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Corso di Laurea Magistrale in International Economics and Commerce

**THE ANALYSIS OF THE COHERENCE  
BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL  
ADVERTISING AND LOCAL CULTURES:  
THE SCAVOLINI CASE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Lo scopo di questa tesi consiste nel valutare la coerenza tra la comunicazione pubblicitaria internazionale e le culture locali, utilizzando Scavolini come caso studio specifico. La comunicazione pubblicitaria di Scavolini destinata a cinque Paesi (Italia, Francia, Spagna, Grecia e Stati Uniti d’America) viene valutata sulla base del modello delle dimensioni culturali di Hofstede. Il risultato della valutazione è il seguente: la comunicazione pubblicitaria di Scavolini risulta coerente con Italia, Francia, Spagna e Grecia, mentre risulta meno coerente con gli Stati Uniti d’America. Il motivo principale di questa incoerenza è da imputarsi allo stile comunicativo di Scavolini, troppo indiretto rispetto ai paradigmi della cultura statunitense. Tale stile è comunque parte integrante della comunicazione dell’azienda ed è strumentale nel veicolare l’idea di sobria eleganza e “italianità” che Scavolini vuole associare al proprio marchio sui mercati internazionali. Nel corso della valutazione è emerso come la comunicazione pubblicitaria internazionale di Scavolini sia fortemente improntata alla standardizzazione. Nel corso della tesi vengono forniti alcuni suggerimenti su come rendere tale comunicazione più adatta alle caratteristiche socio-culturali dei Paesi a cui tale comunicazione è destinata, senza per questo stravolgere l’approccio globale sinora implementato con successo dall’azienda.



## **INTRODUCTION**

In the challenging and ultra-competitive scenario of nowadays' market environment, being able to provide an effective communication has become, from the viewpoint of any company, an increasingly crucial factor in determining business success.

In such an over-crowded context, brand identity is extremely important: every company must make its best effort to develop a brand able to set itself apart from the competitors. On this regard, the communication strategy implemented by every company is assigned a major task: in fact, for any company, communication is mostly responsible for the creation and cultivation of brand identity. At the same time, though, effective communication must also be able to fit the peculiar traits of different local cultures as these local cultures eventually affect the foremost features of different national markets. Advertising, as a peculiar form of communication, plays a strategic role in this scenario: in fact, for any company, advertising must not only promote products and services provided by that company, but must also conceptually deliver and plastically project the values and the ideas which lay at the core of that company. In particular, advertising, as a very immediate and unfiltered form of communication, is important as it's mostly responsible for affecting the "first impression" that consumers make of a brand.

The goal of this master thesis consists in investigating the coherence between international advertising and local cultures, using an Italian company, Scavolini, as a specific case study. Operatively, this master thesis will assess the consistency

between Scavolini's international advertising and the local cultures of the countries in which this company promotes and sells its products. For this purpose, the Hofstedian cultural dimensions' framework (also known as Hofstedian model) will be used: a sample of advertisements developed by Scavolini for five selected countries will be analyzed through the filters of the Hofstedian model.

The Hofstedian model is a "tool", structured around six fundamental cultural dimensions, used worldwide by several scholars and marketing managers as well to appraise the foremost socio-cultural features of a given country. The most important quirk of the Hofstedian model is that it assigns every country a quantitative evaluation (i.e., a score) for each of the six dimensions, so that it makes possible to draw up, for each dimension, a countries' ranking.

For any country and for any company operating in that country, the foremost socio-cultural are very important as they affect local consumers' behaviour.

In its effort to estimate the coherence between Scavolini's international advertising and local cultures, this master thesis will implement a deductive approach: conclusions will be drawn on the basis of the comparison between the content of Scavolini' advertisements and the socio-cultural features of the target countries as filtered through the six dimensions of the Hofstedian model.

The first chapter of this master thesis will describe the history, the evolution and the main features of Scavolini, a worldwide known Italian company, founded more than sixty years ago and based in Pesaro, which produces home living solutions,

most famously modular kitchens. Throughout all these decades, Scavolini has been able to gain a strong reputation for its products, which are designed and manufactured in Pesaro and exported all over the world.

The second chapter will describe the origins and the most important characteristics of the Hofstedian model: in particular, this chapter will focus on the six fundamental cultural dimensions of the Hofstedian model and the operative consequences, in terms of advertising, entailed by different countries' ranking on each of these dimension. In other words, this chapter will illustrate how, for any country, the different scores achieved on these six cultural dimensions affect effective communication.

The third chapter will specifically focus on the five selected countries (Italy, France, Spain, Greece and United States of America) as analyzed through the filters of the Hofstedian model: for each of these five countries, this chapter will show and analyze cultural dimensions' scores, and will provide practical examples of how the socio-cultural differences featured by each of these five countries concretely influence many aspects of everyday life.

The fourth chapter will be the most operative of all, and can be regarded as the "core" of this master thesis. In fact, this chapter will estimate the coherence between Scavolini's international advertising and local cultures by appraising the actual content of Scavolini's advertisements for the five selected countries on the basis of these five countries' foremost socio-cultural features as assessed by the Hofstedian

model. In doing so, this chapter will not only evaluate the advertisements' content but will also provide original insights, considerations and suggestions meant to improve Scavolini's communication.

Finally, the fifth and last chapter will illustrate a "general theory" of advertising and will describe the position actually taken by Scavolini on this matter. Broadly speaking, advertising can be described as a *continuum* whose bounds are delimited by two opposite approaches, the standardised approach and the adaptive approach: each approach, obviously, has its own strengths and weaknesses. This chapter will not only analyse these strengths and weaknesses but will also explain the actual collocation chosen by Scavolini on this *continuum*, highlighting, as far as advertising is concerned, the pros and cons of such a collocation.

In conclusion, this master thesis consists in a in-depth analysis of Scavolini's international advertising for five different national markets: the reverberations of this analysis, though, go way beyond the narrow boundaries of Scavolini's specific case study. Indeed, ultimately, the assessment of the coherence between international advertising and local cultures run through the analysis of Scavolini's international advertising will bring to the surface insightful takeaways which can be usefully exploited not only by Scavolini but also by any company operating on international markets.

## Chapter I

### Scavolini: a portrait of the company



**Figure 1.1** The iconic and worldwide known logo of Scavolini. Source: Scavolini website.

Scavolini is an Italian company which, since its foundation in the early 60's, has always been among the top Italian furnishing companies: it historically specializes in modular kitchens but in the last years it has broadened its offering by starting to design and sell a wide range of products devoted to the whole house (what is known as "home total look"). Scavolini has always been a pioneer in innovating marketing and communication strategies in Italy: popularly known in Italy as *la più amata dagli Italiani* ("Italians' most beloved"), Scavolini has always jumped at the chance of operating and competing in international markets as they have gradually emerged all over the world, even though the Italian market still remains the core market of the company.

## **I.1 The history and the structure**

Scavolini was founded in Pesaro in 1961 thanks to the resourcefulness and goodwill of the brothers Valter and Elvino Scavolini. At the very beginning, it was a small-size company like many other local firms operating in the territory; then, in a few years, due to the foresight and business acumen of the founding brothers Valter and Evelino, it has turned from a small firm for the hand-craft production of kitchens into one of the most important national industrial companies and among the top companies in terms of modular kitchen export (Masia, 2021). The evolution from a small local firm into a top-level national industry was sanctified in 1979, when Scavolini became a joint-stock company. Today Scavolini is at the head of a Group, the Scavolini Group, which includes Ernestomeda, a brand launched in 1996, and also some companies and branches abroad. Since 2023 Scavolini has been part of the special register of historic brands of national interest, established by the Ministry of Economic Development with the aim of protecting and enhancing the excellence of the "Made in Italy".

Throughout the 60 years since its foundation, Scavolini has reached considerable dimensions and currently operates in an industrial site of 204,000 square meters, located in Montelabbate (province of Pesaro-Urbino): it currently has over 750 employees and an important satellite activities' sector in the surrounding area, consisting of firms supplying modular parts (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

After co-founding the company and leading it throughout the most part of his life, in 2017 Valter Scavolini passed the baton to his daughter Fabiana. Since 2017, thus, Fabiana Scavolini has been the CEO of Scavolini.

In the recent years, Scavolini has constantly enjoyed a positive trend in terms of sales and revenues: according to the website *ReportAziende.it*, the company had a turnover of 177 million euros in 2019, 164 million euros in 2020 (negatively biased by the COVID pandemic) and 204 million euros in 2021, whereas the expected turnover for the year 2022 is 280 million euros. According to *ReportAziende.it*, in 2021 Scavolini has been, in terms of turnover, the third-ranked Italian kitchen-furniture manufacturing company, and the overall fourth-ranked company in the province of Pesaro-Urbino.



**Figure 1.2 Scavolini's headquarters in Montelabbate (Pesaro-Urbino). Source: Scavolini website.**

The Italian market has historically been the “core” of Scavolini’s revenues and efforts: since the beginning of the XXI century, though, the company has embarked in an ambitious plan to prospect new markets and expand abroad, first in Northern Europe, then in the USA and finally in the Far East and the Arab world (Zanzi, 2013).



**Figure 1.3 The interior of Scavolini’s factory in Montelabbate (Pesaro-Urbino). Source: Il Sole 24 Ore.**

## **I.2 The production**

Scavolini has always made huge investments to design innovative products where style and technology harmonize to meet every furnishing and functional need. These are the “competitive advantages” historically featured by Scavolini: the wide range of solutions available; the constant attention to the aesthetic component and design, always following the latest trends; the quality, meant especially as attention to the choice of materials; the carefully selected list of suppliers; the excellent quality-price ratio.

Kitchen furniture has always been the core of Scavolini’s manufacturing: since 2012, though, the company’s offering has also included bathroom collections, the result of the company's wish to fulfill a specific market requirement, which in turn has called for the supply of *ad hoc* solutions. Over the years the offering has increased, as it now includes a wide range of solutions spanning from the living area - with an offer that is divided into integrated living rooms and independent living rooms - to the walk-in closet and outdoor spaces: the overall inspiration is the concept of "home total look" (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

Today, Scavolini offers a program of complete environments for bathroom furnishings, extremely varied in its compositional variety, for a total of over 1,800 items. The company also offers specific solutions for the living area, with bases, wall units, open modules and shelves, all of them perfectly matched with the kitchen, implementing a "home total look" vision. Scavolini’s living area offering

can be broken down into two macro categories: integrated living rooms and independent living rooms. The choice between the two options can be determined by various factors (e.g., the type of environment, the space available and the personal style).

Scavolini offers complete and modular walk-in closets, designed with the highest attention to detail, in order to guarantee efficiency and functionality. The extensive modularity allows the choice between linear or corner solutions, with exposed modules or closed with doors, up to the creation of free-standing solutions, designed to separate the rooms.

Finally, Formalia Outdoor is the first Scavolini project designed for outdoor environments. Born as a “spin-off” of the Formalia home system, designed by Vittore Nioiu, it features modern design, functionality and high quality materials. The modularity, made up of 19 elements to be combined with latest generation appliances, allows to create unique configurations, designed to be inserted into any type of space (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).



**Figure 1.4 An example of the Formalia Outdoor living solutions designed by the Italian architect Vittore Niolu. Source: Scavolini website.**

### **I.3 The design**

Scavolini, facing a challenging scenario which features ever-evolving kitchen and home solutions, has always collaborated with prestigious designers on the international scenario. Nendo, Ora-ïto, Diesel Creative Team, Giugiaro Design, King&Miranda Design, Karim Rashid, Michael Young, Rainlight Studio, Fabio Novembre and Luca Nichetto contribute with their exclusive proposals to the constantly intermediating activity between the most advanced and effervescent expressions of creativity and customers' current and future needs. Top-level design is a peculiarity that has always characterized Scavolini: it's the consequence of the

company's ability to promptly respond to market demands and the desire to guarantee the satisfaction of a broad and transversal public, grasping the subtle signals and developing them with a view to continuous research for innovation (Pincini, 2023).

Scavolini implements a design activity on the basis of a simultaneous sociological, disciplinary and experimental approach, which allows to explore new languages. The sociological approach is based on the analysis of the aesthetic and functional expectations of the different socio-cultural groups, the disciplinary approach is dedicated to a "pure" design which provides the ability to create innovation for exclusive projects, the experimental approach is expressed through research on the daily rituals of the customers who everyday enjoy a Scavolini environment (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

In 2018, Scavolini obtained the Made in Italy certification issued by COSMOB and CATAS - the two most important testing and certification laboratories for wood furniture in Italy - which states the Italian origin of the furniture. The certification is based on the UNI 11674 standard which responds to the market protection needs of having objective and verifiable requirements on the basis of which the Italian origin of the furniture product can be guaranteed.

In a context of ecological transition based on the ideals of responsibility and sustainability, Scavolini has translated its commitment over the years into Scavolini Green Mind, an ambitious eco-sustainability project that enhances its attention to

environmental protection and involves all resources at every company level (Magazine Qualità, 2016).

Since 2008, the Scavolini Group has been the first in the kitchen sector in Italy to obtain OHSAS 18001 certification on occupational health and safety management systems, testifying to the great commitment and profound sensitivity in protecting its employees. This certification states Scavolini's "virtuous" approach by rewarding and stimulating the "continuous improvement" which has always been the Company Policy priority.



**Figure 1.5 The Scavolini Store in Sassuolo (Modena), one of the many single-brand stores inaugurated directly by the company in Italy and abroad as well in order to strenghten the brand identity. Source: Scavolini website.**

#### **I.4 The distribution and the communication network**

The distribution network is one of the keys to Scavolini's success: the company has always paid particular attention to its strengthening and qualification. The Scavolini Store project is a perfect example of this approach as it consists of strategic operations aimed at strengthening the brand identity. The Stores, single-brand sales points entirely dedicated to offering furnishing solutions for all rooms of the house, complement the traditional distribution present throughout the national territory. Scavolini Stores stand out for their professionalism, with highly qualified staff, trained to meet every customer need. Scavolini has always paid great attention to the training of resellers, promoting projects and workshops reserved for them since 1994 (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

Scavolini, particularly attentive to the most innovative means of communication, has been a trailblazer in making use of mass media for the furniture sector in Italy and has revolutionized the whole industry by early using of pop celebrities as endorser and testimonials: Scavolini has constantly advertised on RAI since 1975 and on private broadcasters since 1984. The painstakingly designed advertising campaigns on a national and international scale, developed on mainstream media, both online and offline (printed press, TV, cinema, radio, Web, posters), complete the company strategy, contributing to establish Scavolini as a leader in the sector. Institutional communication has always been associated with important activities at the point of sale. All in all, the crucial message that Scavolini has always wanted to

deliver via its products and advertisements is a message of iconic Italian elegance coupled with high levels of functionality (Pincini, 2023).

Since 1996 the company has activated the website *www.scavolini.com*, to make direct contact with consumers; since 2010 it has also been present on the main social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, WeChat and more recently TikTok. In 2015, Scavolini started an important advertising campaign on taxi-cabs in the city of Milan (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

This strong orientation towards communication is due to the imprinting of President Valter Scavolini, who “invented” the concept of the "modern kitchen company": in the 1970s, he understood that the outsourcing of some production processes was instrumental in freeing up crucial resources which were then dedicated to marketing and communication efforts. This business philosophy was a model followed by many competitors (Masia, 2021).



**Figure 1.6 Two popular advertisements by Scavolini from the late 80's-early 90's: the one on the left features Raffaella Carrà, the one on the right Lorella Cuccarini. Source: Negozi Mobili Design.**

In 2017 Scavolini was the first company in the kitchen sector in Italy to debut in the world of e-commerce, launching the "Scavolini Shop" platform: by connecting to *www.shop.scavolini.com*, consumers can design and purchase their own kitchens in just a few clicks. With over 65 possible compositions and more than 300,000 combinations available, Scavolini Shop is the e-channel just a click away that

completes the company offering. In addition to the kitchen category, it is also possible to purchase a selection of bathroom and living models online.

### **I.5 Foreign markets**

Scavolini exports its products all over the world, with a policy of strong network expansion and a constant increase in new openings. It currently has over 300 foreign sales points in addition to the 900 sales points in Italy. Scavolini Usa Inc. was founded in 2007, with headquarters in New York City in the iconic Soho neighborhood. The Scavolini Soho Gallery flagship store stands in the exclusive atmosphere of West Broadway: 900 square metres on two levels displaying the most representative kitchens. In 2017 Scavolini doubled its presence with offices and showrooms on 58th Street, at the A&D Building, already home to renowned design brands (Masia, 2021). In addition to the American HQs, in 2014 Scavolini opened a representative office in Shanghai and in 2015 the UK branch in London. In 2018 it consolidated the internationalization strategy with the opening of the subsidiary Scavolini France sas. The company's successful strategy is based not only on the continuous strengthening of its distribution and organizational network but also on the development of products designed according to the tastes and needs of the different countries and on a communication strategy aimed at increasing "brand recognition". Once again the core message that every Scavolini marketing and communication campaign wants to convey consists in the crucial idea of

delivering the Italian sense of beauty straight into customers' houses (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).



**Figure 1.7 In 2017 Scavolini inaugurated its second New York City-based single-brand store at the fifth floor of the exclusive A&D Building. Source: Scavolini website.**

It's worth recognizing here a crucial difference between how the brand “Scavolini” is marketed on the Italian market and how it is marketed on the foreign markets. In fact, on the Italian market Scavolini is marketed as a mid-end brand (that is, a “popular” brand in the best sense of the word, characterized by good materials, high

reliability and excellent value for money), whereas on the foreign markets Scavolini is marketed as a high-end brand: on this regard, the prestige of the “Made in Italy” label acts a “quality enhancer”. Scavolini, in fact, is a full-fledged member of the so-called “4A of Made in Italy” (i.e., the fashion-clothing sector, the agri-food sector, the furnishing-design sector and the automotive-mechanic sector, known in Italian as *abbigliamento-moda*, *agro-alimentare*, *arredamento-design* and *automazione-meccanica*, respectively). The marketing and communication campaigns of Scavolini in Italy and abroad, therefore, adjust consistently with this vision (Medium, 2018).

## **I.6 Scavolini Foundation**

As a company, Scavolini has always felt a strong commitment towards its territory, its socio-cultural issues, its employees and commercial partners. Established in 1984, the Scavolini Foundation aims, by endorsing operations and by direct interventions as well, to increase and promote research in the field of historical, literary, economic sciences, industrial planning and to encourage initiatives aimed at education, recreation and social assistance. As it can be seen visiting landing page of the institutional website of the Scavolini Foundation, its range of action is wide and currently includes the artistic, architectural, musical, literary, educational-training sectors and study of the phenomena of cultural and economic transformation of the territory in which the Foundation operates. Scavolini, also,

has always been committed to “green issues” such as eco-sustainability and energetic saving: an example of this approach is Scavolini Green Mind, a project launched in 2009 which nowadays makes sure that all the most important productive unit of the company are powered by solar panels. “*Our company*” says Gian Marco Scavolini, Quality & Environment manager and Vice-President of Scavolini “*has always been very attentive to environmental issues, for years we have been implementing many actions which can be summarized in the Scavolini Green Mind project*” (Teknoring, 2011). Beyond the Scavolini Foundation and the Green Mind project, the company has always supported the local community by being very active in the field of Pesaro sports, especially basketball: for many years, Scavolini was the main sponsor of the local basketball team who between the late 80’s and the early 90’s, with Valter Scavolini as President, won two Italian national championships and competed at international level in top-notch European tournaments. Today, even though Scavolini isn’t the main sponsor anymore, the bond between the company and the local basketball team is still strong. By deciding to sponsor and endorse the Pesaro-based sports activities, Valter Scavolini proved to be not only an entrepreneur with solid social and civic principles, but also a communication genius: in a period when many furnishing firms were reluctant to adopt innovative marketing strategies, the Scavolini-sponsored basketball team contributed to make the brand known all over the world (Masia, 2021).

## Chapter II

### The Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework



**Figure 2.1 “Pure Diversity”, by Mirta Toledo, mixed media on cotton paper, 1993. Source: Art Collection of TCU University, Fort Worth (Texas).**

The Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework, simply known also as the Hofstedian model, is one of the most popular device used by marketing specialists in their efforts to penetrate and “understand” new markets: since marketing, as a whole, mostly deals with advertising and communication, the Hofstedian model, “pigeonholing” national cultures, and thus societies, in specific boxes, provides suitable tools for implementing an effective international strategy. Initially developed with the aim of understanding differences in work motivation drivers among all levels of employees, caused by the nationality of the employees, the

Hofstedian model eventually expanded well beyond the narrow borders of work environment and “spilled over” into a wide-encompassing framework able to “see” countries and societies through the lens of cross-cultural analysis.

All human societies need to address a relatively limited number of universal issues: these issues, although common to each and every society, allow for different kind of answers. Basically, the peculiar way in which each given human society tackles these universal issues “shapes” the specific culture of that society (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Moving on from these assumptions, Hofstede concluded that cultural dimensions are the basis of consumer behaviours across different societies: that’s why the Hofstedian model is so important from a marketing and communication standpoint.

## **II.1 The origins of the theory and its main structural features**

Gerard Hendrik Hofstede (1928-2020), better known simply as Geert Hofstede, was a Dutch social psychologist who devoted the most part of his life to analyze organizational culture, especially the various ways in which individuals coming from different countries and therefore different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. Most famously, Hofstede worked for the international technology corporate IBM: in fact, the “Big Blue”, as IBM is informally known, asked Hofstede to examine and evaluate the cultural differences between the more than 100,000 IBM employees scattered around the world, to describe how these difference could

create problems in terms of employee management and finally to provide some solutions in order to smooth as much as possible the inter-personal relationships between IBM employees. After spending many years doing on-field research on behalf of IBM, Hofstede eventually came up with a cross-cultural psychology framework which has proven to be valid not only for the narrow boundaries of IBM employee management system, but also as a more general platform for the understanding and evaluating of different cultures on a broader international scenario (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

This model, known in the scientific literature as the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework, was firstly broached by the Dutch psychologist in his seminal work *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*, whose first edition dates back to 1980. Many social researchers and communication experts have taken inspiration from Hofstede's work and expanded it through further groundwork and efforts: Hofstede himself constantly reviewed and updated his own results writing a number of further books, essays and articles, among which it's worth mentioning here *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* and *Masculinity and Femininity: The Taboo Dimension of National Cultures*, two crucial books published for the first time in, respectively, 1991 and 1998.

In analyzing how difference between cultural groupings (i.e., national cultural differences) affects management, Hofstede has always applied a dimensional

approach to cross-cultural comparisons: this is the main feature of his method. This means, operatively, that every culture is “broken down” into a series of dimensions (the number of which has increased as time passed by, reflecting further expansion in the groundwork), so that each culture gets a score for each dimension: different national cultures get different scores in each dimension, thus each of them ranks differently as far as every cultural dimension is concerned. The main perk from Hofstede’s cross-cultural dimensional analysis is that it provides a qualitative evaluation and a quantitative evaluation as well: along with a qualitative description of each national culture’s main features, the Hofstedian model “churns out” a score which can be attached to each culture (de Mooij, 2019). This quantitative side of the Hofstedian model can turn out to be very useful, especially for marketing and communication strategists who need to make quick decisions based on solid and comparable grounds: different countries features different cultures, and thus different dimensional scores, which must be met with tailored-up solutions. Each cultural dimension is structured according to an adversive principle, i.e. each dimension spans between two extreme and opposite poles, each of the two representing the extreme and opposite feature for that given cultural dimension. The six cultural dimension developed by Geert Hofstede as he implemented his cross-cultural analysis are the following: the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension, the Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension, the High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension, the Masculinity vs Femininity dimension, the

Long Term Orientation *vs* Short Term Orientation and, finally, the Restraint *vs* Indulgence dimension. The first four dimensions were originally examined and described by Hofstede in his early works, whereas the last two dimensions were added later by Hofstede as a result of the expanded on-field work undertaken by the Dutch researcher himself and the suggestions provided to him by the work of other researchers and scholars. In the remainder of this chapter, we'll describe the main features and implications of each cultural dimension.

## **II.2 The Individualism *vs* Collectivism dimension**

This dimension is all about the relationship between the individual and the group as it tries to “gauge”, for any given national culture, the extent to which individuals are autonomous within their society and, by contrast, the measure to which individuals are “ingrained” in the group (Hofstede, 1984). This dimension has always been at the core of many considerations of political philosophy, as it can be conceived as a measuring stick for the nature of the relationship between the citizen(s) and the state, and has also been the subject of research for many humanistic discipline. Driven by both an intellectual academic interest and the need to find some practical application of this dimension, Geert Hofstede was the first to run a large-scale experimental inquiry on this matter and eventually provided a ranking of national cultures according to the Individualism *vs* Collectivism cultural dimension (de Mooij, 2019).

This dimension has at its core the importance that a given cultural grouping attaches to relationships. Collectivist cultures hold personal relationships as sacred: these relationships must not necessarily be only those existing within the strict boundaries of a family, but can extend well beyond it: for example, they can extend to the work environment; if not guaranteed by blood ties, such as in the case of a family, though, these relationships must be painstakingly built via *vis-a-vis* social encounters. In collectivist culture loyalty is held in high regard and the achievement of individual goals is systematically subordinate to the achievement of collective goals. Individualist cultures, on the other side, put their focus on the rights of the individual and encourage individuals to compete against each other in their seeking of their goals: relationships are important, of course, but the achievement of individual tasks and the fulfillment of personal needs prevail over relationship issues. In an individualist culture loyalty is considered to be important but, insofar as this loyalty is not sanctified by some contractual obligation, side-switching is regarded as perfectly legit, as long as this decision can be instrumental in achieving a personal goal or fulfilling a personal need (Hofstede, 1984).

The United States of America and Canada represents two important examples of individualist countries, whereas China and South Korea are regarded among the most collectivist countries in the world (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

### **II.3 The Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension**

This dimension tries to quantify the extent to which individuals of a given national culture avoid uncertainty or, by contrast, the extent to which they are propense to risk. People living in societies featuring high level of Uncertainty Avoidance can accept to undertake, at least to a certain extent, familiar risks but tend to avoid embarking on unknown, and therefore potentially dangerous, ventures (Hofstede, 1984). Uncertainty-avoiding societies regard life as a constant struggle against stress and anxiety: this kind of societies lack flexibility and are very “rigid” as a number of laws and rules, whether written or not, discipline social life. As a consequence of this approach, Uncertainty Avoidance cultures are more reluctant to change and are also more difficult to “infiltrate” from the outside unless one decides to passively accept the vast body of rules and wholly adopt the local traditions and life-style. Risk Propensity cultures, *vice versa*, are more open to change and innovation: this kind of societies are burdened by a relatively light load of rules and laws because they mostly rely on people’s common sense. Competition and conflict aren’t regarded as the roots of potential dangers, but as the positive source of creative energy; and people’s interest is more focused on the result of processes than on how processes actually work, whereas in uncertainty-avoiding cultures the interest is mostly focused on the mechanisms and the rules governing processes (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). In Uncertainty Avoidance cultures the opinion of experts, for any given field of knowledge, is hold in high esteem, while

in Risk Propensity cultures there is the prevalence of a “do-it-yourself” and “try-it-on-your-own” approach.

As a consequence of this *forma mentis*, Uncertainty Avoidance cultures are usually more traditionalist, whereas Risk Propensity cultures tend to embrace change and innovation (de Mooij, 2019).

The United Kingdom and Ireland rank among the most Risk Propensity countries on Earth, while Spain and Greece rank among the most Uncertainty Avoidance countries (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

#### **II.4 The High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension**

This dimension focuses on Power Distance, i.e. on the extent to which, within any given national culture, people expect and accept the fact that power is unevenly distributed in society (Hofstede, 1984). The concept at the foundation of this dimension, which was later expanded and refined by Geert Hofstede, had been earlier studied and investigated by other researchers, who had focused their attention on the specific weight of the hierarchical structure and therefore on the importance of centralization as an organizational feature (Pugh, 1976). More pragmatically, it can be stated that, regardless of the ranking on this specific dimension, it has never existed such a thing as a completely equal society. With that being said, though, it is undeniable that the degree of inequality between different societies varies significantly: in a nutshell, reformulating George Orwell’s famous

quote from *Animal Farm*, we can say: “All societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others”. Reassuring, this dimension pertains to how people deals with the fact that power is more or less unevenly distributed within society and especially to how people accept this disparity in power allocation as natural and to some extent even positive (Hofstede, 1984). The hierarchy and the hierarchical structure play an essential role in defining this dimension. In High Power Distance cultures, hierarchy (whether it is formally defined, as in the case of a work context, or informally defined, as in the case of a family context or a friendship context) is the sun around which the rest of the society moves, thus respect and obedience towards those who sit at the top in the hierarchical pyramid (the elderly in the family, the executives on the job, the officers in the military) come as the most natural of things, and orders, as they come from the top to the bottom, are never to be discussed: in such a society, *status* matters and commands respect, and those who are at the top of the hierarchy are usually seen as inaccessible. In Low Power Distance cultures, hierarchy, nevertheless always existing, is conceived in a more fluid and less rigid way: those sitting at the top of the pyramid are considered “*first among equals*” by their subordinates, therefore any top-down chain of command is expected to be discussed and eventually even challenged: orders tend to be regarded more as “instructions” or “suggestions”. In this kind of cultures, there is a constant exchange of opinions between all those involved in the decisional process, regardless of the position occupied by each of them in the ranking. In Low Power Distance cultures,

relationships between superiors and subordinates tend to be horizontal and the establishment can be discussed, whereas in High Power Distance cultures relationships tend to be vertical and power as it is currently distributed is considered to be granitic (de Mooij, 2019).

India and China are two specimens of High Power Distance countries, whereas the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland) historically represent Low Power Distance countries (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

## **II.5 The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension**

This dimension tries to discriminate national cultures, and thus societies, according to whether they can be described as assertive (i.e., masculine) or caring (i.e., feminine) (Hofstede, 1984). In masculine cultures, there is a clear distinction between the works and tasks who are supposed to be exercised by men and those who are supposed to be exercised by women: competition, struggling for goal-achievement and, more generally, exercise of power and decision-making roles are expected to be undertaken by men, whereas women are expected to care for others and passively obey men's orders. In this kind of societies, roles, within the family and within every other aspect of life as well, tend to be assigned by gender: there is little overlapping as these cultures tend to be very rigid, and goals must be achieved at any cost since work is mostly seen as a challenge and an opportunity for men to compete against each other and gain fame and rewards. In feminine societies,

there's no such strict correlation between the gender and the roles each gender is expected to undertake, since there is more fluidity: the focus isn't put on the performance and the results, but on the conditions under which these performances are implemented: quality of the work environment, and quality of life in general, is a top priority (de Mooij, 2019). Hofstede himself, in the last part of his life, realized that the definition "Masculinity vs Femininity" had become somehow obsolete, as gender-role dynamics and feminist movements were radically changing what in many cultures had been, up to that point, historically recognized and accepted as a clear distinction between "men's roles" and "women's roles" (Hofstede, 1998). Coherently with Hofstede's reasoning, many researchers who have elaborated and expanded this specific cultural dimension have concluded that the use of the terms "masculine" and "feminine" on this regard can provide negatively biased evaluations, and have proposed to change the definition of this dimension (House et al, 2005). Today, as a consequence of this reasoning, this dimension has been renominated and it is currently known also as "Assertiveness vs Non-Assertiveness dimension".

Mexico and Japan are two very masculine (that is, assertive) countries, while the Netherlands and Sweden are among the most feminine (that is, non-assertive) countries in the world (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

## **II.6 The Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation dimension**

This fifth dimension was added later by Geert Hofstede as it wasn't included in the original four-cultural dimension framework of the Dutch researcher: the reason for this initial exclusion was that, as Hofstede later explained, the original framework had been developed according to a Western mindset, i.e. the questions used in the surveys had been designed exclusively by Westerners. On this regard, a new wave of studies was inaugurated in the early 80's by some researchers which broke free from a Western approach and tried to adopt an Eastern mindset: in particular, these researchers tried to measure value orientations of the Chinese culture (Bond, 1988). In doing so, they used a viewpoint which is embedded in the Chinese culture and, at least to some extent, in all Eastern cultures: the Confucian dynamism scale, named after the Chinese philosopher Confucius (Redding, 1990).

This fifth and new dimension was prompted into existence by such Eastern mindset-based researches and was eventually formalized in 1991 by Hofstede after the Dutch researcher embraced an Eastern mindset himself. This dimension is all about the relationship between societies and time, especially the passing of time (Hofstede, 1991). Cultures regarded as short-term are oriented towards the past and the present and tend to be more static: this kind of cultures mostly promote values related to the past and the present, namely respect of tradition, preservation of reputation and meeting social obligations. *Vice versa*, cultures regarded as long-term are oriented towards the future and tend to be more dynamic: this kind of cultures promote

future-oriented values, such as thrift, patience and having a sense of shame. There is no value judgement in this kind of dimension, as it merely reflects the orientation of a given culture towards time and, ultimately, life. Unlike the four original dimensions, this fifth dimension is less categorical as its boundaries are more blurred: still, it can be very insightful and useful, especially when examining differences between Western cultures and Eastern cultures (de Mooij, 2019).

China and Japan represent the two examples of long-term oriented countries *par excellence*, whereas the United States of America and Norway are two good examples of short-term oriented countries (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

## **II.7 The Restraint vs Indulgence dimension**

Just like the one described right above, this sixth and last cultural dimension wasn't part of Hofstede's original framework: in fact, it was initially developed by Michail Minkov (Minkov, 2007). Subsequently it was added by the Dutch researcher to eventually complete his six-dimension framework (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Restraint, sometimes also referred as "Industry", encompasses values such as hard work and saving: restraint cultures concretely means that people rarely indulge in leisure-time and tend to purchase something only if deemed to be necessary. This kind of cultures promote traditional values, for example the idea that a woman's top priority is child-raising and taking care of the family and the house. Indulgence, on the contrary, encompasses the level of happiness enjoyed by

people, the command that people have over their own life and the importance of having some free-time. In indulgence societies people are willing to pay a premium price for extra quality and spend more money for the latest fidgets or the latest technologies. No wonder, then, that it exists a negative correlation between indulgence cultures and long-term oriented cultures (de Mooij, 2019).

Bangladesh and India, just like the most part of Asian countries, are evident examples of restrained cultures, while the United States of America and Brazil, just like the majority of Western countries, are good examples of indulgent cultures (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

## **II.8 Implications of cultural dimensions on communication and advertising strategies**

International companies such as Scavolini, who operate and compete on multiple and heterogeneous markets simultaneously, must necessarily take into account the differences featured by each national culture, and therefore each society. In fact, cultural peculiarities eventually influence consumer behaviour: consumer behaviour, in turn, plays a crucial role in defining, for each country, the fittest advertising and communication campaign. On this regard, as already explained, the Hofstede's six-cultural-dimension framework is one of the most popular tool both among the academia (i.e., researchers and psychologists) and those who operate "on the field" and make the actual decisions (i.e., international companies' marketing

and communication managers). Professionals should always take into account the scores recorded by different countries on different dimensions since, from an international marketing standpoint, each cultural dimension “calls for” the most appropriate communication style; also, it’s worth taking into account the “chemistry” of cultural dimensions: within a single country, cultural dimensions can amalgamate in such a way that apparently incompatible marketing campaigns can turn out to be the fittest ones (Hofstede, 1984).

In terms of communication, the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension is usually regarded as the most important one (de Mooij, 2019). Indeed, being an individualist society (or, conversely, being a collectivist one) is usually a reliable indicator of the level of context prevailing in that given society. What do we mean by “context” and why is it important communication-wise? For any given society and culture, “context” can be broadly defined as the framework within which communication occurs (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). In other words, each society has its own peculiar communication pattern, which, to various extentents, may or may not resemble the communication patterns of other societies.

Pioneering studies undertaken by the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall in the late 50’s, and constantly expanded and updated ever since, have allowed to make a fundamental differentiation as far as context, and thus communication, is concerned: in fact, empirical inquiries show that it is possible to allocate societies along a context spectrum, with “high-context” at an extreme pole and “low-context”

at the opposite one (Hall, 1966). High-context cultures mostly rely on non-verbal communication devices (facial expressions, gestures, etc...), regard situational factors as more important than what is actually spoken (the expression “reading the room” is very apt for this kind of cultures) and tend to be more difficult to “infiltrate”, as personal connections are considered more important than written contracts and must be painstakingly built over a long time-span; *vice versa*, low-context societies tend to be more explicit and thus easier to “infiltrate” from the outside, as they prefer written and detailed instructions and rules, encourage frank speech and plain talking and, all in all, rely on direct and sometimes even brutal opinion exchange and the binding value of contracts (Hall, 1976).

Of course, since societies consist of human beings, different and mutable by definition, it’s not possible to make a clear-cut distinction and univocally assign them to either one extreme pole or the other one: in fact, most societies can be approximately pinpointed in the middle of the context spectrum. With that being said, though, for each society it’s possible to identify a sort of context trend, i.e. it’s possible to identify whether a given society is leaning towards a high-context communication-style or a low-context one. In the pragmatic world of marketing, this operative distinction between high-context societies and low-context ones, however unrefined it may be, can turn out to be extremely important; this distinction gets even more relevant if we consider that empirical studies have proved the existence of a correlation between the level of context and the score achieved by

cultures in the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension: in other words, on-field research has demonstrated that, generally speaking, individualist societies tend to be more low-context, whereas collectivist societies tend to lean more towards a high-context communication style (Merkin, Steel & Taras, 2014).

If one takes into account the specific features of the dimension, this correlation makes substantially sense. Therefore, in individualist societies, it's advisable to implement a very direct and verbal, sometimes even blunt, communication approach, whereas in collectivist societies its advisable to adopt a subtler, nuanced and indirect communication style (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

In individualist societies, the message must be delivered in a clear and straightforward way and must establish a direct “bridge” with the potential costumer: the communication is structured around a “me-basis”, with the endorser “pointing” directly at the target and speaking directly to him, or her, illustrating the benefits that he, or she, as an individual, will get from that given product. In collectivist societies, usually leaning toward a high-context communication style, the message should be less direct and blunt and more sophisticated and minimal (rich of *innuendos*): in such kind of cultures, from a communication standpoint, less is more. Also, the message should be shaped around an “us-basis”, highlighting the mutual benefits procured by that product and the joy of sharing these benefits with other people (de Mooij, 2019).



**Figure 2.2 American ad for L'Oréal: L'Oréal's me-centered "Because I'm worthy" campaign became the company's trademark and the advertising blueprint for doing business in individualistic countries. Source: Creative Review.**



**Figure 2.3 Chinese ad for Adidas: in collectivistic societies, success can only be achieved through team effort and personal sacrifice, the individual per se counts nothing. This us-centered ad delivers this mindset in a very effective way. Source: Adidas website.**

When it comes to the Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension, the key for a successful communication consists in the abundance of details supplied by the message delivered: uncertainty-avoiding cultures call for structured and heavily detailed advertisements, featuring lot of explanations usually delivered by renowned experts, whereas in Risk Propensity cultures the communication focus is put on the final result of the process, with the tacit message that a product is good as long as it works, no matter the risk implied (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). This mind-set difference is mirrored in the different way in which the message is actually delivered. In fact, in Uncertainty Avoidance cultures, the communication style is simultaneously visual and didascallic (sometimes even verbose, with large use of pictures, words and all sorts of instructions and technical quirks), the terminology is always spot-on and test reports and professionals' opinions are dutifully emphasized since consumers want to know exactly how the product works and want to be sure of the dependability of it. Risk Propensity cultures, on the other side, don't need particularly detailed explanations: insofar as the process deliver results, they trust the process (de Mooij, 2019). The Risk Propensity mindset affords communication professionals to adopt a "light touch" and implement less didascallic and more original solutions: in this kind of cultures, the fittest advertising campaigns play on the consumers' fondness for the unchartered and sometimes even features characters parodying experts and scientists.



Figure 2.4 American ad for Heinz: Risk Propensity societies prefer a visual and high-impact style, as they take their risks and go straight to the point. It follows that there's no need for lengthy explanations. Source: Ads of the World



Figure 2.5 Indian ad for Oral-B: Uncertainty Avoidance cultures prefer a verbal, almost didascalic, approach. This ad is a textbook case: a deluge of figures, information and data for a society that needs to be constantly assured. Source: Oral-B website.

As far as the High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension is concerned, the most important thing to take into account is the concept of *prestige*: in High Power Distance cultures, prestige is an important appeal, whereas in Low Power Distance cultures prestige plays a relatively secondary role. Along with the concept of prestige comes another important concept: *status*. In High Power Distance cultures the representation of *status symbol* (a sports car, a huge mansion, a luxury brand, etc...) is quite common in advertising, while the opposite occurs in Low Power Distance cultures (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

It's not immediate to choose which communication style, either direct or indirect, either verbal or visual, is to be preferred: on this regard, for any given society, the ultimate decision should rely on assessing whether that society ranks as a low context culture or a high context one: in the first case, a direct and verbal style is advisable, whereas in the second case a nuanced and indirect communication device, such as a metaphor, should be preferred. High Power Distance cultures tend to be more traditional and, thus, conventional. There is a sacred respect toward the hierarchy (towards the elderly in the family, towards the boss in the workplace), everyone knows his "place" in society and every "over-the-top" behaviour is going to be punished: advertising becomes aware of these features and should adjust accordingly (de Mooij, 2019). Communication in High Power Distance cultures, whether high context or low context, tends to be very conventional: words of wisdom trickle down from the elderly towards the youth, from the boss towards the

employees: the opposite never quite happens. In High Power Distance cultures, also, other two communication features are crucial: first, it's important to emphasize the intergenerational aspects promoted by the product advertised, highlighting the fact that that very product has been previously used by the potential consumer's father or grandfather, and thus has become part of family tradition; second, whenever children are represented, they are always depicted as more protected and pampered as they tend to become independent at a later age, because they "belong" to the traditional family for a longer period time (de Mooij, 2019). *Vice versa*, Low Power Distance cultures tend to be more relaxed and advertising follows suit: in this kind of cultures, it's not uncommon to see a young boy advising an old person, or a subordinate employee challenging his superior's orders. As a consequence, communication can incorporate in its message innovative solutions, such as anti-authoritarian elements and humorous advertising, without risking to offend anyone. In Low Power Distance cultures, the role of advertising mostly consists in "empowering" customers, giving them gentle suggestions rather than dictating impositions from above. As a consequence of this *forma mentis*, in this kind of cultures the concept of *independence* has a great appeal, greater than the concept of *status*: not coincidentally, in this case children are encouraged to take decisions on their own and depicted as independent since a very early age (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

As explained above, the Masculinity vs Femininity dimension is multifaceted and can be broken down into two sub-dimensions: the Assertiveness vs Non-Assertiveness dimension and the Masculinity vs Femininity dimension properly said (House et al., 2004). Advertising in Assertiveness cultures must stress the concept of winning and achievement. If Assertiveness is complemented by Individualism, the need to dominate must be highlighted, too: a good communication strategy in this case involves exaggeration, boasting and comparative advertising; also, since assertive and individualist cultures tend to be low-context, a direct, sometimes even aggressive, communication style is the right fit: the message must be delivered in the most straightforward way possible, and the concept of *status* and *mastery* must be remarked (de Mooij, 2019). Showing off is seen as a positive thing, the concrete evidence that someone has eventually achieved success. Not coincidentally, advertising targeted at Assertiveness cultures usually features well-known celebrities endorsing brands or products: in such a culture, a celebrity is a living proof of someone who has finally “made it” and serves as an inspirational model for those who are still struggling to reach the top. Non-Assertiveness cultures, on the contrary, prefer a low-key approach as they are all about understatement, modesty and caring: the message must be delivered in the “softest” possible way and, even when hard-gainedly achieved, success must never be shown off. It follows that in this case an indirect communication style is advisable: talking about power in public is considered to be rude, thus, when trying

to promote a product, it's better to focus on its technical quirks and avoid confrontations with competitors. In Non-Assertiveness cultures, celebrity endorsement is relatively rare: when it occurs, though, celebrities always maintain a low-key profile and don't take themselves too seriously (de Mooij, 2019).

The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension properly said, on the other hand, has mostly to do with how strong (or, conversely, how weak) role differentiation between males and females is: strong gender-based role differentiation and assignment of tasks according to a clear-cut division between traditionally accepted male-roles and female-roles is advisable in masculine cultures, whereas in feminine cultures advertisings featuring men doing the washing up or women doing car maintenance are quite common. In masculine cultures the appeal of the message tends to be oriented towards efficiency and success, whereas in feminine cultures it tends to play on the desire for affiliation and belonging (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).



Figure 2.6 American ad for Burger King: masculine cultures enjoy a direct, sometimes even blunt, communication style. This ad performs the duty: it's like a punch in the face, as it leaves absolutely nothing to imagination. Source: Burger King website.



Figure 2.7 Spanish ad for Heineken: feminine countries prefer an indirect approach and a softer touch. This ad delivers the “Thank God it’s Friday” feeling in an ironic way. After all, “Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> is a Friday nevertheless”. Source: Heineken’s Facebook page.

Short Term Orientation cultures emphasize the concept of “living here and now” by delivering the message “buy today, pay later”. This short-term thinking is mirrored in the sense of urgency characterizing the advertisements and the rush for “instant pleasure” exuding from the commercials: it follows that the communication style is very direct and visual as it doesn’t leave a lot to imagination (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). In this kind of culture, disposable products delivering immediate benefits are pretty popular as consumers live only in the present and tend to overlook the future (Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 1991).

Long Term Orientation cultures, on the other hand, stress the concept of “save for tomorrow” since consumers living in this kind of cultures think of themselves as ideal links of an inter-generational chain: explicit referring to future generations is quite common as the concept of *legacy* permeate this kind of societies (Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 1991). Durable goods are preferred over disposable ones; premium goods that can be passed on from one generation to the next one, such as luxury brand watches, are also very appreciated. Communication style tends to be very symbolic and unobtrusive as it emphasizes harmony and modesty, so much so that, sometimes, the product endorsed never actually appears or is only mentioned in passing: advertising is mostly perceived as an experience rather than a merely crude attempt to sell something (de Mooij, 2019).

If Long Term Orientation cultures are also collectivist ones (which is almost always the case, especially if we focus our attention on Asian societies), natural elements

play a crucial role in advertising, regardless of the product endorsed, since reaching equilibrium and harmony between man and nature is one the main drivers of these cultures (de Mooij, 2019).

Finally, the sixth and last dimension, the Restraint *vs* Indulgence dimension, is on many regards similar to the Short Term Orientation *vs* Long Term Orientation dimension, as it mostly deals with the extent to which people appreciate having free time and the way in which they spend it. As it is predictable, there is almost a perfect correspondence between these two dimensions in terms of countries, since restrained cultures tend to be long-term oriented, while indulgent cultures tend to be short-term oriented. Thus, communication style implications which are valid for the Short Term Orientation *vs* Long Term Orientation dimension are substantially valid also for the Restraint *vs* Indulgence one: that is, in indulgent cultures advertising should exploit the desire of consumers to enjoy their free time and live their life here at now, whereas in restrained cultures advertising should play on people's propensity to hard work and thrift (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).



**Figure 2.8 American ad for Coca-Cola: Short Term Orientation societies can be summed up with this slogan: “I want it all, and I want it NOW!”. Life is short and unpredictable: this ad plays exactly on this sentiment. Source: AdNews.**



**Figure 2.9 International ad for Patek Philippe: a Long Term Orientation narrative is prediliged by luxury brands, as they play on the idea of family legacy and premium goods being passed from one generation to the next one. Source: Pinterest.**

## **II.9 Some words on Marieke de Mooij, Hofstede's most valuable collaborator, and a few words of caution on how to properly use the Hofstedian model**

The Dutch researcher Marieke de Mooij has been one of the earliest collaborators of Geert Hofstede and has spent a good deal of her career in monitoring international companies' marketing and advertising campaigns and evaluating, for any given country, whether or not these campaigns actually match the Hofstedian cultural dimensions. As you may have guessed reading the sources for this chapter as they are reported between brackets, the name of de Mooij occurs multiple times. Indeed, out of all the scholars and researchers who have collaborated with Geert Hofstede, Marieke de Mooij has turned out to be one of, if not the most, valuable collaborator of Hofstede: that's why I thought it was right to devote her a few words here and mention her most important works. Marieke de Mooij has focused her efforts on the practical applications of Hofstede's socio-cultural findings, i.e. she has examined and evaluated the actual communication and advertising strategies implemented by the most important companies as they operate on international markets. On this regard, her most important works are *Advertising worldwide: concepts, theories, and practice of international, multinational, and global advertising* and *Global marketing and advertising: understanding cultural paradoxes*, whose first edition goes back to, respectively, 1991 and 1998. After years of monitoring and comparing successful marketing campaigns and failing ones, de Mooij came up with some "tips", i.e. operative suggestions for marketing

strategists trying to boost sales in a country given that country's rankings on Hofstede's dimensions. For example, when dealing simultaneously with a country which scores very high on Individualism and a country which scores very low on that same dimension (that is, a very collectivist country), two strongly different marketing and communication campaigns are advisable, even though the product being promoted is the same: in the individualist one, it would be advisable, for example, an advertisement starring a celebrity praising the benefits that that product is catering to him, or her, by fulfilling his, or her, individual needs; *vice versa*, in a collectivistic one, a good advice would be highlighting the benefits that that same product could bring to the consumer as a part of a broader community and, by extension, to the whole community itself (de Mooij, 2019). Another example could be the difference in implementing an advertising campaign targeted at a masculine country and an advertising campaign targeted at a feminine one: in the case of the masculine one, it would be advisable avoiding any gender-role swapping and respecting the decision-making roles as they are traditionally understood; in a feminine one, a bit more of "fluidity" in assigning roles and tasks would be appreciated (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

These ones provided are just a couple of concrete examples of how countries' rankings on the Hofstede's dimensions can come in handy when taking communication and advertising decisions: there a lot of other examples and study-

cases, of course, since different international companies can act differently, and different countries can react differently.

Reassuring, the Hofstedian model remains one of the most, if not the most, useful tool when trying to outline communication and, especially, advertising campaigns tailored-up to specific countries. As is always the case with tools, the Hofstedian model must not be used dogmatically, but must be used with a grain of salt, and this for two reasons essentially.

The first reason is that each country maintains his cultural and social peculiarities as cultural dimensions often amalgate with each other in unpredictable ways (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). Therefore, even though, for example, two countries score both high on Individualism, it doesn't necessarily mean that they must be treated in the same way because, in practice, each individualist society is individualist in its own way, and this same principle holds true for any other cultural dimension.

The second reason is that a too dogmatic and strict application of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework threatens to "water down" the identity of a brand, in a period when, especially when operating and competing internationally, companies are usually reluctant to lose the identity of their brands (de Mooij, 2019). Taking into account the two reasons abovementioned and their crucial role in influencing the success of international communication campaigns, in the remainder of this master thesis we'll go on analyzing and evaluating the advertisements developed by Scavolini for Italy and other four selected foreign

countries, and we'll try to assess whether or not there is an actual match between the Hofstedian cultural dimensions prevailing in these countries and the advertising campaigns implemented by the Italian company.

## Chapter III

### Five specific countries as seen through Hofstedian lenses

This master thesis consists in analyzing Scavolini's advertising for five different countries (i.e., the domestic market plus four foreign markets), and thus finding whether or not Scavolini's communication style matches the main features of these countries as filtered through the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework. In this chapter, therefore, we'll focus our attention on analyzing these five countries' main socio-cultural characteristics using the Hofstedian model as a parameter. For each cultural dimension, the score can swing between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 100. The five countries we'll go on analyzing are the following: Italy, France, Spain, Greece and United States of America. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, each country will be dutifully described, but here's some few words of introduction to provide a general context: Greece, Spain and the Southern half of Italy each present unique features, but can be pigeonholed in the "Mediterranean societies" box; France and the Northern half of Italy, although different, present more defining Continental vibes, and thus can be pigeonholed in the "Continental Europe societies" category; finally, the United States are, as a result of their peculiar foundation history and the following *melting pot*, probably the most undefinable country in the world, and thus stand out on their own in the cultural panorama.

A last word of caution: for each country being analyzed, the quantitative results of each cultural dimension are based on the law of big numbers and therefore must be

taken with a pinch of common sense, as it goes without saying that human beings are not robots, thus they won't behave mechanically. With that being said, the Hofstedian framework has empirically proved to be a useful device when it comes to make quick decisions: after all, as Hofstede himself used to say, culture, ineffable as this word may be, is the ultimate software of each individual's mind, and affect each individual's behaviours (Hofstede, 1991). At the same time, though, individual behaviours are always, at least to some extent, reflections of the social and cultural scenario in which individuals themselves are immersed: it makes sense, thus, to state that, regardless of how strong our individual will may be, the social and cultural context plays, although sometimes unconsciously, a crucial role in affecting the thoughts and actions of each of us (Hofstede, 1984).

In the remainder of the chapter, I'll go on examining Italy, France, Spain, Greece and U.S.A. on the basis of the score totalized by each of these five countries for each of the six Hofstedian cultural dimensions. The scores totalized by each country, and each country's relative position in the ranking for each specific dimension, are freely available and examinable on Hofstede Insights, the official website inaugurated by Geert Hofstede himself ([www.hofstede-insights.com](http://www.hofstede-insights.com)).

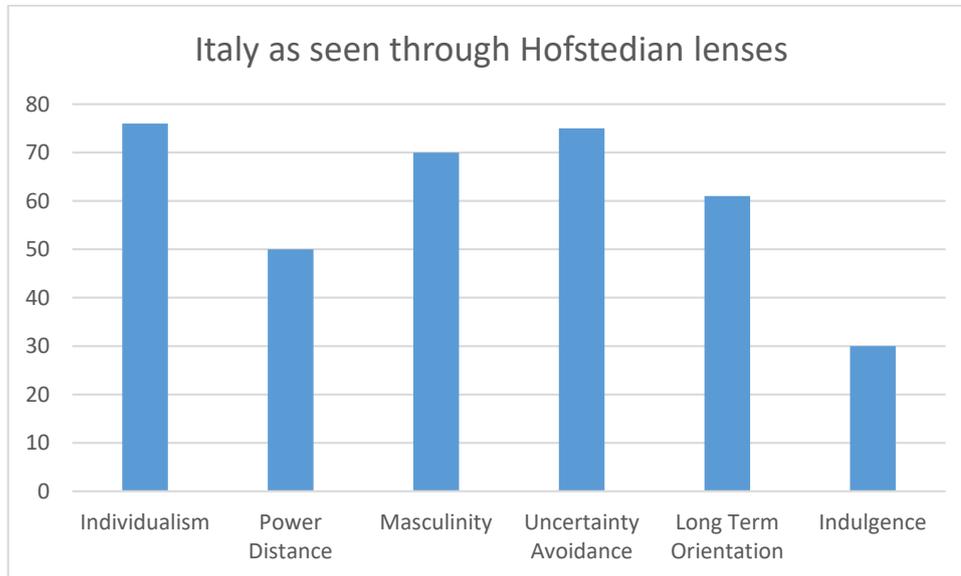
In order to find the scores for each cultural dimension and start doing my work, I first visited this website on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and took notes of all the cultural dimensions' scores for each of the five countries and the relative insights. Then, on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023, I visited the website again and realized, to my great surprise,

that some of the scores had been changed. Indeed, according to the information reported on Hofstede Insights, on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 some scores (namely, those pertaining to the Individualism *vs* Collectivism dimension and the Long Term Orientation *vs* Short Term Orientation dimension) had been updated according to the latest findings made by researchers and scholars. Anyway, I decided to stick with the “old” scores (i.e., the scores preexisting the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 update) for two main reasons: the first reason is that the content of all the academic papers and operative sources that I have read, examined and reviewed pertain to the “old” scores; the second reason is that the Scavolini advertisements that I’m going to examine in the next chapter belong to the company’s advertising campaigns for 2021, 2022 and 2023, years for which the “old” scores are still completely valid.

To sum up: the cultural dimensions’ scores, the associate histograms and all the relative insights that I will use and rely on in the remainder of this chapter and in the remainder of this master thesis are the “old” scores, i.e. the scores predating the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 update.

For the record, these “old” scores are still freely available and examinable, alongside the “new” scores, on Hofstede Insights, Hofstede’s official website.

### III.1 Italy as seen through Hofstedian lenses



**Figure 3.1 Histogram with Italy's score for each of the six cultural dimensions.**

**Source: Hofstede Insights, n.d.**

#### III.1.1 The Individualism vs Collectivism dimension

Before dwelling on Italy's specific cultural features, it's worth spending a few words on this's country main peculiarity: in fact, although not particularly large in terms of geographic dimensions, culturally and socially speaking Italy is a two-faced country as it can be clearly broken down according to a North-South driver. In fact, throughout most of its history, and until a couple of decades ago, the Italian peninsula has sistematically been the land of conquest for a number of foreign nations and empires: the final result of this historical process is that still today, after

more than 150 years since the foundation of Italy as a unified country, Italy presents itself as a fragmented nation, with a number of different dialects and social habits and high and spread level of “parochialism”. As already stated, these cultural differences can be found all over Italy, even between towns and regions which are geographically close to each other. The most striking socio-cultural difference featured by Italy, anyway, was and still is the “rift” between the North and the South of the country (Righi, 2022). In fact, due to the well-known historical events and also due to Italy’s peculiar geographical conformation, the two halves of the country have been constantly subject to two different socio-cultural drivers: Northern Italy has been historically pegged to Continental Europe, whereas Southern Italy has been always linked to the Mediterranean scenario (Savage, 2021).

In the remainder of this chapter we’ll see how these macro-differences between the two halves of the country actually play out when it comes to pinpoint the cultural features of Italy as a whole country.

With a score of 76 on the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension, Italy can be regarded, all in all, as an individualist country (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). It follows that it should be considered as a “me-centered” society, with all that this implies. This data, however, must be taken with a pinch of salt as they reliably reflect only a half of the country. In fact, the high level of Individualism recorded by this country is mostly due to the habits and life-style characterizing the large and rich cities in Northern Italy, which bustle with work and are always “in a hurry”: although huge

and teeming with people, these metropolis make their inhabitants feel like “isolated atoms”, and that’s why people seek refuge in family and friends. The word “friend” itself (*amico*, in Italian), though, reflects this duplicity: in fact, depending on the context, it can mean either a person with which you have a genuine and sincere relationship or an actual, or potential, connection which can help you get ahead in business or politics (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). A high score in Individualism means that, anyway, for Italians in general and for Northern Italians in particular, it’s crucial to cultivate their own ideas and chasing their own goals, regardless of whether these ideas and goals may be detrimental to the community as a whole. In Southern Italy, by the way, behaviours tend be more collectivist and less individualist, partially due to Southern Italy being more rural and less industrialized than its Northern counterpart, and therefore more traditional and family-oriented. The concept of family in Southern Italy goes beyond the conventional boundaries: in fact, it would be better to talk about “expanded family” or “family network”, with rituals such as crowded weddings or Sunday meals being plastic examples of this scenario (Savage, 2021).

### **III.1.2 The High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension**

Italy’s score in the Power Distance dimension is 50, which means that this country ranks in the middle of the two extreme poles (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This is mostly due to the fact that, since its foundation, Italy has always been culturally divided in

two halves: Northern Italy and Southern Italy (Righi, 2022). Historically, Northern Italy has always preferred equality, devolution of power and decentralisation of decision-making: young generations want to decide on their own as they try to emancipate and break free from the boundaries imposed by hierarchy and society. This aversion to be controlled is enhanced by the high level of individualism characterizing the country, especially the Northern half. In Southern Italy, on the other hand, there is an almost holy respect for the hierarchy and the establishment. It follows that Southern Italy features a more static society where old traditions are painstakingly maintained and young generations usually end up continuing their ancestors' work, whether they like it or not: these characteristics are magnified by the fact that Southern Italy stands out as the collectivist half of the country (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

### **III.1.3 The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension**

In the Masculinity/Assertiveness dimension Italy gets a score of 70: this means that the Italian society is highly oriented towards success and achievement and that roles and tasks are strongly defined by gender (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). It follows that success, however achieved, must be exhibited by showing off any sort of *status symbol*, from a sports car to a luxury mansion, from a yacht to a private jet. This showing-off feature is pretty common throughout the whole country, regardless of any North/South distinction (Tavanti, 2012). As far as the gender-base role

assignment, though, things are slowly changing even in Italy. In fact, especially in the North of the country, it's getting more and more accepted for women to undertake traditionally male roles and for men to undertake traditionally female roles. The South of the country, though, more static and driven by traditional values, still lags behind on this regard (Savage, 2021).

### **III.1.4 The Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension**

With a score of 75, Italy ranks very high in the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension: Italians don't feel good in unfamiliar situations as they are afraid of change and tend to reject what comes from abroad (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This *forma mentis* concretely means that, in Italy, bureaucracy is capillary spread in every aspect of society, thus every facet of life is regulated, and complicated, by any sort of quibble and codicil. Everything, especially on the workplace, must be carefully planned and explained: the paradoxical consequence of all this is that Italians rank among the greatest rule-breakers in the world, for otherwise it would be virtually impossible for them to survive in this intricately made scenario of rules and clauses (Tavanti, 2012). This high score in Uncertainty Avoidance, combined with the high score in Masculinity, entails a lot of stress and thus the need for Italians to vent out the tension accumulated during the day: hence, numerous coffee-breaks and the famous tradition of *aperitivo*, i.e. relaxing moments in which Italians can "catch a breath" after a day of work (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

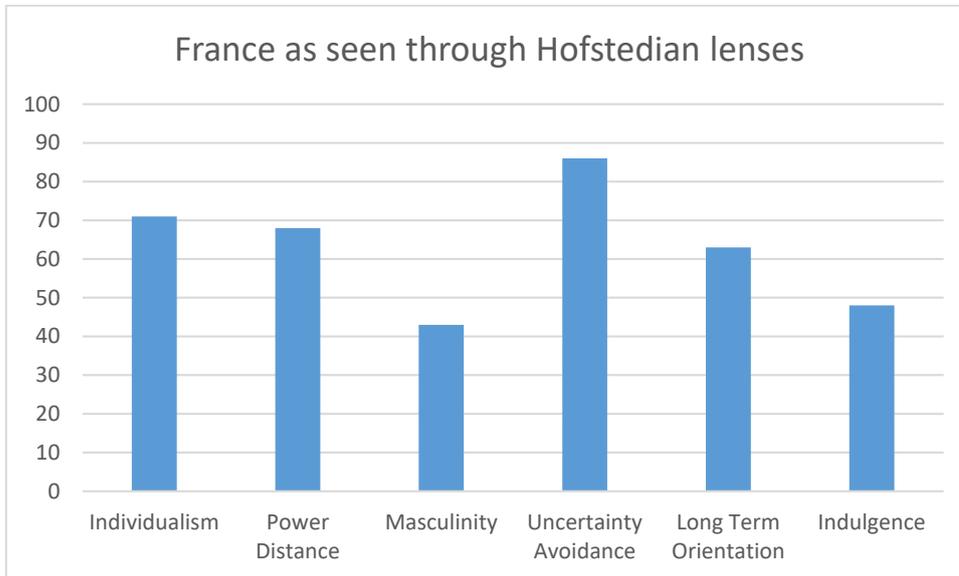
### **III.1.5 The Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation dimension**

Italy achieves a score of 61 on the Long Term Orientation dimension: this means that the Italian culture is a very pragmatic one. Italians may be a bit slow in embracing changes and innovations, but when they finally decide to do so, they quickly adjust their habits to the new trends and exploit them for individual reasons. Also, a high score in this dimension means that Italians are inclined to thrift and careful spending (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

### **III.1.6 The Restraint vs Indulgence dimension**

Coherently with the score recorded in the Long Term Orientation dimension, Italy, with a score of 30 in the Indulgence vs Restraint cultural dimension, ranks as a restrained society: in fact, Italians tend to curb the gratification of their wishes and, contrarily to what stereotypes may suggest, don't put much emphasis on leisure time. Yet it must be acknowledged that, when Italians do indulge themselves, they tend to do so in a flamboyant way, hence the stereotypes (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

### III.2 France as seen through the Hofstedian lenses



**Figure 3.2 Histogram with France’s score for each of the six cultural dimensions. Source: Hofstede Insights, n.d.**

#### III.2.1 The Individualism vs Collectivism dimension

France, with a score of 71, ranks as an individualist country: this fact, combined with a high score on the Power Distance dimension, entails that French people, although showing formal obedience towards those sitting at the top of the hierarchical ladder and sometimes even emotionally dependent on them, act in an individualist way when they find themselves among their peers (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This combination of high score in both Power Distance and Individualism is a contradictory case, and indeed almost an *unicum*: France ranks among the very

few country featuring such a beleaguering scenario. This rare dimensional mix operatively entails an almost paradoxical situation where, on the one hand, French people pay formal respect towards the elderly and the superiors and show them formal obedience, both within the family environment and in the workplace, while, on the other hand, they genuinely think they are smarter and more capable and thus, sometimes, end up disattending the orders they have formally promised to fulfill (Trippitelli, 2019). In other words, French people would like to reverse the hierarchy but are virtually prevented from doing so in the more “conventional” ways due to this deeply-felt deference towards the establishment itself. Since they can’t overturn the establishment through peaceful ways, French people resort to ground-breaking solutions: historically, France has always been the land of revolts and revolutions, and still today ranks among the countries with the largest number of strikes and protest rallies (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). While French people show this ambiguous deference towards their fellow countrymen who hold an higher hierarchical position, the same can’t be said when it comes to foreigners, especially tourists: in the Anglo-Saxon world the customer is always right, regardless of what he says or does, whereas French people don’t accept any lack of respect, thus customers must always show deference towards their hosts (e.g., foreign tourists are expected to speak French rather than English, or at least try to do so).

### **III.2.2 The High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension**

With a score of 71, France ranks pretty high on Power Distance dimension: French people tolerate the fact that power is unevenly allocated within society. This means that, since an early age, children are taught to be emotionally dependent on their parents. As they grow up, this emotional dependency shifts first towards their teachers and professors, and then towards their superiors (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Power, both economic and political, is strongly centralized, with the city of Paris representing, both literally and metaphorically, the power-hub of France. High Power Distance is also exemplified by the fact that French companies tend to be very hierarchically articulated, way more so than other comparable companies based in other parts of Europe: a large number of layers separates rank-and-file employees from their top managers (Browaeys & Price, 2011). Further examples of high Power Distance are the wide use of formal prefixes such as *Madame* and *Monsieur* and the fact that the backbone of the French education system still consists of *grandes écoles* (literally, “big schools”), i.e. prestigious higher-education institutions, originally founded by Napoleon Bonaparte, which every year churn out the future top-players of the French economic and political establishment (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

### **III.2.3 The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension**

France achieves a score of 43 in the Masculinity vs Femininity dimension, i.e. France ranks among the most feminine countries in Europe (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). These are some concrete examples of this mindset: the well-functioning welfare system, the 5 weeks of paid vacation per year, the 35-hour working week (Nadal, 2005). The French society, though, is way more complex than that, as it can be broken down according to a class perspective: in fact, the upper class features very Feminine traits and the lower class features very Masculine traits, with the middle class ranking something in between. This entails that, for example, cheating on one's wife, or husband, tends to be treated differently whether it happens among lower-class couples or upper-class couples: those belonging to the working class tend to harshly stigmatize marriage infidelity and any other sort of "deviation" from the norm, whereas those belonging to the *élite* class tend to treat these things more "lightly" (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). An example of this different approach can be epitomized by former President François Hollande's extra-marital *affair*: in a more masculine environment this *affair* would have been treated as a big-time scandal and would have likely caused the fall of the government, whereas in France this *affair*, although dutifully covered by gossip magazines, has been regarded as little more than a venial sin and handled accordingly, with François Hollande receiving no more than a "slap on the wrist" treatment.

### **III.2.4 The Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension**

All in all, French people don't like surprises: this *forma mentis* is dutifully mirrored in the score of 86 achieved by France in the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension. It follows that everything must be devotedly shown and explained, with details exhaustively being taken care of before meetings and bargainings actually start (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Knowing that, it may sound a bit contradictory the fact that France, as a country, has always been at the forefront of the technological innovation: as a matter of fact, French people have been trailblazers in sophisticated technologies such as nuclear power plants and high-speed trains, and French-designed products get systematically regarded among the most effective in the world. This can be partially explained by the long hours of painstaking planning preceding the actual implementation of projects, but high levels of Individualism and Power Distance also play their part (Browaeys & Price, 2011). In fact, uncertainty-avoiding as they may be, French people feel the need to always be the best in what they do and appease their superiors, and this operatively translates into realizing pharaonic tasks, as it can also be easily argued from the typical French sentiment of *grandeur*. Just like other High Power Distance cultures, France features a lot of rules and laws, and, just like other highly-regulated countries, it also features a lot of law-breakers, as people have eventually realized which rules are actually important and which are redundant (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

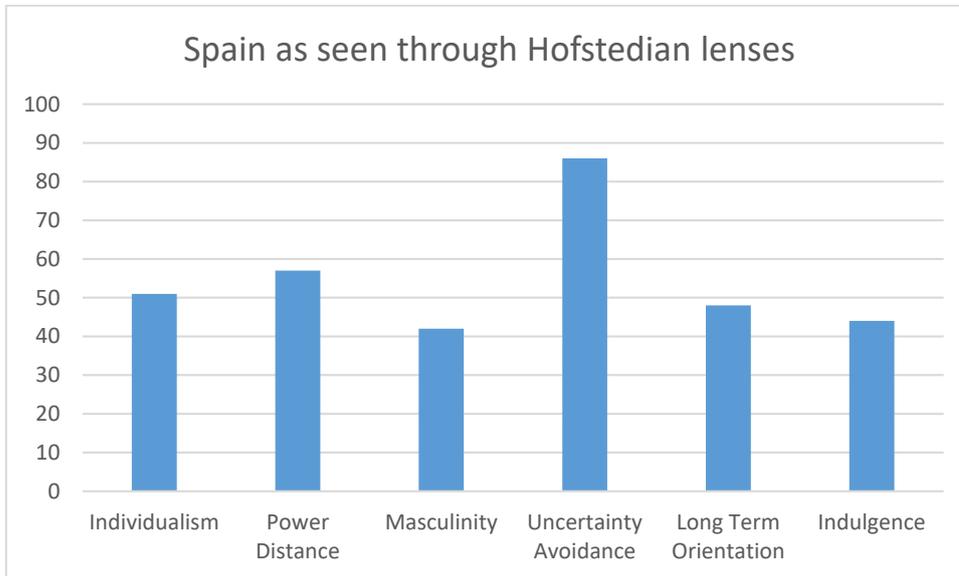
### **III.2.5 The Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation dimension**

As well as most Continental European countries, France, with a score of 63, is a Long Term Orientation country: this means that French people, just like Italians, tend to be very pragmatic. Although deeply linked to their traditions and their past, French people turn out to be very quick to adjust their habits and embrace new ones when they deemed it to be necessary. Along with this capacity for adaptation comes French propensity for money-saving and thus investment (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). The high score achieved on Long Term Orientation, combined with the results achieved on the other abovementioned dimensions, sparks off some unconventional situations which makes France a sort of *unicum*, culturally speaking.

### **III.2.6 The Restraint vs Indulgence dimension**

The score achieved by France in the Restraint vs Indulgence dimension is 48. This mid-of-the-road score reflects the uniqueness of French society. This means that this country can be ranked neither as a restrained society nor as an indulgent one (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This a further example of the peculiar features of France and the impossibility of pinning down this country in clear-cut socio-cultural pigeonholes.

### III.3 Spain as seen through Hofstedian lenses



**Figure 3.3 Histogram with Spain's score for each of the six cultural dimensions. Source: Hofstede Insights, n.d.**

#### III.3.1 The Individualism vs Collectivism dimension

With a score of 51 in the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension, Spain ranks among the less individualist societies in Europe, although very much so if compared with other parts of the world such as Asia and Africa (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Anyway, Spaniards' relatively collectivist mindset sits very well with the high score achieved in the Power Distance dimension: this approach, once again the legacy of a culture mostly oriented towards traditional values, has resulted in foreigners perceiving the Spanish society as a very relaxed one and Spaniards as very easy-

going people. The most evident consequence of this is that, whereas most Europeans tend to be judged as rude and disrespectful by non-European cultures, Spaniards usually represent an exception: due to their “us-mentality” and the knack for sharing typical of collectivist societies, Spaniards immediately convey the idea of easy-going people with whom it is very easy for foreigners to relate (Kooyers, 2015). Teamwork comes naturally to Spaniards without any need for managers to envisage any team-building or motivational scheme: a collectivist *forma mentis* means that employees are willing to collaborate in pursuing their team-goal, by helping each other and if necessary even sharing the workload of a struggling colleague.

### **III.3.2 The High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension**

Spain is a country ranking high in the Power Distance dimension: in fact, its score in this dimension is 57, reflecting a society in which everybody knows his place and respects the hierarchy (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). The very last decades of Spain’s history can be very useful in understanding the main trends in cultural dimensions’ scores achieved by this country, and the Power Distance dimension specifically provides a plastic example of the cultural tendency which has been going on in Spain for quite some time. When the authoritarian and conservative regime of Francisco Franco came to an end in 1975, Spain, now once again a democratic society, experienced a sort of post-dictatorship euphoria, characterized

by a general loosening of the previously straight-laced way of life: during this transition period, the youth and the poor, fed up with the static and claustrophobic atmosphere in which the country had lived up to that point and looking for a more just and equal society, began to challenge the hierarchy and the establishment. These social and political protests eventually brought their fruits, the most evident of which was the Socialist Party winning the national elections in the early 80's (Phelan, 2020). After a couple of decades, though, once the post-Franco thrill ran out, Spain started witnessing a sort of reflux, a gradual flowing back which continues even today: in other words, Spain has been experiencing a progressive return to more conservative views: this does make sense, in a certain way, as this country, just like many other Mediterranean societies, has historically been inclined towards more traditional values (Santana et al, 2021). Spain achieving a high score in Power Distance dimension is a further example of this state of affairs: after the restless years of the post-Franco transition, nowadays most Spaniards don't challenge the authority and tend to accept inequality in power allocation as a physiological component of society. In the workplace, employees want to be ordered what to do and believe that the best leader can only be an "enlightened despot".

### **III.3.3 The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension**

Coherently with the score achieved on the Individualism vs Collectivism cultural dimension, Spain, with a score of 42, can be regarded as the most feminine society among the Mediterranean ones and one of the most feminine across the whole European spectrum, trailing behind only the unrivaled Scandinavian societies (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Spain ranking as a feminine society can sound surprising: after all, Mediterranean cultures, famous for being very strict and oriented towards old-fashioned values, tend to be very straightforward in assigning roles and tasks on a traditional gender-role basis. Spain makes an exception on this regard as it stands out as a more “fluid” and flexible society: this country’s exceptional situation is partly due to the high level of Collectivism permeating the whole society which results in an at least apparently more laid-back approach, and partly due to the aftermaths of the post-dictatorship thrill which, although dried up, keeps affecting some aspects of the Spanish culture (Dickson, 2019). All this consideration entails that the word “consensus” is one of the pillars of Spain as a society: neither polarization nor radicalism are seen under a positive light, and competition, although regarded as instrumental to economic and political success, rarely achieves extreme levels. The weak and the needy are not left behind and usually receive the required help. The participation of all minorities is warmly welcomed, especially in politics: a concrete example of this approach is the fact that Spain, as a country, features one official language and four co-official languages and is

administratively subdivided in 17 *comunidades autonomas* (autonomous communities), each of them sporting its own idiom and flag, enjoying substantial political self-determination and participating in the policy-making life of the whole country by sending its own representatives to the *Cortes Generales* (the central Parliament) in Madrid (Cook & Wilson, 2023). To sum up: in Spain, the “winner takes it all” concept is turned upside down since (almost) everybody gets to enjoy their share of the cake.

#### **III.3.4 The Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension**

Uncertainty Avoidance is probably Spain’s trademark cultural dimension: in fact, with a score of 86 on this dimension, this country ranks among the most uncertainty-avoiding cultures in the world, outranked only by Greece and a couple of other countries (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). On this regard, by the way, Spain proves to be a full-fledged Mediterranean country: life in general, and unfamiliar situations in particular, are regarded more as a begetter of potential threatens than as a source of beneficial opportunities. A tangible example of this mindset has been provided by a survey recently administered in Spain and the United States of America, among other countries: according to this survey, 75% of Spanish youth would like to work in the civil service (that is, a permanent job shielded from any apprehension about the future) while only 17% of U.S. youth would like it (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). A case like this plastically illustrates the reality of a country which, like most of its

Mediterranean counterparts, in its effort to prevent any possible deviation from the norm into unchartered territories has become heavily burdened with tons of rules and codicils, with the paradoxical effect, once again, to *de facto* push its citizens to break the laws whenever they deem it necessary to pull through amidst the bureaucratic labyrinth of regulations and procedures.

### **III.3.5 The Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation dimension**

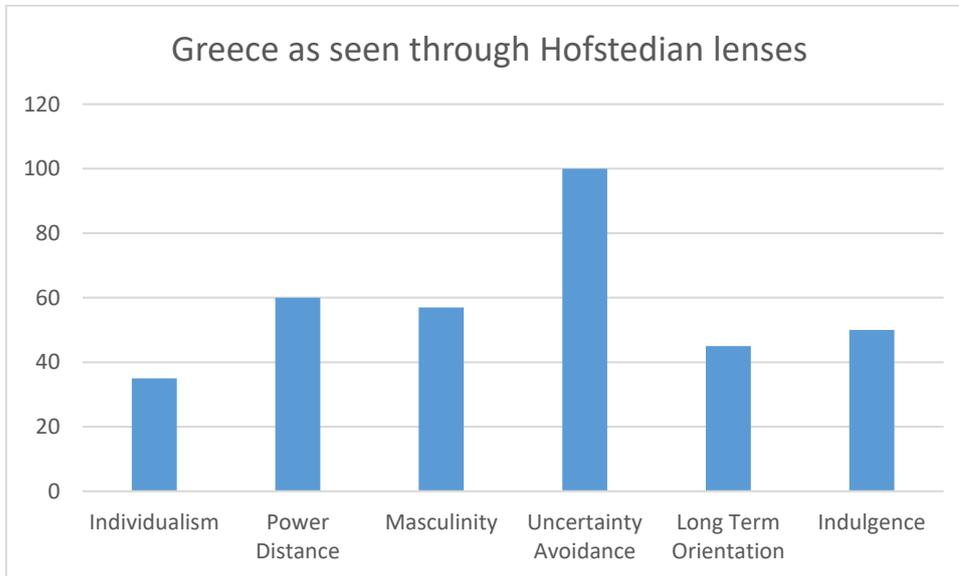
Despite scoring 48 (that is, a mid-of-the-road score) on the Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation dimension, Spain actually tilts towards a more Short Term Orientation approach to life (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). After all, this country has made words such as *movida* and *fiesta* known across the world; also, the famous Spanish tradition of *siesta* (i.e., the post-lunch power nap) reflects the features of a country which loves to “take its time” and enjoys every second of leisure time available (Williams, 2018). Spaniards love to live “here and now”, savouring every moment and leaving aside any possible worry about the time to come. Spain’s short-term oriented approach may seem at odds with its being one the most uncertainty-avoiding countries in the world but it’s at least partially explainable if we take into account Spain’s recent history: after the years of strait-laced and almost “puritanical” standandards of sobriety imposed by the regime of Francisco Franco, Spanish people felt the urge to live their lives to the full. Although Franco’s regime has been over for almost 50 years now and in spite of the recent economic and

political crisis, this *joie de vivre* still persists as one of Spain's most famous features (Dickson, 2019).

### **III.3.6 The Restraint vs Indulgence dimension**

Finally, Spain achieves a score of 44 on the Restraint vs Indulgence dimension, i.e. an halfway score slightly tipping towards a restrained society rather than an indulgent one (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This modest inclination makes sense when considering the great picture in which Spain is immersed. After all, even considering its peculiarities (i.e., Spain being short-term oriented and feminine), we must never forget that Spain is a mostly tradition-oriented Mediterranean country which has achieved real economic prosperity only in relatively recent years.

### III.4 Greece as seen through Hofstedian lenses



**Figure 3.4 Histogram with Greece’s score for each of the six cultural dimensions. Source: Hofstede Insights, n.d.**

#### III.4.1 The Individualism vs Collectivism dimension

Greece scores 35 on the Individualism vs Collectivism dimension, which goes to show that Greece is still today a very collectivist country, indeed the most collectivist country in Europe (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Therefore, Greece ranks as a “us-centered” society: family and social groups play a crucial role in shaping the character, and the future, of each individual. Family is to be meant in the largest possible sense of the definition, as it includes not only the close relatives but also uncles, aunts, cousins and sometimes even friends and neighbours. In a scenario

like this, the sense of social belonging is very strong: for any given community, whether it is the family or the circle of friends or the workplace, members are expected to help and protect each other in the name of the greater good of the group, regardless of any possible individual damage (Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2002). This “sentimental bond” of common honour and mutual duty shared by people belonging to the same group is a pillar of the Greek society and is known in the modern Greek language as *filotimò*, a word for which there’s no exact equivalent in the English language. Such mindset has its pros and cons, of course: on the one hand, it entails genuine outbursts of collective enthusiasm which result into large wedding banquets, crowded Sunday family lunches and, more generally, a strong bond of mutual loyalty among all the parties involved; on the other hand, though, this mindset might possibly entail leaving aside any meritocratic standard and being inclined to prefer members of one’s own group over “outsiders” (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Although these behaviours tend to be regarded as substantially “normal” by collectivist societies, sometimes they assume actual law-breaking connotations and are discarded by individualist societies as blatant examples of nepotism. Taking into account all that has been said so far, it’s no wonder that, in order to run a successful business in Greece, it’s very important to weave a strong network of relationships and treat all the people involved as “family”.

### **III.4.2 The High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimension**

With a score of 60 on the Power Distance cultural dimension, Greece ranks as a moderately high Power Distance society: hierarchy is to be respected, inequalities among citizens are tolerated and the elderly and the superiors are entitled to have always the last word on any subject (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Considering the Greek context, this *forma mentis* makes sense: after all, we are talking of a Mediterranean culture, probably the Mediterranean culture *par excellence*, which lived in poor economic conditions, by European standards, at least until the end of the Second World War. In fact, similarly to what happened in Spain, Greece has started sustaining a robust economic development only by the late 70's-early 80's of the XX century; also, this country has historically been oriented towards traditional values and features a very specific version of Christianity, the Greek Orthodox Christianity, which has always boosted conservative opinions and played a major role in contributing to maintaining the *status quo* (Sakellariou, 2019). It is therefore important to show respect towards those sitting on top of the hierarchical pyramid. This strongly stratified approach to life is all the more understandable if we consider that the Greeks tend to expand, at least to a certain extent, this hierarchical vision of society to the entire world: in fact, it must be noted that virtually every Greek thinks that every Western culture owes a debt of gratitude with the Greek antique civilization (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Bearing this in mind, it's fair to say that,

metaphorically speaking, the Greeks tend to see themselves sitting at the top of the Western world's cultural pyramid.

### **III.4.3 The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension**

With a score of 57, Greece ranks as a moderately masculine society (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Once again, this makes sense considering the fact that Greece can be regarded as the epitome of the Mediterranean countries, where even nowadays many aspects of society are heavily affected by traditional values and the local church, the Greek Orthodox Church, plays a major role as opinion-maker. Therefore, in this country there is a clear-cut distinction between roles and tasks which are supposed to be undertaken by men and those which are supposed to be undertaken by women, and the Greek society as a whole tends to be oriented towards success and achievement (Bouronikos, 2022). This is even more true in a collectivist environment, in which the effects of individual triumphs, as well as failures, reverberate onto all the members of one's own social group. Taking into account this mix of features, it's logical that, according to the Greek mindset, it's important not only to achieve success, but also to show off the tangible results of this success. Aristoteles Onassis and Stauros Niarchos, two Greek entrepreneurs ranked among the biggest business magnates of the XX century, can be regarded as a strong example of this mental attitude: after achieving terrific business success in

their respective fields, they both enjoyed a lavish life style and never shied away from flaunting their immense wealth (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

#### **III.4.4 The Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension**

Uncertainty Avoidance is Greece's defining cultural dimension: in fact, with a score of 100, this country ranks as the most uncertainty-avoiding country in the world (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). As explained above, this *forma mentis* is partly due to Greece's cultural features, historical legacies and political vicissitudes (Papalexandris et al, 2002), and partly due to the recent economic and political troubles and the huge financial crisis experienced by the country (Jordan, 2017). The final outcome of this process is that the Greeks hate unfamiliar situations, plain and simple. In order to avoid switching on the panic alarm button inside the Greeks' head, everything needs to be painstakingly shown and explained since every novelty is more likely to hide a mortal threat than deliver a beneficial effect (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). It follows that the Greeks, just like the Spaniards, would love to land a job with the civil service. This approach to life can be easily summed up by the Greek myth of the sword of Damocles, hanging by a single hair of a horse's tail over the heads of everybody. To address such a cautious environment, life must be carefully regulated and supervised, hence the tons of laws, rules and codicils, most of which are systematically violated by the average Greek citizen, otherwise life would be impossible to be lived. In Greece, just like

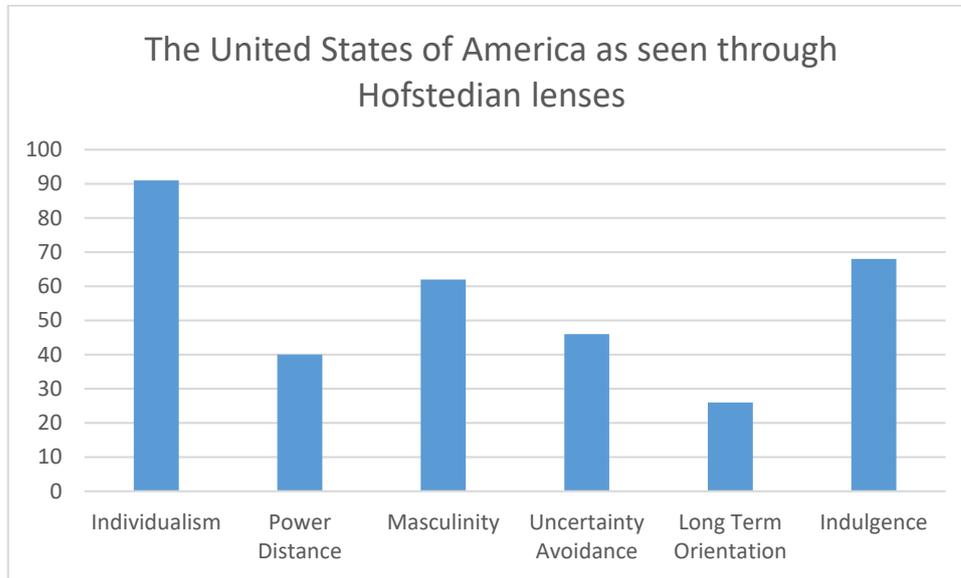
every other high uncertainty-avoiding country, bureaucracy is king: this fact, if on one side contributes to making life more “safe-guarded”, on the other makes existence quite “claustrophobic” and complicated. That’s why, from time to time, Greeks feel the urge to vent out this built-up compression through occasional passionate outbreaks filled with relax and cheerfulness, such as huge meals or dancing events, for which they have become famous across the world.

#### **III.4.5 The Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation and the Restraint vs Indulgence dimensions**

Finally, Greece scores 45 and 50 on Short Term Orientation vs Long Term Orientation dimension and Restraint vs Indulgence dimension, respectively: in each of these dimensions, thus, this country achieves an intermediate score, which makes sense considering how heavily correlated these two dimensions are (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). A mid-of-the-road score in both these cases reflects the situation of a country which shows no particular preference in either dimension: this assessment actually reflects the current political and economic reality of Greece, which is a bit confused. In fact, initially Greece used to be a poor country, then, by the late 70’-early 80’s of the XX century, it started experiencing an economic development culminating with joining the European Union, only to be severely disrupted, both economically and politically, by the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermaths, which has almost doomed Greece back to its meager beginnings. This rollercoaster of

emotions has obviously affected the mindset of the Greek people, especially their hopes and vision of the future: caught up in this sort of eternal transition loop, it's fair to say that the Greeks feel a bit confused themselves about their own country's situation and can't take a clear stand (Jordan, 2017).

### III.5 The United States of America as seen through Hofstedian lenses



**Figure 3.5 Histogram with the United States of America’s score for each of the six cultural dimensions. Source: Hofstede Insights, n.d.**

#### III.5.1 The Individualism vs Collectivism and the High Power Distance vs Low Power Distance dimensions

With a score of 40, the U.S.A. ranks among the lowest Power Distance cultures in the world (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This feature is consistent with the very idea at the roots of the American identity: the United States of America were founded as a “safe heaven” for all those seeking refuge from any kind of aristocracy or dispotism. The concept of “liberty and justice for all” is more than just a mere slogan: it’s the genuin belief, nestled in every American heart, that the U.S.A. are the only country

that provides all its citizens, regardless of their *status* or bank accounts, with equal treatment in terms of both rights and obligations. This peculiar situation can be summarized with the concept historically known as “American exceptionalism” (Walt, 2011). To better understand the implications of the U.S.A. scoring low on the Power Distance dimension, this data must be read in conjunction with the fact that the U.S.A., with a score of 90, rank among the most individualist countries on Earth (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This “explosive” combination accounts for some cultural aspects which, although not exclusively belonging to the U.S.A., are extremely evident in the American society. The first obvious aspect is the Americans’ unshakable belief in meritocracy, i.e. the idea that everybody can “make it” in life as long as he, or she, puts in the necessary effort and hard work. In other words, Americans do believe that success is at everybody’s reach: all you have to do is find your talent and exploit it for good, keeping your nose clean in the process. As Americans love to say, wasting one’s talent is the most un-American thing one can do (Fuhrer, 2023). The second obvious aspect of this combination is the fact that equal rights are emphasized in every facet of society, with the family and the workplace making no exception (Law, 2020). This mix of conditions produces a particular scenario, peculiarly American, where relationships within social communities are simultaneously tight-knit and loose: in fact, whether it’s the family or the company you work for, although in most cases hierarchy is very well structured and roles are clearly defined, inter-personal relationships tend to be very

informal (Fischer, 2008). On the one hand, high Individualism entails that subordinates and employees have great respect and devotion towards those who “have made it” and now sit on the top of the hierarchy; on the other hand, Low Power Distance means that, when making decisions, all the parties concerned demand to be involved, thus orders coming from the top are expected to be challenged by those sitting at the bottom and information is supposed to be spread across the whole chain. In such a culture, it’s quite normal for managers and CEOs to seek advice from their subordinates, and it’s quite normal for subordinates to provide such advice, even when not explicitly requested (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). It follows that the American culture stands out for its terrific pragmatism, and Americans are renowned worldwide for their direct and hands-on approach, which in some cases may be disinterpreted as blunt, rude and sometimes even brutal. Even if the frontier’s days are past gone by now, the frontier’s spirit still persists in the hearts and minds of the American people: this robust mix of Low Power Distance and high level of Individualism implies that people are expected to show initiative and be self-reliant, trying to solve problems on their own instead of waiting for help from the outside. This peculiar mindset has popularly come to be known as Americans’ “rugged individualism” (Walt, 2011). By the way, the frontier’s spirit is still present in Americans’ high propensity for geographical mobility: whether it’s driven by business or merely by the desire to change one’s life, this mobility is a peculiar feature of the American society and it’s even more understandable as

many big American companies are spread across the whole country (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). To sum up, this American typical approach to life, affected by the way in which the country itself was founded and has grown throughout the centuries, has instilled in the minds of Americans the idea that nothing is impossible and has constantly pushed men and women to be “the heroes of their own lives” (Fuhrer, 2023).

### **III.5.2 The Masculinity vs Femininity dimension**

With a score of 62 on the Masculinity vs Femininity dimension, the United States of America rank as a masculine society (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). In such a society, the winners are celebrated, while the losers are discarded. In any context, competition is positively accepted as the main driver of success. By the way, this masculine trait is boosted by the high levels of Individualism: this cultural mix entails that American people, even when operating within collective contexts, tend to display their masculine inclination individually. As a result of this combination, showing off is not frowned upon in the U.S.A.; quite the contrary, openly displaying one’s achievements and the *status symbol* (a new car, a big mansion, etc...) that achievement has granted you to afford is regarded as a natural part of the American experience. After all, the whole concept of the American Dream is built around this focus: if you work hard and keep your nose clean, you’ll make it. And once you have made it, you are almost “morally obliged” to show the results of your efforts

(Walt, 2011). That's exactly why the "celebrity culture" is so strong in the U.S.A. and celebrities are so abundantly exploited in advertising: by definition, celebrities are people who "have made it" in their respective fields, therefore are entitled to provide reliable advice and can act as "inspirational models" (Fitzgerald, 2008). As far as gender-base role assigning, the U.S.A. behaves in a peculiar way. Once again, we must never forget that we are talking of a country the dimension of a continent: on the one hand, the big cities on both the Eastern and the Western coast tend to be more progressive and feature a more liberal approach to life, which calls for a more "fluid" and innovative communication style; on the other hand, the heartland of the U.S.A., especially the Deep South and the so-called Bible Belt, tends to be more conservative and more anchored to the "good values of the past", which call for a more old-fashioned and tradition-oriented communication style (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

### **III.5.3 The Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension**

With a score of 46, the U.S.A. reach a mid-of-the-road position in the Uncertainty Avoidance vs Risk Propensity dimension (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). With that being said, though, empirical investigation and day-by-day experience show that, all in all, Americans are more inclined towards risk-taking than risk-avoiding. In fact, an intermediate score of 46 in this dimension is somehow at odds with the scores achieved in the aforementioned cultural dimensions (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). The

sad truth is that, at least until the early 60's of the XX century, the U.S.A. used to be the land of opportunities *par excellence*, probably one of the most, if not the most, Risk Propensity society in the world, partly due to the apparently endless economic opportunities provided by the country and partly due to the very peculiar way in which the country had been founded and was promoted across the world: just think about all the optimistic message about the American Dream and the slogan boasting “*There’s no way like the American Way!*” (Walt, 2011; Fuhrer, 2023). Then, since the early 60's, all these certitudes started crumbling down: first the assassination of President Kennedy, then the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal precipitated the country in a sort of uncertainty spiral which translated into a shift of American society towards a more prudent vision of existence. The 9/11 attacks have probably represented the ultimate strike at what was left of the American unshakable faith in itself, causing the society to furtherly evolve in a more risk-avoiding mindset (Lempinen, 2021). With that being said, though, the U.S.A. still remain one of the less bureaucratic countries in the world, especially business-wise: new technologies and ideas are always dearly embraced, and economic and political freedoms still remain some of the pillars of the American society as a whole (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

#### **III.5.4 The Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation dimension**

With a score of just 26, the U.S.A. rank among the shortest-term oriented countries in the world: considering this cultural feature with the ones already discussed above, we can conclude that, in a nutshell, “Americans want everything and want it now” (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

In fact, as a society, the U.S.A. are very interested in the final result of processes, as they can hardly suffer the waiting. This, of course, is the flipside of a country so heavily oriented towards achieving and success: this short-term oriented mindset entails that most Americans are very practical and have very clear-cut opinions about what is good and what is bad (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). From a business standpoint, this short-term oriented mentality means that long-term planning can turn out to be quite complicated as performances are measured on a short-term basis, with CEOs being required to churn out quick profits and employees being often pit against each other in a sort of internal competition aimed at delivering results in the shortest time (Browaeys & Price, 2011).

#### **III.5.5 The Restraint vs Indulgence dimension**

Finally, with a score of 68, the U.S.A. ranks as a pretty indulgent society: this final feature is mostly consistent with the overall cultural context explained before, especially with the short-term oriented approach described above (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Still, considering that this country has long embarked in a costly,

and so far fruitless, war on drugs, and can be classified, under many regards, as a prudish, sometimes even bigot, society (this one is a legacy of its Puritanic roots), it may sound somehow paradoxical the fact that the United States rank as quite an indulgent country. In order to explain this oxymoron of sorts, the American people, practical as usual, have come up with a “slogan” which somehow manages to sum up in a few words the inimitable American way of life. This slogan goes like this: *work hard, play hard* (Haines, 2023).



## **Chapter IV**

### **Scavolini's international advertisements examined through the Hofstedian lenses**

This chapter will be the most “operative” of this master thesis. In fact, in this chapter, I'll go on examining Scavolini's advertisements (from now on, advertisements will be simply called “ads” for the sake of space) through the filters of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework.

#### **IV.1 Scavolini's two foremost conceptual communication drivers**

Before starting, some words of introduction are necessary to provide the necessary context. First of all, as far as the pivotal message that Scavolini wants to deliver through its communication strategy, and most specifically through its advertising campaigns, there is a crucial distinction to be made between Scavolini's domestic market (i.e., the Italian market, which still remains the company's core market) and the foreign markets. In fact, at least formally, Scavolini's communication is inspired by two different conceptual drivers: one specific for Italy and one specific for the rest of the world.

When Scavolini operates on the Italian market, the central message the company wants to convey is structured around the idea of Scavolini as “*la cucina più amata dagli Italiani*” (“Italians' most beloved kitchen”), which indeed has been the

company's historic slogan for decades: as it is perceivable, this slogan is mostly built around the idea of creating and cultivating an affective bond between Scavolini and its Italian customer base, playing on the concept of sentimental fondness and legacy. Recently, by the way, the iconic slogan *La cucina più amata dagli Italiani* has been flanked by a new slogan which reads like this: "*Siamo diventati casa insieme*" ("We have become home together"). This new slogan has become necessary since, in 2012, Scavolini, embracing the so-called "home total look" concept, has decided to widen its range of offerings from just the kitchen to the whole house. As you can easily guess, this new slogan has been coined along the same lines as the historic one as it capitalizes on the sentimental heritage of shared experiences linking Scavolini with its Italian customers. *Vice versa*, when operating on foreign markets, the conceptual driver of Scavolini communication is based on delivering the idea of the "*Italian Sense of Beauty*". This message is pretty standard for Scavolini's advertising campaigns on foreign markets because the company's international communication strategy is virtually univocal: this "univocality" of message makes so that all the international ads developed by Scavolini tend to look like one another, no matter the specific national foreign market for which they have been created. In other words, Scavolini is adamant about pursuing its distinctive international communication style regardless of the specific national foreign markets. As already said, this international style is built around the idea of the Italian Sense of Beauty: as it's easy to guess, this message

highlights the concept of *beauty*, specifically intended as sober elegance and quiet luxury. On this regard, also, considering the fact that, on international markets, Italian brands are usually associated with style and sophistication, being able to boast its Italian identity is, from the viewpoint of Scavolini, a further factor acting as a “fashion booster”.

It’s also worth noticing that, on the domestic market, Scavolini is marketed as a mid-end brand, whereas, on foreign markets, Scavolini is marketed as a high-end brand.

Scavolini’s communication drivers are coherent with this difference in market segments’ collocation: in fact, as we have just seen in the case of the slogans, the company’s distinctive message for the Italian market essentially relies on the “sentimental” and long-time bond between Scavolini and its Italian customer base, whereas Scavolini’s distinctive message for the foreign markets, instead, tends to privilege the elegance of the design, the preciousness of the materials, the exclusivity of the brand and, all in all, the Italian identity of the company, because being an Italian firm is a premium quality booster of its own. Therefore, Scavolini’s communication strategy can be summed up as essentially built around these two different drivers: that is, one distinctive message for the domestic market and one distinctive message for the foreign markets.

In other words, the company has deliberately chosen to strongly standardise its international communication strategy, regardless of the peculiar features of specific

foreign markets, the concept of the Italian Sense of Beauty being the only communication driver when operating abroad. In such a scenario, the margin for country-based socio-cultural adjustments is necessarily limited, although still present. Since the goal of this master thesis is to look at these ads through Hofstedian filters and assess, for each given country, whether or not these ads are a good fit, in the remainder of this chapter I'll describe and analyze Scavolini's ads through Hofstedian lenses. To get a more panoramic idea of how Scavolini's ads concretely "operate" on both the domestic market and the foreign ones, the company provided me with the ads produced and published on magazines and newspapers in the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 for Italy and four foreign countries: France, Spain, Greece and United States of America. Out of all the ads provided to me by Scavolini, I chose to describe and analyze those ads that I judged more interesting and tale-telling in Hofstedian terms, for a grand total of 22 ads (5 ads apiece for Italy, France and U.S.A., 4 ads for Spain and 3 ads for Greece). For each of the 5 national markets, the ad described first is the one which, in my opinion, is the fittest for that national market as far as Hofstedian values are concerned. So much for the premise. Now I'll put on a pair of "Hofstedian spectacles" and proceed examining these ads: my examination won't just consist in describing and analyzing the ads through the filters of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework as I will also provide some advice and original insights. All the ads featured in this chapter have been gently provided by Scavolini.

## **IV.2 Hofstedian description, insights and suggestions for the ads developed by Scavolini for the Italian market**

Scavolini has been operating in the Italian market since its foundation in 1961: since the start, the company has been able to count on a wide network of sales points spread across the whole Italian territory and run by authorized retailers. With the beginning of the XXI century, Scavolini has decided to step up its distribution network game by inaugurating the Scavolini Stores, i.e. single-brand stores directly run by highly qualified Scavolini personnel and painstakingly designed to provide an elegant and immersive shopping experience. Strategically placed in carefully chosen points across the Italian territory, Scavolini Stores provide their customers with an exclusive and wide range of kitchen and living solutions (the so-called “home total look” concept) and act as a strong booster for brand identity. As of 2023, Scavolini boasts more than 140 single-brand stores deployed across the whole country, as well as an historically robust and capillary distribution network consisting of sales points run by local dealers (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

10 SCAVOLINI  
NO PROBLEMI  
ASSISTENZA 24 ORE

HI-FIVE

10 Anni di assistenza garantita per la tua Cucina  
5 Anni di garanzia per i tuoi Elettrodomestici

60 ANNI  
insieme

Dalla cucina al bagno, dalla cabina armadio al living  
**SIAMO DIVENTATI CASA INSIEME**

MIA by CARLO CRACCO

**SCAVOLINI**  
La più amata dagli italiani

Figure 4.1 Ad from Scavolini's 2021 Italian advertising campaign.

#### **IV.2.1 The first Italian ad (Figure 4.1)**

Among all the ads developed by Scavolini for the domestic market that I had the opportunity to examine, I think that this ad represents the best match for Italy. Indeed, as far as Hofstedian values go, this ad is a good fit for the Italian market. In fact, in this ad Scavolini seems to have played on the most important cultural features of Italy as filtered through the Hofstedian framework: on the top left corner, we can see the multi-year warranty, which fits Italy's high level of Uncertainty Avoidance; on the top right corner, the logo "*60 anni insieme*" ("60 years together") matches Italy's Long Term Orientation as it just goes to show that Scavolini is an historic firm, a rock-solid business reality which is here to stay, delivering a sense of *legacy*; on the bottom right corner, the company's iconic red square logo is escorted by the equally historic "*La più amata dagli Italiani*", Scavolini's trademark slogan: this, once again, seems to be a play on Italy's high level of Uncertainty Avoidance, as it emphasizes the Italian roots of the firm and boosts the long-time sentimental and trustful bond linking Scavolini with Italian customers; on the bottom left corner, the reference to the cook Carlo Cracco, i.e. an expert in the kitchen sector, appears to be a sort of reassurance and thus may be seen as a further hint to Italy's high level of Uncertainty Avoidance. Also, the fact that Carlo Cracco is a renowned cook, which has recently surged to the *status* of "*celebrity chef*", could be intended as a reference to Italy's high level of Masculinity. Finally, the central reading "*Siamo diventati casa insieme*" can be interpreted, on

Hofstedian terms, as a message with a twofold key: in fact, on the one hand, it may sound as a hint to Italy's Individualism since family is seen as the natural extension of the individual and the house is, by definition, the refuge of the family; on the other hand, the announcement that Scavolini has widened its range of offerings from just the kitchen to the whole house may be seen as a collectivist reference. In Hofstedian terms, there is no contradiction between these two apparently incompatible alternative interpretations: as we know, in fact, Italy can be broken down into two very different halves, with a more individualist North and a more collectivist South. All in all, by the way, this slogan may be read as a reference to Italians' love for relaxing moments and fondness for throwing home parties and hosting friends and relatives. This ad matches Italy's major cultural features as it embraces a mostly visual communication style: as we can see, Scavolini lets the picture "do the talking"; in this ad the words, although crucial for correctly delivering the message, play the role of supporting actors. Coherently with its "visuality", this ad adopts an indirect communication style: i.e., this ad doesn't tackle people directly and doesn't command straightly what to do or not to do. Instead, it adopts a more nuanced and less intrusive style as it gently "takes the customers by hand" and leads them to the intended target indulging their tastes and whims. Such an ad doesn't bark orders but provides calm advice instead.

As I said, this ad is a good fit on Hofstedian terms, also considering Scavolini's specific conceptual communication driver for Italy. That said, I think that, as far as

Hofstede's values are concerned, this ad could be improved: for example, considering Italy's high levels of Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance and the practical effects produced by how these dimensions combine and conflagrate, a smart move could consist in slightly modifying the ad by displaying the chef Carlo Cracco in person: in other words, this ad should not just "drop" the name of the famous *chef*, but should double down by showing Cracco in the flesh. Such a choice would fit both the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension, because Cracco is an expert in the field of kitchens, and the Masculinity dimension, because Cracco isn't a "normal cook" like the others since he has reached the pinnacle of the Italian cooking stardom, and in masculine societies people highly appreciate those who "have made it" in life. I think that Carlo Cracco's "presence-in-the-flesh" on this specific ad wouldn't compromise the overall message of sentimental and trusted bond that Scavolini wants to convey on the Italian market: in fact, due to his presence on a number of TV cooking shows, Cracco has become a popular and friendly face for many Italians, and thus his "presence-in-the-flesh" would quietly help boosting the overall atmosphere of reliable familiarity pervading the ad. Also, displaying the physical presence of a celebrity like Carlo Cracco would continue Scavolini's iconic advertising tradition of featuring celebrities like Raffaella Carrà or Lorella Cuccarini, and this choice would act as a further booster for the sentiment of *legacy* that Scavolini wants to cultivate with its domestic market. Finally, never forget that Mediterranean cultures are "cultures of sharing": in such cultures, guests

are held in high esteem, therefore the master of the house is supposed to offer something to his, or her, guests and share it with them. To make this ad more palatable for a Mediterranean society like Italy, it would be wise to display some “alive elements”, for example some food or beverage: such a move would make the ad fitter for the Italian market as it would increase the Mediterranean flavor of the whole ensemble.

10 ANNI SCAVOLINI NO PROBLEM  
5 ANNI HI-FIVE

10 Anni di assistenza garantita per la tua Cucina  
5 Anni di garanzia per i tuoi Elettrodomestici

60 ANNI  
insieme

Dalla cucina al bagno, dalla cabina armadio al living  
**SIAMO DIVENTATI CASA INSIEME**

CUCINA modello **Formalia** design Vittoe Nioiu

SCAVOLINI

La più amata dagli italiani

Figure 4.2 Ad from Scavolini's 2021 Italian advertising campaign.

#### **IV.2.2 The second Italian ad (Figure 4.2)**

This ad is very similar to the one described above: together with the latter, in fact, this specific ad may be seen as the *manifesto* of Scavolini's communication strategy for the Italian market. Indeed, this ad, in its boasting the two slogans "*La più amata dagli italiani*" and "*Siamo diventati casa insieme*", is shaped along the lines of Scavolini's conceptual communication driver for Italy: it tries to play on the idea of heritage and on the shared memories linking the company with its Italian customers. Also, as far as Hofstedian terms are concerned, this ad checks most of the boxes of Italy's major socio-cultural frameworks. The only main difference between this ad and the one explained before can be detected in the bottom left corner: instead of the name of the famous *chef* Carlo Cracco, it appears the name of Vittoire Niolu, the famous Italian architect who has designed the kitchen. In this case, Scavolini seems to have played the Uncertainty Avoidance card: in a highly uncertainty-avoiding culture like the Italian one, being able to boast the endorsement of an expert is a good communication strategy. Also, in a highly individualist and masculine society like the Italian one, people always want to look stylish and one's belongings, starting with one's house, are regarded as the "natural extension" of one's own persona: being the owner of a kitchen designed by such an important architect acts both as an ego-boosting and a subtle showing-off device. Featuring the collaboration of the famous architect Vittoire Niolu, Scavolini seems

to have played exactly on these cultural dimensions and that's why, as far as Hofstedian terms are concerned, this ad works so well for the Italian market.

As explained before, this specific ad is a good fit for the Italian market. Once again, though, just as described for the previous one, it could be improved, as far as Hofstedian values are concerned, by displaying the architect Vittore Nioiu in the flesh. Vittore Nioiu may not be as popular as Carlo Cracco and his face may not be as recognizable as Cracco's: anyway, this architect is a renowned expert in the sector of design and is highly rated in his field. That's why I think that, for virtually the same reasons explained in the case of Carlo Cracco in the previous ad, the physical presence of Vittore Nioiu in this specific ad could help making it fitter for the Italian market without threatening to corrode the vibes of affectionate informality characterizing the whole ensemble. Also, for the same rationale described in the previous ad, it would be smart to enrich the Mediterranean vibes of this ad by displaying some "alive elements" like food or beverage.



**Figure 4.3** Ad from Scavolini’s 2022 Italian advertising campaign.

#### **IV.2.3 The third Italian ad (Figure 4.3)**

In most Mediterranean cultures, kitchen is a “holy place”, and the Italian culture makes no exception. As we know, the idea of “*sharing*” plays a major role in all Mediterranean societies; among all the parts of the house, the kitchen is crucial in terms of sharing since it’s the place devoted to preparing the meals which will be later tasted by relatives and friends: in other words, kitchen is expected to be lived and enjoyed. Therefore, in an ad targeted to the Italian market, delivering the idea of an “aseptic” and “unlived” kitchen makes no sense. Scavolini seems to have smartly decided to “vitalise” this kitchen by putting a “live element” in the picture:

the loaf of bread, strategically placed on the kitchen table, performs this duty. In the Italian culture the kitchen is also seen as a place in which one can seek refuge from the stress of everyday life: natural elements, traditionally, convey a relaxing message and the indoor plant appearing on the right side of the picture carries out this task, as well as furtherly conveying the message of the kitchen as a place full of life.

From an Hofstedian viewpoint, this ad is a good fit for the Italian market: personally, I wouldn't add or modify anything. In fact, I think that this ad, in all its simplicity, makes a good job of playing on the peculiar features of a Mediterranean culture like the Italian one while at the same time delivering the idea of tender affinity and trustworthy friendship that Scavolini wants to establish and cultivate between itself and its Italian customer base.



**Figure 4.4 Ad from Scavolini’s 2022 Italian advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.2.4 The fourth Italian ad (Figure 4.4)**

As we know, in the last years Scavolini has decided to embrace the concept of “home total look” and widen its range of products, enriching its traditional modular kitchen offering with solutions for every part of the house, including the living room and the bathroom. In this specific ad Scavolini endorses one of its bathroom solutions: it may seem a rather nondescript ad, but there are a few details which are pretty interesting if seen through the Hofstedian lenses. In fact, besides the company’s iconic red logo and the slogan *Siamo diventati casa insieme*, which we already know being a staple component of Scavolini’s communication strategy for

the Italian market, it's worth focusing our attention on the gym tools strategically displayed between the bathroom sink and the bathtub. The detail of the gym tools, in fact, is very interesting if seen through Hofstedian lenses. Indeed, as we already know, the Italian culture is masculine and, contrarily to most stereotypes, restrained: in such a society, people always want to look healthy and fit; at the same time, though, people don't indulge themselves and don't waste time as they tend to be efficient and thrift.

This specific ad seems to plays on these traits of the Italian culture by showing the high functionality of a Scavolini bathroom solution as it enables you to accommodate your own home gym, right inside the bathroom, allowing you to economize on time and space and save the money you would otherwise spend on a traditional gym. Such a choice may also be interpreted as instrumental in sustaining the market collocation strategy decided by the company for Italy: in fact, never forget that, on the domestic market, Scavolini markets itself as a mid-end brand offering efficient solutions with excellent quality-price ratio.



Figure 4.5 Ad from Scavolini's 2023 Italian advertising campaign.

#### **IV.2.5 The fifth Italian ad (Figure 4.5)**

Finally, this fifth ad by Scavolini endorses a bathroom solution. As far as Hofstedian values are concerned, there are two important considerations to make here.

The first consideration is the fact that this ad addresses the beholder's attention not only towards the mere design of the bathroom itself, but also on the toiletries (the two toothbrushes, the soap dispenser, the towels, etc...) such a bathroom can easily accommodate. This may be intended as an inkling to the fact that the Italian culture is one of Restraint, where beauty and functionality are placed on an equal footing, thus things must not only be elegant but also practical: a house is not expected to be treated like a museum, where you are allowed to see but not to touch; *vice versa*, a bathroom, just like any other part of the house, must not only be looked at, but must also be "lived".

Italy achieves a mid-score in the Power Distance cultural dimension: this fact, mixed with Italy's high levels of Individualism and Masculinity, entails that Italians want always to appear well groomed and impeccable. The large number of toiletries displayed in this ad may be seen as a nod to this peculiar cultural mix.

The second consideration consists in the bottles and flasks that can be spotted on the shelves on the left side of the ad: the bottles and the flasks displayed on the shelves show very peculiar messages. In fact, these messages read "*Be safe, my friend*" and "*Be clean, my friend*": such messages work pretty well in a high

Uncertainty Avoidance society like the Italian one, where people need to be constantly assured and wish to be advised and explained what to do. The choice of the word “*friend*” (*amico*, in Italian), out of all the possible alternative words, is, from an Hofstedian standpoint, a very fortunate one: as already explained, in fact, the word *amico*, ambiguous as it may sound in the Italian culture, tugs at the strings of Italians’ hearts, delivering a message of trustworthiness and familiarity.

### **IV.3 Hofstedian description, insights and suggestions for the ads developed by Scavolini for the French market**

When Scavolini chose to “go abroad” and expand its scope of action, France was one of the very first markets in which the Pesaro-based company decided to operate and sell its products: now, after almost 30 years since Scavolini first entered the French market, France still represents for the Italian company a top-notch market target and an extremely valuable destination for its products. Beyond the usual distribution network consisting of local authorised retailers, in the most recent years the company has decided to increase its presence in the French market by opening the Scavolini Stores, first in the city of Paris and then in other important French cities. These single-brand stores act as Scavolini Ambassadors in the world: indeed, such stores strengthen the identity of the brand and valorize the Italian roots of the company. On this regard, the Scavolini Stores play a role very similar to that played by the company’s iconic red square logo. (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).



Figure 4.6 Ad from Scavolini's 2022 French advertising campaign.

### IV.3.1 The first French ad (Figure 4.6)

This first ad for the French market ranks as a good example of the communication strategy adopted by Scavolini for the foreign markets: when operating abroad, in fact, the company wants to deliver the concept of the “*Italian Sense of Beauty*”, therefore it makes sense that all the ads prioritise a sober sense of elegance and remark the Italian identity of the brand, since being Italian is *per se* a quality booster.

On the top left corner and the bottom right corner, indeed, this ad plastically depicts the visual “ingredients” relative to the remarking of the Italian identity of the Pesaro-based company: on the bottom right corner, the iconic red logo of Scavolini stands out immaculate, whereas on the top left corner the caption “*Le Sens Italien de la Beauté*” literally translates the idea of “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*” that Scavolini wants to deliver on the foreign markets as the conceptual driver of its communication strategy. This sense of “calm beauty” is bolstered by the caption quietly highlighting the fact that the kitchen has been designed by the famous Italian architect Vittoire Nioiu and by the overall sober elegance permeating the whole ad. From an Hofstedian viewpoint, this ad fits the French society quite well. In Hofstedian terms, the most important detail is probably the fact that, even though this ad is designed to endorse a kitchen, books are put into the foreground. This detail is a perfect match in Hofstedian terms: indeed, France is a High Power Distance culture, the land of the *grande écoles* and the country of the *philosophes*

and *maitres à penser*. In such a society, books are synonym with knowledge, and knowledge is synonym with power. The caption featuring the name of the famous Italian architect may be intended as a play on the High Power Distance featured by the French society as it can be seen as a low-key display of *status symbol*.

Scavolini has recently increased its spectrum of product offering (the “home total look” concept) and has since adopted a transversal communication strategy devoted to make its customers aware of this wider range of possibilities: that’s the rationale for the bottom-line caption boldly illustrating the company’s broad range of home solutions. Also, Scavolini’s distribution-and-sales network in France is not so capillary as its Italian counterpart, hence the bottom-line providing all the official contacts (company’s website, phone number and e-mail). In Hofstedian terms, these details fit the French society quite well since France is among the most uncertainty-avoiding societies in the world. As such, the French want to be constantly explained, taken care of and provided with all the necessary information: from an Hofstedian perspective, the bottom-line caption carries out precisely this task.

On Hofstedian terms, this ad is as good as it gets. Personally, I wouldn’t add nor change anything since it’s already quite an excellent match for the French society.



Figure 4.7 Ad from Scavolini’s 2022 French advertising campaign.

### IV.3.2 The second French ad (Figure 4.7)

This specific ad is very similar to the one analyzed above, even though a closer look reveals two little details that set this picture apart from the one previously described. The first difference is the fact that this picture lacks the presence of books: this lack contributes, in a certain sense, to make this ad more conventional but at the same time seems to deprive this ad of the typical “French flavour” boasted by the previous one. Anyway, this shortage of “French flavour” due to the lack of books appears to be compensated by the second difference displayed by this ad: in fact, unlike the previous one, this ad features a kitchen equipped with all the necessary tools and devices rather than an immaculate one. Indeed, the decision of displaying a “ready-to-use” kitchen rather than a still untouched one may be penalizing in term of sheer elegance but, on Hofstedian terms, it’s a good fit, because it meets the needs for utilitarianism and practicality dictated by the French society, which has historically been a long-term oriented and restrained society.

To make this ad fitter from an Hofstedian standpoint, a little adjustment could do the trick. In fact, I think it would be wise on Scavolini’s part to play on France’s high levels of Power Distance, just like the company seems to have done in the previous ad by placing books in the foreground. On this perspective, displaying one or more things deemed as *status symbol* could be a smart decision: it can be a book, it can be an object of design, it can be a fashion item, in other words it can be anything generally regarded as a *status symbol* by the French society.



Figure 4.8 Ad from Scavolini's 2021 French advertising campaign.

### **IV.3.3 The third French ad (Figure 4.8)**

In this specific ad we can see the world-known squared red logo of Scavolini neatly outstanding on the bottom right corner of the picture: this part fulfills the need for a strong brand identity on the part of the company as the iconic logo conveys the idea of a firm who wants to be clearly recognized across the world.

From an Hofstedian viewpoint, this ad is a good match for France as it appears to play on France's main cultural features: in particular, it seems to focus on the high score achieved by this country on the Power Distance and the Uncertainty Avoidance dimensions. As we know, in a High Power Distance society like the French one, hierarchy is held in high regard and those sitting on the top of the social ladder are not ashamed to showcase what they got: from an Hofstedian perspective, the Diesel brand logo outstanding on the top right corner of the picture appears to serve exactly this purpose. In fact, the famous Italian fashion brand Diesel, who designed the kitchen, acts as a sort of *status symbol* that can be quietly displayed by those who can afford the kitchen endorsed in this ad. We must never forget that, contrarily to what happens in the Italian market, in the foreign markets Scavolini is marketed as a high-end brand: thus, the Diesel brand furtherly adds to the *status symbol* value already embedded in the Scavolini logo.

The writing on the right bottom corner of the picture, just next to the company logo, is, as already explained, dictated by the company's distribution network not being so capillary nor so well-known in France as it is in Italy: nevertheless, whatever the

reason for this writing, it fits the fact that the French society is strongly uncertainty avoiding. As we know, people in this kind of society want to be constantly assured by the counterpart and expect the counterpart to give all the details and carefully provide all the explanations. This is even more true when, just like in this case, the counterpart is a company coming from abroad: from an Hofstedian viewpoint, thus, the writing on the bottom right corner, showing the company's phone number, website and e-mail, absolves exactly this duty.



Figure 4.9 Ad from Scavolini's 2023 French advertising campaign.

#### **IV.3.4 The fourth French ad (Figure 4.9)**

Apparently, this specific ad may look identical to the one described before: indeed, under many regards, it's pretty similar. In fact, this ad displays the same major traits as the one described above (Scavolini's iconic logo, the Diesel's logo, the writing showing Scavolini's phone number and institutional website) as it appears to play on the same cultural traits and thus substantially delivers the same idea. Actually, from an Hofstedian viewpoint, if we look at it more closely, we can argue that this specific ad seems to convey a "bolstered version" of the message conveyed by the previous one as it appears to enrich the cultural dimensions' mix with two more cultural features. In fact, in addition to the previous ad, this one displays the caption "*Diesel get together*": this caption, besides being a further reference to the famous Italian fashion brand, may be read as a hint to the high level of Individualism of French society. This might sound like a paradox, but it's not: in fact, in individualist societies the closest relatives (i.e., the immediate family) are still regarded as integral part of the individual self, and the house, and especially the kitchen, is, by definition, the place where family gatherings happen and close-knit relationships are established.

Also, this specific ad seems to add a further layer to the cultural mix. In fact, unlike the previous one, this ad showcases an "experienced" kitchen rather than a squeaky-clean one: we already know that the French people, being long-term oriented and

restrained, are a nation which gets straight to the point, therefore the detail of the “experienced kitchen” fits the French society perfectly.



Figure 4.10 Ad from Scavolini's 2022 French advertising campaign.

#### **IV.3.5 The fifth French ad (Figure 4.10)**

Finally, this ad by Scavolini endorses a bathroom solution: this ad highlights the same aspects and uses the same devices as the ones already analysed but presents at least two major differences which set it apart from the ads previously described. The first difference is obvious: in fact, unlike the other ones, this ad endorses a bathroom solution; in other words, this ad represents Scavolini's efforts to widen its range of offerings and carve out a niche for itself in the high-end segment of the home solutions market (in this specific case, in the bathroom solutions sector). The second difference is subtler but very important nevertheless: it consists in the fact that in this ad Scavolini, instead of limiting itself to adopt the usual communication patterns already implemented and explained in the previous ads, has seemingly chosen to double-down on the high level of Uncertainty Avoidance of French society and has displayed in the foreground the exact address and phone number of the store at which this bathroom solution can be found and eventually purchased. If we look at it through Hofstedian filters, this peculiar decision of providing further and very specific information makes sense considering that the French people, being strongly uncertainty-avoiding, tend to mistrust novelties and changes, especially when they come from abroad, and that Scavolini, a firm historically known for its modular kitchens, is currently a newbie in the bathroom solutions market.

As we have just seen, as far as the communication style goes, the ads for the French market substantially replicates the patterns of those implemented for the Italian market, i.e. all the ads feature a predominantly visual and indirect style. Once again, such a choice makes sense: on the one hand, in fact, from an Hofstedian viewpoint such a style is a good match for the French society; on the other hand, it's also instrumental in conveying the message of “sober elegance” and “quiet beauty” that Scavolini wants to deliver all over the world.

#### **IV.4 Hofstedian description, insights and suggestions for the ads developed by Scavolini for the Spanish market**

When it comes to entering foreign markets, Spain, alongside with France, has historically been one of Scavolini's dearest destinations: indeed, Spain has been one of the very first foreign markets penetrated by Scavolini's international expansion and the Pesaro-based company has been operating there for more than 20 years now. The strategy applied by Scavolini for promoting and selling its products in the Spanish market is very similar to that applied for France: first, the company has established a strong partnership with a selected network of local authorised retailers, then it has decided to "go on its own" by flanking this local dealers' network with some recently inaugurated single-brand stores directly run by Scavolini personnel (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).



**Figure 4.11 Ad from Scavolini’s 2021 Spanish advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.4.1 The first Spanish ad (Figure 4.11)**

In my opinion, out of all the ads developed by Scavolini for the Spanish market, this one ranks as the best match from an Hofstedian perspective: in fact, it fits the Spanish society pretty well as it checks most of the boxes of the Spanish cultural framework as reported by Hofstede. Indeed, this specific ad is, as far Hofstedian terms are concerned, the one sporting the most “Spanish flavour”: on the one hand, in fact, it features the usual “marks” adopted by Scavolini to establish its Italian identity; on the other hand, though, it matches Spain’s main cultural traits as it

seems to play on this country's overall Mediterranean scenario and its most specific quirks as well. As far as the brand identity part is concerned, in this ad the task is carried out by the same elements as its Italian counterparts: the iconic red squared logo of Scavolini on the bottom right corner, the boast "*60 años juntos*" (in English, "60 years together") on the top right corner, the slogan "*The Italian Sense of Beauty*" on the top left corner and, finally, the writing "*Mia by Carlo Cracco*" on the bottom left corner. All the other "ingredients" of this ad, instead, appear to capitalize on Spain's cultural framework as a Mediterranean society with its own peculiar quirks. Mediterranean societies tend to be "*societies of sharing*" and Spain makes no exception as it features high level of Collectivism. When it comes to sharing, the kitchen is probably the most important place of the house: in this part of the house, indeed, meals for relatives and friends are prepared and occasionally even enjoyed, as sometimes a kitchen can serve as a make-shift dining room. In Hofstedian terms, the overall "vibe" pervading the whole ensemble is a good fit for the Spanish society: indeed, the kitchen endorsed in this ad is depicted as a fully-equipped one, "ready-to-use" and arguably able to accommodate and feed a large number of relatives and guests; a "naked" kitchen would somehow sound weird to Spanish customers. Also, if we take a closer look, we can spot a detail which "sounds good" in Hofstedian terms and therefore may be thought as a specific hint to Spanish culture: this detail consists in a number of racks with wine bottles being displayed on the right side of the picture. Wine plays a crucial role in most

Mediterranean societies and especially in the Iberian Peninsula, with Spain boasting some of the most famous wines in the world: thus, this inkling is very spot-on in the case of the Spanish market. In fact, besides being a pillar of Spanish culture, in most Mediterranean societies wine has historically acted as a sort of “aggregation factor”, and this detail perfectly fits Spain’s high level of Collectivism.

Just like explained for the French market, the written band, displayed on the bottom of the picture and meticulously providing all the addresses and the phone numbers of the Scavolini Stores, is dictated by the company’s distribution-and-sales network for Spain being not so capillary as its Italian counterpart. If we look at it from an Hofstedian standpoint, though, the written band acts as a sort of subtitle: such a “tagline”, verbose and long-winded as it may seem, is a good fit as it perfectly meets the needs of the Spanish society, which ranks among the most uncertainty-avoiding ones on Earth. Finally, the little Italian flag boasting the caption “Made in Italy Certified”, displayed on the bottom right corner, seems to serve a double purpose: on the one hand, it bolsters the Italian identity of Scavolini; on the other hand, it may be read as a guaranteeing device of sort (in uncertainty-avoiding societies, the word “certified” ranks among the highest regarded words).

As far as Hofstedian values go, this ad is a good match for Spain, although there are a few little adjustments which, if implemented in the right way, could make this ad fitter for the Spanish market without revolutionizing the overall global strategy adopted by Scavolini for the foreign markets: for example, a good advice might

consist in making the whole ad a little more “lively” without compromising the overall elegance of the ensemble. In fact, the kitchen displayed in this ad may sound a little too “immaculate” and thus “cold” for the tastes of a Spanish beholder, and the wine bottles featured on the background may seem a bit sacrificed. Collectivist cultures like the Spanish one are cultures of sharing, thus emphasizing the presence of some food or beverage is always a good strategy: in this specific case, “advancing” the wine bottles from the background to the foreground could be a smart move. Finally, as already explained, Spain is a very peculiar country from a socio-cultural standpoint: in fact, on the one hand, Spain is a patchwork of ethnic and linguistic minorities, such as Catalans and Galicians just to name a few, which in the recent years have staunchingly fought to see their distinctive cultural rights officially recognized by the Spanish central government; on the other hand, Spanish people, taken in the aggregate, tend to be very patriotic and proud of their country as a whole. This is coherent with Spain’s cultural main features, especially Collectivism: in fact, people belonging to highly collectivist cultures tend to be more patriotic than their more individualist counterparts, as the whole country tends to be seen as the “natural” extension of one’s family or local community. On this regard, coherently with this vision, it would be smart on the part of Scavolini to indulge this approach and translate the iconic slogan from English to Spanish, i.e. from “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*” to “*El Sentido Italiano de la Belleza*”.

THE ITALIAN  
SENSE  
OF BEAUTY

60  
YEARS  
together

MIA  
by CARLO  
CRACCO

SCAVOLINI™

KITCHENS, LIVING AND BATHROOMS

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Para más informaciones: DELEGACIÓN DE ESPAÑA: Italmobel S.I., Lekeitio Tel. 94 6841188/94 6841254 - italmobel@italmobel.com

Scavolini S.p.A. Italy +39 0721443333 - contact@scavolini.com - www.scavolini.com

MADE IN ITALY  
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Figure 4.12 Ad from Scavolini's 2021 Spanish advertising campaign.

#### **IV.4.2 The second Spanish ad (Figure 4.12)**

In almost any regard, this ad is identical to its Italian counterpart: the layout of the “ingredients” in both pictures is virtually the same, with the only main difference consisting in the verbose “written band” placed at the bottom of the ad aimed at the Spanish market. Although dictated by logistical and distribution network reasons, this detail may be interpreted, from an Hofstedian viewpoint, as a hint to Uncertainty Avoidance. The latter is the defining cultural dimension of Spain: Spaniards are reluctant to accept innovations and deviations from the beaten path, especially if coming from abroad. Although regarded as a renowned company, from a Spanish standpoint Scavolini still remains a “foreign entity” which is trying to widen its range of offering by expanding from its traditional business sector (i.e., the modular kitchens) into “unchartered” territories (that is, “home total look” solutions): according to Hofstede, in a highly uncertainty-avoiding societies such an innovating and ambitious project can thrive only if dutifully escorted by a robust “smoothing” advertising campaign providing all the necessary information.

From an Hofstedian perspective, this second ad is, all in all, a good match for Spain, although less fit than the previous one. This specific ad could be improved by emphasizing the collectivist and sharing dimension of the Spanish society: in other words, showing some “alive” elements could add some vivacious tunes to the whole picture and make it “closer” to the socio-cultural vibes of Spanish people. When I talk about “alive elements”, I’m not only referring to food and beverage: indeed,

obviously, human beings qualify as “alive elements”. Featuring people in an ad targeted at a collectivist society sounds like a wise choice. In the case of Spain, Scavolini could also make a further step on this regard: it could show a man intent on enjoying the kitchen as he wears a kitchen apron and cooks some meal. Spain can prove to be very apt for this kind of “experimental” representation: in fact, this country ranks not only as a collectivist society but, unlike many other Mediterranean cultures, also a feminine one. In feminine contexts, tasks and duties aren’t determined on a gender-base because there is more “flexibility” when it comes to role-assignment.

THE ITALIAN  
SENSE  
OF BEAUTY

FORMALIA design Vittore Niuu

**KITCHENS, LIVING AND BATHROOMS**

**SCAVOLINI**

Scavolini Store en España: **CASTILLA-LEÓN:** Scavolini Store Burgos Tel. 947.264.960 **Revendedores autorizados Scavolini:** **ANDALUCÍA:** Cocinas Asitek, Marbella Tel. 951.899.180 - Lino Lechuga Estudio de Cocina, Córdoba Tel. 957.47.47.20 - Plural Kitchen, Sevilla Tel. 610.152.878 **CATALUÑA:** Cocina Barcelona, Barcelona Tel. 93.205.30.40 - Expomat Alcover, Alcover Tel. 97.77.60.476 - Jordi Oliveras 20S Studio, Lerida Tel. 97.32.20.722 - Reforama, Granollers Tel. 667.60.36.26 - Prestacom, Castelldefels Tel. 93.63.65.503 **CANTABRIA:** The Gallery, Santander Tel. 680.99.22.33 **COMUNIDAD DE MADRID:** Interiores, Las Rozas de Madrid Tel. 649.65.69.84 **COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA:** Azulejos Sola, Paterna Tel. 961.32.09.73 - M3 Stone Company S.L., Pego Tel. 96.64.02.239 **GALICIA:** Carpifer, A Coruña Tel. 646.304.938 - Sisú Elegant Interiors, Vigo Tel. 886.12.92.62 **ISLAS BALEARES:** Kera Gres, Palma de Mallorca Tel. 971.434.240 **ISLAS CANARIAS:** Appilya Lab y Store, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria Tel. 928.43.52.91 - Groca, Tenerife Tel. 922.467817 **LA RIOJA:** Julio Herrero 1971, Logroño Tel. 941.23.66.36 **PAIS VASCO:** Anicca Concept, San Sebastian Tel. 943.253.150 - DeDiseño Interiorismo, Bilbao Tel. 946.44.40.64 - Izaskun Ideiak, Durango Tel. 946.81.84.94  
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Figure 4.13 Ad from Scavolini's 2022 Spanish advertising campaign.

#### **IV.4.3 The third Spanish ad (Figure 4.13)**

This ad replicates the same communication patterns already seen in the previous cases. The main difference we can spot here is the fact that, unlike the two ads described before, this one features an almost “naked” kitchen: indeed, whereas the two previous ads display a full-equipped and “ready-to-use” kitchen, this one displays a kitchen with very few tools in plain sight. This choice, although at odds with Spain’s foremost cultural traits as filtered by the Hofstedian model, makes sense if we take into account the fact that, in this ad, Scavolini, instead of drawing attention on the name of *celebrity chef* Carlo Cracco, has decided to highlight the fact that the kitchen has been designed by the famous Italian architect Vittoire Niuolu: in other words, in this case Scavolini seems to have prioritized the message of the “*Italian Sense of Beauty*”. Considering this, the substantial lack of kitchen tools in this picture, weird as it may sound if we look at it from an Hofstedian viewpoint, serves Scavolini well as it boosts the idea of “sober elegance” that the company wants to deliver. Once again, though, a little detail could be add to improve the whole ad as far as Hofstedian values are concerned, while maintaning the overall “aura” of elegant composure: indeed, the addition of some pieces of food and/or beverage (preferably some local Spanish dishes and/or Spanish local wines), quietly displayed in some strategical place of the picture, could make the whole ad more palatable for Spanish customers without risking to jeopardize the message of style that Scavolini wants to deliver.

THE ITALIAN  
SENSE  
OF BEAUTY

MUSA design Vuesse

**SCAVOLINI**

**KITCHENS, LIVING AND BATHROOMS**

Scavolini Store en España: **CASTILLA-LEÓN:** Scavolini Store Burgos Tel. 947.264.960 **Revendedores autorizados Scavolini:** **ANDALUCÍA:** Cocinas Asitek, Marbella Tel. 951.899.180 - Lino Lechuga Estudio de Cocina, Córdoba Tel. 957.47.47.20 - Plural Kitchen, Sevilla Tel. 610.152.878 **CATALUÑA:** Cocina Barcelona, Barcelona Tel. 93.205.30.40 - Expomat Alcover, Alcover Tel. 97.77.60.476 - Jordi Oliveras 20S Studio, Lerida Tel. 97.32.20.722 - Reforama, Granollers Tel. 667.60.36.26 - Prestacom, Castelldefels Tel. 93.63.65.503 **COMUNIDAD DE MADRID:** Interiores, Las Rozas de Madrid Tel. 649.65.69.84 **COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA:** Azulejos Sola, Paterna Tel. 961.32.09.73 - M3 Stone Company S.L., Pego Tel. 96.64.02.239 **GALICIA:** Carpifer, A Coruna Tel. 646.304.938 - Sisu Elegant Interiors, Vigo Tel. 886.12.92.62 **ISLAS BALEARES:** Kera Gres, Palma de Mallorca Tel. 971.434.240 **ISLAS CANARIAS:** Appilya Lab y Store, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria Tel. 928.43.52.91 - Groca, Tenerife Tel. 922.467817 **MURCIA:** Vproyecta Mobiliario, Murcia Tel. 639.644.453 **PAIS VASCO:** Anicca Concept, San Sebastian Tel. 943.253.150 - DeDiseño Interiorismo, Bilbao Tel. 946.44.40.64 Izaskun Ideiak, Durango Tel. 946.81.84.94  
Para más informaciones: **DELEGACIÓN DE ESPAÑA:** Italmobel S.I., Lekeitio Tel. 94 6841188/94 6841254 - italmobel@italmobel.com

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 **MADE IN ITALY  
CERTIFIED**

Figure 4.14 Ad from Scavolini's 2023 Spanish advertising campaign.

#### **IV.4.4 The fourth Spanish ad (Figure 4.14)**

Finally, in this fourth ad for the Spanish market, Scavolini seems to have doubled-down on the message at the basis of the previous ad as, in this specific case, it appears to deliver this message in an even starkest way: the kitchen displayed in this picture is squeaky-clean and algid, just like a museum, due to the total lack of kitchen tools. The final result is an ad whose content is probably not the best match for Spain as far as Hofstedian values are concerned. With that being said, though, the idea of “sober elegance” is one of Scavolini’s main conceptual drivers since it’s crucial part of the company’s “Italian Sense of Beauty” vision. This display of a “bare kitchen”, aseptic as it may seem, conveys the message of the “pure essence” of a kitchen. In this case, Scavolini’s goal consists in focusing beholders’ attention towards the formal aspects and refined details of its products. In fact, we must never forget that, on foreign markets, Scavolini is marketed as a high-end brand.

#### **IV.5 Hofstedian description, insights and suggestions for the ads developed by Scavolini for the Greek market**

Scavolini's presence in Greece is more recent if compared with its presence in France or Spain. With that being said, though, the Greek market has turned out to be a very profitable one for Scavolini, so much so that, in spite of its relatively short presence in Greece, the company has decisively chosen to "go big" in the Greek market by flanking the distribution network made of local authorised dealers with a network of single-brand stores. These Scavolini Stores are operated directly by Scavolini personnel and are placed in strategic corners of Greece. Among these Scavolini Stores, the two most important can be found in Athens, Greece's capital, and Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).

THE ITALIAN SENSE OF BEAUTY

MADE IN ITALY CERTIFIED

MIA  
by CARLO CRACCO

BATHROOMS - Tratto design Vuesse

LIVING - Mood design S. Barsacchi

SCAVOLINI

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ ΑΘΗΝΑ: Thema A.E. Τηλ. 210-8016426 Ometry Τηλ. 210-6753696 ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ: Α. Κατσαριόης Ε.Ε. Τηλ. 2310-457344-5 ΑΛΙΣΣΑ: Thema A.E. Τηλ. 2410-550970 ΠΑΤΡΑ: Scavolini Store Patra Τηλ. 2610-437500 ΚΑΛΑΜΑΤΑ: Scavolini Store Kalamata Τηλ. 27210-27800 ΝΑΥΠΛΙΟ: Design & Construct Τηλ: 27520-21086 ΠΥΡΡΟΣ: Μπούρας - Μπούρα Αφες & ΣΙΑ ΑΕ Τηλ: 26210-36380 ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΑ: Λέκκας Μιχαήλ Τηλ. 26510-21281 ΚΩΣ: Moda Cucina Τηλ. 22420-23200 ΝΑΞΟΣ: Καπρής Ι. Μονοπρόσωπη Ε.Π.Ε. Τηλ. 22850-23450 ΣΠΑΡΤΗ: Χίος Center Α.Ε. Τηλ. 27310-72200 ΚΥΠΡΟΣ: Scavolini Store Nicosia ΑΕΥΚΩΣΙΑ: Τηλ. 2248-2444 Salt & Pepper ΑΕΜΕΣΟΣ: Τηλ. 2532-0450  
Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με νέες εμπορικές συνεργασίες με τη Scavolini παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με τον αποκλειστικό αντιπρόσωπό μας Α. ΕΞΑΡΧΟ: Τηλ. 2410-550970 - Fax: 2410-554095 - e-mail: aexarchos@thema.gr



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Figure 4.15 Ad from Scavolini's 2021 Greek advertising campaign.

#### **IV.5.1 The first Greek ad (Figure 4.15)**

As we know, Greece, with a score of 100 in the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension, ranks as the most uncertainty-avoiding country in the world. Also, due to its millennial history and strategic geographic position, Greece can be regarded as the Mediterranean society *par excellence*: in other words, Greece tends to be a collectivistic culture founded on old-fashioned virtues, reluctant to innovations and deeply linked to traditions, with a strong stress on the value of sharing and establishing strong interpersonal connections between members of the same community. Greece being a Mediterranean society entails that this country has a lot of things in common with Spain and Italy (especially the Southern half of Italy): in a certain sense, being this country the Mediterranean society *par excellence*, it's fair to say that, as far as Hofstedian values are concerned, Greece shows, at least on some regards, the same features as Spain and Italy but multiplied to the highest degree.

A good advertising campaign, thus, should play on Greece's foremost cultural traits by emphasizing its Mediterranean features: this specific ad suits the Greek market very well as it seems to play on Greece's high level of Uncertainty Avoidance.

Indeed, from an Hofstedian perspective, this ad may be regarded as the "triumph" of Uncertainty Avoidance. According with this latter dimension, in fact, this ad is characterized by an "overflowing visuality", with nothing left to beholders' imagination. Coherently with a nation which wants to be constantly reassured and

explained, this ad is didascallic (that is, the contrary of minimalist) as it presents itself as an extremely crowded picture, full-stuffed with figures and images. As we know, uncertainty-avoiding cultures demand for additional information, they are “show-me” cultures: you have to show them your product and explain it to them, otherwise people won’t trust you. It seems like, in this ad, this advice has been taken quite literally. In fact, this ad appears to strongly play the Uncertainty Avoidance card by displaying pop-up windows at the bottom of the picture which literally shows the additional home-solutions’ offering provided by Scavolini. From an Hofstedian perspective, this decision is a very fortunate one: this pop-up windows’ device plastically fulfills the needs of a deep “show-me” culture like the Greek one. The final result is an ad which, from an Hofstedian viewpoint, didascallic and overtly verbose as it may appear, fits the Greek society well. To make this ad even more appealing on Hofstedian terms, it would be advisable to double-down on the other feature which, together with Uncertainty Avoidance, defines Greek culture: that is, Collectivism. As previously noted, when it comes to communication and, especially, advertising, the “antagonism” Individualism vs Collectivism is the most important Hofstedian dimension. Considering that Greece, coherently with its Mediterranean cultural heritage, ranks among the most collectivist society in Europe, it would be advisable to structure the communication campaign devoted to the Greek market around the idea of Collectivism, and therefore sharing.

As already said, this specific ad can be described, in all its being “stuffed” with information, as the triumph of Uncertainty Avoidance: it’s true that the presence of two pop-up windows fits Greece’s high level of Uncertainty Avoidance, but at the same time it may be also seen as burdensome or even redundant. In other words, removing one of the two pop-up windows would save some space inside the picture without compromising the crucial reassuring role played by the whole ad. The newly provided space could be used for enhancing some collectivist elements. In fact, from an Hofstedian perspective this specific ad lacks a distinctive collectivist flavour. Just like previously noted for the ads targeted to Spain, it would take just a few little adjustments to fix this issue: for example, inserting some “alive elements”, whether it is some food, beverage and/or human beings, could make the atmosphere of the whole ad more “dynamic” and “animated” and therefore more palatable for a collectivist nation which conceives the house, and especially the kitchen, as the cornerstone of the family and community life. On this regard, an even better adjustment would consist in displaying a kitchen in which two or more people enjoy their leisure time as they share a meal or have a conversation. Finally, just like explained above for Spain, it would be wise, considering that Greece ranks among the most collectivist cultures in the world and therefore Greeks tend to be very patriotic, to translate the iconic Scavolini’s slogan from English to Greek, or at least to flank the English version of the slogan with its Greek counterpart.

# THE ITALIAN SENSE OF BEAUTY



FORMALIA design Vittore Nioiu



BATHROOMS - Formalia design Vittore Nioiu

**SCAVOLINI**

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ: ΑΘΗΝΑ: - THEMA A.E. Τηλ. 2108016426 - OMERTY Τηλ. 2106753696 - PLAZA NUOVA Τηλ.2109603566 ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ: Α. Κατκαριδής Ε.Ε. Τηλ. 2310457344-5  
 ΛΑΡΙΣΑ: Thema A.E. Τηλ. 2410550970 ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΑ: Λέκκας Μιχαήλ Τηλ. 2651021281 ΠΑΤΡΑ: Scavolini Store Patra Τηλ. 2610437500 ΣΠΑΡΤΗ: Xios Center A.E. Τηλ. 2731072200  
 ΚΑΛΑΜΑΤΑ: Scavolini Store Kalamata Τηλ.2721027800 ΝΑΥΠΛΙΟ: Design & Construct Τηλ: 2752021086 ΠΥΡΓΟΣ: Μισοúra Αρεός & ΣΙΑ ΑΕ Τηλ: 2621036380  
 ΚΩΣ: Moda Cucina Τηλ. 2242023200 ΝΑΞΟΣ: Καμής Ι. Μονοπρόσωπη Ε.Π.Ε. Τηλ. 2285023450 ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΟ: Scavolini Store Iraklio Τηλ. 2810244400  
 ΚΥΠΡΟΣ: ΛΕΜΕΣΟΣ Salt & Pepper Τηλ. +35725320450  
 Πληροφορίες για Νέες Συνεργασίες SCAVOLINI: Αποκλειστικός Αντιπρόσωπος: Α.ΕΧΑΡΧΟΣ ΟΙΚΙΑΚΟΙ ΕΞΟΠΛΙΣΜΟΙ Α.Ε. Τηλ. 2108016426 - 2410550970 e-mail: exarchosnastasio@gmail.com

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**In the previous page, Figure 4.16 Ad from Scavolini's 2022 Greek advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.5.2 The second Greek ad (Figure 4.16)**

Just like the previous one, this second ad by Scavolini for the Greek market meets the needs of a highly uncertainty-avoiding society: the pattern and the rationale appear to be just the same as those analyzed for the first ad, and the pop-up squared window displaying the company' additional home solutions remains a blueprint of Scavolini's communication for Greece. As we know, the "expert role" is highly valued in "show-me" societies like the Mediteranean ones: the only major difference between this Greek ad and the one described right before merely consistly in this aspect. In fact, in this case, the "expert role" is not absolved by a famous Italian *chef* (Carlo Cracco in the previous case), but by a famous Italian designer, Vittore Niolu. In strictly Hofstedian terms, the shift of testimonial from Cracco to Niolu doesn't entail any substantial change: indeed, as far as highly uncertainty-avoiding societies are concerned, what really matters is the fact that the product is endorsed by an expert, which is *per se* synonymous with trustworthiness. From an Hofstedian viewpoint, this ad seems to focus only on the Uncertainty Avoidance and overlook other important features of the Greek society. As already explained, in fact, Collectivism, too, plays a crucial role in the Greek culture: indeed, Uncertainty Avoidance and Collectivism can be regarded as the two major

socio-cultural pillars of Greece. Along with these two pillars, though, Greece shows two other features that are very important as far communication is concerned. In fact, this country achieves a score of 57 on Masculinity and 60 on Power Distance: in both cases, these scores seem to be mid-of-the-road scores with little if any strong repercussions on the socio-cultural fabric of the country. Indeed, the scores achieved by Greece on these two dimensions, taken individually, are not particularly high: in this case, though, looks can be deceiving. In fact, Greece may not score particularly high on either Masculinity or Power Distance, but these two cultural dimensions tend to “work” together and their joint operation produces a combined effect more consequential than the score achieved on the individual dimensions may suggest. Practically, these combined effect means that Greece remains, still today, a conservative society centered around traditional values: in other words, in Greece hierarchies still matter, old-fashion virtues are the main behavioural drivers and, all in all, tasks and roles still tend to be assigned on a gender-basis. It goes without saying that in such a society a convention-breaking communication style should be avoided. If Spain, as previously described, ranks as a feminine and “fluid” society, Greece ranks, on this regard, as quite the opposite: thus, an ad featuring a grown man wearing a kitchen apron as he is intent on cooking is not a good fit for the Greek market as it risks to offend the sensibilities of the Greek people.

As far as this specific ad goes, there are a few little adjustments that can be implemented in order to make it fitter, as far Hofstedian values are concerned, without risking to break the conventions of the Greece society: as already suggested, a good choice could consist in featuring some “alive elements”, for example two or three people intent on sharing a meal or preparing a dish (this choice would satisfy the collectivist dimension of Greece); an even better choice might consist in displaying a woman (presumably, a mother) intent on cooking some meals and surrounded by her children (such a choice would meet not only the collectivist needs of Greece, but also all the other major cultural features of the country, as it delivers a reassuring message and respects the conventions of a conservative country). Also, in order to further enhance this latter aspect of the Greek society, it would be smart to display on some strategic and visible corner of the ad the little square logo boasting the “*60 years together*” (preferably translated from English to Greek): in fact, the 60-years recall logo is a venerable landmark as it signals that Scavolini has been active in the business for 6 decades. In other words, this logo means that Scavolini is a trustworthy Italian company with a long and rock-solid experience: this detail would fit both the high level of Uncertainty Avoidance of Greece, as it would act as a powerful reassuring reminder, and the overall conservative vibes of the country, as it would act as a plastic representation of the concepts of old-fashioned traditions and long-standing heritage.



**Figure 4.17 Ad from Scavolini’s 2022 Greek advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.5.3 The third Greek ad (Figure 4.17)**

Finally, this third ad is, as far as Hofstedian terms are concerned, a good match for the Greek society. Actually, this one is a lot different from the previous two ones: indeed, this ad doesn’t focus on a single element (namely, the kitchen) and doesn’t show the usual “trademarks” of Scavolini communication for Greece either. In fact, this ad doesn’t feature the usual pop-up “showcasing” windows and doesn’t display the verbose written band providing all the necessary information. The only devices addressing the high Uncertainty Avoidance concerns of the Greek market seem to be the iconic Scavolini red squared logo on the bottom right corner and, on the top

left corner, the logo of Diesel, the famous Italian fashion brand that has designed the home solution endorsed in the ad. But apart from that, there appears to be no other reference to Uncertainty Avoidance. The other “ingredients” of the ad seem to play on other major features of the Greek society: on this regard, in particular, there are two elements that are worth noticing, and both of these elements have to do with the overall “atmosphere” featured in this ad. The first element consists in the fact that, as already noticed, this ad doesn’t limit itself to display a mere kitchen but shows a wider inner space consisting of a broader living area. On Hofstedian terms, this choice fits the fact that the Greek culture is a culture of sharing and a collectivistic one: after all, home is, by definition, the “nest”, i.e. the place of sharing and the place to which every family genuinely belongs. This message is reinforced by the way in which the whole picture is displayed: the kitchen tools, the dinner table, the chairs and the overall “coziness” of the whole ensemble seem to suggest the idea of a “live place”, i.e. a place which is supposed to be shared and enjoyed with relatives and friends. The ultimate seal on this collectivistic vision is provided by the basic but vivid caption on the bottom right corner: “Diesel Social Kitchen”.

The second element (which, by the way, is linked to the first one) consists in the fact that, in this ad, Scavolini appears to have staged a sort of “indoor set” for the Mediterranean Maquis, the typical natural environment of Greece. This ad fits the fact that Greece ranks among the most collectivist societies on Earth. The whole

ensemble of the ad (that is, the sun-light beams filtering from the windows, the spotlights between the different parts of the kitchen, the indoor plants shining with bright green) seems to convey the idea of a sunny and cool morning on a Greek outdoor scenario. In Mediterranean societies, due to the warm climate, people love spending most of their time outside together: this ad seems to deliver the message that Scavolini allows Greeks to recreate an indoor garden within the boundaries of their four walls. Also, members of collectivistic societies tend to be very patriotic and have a lot of pride for their motherland: Greeks make no exception. Staging what looks like an indoor accommodation of a Greek typical natural habitat, this ad may be read as a play on Greeks' collectivist mindset intended as strong national identitarianism and fondness for familiar environments.

Among the Scavolini ads for the Greek market, this specific one stands out from the others due to its striking difference with the previous two: while the previous two are very crammed with things and information, this one seems to have embraced a softer and more relaxed approach; while the previous two risk to be perceived as burdensome, this one has a sense of sublimity with it. All in all, this ad seems to have prioritised the visual elements of communication over the verbal ones, and the plenty of natural elements featured in it gives the whole ensemble a sense of "light beauty" somehow resembling the ads that international firms usually develop for Asian markets, namely the Japanese and the Chinese ones.

#### **IV.6 Hofstedian description, insights and suggestions for the ads developed by Scavolini for the American market**

Scavolini has been exporting in the U.S.A. for more than twenty years now: indeed, when the company decided to “go overseas”, the United States of America turned out to be a pretty logical choice. In fact, from the point of view of Scavolini, the American market presented, and still presents, three tempting features: first of all, the size of the market itself, ranking among the largest in the world; second, the higher-than-average purchasing power of the American consumers; last, but not least, the ever-enduring reputation for iconic elegance and first-rate quality enjoyed by most Italian brands on the American market. Considering these three features, it has been quite reasonable for Scavolini to select the U.S.A. as one of the company’s top market targets overseas: first, at the turn of the century, Scavolini has operated in the American market through a network of carefully picked local authorised retailers, then, starting in 2007, the company has decided to double-down its involvement and be physically present in the American territories via its now iconic single-brand stores. In fact, in 2007 the company “landed” on American soil by inaugurating the first Scavolini Store in the U.S.A. The location for this first American single-brand store couldn’t be more suggestive: in fact, Scavolini opened it in New York City, more specifically in Soho, one of the most iconic and picturesque neighbourhoods of Manhattan. When it was inaugurated, this Scavolini Store was the largest kitchen store in the Manhattan district. Although inaugurated

on the eve of the Great Financial Crisis of 2008, the Scavolini Store in Soho has weathered the American economic recession quite well and has eventually thrived, *de facto* serving as a “trailblazer” for the other single-brand stores subsequently inaugurated by Scavolini in other major cities such as Chicago, Boston and Miami. In 2017 Scavolini opened its second New York City-based single-brand store, this time on the 58<sup>th</sup> street at the fifth floor of the exclusive A&D Building. Thus, since 2007, Scavolini Stores in the U.S.A. have acted as a booster for the company’s Italian roots and brand identity (Scavolini Company Profile, 2023).



**FLAGSHIP SCAVOLINI SOHO GALLERY** 429 West Broadway @ Prince St. - NY, NY 10012 - T. 212.219.0910  
**A&D BUILDING - SCAVOLINI STORE NY** 150 East 58th Street Suite 560 - NY, NY 10155 - T. 646.898.0068  
**SCAVOLINI STORE MIAMI** 2600 Ponce de Leon Blvd, Coral Gables - FL 33134 - T. 786.615.7974  
**SCAVOLINI STORE LAS VEGAS** 6145 South Fort Apache Rd - NV 89148 - T. 702.8988700  
**MULTIUNITS CONTRACT DIVISION** - T. 646.898.0065



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**Figure 4.18 Ad from Scavolini’s 2021 American advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.6.1 The first American ad (Figure 4.18)**

On international markets, Italian brands are often synonymous with elegance and class: whether it is luxury or fashion, automotive or food, the fact that a product has been designed and/or made in Italy gives it a “plus”, a sort of “special flavour” that

almost magically turns an otherwise “normal” product into a premium one. Being Italian, or at least sounding Italian, acts as an automatic quality booster, and in most cases Italian products have raised to the rank of *status symbol*. This feature is even more true when it comes to the American market, so much so that “Italian sounding” has become part of the marketing strategy of many US-based firms. Scavolini, just like all the Italian firms that operate internationally, is well aware of this situation: no wonder that, on foreign markets, Scavolini markets itself as a high-end brand. Scavolini always jumps at the chance of reminding potential customers of its Italian identity: according to this vision, the slogan “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*” has become the international equivalent of the domestic-based “*La Più Amata dagli Italiani*”, and most international ads boast the Italian flag as a remainder for the beholders. Considering this, it makes sense that, even before suiting local tastes of different foreign markets, Scavolini ads prioritize delivering a transversal idea of elegance and quality.

This first ad for the American market, although staying loyal to the crucial vision of elegance promoted by Scavolini, deviates a little bit from the usual patterns: in fact, instead of the usual slogan “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*”, it delivers a different slogan, which reads “*To Hide or Not To Hide?*”. This slogan, clearly a wordplay on the Shakesperian famous quote “*To be or not to be?*”, acquires meaning when looking more carefully at the whole ensemble of the ad. In fact, this ad shows two versions of the same kitchen: the “open version”, featured on the main picture of

the ad, with the sliding panels wide open and the kitchen tools dutifully displayed in plain sight; the “closed version”, featured on the pop-up window on the right, with the sliding panels closed shut and the kitchen tools hidden. This “two-versions” concept is the main peculiarity of this ad: by implementing this peculiarity, Scavolini seems to have sought a double goal. The first goal, sustained by the “open version”, might consist in boasting the functionality and the performances of a Scavolini kitchen: in Hofstedian terms, a full-equipped and ready-to-use kitchen is a good match for the Americans, which rank among the most pragmatic and direct people on Earth; the second goal, instead, sustained by the “closed version”, might consist in reinforcing the transversal message of elegance that Scavolini wants to deliver as its communication blueprint: the display of a minimal and quietly sophisticated version of the same kitchen seems to serve this purpose. Also, in Hofstedian terms, the ironic pun on the famous Shakesperian quote fits the American society well. In fact, in Low Power Distance cultures such the American one, irony is a popular communication device as hierarchies are not regarded as “sacred”, thus, as far as parody goes, there are no “untouchable” figures: in such a context, it makes sense to parody the words of the greatest English-speaking author in order to endorse a kitchen. These just described are the most peculiar “ingredients” of this ad, whereas the other “ingredients” are conventional features of the transversal message Scavolini wants to convey internationally. As far as this message of elegance is concerned, it’s worth noticing the overall attention

for the details and the quality of the materials: on this regard, the marble of which the central table consists stands out among all the other elements. The other “conventional” ingredients of Scavolini international communication strategy are the renowned red logo and the Italian flag: these elements bolster the Italian identity of the company, with all that this entails in terms of charm and *status symbol*. Finally, the bottom-line written band providing all the necessary information is, in Hofstedian terms, a good fit for the American market, as it fulfills the needs of an increasingly uncertainty-avoiding society.

Personally, as far as Hofstedian values are concerned, I think that, all in all, this ad is a good match for the American market: it’s a good example of how different ingredients can be mixed together to obtain a “full receipt” which is able to satisfy different tastes simultaneously. From an Hofstedian perspective, though, this ad presents a major flaw as far as far communication goes: it lacks “directness”. In other words, on Hofstedian terms, the main issue of this ad is that the communication style pervading it is still too indirect for the American culture. “Directness” is probably the most important communication element when dealing with American consumers: to make this ad fitter for the American market, thus, it would be smart on the part of Scavolini to “build” a more straight-forward and clear-cut connection with the potential customers. Indeed, a more direct communication style would help the company “interact” with its targeted audience by creating a direct link with the beholders. To get this result, it would be sufficient

a small change: for example, it would be wise to add the caption “Call now!” or “Come and visit us!” alongside the bottom-line featuring the company’s addresses and phone numbers. Such an addition would provide the “kick” necessary to make this ad a perfect match for the intended audience since such an adjustment could manage to rub the American people the right way.



**Figure 4.19 Ad from Scavolini’s 2023 American advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.6.2 The second American ad (Figure 4.19)**

As already explained, Italian brands are a *status symbol* abroad, especially in the U.S.A., and that’s why they are marketed in the high-end segment: in a certain sense, being able to afford an Italian kitchen is an accomplishment to be proud of. This is even more true in a masculine society like the American one. In such a society, showing off comes natural as it’s a crucial part of the cultural fabric: thus, being able to afford something is almost useless if you are not willing to boast about it in front of everyone.

This specific ad of Scavolini is more conventional than the previous one but displays at least one detail that seems to fulfill such a masculine requirement: this kitchen is 100% open-sight, perfectly “peekable” from the outside, in complete disregard of privacy. In a more feminine and modest society, this feature may look like an unforgivable intrusion into one’s private life, whereas in a more masculine society a feature like this makes sense because it’s seen as instrumental in flaunting one’s belongings. Coherently with the strong Masculinity featured by the American society, this ad is characterized by an accentuated visual and direct component, as it displays an almost cinematographic style: the whole scene is dominated by the kitchen, with the potential customer relegated in the role of a fictional neighbour snooping from the outside. Indeed, the verbal component of this ad is minimal in terms of sheer size: nevertheless, though, it quietly manages to, on the one hand, boost the Italian identity of Scavolini and its mission of delivering the “*Italian Sense of Beauty*” and, on the other hand, get the transversal message of the full range of products and display the designer name.

This ad is a relatively good match from an Hofstedian viewpoint, even though, just like the one described before, it lacks the necessary “directness”. That’s why, to make it fitter, it would be advisable to furtherly “appeal” the American consumers by doubling down on the inimitable American socio-cultural scenario resulting from the peculiar mix of high levels of Masculinity and Individuality. The mix between these two dimensions, and the practical consequences that this mix entails,

represents the real socio-cultural framework which really defines the United States of America. Coherently with this vision, it would be smart, as far as Hofstedian values are concerned, to replace the conventional slogan “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*” with some more “spicy” slogans: a good alternative might be “*This kitchen could be yours*” or “*Do you like what you see?*”. In fact, such alternative slogans would be able to create an explicit connection with the targeted audience by directly “teasing” the American people; at the same time, these alternative slogans wouldn’t compromise the sovereign message of “*Italian Sense of Beauty*”, which would still be affirmed by the iconic company logo and the overall elegance pervading the whole ad.



**Figure 4.20 Ad from Scavolini’s 2021 American advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.6.3 The third American ad (Figure 4.20)**

In this specific ad the Pesaro-based company opts for a total-white look: the visual component plays a major role here, as Scavolini virtually lets the kitchen present itself. The presence of kitchen tools is limited in order to deliver the idea of a minimal look: this “minimality”, in turn, is instrumental in providing a message of sheer elegance. It’s worth noticing also the presence of a designer chandelier and the attention on fine details and on the quality of materials, such as the marble featured in the foreground: all these things contribute enhancing the overall concept of high-end fashion attached to Scavolini products on foreign markets. In Hofstedian terms, this ad may sound inappropriate for feminine cultures, at it could

be perceived as “cold”, “distant” or perhaps even “rude”; in masculine societies like the American one, instead, such a sheer display of elegance and style is a working receipt: after all, a high-end Italian kitchen is a *status symbol* to show off, therefore emphasizing this notion of “primeness” and “exclusivity” makes perfectly sense. From an Hofstedian viewpoint, this ad fits the American market only to a certain extent: in fact, I think that this ad makes a great job of highlighting the concept of elegance and Italian style, but I also think that, in terms of communication style, it lacks the directness and “aggressiveness” that are necessary to effectively operate on the American market.

In fact, to thrive in a typical low-context society like the American one, it is crucial to meet the needs for “directness”: in other words, American prefer a straight-forward communication style because they hate “beating around the bush”. On this regard, this ad does a good job as it goes straight to the point by putting the “heart of the matter” (in this specific case, the kitchen) right into the foreground: it’s a smart move, but it’s only a first step, since it’s not sufficient as far as the needs for “directness” of the American society are concerned. Indeed, when it comes to advertising, cultures like the American one call for establishing an unfiltered connection with the beholders: in other words, to be successful, ads must be able to build a metaphoric direct bridge with their intended audience. That’s why, as far as Hofstedian values go, this specific ad could be improved by replacing the conventional slogan “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*” with a blunter one, that is with a

slogan directly involving the potential customers: an example may be “*The kitchen right for you*”. Such an alternative slogan would make this ad fitter for the American market without compromising the atmosphere of overall elegance surrounding the whole ensemble.



**Figure 4.21 Ad from Scavolini’s 2022 American advertising campaign.**

#### **IV.6.4 The fourth American ad (Figure 4.21)**

On many regards, this ad may be regarded as the “twin” of the one analyzed before: in fact, this ad, like the one just described, is a further example of Scavolini’s mission to deliver the Italian Sense of Beauty across the world through boosting the concept of pure forms and sheer elegance. Actually, this specific ad seems to embody an even starker implementation of this approach: indeed, this ad doubles down on the notion of minimalism as it displays an almost naked kitchen with virtually zero fringes added. If the previous one was dominated by a total-white look, this one is dominated by a total-black look with strategically placed golden finishes. Once again, the focus here is on the neatness of the details and the

charming refinement: the choice of the colors and the somber essentiality of the whole ensemble convey an idea of quiet beauty and sober class. As a final outcome, the mix of ingredients constituting the picture results in an ad which, in its effort to portray elegance, may sound even more glacial and austere than the one described before: in Hofstedian terms, these characteristics are a good fit for a masculine society. Once again, though, just like the one described before, from an Hofstedian viewpoint this ad sounds too indirect for the American market: to tackle this issue, it's necessary to connect directly with the potential customers. In fact, in order to morph a communication style from an indirect one into a direct one, it's necessary to "start a conversation" with the beholders. On this regard, when operating on markets like the American one, it would be wise on the part of Scavolini to adopt a "talking advertisement" style: for example, in this case, Scavolini could replace its iconic "*The Italian Sense of Beauty*" (which sounds a bit too distant and indirect for the American tastes) with a more captivating and chatty "*Don't you deserve the Italian Sense of Beauty?*". Such a shift from an indirect communication style to a more direct one would make this ad fitter for the American market without distorting the fundamental idea of sovereign elegance that Scavolini wants to convey on foreign markets.



the whole ensemble provide this ad with a sort of “Latin vibe”. The most striking difference, though, between this specific ad and the previous ones consists in the fact that this ad is clearly set on an Italian stage, namely in Rome: the perspective standing out on the background belongs to the panorama of the Eternal City, with all its pines and domes. These very “Mediterranean” features may seem to clash with the fact that this ad is targeted to the American market: actually, on Hofstedian terms, the features of this ad are perfectly compatible with their intended target. In fact, this ad should be intended as an inspirational one: as we know, American people tend to have an idea of Italy as the land of relax and *dolce vita*. This idea, stereotypical as it may be, proves to be very useful when it comes to advertising: the message laying behind this ad sounds may be interpreted as: “*Scavolini brings Italy (and its laid-back life style) directly to your American home*”. More than in other cases, with this ad Scavolini seems willing to sell both an Italian kitchen and the life style that comes with it: the sunny Roman stage, with all that this entails in terms of expectations, is instrumental in boosting the Italian identity of the firm and pitching the dream of a breezy and placid life that so many Americans associate with Italy. Whereas the previous ads seem to capitalize on the high level of Masculinity of the American society, this one seems to play on the American culture being an indulgent one and on “*Work hard, play hard*” being the slogan condensing the many contradictions of the American life style. Together with the idea of a more relaxed life, this ad seems to capitalize on the Indulgence of the American society

also on a second level. In fact, Italy is regarded by Americans as one of the top holiday destinations: by teasing Americans' wish to visit Italy, the "postcard picture" of Italy featured in this ad may be read as a play on the high level of Indulgence of the American society.

All in all, thus, as far as Hofstedian terms are concerned, this ad represents, with all its being peculiar, a good match for the American market.

Once again, though, I think that, from an Hofstedian viewpoint, a little adjustment could actively help shaping this ad in a fashion which is more palatable for the targeted audience. As in the previous cases, in fact, I think that it would be smart to replace the usual slogan "*The Italian Sense of Beauty*" with a slogan tailored-up to address directly the needs and the aspirations of the American people. In this specific case, considering the holiday Roman atmosphere in which this ad is set and the fact that it seems to play on the high level of Indulgence of the American society, I think that a smart alternative slogan could be "*Take a break and enjoy a real Italian kitchen*" or, even better, "*You most definitely deserve a real Italian kitchen*". I think that these little adjustments could make this ad more appealing for the American audience without corroding the sovereign message of quiet elegance that Scavolini wants to convey: in fact, I think that the idea of "*The Italian Sense of Beauty*", as the conceptual driver of Scavolini's communication on foreign markets, would still be intrinsically pervading the ad, even though wrapped up in a more American-friendly package.

#### **IV.7 Final considerations on the Scavolini's ads from an Hofstedian perspective**

After describing and analysing all these ads through the lenses of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework, the time has come to draw some conclusions about the coherence between these advertisements' content and the socio-cultural features of the specific countries at which these ads are targeted.

The conclusion is the following: fundamentally, the ads developed by Scavolini for Italy, France, Spain and Greece are, all in all, a good match as long as Hofstedian values are concerned because each of them ultimately manages to fit relatively well the specific national market at which is targeted. *Vice versa*, the ads developed by Scavolini for the American market are not a particularly good match from an Hofstedian perspective because they are not sufficiently direct in terms of communication style. The American culture, as filtered through the Hofstedian model, calls for a highly verbal, straight-forward and direct communication style that Scavolini ads mostly lack. The style pervading Scavolini's ads, in fact, regardless of the specific national market at which they are targeted, is ultimately an indirect and unobtrusive communication style: such a style, indeed, is instrumental in conveying the message of "quiet beauty" and "sober elegance" that the company wants to deliver around the globe. This indirect and unobtrusive communication style ultimately suits the European societies (Italy, France, Spain and Greece) that have been analyzed but is unfit for the American society. Anyway,

as it has been illustrated, there is still margin for improvement without having to revolutionise the overall communication style of the company: with just a few calibrated changes, in fact, it's possible to make these ads, even those targeted at the U.S.A., a better match for the respective target markets.

All these considerations about Scavolini's communication style lead to a further conclusion about Scavolini's advertising as a whole. This further conclusion is the following: ultimately, this indirect and unobtrusive style is a staple of Scavolini's advertising. In other words, on the basis of what has emerged throughout the analysis of these ads, naturally descends the conclusion that all Scavolini's advertising campaigns, those targeted at the domestic market and those targeted at foreign markets as well, ultimately implement this style because, even though formally inspired by two different conceptual communication drivers and aiming at two different market segments, both the ads targeted at Italy and the ads targeted at the rest of the world replicate the same pattern in their effort to highlight the elegance of the products and the refinement of the whole ensemble.

This goes to show that, at least as far as advertising is concerned, the formal difference in terms of conceptual communication drivers between the Italian market and the foreign ones exists more in theory than in practice since the ultimate goal of *all* the ads developed by Scavolini consists in emphasizing the elegance of the product and the design of the solutions, regardless of the market segment collocation and the specific target national market.

In fact, as it can be deduced from the analysis of the ads, Scavolini's advertising is very standardised, at least as long as the advertisements' visual component (i.e., the images featured in the pictures) is concerned. The visual component is practically the same in *all* the ads, no matter the specific destination for the domestic market or the foreign ones: if it depended *only* on the advertisements' mere visual component (i.e., if it depended *only* on the images featured in the pictures), all Scavolini's ads, both those targeted at Italy and those targeted at the rest of the world, would be virtually interchangeable. In other words, all the possible elements of localization that, for each ad, have been spotted and interpreted according to an Hofstedian key (although important in terms of evaluating the correspondence of a given ad with its given target national market, and thus worthy analyzing since the ultimate goal of this master thesis consists in assessing whether Scavolini's ads actually match the Hofstedian values of their target markets) are ultimately negligible if contextualized in the great picture of Scavolini's heavily standardised advertising strategy.

To sum up: as far as the visual component is concerned, there is no significant differentiation between Scavolini's ads because, in strictly visual terms, they are *all* virtually interchangeable, regardless of the specific target market.

In the beginning of this chapter it has been stated that Scavolini's communication and advertising strategy is structured around two crucial drivers, one for Italy and one for the rest of the world: considering that the visual component is substantially

the same for all the ads and doesn't change according to the destination, one may wonder how Scavolini manages to implement this strategy. The answer is: the advertisements' written component.

In fact, it's the written component (namely, the slogan and the other written components such as the certificate of Italian origin flanked by an Italian flag and the taglines) that carries out the task of implementing this strategy. Ultimately, for each ad, it's foremostly the slogan and, to a least degree, the other written components that allow to tell an ad targeted at the Italian market from an ad targeted at a foreign one. As far as the ads targeted at the domestic market are concerned, it's their written component (mostly, the slogan) that delivers the concept of "*La cucina più amata dagli Italiani*", whereas, as far as the ads targeted at foreign markets are concerned, it's the written component (mostly, the slogan and the certificate of Italian origin) that delivers the concept of the "*Italian Sense of Beauty*" and the Italian identity of the brand.

To reassume: as far as advertising is concerned, Scavolini's "two-drivers" communication strategy is operatively made possible by the advertisements' written component as the latter compensates for the "sameness" of the advertisements' visual component.

A further confirmation of this final consideration is the fact that Scavolini's commercials are heavily standardized, too: in other words, Scavolini's commercials, just like the ads, are characterized by a high level of similarities.

Indeed, all the commercials produced by Scavolini, regardless of the specific national market for which they are meant, are substantially the same, which in turn entails the fact that they are virtually interchangeable: as in the case of the ads, in fact, the difference in slogans (namely, “*La cucina più amata dagli Italiani*” for the domestic market and “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*” for the foreign markets) is the only thing that effectively sets the commercials intended for the Italian market apart from the commercials intended for the rest of the world.

## **Chapter V**

### **The choice between a standardised advertising approach and an adaptive advertising approach and the decision took by Scavolini on this matter**

They say that advertising is the soul of business. This statement may be debatable, but what it's certainly true is the fact that, for any given company, advertising represents one of the essential components of communication and arguably the most important one when it comes to deliver the idea and the values that potential customers will immediately associate with that specific company (Dyer, 1982). In this fifth and final chapter, I'll explain the "general theory of advertising" and what this concretely entails when it comes to make the crucial decision between an advertising strategy inclined towards a standardised approach and an advertising strategy inclined towards an adaptive approach, with a special focus, of course, on the specific case of Scavolini.

#### **V.1 A general theory of advertising**

According to Philip Kotler, one of greatest experts in the field of marketing, advertising is "*any paid form of non personal presentation and promotion of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor*" (Kotler, 1994, pag. 627). Therefore, at least on a very elementary and conceptual level, the first and foremost role of advertising consists in making potential customers aware of the fact that a given

manufactured good or service exists and is available on the market. This is, obviously, a very basic interpretation of advertising, although correct in its plain and simple formulation. The truth is that, on a more sophisticated level of understanding, advertising gets assigned a more ambitious task: indeed, advertising is in most cases responsible for the “first impression” that the targeted audience of potential customers will make of a given manufactured good or service and therefore of the company producing that good or providing that service. On this regard, thus, advertising is, for all intents and purposes, a form of communication (Dyer, 1982). I’m not saying that advertising is the only vehicle through which consumers develop an idea about a given company: there are of course other vehicles that shape potential customers’ view on a specific product or service, for example word-of-mouth and experts’ review. Among all these possible vehicles, though, advertising stands apart as it’s one of the very few which is (or at least should be) completely under the full control of the company and it’s also the very one through which the company can, metaphorically speaking, make its voice directly heard by the targeted audience (Kotler, 1994). Indeed, by connecting with potential customers via advertising, a company builds a bridge by talking to them in first person: that is, advertising is used by companies as a tool which allows them to start and cultivate a conversation with their intended target. This means that advertising is not merely supposed to make people aware of the existence of a given product or service but, more importantly, advertising is supposed, on a conceptually

deeper level, to express the values and the ideas that potential or actual customers will associate to that product and, consequently, to the company producing it (Dyer, 1982). In other words, advertising should not just provide information but also form opinions and visions: the idea that advertising is useful only in terms of revenue increasing is obsolete. Indeed, advertising consists in proper promotion of the products (and the company staying behind those products, of course), not just selling of items: it goes without saying that, when rightly done, advertising will also boost sales and revenues. Indeed, it's an established fact, among scholars and marketing experts as well, that, in the intricate, crowded and ultra-competitive scenario of the globalized market of XXI century, advertising has risen to the *status* of distinguishing tool, i.e. a tool through which companies can distinguish themselves from the others by talking directly to their potential or actual customers (de Mooij, 1994). Through advertising, companies create a constant interaction between themselves and the market: in other words, through advertising companies can establish a relationship by shaping the first impression of those who “stumble upon them” for the first time and can, from that point on, keep up cultivating that personal relationship. In practice, advertisements represent a projection, a plastic representation of the range of values and virtues companies hope to signal to beholders and thus an embodiment of the way in which each company wants to be seen and perceived on the outside (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

## **V.2 The standardised advertising approach vs the adaptive advertising approach**

When it comes to the concrete ways through which companies implement their advertising campaigns, and with particular reference to the core matter of this master thesis, it must be said that, as far as communication and especially advertising are concerned, companies “float” in a *continuum* whose boundaries are marked by two extreme poles. These two extreme poles are, on one side, the so-called standardised approach and, on the other side, the so-called adaptive approach: the communication and advertising campaigns actually implemented by companies swing between the boundaries set by these two extreme poles (de Mooij, 1994).

As the name itself suggests, the standardised approach (also known as global approach) basically consists in promoting the same product or the same brand in the same way everywhere around the world. *Vice versa*, the adaptive approach (also known as localised approach) consists in promoting the same product or the same brand in different ways according to the different national markets to which this product or this brand is specifically targeted (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020).

In most of the cases, adaptation occurs on a country-basis: this virtually means that, when adaptation is implemented on a full-scale, the same product or the same brand is promoted in a “customized” way for the national market of any specific country. The foremost socio-cultural traits featured by these countries are the parameters on

which companies operating on international markets decide to calibrate the contents of their communication and advertising campaigns.

An adapted communication and advertising campaign is a well-designed campaign when, as far as socio-cultural features are concerned, it checks all (or, at least, most of) the boxes of a given country; it follows that the ultimate result of a well-implemented adaptive approach is a communication and advertising campaign that fits the targeted national market quite well (de Mooij, 1994). Obviously, when a company opts for a standardised communication approach, country-basis parameters are of little relevance, if any, since, by definition, standardisation makes no difference between national markets and treats all countries as if they were the same. Of course, as common sense suggests, there's no such thing as a "complete" standardised approach or a "complete" adaptive approach: when it comes to company communication in all its ramifications, pure forms of standardisation and adaptation exist only on theory, as real life shows that even the more standardising company puts a "pinch" of adaptation in its communication and, at the same time, even the most adapting company limits its adaptation to some extent by adopting different measures of standardisation: this entails that, ultimately, the final choice is a question of degree (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). In other words, the distinction between pure standardisation and pure adaptation is only a theoretical reference, as in real life all companies adopt an intermediate approach between these two extreme poles: ultimately, what really matters is how "tilted" towards which of these two

extreme poles the communication and advertising strategy of a given company actually is. Nevertheless, this theoretical macro-distinction is very important and has been long studied by scholars and marketing experts as well, since its effects are very practical and trickle down in actual business (Kotler, 1994) Indeed, each of these two extreme poles, “standardisation vs adaptation”, has its own strengths and weaknesses, and, for a given company, opting to embrace a strategy inclined towards a given extreme pole rather than the other one virtually reflects the actual “stand” that that specific company has chosen to take on the international markets. Having to decide where to collocate on this *continuum* delimited by the standardised approach on one side and the adaptive approach on the other side is one the hardest challenges that companies operating on international markets are called to address, and also one of the crucial ones in terms of international success: this challenge has come to be known as the “global vs local dilemma” (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020). Either of these approaches has its strengths and weaknesses (de Mooij, 1994). Let’s start with the standardised approach. Mind you: as already explained, in real life there no such thing as a 100% standardization or a 100% adaptation because “pure forms” exist only on paper and in the real world of business what companies actually do is adopt a mid-of-the-road approach which leans more or less heavily towards one of the two extreme poles (even though, in all honesty, it must be said that some advertising campaigns implemented by companies like Chanel or Apple for “global products” such as the Fragrance N°5

or the iPhone, respectively, come extremely close to a “pure” standardised approach).

### **V.3 The strenghts and weaknesses of a standardised advertising approach**

#### **V.3.1 The strenghts of standardisation**

The main strenght of standardisation is that is cost-saving (de Mooij, 1994). Intuitively, from a company viewpoint, opting for a “one-size-fits-all” advertising solution allows to save some money, made possible by the optimization of costs. Indeed, the advertising costs faced by a company to develop a campaign for a given national market are “diluted” over all the remaining countries in which the company promotes its products or services (Jain, 1996). In such a context, there is no need to implement any country-basis prospecting or diversify research since the “one-fits-all” approach ignores any less or more subtle difference featured by any specific country by covering all the different national markets exactly in the same way.

The second strenght of standardisation is that enables companies to create a strong brand identity (de Mooij, 1994). This, in turn, allows to create and cultivate a loyal relationship with customers, both actual customers and potential ones: in a globalized world getting more and more crowded with new players and thus characterized by an increasing competiton on multiple levels, customer brand loyalty has become, for all purposes and intents, an asset, although an intangible

one (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020). In other words, if it's true that globalization has made the world "smaller" and has broadened the audience of individuals potentially interested in purchasing the product or service provided by a given company, it's also true that today that same company faces the rampant competition of players operating from the four corners of the planet and providing virtually the same, or at least very similar, products or services. This is the reason why it has become extremely important for any given company, whether operating internationally or only on the domestic market, to establish a distinctive brand identity, i.e. building a common image easily recognizable across the globe (Kotler, 1994). This is even more true in the world of today, which is the result of the mass media revolution and of the more recent, and still going on, social media revolution, in which we are constantly "bombed" with images and sounds. In such a confusionary and dispersive context, if a company wants to thrive, it must be able to display an immediately identifiable image and thus enjoy a strong brand identity. On this regard, a standardised advertising approach can turn out to be very helpful.

The third strength of standardisation consists in the fact that it allows companies to take advantage of a winning formula by just merely replicating the initial pattern (de Mooij, 1994). In other words, if a given company finds a successful formula (whether it may be a successful idea, or a successful slogan, or a successful testimonial), a standardised advertising approach enables that same company to exploit that winning formula across the world by just "cloning" the original

“recipe”, with minimum costs in terms of adaptation. Good ideas are hard to find and once a company has find one it can’t afford to waste it: standardisation allows companies to take advantage of a good idea and use it more than just once (potentially, an infinite number of times); at the same time the pattern replication dictated by a standardised approach increases brand identity and enables companies to save the money and the time they would have otherwise spent on further research (Jain, 1996).

The fourth strenght of standardisation consists in better control and coordination over advertising (de Mooij, 1994). This fourth strenght of standardisation is quite intuitive as it “physiologically” descends from the very nature of a “one-size-fits-all” approach. This means that, when implemented in the right way, standardardisation allows companies to implement a more efficient allocation of time and money since companies don’t need to “overspread” their economic and human resources in a continous effort to keep up with different countries’ specific features. Basically, a company opting for a standardised advertising approach doesn’t have to care about the specific peculiarities of each and every national markets and this latter detail ends up, at least in the very short term, in a significant gain in terms of planning and time-scheduling (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

### **V.3.2 The weaknesses of standardisation**

The first and foremost weakness of standardisation consists in the fact that implementing a successful standardised recipe is always very difficult: when it comes to communication, and particularly advertising, “one-size-fits-all” solutions have to deal with the different traits of every specific national markets (de Mooij, 1994). These country-based different socio-cultural features are the main challenges that must be addressed by a global advertising approach: this means that even the more painstakingly crafted standardised advertising campaign can turn out to be less successful than expected or, in the worst-case scenario, completely fails when defied by insurmountable peculiarities of the local markets. To quote Salla Palviainen and Tarja Ahonen, “*standardisation creates more pressure on the brand to create a campaign that resonates with audiences from different cultural backgrounds, as it creates a bigger chance to failure if they do not. For example, the message of the advertisement might not get through to the intended customer as the advertisers lack knowledge about local customs and communication styles*” (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020). In other words, it’s fair to say that, from a company viewpoint, implementing a standardised advertising campaign entails higher stakes: in fact, if this campaign turns out to be successful, the company will reap the fruits of a huge pay-off, whereas if it turns out to be a failure the company will fall flat on its face.

The second weakness of standardization consists in the fact that, except in very rare cases, a standardised advertising campaign is, although to different extents, physiologically “doomed” to be not completely effective (de Mooij, 1994). In other words, just for the simple fact of implementing a “one-size-fits-all” approach, a standardised campaign will necessarily be more successful in some countries and less successful in others. This last fact is the “sad truth” that any standardised approach supporter must face when dealing with international advertising: the world may have become a “global village”, but the core values of, say, a Japanese old man in Tokyo are still completely different from those of, say, an American old man in New York City. In other words, core values are still strongly linked to national cultures (i.e., core values are country-based), and core values must not be ignored since they are those values most responsible for influencing consumers’ behavior (Kotler, 1994). Also, when implementing a standardised approach, executives and managers alike should always take into account the fact that different countries have different rules, thus what is regarded as “normal” or at least legally doable in a given country may not necessarily be so in a different one. As you move from one country to another, cultural and legal restrictions differ, and this country-based differences must always be taken into account by companies, even when embracing a standardised approach. It follows that the necessity to abide by local norms, whether written or unwritten, is one of the hardest challenges to be faced by standardised advertising (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

## **V.4 The strengths and weaknesses of an adaptive advertising approach**

### **V.4.1 The strengths of adaptation**

The first and foremost strength of an adaptive advertising approach consists in the fact that such an approach should help a company create a “preferential lane” linking itself with its intended customers (de Mooij, 1994). Since the core values of local consumers and, thus, the socio-cultural features of national markets tend to vary on a country-basis, adapting the content of communication and advertising campaigns according to the wide range of peculiar socio-cultural factors featured by different countries represents the toughest task for a company operating on international markets: in this case, a company is supposed to adopt and implement the results and suggestions dictated by at least one socio-cultural framework, for example the Hofstede model.

A localised advertising approach, when implemented correctly, enables companies to connect with their targeted audience on a deeper level (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020). In other words, local consumers, even though often unaware of the fact that the content of a given advertising campaign has been specifically adapted, feel more involved when “interacting” with an advertising campaign tailored-up just for them and this in turn is likely to act as a booster for customers’ loyalty (Kotler, 1994). To sum it up, adaptive advertising is expected to avoid making blunders, at least as far as cross-cultural communication issues are concerned: thus, a well implemented

adaptive advertising is the best defense against any possible local backfiring and it's also very much appreciated by local customers themselves (Jain, 1996).

In other words, as far as advertising goes, the “preferential treatment” accorded by companies to local customers tends to be matched by the “preferential treatment” contextually accorded by local customers to companies when it comes to make purchasing decisions. This consideration leads to the second strength of adaptation. The second strength of an adaptive advertising approach is that, *ceteris paribus*, such an approach boosts sales (de Mooij, 1994). Indeed, companies adapting the content of their advertisements to local customers enjoy an increase in sales compared to those that don't adapt their advertisements: this happens because local customers tend to “reward” those companies which put some efforts in trying to tune in with local “vibes”. On this regard, a study shows that, globally, 72% of consumers are more likely to purchase a product if the information is provided in their own language and 56% of consumers regard the ability to obtain information in their own language as more important than price (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020).

#### **V.4.2 The weaknesses of adaptation**

The main weakness of an adaptive advertising approach is that, if compared with a standardised one, is more expensive in terms of money, time and human resources (de Mooij, 1994). This is understandable: in fact, other things being equal, whereas standardisation allows companies to save both time and money, adaptation is way

more expensive and demanding as it calls for more time, money and human resources employed in the wide range of activities focused on the research necessary for a successful country-basis adaptation. The silver lining here is that, although comparatively more expensive, adaptation is (or, at least, should be) less risky than standardisation in terms of return on investments: indeed, adaptation, expensive as it may be, is supposed to erase any possible threat of socio-cultural misunderstandings or local backfires, whereas these threats are physiologically intrinsic and virtually unavoidable when implementing a standardised advertising approach (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

The second weakness of adaptation is that such approach, when implemented to an excessive degree, and sometimes even when carefully developed and implemented to an apparently right extent, risks to “water down” the company identity (de Mooij, 1994). In other words, when a company wants to be everything for everybody, i.e. when a company operating internationally tries to suit the different tastes of the local customers of all its foreign national markets, it risks to commit the sin of “overstretching”. Overstretching in turn entails the risk of losing, or at least weakening, the company identity: in the over-crowded market scenario of these days, no company can’t afford to give up its identity (Kotler, 1994; Jain, 1996).

## **V.5 The choice between standardisation or adaptation pondered from the perspective of a company**

From a company viewpoint, losing the identity has always been a serious hazard, and this consideration sounds even more true today, in a world turned upside-down by smartphones and social media revolution and thus more confusing and dispersive than ever. In such a world, company identity has become a priceless intangible asset (Kotler, 1994). It goes without saying, thus, that adaptation, although appreciated by local consumers, must always be implemented by executives and advertising managers with sacred respect towards the company identity (that is, the values and the vision that a company promotes, projects and wants to be perceived by consumers) (Dyer, 1982).

As already explained, a 100% standardised advertising approach or a 100% adapted advertising approach exist only on paper as in real life companies actually opt for a mid-of-the-road approach. With that being said, though, it can't be denied that there are companies preferring an advertising approach more inclined towards standardisation, whereas there are other companies preferring an approach more inclined towards adaptation. In most cases, the crucial choice between these two alternatives is dictated by the structural features of a company and by the relative homogeneity, or dishomogeneity, of its intended target (de Mooij, 1994). Indeed, *ceteris paribus*, a company promoting a wide range of different brands is more likely, and indeed more suitable, to opt for an adaptive advertising approach. Just

think about multinational companies, such as Nestlè or Mondelez, under whose respective umbrellas operates a multitude of different brands (Wang, 2022). In the case of Nestlè, for example, it can be difficult even to talk about a single “company identity” as Nestlè stays behind a large number of different brands, each of which sometimes has nothing to do with the others: it follows that it would be more correct to say that, as a multinational company, Nestlè has many “identities” as the number of brands operating under its control. In such a situation, it’s probably in Nestlè’s best interests to “hide” behind these brands. On this regard, adaptation can turn out to be very useful.

*Vice versa*, there are companies operating on international markets and promoting just one brand: this means that under the umbrella of such companies, known as “One-Brand Companies”, operates only one brand. When it comes to such kind of companies, a standardised approach can prove more suitable. In these circumstances, in fact, it’s easier, and indeed more reasonable, to carve out a clear-cut and distinctive company identity (Wang & Yang, 2011). Scavolini represents a good example of One-Brand Company: this entails that Scavolini, as a company, has no other brand to endorse other than the brand *Scavolini* itself. In other words, in the case of companies such as Scavolini, company identity and brand identity virtually coincide, and that’s exactly why such companies are a good fit for an advertising approach inclined towards standardisation.

When it comes to the relative homogeneity, or dishomogeneity, of a given company's intended target, it goes without saying that, all other things being equal, a standardised advertising approach is highly advisable for a company targeting a relatively homogeneous audience, whereas an adaptive approach will be a better match for a company targeting a relatively dishomogeneous audience (de Mooij, 1994). The specific case of Scavolini is a bit tricky because this company markets itself as a mid-end brand on the domestic market and as a high-end brand on foreign markets. It follows that, on the domestic market, Scavolini should embrace an advertising approach at least slightly inclined towards adaptation as the mid-end market collocation entails a relatively wider, and therefore dishomogeneous, targeted audience; on the foreign markets, *vice versa*, Scavolini should embrace an advertising approach inclined towards standardisation as the high-end market collocation suggests a narrow niche of intended consumers, i.e. a tighter targeted audience whose tastes and needs are expected to be relatively homogeneous.

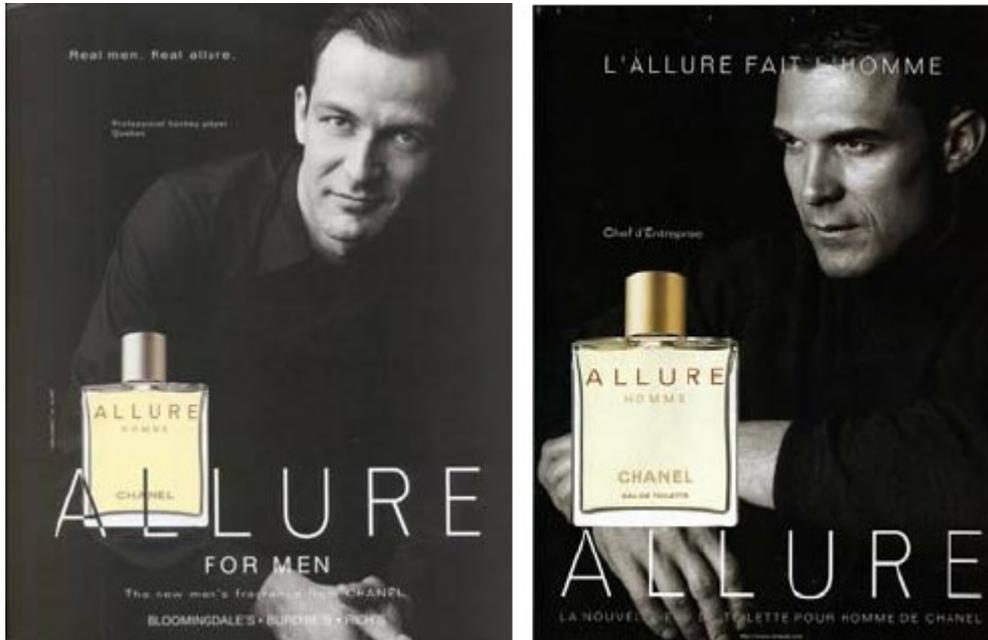
Sometimes the choice between adopting a standardised advertising approach or an adapted one is dictated by the products or the services being promoted. In this case, in fact, the features, both tangible and intangible, of a given product or service acts as a deal-breaker (Kotler, 1994). Generally speaking, convenience goods are a good match for a country-based adaptive advertising targeted to different foreign national markets (de Mooij, 1994). Indeed, consumer goods (and especially the so-called "fast-moving-consumer-goods", such as snacks, sports clothes and other

popular convenience goods you can easily spot on the shelves of supermarkets) display a set of features which make them quite “flexible” in terms of advertising and therefore very suitable for an adaptive approach (Wang, 2022). On the other side, one-time purchases (such as a car or, just like in the case of Scavolini, a kitchen or other durable goods) are more suitable for a standardised advertising approach: in this kind of situation, in fact, the “company identity” plays a crucial role since the value of the good object of the transaction is so high that it calls for a strong bond of transparency, and thus trustworthiness, between the company itself and its customers (Wang & Yang, 2011).

Once again, the specific case of Scavolini is a bit tricky: in fact, it’s true that kitchens and home living solutions in general are one-time purchases and thus are a good fit for a standardised advertising approach; at the same time, though, it’s also true that, among all the possible kinds of one-time purchases and durable goods, kitchens and home living solutions are the very ones which are mostly suitable for customisation. In other words, in practice, kitchens are designed and “tailored-up” according to the specifications provided by the customer, hence the wide range of different materials and colours among which the specific customer can choose. This means that it’s fair to say that, among durable goods and one-time purchases, kitchens and home living solutions in general stand out for their potential to match the peculiar requests and desires of local customers. This fact is very important, in terms of advertising, because it provides kitchen companies and

furnishing companies with enough margin of manoeuvre for country-basis adaptation of the content of their advertising campaigns. In other words, despite operating in the world of durable goods and one-time purchases, a world otherwise dominated by a standardised advertising approach, companies such as Scavolini are granted the “privilege” of being able to, at least to some extent, adapt the content of their advertisements on a country-basis. Considering the globalized and ultra-competitive world in which Scavolini operates, this “privilege” is a very prized one. Finally, Scavolini has a further reason to implement an advertising approach inclined towards standardisation: as we know, in fact, Scavolini has turned its Italian identity into an integral part of its brand, and a standardised approach is the best fit for those companies which have turned their national identities into a crucial part of their respective brands (Wang & Yang, 2011).

So much for what concerns the “general theory” of advertising and its most common real-life implications. In the remainder of this chapter, we’ll focus on the advertising approach actually adopted by Scavolini.



**Figure 5.1** On the left, an American ad for Chanel; on the right, a French ad for Chanel. This is a striking example of highly standardised advertising: as you can see, the two ads promote the same product and are substantially interchangeable. The socio-cultural adjustments implemented by Chanel in this case are minimal as the two ads are virtually identical. Indeed, in the world of luxury goods, sowing the seeds of confusion among actual and potential customers through an excessively adaptive approach would be deleterious: that’s why Chanel, being a staple in the fashion business, can’t afford to “overstretch” its iconic brand. Source: ResearchGate.



**Figure 5.2 An American ad for Nike. As a company selling its products all over the world, Nike has mastered the art of adaptive advertising. This ad, for example, plays on the “alone hero” character so dear to the American frontier tradition. In other words, this ad is a perfect match for the American market: indeed, in its being direct, verbal and motivational, this ad suits the American socio-cultural fabric quite well. Source: Nike website.**



**Figure 5.3** A Chinese ad for Nike. “Alone you won’t get far”: that’s the kind of message that this ad seems to deliver. China ranks among the most collectivist societies in the world, and Nike seems to have adapted its Chinese advertising according to this most defining dimension. Indeed, in collectivist cultures, people prefer a visual and indirect style: with this ad, Nike appears to have played exactly on these premises, at the same time emphasizing the value of Collectivism. Source: Nike’s Facebook page.

## **V.6 The advertising approach ultimately adopted by Scavolini is semistandardisation**

The communication and advertising approach adopted by Scavolini is an approach heavily inclined towards standardisation. As we know, in the real life there's no such thing as a pure 100% standardised approach: with that being said, though, when it comes to international advertising, what the Pesaro-based company actually does approximates a full-scale standardised approach. More specifically, we can call Scavolini's advertising approach an example of semistandardisation.

What does semistandardisation mean? Taken for granted that a 100% standardised approach actually doesn't exist, in the case of Scavolini semistandardisation concretely means that the company has embraced an advertising approach hinged on two fundamental conceptual communication drivers, one specifically targeted to the domestic market (i.e., the Italian one) and one specifically targeted to the foreign national markets taken as a whole. In other words, as far as communication and advertising are concerned, Scavolini has opted for a very regimented and "rigid" approach and in particular, as far as international communication goes, it has avoided any form of country-basis socio-cultural adaptation. As we have seen in the fourth chapter, in fact, the Pesaro-based company has decided to follow an unambiguously univocal pattern for the domestic market, focusing on the conceptual messages "*La cucina più amata dagli Italiani*" and "*Siamo diventati casa insieme*", and an unambiguously univocal pattern for the foreign national markets, hinged on

the conceptual message “*The Italian Sense of Beauty*”. This communication and advertising approach must be interpreted in the context of the market segment collocation decision adopted by the company: as we know, in Italy Scavolini markets itself as a mid-end brand, whereas abroad it markets itself as a high-end brand. In light of this, the semistandardised approach embraced by the company is perfectly reasonable: indeed, the conceptual communication driver implemented for Italy is coherent with the collocation decision on the domestic market as it plays on the rock-solid “sentimental bond” linking the Pesaro-based company with its loyal Italian customer base and emphasizes the excellent quality-price ratio of Scavolini’s products, whereas the conceptual communication driver adopted for the foreign markets matches the high-end collocation decision made by Scavolini when operating abroad as it doubles down on the concept of sheer elegance and Italian style (hence the the emphasis on the preciousness of the materials and the exclusivity of the whole ensemble). To reassume: the communication and advertising approach embraced by Scavolini is semistandardisation, which means that the company has opted for an approach heavily inclined towards standardisation. It’s worth to highlight here that, in practice, the length to which Scavolini has decided to implement this semistandardised approach (i.e., this advertising approach relying on two different communication drivers, one specifically aimed at reaching the domestic market and one specifically aimed at reaching foreign markets) pertains almost exclusively to the written component of

the advertisements' content (i.e., foremostly the slogans boasted by the advertisements and, to a lesser degree, other written components, such as the certificate of Italian origin) as the visual component (i.e., the images featured by the advertisements) is virtually the same everywhere in the world. As we have seen in the advertisements described in the fourth chapter, in fact, as far as the visual level is concerned, Scavolini's communication is pretty much the same regardless of the country a given specific advertisement is directed to: in other words, if it depended only on the visual part of the advertisements, it would be fair to say that Scavolini's approach comes very close to a pure form of standardisation. Indeed, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the responsibility of delivering the company's "dual communication driver-based strategy" rests almost exclusively on the shoulders of the written part of the advertisements' content: by boasting "*La cucina più amata dagli Italiani*" and "*The Italian Sense of Beauty*" for, respectively, the Italian market and the foreign markets, the written component of the company's advertising campaigns (i.e., the advertisements' slogans) carries out Scavolini's "dual communication driver-based strategy" and concretely reflects the different brand collocation on the domestic market and on the foreign markets. To sum up: as far as Scavolini's semistandardised advertising approach is concerned, the written component of the advertisements acts as the real workhorse for the company.

In the specific case of Scavolini, I think it's worth to stress the importance of this fact, that is the existence of two different components, namely a visual one and a written one: in fact, the company's semistandardised approach, formally structured around two different conceptual communication drivers (essentially, one for Italy and one for the rest of the world) operatively relies almost exclusively on the advertisements' different slogans, since the advertisements' visual component is basically the same. In other words, in the case of Scavolini, semistandardisation is somehow duplex: in fact, as far the company's conceptual message is concerned, semistandardisation boils down to a clear-cut distinction between the communication driver for Italy and the communication driver for the rest of the world, whereas, as far as advertisements' content is concerned, it boils down to a first component, the visual one, which is subject to a virtually full-scale standardization, and a second component, the written one, which, instead, is granted some margin of adaptation, although quite limited.

Finally, a further example of the overall semistandardised approach embraced by Scavolini can be singled out in the clear-cut distinction made by the company in terms of market collocation: as we know, in fact, Scavolini has opted for a mid-end collocation of its brand on the Italian market whereas it has opted for a high-end collocation on foreign markets.

From the viewpoint of the Pesaro-based company, semistandardisation makes sense as it perfectly meets the needs faced by the company's communication and

advertising managers when operating on the Italian market and on the foreign ones as well: that is, the need for a distinctive and clearly recognizable identity for the domestic market and the need for a distinctive and clearly recognizable identity for the national foreign markets.

Also from a theoretical point of view, Scavolini's choice makes sense: first of all, Scavolini, being a One-Brand Company, has all the interest to perpetuate an advertising approach heavily inclined towards standardisation since this kind of approach is the most suitable to establish and cultivate a strong brand identity (which, in the case of Scavolini, coincides with the company identity). From the perspective of Scavolini, a strong brand and company identity, in turn, is crucial when operating on markets, especially foreign ones, and, in particular, proves very useful when it comes to emphasizing the "Italianity" of the company. From the viewpoint of a generic company, being able to display its Italian identity is a quality booster: as we know, in fact, on the international markets being Italian is, in nearly all the economic sectors, synonymous with iconic style and well-crafted design. This even more true in the case of Scavolini, which has structured all its international communication conceptual driver along the lines of delivering the idea of the Italian elegance and style across the globe. In other words, for a company that wants to bring the Italian Sense of Beauty right into the houses of people around the world, being able to keep its Italian identity pristine is crucial. It follows that, when analyzed from this perspective, the semistandardised approach adopted by

Scavolini makes even more sense because it allows the Pesaro-based company to staunchingly preserve its Italian identity without wasting the “little treasure” of positive features that local consumers usually associate to Italian companies.

Also considering the features, both tangible and intangible, of the goods manufactured and promoted by Scavolini, an advertising approach heavily inclined towards standardisation is a smart choice: Scavolini’s products are not convenience goods but one-time purchases. This means that Scavolini’s products are durable goods which are purchased *una tantum*, and the value of the good object of the transaction tends to be high. In other words, from the point of view of consumers, Scavolini’s products are regarded, for all intents and purposes, as investments. As such, purchasing a good produced by Scavolini entails, on the part of the potential purchaser, an articulated and longer-than-average decision making process: in such a situation, transparency and trustworthiness are the real deal-breaking factors. It follows that, from the perspective of a company, being able to feature a pristine identity and thus project on the outside a distinctive and clear-cut personality is crucial. Once again, on this regard, an approach heavily inclined towards standardisation comes in handy, even more so considering how important is for a company like Scavolini being able to show its Italian identity.

As it has been showed in the fourth chapter, the semistandardised approach adopted by Scavolini in the content of its advertisements is quite visible: as already explained, considering the company’s structural features and policy ambitions, such

an approach has proved to be a good fit for Scavolini. Indeed, according to Scavolini's marketing and communication managers, this approach has, throughout all these years, served the company pretty well. As it's easy to understand, semistandardisation doesn't call for any particular socio-cultural analytic framework of sort. In fact, it seems that, in unfolding its international communication and advertising campaigns, Scavolini has never adopted the Hofstedian cultural dimensions' framework nor any other socio-cultural model whatsoever.

Whatever the case, according to Scavolini's marketing and communication managers semistandardisation has always proven to work very well for Scavolini and thus the company has no reason to revolutionise this advertising approach. This doesn't mean that this approach can't be improved: indeed, as I tried to illustrate in the fourth chapter, this approach, successful as it may be, can be ameliorated by introducing some country-based socio-cultural adaptations. As I tried to explain in the previous chapter, these adjustments should consist in little changes in the advertisements' communication style and verbal and visual components. Of course, in order to be successful, such socio-cultural adaptations should be purposefully tailored up for the specific national markets for which the different advertisements are meant. To this effect, Scavolini ought to adopt a socio-cultural analytical framework to "explore" the peculiar features of different countries: the Hofstedian model is one of the most popular and qualified socio-cultural dimensional

frameworks, but there are others effective frameworks, too, such as the Schwartz model and the GLOBE model (Browaeys & Price, 2011). Of course, should the company eventually decide to implement a bit of socio-cultural adaptation for its advertisements' content, it would be up to Scavolini to select which analytical frameworks fits the company the most.

In the end, this master thesis has showed that, as far as international communication and, more specifically, advertising are concerned, Scavolini has adopted a semistandardised approach hinged on two fundamental conceptual drivers, one for the domestic market and one for the foreign markets: considering the specific features of Scavolini and the context in which this company operates, semistandardisation has turned out to be a good fit and in fact has always served the company well.

As it has been showed in the previous chapter, as far as Hofstedian values are concerned, Scavolini's advertisements, heavily standardized as they may be, have played out relatively well for the specific national markets for which they are meant. In particular, they have turned out to be, all in all, a good match for the four European countries (Italy, France, Spain and Greece).

As far as the U.S.A. are concerned, though, from an Hofstedian viewpoint the content of Scavolini's advertisements is not the best fit because, considering the peculiar features of the American society, Scavolini's communication style results too indirect and unobtrusive for the the American culture: with that being said,

though, this lack of “directness” is perfectly reasonable, from the company’s viewpoint, because the adoption of a sober and tactful communication style has always been instrumental in conveying the idea of quiet elegance and sober fashion that the company wants to deliver across the world through its concept of the Italian Sense of Beauty.

Anyway, as it has been explained in the previous chapter, there is still margin for some kind of country-basis socio-cultural adaptation without having to revolutionise the overall approach of semistandardisation already successfully implemented by the company: indeed, as I have tried to demonstrate, in the specific case of Scavolini a slightly higher degree of socio-cultural adaptation would be not only possible but even advisable, because, as studies show, adaptation, when correctly implemented, allows to connect with local customers on a deeper level and acts also a booster for sales and, thus, profits (Palviainen & Ahonen, 2020).

Concluding, I think that the main takeaway here is the fact that, when it comes to communication and, in particular, advertising, there is always some margin for improving: even the most successful advertising approach can be enhanced. In the specific case of Scavolini, semistandardization has proven to be, throughout all these years, very successful and thus there’s no need to revolutionise it, but this doesn’t exempt the company from trying to ameliorate it: as I have tried to demonstrate, adapting Scavolini’s advertisements by making those little changes suggested in the fourth chapter would shift the advertisements’ content towards a

slightly fitter narration, without compromising the overall semistandardised approach that, so far, has proven to be so successful. At the same time, though, such little changes would make these advertisements more suitable, socio-culturally speaking, for the specific national markets for which they are meant, with all the positive repercussions that such a better fit concretely entails.

## CONCLUSION

In the last decades, the terrific progress in information and communication technologies and the following globalization have made so that, in virtually every sector, markets get increasingly crowded with a wide range of competitors and players coming from every part of the world and practically providing the same or at least very similar products and services. It follows that, from the perspective of a company, being able to rely on a strong brand identity represents an incredibly prized asset, although an intangible one. Communication, and more specifically advertising, represents a powerful resource through which companies can shape the identity of their respective brands: this is the reason why, for any company, communication must always keep a sufficient level of consistency; an excessively diversified communication strategy, in fact, threatens to compromise brand identity, with all the negative repercussions of the case. At the same time, though, effective communication, and particularly advertising, is expected to match the specific tastes and tackle the peculiar issues of local consumers, and thus is also required to adopt a certain level of adaptation.

It follows that, as far as advertising is concerned, the real challenge that companies operating internationally are called to face consists in finding the right balance between the two extreme poles of the advertising *continuum*, that is the right balance between a standardised approach and an adaptive one. The ultimate choice on this regard depends on several factors, the most important ones are the structural

features of a company and the relative homogeneity, or dishomogeneity, of the customer base of this company. Scavolini, for example, has opted for an advertising approach heavily inclined towards standardisation. This master thesis has showed that such an advertising approach (commonly known as “semistandardisation”) is a good fit for the Pesaro-based company: in fact, considering the company’s structural features, the range of products offered and the audience of consumers targeted, an approach heavily inclined towards standardisation represents the best choice for Scavolini. In other words, for a company that has made the concepts of “elegance” and “Italianity” two crucial aspects of its communication strategy, semistandardisation is the most suitable recipe for preserving a pristine brand identity without risking to water it down due to an excessively dispersive communication strategy.

The flip side of such an approach is that, in the majority of cases, this approach is virtually bound not to be completely effective: in fact, since countries differ from each other for featuring peculiar socio-cultural traits, and being a heavily standardised advertising approach virtually the same for all countries, it physiologically follows that some countries will be more receptive, whereas other countries will be less receptive.

As already stated in the Introduction, the goal of this master thesis is to gauge the consistency between international advertising and local cultures, using Scavolini as a case study. Operatively, this master thesis has evaluated the coherence between

Scavolini's international advertising and the local cultures of five selected countries in which Scavolini operates. To make this evaluation, the Hofstedian cultural dimensions' framework has been applied. In practice, this master thesis has embraced a deductive approach: the content of the Scavolini's advertisements has been appraised on the basis of the peculiar socio-cultural features of the five selected target countries. At the end of this process, it has turned out that, in Hofstedian terms, the content of the advertisements developed for Italy, France, Spain and Greece is, all in all, a good fit for the respective target countries; on the other side, though, from an Hofstedian perspective the content of the advertisements developed for the United States of America is, all things considered, not particularly fit for the American market. The "culprit" of this latter situation is the lack of "directness" of Scavolini advertisements: in other words, Scavolini's communication style is too indirect and unobtrusive for the American society, which instead calls for a more direct and blunt communication style. At the same time, though, it must be said that the indirect and unobtrusive communication style copiously used by Scavolini in its advertisements is instrumental in delivering the idea of iconic Italian elegance that the company wants to spread all over the world. Ultimately, the results that have been just described (i.e., the fact that, from an Hofstedian viewpoint, Scavolini's advertising is more consistent with the socio-cultural features of some countries and less consistent with the socio-cultural features of others) is a practical consequence of what has been explained before:

an advertising approach heavily inclined towards standardisation is bound to be more effective in some countries and less effective in others, in this specific case more suitable for the socio-cultural features of some countries and less suitable for the socio-cultural features of others.

In the end, two main takeaways have emerged: the first takeaway is the notion that, to be successful when operating internationally, companies must always take into account the socio-cultural features of different countries and try to adjust their communication accordingly, even if these companies have opted for an approach heavily inclined towards standardisation; the second takeaway is the notion that, as far as advertising goes, there is always room for improvement and that little changes can make a great difference.

In conclusion, the advertising approach embraced by Scavolini is an approach heavily inclined towards standardisation: such an approach, despite its physiological limitations, suits Scavolini's features pretty well and, indeed, it has always served the company very well. At the same time, though, this master thesis has showed that, by applying little changes to advertisements' content, it's possible to make Scavolini's communication fitter, and therefore more effective, for the specific target countries without having to revolutionise the overall global advertising approach implemented so far by the Italian company.

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