

**GENERATIONAL MARKETING: EXPLORING COHORT-PROGRAMMED VALUES
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON CROSS-CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN CONSUMER
BEHAVIOR BETWEEN BRAZIL AND UNITED STATES ***

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses cross-cultural differences in order to explore similarities and dissimilarities between values of Brazilian and of American cohorts. It unveils asynchronies in similar values of national cultural dimensions. It employs dimensions of national culture such as individualism, uncertainties avoidance, masculinity and ethnocentrism that have been used in models to investigate cross-national differences. Consequently, it suggests that the new conceptual grounds of cohort analysis can significantly innovate the way marketers may target consumers in cross-cultural endeavors.

Keywords: cohort marketing, generational marketing, consumer behavior, consumer values, cross-cultural differences

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization challenges marketers to acquire greater knowledge of cross-cultural differences in consumer values to enhance marketing effectiveness. Greater mobility and openness of many societies will increasingly influence the distinction between American and other cultures (Strauss and Howe, 1991, chapter 1). The influence of national culture on people's disposition to engage in the consumption of goods has been substantially investigated (Hirschman, 1980; Roth 1995) and studied at different levels (Dawar and Parker, 1994). However, the implications of values - utilizing a generation framework - on cross-cultural differences remain unexplored.

COHORT MARKETING

Generational marketing (Rice, 1995; Smith and Clurman, 1997) assumes that one individual belongs to a generation if he or she is born in a given period of time. A generation is a set of people involuntarily grouped in a period of history which extends from 20 to 25 years of duration, or approximately the time necessary for a person to grow and reproduce (Meredith and Schewe, 1994). Since each group experiences unique events together, they learn how to behave in certain ways, which supposedly differentiates them from other groups of people or other generations. A different age grouping, called cohort, is becoming a useful distinction.

A cohort is defined as a group of individuals experiencing the same significant events during the same time interval, undergoing a sequence of roles from birth to death, and exhibiting common characteristics due to accumulated knowledge and shared experiences (Meredith and Schewe, 1994; Rentz and Reynolds 1991; Rentz, Reynolds and Stout 1983; Riley 1973). Accordingly, cohort marketing stresses that the specific use of birth dates is insufficient to define relevant marketing targets. As one dissects the course of individuals through a period of time, he or she learns that major external events, such as wars, political upheavals, and economic crises leave strong imprints on behaviors, desires, preferences and attitudes, especially during the "coming of age" time period of late adolescence and early adulthood. When members of social groups experience major external events together, they form a bond; this connection makes them share values which will be deeply

rooted and remain unchanged. This group will be then called a cohort. Since the year of birth alone is insufficient to form a well-defined group, a cohort's time interval can be longer or shorter than a generation (Schewe and Noble, 2000).

RELEVANCE OF COHORTS

Specifically, a cohort consists of individuals who shared the same historical environment and many life experiences during late adolescence and early adulthood (generally between 17 to 23 years), which lead to the imprinting of values that remain constant throughout their lifetime. Accordingly, values, attitudes and preferences remain relatively unchanged with age and with changes in the stages of the life cycle. Values and attitudes that guide behavior may have a profound effect on what, when, where and why people are motivated to buy products and services (Lewinson, 1997).

As cohort members age, they assume new, distinct roles - recently married without children; married with young children; married with grown up children; old couples without children at home; retired and so on. Cohort members learn to perform new roles and discard old ones as they accumulate knowledge and experience. At the same time, as new cohorts evolve through new lifestages for them, they carry out these roles with their unique set of values, attitudes and preferences that have emerged as a consequence of social, political and technological forces experiences as they came of age.

Any relevant distinction between groups – such as those exhibited by cohorts – keenly appeals to marketers. The critical assumptions are as follows: people that belong to the same cohort exhibit similar behaviors and they change similarly when exposed to new events and new environmental conditions; and that people that belong to different cohorts as a result of having experienced different historical phenomena and different environmental conditions exhibit dissimilar behavior. In other words, cohorts are internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous. In a set of cohorts, it is expected that each succeeding cohort differs from its predecessor because each one is socialized and each ages in a coming-of-age time period different from that of the other. Each experiences unique events, or the same events in a different way, than members of the previous cohort (Rentz, 1980).

The cohort's essence lies in its members' involvement with an epochal event and the sharing of

resulting experiences with others at a moment in time when their personal values are being formed. The epochal events may have an international scope. However, people of different nations may associate distinct meanings and values with the same epochal event (Scott and Zac, 1993). For example, World War II was a major event for both the Americans and the British. It was probably a far more shared experience in British and American cultures than in the Brazilian society. It is also possible to hypothesize differences within the same country. For example, the Americans who went to battle may have different and/or more strongly held values associated to the war event than those who stayed home. Furthermore, even if an event reaches a global dimension, one should not expect that it translates into the same values in different countries or even within regions of the same country. This is more so for Brazil than for the U.S. Because of accentuated social and economic differences among Brazilians, they do not always learn from and share a major event as extensively as Americans do. Brazilians as a country are not as well-educated or as well-communicated with as British or American citizens. Consequently, one should be more cautious with using cohorts and with their validity for a country like Brazil, knowing that even major events may not be experienced by the socially excluded or by those of the middle to lower ends of the socio-economic population. In Brazil, these represent a significant number of the population.

OBJECTIVES

This article addresses cross-cultural differences in order to explore similarities and dissimilarities between values of Brazilian and of American cohorts. It unveils asynchronies in similar values of national cultural dimensions. It employs dimensions of national culture such as individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 1994) and ethnocentrism (Sharma e Shrimp, 1995) that have been used in models to investigate cross-national differences in the consumer's level of innovativeness (Steekamp, Hofstede and Wedel, 1999). Consequently, it suggests that the new conceptual grounds of cohort analysis can significantly innovate the way marketers may target consumers in cross-cultural endeavors.

Figure 1 shows that cultural values mingle within each cohort. As succeeding cohorts change as a result of new defining moments – historical, social, political and economic - cultural values in each cohort find new grounds to germinate and to reach levels that are different from other cohorts.

Figure 1

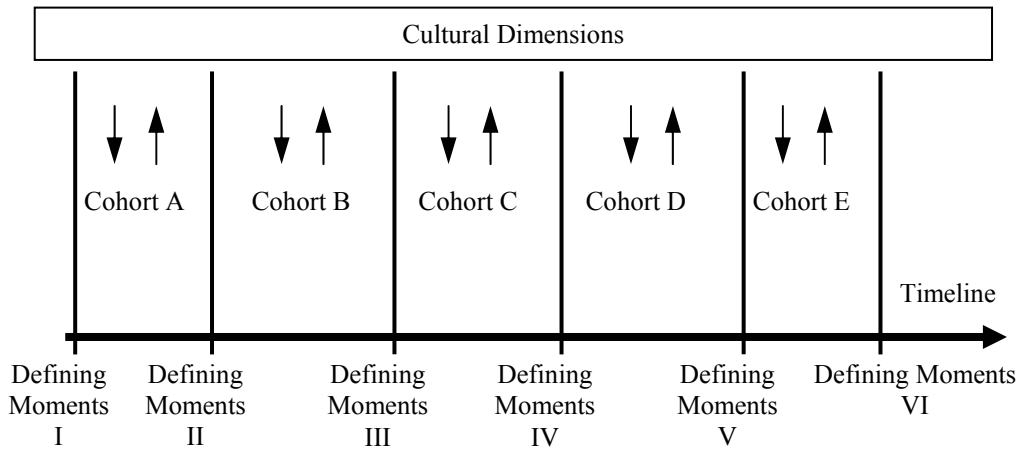
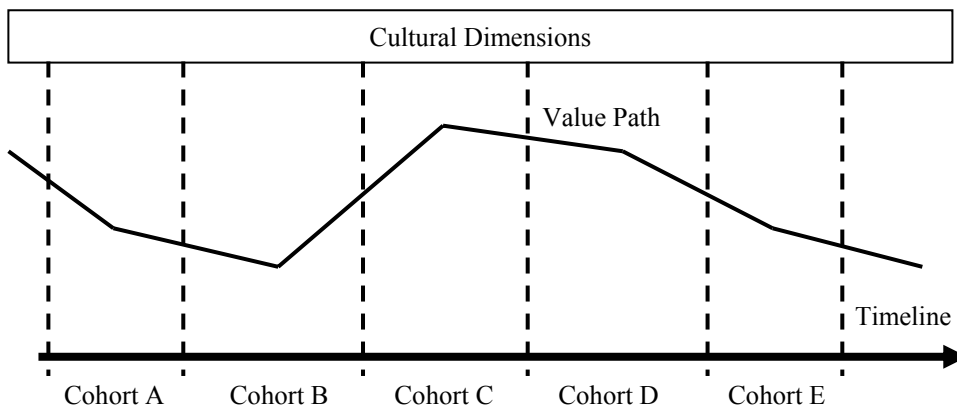


Figure 2 shows a hypothesized path for one cultural value. A path will exhibit a lower or higher assimilation of such value in each cohort. A value such as risk aversion could be high for one cohort, for instance, while low for another. In turn, it asserts that the use of one single level for any cultural value may weaken a communication effort to a market target, even when other conventional segmentation methods are employed.

Figure 2



This paper makes a set of path propositions for cultural values covering four cultural dimensions: individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and consumer ethnocentrism. Six judges, including the authors of this paper plus three other researchers experienced in cohort analysis, both in academic research and in consulting, provided insights and expertise for the analysis and formulation of the propositions.

The brief description of the Brazilian and the American cohorts and the subsequent value analysis, presented below, were based on published material (Meredith and Schewe, 1994; Smith and

Clurman, 1997; Motta, Rossi and Schewe, 1999 and Motta and Greve, 2000). Additional material regarding the Brazilian cohorts was obtained by an extensive review of literature on values related to the country's history and culture uncovered by generation-oriented studies (items not listed in references). And for the American cohorts, proprietary material from Lifestage Matrix Marketing, a consulting company based in California and focusing on the Aging of America, was used.

AMERICAN COHORTS

The first cohort – “Depression” (coming of age 1930 to 1939) – saw its members face great financial hardships when entering adulthood which led them to behave conservatively regarding expenditures as well as other aspects of life. They tended to be cautious and quite assertive. They developed a strong sense of trust in institutions, such as the government and large enterprises, because it was up to them (institutions) to guide the people out of the enormous economic crises of the time. Their main values were risk aversion, financial security, comfort, convenience and admiration of hard work.

The second cohort – “World War II” (coming of age from 1940 to 1945) – includes those that went to the war and those that stayed back home working to feed the war machine. They went through sacrifices for the common good. To defeat the enemy, they had to postpone their dreams and put duties above gratification. They developed a sense of responsibility and a “can do” attitude. Sacrifice was a virtue to this cohort. They developed team spirit and became more prone to conformity. Cooperation and mutual support grew in a time when they were required to follow rules and work together to attain common goals. Loyalty and patriotism became more important for this cohort than for any other. Long periods away from home imprinted the members of this cohort with strong forces of romanticism.

The third cohort – “Post-War” (coming of age from 1946 to 1963) – includes members that came of age in a period of economic recovery and growth. Although they lived in apparent social tranquility, people entered adulthood fearing communism and they experienced McCarthyism. It was still necessary to gather enough strength to beat the common enemy, hence, it was a time of loyalty, respect for authority and abstention from personal vanities. Victories in war and in science reassured them with high expectation for the future. Today, although they have a slightly higher propensity to spend, they still maintain a good saving habit. Consumption is seen as deserved

reward and possessions, such as homes, cars and home appliances, are measures of success. They demonstrate a high degree of self-reliance. They transformed rural America into a sub-urban country with a good living structure, electricity, sanitation and security. The interstate highway system, begun during this period, connects communities together and helps in the nation's growth.

The fourth cohort – “Boomers I” (coming of age from 1964 to 1972), also called the “Me generation” – include members viewed as individualists who value personal satisfaction. Their parents worked hard to give them goods and an education, which they, themselves, could not have. Hence, these Boomers started to believe that they had the right to own things, and that progress and prosperity would never end. Debt is not bad at all. Since they were used to receive their belongings instead of working for them, they turn to their souls for fulfillment. This self-journey makes them constantly search for learning opportunities and for self-improvement through life experience. The guarantee of a good future allowed them to experience the hippie movement - giving up everything for their emotions. Assurance made them more confident to break rules, to question traditional values without fearing sanction, and to fight for the excluded since they believed society has room for everyone. However, they wanted to fix the system by expelling corrupt and the inefficient people, and to assure the victory of good against the evil. Above all, they were confident they could accomplish these endeavors. With distrust in institutions and in people with more than 30 years of age, they preferred to have control in their hands. Hence, they were greedy for information that would help them make better choices and have more control over situations. The appreciation for youth is a value of great importance to the Boomers (I and II).

The fifth cohort – “Boomers II”(coming of age from 1973 to 1983) – saw the end of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal and the oil embargo of the Arab countries mark the end of the good era. Unemployment, inflation and recession astonished the youth that entered adulthood during this period. Feeling frustrated with their expectations they saw themselves as victims and they became bitter, disappointed, angry and cynical. Disappointed with political scandals and with the loss of their murdered leaders, they became engaged in uncovering what was behind events, demanding transparency and access to information. Economic adversities made them leave their political ideals behind to become more narcissistic. They were not hippies anymore; they were yuppies instead. Running into debt was a way of defeating adversities. If it was not possible to fix the system, the solution was to take advantage of it. They were always willing to buy even if the purchase was not

necessary or affordable.

The sixth cohort – “Generation Xers” (coming of age from 1984 to 1994) – decided to search for something or someone to lean on. They turned back to the past, rescuing behaviors to mold them into a mosaic of their own interest. Facing an uncertain future, they preferred to live for the present and to enjoy the moment. However, the majority of this cohort does not see themselves as victims. They accepted living in a world full of risks, learning how to balance out the benefits and costs of each decision. They did not fear taking risks; instead, they wanted to overcome them. However, they are more conservative than the Boomers and they exhibit a higher propensity to save. Adaptability and vigilance are important values in a world of risks in which nothing lasts forever. Accordingly, they do not adopt a standard pattern of living, instead they show a plurality of acceptable behaviors. Therefore, cultural, political, sexual, racial or social diversity are important for this cohort.

As sons of divorce and hostages of Aids, they assumed pragmatic and ironic characteristics. Sacrifice is the responsibility of their grandparents and idealistic crusades are left to their parents. It is important for them to enjoy life. Without trust in institutions or even without trust in their own families, the youth increasingly count on themselves, on their abilities and on their survival skills, and adopts an entrepreneurial mentality. In addition, friends and partners play a greater emotional role in Xers’ lives, building enclaves where they feel safer.

BRAZILIAN COHORTS

The first cohort-- “The Vargas Era,” (coming of age from 1930 to 1945)--was named after Getulio Vargas, a charismatic leader who ruled the country with an iron fist amidst two coups d’état and two Constitutions. The middle class resented the economic pressure of this era, the terror with which they lived, the persecution of political opponents, and the repression of all kinds of actions against the regime inherited from the Great Depression of the late 1920’s. In fact, the middle class resented the economic pressure more than the authoritarian regime. On the other hand, the masses surrendered entirely to Vargas’ skills as a strategist. Protective labor laws and other benefits counterbalanced extreme poverty and massive unemployment. Their access to formal education was limited. The scarcity of industrialized products led them to feel that being someone was better than having something. Lack of imported goods hindered dreams of consumption. Due to a massive,

biased, self-promotion, government propaganda and the exaltation of national values, the people of this cohort developed a strong cult of nationalism as well as a perception of the State as the solution for national issues. In general, people of this cohort are conservative, religious, plain, and homey.

The second cohort – “The Post-War”(coming of age from 1946 to 1954) – experienced a strong wave of morality that swept the nation during this era. Family, church, and marriage were their most valued institutions. Divorce was forbidden and gambling was prohibited allegedly because the nation’s moral, legal, and religious traditions were against it. Official and private efforts were made because of post-war inflation for economic recovery. The labor forces were still feeling the weight of the authoritarian regime in late 1940s despite the supposed transition to democracy. The return to liberalism, the awakening desire for consumption of goods, cultural and material projects of modernization, and the importation of products lessened the feeling of nationalism among the privileged segments of the population. Little by little the need for “having” overcame the feeling of “being.” Three values and attitudes describe the people of this cohort today: kindness, hospitality, and sentimentalism.

The third cohort – “The Optimism (coming of age from 1955 to 1967) – experienced different scenarios, bound together by hopefulness and the belief that Brazil was the “nation of the future,” which provided this cohort with captivating characteristics, such as unprecedented political freedom, increased salaries, fast industrialization, and euphoria. The middle class identified with the then president’s joyful and liberal orientation, while the president – taking advantage of the nation’s growing nationalistic sentiment – introduced the notion of sacrifice. He preached that people had to make sacrifices in order for the country to turn into a great leading nation. Radio and television’s power to convey persuasive doses of optimism became evident. The next president pledged to sweep out all corruption and inefficiency from public administration. However, soon after stepping into office, he resigned without clearly stating his motivation to do so. Following his resignation, his vice-president took office, but he did not stay in office for long. Conservative forces, mainly from the middle class, supported a military takeover because they feared communism. In conclusion, this cohort witnessed the transformation of the concept of democracy into a radical rejection of disorder.

The fourth cohort – “The Iron Years”(coming of age from 1968 to 1979) – lived through a

repressive and violent regime of military dictatorship that led to either belligerence or alienation. Civil rights were significantly reduced, censorship was instituted, and political opposition was not tolerated. Peaceful protest was everywhere in the form of the lyrics of noisy popular music and the population's emphatic and steadfast silence. In order to counterbalance its own authoritarianism, the military regime was lenient toward violations of traditional ethical and moral values. The system used sports, festivals, porno-farce movies, and soap operas to camouflage its savagery, resulting in a system of programmed alienation of the population. Taking advantage of others was praised as a virtue on TV. The harmony of interpersonal relationships was definitely broken, as wariness, suspicion, and cynicism became, for the most part, substitutes for genuine, candid, and honest relations among people. Socioeconomic inequalities increased stunningly, co-existing with vertiginous rates of economic growth, an increase in imports and exports, rapid industrialization and urbanization, huge investments in large infrastructure projects, and an expansion of the educational system.

The fifth cohort –“The Lost Decade”(coming of age from 1980 to 1991) –enjoyed the beginning of an uncensored atmosphere and experienced a country in a period of insecurity. They feared AIDS and violence; they felt frustrated with the failure of economic plans developed to control monetary inflation. They also faced the materialism and individualism of contemporary western mass culture. Most people of this cohort felt hopeless, lacked confidence in the political and business classes, and had little faith in governmental initiatives. The natural ambition of youth to succeed often led them to use drugs. The disillusion of the time caused many citizens to join Evangelical churches or to embrace esoteric beliefs. However, these youths were pragmatic and were not committed to keeping up social standards. Examples of the lack of commitment to such standards were their open discussions of sex, the ways they cared for their own health, and their concern for ecology.

The sixth cohort –“The Being on Your Own”(coming of age from 1992...) – exhibited as main characteristics consumerism and the attempt to recover ethical and moral values. People coming of age at this period have faced a strong and stable monetary unit, the “Real” currency, and a movement toward globalization. Consumer habits have been enhanced by the Real currency, which has granted them unprecedented buying power. Since wealth means social and/or political power, for them spending practices are generally acceptable. People in this cohort also face a period, which, economically speaking, can be summarized by high unemployment rates and privatization,

both of which have been the subject of criticism. In conclusion, the feeling of being on one's own was partly brought about by the mixture of promise and uncertainty about the country's future and, in part, by the novelty of the shopping mall and the digital generation.

ANALYSIS AND PROPOSITIONS

Research that deals with effects of cohorts in the U.S. and in Brazil considers intra-cultural differences, because, indeed, cohorts are both time and value dependent subcultures. The propositions that follow are hypothesized in four value categories for each country and these categories, as mentioned before, are: individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and ethnocentrism

Individualism

In individualistic cultures, each person has a tendency to disrespect social rules and to make decisions in an independent manner (Roth, 1995). Inversely, in collective cultures, people have a greater probability of acting within a collective agreement with the normative social structure and of being more loyal to groups to which they belong, expecting these groups to give them protection (Kagitcibasi, 1997).

The members of older Brazilian cohorts - Vargas Era, Post War and Optimism - are nationalists and patriots, willing to sacrifice personal interests for their country, their families, their religion or their businesses. All three cohorts value submission to authority and respect for order. But, with the country's development, urbanization and industrialization, each cohort successively reduced its sense of community and became progressively more individualistic. In the Iron Years, the dictatorial government worked to dismantle social movements and to restrict citizen's civil rights. At the same time, members of the cohort saw the idea emerge that it was right to "take advantage of others." Together, these factors led to the diminishing of harmony in interpersonal relationship and to a substantial increase in individualism. Hopelessness and lack of confidence in the political class and in businessmen, the feeling of betrayal after several unsuccessful economic plans, and a dictatorship led members of the Lost Decade to value non-commitment with standards and to become even more individualistic. This trend followed in the next cohort - Be on Your Own - whose members have to live with progressively less government support, under the threat of unemployment and of families dismantled by divorce.

For the American cohorts Depression and World War II, collectivism was crucial to assure both the survival and the overcoming of economic and political obstacles. They praise community and family, especially the member of the World War II cohort that stayed away from their homeland and from their families for a long period of time. They also learned to value sacrifice and to respect authority. Indeed, the long period of prosperity after the war was built with work and team spirit. However, the greater mobility of American society and early urbanization, which reduced the size of families and obstructed the maintenance of personal lasting relationships, contributed to the weakness of collectivism in comparison with the more collectivist Brazilian cohorts. In turn, Boomers I and II did not have to join forces to beat an enemy and construct a country. They did not need to learn to work in teams or to respect the authority of a leader. Both cohorts are individualists, but the Boomers II are marked by a sense of narcissism. The Xers tend to be independent, to have high self-esteem, to rely on themselves alone to earn a living and prosper, and to value family. Hence, the propositions on individualism are the following:

For the U.S., the path of individualism starts at a relatively low level but it still drops to even lower levels at the World War II cohort; after that, it takes an ascending slope –moderate at the Post War, but sharper at Boomers I and II – until it reaches the Xers, where the upward trend becomes smoother.

For Brazil the path of individualism starts at very low level in the Vargas Era, after that it gains a moderate ascending slope until the Optimism, and after the ascending slope becomes sharper.

Members of Vargas Era, Post War and Optimism are less individualistic than all American cohorts.

Avoiding uncertainties

Avoidance of uncertainties reflects the fact that members of one culture avoid non-structured, ambiguous, uncertain and undefined situations; accordingly, they adopt restricted codes of behavior. In risk aversion cultures, different equals dangerous, and their members oppose change-established patterns. At the same time, in cultures in which people are risk takers, the difference presents a curiosity to be explored (Hofstede, 1991, 1994)

In the American case, the members of older cohorts (Depression, World War II and Post- War) are risk averse and adopt restricted codes of conduct. Members of Depression are especially averse to financial risk, one factor that may help explain the long delay in the recovery of the financial indexes after the Depression. In turn, Post-War members value stability and familiarity in life. Today, they prefer to live in communities such as those provided by the suburban lifestyle or by retirement condominiums. But the Boomers, assuming they owned a “ natural right” to succeed, became risk takers, while the Xers – facing changing environment – became risk administrators. Then, Boomers are less risk averse, more skeptical and more prone to question. They search for new experiences believing that everything will end up all right and that they will be winners. Boomers II, although also prone to question circumstances, value financial security as a result of the recession of the 70’s and 80’s which affected them. Because of the disillusionments they suffered, they became rather cynical and politically ambivalent, Xers learned to value not only financial security but also emotional security.

In the Brazilian case not only the members of the older cohorts – Vargas Era and Post-War - but also the members of Lost Decade strongly want to avoid uncertainty. The latter were frustrated and disappointed with the strong economic crises of the 80s and with the threat of Aids, unemployment, and the increase in violence among other problems. Hence, they became risk averse. Members of the Optimism cohort lived during a short period of accelerated development. This period was enough to give them confidence in the country’s progress and hope for change, which influenced them to become greater risk takers. In turn, the members of the Iron Years lived under the myth of grandiosity, but at the same time, under the pessimism and dissatisfaction caused by the military dictatorship. This ambivalence made them less risk takers than the previous cohort. Members of the Be on Your Own cohort in addition to being incredulous, skeptical, and judicious in spending, became less confident in the country’s leaders and less willing to take risks. The propositions are as follow:

The path of risk aversion begins at a very high level in the Depression cohort, after that it declines smoothly until the Post War cohort. Subsequently, it declines sharply until Boomers I. The path reverses its trend in Boomers II until the Xers.

In Brazil, the path starts at relatively high level in the Vargas Era, declines slightly in the Post War,

but gains an accentuated downward slope into the Optimism cohort. After that, it reverts its trend into an ascending slope until the Lost Decade, reverting again into a downward slope.

Masculinity

Masculinity reflects how values such as performance, ambition, wealth, materialism, success and competition prevails over feminine values like quality of life, warm personal relationships, solidarity, equality, environmental preservation and caring for others (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 1994). Although Steenkamp, Hofstede e Wedel (1999) kept the label - masculinity, femininity - given by Hofstede for this issue, they point out that the role each gender plays has changed dramatically. Therefore, the label should be replaced by descriptive, not gender-related stereotypes.

Vargas Era was the most feminine Brazilian cohort. Members of this cohort praised ‘being’ over ‘having,’ lived simple lives and were more concerned with serving and caring for others. The Post War – likely to be the most romantic of all Brazilian cohorts – is also feminine. These first two cohorts were strongly influenced by catholic values of solidarity, equality, and love for neighbors. The Post War cohort valued moral tradition and family but at the same time, had consumption dreams and an enchantment with superfluous goods. Members of the Optimism cohort were indoctrinated by ideals of sacrificing for the country and for social order, but were filled with developmental euphoria, which made them leave behind traditional moral values, praising freedom and transgression and weakening the duty to taking care of others. Members of the Iron Years learned “to take advantage of others” and those of the Lost Decade cohort learned to be ambitious and materialistic. But members of the Be On Your Own cohort engaged in recovering moral and ethical values (typical of the older Cohorts) and by reacting to the status quo. They show greater concern for equality and for preservation of the environment.

In the U. S., Depression members valued social connectedness and the local community in which they lived. But members of the World War II cohort are likely to be the most romantic of all U.S. cohorts. Holding a sense of responsibility and the idea of sacrifice as a virtue, they also value community and family. Although they equally valued family and the neighborhood community, members of the Post-War entered adulthood with materialistic principles and self-fulfillment values.

All three cohorts - Depression, World War II and Post-War – received strong influence of the Puritan work ethic. Their members praise performance, wealth, and comfort. Nevertheless, they accepted working hard for the country, for their community and family and sharing concern for the well being of others. Thus they are feminine cohorts. On the grounds discussed, they seem less feminine than the older Brazilian cohorts - Vargas Era, Post War and Optimism – which do not praise success, wealth and accumulation as highly as the Americans cohorts. For the older Brazilian cohorts, progress, wealth and comfort were more distant reality than for the American older cohorts.

Boomers I wish to be winners and value personal and social expression. It's the most masculine of all cohorts of both Brazilians and Americans. Boomers II wish to be winners too, but they add a greater value for family commitments and wellness. Xers, in turn, praise new values such as quality of life, life at work and concern for the environment. The following are the propositions:

The path of masculinity starts at a relatively low level in the Depression Cohort, it declines in the World War II cohort, but after that, it faces a strong ascending slope until Boomers I, where it start a descending trend to the Xers.

In Brazil, it starts at a relatively low level in the Vargas Era, gains a moderate ascending trend until the Optimism and a sharp ascending trend in the next two cohorts and reaches the Be on Your Own with tendency to revert its trend.

The members of Vargas Era, Post War and Optimism are more feminine than all U.S. cohorts.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism implies that consumers overestimate national products and underestimate foreign products. They feel obliged to buy national and to avoid foreign products, especially those whose origin are from countries that do not keep a good relation with the home country (or other countries) either because of a recent war or because of hostile international relations (Sharma e Shrimp, 1995). The consumer's ethnocentrism causes the evoked set to disregard foreign products not only for economic reasons but also for moral reasons (Shrimp e Sharma, 1987). Therefore, ethnocentrism presents itself as prior to the behavior, as a "trait-like property" of individuals' personality, allowing that it have its origin in the value formation of a cohort, which we assume

prior to consumption behavior (Sharma e Shrimp, 1995). Ethnocentrism may be associated with period effects, such as some present hostility, as a war, for instance.

The Depression, World War II and Post War American cohorts are nationalists and relatively ethnocentric. Of all three, members of the World War II cohort are the most patriots, and those with a greater commitment to buy American products. Boomers I and II and Xers reached adulthood at a time when an extensive number of products were already of foreign origin. Since Xers praise social and ethnic diversity, and feel like members of a global community, they follow the trend of the weakening ethnocentrism that starts with the Boomers I.

For the Brazilians, the Vargas Era and the Optimism cohorts began their adulthood in a severely closed economy and with practically no access to imported goods. While the members of The Vargas Era lived under the extended nationalist propaganda, the members of the Optimism cohort were bombarded with import substitution propaganda; therefore, it is supposed that they tend to be ethnocentric. But it is assumed that the most ethnocentric cohort is Vargas Era because of the intensive government propaganda, which imprinted pride in national products. The Brazilians of the Post War cohort traded their war reparation funds for import goods and weakened ethnocentrism. The members of the Iron Years and the Lost Decade cohorts under the influence of the press started to fantasize about imported goods and hoped Brazilian products had the same standards of quality. But, the Be On Your Own is the first cohort to be imprinted with global values and to enter adulthood in a more open economy. Hence, the propositions:

In the U. S. the path of ethnocentrism meets high levels at its start with the Depression cohort, reaching a slightly higher level in World War II. Then, it shows a rather uniform declining trend that progressively intensifies, reaching the Xers at its lowest level.

In Brazil it starts at relatively high levels in Vargas Era, takes a downward trend in the Post War, reverses to a moderate upward trend in the Optimism, then it shows a moderate, but constant, declining trend until the Be on Your Own where downward slope becomes sharper.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper shows that in the comparison of American and Brazilian cultures, values of

ethnocentrism, risk aversion, masculinity and individuality undergo occasionally similar and at other times different movements in level through time. This points out the similarities and differences between each culture. The cohort concept suggests a possibility of better comprehending phenomena regarding the formation and fixation of national values. The mapping of these value paths indicates the sloping associated with each cohort and its relevance in determining the resulting value at a national level. In this way, cohort marketing offers a new, practical way to improve knowledge regarding questions which concern cross-cultural relationships, since it permits identification of the similarities and differences that exist between two or more cultures. The use of cohorts in marketing segmentation has already been proposed elsewhere (Schewe and Noble, 2000), but the paths of cultural values contribute towards improvements in this proposal. One can imagine an international marketing manager from an American company making cohort assumptions about underlying values in another country that are quite different in content or in level when compared to those of American cohorts.

In summary, this work confirms the importance of cohorts in cross-cultural analysis. Future studies may better identify the domain of each variable in the cohort structure and define cultural value paths more precisely for both the U.S. and Brazil.

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