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How to be a *Cosmo* Girl:  
Seeking Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions  
in *Cosmopolitan* Magazine International Editions

By

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### **Abstract**

American marketing in international markets has been widely studied in regards to brand management and manipulation. This paper looks at Hofstede's cultural dimensions and explores their strengths and weaknesses in determining appropriate marketing strategies in foreign markets by examining three international editions of *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. This paper argues that though the cultural dimensions are indicators of societal behavior, a blending of foreign and domestic culture values is a more appealing marketing strategy. These findings are significant, as they shed light on the particular formulas for the selected countries that work as a blend of American and foreign values and delve deep into a prime example of overall successful marketing tailored to international markets.

How to be a Cosmo Girl: Seeking Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

in *Cosmopolitan* Magazine International Editions

Due to increasing globalization, American brands have an ever-increasing capacity to reach out to other countries and compete with foreign domestic markets. When embarking upon a foreign marketing campaign it is essential to evaluate the cultural climate of the country being targeted. While many marketers take a business-like approach to foreign marketing and see potential international customers as statistics and numbers (Penaloza & Toulous, 2011), research shows that a more culturally based approach to advertising and marketing in foreign markets make the customer base far more likely to accept and prefer the foreign brand over a domestic one (Chung 2010). This strategy is particularly important for brands relying on selling the idea of “Westernness” or Americanness such as Nike, Apple, Coca-Cola, Hollywood films, Levis, etc. In order to create the desire for the American ideal in a foreign country with unique cultural values they must frame American culture in an easily digestible message tailored to the foreign cultural value system.

While research shows that consumers are more likely to favor products manufactured in their home country when there is little known about the differences between brands and manufacturers, these biases can be overcome with an increased knowledge of the product and brand recognition (Olsen, Granzin, & Biswas, 308). The most appropriate lens through which to filter Americanness depends largely on the country, culture, and specific product involved. In order to ascertain the best strategy, it is essential to understand the value systems of the international countries, not just their markets. According to Geert Hofstede (2001), countries’ values can be numerically

determined and used to predict behavior. By looking beyond the market and into the general culture of the country in question, local values can be contrasted with the American values espoused by the product to determine the appropriate lens.

A thorough understanding of cultural values can provide insight into how best to tailor culturally appropriate content for internationally diverse brands and media, such as *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Taking this further, this study examined the cultural values for various target markets as defined by Hofstede against existing and successful international marketing strategy to determine the effectiveness of Hofstede's dimensions in the marketing sector.

### **Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Construct**

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Construct examines 4 binary elements of work-related values across countries and cultures. These values often can be used to explain cultural values, behaviors, and beliefs (Penaloza & Toulouse, 2011). The four dimensions of culture are: individualism-collectivism, small-large power distance, feminine-masculine value pattern, and weak-strong uncertainty avoidance (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

#### **Individualism-Collectivism**

An individualistic culture is one that values the importance of individual identity and rights over group identity and rights, while a collectivist culture values a "we" identity over an "I" identity. Common individualist values include freedom, honesty, social recognition, comfort, hedonism, and personal equity, while collectivist values are harmony, face-saving, filial piety, equality, and fulfillment of other's needs. Clearly, these different value systems shape daily life (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). An ad

featuring a child refusing to eat a meal her mother prepared because she wants Kid Cuisine, for example, might resonate with an individualistic culture, who might see the child as adorably stubborn, but fall flat in a culture that values the group wellbeing, since the child refuses to participate in the communal meal. Unsurprisingly, American culture is incredibly individualistic, as well as western regions of Europe. However, Asian and Central American cultures are collectivist. In fact, two-thirds of the world's people live in cultures with high collectivist value tendencies (Chung & Ting-Toomey, 2012).

### **Small-Large Power Distance**

Small power distance cultures value equality above all else, especially in regards to power distribution, rights and relations, and rewards and punishments based on merit, while cultures grounded in large power-distance values favor unequal power distribution, hierarchical rights, asymmetrical role relations, and a rewards and punishments based on age, rank, or status (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Here again, the imaginary ad for Kid Cuisine is very targeted to a small power-distance culture, which would view dinner-time as more of an open forum for input, while a large-power distance culture might find the child in need of punishment for speaking to his or her parents in such a disrespectful way.

### **Weak-Strong Uncertainty Avoidance**

Weak uncertainty avoidance cultures appreciate confrontation and risk taking, while strong uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer conflict-avoidance and stability. Typically the US, and Hong Kong have weak uncertainty avoidance culture while countries such as Belgium, El Salvador, and Japan have strong uncertainty confrontation (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

Once more, the ad featuring the obstinate child would receive mixed reviewed. A weak uncertainty culture would appreciate that the child confronted her parents when she was unsatisfied, while a strong uncertainty culture would find her aggressiveness uncomfortable.

### **Feminine- Masculine Value Patterns**

Finally, a more feminine culture is one in which social gender roles are less rigid and defined, while a masculine culture is one in which social gender roles are clearly defined and adhered to. Typically, countries like Finland, Costa Rica, and Yugoslavia are feminine while the US, Mexico, and Venezuela are considered masculine. In this case, the ad might be well received in either culture. A feminine culture would not be threatened by a young girl being assertive, while a masculine culture may be surprised to see a female acting aggressively, but would appreciate the value. With so much room for misinterpretation, it's essential to recognize the values of the domestic market and how they differ from those of American product being sold to them.

### **Americanness and International Marketing**

With few exceptions, most of the countries in question rank similarly relative to each other on all of these cultural value scales. In comparison with America, many of these values are conflicting. According to R. L. Kohl, Americans typically have basic values ranging from competition, materialism, future orientation, individualism, equality, and directness and honesty (Kohl, 1998). For a company attempting to market Americanness in a foreign country, it's essential to deliver strong American values in a culturally sensitive package in order to be accepted.

Identifying the global-local tensions that exist between the two cultures requires an assessment of the foreign market and culture to ascertain not only how they influence people's perceptions of America, but also how it shapes their willingness to buy foreign products (Penaloza & Toulouse, 2011).

Research shows that consumers form relationships with brands (Min-Young, Knight, Youn-Kyung, 2008) and the ability to establish an American product as superior is a primary international marketing strategy. Yet little is known about how to successfully predict and enact a marketing strategy that markets Americanness in a product that also relies heavily on the concept of sameness, such as magazines that attempt to be a relatable source for people of different cultures and to show understanding and solidarity with them.

### **Rationale**

#### **American Values and *Cosmopolitan International***

The deliberate alteration of a product for different international markets is especially important when creating material designed to promote an American ideal (cite?). In particular, media marketed internationally must be altered in a far more subtle way than simply adjusting ingredients in a soda recipe or adjusting a tagline in an advertisement. While movies and television are simply edited to suit the morality standards of foreign markets, printed media has much more room for adaptation. Many magazines, for example, have grown to produce different international editions, all tailored to the foreign market it's targeting while still promoting the central message of the original American edition. With each edition, it becomes a question of how to market Americanness successfully to each foreign audience.



The international distribution of *Cosmopolitan* magazine is an excellent example of unique tailoring to individual cultural norms. When marketing an overtly American product such as *Cosmopolitan* to international markets, Hearst is largely selling a concept of the American woman- complete with strong individual identity assertion, confrontation, sexuality, and informality. In order to reach foreign markets whose values might be drastically different than their own, *Cosmo* must present itself as the “American” magazine without being too shocking or unusual for foreign readers.

The following hypothesis is based on existing research and a previous understanding of *Cosmopolitan*'s approach to international marketing strategy. This analysis should show that regardless of the cultural dimensions of the particular region, all three international magazines present a high degree of “American” culture dimensions- meaning an above average focus on materialism, low context dialogue, and masculine values in their conceptions of sexuality (particularly for regions demonstrating the opposite values).

### **Methods**

This study examined the international editions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine for the UK, France, and Latin America for the month of October 2012. The researcher conducted an examination of the article content and product placement in a content analysis. The findings were compared both to the cultural values of the region the edition is from as well as those associated with America and the US version of *Cosmo* through the lens of Hofstede's cultural values theory, which postulates the following culture values for the selected countries:

Country	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Avoidance
The UK	Low	Individualist	Masculine	Low
Mexico	High	Collectivist	Masculine	High avoidance
The US	Low	Individualist	Masculine	“Uncertainty Accepting”
France	High	Individualist	Feminine	High

(Hofstede, 2001)

After assessing the theoretical strengths and weaknesses of Hearst’s marketing choices, the study aims to find how *Cosmo* markets the American ideal internationally, and much cultural tailoring is necessary to achieve success.

### Results

Ultimately, the study’s prediction was not entirely supported. Rather than push American values over the cultural values of these other regions, Hearst seems to have put more consideration on local values than American cultural values, with the exception of the French edition. While certain degrees of the original American values were evident in some aspects of the international magazines, their presentation in each region varied. In general, each region demonstrated a unique blend of American and regional values with a push towards individualism, low context behavioral and hierarchical advice, weak uncertainty avoidance, and masculine values relative to their own cultural value patterns, with the exception of *Cosmo Français*, which significantly down played their own regional values.

### **Individualism and Gratification**

*Cosmo UK*. As a region with a strong individualist core, it's not surprising that the magazine content is dominated by an individualist mentality. Examining the 7 main sections of the magazine alone demonstrate the focus on individualism and personal independence, particularly the sections "Live Big and Go for It" featuring shopping tips and ways to treat the individual, "Love, Sex, & Success" focusing on personal sexual gratification and health, "You, You, You" focusing on individual life advice, and mental and physical health tips (with a strong focus on the concept of "me" time), and finally "Offers" offering contests and giveaways for the individual reader to win. While these sections shape the specific direction of the reader's focus and organize the articles, they all fall under a strong theme of "YOU". Articles ranged from how to succeed over others, how to look the best possible (better than others), how to dress to impress, and how to be gratified sexually, professionally, and emotionally.

Though the magazine covers these different areas for gratification, they ultimately all fall under two values, both very American and very *Cosmo*. The first is material gratification. Through the use of in-article product placement coupled with health and beauty advice focuses on weight loss and hiding flaws, the magazine claims to provide the answers to confidence and success in all of life's areas. For example, the monthly article "*Cosmo* Inspiration" focused on how British celebrity Kelly Osborne's drastic weight loss inspired a *Cosmo* reader to lose weight and, purportedly, regain her life. ("Kelly Osborne Made Me Lose 7 Stone"). The article details the reader's journey from an overweight and drastically unhappy young woman, to a confident, sexy, and desirable individual. It couples the idea of individual strength and willpower with outward

appearance, which is echoed through multiple health and beauty articles which attempt to provide the products that help readers gain their individual success, such as the right shampoo or the perfect lipstick.

The second category is not as frequently used as it is far more subtle and abstract. For the so-called “*Cosmo* girl”, pride and prowess in her sexuality is a sign of a strong, independent woman. Being a sexy, confident, and relatively experienced woman is clearly a goal for the “*Cosmo* girl”. The UK edition couples the *Cosmo* ideal of sexuality with freedom and individualism, creating the message that a healthy sexuality leads to a freer individual. For *Cosmo*, sex is a tool with which to access individual gratification and to rightfully self-indulge.

The best illustration of individualism comes from the “You, You, You” section. The slogan for this portion reads “You, You, You: Your life- sexy, simple and sorted” (199). Clearly, the entire section focuses completely on individual gratification. The first page features an article titled “3 Ways to Beat the Competition”, with short blurbs detailing how to gain career success over other coworkers. The advice ranges from practicing speeches in front of pets to psychological advice for interviews and exams, but the overall point is the same: do what is necessary to stand out, be unique, and triumph over others. Many other articles in this section read similarly. Perhaps the largest stand-out article is titled “How Your Rabbit Was Born: From Roman Dildos to Rampant Rabbits, this is one History Lesson That Every Girl Needs to Take...” (200). The article details the history of the vibrator, concluding with advice for use and a shopping guide. While certainly a shocking topic for the US, the article’s message is twofold. First, it implies that it’s an individual woman’s right to know the history of female sexuality.

Secondly, it acknowledges a level of female sexuality that is incredibly intimate and highly individualistic. In a magazine that focuses so much on sex and sexuality, this article is the epitome of independence and self-reliance.

***Cosmo Français***. As a highly individualist culture, *Cosmo Français* was expected to echo the original *Cosmo* girl- assertive, strong, and independent. Ultimately, this attitude was evident in the product-endorsing articles. The magazine is almost entirely composed to articles featuring products ranging from beauty products to movies to rent. While the magazine is split into sections similar to the other editions (love, personality, beauty, *Cosmo* questions, etc), the content relies heavily on ads.

In a column titled “Be Well”, French actress Auriéle Vaneck lists her favorite foods and exercise regimens with everything from her favorite cheeses to her favorite types of yoga. The beauty section of the magazine has article after article of product recommendations that leave no room for interpretation. The focus of all of them is on consuming products to become a better person, as well as the idea that it’s the individual’s responsibility to make sure they are consuming the right products and focusing on themselves.

Ultimately, the message is that independence not only can be attained by purchasing goods., but should be obtained in this way. The focus on self-betterment is very materialistic, yet also focuses on culture in a substantial way. Product placement for books, documentaries, films, and music have a much higher prominence in the magazine than in other editions. Many of these suggestions are American films and television programs, but much of the culture-based suggestions are rooted in French culture. While stressing a very American attitude towards commercialism and success, they maintain

ties to the French culture by focusing on French artists and writers. This stress on self-improvement is an essential to the individual cultural dimension that France values.

***Cosmo Español.*** With many Latin countries being collectivist societies with large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance, the aggressive, independence, and sexually charged “*Cosmo* girl” of the US and the UK does not match up to the cultural dimensions of much of the Spanish speaking audience. The differences between the original “*Cosmo* girl” and her Latina counterpart are pronounced, but the traditional *Cosmo* values are not forgotten. Unlike editions for more low uncertainty avoidance cultures, *Cosmo Español* is filled with advice on how the reader can manage her assertive, successful side without appearing aggressive or self-serving. Articles like “Is Your Boss a Predator? Recognize What Kind of Beast They Are and Keep Them At Bay”, “Are Your Friends Affecting Your Immune System?” and “Maintain the ‘Yo’ in ‘Nosotros’” all give advice on how to maintain an individual identity and seek self gratification without confrontation.

In the article “Maintain the ‘Yo’ in ‘Nosotros’”, psychologist and counselor Rakhi Beekrum addresses what she sees as five fatal mistakes women make in relationships that deprive them of their individuality. Each problem is headed with a quote coming from the viewpoint of a woman lost in her relationship (ex.: “He’s all I need”, “I’ll do whatever you want to do”). These headings are followed by very gentle explanations of how easy it is to feel this way and why many women do. It almost suggests that this is how women think and behave, unaware of the consequences revealed in the next paragraph. Under the statement “I’ll do whatever you want to do,” Beeker explains, “Some women think that they’re going to be most desired by their man if they try to please. Have confidence that

you're perfect as you are, and that should be enough for him" (56). The contrast between the societal norm and the advice given in this article shows the tension between the individualistic culture values that *Cosmo* carries over from the American original and the collectivistic culture values of the Latin American countries this edition circulates in.

It seems the Latina *Cosmo* girl is navigating the waters of how to deal with difficult people, be more assertive, seductive, and successful while remaining within the high-context social structure and adhering to the strong uncertainty avoidance confrontation style. They need to adapt slowly to the different value patterns in order to accept them. Therefore, experts such as Rakhi Beekrum serve to dictate a more self-reliant and independent way of life.

### **Power Distance and Low Context Communication**

*Cosmo UK*. The UK is one of the lowest ranked regions for power distance. Therefore, a hesitance on *Cosmo UK*'s part to be too authoritative makes perfect sense in conjunction with Hofstede's cultural dimension theory. In a magazine based almost entirely on expert advice and product endorsement, keeping the reader and publisher on an equal footing can pose a difficult problem. In true UK style, *Cosmo UK* achieves this with two main tactics: encouraging a large amount of reader participation and delivering advice in a very blunt, almost aggressive casual style relying on the UK's value of low-context communication.

Reader participation is a large focus of the first sections of the magazine. In a column called C-M@il, *Cosmo* selects the most relevant reader feedback from their various social networking sites to create a dialogue between readers. While the comments printed in the magazine are one-dimensional comments, they are drawn from sites such as

Twitter and Facebook, where users can “like” and comment each other, creating a forum for peer interaction. In the October 2012 edition, the *Cosmo* question on Twitter was “This month is all about London Fashion Week. What’s been your favorite this year?”, with many Twitter users responding. Three responses were printed, with a reminder to join in using the hash tag #Cosmoquestion and to follow @CosmopolitanUK (16).

Reader participation also is found in headlining articles, creating a level of ethos and a sense of friendly advice for the small power distance country. In the article “Kelly Osbourne Made Me Lose 7 Stone”, reader Louisa Barnett, 30, tells the story of how a previous article in *Cosmo* inspired her to lose weight and regain control of her life. The article spans 3 pages and is complete with a series of photos of the reader-contributor, as well as the magazine cover that inspired her story. The end of the article ends with a recommendation for further reading on the *Cosmo UK* website.

By encouraging reader participation, *Cosmo UK* is able to deliver their strong opinionated messages on a wide range of topics without overpowering the reader or creating an authoritative persona. Rather than describing themselves as all-knowing super-women, the magazine attempts to be a friend. The idea is that *Cosmo UK* help the reader do something, not tell her how to do it. This small nuance is huge is maintaining the small-power distance relationship Hofstede predicted would resonate with UK residents. With a outside opinions ranging from celebrities to Facebook followers, *Cosmo* reinforces their ideas by having them reiterated by someone else. For example, the cover boasts celebrity Leighton Meester’s fashion rules- not *Cosmo*’s. Similarly, the magazine relies on social media to engage the readership and publish their opinions. Monthly articles featuring reader confessions, letters, and stories also dilute the authoritative



nature of the advice and make the article feel more like an open forum. To complete the feeling of equality, each of these peer-written articles conclude with a website or address for the reader to contribute her own advice or story to the magazine. These small additions create the feeling of a community. If the “*Cosmo* girl” is strong and independent, than the magazine needs to be a place where she can foster her own ideas, not bow to the ideas of an expert.

***Cosmo Español.*** As a region with a large power distance dynamic, Latin America is familiar with receiving advice from an authoritarian voice with expert opinions. *Cosmo Español* focuses on Latina’s likelihood to accept a strong power distance and establishes itself as an authoritative figure rather than as an equal or friend. The experts at *Cosmo Español* are there to tell the readers how to look good, how to behave, and how to be a well-rounded *Cosmo* girl.

In all of the major advice or product recommendation articles, only two of them relied on reader participation while 5 were justified by celebrity opinion and 12 centered around the opinion of field experts. These experts carry with them a heavier weight of authority than peer opinion, which falls in line with the high power distance values of Latin America. One article titled “Can Your Friends Affect Your Immune System?” is backed by a study from the University of California Los Angeles, which says that negative social interactions could cause body inflammation, making people more susceptible to asthma, diabetes, or cancer. The following article “Is Your Boss a Predator?” is written by industrial psychiatrist Jane Clarke, author of the book *Savvy: Dealing with People, Power, and Politics, and Work*. As an expert in the field, she created a series of questions to determine if a boss is “a beast”. Finally, in an article titled

“How to Pick Yourself Up After a Big Fall”, advice from psychologist Janne Dannerup and counselor Kirsten Long are sprinkled throughout, lending an expert opinion to each of *Cosmo*'s claims.

All of the extreme difference between the amount of expert opinions and those of peers (particularly in light of the importance of peer participation in other editions) highlights the high power distance dynamic of Latin American countries. Rather than attempt to close the gap to maintain the traditional *Cosmo* values of the American edition, *Cosmo Español* maintains an authoritative presence.

***Cosmo Français***. As a country with relatively high power distance values, one would expect *Cosmo Français* to deliver their advice and advertising from a position of expertise. While much of the product placement in the magazine does come from a source of authority, it is equally as present as peer participation that focuses on equality and reader/expert dialogue.

The first few sections of the magazine focusing on key items to purchase for the month of October (beauty, entertainment, books, travel locations) consists of a long list of products, places, and art to look into. For each item, *Cosmo* tells the reader not only the benefits of paying for the product or experience, but also that they should have it, and it's hardly a suggestion. This authoritative stance is in line with the expected power distance values associated with France.

Other articles, however, contradict these values by relying on social equality and peer interaction in a way more in line with small power distance cultures like the United States. There are several articles displaying confessions and opinions sent in by readers as well as entire articles focusing on the viewpoints of one reader with a small level of

expertise in the subject. For example, in an article titled “Winning Speed Dating”, reader Johanna and her partner Christopher recount their personal experience meeting while speed dating and how they turned their encounter into a successful relationship. The article takes up an entire page and features a photograph of the couple.

This article is one of several in the October 2012 edition that allows readers to share their stories and influence the opinion and voice of the magazine. In doing so, *Cosmo* has chosen to blend the traditional French power distance values with American power distance values to create a more suitable balance for their French audience.

### **Masculine and Feminine Value Patterns**

*Cosmo UK*. The UK is a very masculine country according to Hofstede, and *Cosmo UK* definitely follows suit. In the UK, The “*Cosmo* girl” is almost hyper feminine. Physically, she’s up to date on the latest fashion, beauty, and health tips. She’s successful in her social and professional life. Sexually, she is not only physically attracted to males but actively seeks and desires them.

With an entire section devoted to career advice, *Cosmo UK*’s October 2012 edition focused on seeking the perfect career. Already assuming that the *Cosmo* girl is invested in having a strong career, the introduction to the career section reads “It’s no secret that some industries are great for women while areas are...hmm...frankly rubbish. Before you make that career move, find out what your dream industry has in store for an ambitious woman like you” (103). The following few pages have experts from the retail, hairdressing, engineering, tax and accountancy, and journalism and PR fields giving out advice for being a strong and aggressive woman in their particular workplaces. The section concludes with a plea to sign *Cosmo UK*’s petition for equal pay and advice for

job seekers. It's clear that the masculine values of aggression, ambition, and self-reliance are strongly shared in *Cosmo UK*.

Though *Cosmo* is known for focusing on feminine qualities, the values of aggression and confidence are largely praised throughout the publication. With articles such as "100% Confident- Get Ready to Kick this Month's Ass. Wahoo!" and "Live Big & Go For it! Sexy, Confident, and Smart...That's You!", the magazine focuses on how to be an alpha-female, creating an assertive and confident shared identity, completely inline with masculine culture values.

***Cosmo Español***. As a masculine society, the traditional gender roles are strongly reinforced, and the same is true in the publication. Rather than demonstrating the culturally masculine values of aggression and independence, the publication focuses on the traditional gender roles of women. While that changes little for the health and beauty tips, when it comes to sexuality, the focus shifts from the traditional *Cosmo* view of sexuality for personal gratification to the focus on the woman's ability to please her man. With only one article with explicit sexual advice, the Spanish edition is drastically less sexual than it's more individualist counterparts.

The main article in the "Desire, Love, & Passion" section (a much more discrete title than other editions' "Sex" section) is "The *Oohh* Technique That Never Fails", featuring user-submitted comments on their personal sexual techniques that have created intimacy between them and their partner or satisfy their men- an incredible difference from the self-focused direct sexual candor of the UK edition. Though one of only two of the peer-submitted content articles in this edition, the sexual advice is more community based and creates a reader dialogue. This community focus is shared by each reader

featured, as the point of their tips and tricks are not for personal sexual gratification, but for closer intimacy and a stronger relationship. For example, reader Alicia shared, “The position that always achieves orgasm is sitting in a chair facing each other. We have full contact and friction. I love to travel down his back with my hands wide open in that position. It’s very exciting because it makes me feel very attached to him, and it excites me more” (44). For a region with such strongly defined gender roles, it makes sense that a discussion of sex would stay away from female sexual gratification and focus on the nurturing and community oriented benefits.

Rather than stress an independent or individual attitude towards sexuality, reader participation serves to dilute the sexuality of the article. The articles following are about relationships, not sexuality, and the models featured depict happy couples, where the women are modestly dressed and at a physical distance from their partner.

***Cosmo Français.*** While France is a more feminine value country (Hofstede, 2001), the emphasis on the individual also purported a much more masculine set of values. Unlike the culture value patterns predicted by Hofstede and previous researchers, the masculine value patterns did not follow the typical French pattern. There’s a large focus on female independence and self-reliance, and hardly any mention of community or group reliance. While the magazine offered relationship advice, it was primarily centered on the individual, rather than the expected view of an intertwined couple.

In a section called “SOS Superhéroïne”, an article titled “But What Do I Get Involved In?” follows a woman named Chloe. The subheading translates to “I’m Chloe, or rather Super Chloe. When someone has a problem, I jump to action. Funny, but never thank me” (210). Chloe jumps to action in a series of situations where she takes charge of

her friends' personal problems and immediately solves them. While Chloe's efforts do help those in her close personal community, the article focuses primarily on the merits of her own personal skills and prowess in multiple situations. The idea is not that Chloe does so much good for her friends and family, but that she knows how to handle any situation. The focus is on the individual, and how she benefit or feel after each encounter.

There was also a strong focus on the career of the reader, playing into a more masculine and aggressive capitalistic structure, rather than the feminine values of collaboration and community cooperation. The masculine values found in the magazine completely disregarded the feminine nature of the French culture.

In an article titled "La Science Avance" (Advancing Science), 25 female researchers discuss their award-winning careers in chemistry, with a focus on battling sexism in the sciences with a sense of humor. Again the article focuses on ambition and success over community and nurturing. It is literally a woman adapting traditional male roles and succeeding in spite of the obstacles she faces (122). These findings are a far cry from the expectations laid down from France's typically feminine value patterns.

### **Conclusions and Implications for Further Study**

The limited scope of this study could be further expanded in two ways, first by expanding the study of *Cosmopolitan* as a brand. *Cosmo* has 64 international editions, and only three were represented here. Further study in additional cultures would serve to shed more light on the subject. Second, the study could be expanded to examine other international American magazines and compare them to the strategies examined in this study. *Cosmo* is only one media voice with a specific client, and further study with more artifacts could bring more insight to the nature of international media marketing. Finally,

further study on French culture and American influence within France is needed to fully understand why the results were so different from the other international editions examined here. Further study could examine the French relationship between identity and fashion, or the French culture's general attitude towards Americanness and American products.

Regardless of these limitations, it seems that cultural values are far more fluid and open than Hofstede's cultural dimensions predicted. According to Signorini, "Hofstede's model does not take into account the flexible and changing nature of culture and his model is not able to reflect culture changes" (2009). When it comes to marketing, *Cosmo's* success suggests that a more balanced and tailored approach incorporating Americanness and regional cultural values is most likely to succeed in multiple regions. Maintaining strict adherence to traditional cultural values is not necessary to create a relatable product. Rather, apparently an individual and subtle blending of home-culture values with Americanness is a far more pervasive approach, at least in these three countries' editions. Though the French edition stood out by focusing primarily on American values, all three of these editions seem to suggest that a strict adherence to regional values is unnecessary and potentially less appealing to a modern global audience. These findings are significant, as they shed light on the particular formulas for the selected countries that work as a blend of American and foreign values and delve deep into a prime example of overall successful marketing tailored to international markets.

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