “They didn’t really get it.” As a result, Creatives had grown accustomed to keeping Digital out of ideation. I refer to this as Creatives showing concern that Digital might try to *usurp* them.

Third, it was simply *unusual* for Digital to have a significant role in ideation. However, now all Creatives were aware that they were supposed to involve Digital in this phase. But, only some Creatives did so.

Value of a workgroups set-up characterized by partial pressure It was not uncommon for AdCo members to be working on a half dozen projects at a time, split across a few clients. Therefore, assignment to the participatory advertising projects, as with all at AdCo, was largely based on members’ availability. Through the randomness of this process, it happened that some workgroups had set-ups where Creatives were on average higher in level (i.e. in more senior positions) than Digital members; in other groups, Creative and Digital members were roughly the same level. There were no groups where Digital members were on average higher level, and this is because the Digital department was smaller and flatter and had only two members in senior-level positions (versus a dozen in Creative), and they were not staffed as project workgroup members. All workgroups were instructed to work collaboratively in concepting the idea for the ad.

Through my analysis, I came to call the workgroup setup involving relative equality between Creative and Digital professionals as one characterized by what I call “partial pressure” for Creatives. The setup put pressure on them because being similar in level to Digital colleagues made it less possible to use the “usual” practice of excluding them from ideation. When I asked Creatives in these groups about Digital being involved in ideating for participatory ads, they said things like, “We have to include them” and “They’re going to be mad if we meet without them.”

Moreover, having Digital members that were similar in level to themselves seemed to lead Creatives to rethink Digital members' "utility." For example, one of the Creatives said: "If this were a TV spot we could script it, hire a director and it would be pretty straightforward. But, [Creative] and I knew we could not do these [ideas] on our own. We knew they fit with the brand, but we had no idea how to really get these ideas to work." While the challenge was the same for Creatives in all groups, those in workgroups not characterized by partial pressure did not talk this way.

I refer to this pressure as "partial," however, for two reasons that relate to the two different meanings of the word. The pressure was partial in the sense that it was incomplete because the expectation sent from top management was not that Digital members would lead the projects, nor was it a scenario where Digital members were on average more senior. In other words, the pressure could have been stronger. The pressure was also partial in the sense that it was biased in favor of one side—Creative—because ideation was Creative's historical jurisdiction and therefore, even with the message that Digital had to be involved, Creatives had something of a home field advantage, and therefore less of a concern about being "usurped." For example, the Creatives in the groups characterized by partial pressure still talked about how the idea was "theirs" even when Digital had played a major role in conceiving of it, which Creatives also acknowledged. In other words, the message was not work for Digital, but work with Digital.

In all six of the workgroups where Creatives were placed in a setup characterized by partial pressure, I observed them use a series of practices I call "reconfiguring the sacred practices." In contrast, in six of the seven workgroups where Creatives were more senior than Digital, I did not observe Creatives using these practices. In the one where Creatives did, the group was somewhat unusual in that it was working on a pro bono project (which still required client greenlight to launch) and thus the Creatives working on it appeared more receptive to working in unconventional ways. In the next section, I describe how the reconfiguring the sacred practices enabled some workgroups to develop high quality ideas, then show how the lack of these practices created problematic outcomes for the other groups.

Partial pressure and reconfiguring the sacred practices

The workgroup setup characterized by partial pressure on Creatives provided an important context for change, and one that differed from what Creatives experienced in the other

workgroups. Specifically, it pressured Creatives to discontinue the usual practice of excluding Digital from ideation, it encouraged them to think of Digital members as more useful, and it was not so much pressure that usurpation fears were high. In these groups, I saw Creatives use three practices which I call *reconfiguring the sacred practices*: perforating the sacred; protecting the sacred; and pluralizing the sacred (see **Table 5**). Using these practices gave some workgroups the ability to change who was involved in ideating, how the process unfolded, and the quality of the idea produced as a result.

I refer to the practices as relating to a reconfiguration as opposed to redefinition of the sacred because ideation remained core, sacred work, but who was involved and how it happened changed. I refer to the reconfiguring the sacred practices as what occurred at the Creative-Digital boundary versus the Creative-audience boundary because while the audience played an essential role in producing content for a participatory ad, in the ideation phase specifically, they were still abstract, not yet contributing to the project. Thus, they did not challenge Creatives' role as sole doers and guardians of the sacred act of ideation, as Digital professionals' presence did.

----- Insert Table 5 about here -----

Perforating the sacred Perforating the sacred involved core professionals allowing previously forbidden actors and topics to enter the sacred space of their core task. At AdCo, this involved: a) core professionals inviting digital interactivity professionals to engage in ideation and b) mingling sacred and formerly profane topics during the task of coming up with an idea for the ad. I use the word “perforate” to signal that these actions were taken selectively, and still allowed core professionals to remain in a higher position of control.

In all of the workgroups characterized by partial pressure, I observed Creatives actively seeking input from Digital members of the group, relatively early on in the project, and while idea generation was still very much in progress. Consider the group working for a wine company (“WineCo”), which wanted to do something “cool and interactive” using social media to celebrate the wine company’s 150th anniversary. In a meeting before they engaged Digital members, Creatives came up with a series of ideas, like creating a Facebook campaign where people could buy their friends a glass of wine, and a scavenger hunt at WineCo’s scenic vineyard, where they would capture footage for online videos. They came up with a half dozen

high-level ideas then they invited the Digital members assigned to the group to attend a meeting where they walked through the ideas and asked for input.

Digital members offered feedback, often explicitly calling out aspects of ideas they liked; this was important since their presence in the meeting represented something of a transgression. For example, though a Digital member expressed concern about “getting critical mass” for the scavenger hunt at the vineyard, since it seemed to involve a small number of people, they went on to say “Love the scavenger hunt. Maybe we could broaden it, like take it out of the vineyard and into the real world. We need scale.” This initiated a conversation about how the hunt might unfold differently, but in ways still in keeping with the idea of “unchanged for the better,” which was intended to highlight that the wine had not changed over time, remaining true to its roots and high quality standard.

In addition, and because of the presence of Digital members at this stage of ideation, I observed Creatives in these groups talking extensively about topics like technological feasibility, something I did not observe when they did traditional advertising work, and did not observe in the groups where Digital was not involved. For example, once the group got excited about the idea of hiding casks in historic locations around the world, they talked through the realities of making this possible. A Digital member talked about the sudden popularity, at the time, of augmented reality games like Pokemon-Go and the whole group then picked up this idea, talking through how it might help the hunt be more “social” and “viral.” The group also discussed technical issues such as if Facebook versus Instagram should be the platform for the project, and how clues about casks’ locations could be best distributed in real time. Creatives had gotten excited about using vintage photos of the historic locations in the clues, and therefore hoped to do the project on Instagram, which better featured photography, but were convinced by Digital members that Facebook was superior for its broader reach. Later, when it came to client approval, the client mentioned they preferred Facebook because it was expected to lead to higher engagement.

My observation of this group and others suggests that perforating the sacred was important because it allowed new actors with critical areas of expertise to have voice in the design of an ad, and it led groups to consider the formerly profane topic of feasibility early on, as they worked out the big idea.

Protecting the sacred Protecting the sacred involved core professionals engaging digital interactivity professionals in ways that still enabled core professionals to protect certain aspects of their sacred task. At AdCo, this involved: a) core professionals selectively shielding sacred activities from digital interactivity professionals and b) core professionals selectively condemning transgressions of the sacred when they occurred.

In all of the workgroups characterized by partial pressure, I observed Creatives selectively shielding sacred activities from Digital members in the group. For example, in each of the groups, they deliberately did not seek input from Digital until they had developed several ideas on their own. In addition, once Digital members were involved, Creatives on a small number of occasions would talk at length about the project without them—generally informal, hallway meetings. This was relatively easy to do because while AdCo’s office was open plan, members of each department sat together.

Another means of protecting the sacred happened when Creatives made a point of condemning what they perceived as transgressions of the sacred committed by Digital members. In the Cask Chase group, for example, when a Digital member initially suggested taking the hunt out of WineCo’s vineyard, a Creative pointed out, with obvious annoyance, that “it can’t be any old scavenger hunt” since the point was to show how the client’s wine was unchanged for the better in 150 years. Also in this group, when Pokemon-Go was first mentioned, a Creative initially expressed skepticism about “tying the latest craze” to a historic brand. When asked about these comments and others like them in interviews, Creatives talked about the importance of “explaining advertising” to Digital colleagues, who lacked formal training in the profession.

In a workgroup that was designing a participatory ad for a beverage company, I saw a similar dynamic. The hope was to highlight the health benefits of the firm’s fruit juice, including its ability to prevent urinary tract infections. Creatives were particularly excited about doing a social media event with a live component at a college campus, since the client wanted to target millennials. They had gotten excited about the idea of installing port-o-potties in a central area on campus and having a celebrity who played a doctor on TV hide in one and describe the health benefits of the juice, delightfully startling college students. In addition to broadcasting the event on Facebook Live, the workgroup planned to have audience members send questions to the celebrity, and share their own stories online. Upon hearing the idea, a Digital member said, “What if we did it at Coachella? Or some music festival. We could still target millennials but it

would be less obvious it was a stunt because there'd naturally be a long line of port o potties." A Creative then took several minutes to explain how the client wanted a college campus tie-in and noted the importance of "sticking to the story" when making an ad, even if it is participatory.

My observations of these groups and others suggests that protecting the sacred was important for two reasons. First, the act of selectively excluding Digital members helped reduce the threat of having Digital involved in this sacred space. Second, the act of calling out when Digital members were making suggestions that Creative perceived as leading the project in an "off-brand direction" was a way of teaching them how Creatives thought about protecting brands' images in making ads. If only protection of the sacred was happening, it would have been problematic; but when coupled with the perforating practice, it helped groups to access a wider range of expertise while also remaining true to the purpose of advertisements, and while reducing threat for Creatives.

Pluralizing the sacred Pluralizing the sacred involved core professionals taking a more diverse and multiplex approach to their core task, through engaging digital interactivity professionals as partners in the work. At AdCo, this involved: a) adding new dimensionality to old perspectives and b) diversifying evaluation criteria.

In all of the workgroups characterized by partial pressure, I observed Creatives adding new dimensionality to old perspectives on their work, and Digital members' involvement directly enabled this. For example, as indicated earlier, all of the Creatives working on participatory ads dismantled historic boundaries related to the audience, and understood participatory ads required new forms of exchange, such as providing a "fun" activity or "solving a problem" for the audience. While important for reconfiguring the Creative-audience relationship, this alone did not ensure that a participatory ad was compelling in the context of social networking sites like Facebook. This is because social networking sites were characterized by a distinctive set of impression management norms that were essential to think through in participatory ad design (e.g. Turkle, 2011; Levina and Arriaga, 2014; Marwick, 2013).

For example, the Creatives working on a project called April Fools Protection for an identity theft protection company initially spent a lot of time thinking about what would be "fun" for participants. But, once Digital was involved, they added nuance to this: while fun was "useful" for the audience, they also had to do something that helped people look good in front of

their friends, or strengthen their connection with them, or meet new people. This helped the group rethink how to design the project to better play to audience members' social needs. For example, they decided to create fictitious stories people could share that were based on the kinds of content people share online ("People share about their dogs or their new house or their cool vacation," as one member put it) and that were likely to get an impressed laugh from friends once they learned it was a joke. Similarly, when thinking through how to make the Raise Your Glass project most fitting for Instagram, the Creatives working for WineCo initially talked about activities that were "funny" and thus likely to be shared. But, once Digital was involved, talked specifically about how on social media, people post photos that make it look like "they're having more fun than their friends are [laughs]." In other words, while Creatives on their own understood advertisers' changing relationship with audiences, they did not understand or know how to act upon the idea that another critical aspect of social media advertising was helping audience members to manage their relationships with their own social media followers. While Creatives understood how their relationship with the audience was changing, they did not fully understand the context in which audience members were embedded.

In addition, I observed all of the workgroups with setups characterized by partial pressure use a diversified set of evaluation criteria when making judgements about the quality of their work. As indicated earlier, Creatives were accustomed to working on "gut" or "intuition" when evaluating their work before sharing it with clients, and this is how Creatives in groups not characterized by partial pressure continued to operate. However, Digital's involvement forced Creatives to consider a wider, more objective range of criteria (e.g. can the idea actually be implemented versus does it sound amusing) when deciding if an idea was a good one.

For example, the April Fools Protection group cycled through a diverse set of issues when doing a final check on the quality of their idea before showing it to the client. Even though everyone in the group loved the idea, they delayed showing it to the client until they had resolved what Creatives had previously regarded as "minutiae." For example, in this case, the group forced itself to figure out how to strike the balance of widely publicizing the April Fools joke without revealing it to so many people that no one was left to be fooled. The Line Protection group, a different set of AdCo members also working for the identity theft protection company, took a similar action. When making final deliberations about their idea to create a tie-in to PAX (a gaming conference popular with millennials) where the brand would "protect" attendees' spots

in line, after using Twitter to summon a brand rep to hold their space. From the start, everyone in the group thought it was a great idea—“this is like a new business!” one exclaimed—but before finalizing the idea, they cycled through all of the different ways in which it had to “work” in order to be successful. For example, they talked through what would happen if they got more requests than they could cover, and what to do if people posted their protection request to Facebook instead of Twitter.

My observations of these groups and others suggest that pluralizing the sacred was important for multiple reasons. First, it helped Creatives to add dimensionality to their conceptions of the audience—specifically by seeing them not just as active and in need of incentives to engage, but as social actors embedded in their own complex set of relationships. Second, it forced Creatives to consider a wider, more objective set of criteria when evaluating ideas. Digital members’ engagement in the sacred space of ideation enabled this pluralization to occur. I use the word “pluralize” versus “change” or “redefine” to highlight that the important activity was less dropping previously valuable ways of working, but adding new ones to complement them.

Resulting locus of ideation and strength of the idea The workgroup setup characterized by partial pressure was important because it encouraged the use of reconfiguring the sacred practices, which in turn shifted the locus of ideation. It shifted it from the domain of core professionals alone to a space occupied by core and digital interactivity professionals, who brought key insights about social media platforms, as technical but also social spaces. Therefore, while these digital interactivity professionals did not have deep expertise in advertising, they did understand how to engage the non-professionals using social media sites such as Instagram with whom those inside the firm would be co-producing. As a result, the ideas that these workgroups generated received clients’ greenlights because they were deemed likely to attract strong engagement, to represent the brand image, and to be technologically feasible (see **Figure 1**).

----- Insert Figure 1 about here -----

Lack of partial pressure and failure to use reconfiguring the sacred practices

In six of the seven groups not characterized by partial pressure on Creatives, I did not observe the reconfiguring the sacred practices.² In these groups, Creatives were unwilling to let Digital into their sacred ideation space, and the quality of their ideas suffered as a result, even though these Creatives had renegotiated their boundary with the audience.

Unwillingness to perforate the sacred My observations of and interviews with the Creatives in the six workgroups where there was no change to the sacred task of ideation suggest that this was the case because the Creatives did not feel pressure to include Digital in the way that Creatives in the workgroups described above did. This is because they were on average more senior to Digital members. Even though they, like their partially pressured peers, were explicitly told to include Digital members, they did not feel their position of strength at AdCo's "center" sufficiently weakened to have to do so. Moreover, perhaps because the Digital members were on average junior to them, they continued to assume that Digital could not really add value to the activity of generating ideas.

For example, like Creatives in groups with partial pressure, those working on the Trillion Dollar Kickstarter project for a bank client kept Digital out of the process in their initial generation of ideas. One of the Creatives had recently read a news article stating that many millennials did not think banks needed to exist, and the Creatives thought through how to make the bank feel relevant. They talked about how millennials care about issues relating to student debt and came up with the idea of making a tongue-in-cheek Kickstarter campaign where the bank would try to raise enough money to absolve all student debt, thus proving its value to millennials. However, where they deviated from partially pressured peers is they never invited Digital colleagues to help work out the idea.

Several weeks into the project, a Digital member grew concerned that no one in Digital had "heard a thing" about the project, even though they were supposed to be working on it together. This Digital member emailed the most senior Creative in the group, saying, "I heard

² The one exception to this, as noted earlier, was the Super Duper PAC workgroup, where Creatives were on average senior to Digital but enlisted them anyway; this seems to be because the project was pro bono work and therefore Creatives appeared more willing to deviate from historic ways of working.

you kicked off the project for BankCo. Did I miss the kickoff meeting?” The Creative wrote back saying, “Yeah we just wanted to get cracking when we [Creatives] were all in the office [they often traveled] and seems like we can do the initial workout ourselves.” The Digital member replied that they would “love to help” but never got a response. Amongst themselves, Digital members expressed frustration, but did not feel sufficiently powerful relative to Creatives to push back any further. Creatives in this group, similar to others not partially pressured, noted, “It’s best to keep it small” because “you can’t have a whole room concepting ideas.”

Recall that these Creatives and others who kept Digital out of the sacred space of ideation were genuinely excited to work on participatory ads and genuinely wanted their projects to be greenlit. A Creative working on De-Socializer referred to it as “something of a passion project,” and had thought through how it would add value for the audience, but the socio-technical realities of Facebook [the intended home] were never sufficiently addressed due to the group’s refusal to bring in Digital members. These workgroups spent as much time ideating as Creatives in the other groups, but their conversations lacked critical inputs for getting the work done well.

One may wonder why these Creatives would not, arguably, be the most likely to include Digital, since their being on average senior to Digital members might mean they could exert more control and therefore they had little to worry about in terms of usurpation. While this is a reasonable question, it is important to appreciate how sacred ideation was, and how radical of a change it was for Digital to be involved in this stage of the work. My observations indicated that because controlling ideation was so central to Creatives’ identity, power and status, unless they felt pressured to let Digital in, they did not do so.

Resulting locus of ideation and strength of the idea Creatives in the workgroups not characterized by partial pressure did not engage in reconfiguring the sacred practices, and in these groups, the locus of ideation remained with Creative department members only. As a result, while the ideas they developed sufficiently represented the desired brand image, clients remained unconvinced about their likelihood to attract strong engagement and technological feasibility remained a concern. Therefore, these projects did not give clients’ greenlights.

A grounded model of how core professionals reconfigure their sacred work tasks

AdCo's Creative department members and their shifting relationship with Digital members and the audience provides an instructive example of the way in which an incumbent firm's attempt to leverage social media affordances to develop a new offering that hinges on coproducing with the audience can be an occasion for change to what Durkheim would call the organization's "religion." Ideation had long been a "sacred" activity at AdCo, not just in the eyes of Creative department members, but others at the firm. As the creators and guardians of ideas, Creatives maintained an undisputed place in what Shils would call AdCo's "center," with all the trappings this entailed. However, the shift to do participatory advertising required a dismantling of the boundary that Creatives had long maintained—not just with the audience, who they had long seen as passive recipients of their "art," but also with Digital department members, who they had long perceived as a downstream support department.

These digital interactivity professionals were important because they had expertise in social media platforms as complex assemblages of user practices and ever-adapting technologies (e.g. Facebook frequently changed its algorithm for how content was ranked on users' newsfeeds), and this made them essential conduits between Creatives and the audience. Digital interactivity professionals therefore had essential experience when it came to designing a concept for a participatory ad that would lead to high levels of audience engagement and that was technologically feasible. In traditional ads, these were not key uncertainties to be managed by the organization because the audience's active engagement was not relevant, and using broadcast media or even social networking sites in their broadcast capacity (e.g. tweeting from a client's account) involved well-established techniques. Whereas historically coming up with the big idea had been the key source of uncertainty, this was coupled with additional activities when AdCo tried to make participatory ads.

At AdCo, as would be expected, some Creatives, in this case a minority, refused to do the new kind of work, denigrating it in ways similar to what has been depicted in the literature. These Creatives were not staffed on participatory advertising projects. Most Creatives, though, were enthusiastic about participatory ads, and all of the Creatives staffed on participatory ad projects refocused their identities and changed how they managed their boundary with the audience, as the literature has described to be important. However, only some groups' Creatives changed how they engaged with Digital professionals inside the firm. They did this by using what I call reconfiguring the sacred practices, which involved perforating, protecting and

pluralizing the sacred. These practices were crucial for these groups' success (i.e. their ability to get greenlit) because they enabled Creatives to access critical expertise needed to get the work done. The practices helped change who performed the firm's sacred activity, and what the task involved.

My data suggest that a workgroup setup where Creative and Digital members were on average similar in level was important for encouraging Creatives to use reconfiguring the sacred practices. I call this setup one characterized by partial pressure for Creatives to invite Digital members into their sacred space. All Creatives at AdCo were subjected to the same pressure from the Global Chief Creative Director, whose provocative town hall made clear that Creatives had to change how they managed the audience and Digital. However, an additional nudge was needed to compel Creatives to change how they guarded ideation. Creatives had long used their status as members of the department as a license to take actions that members of other departments could not. While Matt's town hall chipped away at this power to some degree, the Creatives in groups where they were on average senior to Digital members had their collective seniority as an additional source of power, and thus had more ability to resist changing their rituals relative to the sacred task of ideation. In the partial pressure workgroups, when this power source was stripped, albeit due to the randomness of the staffing process, Creatives perceived that they did not have the option to continue the usual practice of excluding Digital professionals. In addition, it seemed that because they were similar in level, they were more likely to rethink the assumption that Digital members did not have useful knowledge.

Possible Alternative Explanations

There are several alternative explanations for my findings, and I consider them here. First, one may wonder if something other than the criteria I described—if an idea well-represented the brand, the audience seemed likely to engage, and the project was technologically feasible—might affect a client's decision to greenlight a project or not. For example, perhaps some clients were simply more conservative and less likely to greenlight participatory ads, or perhaps they lacked the budget, or had already approved an initial participatory project and thus were less likely to approve a second one. None of these explanations fit my data. AdCo had a few conservative clients (i.e. only did TV work) and they did not attempt to sell participatory ads to the few clients that fell into this category. Regarding budget, participatory ads were generally

much less expensive than doing TV commercials (which required hiring actors, directors, etc) and projects that were relatively low and high budget were both greenlit. Moreover, some clients greenlit some projects but not others, but in these cases, the order in which projects were greenlit or not differed, suggesting the order in which projects were presented did not determine their chance of launching. Finally, while I was not authorized to speak with clients, I spoke with group members afterwards to learn about client feedback about the work. In the groups that failed to get a greenlight, the consistent message was that clients were concerned about engagement and technological feasibility.

Another possibility is that perhaps some Creatives working on these projects did not really want to do participatory advertising work and therefore they deliberately sabotaged the project so they would not have to actually launch it. Nothing in my data suggests this was the case. The Creatives staffed on participatory ads were across the board enthusiastic about them and expressed great frustration about cases where work they had designed did not get made. One said, “What I like least about my job is the enormous amount of time that is wasted on things that don’t go anywhere.”

One may also wonder if some Creative and Digital members had a friendship or some kind of positive rapport before working together on a participatory ad and this made the Creative more likely to do things like perforate the sacred. My data do not support this. Since AdCo was not a massive company, some people had worked together before (in both greenlit and non-greenlit groups) and most at least had heard one another’s names. Moreover, since relations between Creative and Digital had historically been contentious, prior experience was not necessarily an asset in this case.

One may also wonder if it was a talent issue—perhaps some groups simply had more talented members and therefore were more likely to develop high quality ideas. For another paper, I asked AdCo members to name the top performers in their department. Many of the people identified as top performers were in the workgroups whose projects were not greenlit. Of course, it could also be that the talents of members other than Creative and Digital affected the outcome, like account people. Indeed, members of the Account department pitched the ideas to clients (along with the other group members), but it does not appear that the groups that failed to get greenlit suffered because of poorly skilled account people. To the contrary, some of the account managers from groups whose projects did not launch struck me as the most sophisticated

about thinking how to sell participatory ads to clients. One opened their computer to show me all of the different work they had done mapping the customer journey for the client. And yet, they went on to say that the participatory advertising project had been “challenging” because “we had details that Creative basically didn’t work out and wouldn’t let anyone else work out.”

In addition, one may wonder if the failure for some Creatives to engage Digital members was simply that they were senior level versus the fact that they were higher in level than Digital members. Three out of the seven greenlit projects had senior members, suggesting that the presence of senior members alone was not the critical issue. Likewise, Creatives excluding Digital members occurred when Creatives who were not senior-level did not experience partial pressure, suggesting that being senior was not a necessary condition for failing to use the reconfiguring the sacred practices.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated when and how core professionals inside an incumbent firm work across the historically sealed boundary between themselves and digital interactivity professionals in order to do sacred work in new ways that enable coproduction with nonprofessionals. The literature on how core professionals engage nonprofessionals in their work highlights the importance of professionals’ refocusing their identities, dismantling historic boundaries, and facilitating new forms of exchange in order to benefit from engaging nonprofessionals in their work (e.g. Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). However, all core professionals working on participatory ads at AdCo did these activities, and yet only some were able to develop high quality ideas. To account for the variation, it is important to examine boundaries inside the firm as well. The literature on core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent firms details the conflicts between professional groups, particularly during digital transformation efforts, and it highlights the importance of separating digital interactivity professionals so they can do newer kinds of work without interference from core professionals (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004). This was not possible at AdCo, where clients wanted integrated campaigns, and where core professionals’ skills were still essential for doing the new kinds of work. I found that in order to work with digital interactivity professionals, core professionals had to change how they did their most sacred activity: coming up with an ad’s “big idea.” The core professionals that allowed digital interactivity professionals into this space did so using a series

of practices I call reconfiguring the sacred practices. My data suggest that a workgroup setup characterized by what I call partial pressure on core professionals, due to their being on average similar in level to digital interactivity professionals, led them to use because they felt insufficiently powerful to exclude these colleagues and more likely to see them as useful. At AdCo, only Creatives who used reconfiguring the sacred practices had their ideas greenlit.

Contributions to the literature on boundaries between professionals and nonprofessionals in the age of the Web and social media

This literature has focused on how the Web and social media, with their providing unprecedented levels of information, voice and the ability to connect to everyday people, are breaking down historic barriers between professionals inside firms and nonprofessionals outside (Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Barley, 2015; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). In this context, scholars have focused on when and how professionals can use increased interactivity and connection with nonprofessionals to do work in cheaper, better, faster or even fundamentally different ways (e.g. Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016). Scholars highlight that nonprofessionals' ability to create value can be threatening for professionals inside incumbent organizations, and detail the importance of identity refocusing, dismantling historic boundaries like knowledge boundaries (Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018), and developing new work practices more facilitative to co-creation (Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018) such that professionals can gain value from integrating nonprofessionals into their work.

My first contribution to this literature is to show that while professionals' renegotiating their boundary with nonprofessionals is necessary for doing new, more participatory kinds of work, it may be insufficient. In some cases, it hinges on core professionals renegotiating their boundary with digital interactivity professionals inside the firm. This is challenging, though, in cases like AdCo's when the boundary relates to core professionals' most sacred task. I find that to engage digital interactivity professionals, core professionals can use practices I call reconfiguring the sacred practices, and this involves their perforating, protecting and pluralizing their sacred task. My study suggests these practices may only be used under certain conditions, such as when core professionals feel partial pressure to change how they work.

The importance of partial pressure resonates with Lifshitz-Assaf's (2018) observation that at NASA, the scientists who had made horizontal versus vertical role changes were more

likely to refocus their identities and dismantle boundaries with the crowd. Lifshitz-Assaf speculated that these scientists' having shifted disciplines and projects over time may have led them to be less attached to the "how" of their work and more able to focus on the "why." My study also suggests that it is important for professionals to loosen their attachment to "how" their work gets done, though I suggest this may be facilitated through less of a cognitive pull process, and more of a structural push process, where workgroup setup, coupled with top team pressure, can be the impetus for change.

One may wonder why other studies, like Lifshitz-Assaf's (2018) and Nelson and Irwin (2014), did not seem to involve core professionals needing to change how they managed boundaries with other professional groups internally. This may be due to the nature of how shifting dependencies were managed. For example, NASA enlisted global open innovation platforms like Innocentive and Topcoder to serve as an intermediary with the crowd. The newness of NASA scientists' relationships with members of these firms, their distance from daily life, and the fact that they were paid by NASA may have worked to reduce the threat they presented. Had these professionals been part of a former support department inside NASA, the situation may have been more contentious. This speaks to the potential value of incumbent organizations outsourcing the expertise of digital interactivity professionals, though at AdCo this was not possible. Top managers wanted work like participatory ads to become a core capability.

In addition, my study suggests that part of why professional "de-centering" in the age of engaging nonprofessionals is challenging may be that the challenge is not just for professionals to transition to being in more orchestration-related roles such as "solution seeker" or "connector," as the literature has described (Eyal, 2013; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018). Rather, the challenge may be that these orchestrator roles sometimes have to be shared with members of another professional group. This suggests that power dynamics inside organizations need to be part of the context when considering when and how core professionals are able to integrate nonprofessionals into their work with more or less effectiveness.

Indeed, my study answers calls for more work on pluralistic settings where members inside an organization may have different approaches to engaging nonprofessionals (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016). Consistent with Nelson and Irwin's (2014) observation that librarians were able to let users into their "sacred" space once they saw that they did not denigrate but enhanced it, my study shows how a similar dynamic may need to happen inside

firms between professional groups. At AdCo, the core professionals who loosened their tight control of the sacred were the ones who turned out to be able to continue doing the sacred activity well in the new realm.

Boundaries between core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent organizations

There is a large literature on managing boundaries inside organizations (e.g. Bechky, 2003b; DiBenigno, 2017). The subset of the literature focused on boundary management between core and digital professionals when a new technology is introduced is much smaller (Bailey, Leonardi, and Barley, 2012; Dougherty and Dunne, 2012). And the research stream pertaining to core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent firms trying to develop new offerings that hinge on audience engagement is smaller still, and not part of the mainstream organizations literature (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Usher, 2016). However, as an increasing number of organizations move more in this direction, understanding how this boundary is managed more or less effectively is important (e.g. Piskorski, 2014; Hinings, Gegenhuber, and Greenwood, 2018).

My study makes two contributions to this literature. The first is to make progress on situating the phenomenon, distinguishing it from other types of situations where professionals inside organizations manage boundaries. My study does this by showing how the dynamics of core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent firms working to develop new offerings that leverage social media affordances to engage the audience as co-producers are unique. In this scenario, the intention is not for digital interactivity professionals to replace those at the core, nor is it for them to help core professionals do their work more efficiently. Rather, it is to help the firm develop a fundamentally different kind of offering—one suited for a two-way communication, interactive environment—which still requires the expertise of professionals at the core, but that also requires digital interactivity professionals' expertise. It is this integration—of the old, where core professionals have mastery, and the new, where digital interactivity professionals have crucial expertise related to the new uncertainties, which are the audience and social media—that makes the scenario especially difficult.

Since incumbent firms often have something of a religion relative to the most important activities performed by core professionals—at AdCo, Creatives' coming up with an ad's "big idea"—figuring out how to encourage core professionals to allow digital interactivity

professionals into their sacred space is a challenge. It requires different mechanisms than those put forth in the literature that may work in less contentious times. My clarifying the nature of the challenge is a contribution because extant studies have not articulated how this professional boundary is different from others, and as this research stream merges with the core organizations literature, it helps situate the phenomenon relative to other research. More broadly, this study answers calls in the organizations literature for more research on how “relatively mature” and “very new” professional groups might integrate their expertise within the context of incumbent firms in times of change (Dougherty and Dunne, 2012).

My second contribution to this literature is to detail how core professionals allow digital interactivity professionals to participate in a sacred task, which in turn enables workgroups of core and digital interactivity professionals to do new kinds of work effectively. The existing literature has highlighted the importance of top managers empowering digital interactivity professionals, which often requires structurally separating them from those at the core (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Williams, Wardle, and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Piskorski, 2014; Suddaby, Saxton, and Gunz, 2015). I show, however, that it is possible for core and digital interactivity professionals to work together, in ways that add value to the firm, when core professionals use reconfiguring the sacred practices. With these, core professionals can perforate, protect and pluralize their sacred activity.

My study suggests that core professionals only use these practices under some conditions. At AdCo, all core professionals were subjected to pressure from top management, but only those staffed in a workgroup where they were similar in level to digital interactivity professionals actually used reconfiguring the sacred practices. I call this situation one of partial pressure. Being similar in level to digital interactivity professionals made it less possible to exclude them, because of a perceived lack of power to do so, and led core professionals to second-guess the assumption that their colleagues lacked useful knowledge for their core task. At the same time, because the core task had long been the domain of core professionals, and there was no indication from top management that digital interactivity professionals should take it over, the pressure or level of threat was not intolerably high, which might have led to a threat rigidity response.

My finding on how core professionals might change how they engage with another, historically more peripheral professional group inside of an organization resonate with findings

from prior work. For example, DiBenigno’s (2019) study of commanders and mental health professionals in the Army highlighted that male uniformed mental health professionals (versus their female civilian counterparts) had an easier time soliciting change in commanders’ behaviors, which DiBenigno suggested may have been the result of their relatively more similar status. In a review of the literature on how status differences influence interactions among professionals when they are confronted with new technologies, Anthony (2018) noted that when status differences are mitigated, groups are better able to fully utilize new technologies. My study’s finding about the value of relative equality between core and digital interactivity professionals therefore resonates with these studies.

It also has similarities with Truelove and Kellogg’s (2016) finding about the value of a radical flank threat for precipitating change amongst core professionals—though this study has important differences. In both studies, the top management team put pressure on all core professionals to work with members of a department that was increasing in importance as the organization started to do new kinds of work. In both studies, only some core professionals actually changed, and this was because they came to perceive that they no longer had sufficient power to resist the professionals from the other group. However, at the carsharing firm, there were two distinctive sets of core professionals—radical and moderate engineers—whereas this heterogeneity among core professionals was not evident at AdCo. Interestingly, even if forced to categorize some Creatives as “moderate,” these ones did not engage with Digital unless embedded within a workgroup characterized by partial pressure. Moreover, for engineers at the carsharing firm, they truly did not want to do the marketing projects that they were being pressured to do, whereas at AdCo, Creatives staffed on participatory advertising workgroups wanted to do this work; their issue was that they did not want to share their sacred space with Digital. Therefore, even once weakened, different practices were required to get the new work done—hence the importance of reconfiguring the sacred practices at AdCo, versus coalition-building practices at the carsharing firm. Importantly, my study shows that even if there is not a “moderate” subsection within a department of core professionals, it may be possible to create a sense of weakened power through strategic workgroup design.

Table 6 for a summary of how my findings contrast with the literature.

----- Insert Table 6 about here -----

Future research

Ethnographic studies are valuable for building theory in areas about which we know little empirically or theoretically, but they come with limitations and need to be followed by with more research. For example, my finding about the importance of reconfiguring the sacred practices assumes that core professionals are still required to get the core work done; this may not hold in some cases, and it may not hold long-term. For example, it might be that over time, digital interactivity professionals can fully do core professionals' work; this is likely to vary by the nature of the work and professional groups involved (e.g. if the core work requires certification or licensing). Moreover, while my study suggests the value of workgroup setups that exert partial pressure on core professionals to open their sacred space, given the nature of my methods, it is impossible to know if this was a direct cause of some Creatives using reconfiguring the sacred practices. More studies are needed to determine the boundary conditions of when this happens. Moreover, the fact that AdCo's Creatives continued to do traditional advertising work—and thus had an outlet to fulfill long held identity needs and to use well-homed work practices—may have made activities like perforating the sacred on participatory ads easier. If this had not been the case, then perhaps none would have changed how they guarded the sacred task of ideation, regardless of the workgroup in which they were embedded. In addition, more research is needed to enrich our understanding of how the dynamics between core and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent firms might differ from those between core and other kinds of professionals, like those with expertise in artificial intelligence, algorithms or big data, for example (e.g. Christin, 2017; Faraj, Pachidi, and Sayegh, 2018). Lastly, it is important to better understand when we are likely to see incumbent firms struggle with the sacred. For example, is there something specific to creative industries that makes the sacred especially hard to penetrate, or is it a broader phenomenon?

My study generates other interesting questions for future research. For example, my focus was on core professionals' actions, but future research might examine incumbent firm digital transformation efforts from the point of view of digital interactivity professionals. Are there certain things they do—or do not do—that make them more or less likely to be able to influence those at the core? Moreover, the provocative nature of the Global Creative Director's town hall suggests the essential role that top managers play in change efforts. Aside from the potential

value of strategic workgroup setup, what other actions are helpful for ensuring that core and digital interactivity professionals integrate their expertise? What effect does it have if core professionals who do not heed pressure to change go unpunished? More broadly, for firms like AdCo, where the portfolio of offerings require firm production and also coproduction with the audience, how do top managers best manage the contradictory logics and skill sets needed for these dramatically different kinds of work to happen within the boundaries of a single firm?

Almost a century ago, Shils observed that the “greater density of communications” was changing how members at the center and periphery of society interacted. The Web and social media have not simply increased the density of communication, but have significantly altered how people work and live. Shils’ notion that technology change makes the peak at the center “no longer so high, the periphery . . . no longer so distant” may be a useful metaphor for what needs to happen with core professionals and their changing boundaries with those outside and inside the firm in an age where organizational work is shifting towards coproduction.

Table 1: Data Collection at AdCo

	Formal Interviews	Meeting Observations	Collected Materials
Creative (n=80)	35	Participatory advertising project meetings: 22 Traditional advertising project meetings: 12 Companywide meetings: 10 Departmental meetings: 9	Company materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town hall slides • Company-wide emails sent from top managers Participatory ad project workgroups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefs • Whiteboard photos during design sessions • Slide decks • Emails (when included)
Digital (n=45)	33		
Account (n=60)	14		
Strategy (n=15)	5		
Other AdCo Employees (e.g. CEO, Business Affairs, Broadcast Producers, Human Resources)	22		
Total	109	53	

Table 2: Participatory advertising project descriptions

Project Name	Client Industry	Related Social Media Platform	Description*
<i>April Fools Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	Facebook	Toolkit of stories where audience members could post fictitious stories to Facebook on April Fools Day, to trick their friends (e.g. stories that said they were, for example, soon to be starring in a TV show, or the Olympics)
<i>Line Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	Twitter	Activation at PAX where the audience used Twitter to summon company reps to do things like “protect” their spot in line or their phone while it charged
<i>Everything Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	Facebook	Comical set of offerings protecting people from everyday hazards like reading about television spoilers online
<i>De-Socializer</i>	Wine & spirits	Facebook	Application for Facebook that detects if a user has a high blood alcohol level and if so, limits their ability to make potentially embarrassing social media postings
<i>Cask Chase</i>	Wine & spirits	Facebook	Scavenger hunt for wine casks hidden in historically significant locations around the globe
<i>Raise Your Glass</i>	Wine & spirits	Instagram	Contest where the audience shared photos and videos of themselves toasting a famous singer known for loving the wine
<i>Juice Talk</i>	Beverage	Facebook	Activation on college campus with extensive social media component to raise awareness of the health benefits of one of the client’s juices
<i>Debtors Prison</i>	Financial services	Facebook	Contest to get people to do shocking things in order to have their student debt paid off
<i>Trillion Dollar Kickstarter</i>	Financial services	Kickstarter and Facebook	Tongue in cheek engagement to raise enough money to absolve all student debt
<i>Super Duper PAC</i>	Nutrition Advocacy Organization	Kickstarter and Facebook	Publicity stunt to build energy and content around cause of pressuring big food companies to change some of their practices
<i>Fill-In Campaign</i>	Real Estate	Facebook	Contest where realtors do tasks for people on weekends while they look at houses, all run on Facebook
<i>Crowdsourced Neighborhood</i>	Real Estate	Facebook	Contest where members of a large city crowdsourced how to fill a new shopping center
<i>Study-Scapes</i>	For-Profit Education Company	Facebook	Contest where audience members shared photos of themselves studying in interesting locations

*Descriptions were slightly altered to protect confidentiality

Table 3: Participatory advertising project comparison

Project Name	Client Industry	Related Social Media Platform	Complexity*	Approximate Proposed Budget	Client Greenlight?
<i>April Fools Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	Facebook	Medium	Low	Yes
<i>Line Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	Twitter	Medium	Low	Yes
<i>Cask Chase</i>	Wine & spirits	Facebook	High	Medium	Yes
<i>Raise Your Glass</i>	Wine & spirits	Instagram	Low	Low	Yes
<i>Juice Talk</i>	Beverage	Facebook	Medium	Medium	Yes
<i>Study-Scapes</i>	For-Profit Education Company	Facebook	Low	Low	Yes
<i>Super Duper PAC</i>	Nutrition Advocacy Organization	Kickstarter and Facebook	High	Low	Yes
<i>Everything Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	Facebook	Medium	Low	No
<i>De-Socializer</i>	Wine & spirits	Facebook	High	Medium	No
<i>Debtors Prison</i>	Financial services	Facebook	Low	Low	No
<i>Trillion Dollar Kickstarter</i>	Financial services	Kickstarter and Facebook	Medium	Low	No
<i>Fill-In Campaign</i>	Real Estate	Facebook	Low	Low	No
<i>Crowdsourced Neighborhood</i>	Real Estate	Facebook	Medium	Low	No

*I assessed complexity by triangulating reports from workgroup members and those outside of the group (e.g. members of other workgroups, top managers)

Table 4: Participatory advertising project staffing

Project Name	Client Industry	Creative Department Members	Digital Department Members	Creative and Digital Members' Average Difference in Level*	Client Greenlight?
<i>April Fools Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Middle 	Low	Yes
<i>Line Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Junior • Middle • Middle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Junior • Middle 	Low	Yes
<i>Cask Chase</i>	Wine & spirits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Middle • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Middle • Middle 	Low	Yes
<i>Raise Your Glass</i>	Wine & spirits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Middle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle 	Low	Yes
<i>Juice Talk</i>	Beverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Middle • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Middle 	Low	Yes
<i>Study-Scapes</i>	For-profit education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Junior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle 	Low	Yes
<i>Super Duper PAC</i>	Nutrition advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Middle • Senior • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Middle 	High	Yes
<i>Everything Protection</i>	Identity theft protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle 	High	No
<i>De-Socializer</i>	Wine & spirits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Middle • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle 	High	No
<i>Debtors Prison</i>	Financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Middle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Junior 	High	No
<i>Trillion Dollar Kickstarter</i>	Financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Junior 	High	No
<i>Fill-In Campaign</i>	Real Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle 	High	No
<i>Crowdsourced Neighborhood</i>	Real Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Middle • Senior • Senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior • Junior • Middle 	High	No

*= I assigned 1 point if junior, 2 points if mid-level and 4 points if senior. I assigned 4 versus 3 points for the senior level since there were far fewer senior than mid-level employees, and the gulf between mid-level and senior level employees was greater than that between junior and middle level employees. To calculate the difference in level between Creative and Digital members of a workgroup, I created an average score for each department's members and then subtracted these from one another. If the value was one or greater I coded it as "high" and if it was less than one I coded it as "low."

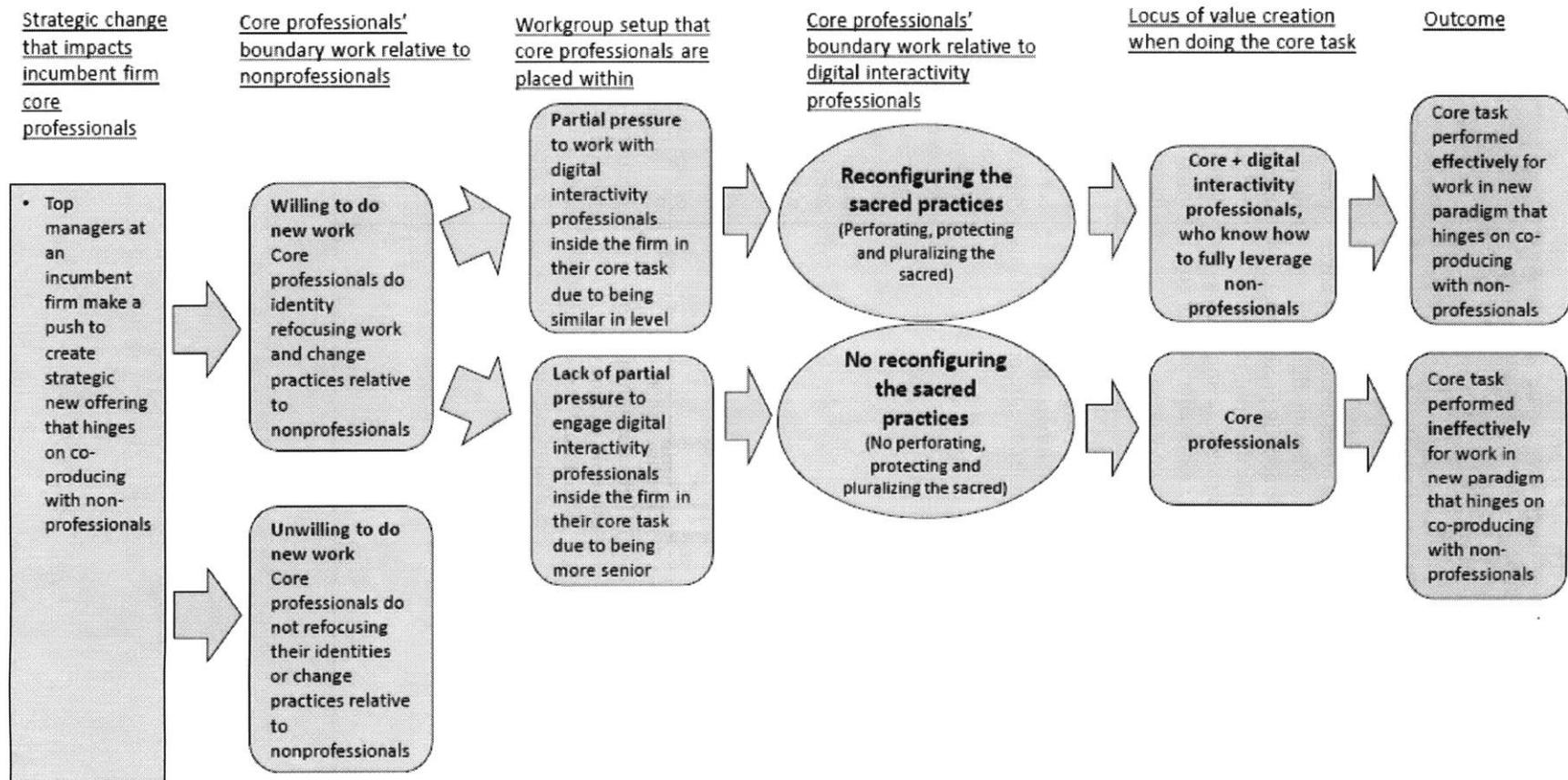
Table 5: Reconfiguring the sacred practices

Practice	Definition	Sub-practices	Why was this important?
Perforating the sacred	Core professionals allow previously forbidden actors and topics to enter the sacred space of their core task.	-Inviting digital interactivity professionals to engage in the core task -Mingling sacred and formerly profane topics while doing the core task	These actions allowed new actors with critical areas of expertise to have voice in the core task, and it led groups to consider formerly profane topic of feasibility early on.
Protecting the sacred	Core professionals engage other actors in ways that still allow them to protect certain aspects of their sacred task.	-Selectively shielding sacred activities -Selectively condemning transgressions of the sacred	These actions helped reduce the threat core professionals experienced when letting others into their sacred space. And, the act of calling out what they perceived as suggestions that would move the work in directions that might harm the project's integrity helped to keep the project on course.
Pluralizing the sacred	Core professionals take a more diverse and multiplex approach to their core task.	-Adding new dimensionality to old perspectives -Diversifying evaluation criteria	These actions helped core professionals to add dimensionality to their work, which was important for shifting to coproduction. Plus, the presence of another professional group with expertise in coproduction forced core professionals to consider a wider, more objective set of criteria when evaluating ideas.

Table 6: Comparison of my findings with the literature

	Literature on boundaries between core professionals and nonprofessionals in the age of the Web and social media	Literature on boundaries between core professionals and digital interactivity professionals inside incumbent organizations	My Study
<i>WHY is it difficult for incumbent organizations to use nonprofessionals in their core processes?</i>	Core professionals may experience identity threat when posed with the prospect of integrating nonprofessionals into their core work, and resist doing this work as a result	In order to effectively integrate nonprofessionals, core professionals may have to work with digital interactivity professionals inside the firm, but resist doing this, seeing them as inferior or encroaching on their core tasks	In order to effectively integrate nonprofessionals, core professionals may have to work with digital interactivity professionals inside the firm, but resist doing this, seeing them as inferior or encroaching on their core tasks, which they view as sacred
<i>WHEN can incumbent organizations use nonprofessionals in their core processes?</i>	When core professionals do identity-refocusing work such that engaging nonprofessionals is no longer threatening	When top managers empower digital interactivity professionals, protecting them from core professionals	When top managers emphasize the importance of core professionals including digital interactivity members in their work + staff workgroups with members from both professions in a way that pressures core professionals to integrate digital interactivity professionals into their sacred work task (e.g. have core and digital interactivity professionals be similar in level vs. having core professionals be more senior)
<i>HOW can incumbent organizations use nonprofessionals in their core processes?</i>	-Dismantling boundaries (e.g. knowledge boundaries) -Facilitating new forms of exchange (e.g. taking a more communal approach to work activities)	-Granting autonomy -Connecting them with powerful executives -Structurally separating them and allowing them to lead businesses	Reconfiguring the sacred practices—perforating, protecting and pluralizing the sacred—whereby core professionals work with digital interactivity professionals and are therefore able to do their sacred task in a way that is effective when doing work that hinges on coproducing with nonprofessionals

Figure 1: Core professionals’ reconfiguring the sacred when incumbent firms attempt to make participatory offerings



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CHAPTER 2

Professionals, active audiences, and collective creative production with social media: The critical role of harmonizing engagement

Abstract

I explore how professionals use social media to coproduce commercial creative offerings with the audience—a scenario where conventional mechanisms for fostering collective creative work are unsuitable. I do so through a two-year ethnographic study of an incumbent advertising firm (“AdCo”), where I observed workgroups producing two types of ads: traditional ads, such as television commercials, and participatory ads, which consisted primarily of user-generated content posted to social media platforms such as Instagram. When AdCo professionals work on traditional ads together, practices like drawing on institutionalized roles and evaluation routines worked well for integrating work, as the literature would predict. However, coproducing participatory ads with the audience required something different. All of the participatory advertising workgroups at AdCo used what I call *inspiring engagement practices* such as social incentivizing and soliciting personalized participation to encourage audience participation. However, only those that used what I call *harmonizing engagement practices*, whereby professionals strategically guided, shaped and steered audience participation, produced coherent creative work and had their projects nominated for industry awards. This study contributes to the literature on the production of collective creative work, the literature on social media and organizations, and has broader implications for the changing nature of work.

Creativity is widely recognized as a critical means by which organizations create value and maintain competitive advantage in today's economy. One is hard-pressed to find an industry where creativity is unimportant, and in many, like entertainment, electronic gaming, publishing, advertising to name a few, the organizational ability to produce commercially successful creative offerings is essential for survival. The literature on collective creativity highlights how professionals inside or across organizations leverage their diverse expertise to produce offerings that are both novel and useful, and which represent a generative synthesis of their contributions (e.g. Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Harrison and Rouse, 2014; Seidel and O'Mahony, 2014; Harvey, 2014; Sonenshein, 2016). This literature covers a wide range of empirical settings and offers important insights into how producing creative work with a collection of professionals can happen. However, organizations' increasing use of social media in the production of creative offerings is calling into question some of the literature's key assumptions—such as that the people involved in commercial creative projects are professionals, or that they conceive of themselves as part of a collective effort at all. With the rise of participatory production, a type of collective creative production, we may need to rethink what the production of collective creative work involves, and what its facilitation requires.

Social media are a group of Web-based technologies that allow people to easily create, share and evaluate content (Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). In contrast to broadcast media, which afford one-way communication between a small set of producers of creative content and a vast number of consumers, social media allow consumers to become producers of their own content, and to share it (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Benkler, 2006; Orlikowski and Scott, 2014). In one model, the audience of commercial creative work is conceptualized as a passive entity that congregates around a professionally-produced object; in the other, audience members are conceptualized as active and networked, producing user-generated content as they consume firm-generated content, and continually sharing information with each other in their own, self-designed social networks (Marwick and boyd, 2010).

As social media blur traditional distinctions between producers and consumers, they are paving the way for new, more participatory forms of creative production. For example, entertainment companies have created a new breed of “social TV shows” that leverage social media platforms like Facebook and smartphone apps to invite the audience to engage directly with characters, and even to change the plot of a story as it unfolds (Stollfuß, 2018; Max, 2018).

In the video game industry, producers of massively multiplayer online role-playing game such as EVE routinely leverage communities of players as co-producers (Lindberg and Levina, 2018). Social media platforms, coupled with the participatory culture that surround them, where audience members have come to expect the ability to create and connect as they consume (Deuze, 2006; Jenkins, 2008), have enabled this trend, and it is particularly pronounced in creative industries like entertainment. But more broadly, the trend towards organizations engaging everyday people as key participants in core organization processes like innovation and production is now widespread in today's economy (e.g. von Hippel, 2005; O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Schlagwein and Bjørn-Andersen, 2014; Levina and Fayard, 2018; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018).

Social media are theoretically interesting not only because they alter *who* can be involved in the creation of firm-produced offerings; they change the very nature of *what* can be produced. Firms like TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe whose business models depend on user-generated content for activities like hotel evaluation and medical research—domains historically controlled by professionals—help make this point (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014). For example, whereas conventional guidebooks containing hotel reviews are produced solely by experts and released annually, TripAdvisor's rankings are generated through the contributions of everyday people and are continuously, algorithmically updated and are thus inherently dynamic, provisional and generative.

Considering the organizational literature on collective creativity and the literature on social media and audience participation side-by-side raises intriguing questions. For professionals inside organizations, how does work change when social media are used to engage the audience as co-producers of creative offerings? When doing this more participatory form of creative production, what unique challenges arise? What discriminates more and less successful creative offerings that incorporate the active audience? How might examining this emerging type of work inform our understanding of the phenomenon of collective creativity itself?

The literature on collective creativity highlights how groups of professionals can produce creative offerings using practices that facilitate both divergence and also integration (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Harvey and Kou, 2013; Harrison and Rouse, 2014, 2015; Sonenshein, 2016). However, the practices described in the literature—such as using institutionalized roles—presuppose a bounded set of professionals

working together. The literature emphasizes that quality creative offerings require specialized skills and the creation of a “coherent whole” (Lingo and O’Mahony, 2010), but it is puzzling to see how this integration might happen with the audience versus professionals, and when the offering itself is not fixed, stable and polished but dynamic and generative in nature.

For this reason, the literature on organizations, social media and active audiences is helpful. While they are few in number, and not focused specifically on collective creative production, the studies that go inside organizations and detail participatory production practices highlight the need for professionals to both inspire audience engagement and harvest it for their commercial purposes (e.g. Tempini, 2015). However, this literature’s center of gravity has been organizations like PatientsLikeMe, where professionals create value by selling patients’ data versus by making creative offerings, which involve unique challenges (e.g. Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Orlikowski and Scott, 2014). Therefore, while essential for making headway on understanding professionals’ work practices relative to active audiences, this literature cannot answer the questions that motivate this study.

In this paper, I answer calls for more research on updating our empirical and theoretical understanding of creativity in light of emerging technologies (Amabile, 2019), and strive, more broadly, to offer a glimpse into how an important kind of work is reconfigured in today’s economy. While the trend towards participatory production is pronounced in content-based industries like entertainment and advertising because of how dramatically content generation and sharing has changed (Benkler, 2006), creative industries are just the leading edge of what is a much larger and broader shift (e.g. Faraj, Jarvenpaa, and Majchrzak, 2011; Treem and Leonardi, 2012; Majchrzak et al., 2013). Increasingly, firms that offer conventional products or experiences—such as apparel companies and centuries-old museums—are experimenting with making their offerings more participatory, in line with evolving consumer expectations to produce and share content as they consume it (e.g. Westerman, Bonnet, and McAfee, 2014).

I use data from a two-year ethnographic study of an incumbent firm in the advertising industry to show how professionals’ work when producing ads—a commercial creative offering—changes when making a traditional versus participatory ad, and how the audience can be engaged more or less effectively in the case of the latter.

The production of collective creative work

Collective creative work is that which involves many individuals working together to produce a final offering that is both novel and useful. Some of the examples in the literature involve collective work in creative and cultural production industries, like country music and modern dance (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Harrison and Rouse, 2014). Others examine collective work in more traditional corporate settings, but where the work involves significant creativity, such as strategy and design consulting firms, retail stores, and health policy (e.g. Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Harvey and Kou, 2013; Harrison and Rouse, 2015; Sonenshein, 2016). Scholars have focused on various facets of the production of collective creative work, including the importance of certain processes, such as feedback and evaluation influence creativity over time (Harvey and Kou, 2013; Harrison and Rouse, 2015), and roles, such as brokers and managers (e.g. Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Berg, 2016). Other studies focus on the importance of network structures in explaining the success of creative groups (e.g. de Vaan, Vedres, and Stark, 2015), and the behaviors that trigger moments when critical insights emerge in the interactions between individuals (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Harvey, 2014).

Across the literature, a principal scholarly interest has been how the disparate contributions of a wide set of individuals can be fostered, so as to generate many quality options, but then—critically—how these options can be integrated and rendered into a “coherent whole” (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). This parallels discussions of individual-level creativity, which highlight the importance of divergent and convergent thinking (e.g. Amabile and Pratt, 2016) and processes of variation, selection and retention (e.g. Staw, 1990; Simonton, 1999). What is distinctive about collective creative work is that the process of managing divergence and integration involves additional logistical and political complexities. Therefore, studies have shown the value of specific practices for encouraging divergence and integration in groups of professionals. These practices are not specific to particular phases of the creative process but, rather, occur throughout.

Fostering divergence happens through practices such as encouraging divergent approaches to the work, granting professionals latitude, and creating a supportive work environment conducive to creativity. Regarding the first, many studies in the collective creativity literature highlight the value of groups deliberately creating many different options, particularly

early on in a project, as they figure out what exactly it is that they are creating. Lingo and O'Mahony (2010) describe how professionals making country music albums work out dozens of song for possible inclusion in an album, even though the final one will have only a fraction of this number. Other studies show the value of encouraging group members to generate many diverging solutions to a problem when brainstorming (e.g. Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Harvey and Kou, 2013; Harrison and Rouse, 2015).

Regarding granting professionals latitude, scholars highlight the importance of not simply allowing but actively encouraging professionals to put their own individual stamp on a project. This can happen by encouraging creators to use "artistic license" (Tschang, 2007) or apply their "signature styles" to work (Elsbach, 2009). It is therefore helpful when those in managerial roles, like producers of music albums or choreographers of dance troupes, grant high levels of autonomy to professionals so they can perform tasks as they see fit. Sonenshein (2016) showed, for example, how employees at a chain of retail boutiques were asked to use their judgement and personal preferences when making choices about how to display products in the store. In settings such as film crews, organizations empower members to do things like solve problems on their own by granting occupational communities significant latitude over their tasks (Bechky and Chung, 2018). In some cases, granting latitude means relaxing time pressures or allowing individuals to work in ways counter to group norms (e.g. O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Harrison and Rouse, 2014).

Regarding creating a work environment conducive to creativity, many studies describe the importance of supportive cultures for enhancing creative work (e.g. Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Harvey, 2014). For example, cultural norms that encourage help-giving and help-seeking, which might be stigmatized in some settings, are not just tolerated but expected in creative organizations like IDEO and Pixar (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Catmull, 2014). These are important because they can lead to moments, albeit fleeting ones, where the locus of creativity shifts from the group to group interactions (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006). More broadly, a supportive environment is one that is sensitive to what creative individuals need over the course of a project, which changes over time (Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017).

These practices related to generating divergence are important for multiple reasons. For example, they keep professionals motivated and can decrease political conflict related to

prioritizing some options or professionals over others. Moreover, when doing creative work, it is important to have many different options in play because often, those in the group do not know what the final offering will be until late in the production process. However, in order to create commercial value out of all of this divergence, professionals need to integrate their work too. The literature suggests that integration can be facilitated when professionals use practices such as drawing on institutionalized roles, instituting rules and using routines to evaluate and synthesize inputs.

Drawing on institutionalized roles helps professionals to coordinate and integrate their work, especially in project-based work when people may not be familiar with one another (Bechky, 2006; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). The "total institution" feel of projects such as making a film can also enhance socialization and hence coordination and integration. Moreover, in many industries, such as advertising, employees enter different departments, like Creative and Account, already socialized into their roles, which helps ease interactions inside firms since people enter with a clear sense of their place on the larger system (Koppman, 2015). Creative projects also benefit from having individuals in specific kinds of structural roles like brokers, as these group members can help smooth interpersonal tensions, manage ambiguities, and ensure work flows proceed at an appropriate pace (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). For example, brokers such as producers in music album production can absorb challenges to expertise and keep parties from hearing potentially injurious comments in an effort to prevent conflict; at the same time, they can usher in a final synthesis of the work.

Regarding instituting rules, this is important because in order to integrate efforts into a coherent whole, group members need to conform to certain standards or guidelines. For example, in his study of a chain of women's boutiques that managed to create a sense of "familiar novelty" across its stores, Sonenshein (2016) showed how this happened by employees being required to adhere to certain guidelines when they personalized displays. More broadly, since the literature has focused on professional work, individuals depicted in these studies were subject to typical rules, policies and procedures that characterize employment in organizational settings.

Finally, studies highlight the value of groups using routines to evaluate and synthesize their work. For example, this can take the form of routinely evaluating ideas once a large set has been generated during brainstorm sessions or using feedback processes that encourage idea editing and integration (Harvey and Kou, 2013; Harrison and Rouse, 2015). It can also involve

disciplining organization members to not simply use artifacts like prototypes, but to routinely do additional activities such as collectively scrutinizing them and linking them to design constraints (Seidel and O'Mahony, 2014). Another manner of using evaluation routines is to carefully screen members before they enter the collective in the first place, which can happen through processes like hiring (e.g. Sonenshein, 2016).

Taken together, these practices related to encouraging divergence and facilitating integration are essential for understanding how groups of professionals can collectively produce quality creative work. In particular, integration practices are helpful for managing the ambiguities at the heart of many creative production efforts, like ambiguity over how work should be done, and ambiguities around whose claim to expertise allows them to control the process (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). However, some reasonable assumptions made in these studies—like that the group is composed of professionals at work—do not hold in cases where professionals inside firms use social media to engage active audiences as co-producers of creative work. Audience members lack professional training, cycle in and out of involvement as they please, and produce content largely for their own entertainment versus a desire to contribute to a larger collective effort. Moreover, professionals inside organizations often only interact with the audience in digitally mediated ways—often directly on social media sites, where communication is typically public—versus in-person inside an organization, as communication tends to be depicted in collective creativity studies. While it would appear that the need to solicit a large number of diverging options and somehow render them into that which is novel and useful still applies, how this happens in participatory production is unclear.

The organizational literature on creativity highlights how the phenomenon happens at the individual, group and organizational level (e.g. Amabile, 1988; George, 2007; Amabile and Pratt, 2016; Miron-Spektor and Erez, 2017); but it has yet to examine collective creativity when the individuals producing the offering are a hybrid of professionals and active audiences using social media. There have been calls for more research on the changing nature of creative work given the rise of the Web and emerging technologies (e.g. Amabile, 2017, 2019). To make progress in this space, it is useful to consult the literature on social media, organizations, and the rise of the active audience.

Social media, organizations, and the rise of the active audience

Social media are a group of Web-based technologies that allow users to easily create, share and evaluate content (Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). These technologies have had an enormous impact on society; most relevant for this study, they alter the relationship between producers and consumers, changing who can be involved in the production of organizational offerings, and what kinds of offerings can be produced as a result.

Many are familiar with the broadcast media model of communication, where producers create goods (such as dance performances, country music albums or newspaper articles) and audiences consume them (e.g. Benkler, 2006). Here, the audience is conceptualized as a stable entity that congregates around an object. In contrast, in a social media model, we see “networked audiences” whose members produce user-generated content as they consume firm-generated content, and connect and share information with each other (Marwick and boyd, 2010).

To understand this shift from passive to active audiences, it is important to understand the affordances that social media bring—meaning, the potential for actions that might be impossible otherwise. The first and most defining of these is the ease with which everyday people can create, circulate and share content with one another (Benkler, 2006; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). For example, social media allow anyone with an Internet connection and free account on sites like Facebook or Twitter to broadcast their opinions publically for others around the world to see, or, if they so desire, for those within a self-selected network to see. This would not be possible with broadcast media, where a small set of producers inside firms create content that is pushed to a vast audience (Benkler, 2006). Social media offer other affordances too, such as visibility, persistence, editability and association between people and information, which, as Treem and Leonardi (2012) argue, in combination create a communication process that is new from what we have seen in the past.

Social media, in affording audiences voice and the ability to connect with firms and with one another, blur the traditional distinction between production and consumption, and alter who can be involved in the production of commercial creative goods. Consider the new wave of “social TV” shows where firms use what Stollfuß (2018) calls participatory versus professional production practices, which intertwine television’s mass media logic with the logic of social media (van Dijck and Poell, 2014). One such show, a German-French social TV show called *About:Kate* centers around a patient in a mental hospital, where the audience is invited to

accompany the protagonist through her struggles in the hospital. Through a smartphone app and cross-media storytelling, the producers of the show designed it for an active audience, with opportunities to contribute to the show itself through user-generated content that can change the show's plot, and to communicate with the protagonist (and producers) and other fans on Facebook.

Another social TV show, *SKAM*, centers on the lives of Texas high school students, some played by local teens, and is distributed on Facebook, in short clips (e.g. 5 minutes long) that coincide when the activity would be happening in the lives of actual teenagers. For example, producers post clips of plot lines involving students getting dressed for a party on a Saturday night, when many of the young viewers are doing the same thing. *SKAM*'s characters have Instagram accounts and, like real people's, these offer insights into their characters' pasts. If a viewer follows a character's account, they will sometimes follow the viewer back. As Max (2018) noted, with the show, the audience is “. . . not only an integral part of the spectacle; you are also a producer. The show's creators monitor fan commentary and sometimes respond to it by changing plot details on the fly.” These shows hinge on the audience's engagement, which might be thought of as “digital prosumption” (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010) or “produsage” (Bruns, 2008). Moreover, the shows reveal how a television show might be reconfigured using social media—shifting from a polished product to more of a platform for engagement.

Indeed, in addition to changing *who* can be involved in the production of firms' offerings, social media change the nature of *what* can be created. In the industrial economy of the past, firms focused on producing “finished goods to be consumed passively” (Benkler, 2006), and these goods were therefore “fixed and immutable” versus today, where they take on a more “inherently dynamic and malleable” or “generative” form (Yoo et al., 2012). As Benkler (2006) noted: “The internet allows individuals to abandon the idea of the public sphere as primarily constructed of finished statements uttered by a small set of actors socially understood as ‘the media’ and separated from society . . . statements in the public sphere can now be seen as invitations for a conversation, not as finished goods.” For example, whereas a conventional hotel review guidebook is produced by experts and released annually, TripAdvisor's rankings are generated through the contributions of everyday people, and are continuously updated by algorithmic means, thus making them in a continuous state of becoming (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014).

These changes in the “who” and “what” of production have also infiltrated everyday life—for individuals and firms. For example, in her work on celebrity culture, Marwick (2015) shows how the selfie culture on Instagram has transformed the phenomenon of celebrity from “something a person was” to “something people *do*.” She and colleagues argue that celebrity is becoming a performative practice—where everyday people engage their fan bases online, small or large as they may be (Marwick and boyd, 2010). In the news industry, we are witnessing incumbent firms using “distributed construction” models of production, where “the people formerly known as the audience” are inscribed as co-producers of news content (Boczkowski, 2004; Rosen, 2006).

Looking across what is admittedly a vast literature, we can identify two basic sets of practices by which professionals inside firms coproduce participatory offerings with active audiences in order to create value for their firms: one related to generating engagement, and the other related to harvesting engagement. Generating engagement involves incentivizing participation, soliciting personalized participation and sustaining engagement. Harvesting engagement involves cultivating information integrity (e.g. reducing erroneous information), restricting information input, and managing conflicting interests.

Regarding generating engagement, professionals’ incentivizing participants is important, because without audience engagement, offerings like TripAdvisor’s rankings could not exist (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Tempini, 2015). However, travelers writing reviews for the site, like patients inputting their medical information on PatientsLikeMe, are unpaid volunteers and thus need to be enticed with non-remunerative rewards. This can happen by professionals devising a business model that helps them do life tasks in better ways, as seen in firms like Yelp and PatientsLikeMe, or by drawing audiences in with innovative kinds of entertainment experiences, as seen in social TV shows.

Professionals’ soliciting personalized participation is important, since offerings that hinge on audience engagement require a diverse set of user-generated content that those inside a firm could not create, not simply because of the scale, but because it is rooted in participants’ everyday experiences. Professionals can do this by developing technological infrastructures that make collecting user-generated content possible, as seen in TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe. It can also happen by producers of social TV shows doing things like leveraging platforms such as Facebook to solicit ideas for plot points from the audience. Or, in the news industry, it can

involve “gate-opening” practices whereby professionals deliberately seek content from everyday people (Boczkowski, 2004; Williams, Wardle, and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018).

Likewise, professionals’ sustaining engagement is important for keeping high levels of audience participation happening over time. This can occur when professionals do things like routinely adding new product or platform features, or selecting certain audience member contributions for special display, sometimes referred to as curation (e.g. Tempini, 2015; Stollfuß, 2018). Sustaining engagement is important in businesses like PatientsLikeMe, where collecting longitudinal data is valuable.

At the same time, just as the collective creativity literature highlights how fostering divergence is important but value is really created when different options are integrated, this literature highlights that in order for firms to create value, they need to harvest participants’ engagement. The firms that have received the most scholarly attention are those that monetize data (how PatientsLikeMe makes money) or commercialize engagement in other ways, with actions like directing users to booking sites or selling ad space (how TripAdvisor makes money). Therefore, scholars have shown that cultivating information integrity is important for these businesses (e.g. Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Tempini, 2015). For example, while it is not 100% successful at this, TripAdvisor works to identify and eliminate reviews that are fraudulent (e.g. hoteliers writing positive reviews of their own establishment), as too many of these could collapse the company’s business model. Likewise, PatientsLikeMe researchers devote large amounts of time to distinguishing “real evidence from incorrect data” which is often “hard to figure out” and in this case is typically from patients’ errors (Tempini, 2015).

Restricting information inputs from participants is also important. This involves designing interfaces that force audience members to enter information in certain ways, as seen in review sites like Yelp, and professionals at PatientsLikeMe use this practice to organize their databases such that they can do medical research more effectively and sell data with more ease. For example, when researchers at the company realized that the “arthritis” option was very broad and covering too wide of a range of conditions, they deactivated it and created more specific options (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis) to enhance data collection and organization efforts (Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Tempini, 2015). Similarly, the small set of studies that offer glimpses into the making of social TV shows demonstrate how producers confine the kind

of user-generated content they solicit. For example, *About:Kate*'s producers decided that some user-generated content would be featured in the show, and therefore thought carefully about what would make it easiest to integrate this footage (e.g. specifying certain length) into professionally-produced footage in the post-production process, then restricted users to this format (Stollfuß, 2018).

Finally, the literature suggests that managing conflicting interests is often important. Often, organizations that use participatory production methods present themselves, justifiably, as bridging the “industrial versus grassroots” divide (Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014). While this is an asset when it comes to attracting engagement, it requires careful management because there are times when user versus firm interests diverge. As Tempini (2015) pointed out about PatientsLikeMe, patients submit data “for purposes and with hopes that remain unspoken and are different from the purposes of the researcher cultivating the database. They participate in the network not only to participate in research, but also to find a cure and, mostly, to socialize with other patients.” If, therefore, patients are prohibited from entering certain kinds of symptoms that researchers deem medically illegitimate or, if their ability to connect with others is limited or, to take another medial related community, if the firm wants to change privacy terms (Barrett, Oborn, and Orlikowski, 2016), this can cause tension. Therefore, managing conflicting interests through actions like highlighting, in the case of PatientsLikeMe that the firm is “not-just-for-profit,” or transparently explaining why certain decisions are made, is important.

While helpful, these generating and harvesting engagement practices do not fully answer the questions that motivate this study. This is because this literature's center of gravity has been organizations like PatientsLikeMe. When the goal is to produce a high quality commercial creative offering such as an ad, the challenge is to figure out how to both encourage and manage an ongoing stream of user-generated content for the purpose of creating a coherent and favorable image for a brand. Given that participatory ads were made using social media sites such as Instagram that AdCo did not control, and given that AdCo professionals could not change or delete user-generated content once it was posted, and that content was generated continuously, figuring out how professionals might craft a sense of coherence out of audience engagement is far from clear.

METHODS

Research Setting

The setting for this study is an award-winning, incumbent firm in the advertising industry (“AdCo”). I conducted a 24-month ethnographic study at AdCo to understand the changing nature of collective creative work for professionals working inside an incumbent organization that was trying to use social media affordances to develop new offerings. AdCo, which was founded in the 1940s, had roughly 400 employees and \$120 million a year in revenue at the time of this study. Like other large agencies, it employed a range of professionals, organized into departments like Creative, Digital, Account, Strategy and Production, and it had several offices.

During the time of my study, which spanned 2014 to 2016, AdCo continued to produce mostly traditional ads (e.g. television spots, print ads, online videos), but it also developed a new offering called participatory advertising, which it sold to clients. Participatory advertising involved professionals inside the firm using social media platforms such as Instagram to invite the audience to engage in an activity on behalf of a brand and then to post about it to their own profiles, for their social media connections to see. Examples of participatory advertising ranged from an AdCo project group working for a wine company creating a scavenger hunt related to the brand and inviting participants to post photos of themselves doing it to Facebook, to a contest where participants were invited to post photos and videos of themselves toasting a famous singer known for loving the wine. Participatory ads are an example of a commercial creative product whose existence hinges on audience engagement, and thus which require participatory production, a particular kind of collective creative production. As AdCo’s Global Chief Creative Director put it, where traditional ads involve “talking at the world,” participatory ads involve “getting the world to talk.” AdCo’s CEO frequently talked about how “the expression of creativity is evolving” in the industry. During the time of the study, AdCo had between ten and fifteen clients and it launched six participatory ads.³

There are several reasons why I chose to study participatory production, a form of collective creativity, at AdCo specifically. First, the advertising industry was an ideal setting for my study because it is one where creativity is a key source of competitive advantage, and

³ In another paper, I describe how AdCo workgroups designed thirteen participatory ads, though only seven of these received a client greenlight, which was needed in order to launch. However, after greenlighting a project, one client decided not to do it after all, and so six projects actually launched during the time of my study.

therefore devising ways to foster creativity in new kinds of offerings using new technologies was essential. Second, because AdCo continued to make traditional ads during the time of my study, and for the same clients for which it was making participatory ads, it was a setting where I could compare and contrast the two production models side by side. Finally, AdCo launched six participatory advertising projects during the time of the study, and this offered me the opportunity to examine variations across how workgroups handled engaging the audience, with the hope of understanding how the audience might be engaged in ways that created more or less value for the organization.

Ethnographic data collection

Using an inductive, ethnographic approach that is well-suited for developing new theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989; Edmondson and McManus, 2007), I studied a single organization to develop a rich understanding of micro-processes involved in my focal phenomenon (Van Maanen, 2011). I focused my data collection efforts for this paper on the AdCo project workgroups that launched participatory ads, so I could understand what this work involved, and what was required to do it more or less successfully. I also collected data on traditional advertising projects so I could better understand exactly how the work changed for professionals inside AdCo when they moved from one production mode to another.

Data collection at AdCo began in 2014 and carried on for two years. I got access to the company through the CEO, with whom I had a mutual contact. I had no prior affiliation with any AdCo members. Once given access, I received an employee badge, company e-mail address, and permission to make contact with anyone at AdCo. I declined the opportunity to sit in the executive wing, conscious of the importance of not being viewed by AdCo members as aligned with management or any other group. For this paper, I draw primarily on observations of project groups working on traditional and participatory ads, as well as interviews with members of these groups and others at AdCo, such as top managers. I also draw on other observations, such as company-wide and departmental meetings. I also collected materials about AdCo and the industry during my study, such as companywide emails, slide decks from various presentations, and industry documents (e.g. awards show press releases) (see **Table 1**).

For this paper, I use data from all six participatory ads that launched during the time of the study, as well as five traditional advertising projects made for the same clients (see **Tables 2**

and 3). While at AdCo, I observed other traditional advertising projects, but for this paper, I limit the data to those for the same clients, to allow for a more direct comparison. To preserve confidentiality of the clients and of AdCo, project names were disguised and some descriptions of the projects were slightly altered, with care to insure that sufficient detail was preserved to illustrate what the work involved.

Observations of traditional advertising projects I observed five traditional advertising projects to establish a baseline understanding of collective creative production in the advertising industry. The five projects spanned broadcast and digital ads, but none involved the audience playing an active role in the production of the work. Traditional advertising project workgroups ranged in size from five to twelve AdCo members (some involved professionals outside the firm, such as directors and actors for television spots). These members came from the following departments: Strategy (responsible for writing the creative brief that defined the client objective for the ad); Account (managed the client relationship and internal workflow); Creative (classically trained advertising professionals like copywriters and art directors); Digital (professionals skilled in digital interactivity, like social media strategies and digital producers); and Broadcast Production (producers who helped establish and manage relationships with outside professionals like directors, and post-production houses). In these projects, however, the core work of making the ad's content was the province of Creative and sometimes, depending on the type of ad, Digital department members to a certain degree. For these ads, I directly observed all major aspects of the process (e.g. ideation, storyboarding, making wireframes) except for on-site filming in the case of television spots and online videos.

Observations of participatory advertising projects Participatory advertising groups ranged from five to ten members, and were staffed with members of all the aforementioned departments except Broadcast Production. In these projects, the core work of making the ad was the province of Creative, Digital, and the active audience. For these ads, I directly observed all major aspects of the process, from ideation to building materials for the ad (e.g. social media posts, preparation of supplies like casks for the cask hunt), and AdCo project groups' interaction with the active audience once they began generating content.

Interviews During my time at AdCo, I conducted 109 interviews, including with members of the traditional and participatory ad projects workgroups I observed, and more broadly throughout the organization, for example with AdCo's top management team members. My interviews averaged 60 minutes each and were individually conducted with participants in private conference rooms. With project workgroup members, I asked about what the work entailed, what was rewarding and challenging about it, and I also asked questions related to things interviewees had said or done in meetings. With members of the top management team, I asked about AdCo's evolving strategic direction, and their perceptions of the relative performance of the project workgroups.

----- Insert Tables 1, 2 and 3 about here -----

Data Analysis

My research design enabled me to investigate how the production of traditional and participatory advertisements differed, and what was required to produce high quality participatory ads. Data analysis was iterative and occurred in several phases. Throughout the process, I wrote weekly memos describing my evolving impressions and how my findings were similar and different from what was discussed in the literature.

Developing case studies for the traditional and participatory projects In my initial analysis, I wrote case studies for the five traditional and six participatory projects, by drawing on my fieldnotes (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). I then coded these cases in accordance with the guidelines from Miles and Huberman (1984), paying close attention to key challenges workgroups faced and the work practices they used to handle them. I then analyzed my codes, keeping track of insights about variations within and across the project types. While it was obvious that neither type of work was straightforward, it was also clear that participatory ads generated a new set of challenges, like incentivizing the audience to engage and sustaining participation over time. I paid close attention to how workgroups handled these challenges. I also realized that in participatory work, AdCo members inside the firm were able to coordinate their work with one another using practices also valuable in traditional ads, but engaging the audience required something different.

Comparing participatory projects' outcomes Since participatory advertising was a new offering for AdCo, any project that launched might be deemed a success; however, there was a clear sense inside the firm that some projects were more successful than others. I wanted to understand this variation and use it as a lens for understanding what practices might be more or less effective for coproducing with the audience. Therefore, in this second phase of analysis, I examined which projects were more versus less successful by using if a project was nominated for an industry awards show such as Cannes as my measure.

Award shows are extremely important in the advertising industry. Winning awards is arguably the very most important way that ad agencies distinguish themselves from one another, and awards are important for attracting new and retaining existing clients (e.g. McLeod, O'Donohoe, and Townley, 2011; Koppman, 2015). For example, especially in the post-financial crisis years, Chief Marketing Officers are increasingly forced to justify their decision to use a specific agency, and awards were helpful for this purpose (Bruell, 2017).

Since submitting work to awards shows was labor intensive, usually included fees, and there was a norm of only submitting an agency's best work, managers were very selective about which projects they nominated. As was common in the industry, top managers from across AdCo decided which projects to nominate for awards. Since they were eligible for bonuses if the firm won awards, managers were incentivized to select the projects most likely to win. Two of the traditional advertising projects and four of the participatory advertising projects were nominated for awards. Each awards show used a slightly different set of criteria, but the criteria involved a roughly equal mix of quality of idea, excellent execution, and brand impact. To achieve this, an ad had to have a clear sense of coherence—a distinctive aesthetic that represented the brand and its essence favorably. While it was not puzzling to see how a distinctive aesthetic might be created in making a traditional ad that AdCo professionals could carefully control, it was not evident how this could happen in participatory ads, given that laypeople from around the world created the content for these ads, and without AdCo's ability to filter it.

Cycling with the literature At this point, I consulted the literature to see if any extant work might explain the projects' variations in success. The collective creativity literature described work practices that matched those I had induced from my cases, and helped me understand better what creating coherence required in a traditional ad (e.g. Hargadon and

Bechky, 2006; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010). However, the practices I had observed on participatory ads were quite different from what was described in the collective creativity literature. Therefore, I consulted various literatures that seemed like they might relate to more participatory forms of production, to see if I was finding anything different there. I came across the literature on organizations, social media and active audiences, which I found useful for articulating how the “who” and “what” of the collective creative process differed in participatory ads. I also saw that a very small set of studies went inside firms to capture work practices and among these, scholars had sketched a preliminary picture of what might be involved in generating engagement and harvesting it (e.g. Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Orlikowski and Scott, 2014).

This raised two additional questions for me. First, all of the participatory advertising workgroups used engagement practices roughly similar to what the literature described as important, but not all were nominated for awards. Second, the harvesting practices did not seem particularly relevant for my case, as they related more to monetizing data than achieving coherence in a creative work made with audience participation. This made me wonder: if the AdCo workgroups with projects nominated for awards were not producing value by facilitating the integration of diverging outputs into a single, coherent whole (as described in the collective creativity literature) or harvesting engagement by monetizing participants' data (as described in the literature on organizations and social media), then how were they creating value? I returned to my cases with this question top of mind.

The importance of harmonizing engagement In my final phase of analysis, I re-coded my participatory advertising cases to determine how it could be that all workgroups engaged the audience, but not all benefited equally from this. All workgroups used certain practices to generate engagement, like soliciting personalized participation, and I came to call these *inspiring engagement practices*. I use the word “inspiring” because the participatory ads took place on a particular kind of social media platform, social networking sites, where audience members went to connect with their friends not to do activities for corporations. Therefore, in order to compel the audience to engage, designing activities and taking actions that really inspired people was important.

At the same time, I realized some workgroups were using additional practices, and these were the groups whose projects were nominated for awards. I realized they were doing additional things in an attempt to guide, shape and steer the audience to engage in certain ways that benefitted the client's brand image, and that helped to create a distinctive aesthetic for the ad. I came to call these activities—such as constraining personalized participation, braiding media logics, and corrective curating—*harmonizing engagement practices*. The word harmonize seemed apt because its meaning—to make consistent or compatible, or to produce a pleasing visual combination—seemed in line with the activities AdCo members in some workgroups were doing.

FINDINGS

In this section, I begin by describing the collective creative process involved in making traditional ads. I then explain the unsuitability of conventional coordination practices when coproducing with the active audience in making participatory ads. Next, I describe how all of AdCo's participatory advertising workgroups used inspiring engagement practices but only some were able to produce coherent creative work, and they did this by using harmonizing engagement practices.

Coordinating collective creative production in traditional ad-making

When making a traditional ad, whether for broadcast or digital media, the challenge for AdCo members was to devise an idea consistent with the client's needs and then create a media object that executed this idea and could be presented to the audience for consumption. This involved four major phases of work: "concepting," where Creatives generated an idea; "pre-production," where groups planned how the idea would be executed (e.g. which actors to hire); "production" where the ad was made (e.g. actors filmed on-location); and "post-production" where it was perfected (e.g. sound and color-corrected) so it could be distributed. As with all creative work, these phases were highly iterative and for those involved, the process seldom felt linear. Throughout these phases, and consistent with the literature, the central challenge was one of integration: figuring out how to elicit diverging opinions and outputs from a diverse set of professionals, but then synthesize these into a coherent whole, despite the logistical and political

challenges that this involved. In line with the literature, I observed AdCo members using practices related to generating divergence and also practices related to facilitating integration.

Regarding generating divergence, it was common for workgroups at AdCo to create a diverse range of options, throughout the entirety of the ad-making process, with the intention of ultimately choosing only a few. For example, for the “This Town” and “Protectors” TV spots, the Creative Directors tasked several different art director and copywriter pairs to generate the “big idea” for the ad, since early on it was unclear what would work best. I sat with one of the Creative Directors in a conference room as pairs came in, shared their ideas, and got feedback, and we conversed during downtimes. The Creative Director told me which ideas he sensed were most promising, but wanted to let most of the ideas “run a little longer” since “it’s hard to know what they will become.”

Across all projects, workgroup members, particularly Creatives, received high levels of latitude when getting their work done. For example, members in Account, who interfaced with the client, frequently gave Creatives more time than account people would like, noting that “freedom” was important whereas “stifling” could be harmful. Moreover, professionals working on ads were invited to put their personal stamp on the work. For example, the “Bar Tales” website idea came from a Creative who had long loved hearing “epic” drinking stories, and the “New Business, Old Dreams” project was inspired by a former AdCo member who had gone on to be an entrepreneur.

AdCo also worked to create a supportive work culture conducive to creativity. This was especially the case for Creative department members, but more broadly, it was a culture where helping others was the norm. For example, since Digital department members had to keep abreast of the latest social media trends and since this was “an impossible job,” they frequently emailed one another articles related to things like algorithm changes on social media platforms. At companywide meetings, they often showcased technologies that others inside the firm might be interested to use, such as when they had virtual reality headsets on hand and AdCo members lined up to try them. When the “This Town” spot encountered a problem with its shooting location, broadcast producers from another project offered help in finding a new site, sharing knowledge about the pluses and minuses of different regions. In addition, the company frequently held social events like happy hours, volunteer days, and a concert series to help employees mix and get to know one another better. The Creative department held an “About

Me” series where people talked about their creative work and how it had evolved over the course of their lives. Within the firm, members across and within different departments had varying levels of power and status but there was a sense, as a Strategy member put it, that “it basically takes a village” to get advertising work done.

The sum of these activities is that AdCo had many measures in place to encourage divergence. However, creating value for clients really happened when diverse inputs were integrated into a coherent final product, and this required facilitating integration. AdCo did this by having professionals draw on institutionalized roles, follow certain rules, and utilize routines related to evaluating and synthesizing inputs.

Regarding drawing on institutionalized roles, AdCo members occupied roles that were highly institutionalized, not just at AdCo, but across the industry, and this proved essential for coordinating work. AdCo had a conventional role structure where members of different departments had a high degree of clarity over the work tasks for which they were accountable. Creatives’ primary role, for example, was coming up with an ad’s “big idea” and then tending the process as the idea came to life in the production process. Producers’ job was to do anything it took to get the work made (e.g. vetting directors, helping scout film locations). Because these roles came with clear expectations about how to interface with others, they helped ease coordination and reduce conflict. For example, when the art director on the “Bar Tales” website insisted on using an emerging technology to get handwritten notes looking like they were being written in real time, the broadcast producer on the project pushed back that this would be too expensive, but later conceded, “My job is to take Creatives’ idea and make it happen.” In some areas, like Digital, new roles were added as technologies changed, and to raise awareness about what incoming members did, and the value they could add for others, AdCo hosted a “WTF Do You Do?” series where people shared their expertise and how they might add value to others’ work. Even in cases where roles seemed like they might have areas of overlap, members were quick to set boundaries around their roles, as evidenced by a Digital member referring to “Bar Tales” who said, “They do the art and copy, we do the pixels.”

AdCo also instituted a series of rules that helped members align their work. For example, for the “Twitter Battle” project, Creatives asked Digital members to write copy for the social posts, but provided them with a “tone guide” to do so. The guide gave very specific insights into the fictional spokesman’s “personality,” including material like phrases he often used and what

characters in movies and television shows were similar to and different from him. Digital members were allowed to put their own spin on the posts, but within a pre-set framework that helped keep the client's brand image coherent across different projects. Some rules were more informal, but served a similar purpose. For example, before showing a piece of work to a client, members first showed it to the group's senior members from Creative and Account.

Finally, AdCo had many routines that helped members evaluate, refine and synthesize their work throughout the process. For example, when making traditional ads, AdCo often used market-testing firms to see how audiences reacted to different options before settling on a final one. Another important routine related to post-production, where extensive editing of raw footage helped professionals to create a perfected final product. For example, for the "New Business, Old Dreams" online videos, the group had filmed several hours of entrepreneurs at work, and being interviewed, and in the post-production process, they scrutinized these videos, selecting the "perfect shots" to be used in the final videos. Even once this material was selected, it was then sent to in-house editors, who sat with broadcast producers, and did things like color-correction and sound-touching (e.g. one of the entrepreneurs owned a taco food truck and the footage of them cooking meat and pouring drinks took many hours to get looking and sounding just right).

Taken together, these practices aimed at generating divergence and facilitating integration were important for creating high quality ads. The two traditional ads nominated for awards—"Bar Tales" and "Protectors"—were nominated because they conveyed a message about a client's brand in an aesthetically appealing, entertaining, and brand-enhancing way. While producing quality traditional ads was far from easy at AdCo, it did not involve an additional layer of complexity seen in participatory ads: figuring out how to produce quality creative work when the audience, over whom those inside the firm had no direct control, became an essential production partner.

Unsuitability of conventional practices when engaging the audience in participatory ads

The ultimate commercial purpose of a participatory ad was the same as a traditional ad: to create a coherent, compelling, positive impression for a brand. However, the form participatory ads took, and the set of individuals involved in making them, was quite different. When making a participatory ad, AdCo members came up an activity that the audience would

have to self-select to do and self-select to post about on social media platforms such as Facebook, for their connections from many facets of life to see. The intent—what clients were paying for—was to produce a large and ongoing stream of user-generated content whose gestalt created a favorable image for the brand.

For groups inside AdCo, the work involved three major phases: “concepting,” where the group generated an idea; “offline design,” where the group developed materials related to the ad and integrated them with social media platforms; and “online management,” where the group interacted with the audience as audience members created content. See **Table 4** for a high-level contrast of the traditional and participatory work processes.

Much of this work bore resemblance to the work of making a traditional ad—such as generating an idea, or preparing materials such as social media posts. And within AdCo, conventional practices for coordinating work still applied. However, these practices were not appropriate for engaging the audience. This was for two reasons. The first reason related to the nature of the audience: its members were fundamentally different from AdCo members inside the firm. They were not AdCo employees, and thus were not beholden to organizational roles, rules, routines, or punishment measures—and yet they were indispensable members of the production. They were not creative professionals—and yet, their content would represent AdCo’s clients, with no filtering because in participatory ads, audience members posted content directly to their social media accounts, not to a private site where AdCo selected which pieces of content it wanted to use. Audience members were not at work, nor were they trying to build reputations as artists; rather, they participated for entertainment, to try to win a prize, or to connect with friends—and yet, the content they created constituted AdCo’s offering to its clients. They were not easily contactable teammates, since the audience was thousands even tens of thousands of engaging individuals, most cycling in and out of involvement quickly, and all communicated with only in digitally mediated ways.

The second reason conventional practices for coordinating work did not suffice related to the nature of a participatory ad itself: it was not a finished, polished object with clear boundaries and static features but rather, a provisional, dynamic and generative flow of user-generated content revolving around a pre-set theme. While it was essential for projects’ success for workgroups to create a desirable, coherent image for the brand, AdCo professionals could not rely on routines like post-production color-correcting. For those inside AdCo, making a

participatory ad still involved artistry and craft, but it also involved figuring out how to craft engagement. Therefore, a different approach to the work was required.

All workgroups secured audience participation by using inspiring engagement practices

To encourage the audience to create content needed to make the ad happen, all six groups used what I call inspiring engagement practices: (1) social incentivizing (2) soliciting personalized participation, which happened before the audience engaged; and (3) boosting interactivity, which happened during the online management phase.

The six participatory ads that launched included: a user-generated content contest for For-Profit Education Company where participants shared photos of themselves studying in interesting locations; a user-generated content contest where the audience shared photos and videos of themselves toasting a famous signer known for loving wine for Wine Company; an April Fools Day promotion for Identity Theft Protection Company where the audience could use brand-generated fictitious stories to trick their friends; an activation at PAX (a gaming conference popular with millennials) where Identity Theft Protection Company protected participants' places in long lines; a movement to build a Super Duper PAC related to change in nutrition policies for Nutrition Advocacy Organization; and a global scavenger hunt for wine casks for Wine Company.

Social incentivizing Social incentivizing involved professionals inside the firm designing a participatory endeavor specifically so that audience members would receive incentives related to their social lives by engaging. All workgroups were highly attuned to the need to motivate the audience to participate in the activity—after all, if participants did not engage, the ad could not possibly be successful because it would have no content. As a group member noted, “I can barely get my friends to do things for me, and this is even harder because it’s asking someone to do something on behalf of a brand and in this really public way [referring to social networking sites where people broadcast content to a wide set of connections].”

Social incentivizing involved two specific activities: helping the audience to make better connections with others, and helping the audience to enhance their image in the eyes of others. This was important because participatory ads were homed on a specific kind of social media platform: social networking sites, where individuals had non-anonymous profiles and

connections with friends from all kinds of contexts, and where impression management efforts were intense (e.g. Hogan, 2010; Turkle, 2011; boyd, 2014). Moreover, audience members' reason for being on these sites was to connect with one another, not with corporations.

Regarding enhancing connections with others, the Cask Chase project designed the scavenger hunt hoping that groups of friends could do the hunt together as they explored new parts of their cities. The Study-Scapes project members talked about how having audience members post photos of themselves studying in cool locations was a way to update their friends about their lives. The Super Duper PAC workgroup designed their activity so that participants could make connections with others who also cared about food safety, but often felt a lack of efficacy to effect change. A group member said, "Whenever there's an expose about food safety or the huge amount of hidden sugars and chemicals in many of our foods today, everyone gets on their soap box on social media and changes their profile pic for a few days, but then it all disappears and nothing happens . . . we wanted to make this anger actionable." The Super Duper PAC was a publicity stunt intended to raise awareness of the client's brand, but in order to incentivize people to engage, it was important to afford them an opportunity to connect with others so they could do something that mattered to them.

Regarding helping the audience to enhance their image, the April Fools Protection workgroup thought through what they could do that would be "actually useful for people" and thought through what kinds of content people like sharing online. "People share about their dogs or their new house or their cool vacation," a group member said, and the group decided to craft the fictitious stories around topics that people were likely to share because they made participants look good (e.g. "Jeff stars in a new reality show!"). The group relied on the idea that people enjoy "tricking" and "one-upping" their friends. The Raise Your Glass group believed the audience would do the toast partly because "people love sharing drinking photos" or other images where "they look like they're having more fun than their friends are [laughs]."

In sum, social incentivizing was important because the audience's engagement was purely voluntary, and it was highly public. Moreover, the ads took place on social networking sites where people went primarily to connect with their friends—not to engage with brands. The six groups' focus on ensuring that participating in the ad was going to provide social benefits—whether connections or self-enhancement—was therefore essential.

Soliciting personalized participation Soliciting personalized participation involved professionals inside the firm crafting materials that invited the audience to contribute content rooted in their own personal experience to the endeavor. This involved two specific activities: encouraging the audience to put their personal spin on the ad, and giving the audience choice as they engaged. Soliciting personalized participation was important because social networking sites were identity expression spaces where people expressed individuality (e.g. Hogan, 2010; boyd, 2014) and because it is motivational for people to be granted autonomy when doing a creative activity (e.g. Amabile, 1993). Moreover, the whole point of participatory advertising was to generate a diverse stream of user-generated content, so it was important to get a range of content that represented audience members' different lived experiences.

Regarding encouraging the audience to put their personal spin on the ad, the Study-Scapes workgroup encouraged the audience to share photos of themselves studying in “cool” locations, but did not specify what this meant. Instead, they invited the audience to post photos that showed what this meant to them—which for some turned out to be a beach, for others, a trendy coffee shop. In the Raise Your Glass project, the group designed social media posts inviting audience engagement by challenging participants to “show us what you’ve got” and noting that they were “giving the toast to the people.” They encouraged the audience to toast the famous singer who loved the wine as they saw fit, alone or with friends.

Regarding giving the audience choice as they engaged, the April Fools Protection group created 26 different stories that the audience members could sift through and select between when deciding which one to use to trick their friends. The Line Protection group offered a variety of different forms of “protection” from which participants at PAX could choose, from lockers to keep their phones protected as they charged, to holding people’s spots in line. The Cask Chase group allowed participants various opportunities for choice, like allowing them to follow chases happening in other cities across the globe, and letting them choose the format through which they would receive clues about the casks’ locations.

In sum, soliciting personalized participation was important because these ads hinged not just on getting people to do the activity, but doing it on their own terms so that the result would be a profusion of diverse content that could not possibly be created by professionals inside a firm—not only because of the volume, but because it was personalized.

Boosting interactivity Boosting interactivity involved professionals inside the firm taking actions intended to sustain and intensify engagement over time. Boosting interactivity involved two specific activities: highlighting popular content and accelerating participation. In order to do this, all groups held meetings where they reviewed audience-generated content. In these meetings, members sat at their computers or with their phones and scrolled through content, calling one another's attention to various posts, and making observations about things such as which posts were getting the most "likes," a key engagement metric.

Regarding highlighting popular content, all of the groups selected certain audience members' contributions for special display during the course of the project. They did this by featuring this content in posts created by the brand. For example, the Study-Scapes group made a point of routinely sharing the user-generated posts that had received the most "likes" from participants' followers, as a means of celebrating those who were doing the activity well. The Raise Your Glass and Cask Chase groups also routinely re-shared posts that had received unusually high numbers of "likes." The groups did this to show "we're watching," as one member put it, and to celebrate the range of content the audience was creating.

Regarding accelerating participation, all of the groups tried to increase the scope and intensity of the audience's engagement in the activity throughout the course of the project. For example, when a participant who had done the Line Protection activity wrote about it praising the brand in a Twitter post, the group shared this post, encouraging others to join in so they could receive the same benefits. The Super Duper PAC group and April Fools Protection group used social media influencers to try to attract new participants and energize those who had already participated.

In sum, boosting interactivity was important because it served as a means of affirming those who had participated, as well as increasing the chance of creating a larger scope and scale of participation as the project unfolded. This was important because the audience was not rewarded through conventional means like money or job promotions, so audience members could not be forced to engage. Moreover, when AdCo members used the practices associated with boosting interactivity, it helped increase the ad's dynamism and generativity.

The importance of harmonizing engagement for producing a successful participatory ad

In order to have their project nominated for an industry award, a participatory ad workgroup had to project an aesthetically appealing, coherent, favorable image for a brand. This was difficult, as explained earlier, given the nature of who was involved in production and what was being created. Four of AdCo's workgroups had their projects nominated. These workgroups achieved this this by supplementing the aforementioned *inspiring engagement practices* with an additional set of practices I call *harmonizing engagement practices*. These practices involved subtly guiding, shaping, and steering the audience's engagement, with the explicit intent of encouraging certain kinds of participation that would enhance a client's brand image, and subtly discouraging other kinds.

I induced four harmonizing engagement practices from my observations of these more successful workgroups: (1) constraining personalized participation, (2) braiding media logics, which happened before the audience engaged; and (3) corrective curating and (4) mutual accelerating, what happened during online management. Consistent use of these practices helped these workgroups not just elicit participation from the audience, but shape it so as to craft a desired image for the client (see **Table 5**).

Constraining personalized participation Constraining personalized participation involved using the solicitation of personalized participation as an opportunity to try to guide who might engage and what kind of content they might create. Since all of the participatory ads involved "open calls" where the invitation to engage was broadcast to a broad network, this was particularly important, as AdCo professionals could not control "who shows up."

Regarding constraining who might engage, Wine Company wanted to target millennials with the Raise Your Glass project, because a key strategic objective was to increase brand affinity with this demographic (many of the clients doing participatory advertising projects wanted to target millennials). However, historically the brand was more popular with middle-aged consumers, and members of this demographic were disproportionately represented in the brand's social media followers. The open call was therefore risky. Initially, the workgroup had decided to do the ad on Facebook because of its much larger reach (and they wanted as many participants as possible), but ultimately they decided to do it on Instagram because "that's where

the millennials are,” as a group member noted. Similarly the workgroup making Line Protection decided to hold the project at PAX as this would likely attract millennial participants.

Regarding constraining how participants might engage, the workgroups thought carefully through the various contingencies that could arise once the audience started engaging, and worked to keep their projects as much under their control as possible. Importantly, they took care to insure this did not feel oppressive. For example, the April Fools Protection group grappled with the fact that they wanted to create an April Fools Day prank that was “edgy” enough that people would do it. However, this was difficult since, as one group member noted, “there’s also a general sense that these companies aren’t cool and maybe aren’t even trustworthy, and so it can be risky to do something related to pranks.” At the same time, the group talked through how if the prank was “too safe” then it would be “lame” and “no one is going to do it.” Initially, the group had settled on a “prank generator” tool where audience members would be supplied with pranks they could play on friends, which they would then post to social media. However, a Creative in the group noted, “I’m a little worried about all the things that could go wrong,” citing how a prank might be misinterpreted as [identity theft protection company]-sponsored bullying, and that “. . . it’s human nature to share inappropriate stuff on the Internet.” This prompted a discussion about how, while it was intriguing to help people play a prank on friends, the group had to make it “as controlled as possible.” Because of this discussion, the group settled on creating the 26 pre-set stories from which participants could choose and personalize. A group member noted that it was impossible to control exactly how people would use the material, but this was a way to limit the likelihood of unfavorable scenarios happening for the brand.

To take another example, in the Raise Your Glass project, the group wanted to be sure that the brand was featured prominently in audience members’ toasts, since otherwise, when participants’ friends saw the post, they might not read the associated hashtags or even think of Wine Company. Therefore, they created a constraint, communicated in its posts announcing the contest: in order to win, participants had to include the brand somewhere in the photo (e.g. show a wine label). In contrast, the Study-Scapes group did not make a concerted effort to constrain personalized participation. For example, the group did not explicitly tell participants to include the brand anywhere in the photo.

Constraining personalized participation was important for creating a coherent final offering as it helped workgroups inside the firm to exert increased control, albeit indirect control, over who engaged and the content they created.

Braiding media logics Braiding media logics involved professionals inside the firm using social media both as a tool for having a two-way conversation with the audience, but also as a tool for transmitting a clear, aesthetically coherent image of a brand. As with constraining personalized participation, this was important because it involved the group not foregoing any opportunity to exert additional control. In this case, the value was first that they took great care to produce as much of a coherent image of a brand as they could, in hopes of having their firm-generated content serve as an organizing framework for the ad, and encouraging a certain kind of participation. Plus, it was an opportunity to do more conventional advertising.

For example, the Cask Chase project was celebrating that Wine Company had been making its wines for 150 years, and that the wine was “unchanged for the better” and “all about craft and heritage.” The project involved hiding 150 collectors’ edition, prize-filled casks hidden in historic locations in key Wine Company markets across the world. The workgroup make announcements informing the audience of the chase in the weeks leading up to the actual chases (which happened over the course of several months), and during the chases, they released clues every few moments on Facebook. The group used each of these “touch points” with the audience as a chance to project a focused brand identity for Wine Company. For example, the clues were meticulously crafted using vintage photography from the historic locations where the casks were hidden, and typefaces associated with the brand. Workgroup members ensured that the clues looked unique to the specific locations, but also “were clearly part of the Wine Company aesthetic.” Even the iconography on the casks and the prizes inside were carefully designed and selected to ensure that each artifact involved in the project doubled as an advertisement for the brand.

In contrast, the Study-Scapes group did not dedicate much attention to braiding media logics. One of the group members referred to the posts soliciting participation as “these things don’t have a long shelf life” and “people are going to see these for two seconds as they scroll on their phones.” As a result, the posts that this workgroup created did not help create a coherent aesthetic for the ad.

Another example of braiding media logics involved the Line Protection project. The workgroup took every opportunity to ensure that the “assets” it created for the PAX conference were carefully crafted to transmit a desired identity for the client, Identity Theft Protection Company. The company’s spokesman was sometimes referred to as “Protector-Guy” and had a silly personality. The workgroup spent hours searching for costumes and props online so that the “protectors” who saved spots in line had a look consistent with the brand. In addition, the group had the “protectors” carry iPads that showed entertaining but lightly branded content (“not too sales-y,” a group member said), such as trivia and videos, to people standing in line.

Braiding media logics was important for creating a coherent final offering as it helped establish a coherent, compelling aesthetic for the ad and it helped encourage participation in this vein.

Corrective curating Corrective curating involved professionals inside the firm curating audience content as a means of steering the audience to create more of certain kinds of content desired by the brand, and less of others. This was valuable over and above demonstrating to the audience that the brand was listening because it also was a rare opportunity for those inside the firm to try to direct the content the audience was creating as the ad was unfolding in real time. As mentioned earlier, in participatory ads the audience was not submitting content to a website for selection by professionals inside the firm; the content they posted was to their own social media accounts and the brands’ and those inside AdCo could not delete it.

When reviewing the audience-generated content during internal meetings throughout the project, members of the Raise Your Glass workgroup called one another’s attention to especially “good ones” or “concerning ones.” For example, when a woman posted a photo of herself doing the toast in a bathtub, with soap bubbles obscuring most of her body, but with her legs exposed, one member gasped, “Oh god, [client name] is going to freak.” “But look at this one,” another group member noted, turning their computer screen so others could view a video of a twenty-something man wearing a tuxedo singing happy birthday while playing the piano. “This is perfect!” one of the Creatives in the group said, referring to how the participant was almost like an impeccably casted actor. The group decided to share this video in a brand-sponsored post in hopes of getting more engagement like this.

In some cases, groups developed plans for how to curate participation in strategic ways once the audience was engaging, even before the project went live. For example, the Cask Chase project happened over the course of several months, and the group wanted to capture video footage of the first chase, taking place in Wine Company's hometown, to use the material for future advertisements and to generate buzz about the project. As the time to launch approached, some group members grew increasingly worried about the extent to which the chase would soon be "out of our hands." One wondered aloud what would happen if no one found the cask; another said, "We're going to be posting this person's picture all over our social media channels, and if we get someone really weird, that could kill this thing."

At a group meeting shortly before launch, one member suggested putting in a fix to help ensure someone with "the right look" won the first chase. Another responded, "If they do find it fair and square we can't intervene, we've got to keep this authentic. The whole brand is about authenticity!" But this member pushed on, "OK well what if no one finds it, let's at least keep in mind who we want, so we could pull the right person in if need be." The group had set a rule that the winner had to not just find the cask's location first, but had to touch it and say a password. Ultimately, while all group members accepted that they could not directly intervene, they agreed that if the first person to enter the saloon looked "perfect" then the group member stationed on-site could help subtly steer them to the right place. Likewise, if someone less favorable for advancing the brand's image was the first to touch the barrel but forgot to say the password, the staff member would not prompt them to. In the end, a twentysomething, clean-cut woman found the cask first, so the team did not need to activate what they had come to call "plan B."

In contrast, the Study-Scapes workgroup did not use curation as a corrective activity. For example, the group's plan was to feature the winning photo as the brand's Facebook cover page for several weeks after the contest. As the group scrutinized the user-generated content, they noticed that some photos were poor image quality (which happened in all of the participatory ads), and therefore would not look good when featured, in an even larger size, on the brand's cover page. The group had a discussion where they considered if they should create a brand-sponsored posts somehow reminding the audience of the importance of posting photos of a certain image quality, but decided against this, determining it was better to "keep it organic" since this was perceived to be more consistent with social media culture. Ultimately, a lower quality photo received the most likes and was featured as the cover photo as planned, but it was

taken down after a day, as it did not look good. The group briefly considered asking the person with the photo to send in a new one for the cover page, but decided, again, to limit interference in the name of keeping it “democratic” as they perceived to be appropriate on social media.

Corrective curating was important for creating a coherent final offering as it was a means of shaping audience engagement—in particular, steering the audience away from producing certain kinds of content and towards others—as the project was live.

Mutual accelerating Mutual accelerating involved professionals inside the firm sifting through audience-generated content in hopes of finding previously unknown areas where the brand’s and audience’s interests aligned, and deliberately steering the collective engagement further into these areas (versus those that were only of audience but not client interest). This was important because it was a means of sustaining engagement, but doing so by steering the project in brand-desired directions.

For example, members of the Raise Your Glass workgroup noticed that many audience members’ posts were of people singing, and these tended to get the most “likes” and “comments.” A group member suggested that they could try to get a famous singer to make a video for the project, as this would likely increase energy amongst current audience members, and would expand the network of audience members with exposure to the content, thus also increasing the scale of engagement. The group talked over who might be ideal, discussing the importance of someone popular with millennials but also known for classic hits aligned with the brand’s heritage, and who might be a fan of wine, but not necessarily someone who existing participants followed. Once they settled on the ideal singer, the group worked their networks to reach the singer, whom they did not pay, but who agreed to do a post. “[Singer] had over a million followers on Instagram, and they all saw it. And engagement surged,” a member of the group proudly noted. In contrast, the Super Duper PAC workgroup did not engage in mutual accelerating. Instead of observing where the audience energy was and then determining which influencers it might engage to accelerate participation, the group used ones it had selected earlier in the project.

The Cask Chase workgroup also used mutual accelerating. During the project, the group met every few days to review the latest posts that participants made as they did the chases. They sometimes searched the Facebook profiles of participants, and learned that in many cases, friends

were not just doing the chase together, but challenging one another to do it, engaging in friendly competition. The workgroup decided to create a brand-sponsored post where they noted that many participants were challenging their friends to do the chase and encouraged future participants to do so. This was intended to increase the scope and scale of engagement, but in an area that Wine Company found desirable, since socializing with friends around wine was important for the brand's image.

Mutual accelerating was important for creating a coherent final offering as it was a means of shaping audience engagement in directions that the audience had expressed interest in, but that were also of interest to the brand. This helped add a sense of generativity to the content flow, but generativity that was also moving the project in certain directions not others.

----- Insert Table 5 about here -----

Towards a model of how professionals inside firms manage participatory production

Organizations of all kinds are increasingly using a specific type of collective creative production—participatory production, in which the audience is engaged using social media as a production partner—in hopes of making offerings that fit consumers' increasing desire and expectation to produce and share content and connect with others as they consume firm-generated content. Participatory production represents a change in who is involved in the production of firm offerings, and the very nature of these offerings (see **Table 6**). Especially for incumbent organizations trying to update their offerings, participatory production can potentially be very valuable, but producing participatory offerings involves a series of challenges, many related to managing ambiguity.

My observations and interviews with AdCo's workgroups making participatory ads indicates that they faced three principle ambiguities: (1) Will the audience engage? (2) What will the audience produce? (3) How can an ad with content created by audience members and that is generative and dynamic in nature have a sense of coherence? While the literature on collective creativity has described ambiguity as a key challenge—for example, ambiguities over occupational jurisdiction—the ambiguities AdCo workgroups faced were unique to participatory production (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010).

All of the workgroups that launched participatory ads did what they could to manage the first ambiguity effectively, using the inspiring engagement practices. However, only some workgroups masterfully managed the second two ambiguities, and they did this by using what I call harmonizing engagement practices. By deliberating constraining participation—while still allowing for personalization and choice—these groups exerted a higher level of control than others did with respect to the content the audience was able to create. This helped them to keep audience-generated content within a desired zone of acceptability for the brand, and to have it tightly related to a given theme and aesthetic—all of which was important for generating coherence. Likewise, by braiding media logics, these groups blended the social media and mass media logics whenever they could, creating a clear organizing aesthetic framework for the ad. Meanwhile, corrective curating and mutual accelerating helped direct and redirect audience engagement in specific directions that enabled these groups to create a coherent stream of content for their clients.

I refer to these practices as harmonizing engagement because they involved shaping a stream of content in a way that enabled it to feel consistent, compatible, and coherent throughout the work process. My study at AdCo suggests that without this conscious attempt to keep content within specific bounds, audience engagement did not yield as much value as it potentially could. The groups that used only inspiring engagement practices seemed reluctant to exert control even in areas where they could, perhaps because of a desire to operate in ways consistent with the democratized culture of social media, or perhaps due to risk of alienating the audience. However, the groups that used harmonizing practices managed to exert much higher levels of control without evidence of violating norms. They did this by controlling what they could, and then indirectly shaping that which they could not control.

----- Insert Table 6 about here -----

Possible alternative explanations for participatory ads’ diverging outcomes

There are possible alternative explanations for why some participatory ads were nominated for industry awards and others were not, and I will consider some of these here. First, one may wonder if project groups working for clients in certain industries had an advantage. While reasonable, this assumption is unsupported by the data. For example, two of the four

projects nominated for awards were for a client in the identity theft protection industry, a decidedly “unsexy” industry, as an account person noted. In addition, several awards shows had special tracks for certain industries, such that banks would not be competing with soft drink brands, for example. Moreover, the Study-Scapes group—working for a for-profit education company, an industry sometimes viewed as predatory—was surprised by the high level of engagement; their challenge was not getting the audience to engage, but lack of skill in directing the engagement. As a group member admitted, “it’s not really clear what it did for the brand.”

Second, one might wonder if some projects had higher budgets to work with, or were working on projects that were less complex and more likely to win awards. As the comparison in **Table 7** shows, this was not the case.

Third, one may wonder if the four projects nominated for awards simply had better ideas than the other groups, and that the relative success of these projects derived from their inherently better ideas versus the harmonizing engagement practices as argued in this paper. This alternative explanation is also unsupported by the data. My interviews with top managers at AdCo indicated that all of the ideas were strong. These managers also emphasized that while having a great idea was important for making an ad with the potential to win an award, production was where the more versus less successful ads were distinguished, and where countless impactful decisions were made. In all of the groups, even after receiving the client greenlight, certain details were changed as members started doing things like crafting materials for the ad. Upon hearing the idea for Super Duper PAC, multiple AdCo members referred to it as “awards bait” since social interest projects disproportionately won industry awards.

Fourth, one may wonder if the groups that had projects nominated for awards had more talented AdCo members. There was no indication that this was the case. For another paper I am writing from data collected at AdCo, I asked respondents to name the top performers in their department. Several of the people identified as top performers were in the workgroups whose projects were not nominated for awards.

----- Insert Table 7 about here -----

DISCUSSION

This study explored how professionals use social media technologies to coproduce commercial creative offerings with the audience. The literature on collective creativity highlights how collections of creative professionals use practices related to generating divergence and facilitating integration to produce a coherent final offering (e.g. Bechky, 2006; O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Harvey and Kou, 2013; Harrison and Rouse, 2014; Sonenshein, 2016). However, these practices, which involve activities like using institutionalized roles and rules, are unsuitable when professionals inside the firm coproduce with the audience. The literature on social media, organizations and active audiences is helpful for understanding how professionals engage audiences as key participants in their work, and offers a series of practices related to inspiring and harvesting engagement (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Tempini, 2015). However, this literature has not focused on the production of creative offerings. In my study, I found that producing high quality commercial creative offerings using participatory production, a form of collective creative production that involves using social media to coproduce with the audience, requires both inspiring and harmonizing engagement.

Contributions to our understanding of the production of collective creative work

The organizational literature on collective creativity has focused on how professionals can integrate their expertise and diverse contributions to produce a novel and useful offering—a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. This is far from easy, both logistically and interpersonally (e.g. Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010), but scholars have shown how it is possible when professionals engage in activities related to generating divergence and facilitating integration (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Bechky, 2006; Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Harrison and Rouse, 2014; Sonenshein, 2016). I found that the practices delineated in the literature were very consistent with those used to coordinate the production of conventional collective creative work at AdCo, such as the making of traditional ads. However, these practices were unsuitable for coordinating work with the audience when making participatory ads. This was not simply because audience members lacked professional training, but because their engagement in firm-audience produced offerings was entertainment more than work. Moreover, they did not conceive of themselves as participating in the creation of a larger, commercial creative effort.

My study makes three contributions to this literature. First, I show the practices by which professionals inside a firm can coproduce a commercial creative offering with the audience using social media affordances such as the ability to create and share content on a mass scale. The first set of practices, which I refer to as inspiring engagement practices, involves social incentivizing, soliciting personalized participation and boosting interactivity. All AdCo workgroups making participatory ads used these. However, these were insufficient for making a coherent creative offering; this required additional practices such as constraining personalized participation, braiding media logics, corrective curating, and mutual accelerating. I call these actions harmonizing engagement practices, and they were essential for creating value for the firm out of the audience's engagement because they were a lever for guiding, shaping and steering participation throughout the project, in ways that enabled coherence.

While the inspiring and harmonizing engagement practices are different from what has been described in the current literature, they are consistent with ideas put forth in extant work. For example, Bechky and Chung (2018) describe the importance of occupational control as important for emergent coordination, and this parallels my highlighting the importance of workgroups using these practices to manage ambiguity and exert control, directly or indirectly, whenever they could. In addition, the notion of "familiar novelty" (Sonenshein, 2016) produced across a chain of boutique stores has some similarities to coherence as conceptualized in the more successful participatory ads. For example, like Sonenshein's study, mine shows the value of relatively tight variations around a common theme. Moreover, Sonenshein (2016) describes the personalizing and depersonalizing mechanisms that allowed the chain to produce familiar novelty. In my study, inspiring engagement practices like soliciting personalized participation and harmonizing engagement practices like guiding personalized participation can be construed as having a dual personalizing and depersonalizing component. Sonenshein describes how artifacts such as the visual merchandising manual provided guidelines for employees but also invited them to put their own personal take on merchandising routines; the brand-sponsored social media posts in my study were likewise objects intended for a similar purpose. However, there are key differences in our settings, most notably that the store's employees were paid professionals, consciously working together to enact a merchandising routine, and carefully selected through hiring practices. AdCo professionals, in contrast, were managing a collective over whom they have no direct control and whom they were engaging on highly public social

networking sites. Therefore, while both studies show the need to create variation but also create consistency, doing so required different practices.

To my knowledge, mine is the first study that examines the practices by which the process of collective creative production can occur when it involves a mix of professionals inside a firm and social media-powered audiences outside. The only handful of studies in the collective creativity literature that touch on social media tend to be cases like Harrison and Dossinger's (2017), where T-shirt designers received feedback on their designs from the crowd. While this is an interesting avenue for creativity research, participatory production as described in this study is a different challenge.

Regarding my second contribution, my study introduces to the collective creativity literature the notion that using social media affordances has the potential to change the very nature of the final offering. The creative offerings described in the literature, such as country music albums, are fixed, stable and settled once finalized; but creative offerings that are the result of participatory production using social media are deliberately provisional, dynamic and generative. These offerings involve large volumes of diverse content that is continuously generated over time. This makes these offerings theoretically interesting because they involve new coordination challenges for professionals trying to create coherent creative work. As I show, it is possible to manage the challenges effectively, when professionals use both inspiring and harmonizing engagement practices. In their work on creative collectives, Bechky and Hargadon (2006) recount how one of Edison's longtime assistants said the inventor was in reality a "collective noun;" my study suggests that in addition, we might think of social media-powered creative offerings as "collective verbs" due to their dynamic, pluralistic nature.

Third, my study suggests that the use of social media in the production of collective creative work may require a re-conceptualization of the phenomenon itself. I show that when collective creativity is performed using a participatory production process wherein social media are used to engage the audience as co-producers, the "who" and "what" of creativity are reconfigured. This is in line with Marwick and boyd's (2010; 2011) notion that celebrity is transformed in a social media context—from something a person is, to a set of practices everyday people do. It is also in line with Orlikowski and Scott's (2014) argument that the move to online reviews entails "not just a reconstitution of the phenomenon of travel but a reconfiguring of the phenomenon of valuation itself." I show how social media shift the locus of

creativity from inside the firm—or, as scholars have suggested, inside the routine or the interaction of professionals (Hargadón and Bechky, 2006; Sonenshein, 2016)—to more of a property of the system. By a property of the system, I mean that the novelty and utility of the offering is located in the continuous generation of content by individuals scattered around the world.

This shifting locus of creativity may also be an occasion to rethink how we conceptualize change to systems of collective creative production. Consider, for example, Becker's (1982) work on "art worlds," in which he argued that art is a collective activity and rests upon an extensive division of labor. While he was writing about art, one might think of just about any economic activity as a "world" in his terms. Becker noted that when technology changes, those in the art world can "... no longer cooperate with others in the accustomed way, and cannot produce as usual the kind of works they know how to make," which describes the situation for AdCo's professionals nicely. However, Becker suggested that when art worlds change, or when new ones arise, we see a change in who occupies roles such as artist, supplier, and audience, but the basic role structure remains intact (i.e. there continues to be an artist "who sits in the center of a network of cooperating people," an audience, suppliers). My study suggests that social media's integration into creative processes may reconfigure the whole system, muddling the notion that there are clear boundaries between roles like artist and audience. For this reason, my study advances the literature not just by highlighting how the collective creative process is different with the active audience using social media, or how the audience can be engaged more or less effectively, but also for its potential to advance our theorization of the phenomenon of collective creativity in today's world.

See **Table 8** for a summary of how my practices differ from those in the literature.

Contributions to the literature on social media, organizations, and active audiences

This study also contributes to the literature on social media, organizations, and active audiences. This literature focuses on how social media are blurring traditional distinctions between producers and consumers, and paving the way for new kinds of offerings (Boczkowski, 2004; e.g. Benkler, 2006; Yoo et al., 2012; Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Piskorski, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018). While it is a key scholarly interest, only a handful of studies in the literature use data from professionals' work practices

inside firms as they engage in participatory production. Therefore, my study's first contribution is to add a case to what is a small but growing and important literature, and, on the theoretical front, to highlight the importance of harmonizing engagement. This is important because, due to the kinds of organizations scholars in the literature have studied (e.g. born-digital firms like PatientsLikeMe), scholars have focused mostly on how professionals can harvest engagement, by using practices such as cultivating information integrity so that user data can be monetized. However, as I show from AdCo's making participatory ads, professionals' engaging active audiences to create value need not be limited to selling data, or activities like directing Web traffic to other sites. Therefore, in studying participatory production in the context of collective creative work, I hope to broaden this literature, and bring it more into the mainstream organizations literature.

Even for scholars not focused on creative work specifically, my study offers broader insights into how organizations are using social media to engage active audience in the creation of new offerings. As noted earlier, incumbent firms in industries that have historically involved very clear lines between producers and consumers of content are the first to see the trend towards more participatory offerings. But, this is part of a larger transformation happening across the economy and society. Engagement is becoming central to how organizations create value, not as a marketing ploy, but as an essential part of the consumption experience. This can be seen in endeavors such as Nike+, where consumers buy shoes but more importantly, participate in a wide network of firm-facilitated activities enabled by social media (e.g. group runs with new connections, the ability to "share" runs with existing social media connections). While Nike+ is not a creative product per se, ensuring that the offering has a clear structure and coherence is important because it is still a commercial endeavor. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the harmonizing engagement practices described in this paper might be useful. One may wonder, as firms increasingly design participatory offerings, if they are actually any different from offerings we have seen in the past. For example, scholars were describing the "experience economy" decades ago (e.g. Pine and Gilmore, 1999). What is unique today, however, is that social media truly blur lines between producers and consumers in new ways. Where the writing on the experience economy describes how professionals inside firms produce experiences for consumers, this is a different phenomenon from consumers producing the very content for firms' commercial offerings.

My second contribution to this literature is to show that it is possible for successful participatory production to happen in the context of an incumbent firm, and, moreover, through the efforts of traditionally-trained professionals. Most cases in the literature focus on born-digital firms like TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe. The few that go inside incumbent firms, mostly in the news industry, show that traditionally-trained professionals are often unwilling or unable to effectively engage active audiences, and tend to revert to traditional work practices (e.g. Williams, Wardle, and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011). Therefore, scholars often suggest the value of creating separate units where professionals with expertise in social media and digital interactivity can be protected from the core business (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004). However, this was not possible at AdCo, because clients wanted integrated ad campaigns and therefore needed Creative department members to work on participatory ads as well. My study shows that workgroups mixed with traditionally-trained professionals from the core business, along with digital interactivity professionals, can work effectively together to coproduce with audiences and create value for their organizations.

Implications for the changing nature of work

This study also has broader implications for our understanding of the changing nature of work in today's economy. First, it explains how the phenomenon of professionals using social media to coproduce commercial offerings with active audiences is growing in importance, how it can happen effectively, and what this means in terms of capabilities that might be important going forward. Scholars have shown a great deal of interest in the changing nature of work, studying phenomena such as the gig economy (e.g. Petriglieri, Ashford, and Wrzesniewski, 2019), flash organizations (Valentine et al., 2017), and the impact of emerging technologies like robots and algorithms on professional work (Barrett et al., 2011; Christin, 2017; Faraj, Pachidi, and Sayegh, 2018; Beane, 2019). However, there are few if any academic studies about how firms, let alone incumbent firms, might use social media to develop more participatory offering. The studies that do consider social media tend to focus, instead, on phenomena like knowledge-sharing (Majchrzak et al., 2013; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016; Neeley and Leonardi, 2018; Leonardi, 2018), boundary management issues (e.g. Perlow, 2012; Stanko and Beckman, 2014) and relationships between organizational members (e.g. Turco, 2016; Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). I hope my study will spur more research on how social media is changing not just how

professionals communicate, but how the production of professional work can happen, and what kinds of offerings can be produced as a result.

In addition, this study contributes to our understandings of the changing nature of work by highlighting the ways in which important professional skills both change and remain the same when laypeople such as audiences serve as collaborators, if unknowingly, in the production of professional work. For example, in the case of advertising, it highlights the continued importance of craftwork and aesthetics, though more participatory forms of production also require that professionals are able to craft engagement. My study highlights the salience of control issues, and the increasing importance of what Fligstein (2001) calls “social skill,” though in my context, this term takes on a new meaning: in addition to the ability to induce other actors to cooperate, social skill in coproducing with the audience involves the ability to operate strategically in a social media context. More broadly, my study answers calls for more research on how professionals work not only with one another but with broader networks of constituents, to include laypeople (Eyal, 2013; Anteby, Chan, and DiBenigno, 2016).

Future Research

As with any single site ethnography trying to build theory on a topic that is important but we know little about, this study has limitations. The first relates to generalizability. The inspiring and harmonizing engagement practices were important in my setting, but more research is needed to determine if these practices are equally useful in other settings, or how they may need to be adapted. For example, the ability to control a client’s image is very important—essential—for work in advertising, but this need for control, coherence and consistency may play out differently in other kinds of participatory production processes. Moreover, since participatory advertising took place on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter that AdCo did not control, and which have distinctive social norms (e.g. Turkle, 2011; Marwick, 2013), more research is needed to understand how managing audience engagement might look differently when social media other than social networking sites are used. This said, to the extent that firms are increasingly using social networking sites as homes for value creation (Piskorski, 2014; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017; Heimans and Timms, 2018), my study, even as it stands, should offer insights for contexts beyond advertising.

To conclude, I would like to suggest several areas for future research. First, as professionals inside firms increasingly use participatory production as a mode of value creation, a series of ethical issues arise. For example, since clients paid the firm for these ads, AdCo made money from the audience's participation, where audience members did not. Moreover, one may wonder if advertising that weaves into the fabrics of audience members' communication with their friends and other connections is desirable. Finally, the more successful groups subtly guided and steered audience members' participation in ways that one might find in conflict with the rhetoric of democratization that sometimes characterizes discussions of social media. Indeed, scholars have pointed out that the Internet and social media are much less democratic and open than they might initially appear (e.g. van Dijck, 2013), and how coproduction can be a means by which actors attempt to maintain or re-establish control over others (Cordella, Paletti, and Shaikh, 2018; Curto-Millet and Nisar, 2018). While these issues are beyond the scope of my study, they represent an important area of inquiry as firms venture more towards new models of production that hinge on audience participation.

Second, more research is needed to understand the conditions under which professionals and organizations can make the transition to doing more participatory forms of all kinds of work, to include collective creative work. We know identity refocusing work and boundary-dismantling may be important for professionals' willingness and ability to engage nonprofessionals in their work (Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018), but what else might be required? Moreover, what enables some professionals to excel at conventional and participatory production work simultaneously? What might leaders of incumbent firms like AdCo do to foster this ability?

To conclude, my study offers important theoretical insights into the production of collective creative work in today's social media-saturated world. It answers calls for more research on collective creativity in the context of emerging technologies (e.g. Amabile, 2019), and more broadly, it offers a glimpse into how professional work is changing.

Table 1: Data Collection

	Formal Interviews	Meeting Observations	Collected Materials
Creative (n=80)	35	Participatory advertising project meetings: 41 Traditional advertising project meetings: 19 Companywide meetings: 10	Company materials included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town hall slides • Company-wide emails sent from top managers that described award show submissions Materials from project workgroups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefs • Whiteboard photos • Slide decks • Emails (when included)
Digital (n=45)	33		
Account (n=60)	14		
Strategy (n=15)	5		
Other AdCo Employees (e.g. CEO, Business Affairs, Broadcast Producers, Human Resources)	22		
Total	109	70	

Table 2: Description of Traditional Advertising Projects*

Project Name	Client	Medium	Description	Nominated for industry award?
<i>This Town</i>	Wine Company	Television commercial	Television spot with 15, 30 and 60-second versions that featured real people working in WineCo's vineyard and the surrounding town that support it, with the intent of highlighting the brand's heritage.	No
<i>Bar Tales</i>	Wine Company	Interactive Website	A parallax website that housed a series of bar and drinking stories collected by an AdCo group that traveled the country and collected the "tales" from real people. The homepage had a bar atmosphere, with hushed chatter and clinking glasses in the background. Visitors could click through the collection of stories, which were a mix of audio recordings, handwritten letters, and videos, all painstakingly art directed.	Yes
<i>New Business, Old Dreams</i>	Identity Theft Protect Company	Online videos and website	A website and online video series featuring professionally produced videos and stories detailing the lives of entrepreneurs building their dream businesses, with the help of identity theft protection services.	No
<i>Protectors</i>	Identity Theft Protect Company	Television commercial	Comical television commercial with 15 and 30 second versions featuring Identity Theft Protection Company's quirky fictional spokesman interacting with customers.	Yes
<i>Twitter battle</i>	Identity Theft Protect Company	Twitter posts and online videos	Series of posts and videos where Identity Theft Co's quirky fictional spokesman had a fight with the actors who played him.	No

*Descriptions have been slightly altered to protect confidentiality

Table 3: Description of Participatory Advertising Projects*

Project Name	Client	Medium	Description	Nominated for industry award?
<i>April Fools Protection</i>	Identity Theft Protection Company	Facebook	Toolkit of stories where audience members could post fictitious stories to Facebook on April Fools Day, to trick their friends (e.g. stories that said they were, for example, soon to be starring in a TV show, or the Olympics)	Yes
<i>Line Protection</i>	Identity Theft Protection Company	Twitter	Activation at PAX (a gaming conference popular with millennials) where the audience used Twitter to summon company reps to do things like “protect” their spot in line or their phone while it charged	Yes
<i>Cask Chase</i>	Wine Company	Facebook	Scavenger hunt for wine casks hidden in historically significant locations around the globe	Yes
<i>Raise Your Glass</i>	Wine Company	Instagram	Contest where the audience shared photos and videos of themselves toasting a famous singer known for loving the wine	Yes
<i>Super Duper PAC</i>	Nutrition Advocacy Organization	Kickstarter and Facebook	Publicity stunt to build energy and content around cause of pressuring big food companies to change some of their practices	No
<i>Study-Scapes</i>	For-Profit Education Company	Facebook	Contest where audience members shared photos of themselves studying in interesting locations	No

*Descriptions have been slightly altered to protect confidentiality

Table 4: High Level Work Processes in Traditional versus Participatory Ads*

	Work before ad is released outside the boundary of the firm	Work after release
Traditional ad work process	<pre> graph LR A[Concepting] <--> B[Pre-production] B --> C[Production] C --> D[Post-production] </pre>	
Participatory ad work process	<pre> graph LR A[Concepting] <--> B[Offline design] </pre>	<pre> graph LR C[Online management] </pre>

*Both work processes were highly iterative in a way these figures do not convey, but I present them this way to highlight the contrast between the different buckets of work, and how work continues (or not) when it leaves the boundary of the firm.

Table 5: Inspiring and Harmonizing Engagement Practices

Practice name	Definition	Sub-practices	Why this was important
Inspiring engagement practices			
Social incentivizing	Social incentivizing involved professionals inside the firm designing a participatory endeavor specifically so that audience members would receive incentives related to their social lives by engaging.	-Helping the audience to make better connections with others -Helping the audience to enhance their image	-It helped the audience to connect with others and make a positive impression, both of which were important on the social networking sites where these ads were homed.
Soliciting personalized participation	Soliciting personalized participation involved professionals inside the firm crafting materials that invited the audience to contribute content rooted in their own personal experience to the endeavor.	-Encouraging the audience to put their personal spin on the ad -Giving the audience choice as they engaged	-It was a chance to express individuality. -It was motivational for people to have autonomy when doing a creative activity. -It was important to get a profusion of diverse content.
Boosting interactivity	Boosting interactivity involved professionals inside the firm taking actions intended to sustain and intensify engagement over time.	-Highlighting popular content -Accelerating participation	-It affirmed those who had participated. -It increased the chance of creating larger scope and scale of participation. -It helped increase the ad’s dynamism and generativity
Harmonizing engagement practices			
Constraining personalized participation	Constraining personalized participation involved using the solicitation of personalized participation as an opportunity to try to guide who might engage and what kind of content they might create.	-Guiding who might engage -Guiding how they might engage	-It was a way to shape who might engage and what content they might create, which was important given that participatory ads involved “open calls” with no opportunity for professionals to filter or delete content.
Braiding media logics	Braiding media logics involved professionals inside the firm using social media both as a tool for having a two-way conversation with the audience, but also as a tool for transmitting a clear, aesthetically coherent image of a brand.	-Using social media to transmit a clear, aesthetically coherent image for a brand	-It enabled professionals to produce as much of a coherent image of a brand as they could, having firm-generated content serve as an organizing framework. -It helped encourage certain kinds of participation. -It was an opportunity to do conventional advertising.
Corrective curating	Corrective curating involved professionals inside the firm curating audience content as a means of steering the audience to create more of certain kinds of content desired by the brand, and less of others.	-Curating audience content to encourage and to discourage certain kinds of participation	-It was a rare opportunity for those inside the firm to try to direct the content the audience was creating as the ad was unfolding in real time.

Mutual Accelerating	Mutual accelerating involved professionals inside the firm sifting through audience-generated content in hopes of findings previously unknown areas where the brand's and audience's interests aligned, and deliberately steering the collective engagement further into these areas (versus those that were only of audience but not client interest).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Searching for areas of mutual interest ad energy -Steering the collective engagement into areas of mutual interest 	-It was a means of sustaining energy and increasing dynamism but in ways that directly benefited the brand.
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Table 6: Comparison of making a traditional versus participatory offering

	Production of a traditional offering	Production of a participatory offering
<i>Producers</i>	Professionals	Professionals + active audience
<i>Audience</i>	Mostly passive	Networked, active audience creating core content of the offering + a secondary audience that is their social media connections to whom they are broadcasting
<i>Operating logic</i>	Mass media logic	Mass media and social media logic
<i>Production practices used by professionals</i>	Generating divergence and fostering integration	Inspiring engagement and harmonizing engagement
<i>Nature of the work for professionals</i>	Engaging in craftwork	Engaging in craftwork + Work as crafting engagement
<i>Nature of the final offering</i>	Fixed, settled, stable	Provisional, dynamic, generative
<i>Examples</i>	-Television commercial -Conventional travel guidebook	-Participatory ad -TripAdvisor ranking

Table 7: Comparison of Participatory Advertising Projects

Project name	Client	Workgroup members	Project budget	Project duration	Project complexity*	Nominated for industry award?
<i>April Fools Protection</i>	Identity Theft Protection	Creative: 2 Digital: 3 Account: 1 Strategy: 1	Low	1 day	Medium	Yes
<i>Line Protection</i>	Identity Theft Protection	Creative: 4 Digital: 3 Account: 1 Strategy: 1	Low	2 days	Medium	Yes
<i>Cask Chase</i>	Wine	Creative: 4 Digital: 4 Account: 2 Strategy: 1	Medium	2.5 months	High	Yes
<i>Raise Your Glass</i>	Wine	Creative: 3 Digital: 2 Account: 1 Strategy: 1	Low	1 month	Low	Yes
<i>Super Duper PAC</i>	Nutrition Advocacy	Creative: 4 Digital: 3 Account: 1 Strategy: 1	Low	2 months	High	No
<i>Study-Scapes</i>	For-Profit Education	Creative: 2 Digital: 2 Account: 2 Strategy: 1	Low	2 weeks	Low	No

*Based on interviews with workgroup members and others at AdCo.

Table 8: Comparison of practices highlight in the literature versus my study

	Literature on collective creative production	Literature on organizations, social media and active audiences	My case
<i>Key challenge</i>	Crafting a coherent whole out of the contributions of many professionals	Inspiring the audience to engage so that the firm can commercialize this engagement	Inspiring the audience to produce a large, diverse, and ongoing stream of content whose gestalt creates a coherent and aesthetically pleasing image (in my case, a strategic image for a brand client)
<i>Key practices</i>	<p>Encouraging divergence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the creation of a diverse set of options • Granting latitude • Fostering a supportive culture conducive to creativity <p>Facilitating integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing on institutionalized roles • Instituting rules • Using routines to evaluate and synthesize inputs 	<p>Inspiring engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivizing participants • Soliciting personalized participation • Sustaining engagement <p>Harvesting engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivating information integrity • Restricting information inputs of participants • Managing conflicting interests 	<p>Inspiring engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social incentivizing • Soliciting personalized participation • Boosting engagement <p>Harmonizing engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding personalized participation • Braiding media logics • Corrective curating • Mutual accelerating
<i>Key assumptions</i>	-Content producers are professionals, consciously working together	-Content producers are the audience, who are not professionals, who cycle in and out of involvement, and who have interests that may diverge from those of professionals inside the firm	-Content producers are mostly the audience but also professionals inside the firm; the audience is not professionally trained, cycles in and out of involvement, and is not necessarily aware of being part of a larger creative effort

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CHAPTER 3

Hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm: Mapping the terrain of firms engaging outside nonprofessional actors to get work done

Abstract

Advances in the Web, digital technologies and social media are challenging conventional notions that work is best done inside the boundaries of the firm. Scholars have examined how firms of all kinds of now using nonprofessional actors outside the boundary of the firm to accomplish core work. However, at present, the research on this phenomenon is fragmented across various streams of literature, and studies involve many overlapping and sometimes ill-defined terms. As a result, it is difficult to organize and make sense of what we know about these emerging, hybrid forms of work that involve collaboration between professionals inside firms and nonprofessionals outside firms. In this chapter of the dissertation, I attempt to make initial progress in organizing what we know. I begin by detailing how technological advances have led to a context where these hybrid models of getting organizational work done are possible and attractive. Next, I describe the disparate research streams that have considered the phenomenon of hybrid forms of working at the firm boundary, clarifying some of the similarities and differences between these literatures. Finally, I synthesize what we know about the challenges of working at the firm boundary, dividing these into those related to willingness, and those related to capabilities. I conclude with suggestions for future research.

The prevailing understanding of firms has been that organizational work—whether innovation activities such as developing new product ideas, or the actual production of products—does and should take place within the boundaries of the firm (Schumpeter, 1934; Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1981). However, advances in digital technologies and social media, because of their lowering communication and coordination costs, are challenging this assumption (Chesbrough, 2003; Benkler, 2006; Baldwin and von Hippel, 2011). As a result, we have seen a rise in scholarship on more “open” forms of organizing and working—with “open,” though its exact definition is still debated, signaling that work happens outside or across versus inside the boundaries of the firm, as seen in “closed” models of innovation and production (Dahlander and Gann, 2010). Most of the new research in this context has examined how complex tasks get done in communities such as Wikipedia and Linux (O’Mahony and Ferraro, 2007; O’Mahony and Lakhani, 2011; Faraj, Jarvenpaa, and Majchrzak, 2011). However, there is a hybrid space between “open” and “closed”—a space where professionals inside organizations integrate nonprofessionals outside the boundaries of the firm as collaborators in getting their core work done.

At present, this hybrid space has inspired a growing number of studies (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018), but is plagued by two problems. First, these studies are scattered across a wide range of research streams that span from innovation management to news media to information studies and have led to a set of rather fragmented and disorganized series of scholarly conversations where researchers studying related phenomena are working largely in silos. Basic terms like “crowd” often go undefined, and are used in different ways, making it difficult to compare empirical findings and make generalizations looking across studies. Second, because words like “crowdsourcing” and “open innovation” and even “coproduction” have become buzzwords and spawned cottage industries of consultants who suggest that these activities can be panaceas for all kinds of organizational challenges, there is a tendency to dismiss these activities as fads. While this criticism is in some cases fair, it is also the case that studies on how firms are using nonprofessionals outside firm boundaries to get core work done can be viewed as signaling a fundamental shift in the economy (Benkler, 2006). If we dismiss these activities as a fad or something confined to certain industries, we miss a potentially significant change in how organizations function today.

My goal for this chapter is to make initial progress on trying to organize studies conducted in this hybrid space, where firms' core work is performed by a mix of professionals inside firm boundaries and nonprofessionals outside firm boundaries. I use the term "nonprofessionals" throughout as a general term to refer to those outside firm boundaries, because in the literature a mix of terms are used. I begin by detailing how technological advances have led to a context where these hybrid models of getting organizational work done are possible and attractive. Next, I describe the disparate research streams that have considered the phenomenon of what I will call hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm. After clarifying some of the similarities and differences between these literatures, I synthesize what we know about the challenges involved in this kind of work, as well as how it can happen. I conclude with suggestions for future research.

How social media are enabling hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm

Advances in the Web, particularly the rise of social media, are enabling work to happen not within or outside the boundaries of the firm, but at the boundary of the firm, with a mix of firm and non-firm actors (Benkler, 2006). While most laypeople and many scholars operationalize social media as "Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter," social media are much broader and are a group of Web-based technologies that allow users to easily create, share and evaluate content (Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). The term encompasses video sites like YouTube, social networking sites like LinkedIn, forums like Reddit, review sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp, and annotation and aggregation sites like Pinterest.

Social media offer a distinctive set of affordances—meaning, they provide users with the potential for actions that might be impossible otherwise. The first and most defining of these is the ease with which everyday people can create, circulate and share content with one another (Benkler, 2006; Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). For example, social media allow anyone with an Internet connection and free account on sites like Facebook or Twitter to broadcast their opinions publically for others around the world to see, or, if they so desire, for those within a self-selected network to see. This would not be possible with broadcast media, where a small set of producers inside firms create content that is pushed to a vast audience (Benkler, 2006).

Social media offer other affordances too, such as visibility, persistence, editability and association between people and information, which, as Treem and Leonardi (2012) argue, in

combination create a communication process that is new from what we have seen in the past. Social media allow for visibility in that they afford users the ability to make their behaviors, knowledge, and preferences that were once invisible (or hard to see) open for public display. Social media allow for persistent communication in the sense that the content created (e.g. a blog post) remains accessible in the same form as the original display long after the actor has finished his or her presentation. Editability, sometimes called rehearsability, refers to the fact that individuals can spend large amounts of time and effort crafting and re-crafting a communicative act before it is viewed by others. Associations refer to the established connections between individuals, between individuals and content, or between an actor and a presentation. Associations can be social ties, such as when social media users articulate a network of connections with which they will share information, or can be the ties between an individual and the content they have created (e.g. a user name on a review site such as TripAdvisor). Therefore, social media have the potential to transform how individuals interact with one another, in their social lives and work lives, and how individuals outside firms interact with those inside.

To make clear why these affordances have a potentially transformative effect, it is useful to consider some of the ways of interacting that we take for granted today, but that would have been impossible in the past. There was a time when someone with a rare disease might have a single doctor to consult, a professional located perhaps several states away, with no one locally to turn to for advice on living with the disease (assuming it ever got diagnosed in the first place). Today, this same individual could go online and visit not just WebMD, but one of the many free communities where users can enter their symptoms and compare them with others'. In addition to potentially speeding diagnosis, this could enable them to connect with others who had experience and insider tips in living with a disease (Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Barrett, Oborn, and Orlikowski, 2016). To take another example, there was a time when, in making decisions about what hotel to stay in when traveling, one was largely dependent on guidebooks written by experts, or word of mouth advice from those in one's social circle. Today, however, there are myriad reviews sites where the opinions of hundreds of thousands of travelers around the world get aggregated and produce ever-changing, up-to-date hotel rankings (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014). In the past, after a bad experience, one might write a complaint letter to a hotel, or tell one's friends to avoid it; today, after a few minutes writing a TripAdvisor review, a guest has the potential to affect a hotel's business for weeks, months potentially even years to come. In

sum, this ease of creating and sharing content is leading to higher levels of voice, information and the ability to connect than we have seen in the past.

Social media are enabling hybrid modes of working at the boundary of the firm in two ways. First, they are radically decreasing communication costs, making it easier than ever before to access knowledge outside of firm boundaries. There was once a time that accessing knowledge at a large scale outside the boundaries of the firm seemed impossibly difficult. However, today, many organizations are routinely engaging in activities like broadcasting tough technical problems and garnering solutions from tens of thousands of people around the world, none of whom work for the firm, and many of whom that might not have any experience in the industry but provide highly valuable insights anyway (Jeppesen and Lakhani, 2010; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). Second, social media are decreasing design costs, making it increasingly possible to decompose and modularize complex tasks. This renders large, complex tasks such as software production, that were once prohibitively expensive to do anywhere but inside firms, to be modularized such that they can be done by a mix of professionals inside firms and nonprofessionals outside (West and O'Mahony, 2008; Shaikh and Cornford, 2010).

Current perspectives in the literature on hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm

The phenomenon of work happening at the boundary of the firm with a mix of professionals inside and nonprofessionals outside has been explored in several research streams, each with different points of emphasis. These research streams have varying degrees of overlap with one another, and varying degrees of active conversation between them. In this section, in preparation for making comparisons across, I describe each one.

Crowdsourcing literature The first of these literatures centers on how firms can use “crowds” to enhance their capabilities, often related to innovation activities such as generating new ideas (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Felin, Lakhani, and Tushman, 2017; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). As with many terms in this emerging literature, the term “crowd” has been ill-defined and used in different ways, but crowds are generally understood to be sizeable multitudes of individuals who operate autonomously, and often anonymously and interchangeably, as the individuals within them try to achieve a goal (Viscusi and Tucci, 2018). This literature was influenced by research on the value that firms can get from working with

lead-users (von Hippel, 1988), and is sometimes referred to as the “open innovation” literature (Chesbrough, 2003), though the exact meaning of “openness” continues to be the subject of debate (Dahlander and Gann, 2010). Much of this literature is dedicated to how crowds can be useful for generating ideas, whether related to difficult technical problems (e.g. Boudreau and Lakhani, 2013; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018) or generating new product ideas (Schlagwein and Bjørn-Andersen, 2014). Scholars have examined issues such as which crowd members tend to have the most valuable ideas (e.g. Jeppesen and Lakhani, 2010), how problems can be best decomposed and broadcast to the crowd (Boudreau and Lakhani, 2013), and how firms can manage their relationship with crowd members whose ideas are not selected (e.g. Dahlander and Piezunka, 2014; Piezunka and Dahlander, 2018).

Firms and communities literature The second of these literatures, which has some engagement with the first, examines how firms gain value from engaging with communities, whether formally sponsored by the firm or not (e.g. West and O’Mahony, 2008; O’Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Shaikh and Cornford, 2010; Fisher, 2018). The distinction between crowds versus communities is that while communities are often also large in scale, they are distinguished by their members’ self-awareness of themselves as a group, and members generally have less anonymity and interchangeability and work together to achieve a goal (Viscusi and Tucci, 2018). Moreover, in contrast with crowds, it is common for firms to engage with communities over time, for example as members inside the firm and inside the community develop and refine software over many years. The research on firm-sponsored communities has primarily focused on software development and examined issues such as how intellectual property and governance are handled, and how code is produced in ways that fit the needs and preferences of firm and community members (West and O’Mahony, 2008; Siobhán O’Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Shaikh and Cornford, 2010). Other studies have examined how firms can use non-technical online communities, such as brand communities on platforms like Facebook (e.g. Gallagher and Ransbotham, 2010). Scholars have focused on topics such as what actions taken by the firm can help grow these communities (Bapna, Benner, and Qui, 2018) and how firms can gain information and influence by working with communities (Fisher, 2018).

Coproduction literature The third literature is focused on how professionals inside firms coproduce organizational offerings with nonprofessionals, and this literature is largely separate from the two described above. The distinction between studies in this stream and the previous ones is that these studies examine how firms leverage the engagement and integration of nonprofessionals not to do an existing activity in a cheaper, better or faster way, but to create a different kind of offering that is only possible with outside engagement.

There are three small streams of scholarship on this topic. In the first, scholars have examined the rise of a new class of firms, such as TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe, whose core work hinges on the continued creation of user-generated content by those outside the firm (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014). Most scholars in this research stream specialize in information technology. In the second stream, most scholars come from a journalism and media studies background, and they focus on coproduction within the news industry, often inside incumbent firms. These studies show how news organizations are increasingly trying to coproduce news with “the people formerly known as the audience” and describe why this is often difficult (Boczkowski, 2004; Rosen, 2006; Williams, Wardle, and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Boczkowski and Lewis, 2018). The third research stream examines more “social” forms of entertainment, as seen in the rise of “social TV shows,” where social media platforms like Facebook and smartphone apps are used to invite the audience to engage directly with characters, and even to change the plot of a story as it unfolds (Stollfuß, 2018; Max, 2018). Across all of these research streams focused on coproduction using social media, scholars have described the importance of novel work practices; for example, many highlight the importance of professionals taking actions to facilitate and manage engagement, such as using “gate-opening” versus “gate-keeping” practices, and curating user-generated content (Boczkowski, 2004; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Stollfuß, 2018).

Crowd-based business models literature A final research stream examines what has been called “crowd-based capitalism” (Sundararajan, 2016). These studies examine new, platform business models that facilitate commercial exchange between producers and consumers of products and services, as seen in firms such as Airbnb, TaskRabbit, and Etsy. At present, these studies tend to focus on the uniqueness of these business models versus the daily work practices of professionals inside the firm, which is more of a focus of scholars studying coproduction.

Another distinction is that studies here examine cases where the nonprofessional actors are engaging with a firm explicitly for financial purposes (e.g. renting their home, selling jewelry) versus cases like TripAdvisor, in the coproduction literature, where nonprofessionals create content without expectation of being paid.

Looking across these different research streams, we see a wide range of ways in which firms are using nonprofessionals outside their boundaries to get work done. There are important similarities and differences in these literatures, however, and I explore these in the next section.

Clarifying similarities and differences in hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm

While all of the research streams mentioned in the previous section involve professionals inside firms engaging nonprofessionals outside the boundary of the firm with the goal of enhancing performance, there are differences between them that are important to clarify as a first step in organizing the studies that are set within this hybrid space. In this section, I examine “who” the outside actors is, “what” they are doing, “when” firms turn to these outside actors, and “where” the interaction is taking place. Later on in the chapter, where I focus specifically on the challenges related to engaging outside actors in firm operations, I examine “why” the interaction is difficult, and “how” professionals inside the firm get work done in this context.

Who is the nonprofessional actor with whom the firm is engaging? The extant literature includes a range of terms to capture the nature of the outside nonprofessional actors with whom firms engage for performance benefits. For example, studies focused on innovation use terms ranging from “lead users” and “crowds” and “communities.” Studies focused on coproduction refer to “users,” “participants,” “audiences,” “crowds,” and words specific to the context such as “patients” or “reviewers.” This large number of terms, as well as overlap in how they are used, makes it difficult to get a handle on who these outside actors are.

To begin to organize our understanding of how firms engage with nonprofessionals outside the boundary of the firm, it is helpful to think about how the relationship between the firm and the nonprofessionals varies along three dimensions, as well as how the relationships between nonprofessional, outside actors and one another vary. Regarding the relationship between the nonprofessionals and the firm, this can vary in terms of duration of the relationship, remuneration expectations and history of the relationship. The duration of the relationship can be

very short: such as a one-off case when an individual offers a solution to a problem posed by a firm in a crowdsourcing contest. The duration can also be very long, as seen in cases where firms sponsor open source communities to work with them on software development projects that take many years.

The relationship can also vary in terms of remuneration expectations. In some cases, the outside actor engages only when their participation leads to payment, as seen in cases such as Airbnb or Etsy. In other cases, the outside actor may not be guaranteed financial compensation, but it is a motivational possibility, as in cases where they seek to win prize money by solving technical problems for firms like Netflix. This is also applicable in cases like individuals submitting videos to sites like YouTube, where a very small percentage of top producers do receive financial compensation. In other cases, there is no expectation of financial compensation, as in cases where hotel or restaurant guests submit reviews to sites such as Yelp or TripAdvisor, though members may receive perks like free dinners if they are top reviewers. In other cases still, there is no expectation for compensation at all, as in cases where viewers of a social TV show engage with characters from the show on Facebook.

Finally, the relationship between the outside actor and firm can vary in terms of the relationship's history. In some cases, the relationship is new—as seen in cases like PatientsLikeMe or TripAdvisor, where the firm itself is relatively new. At the other end of the extreme, when newspapers try to develop new offerings that hinge on audience-generated content, they are changing the terms of what in many cases has been a longstanding, one-way-communication relationship with readers. To take another example of this kind, LEGO, once it decided to engage its adult fan community in product development efforts, had to change how it managed the relationship with these outside nonprofessional actors who had once been customers only. To take cases that fall in the middle, we can think of a crowd member submitting an idea to NASA via an innovation platform like Innocentive. The crowd member may have had no prior contact with NASA, but might contribute regularly to contests managed by Innocentive.

A fourth dimension along which the outside actors vary relates to their relationship with one another. In some cases, such as communities of LEGO fans or Linux developers, individuals may have longstanding relationships with one another. Typically these are online relationships, but they may be in person too. In other cases, when, for example, tens of thousands of

individuals respond to a firm's open call to solve a technical problem or submit a new product idea, the outside actors typically have little or no engagement with one another. Another variation on this can be seen in cases like participatory advertising, described earlier in this dissertation. Here, audience members post content about professionally designed brand-related activities they have done or are doing to their own social media profiles on sites such as Instagram and Twitter. Though the participants may have no connection with one another, they are posting content for their own highly individualized social networks, where their relationships run from superficial to deep.

The reason these variations in the “who” are consequential is because depending on the nature of the outside nonprofessional actor, and the associated relationships this entails, different challenges emerge, as will be described later in the chapter.

What is the nonprofessional actor doing for the firm? Another way to begin to understand the differences across the studies in the literature is to segment extant work in terms of what the nonprofessional is doing for the firm. In some cases, they are generating ideas for the purpose of solving specific problems—often, but not always, technical ones—posed by professionals inside the firm. In other cases, the ideas may be unsolicited, as seen in cases where a lead user submits an idea for revising a product without being prompted to do so. Other cases involve development and refinement of ideas. For example, the nonprofessional might be building out an idea that was initially generated inside the firm, as seen in some firm-sponsored communities working on software development. Another activity that outside nonprofessional actors sometimes do for the firm is evaluate or select ideas, as seen in cases such as crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter or Threadless, where people go to the site and vote for their favorite projects. In other cases still, nonprofessional actors create content related to their personalized experience. This is evident in cases such as TripAdvisor, where guests submit reviews related to their personal experience with a hotel, or cases such as PatientsLikeMe, where patients submit data related to their own health.

The reason variations in the “what” are consequential is because in parsing the different activities outside nonprofessional actors do for the firm, the specific role that these actors is playing becomes clearer. For example, they may be serving as a complement to professionals inside firms, as seen in participatory advertising, or firms that host online patient communities.

By complement I mean they are doing “work” that is different from what professionals inside the firm do. In contrast, in other cases, the outside nonprofessional actor may be doing work that used to be done inside the firm, as seen in cases where crowds are used to solve tough technical problems that have stumped internal R&D teams. In these cases, they work more as a substitute. This is not to say that professionals inside the firm necessarily become obsolete, but rather that their work tasks make change—from, for example, solving problems to seeking solutions. The reason these differences in “what” the outside nonprofessional actors are doing are important is they relate to different challenges, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

When does the firm engage nonprofessional actors? The occasions when firms attempt to integrate nonprofessional actors to enhance performance also vary. In some cases, firms seek the inputs of outside actors to do their existing work in cheaper, better or faster ways. For example, organizations such as NASA and Netflix, both widely regarded as having top technical talent, have found that in some cases, outside nonprofessional actors can solve tough technical problems better and faster than professionals inside the organization. In cases like this, integrating these nonprofessionals is an example of a significant process innovation—their integration signals a major change in how work gets accomplished.

In other cases, the firm turns to outside nonprofessional actors not because it seeks to do its existing work differently, but because it seeks to do a different kind of work that is impossible without this engagement. For example, TripAdvisor’s rankings could not be produced by professionals inside the firm because the rankings require participation on a massive scale. Moreover, the whole point of the reviews is that they do not require trained experts working within pre-set conventions, but everyday people sharing their personalized experience. Likewise, as discussed earlier in this dissertation, participatory advertising requires that everyday people put their personal spin on a theme suggested by a brand. Advertising firms that do this kind of advertising are not trying to make an existing advertising product such as a television commercial using a process that is cheaper, better or faster; rather, they are trying to do a new kind of advertising that is better-fit for changing consumer preferences in a social media world. Therefore, in these cases, working with outside actors is a product or even business model innovation (and in incumbent firms, a process innovation too).

Moreover, there are variations in the kinds of firms using outside nonprofessional actors to produce offerings that are different from what we have seen in the past. Some are born-digital firms founded to take advantage of a world where firms can relatively easily access outside actor inputs, as seen with TripAdvisor, Yelp and PatientsLikeMe. Their entire business hinges on leveraging “crowds.” In other cases, such as incumbent news media organizations and advertising firms, the use of outside actors to create new offerings is an attempt to complement existing offerings, and is not the entirety of what the firm does.

The reason these variations in “when” outside nonprofessional actors are used are important is because they relate to different challenges, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Where is the interaction with outside actors taking place? There are also variations in where the interaction with outside nonprofessional actors takes place. It is useful to think about variations in the “where” in two ways. The first is if the firm controls the site of interaction or not. Firms such as TripAdvisor (as well as divisions of larger businesses, such as YouTube) control their websites where user-generated content is submitted, offering a relatively high level of control. At the other end of the control spectrum, there are cases where firms “home” their interaction with outside actors on sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) over which they have no direct control, as seen in participatory advertising. In between these two extremes, we find cases where firms contract with platforms such as Innocentive, which specialize in bringing together firms and crowds; while the firm therefore does not control the site, they pay for it and thus also have a moderate degree of control.

The second way in which the “where” of the interaction can vary relates to the degree of visibility the site for interaction affords. For example, when firms enlist platforms such as Innocentive to collect ideas to tough technical problems, these solutions are typically kept private, meaning that are not visible to a wide public. In contrast, in the example of participatory advertising happening on sites like Facebook, the content associated with brands that is created by outside actors is visible for anyone to see. Ad agencies doing participatory advertising on sites like Facebook cannot filter the content once it is created.

The reason variations regarding the “where” of the interaction are consequential is they involve different levels of control and risk, which speak to the different kinds of challenges firms face when trying to do hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm.

The challenges of hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm

As the previous section described, firms are using a range of outside nonprofessional actors, for different purposes, and in different settings; as a result, the challenges involved in doing hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm vary. In this section, I synthesize the research on why engaging outside actors is difficult, as well as how it can happen effectively. I divide the challenges that professionals inside firms face into two broad categories: those relating to unwillingness of professionals to do work involving outside nonprofessional actors, and those related to professionals' lack of capability to do the work, even when willingness is present.

Challenges related to professionals' potential unwillingness Extant research on how firms might gain value from engaging with outside nonprofessional actors highlights that sometimes this is difficult because professionals inside the firm are unwilling to do this work (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). The literature suggests two sources of unwillingness: threats to professional identity, and threats to epistemological stance.

Threat to professionals' identity The first reason professionals might be unwilling to do work that involves integrating outside actors into firm operations is doing so poses a professional identity threat. For example, when NASA scientists with decades of experience were confronted with crowd members who could predict solar storms better than they could, this threatened their highly valued "problem solver" identity (Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018). In response, some scientists tried to defend their jurisdictional claim to problem-solving by engaging in activities like downplaying the value of non-expert solutions, and referring to e-mails related to open innovation as "spam." Similarly, when the Internet's search capabilities empowered patrons to bypass librarians—who had long prided themselves as "masters of search"—many librarians were threatened (Nelson and Irwin, 2014). As a result, many disparaged the Internet as filled with information from dubious sources and highlighted their unique ability to offer a single "best" result versus multiple options offered by search engines.

However, it is possible for professionals to engage outside nonprofessional actors in cases that might be construed as threatening when professionals refocus their identities. For NASA scientists, this involved some scientists transitioning from a "problem solver" to "solution seeker" identity; with librarians, it involved them shifting from a focus on being "masters of

search” to being “connectors of people and information” (Nelson and Irwin, 2014; Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018).

Threat to professionals’ epistemological stance The second reason professionals might be unwilling to do work that involves integrating outside nonprofessional actors into firm operations is doing so poses a threat to their epistemological stance (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016). For example, members of an innovation consulting firm rejected the practice of crowdsourcing because it ran counter to the firm’s well-codified and deeply-held notions related to how problems should be framed and solved (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016). At this firm, professionals were expected to follow a “pre-specified ‘algorithm’” when developing and testing their solutions. For professionals inside the firm, crowdsourcing was simply too stark a departure from how they were accustomed to working that they rejected the practice altogether. Drawing a contrast with another firm where professionals embraced crowdsourcing, the authors suggest that it is valuable for professionals to not simply focus on emulating existing crowdsourcing practices and platforms, but, instead, to explore and redefine what crowdsourcing might mean for their particular context (Fayard, Gkeredakis, and Levina, 2016).

Challenges related to professionals’ lack of capabilities In some cases, professionals are willing to engage outside actors in their work, but when they attempt to do so, they do not gain the value they hoped to receive. In such cases, the challenge is one of *lack of capability*. Looking across extant research, we see three kinds of capabilities that are important: those related to coordinating the work, those related to managing control issues, and those related to managing changing relationships inside the firm.

Coordinating the work The first set of capabilities relates to coordinating work with outside nonprofessional actors. Studies in the open innovation stream highlight the importance of professionals inside firms developing capabilities related to framing problems such that the crowd can solve them, as well as integrating these insights back into the firm (e.g. Lakhani, Lifshitz-Assaf, and Tushman, 2013). Studies in the coproduction stream highlight the importance of work practices related to generating and actively managing engagement (Orlikowski and Scott, 2014; Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Tempini, 2015). For example, professionals need to

devise ways to solicit personalized participation such that they can collect content related to participants' life experiences, and to sustain high levels of engagement over time, as longitudinal data collection and participation are important for firms such as PatientsLikeMe (Tempini, 2015). Many studies also highlight the importance of professionals being able to organize and curate vast collections of user-generated content. For example, at firms like PatientsLikeMe, professionals need to design and manage the site in ways that allow the firm to ensure data integrity. When researchers at PatientsLikeMe realized that the "arthritis" option was very broad and covering too wide of a range of conditions, for example, they deactivated it and created more specific options (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis) to enhance data collection and organization efforts (Kallinikos and Tempini, 2014; Tempini, 2015). Moreover, in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I highlighted how professionals inside an incumbent advertising firm used practices like corrective curating and mutual accelerating to manage audience members' engagement in ways that benefitted the firm.

Managing issues related to control The second set of capabilities relates to managing issues related to control. For example, when firms work over long periods of time to develop commercial offerings with outside actors such as online communities, questions related to who should control the work and how often emerge (West and O'Mahony, 2008; Siobhán O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Shaikh and Cornford, 2010). Studies here have highlighted that communities typically have logics that differ from those held by professionals inside firms; for example, where the former may value sharing and egalitarianism, the latter may prize withholding information and hierarchy (Benkler, 2006; Lakhani, Lifshitz-Assaf, and Tushman, 2013). As a result, working together typically involves professionals inside firms learning to "let go" of some of their historical ways of controlling work (Shaikh and Cornford, 2010). Studies have shown the importance of capabilities such as building and working with boundary organizations (Siobhán O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008; Lindberg and Levina, 2018), and managing intellectual property (West and O'Mahony, 2008).

Control issues extend beyond research on firms' working with communities to develop software. For example, in 2018, when a YouTube contributor felt the company had unfairly compensated her, she shot three employees and killed herself, drawing attention to issues related to how firms benefiting from content developed by outside nonprofessional actors compensate

those beyond their boundaries. Moreover, in the class of firms founded in opposition to conventional ways of doing a core activity in an industry (e.g. TripAdvisor serving in contrast to conventional guidebooks; Kickstarter in contrast to conventional fundraising), tensions can arise when firms that use a grassroots rhetoric take actions that prioritize profit over user preferences. For example, firms that host patient communities are valued by users because they offer an unprecedented and in some cases even life-saving opportunity to connect with other patients from around the world; as such, the firms are often seen as having a distinctly social and positive mission. However, when firms change privacy settings (Barrett, Oborn, and Orlikowski, 2016), or restrict the kind of information patients can submit due to concerns about data integrity (Tempini, 2015), tensions related to the different parties' intentions and interests can arise. Therefore, the capability to manage conflicting interests through actions like highlighting, in the case of PatientsLikeMe, that the firm is "not-just-for-profit," or transparently explaining why certain decisions were made, is important.

Managing changing relationships inside the firm The third set of capabilities relate to the ability to manage changing relationships inside the firm. Studies here highlight that in some cases, professionals at the technical core of an incumbent firm might be willing to engage outside nonprofessional actors in their work, but to be able to do so, they need to work in new ways with professionals from other departments, and may resist doing so (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004; Usher, 2016). Most of the studies related to this challenge are from the news industry, but the literature is growing, with work like the research presented in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

These cases can be especially fraught internally because the desire to integrate outside nonprofessional actors for the development of new offerings is often part of a broader questioning of what it means to be in business in the industry. In news media organizations, for example, incumbent firms are employing professionals with expertise in digital interactivity to help "rethink what we even mean by 'news'" (Carpini, 2017). This creates a particular dynamic inside these firms, and one that can be problematic for core professionals: ". . . the computer nerd once tasked with fixing email and shoveling content onto the website is now enrolled in coming up with new storytelling techniques, such as making news more interactive for users" (Usher, 2016; Lewis and Zamith, 2017).

To help manage the tensions involved in this process, scholars suggest the importance of top managers protecting and empowering digital interactivity professionals, who may not have expertise in the industry, but who do know how to engage outside nonprofessional actors using social media. This can involve activities such as granting digital interactivity professionals increased autonomy (Suddaby, Saxton, and Gunz, 2015), connecting them with top executives (Piskorski, 2014), or structurally separating them from core professionals, to protect their ability to get work done as they see fit (e.g. Boczkowski, 2004). Sometimes, structural separation takes the form of a partnerships outside the firm, as seen in Knight-Ridder's work with Mozilla, where traditionally trained journalists and digital interactivity professionals not employed by Knight-Ridder worked well together, but this was because they self-selected to work with members of the other group (e.g. Lewis and Usher, 2016).

However, in cases where structural separation cannot work, as detailed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, strategic workgroup design can be important. Specifically, at the incumbent advertising firm attempting to do participatory ads, I found it was important for workgroups of core and digital interactivity professionals to be staffed such that members were relatively equal in hierarchical level. This was important because this structure encouraged the use of practices related to changing historical ways of doing what those inside the firm had long seen as sacred work. Interestingly, in this case, core professionals in the Creative department were willing to engage the audience in new ways, but they struggled more with renegotiating boundaries internally, hence the importance of renegotiating sacred work inside the firm in order to engage outside nonprofessional actors.

Looking across the studies discussed in this section, we can see that engaging outside nonprofessional actors effectively is difficult, and challenges can be clustered into a lack of willingness amongst professionals inside the firm, or a lack of capabilities to manage the work and associated relationships. It is important to segment these challenges for the purpose of organizing the literature, but also to assist managers in understanding why their organization may be struggling to gain value from engaging in more "open" forms of working.

Conclusion and future research

In this chapter, I have described how social media are allowing work to happen across the boundary of the firm, discussed the research streams that relate to this phenomenon, clarified the differences between these research streams, and then examined why working across the

boundary of the firm is challenging. In this concluding section, I discuss two promising directions for future research.

The first area that requires more scholarly attention is better linking firms' use of outside nonprofessional actors with what we already know about organizations. For example, the literatures on managing inter-organizational alliances (e.g. Davis and Eisenhardt, 2011; Davis, 2016), coordination in post-bureaucratic organizations (e.g. Kellogg, Orlikowski, and Yates, 2006), and shifting power dynamics inside of firms in times of change (Truelove and Kellogg, 2016), to name a few, offer foundational insights. At present, however, studies about open innovation or coproduction have tended to remain in silos. Without engagement with the core organizations literature, and without gaining more clarity on what is truly distinctive about firms working with outside nonprofessionals, the literature risks remaining in a silo, versus being an essential source of scholarship on how organizations and core processes are changing today.

The second area that requires more scholarship is deepening our understanding of how incumbent firms might shift to new ways of working that involve integrating outside actors. For example, Powell (2016) has remarked that "too much attention is directed only to ostensibly novel phenomenon, without parallel attention to how older organizations absorb new practices." At present, there are only a few studies that examine change head-on (e.g. Lifshitz-Assaf, 2018), and yet, there are those who argue that work that involves increasingly porous organizational boundaries is the way of the future (e.g. Piskorski, 2014; Westerman, Bonnet, and McAfee, 2014; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). Therefore, we need to better understand what is required for incumbent firms to shift from their historical ways of working, to hybrid modes of work that involve engaging nonprofessionals at the boundary of the firm.

As technological advances continue to make hybrid forms of work at the boundary of the firm increasingly possible and appealing, it is more important than ever to advance scholarship in this area.

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CONCLUSION

Updating organization theory for a changing technological landscape is a never-ending undertaking, and one that requires collective effort. This dissertation is my attempt to try to make empirical and theoretical progress on old questions—such as when and how professionals work across boundaries, and how they best coordinate work—that call for new answers in a world where professionals inside organizations use social media to integrate nonprofessionals into their work.

As my study reveals, the changing nature of work for professionals inside AdCo is a story of blurring boundaries and shifting interdependencies. Not all AdCo members were willing to work in both older and newer ways. And not all AdCo members who were willing to work in newer ways were able to do so with the same degree of effectiveness. In examining these variations, it is clear that the ability to reconfigure relationships to meet the challenges of a work world where boundaries are blurring and historic modes of control are hard to come by is an important capability.

While every industry has its own dynamics, examining AdCo's attempt to do participatory advertising may have instructive lessons for incumbent firms in other industries. It is useful to see participatory ads not as a fad or quirk of the advertising industry, but as an indication of a fundamental shift in how production is happening today. Since industries like advertising and others described in this dissertation, such as news media and entertainment, are content-based, the shift from broadcast to social media has had an especially dramatic effect on professional work in these settings. However, many industries are heading in this direction. One need not look to born-digital firms like TripAdvisor and PatientsLikeMe for evidence that crowd/peer/audience-powered products and services are abundant today. As social media have evolved consumer tastes and firm production capabilities, incumbent firms in industries from apparel to financial services are developing more participatory offerings in hopes of remaining relevant. Engagement is no longer the sole domain of marketers; it is becoming an increasingly important means through which organizations produce offerings and create value.

This is not to argue that traditional, firm-centered modes of production are becoming obsolete. Even within the advertising industry, most work today fits into this more traditional mode of production. At the time of my study, AdCo's revenue was overwhelmingly driven by traditional ads, and traditional advertising remains a big business today. However, studying how

AdCo professionals made participatory ads—how the work was different from that to which they were accustomed, what proved difficult, and which work practices were more or less effective—is a window into understanding how professional work is changing in today’s world.