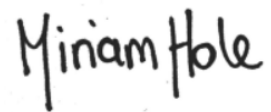


Abstract

This study was designed to examine the representation of femininity in two issues of the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* published 21 years apart. The framework for this analysis is Critical Discourse Analysis, which focuses primarily on the hidden meanings and consequences of discourse. The study uses multimodal data, i.e., it considers different modalities such as colour, signs, images and text. A combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis were used to explore the similarities and differences between the representations of femininity in the two magazine issues. Based on the aspects that were considered in this study, including the distribution of themes and the language and different modalities used to represent femininity, the results shows that femininity is represented in a similar way in the two issues despite being published a generation apart.

Acknowledgement

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Hole". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Miriam Hole

Trondheim, 15.mai, 2016

Contents

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	III
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. BACKGROUND FOR TOPIC CHOICE.....	1
1.2. AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
1.3. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS	3
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.2. GENDER AND DISCOURSE	5
2.3. REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMININITY	8
2.4. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND MULTIMODALITY.....	10
3. METHODOLOGY	13
3.1. CHOOSING RESEARCH MATERIAL.....	13
3.2. COSMOPOLITAN	14
3.3. RESEARCH MATERIAL	14
3.4. CHOOSING METHODS.....	15
3.4.1 <i>Quantitative data collection</i>	15
3.4.2 <i>Qualitative analysis of data</i>	17
3.5. REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY	18
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	19
4.1. CHART 1 – AN OVERALL VIEW OF THE CONTENT IN EACH MAGAZINE.....	19
4.2. CHART 2 – THE SUB CATEGORIES	20
4.3. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	22
4.2.1 <i>The covers</i>	22
4.2.2 <i>The largest category in each magazine</i>	29
4.2.3 <i>Differences</i>	36
5. CONCLUSION	41
APPENDIX	I
A. ADDITIONAL CHART DATA.....	I
B. THE RELEVANCE OF THE WORK FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION.....	XI

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Content comparison of each category	20
Table 2: Colour coding used in raw data tables.	I
Figure 1: Magazine cover Cosmopolitan 1994 issue.	23
Figure 2: Magazine cover Cosmopolitan 2015 issue.	25
Figure 3: Male celebrities in the issue from 1994.	36
Figure 4: Male celebrity in the issue from 2015.....	37
Chart 1: Overall view of magazine content.....	19
Chart 2: An overview of the sub categories within each main category	21

1. Introduction

1.1. Background for topic choice

We live in a society where we are exposed to images and texts from countless different sources every single day, and being aware of how this can influence us has thus become an issue of increasing importance. Kang (1997) claims that these visual and textual impressions influence our behaviours, values, and attitudes. This study uses the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with multimodality to investigate discourses in the popular magazine *Cosmopolitan*. *Multimodality* means combining different modes to convey meaning, where the meaning potential is realized in the choices of these different modalities and how they work together (Hellum, 2013). Within CDA, discourses are seen as essential factors in how people come to view themselves and think about their own identity. Michael Foucault (1972) defines discourses as “practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). In other words, reality is understood as constructed by social forces (Cameron, 2001). Most language-users are not conscious that they are contributing to upholding certain discourses, and they can become so naturalized that people forget that certain things are not unchangeable (ibid).

One of the main ways people categorizes themselves and others, is through gender (Fairclough, 2014). The ways in which people seem to be affected by this categorization triggered an amendment to an existing law regarding people’s rights in educational institutions. The *Gender Equity in Education Amendment* (1994) was proposed by US Congress after research showed that teachers had an inclination to talk, teach, and interact differently with boys and girls, a tendency known as *gender bias*. This in turn seemed to have an effect on the students’ career choices. In an attempt to hinder these consequences, the act suggested a program that would make teachers conscious of this inclination (ibid). The tendency to be affected by gender bias and stereotypes was also proven in a study by Steele (1997) where women were

asked to complete a mathematics test. The women who believed that the test would reveal that their abilities were poorer than those of the men did worse than the women who did not have this belief. Moreover, Begley (2000) found that reminding people of their membership in a stereotyped group was enough to influence their performance in a negative way. In other words, a certain behaviour was expected which evoked that exact behaviour so that the originally false conception became reality. This phenomenon is known as a *self-fulfilling prophecy* (Merton, 1948).

This study set out to investigate if the focus on the effects of gender stereotyping had subsequently manifested itself in one of the genres that has received the most criticism for upholding gender stereotypes, namely the women's magazine. The specific magazine that has been chosen for this study is *Cosmopolitan*. The main reason why this magazine was picked from all the other similar magazines that are published is that it is a very popular magazine that is sold in many countries, and is therefore well known to people from many different parts of the world.

1.2 Aims and research questions

Written as a contribution to the growing field of Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality, this thesis compares how femininity is portrayed in two issues of the magazine *Cosmopolitan* published 21 years apart. The examples above are just a few of several studies that illustrate that there has been a development in knowledge about how people are affected by stereotypes. Other studies have revealed that visual media, such as magazines, play a big role in communicating and promoting stereotypes and cultural beauty ideals for women (Tiggemann & Slater, 2004). The aim of this study is to compare the representation of femininity in two issues of the lifestyle magazine *Cosmopolitan* published a generation apart. The first magazine is from 1994 – the year of the Gender Equity Act, and the other magazine is from 2015 – chosen to represent today. The research is based on the following question:

Has the representation of femininity in the lifestyle magazine *Cosmopolitan* changed from 1994 to 2015?

The thesis is more specifically aimed at answering the following sub questions:

1. What major themes emerge in the representation of femininity in the two issues of *Cosmopolitan*?
2. How is femininity represented with specific regards to language use in the two issues of *Cosmopolitan*?
3. What role does multimodality play in the representation of femininity in the two issues of *Cosmopolitan*?

Based on results from both a quantitative data analysis and a qualitative data analysis, the study will investigate the most apparent similarities and differences between the two issues in regards to these questions.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework for the thesis. With an initial introduction on the gender discourse debate and a look at previous studies of the representation of femininity, chapter 2 forms the necessary context to further elaborate on femininity in the two magazine issues. Additionally, this chapter includes a brief presentation of Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the methodology and includes justification for methodological choices as well as a discussion of their limitations. Chapter 4 is divided into two parts. The first part presents a quantitative analysis of the major themes in the representation of femininity. The results from the data collection are presented in two charts. The second part of chapter 4 is a qualitative analysis of the most prominent themes related to the thesis. Finally, chapter 5 summarizes the results and provides conclusions.

2. Literature Review

The literature review presents the theoretical framework for the thesis. Firstly, the on-going debate about language and gender is introduced to show the contrasting theories that exist on this topic. Secondly, an introduction to previous research on the representation of femininity is presented to establish the context of this thesis. Lastly, a presentation of the methodology for this study is included, which involves combining Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality.

2.2 Gender and discourse

Within the framework of CDA, discourses are seen as socially constructed knowledge about different aspects of reality, meaning that they have been developed in a specific context (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). In Fairclough's definition (see introduction), the term *discourse* is used to refer to how language and the use of different communicative modes affect our way of seeing the world; the research in this study is based on this understanding. To elaborate: Fairclough argues that because discourses are established ways of representing reality, and these ways can be favourable for some while destructive to others, they are consequently important sources of power. Discourses thus involve complex sets of relations between people, the physical world, and power (Fairclough, 2013). Language use is always affected by choices based on a certain point of view or by paying specific attention to certain aspects of the world around us, so the way we use language to express ourselves is never an objective description (Gill, 2007). Discourses are thus inevitably carriers of ideology (Fairclough, 1989). Ideologies are shared beliefs that function as justifications for the social structures in a society. Not only does the power of discourse affect how we see the world around us, it also affects the way we see our place in it, and our identity (ibid).

[I]t is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world...[A]ll of us come to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives rarely of our own making. (Somers & Gibson, 1993, pp. 58-59).

All people have a number of different traits and attributes that make up their identity. One of the main categories we are placed in by others is *gender*. How closely gender is related to discourse depends on how one perceives the concept of gender.

Before we examine this idea, it is first necessary to distinguish between the terms *sex* and *gender*. A person's *sex* is determined by what biological reproductive organs they have, and this decides whether they fall into the category *male* or *female*. Although research has come to appreciate that there are more than two sexes, that is, that we need to move away from viewing sex in binary terms, it is still most common to use only these two gender categories (Stoller, 1994). *Gender* is either seen as a category that is culturally constructed, or timeless and fixed in the same way that sex is. In other words, some people view gender as being so closely linked with a person's sex that they claim the two are essentially the same thing. They believe that the differences between men and women go beyond mere biological physical traits. According to this view, girls and boys will develop different interests and hobbies, and even prefer different colours because of their biological makeup (ibid). The contrasting perspective, however, argues that we are born with a sex, but socialized into a gender. According to this view, gender discourse plays a significant role in shaping our identities as either masculine or feminine. In other words, they argue that there is a clear difference between sex and gender. They define gender as "the social organization of sexual difference" (Butler & Weed, 2011, p. 43). Gender is not seen as a reflection of the physical differences between women and men, and the idea that women have definably female needs and interests that are consistently different to those of men, is rejected. In this view there is no such thing as a pre-existing female identity, and gender is a historical and social category rather than a biological one (ibid).

What side a person finds themselves on in the debate about discourse and gender is likely to affect the way that person perceives the role of magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*. Some will argue that *Cosmopolitan* depicts women as they really are: the magazine advertises and writes about makeup, beauty products, clothes, etc. because women are naturally inclined to find these topics interesting. Others, on the other hand, believe that the magazine contributes to upholding gender stereotypes

through *sexist discourse*. Sexist discourse is language which stereotypes and/or discriminates a group of people based on their gender (McPhillips & Speer, 2015). In other words, there is disagreement as to whether these magazines are simply giving women what they naturally want, or if they are trying to shape particular values of their readers for their own gain by providing much attention to certain topics, while ignoring others (McCracken, 1993). Based on this, some people argue that these magazines play an important role in upholding *hegemony*, because it guides what the readers should be concerned about, and sets the agenda for cultural expression (ibid). Hegemony is a term used to describe a situation where one group is dominant over another (Ougaard, 1988) Legitimizing certain norms and ideas is often what supports this relation. It can also be used to describe how a particular set of ideas becomes so powerful in people's minds that they inhibit the articulation of alternative ideas (ibid).

The pursuit of beauty is something that can be found in all cultures, and women buy these magazines because they represent what it means to be feminine (Yin & Pryor, 2012). But who dictates what is considered beautiful? According to Johnson and Repta (2012) it is shaped by various institutions including religion, media, and political systems. So the magazine is not just representing what is considered feminine, but at the same time it is a part of the context that *constructs* what is considered feminine. Furthermore, people who support this perspective point to the fact that gender identity, especially femininity, is the firewood behind a large section of the market governing consumption, and the fact that certain needs, norms, and standards are presented as natural and normal is beneficial for this market (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). The constructed versions of femininity and masculinity are thus continued and preserved by the market of gendered products such as clothes, makeup, beauty products etc. (ibid). According to this view, lifestyle magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, which are funded mainly by advertising agencies, thus have a dominant role in controlling gender discourse (McLoughlin, 2000). The fact that most of the rest of the magazine includes the same topics and themes, might be due to the fact that the ads are not supposed to be experienced as interruptions, but rather a natural experience that is part of the flow (Gill, 2007).

This study is not going to settle the sex/gender debate, as there might not even exist a clear-cut answer. The current situation is such that it is not possible to be completely sure of whether traits of femininity and masculinity are socially learned or inborn traits. What we *do* know however, and will focus on in the next section, is that beauty standards and images of the ideal female have changed throughout time and place. Furthermore, research shows that people are affected by these constructions.

2.3 Representations of femininity

For women to be considered feminine they must construct their identities and looks based on the values and expressions of the prevailing ideal. However, what is considered feminine in different cultures show great variety. During the time between the T'ang and Sung Dynasties (907-959 A.D.) in China, for example, small feet came to be viewed as feminine. Women would often be forced to break their toes and bind their feet in order to force the sole and heel as closely together as possible. In addition to being extremely painful, it made it almost impossible to walk, and while rich women would be carried around, women from lower classes would have to use a cane in order to maintain their balance. Poets made songs about the feminine frailty of these tiny feet (Greenhalgh, 1977). In Myanmar, a long neck is considered feminine, and the Padung women use rings to elongate their necks. This beautifying project can start as early as the ages of 5-6 (Thesander, 1997). In the North African nation of Mauritania, it is considered beautiful for women to be fat to the point of morbid obesity (Thompson, 2014). The pressure to gain body weight and stretch marks has led to excessive force-feeding of young girls, who are urged to eat as much as 16,000 calories per day (ibid). What is considered feminine is not just different from culture to culture, but can also change in the same culture over time. In North America, tanned skin used to be considered undesirable because it indicated that one belonged to the lower classes that worked outside (Mahler, Beckerley, & Vogel, 2010). This changed when the French designer CoCo Chanel portrayed it as trendy, feminine, and a sign of good health in an advertisement campaign in the 1920s. It did not take long before American culture adopted and spread this view (ibid).

Goffman (1979) claims that advertisements work as socializing agents, because they often contain variably subtle clues about gender roles. Research suggests that being exposed to such gender stereotypes can affect people's attitudes. A study by Kilbourne (1990) revealed that people showed more negative attitudes toward women after being exposed to images that depicted them in roles that were stereotypical. This was especially true when it came to their view of how well women were suited to be leaders. These results suggest that there is a connection between how women are portrayed in the media and people's ideas of women's roles in society (Lindner, 2004).

Previous studies using the CDA framework have found that there is a predominant tendency to present women as childish, dependent, domestic, irrational, subordinate, and weak in the American media (Kang, 1997). A study from 1970 revealed that ads tended to show women in traditional-housewife roles even though this was not representative for the diverse roles the women had in society at this time. In other words, women continued to be portrayed in stereotypical roles even after the Women's Movement (Lindner, 2004). A follow-up of this study was conducted a decade later and found that women were portrayed in a more diverse set of roles than what was seen before. Women were for instance not just seen inside a house, but also at a work place. However, women were also more often shown in sexualized roles as well as in submissive and objectified images. This might have been a response to women's rapid advancement in roles previously dominated by men, and thus a way to re-establish the power imbalance between the sexes (ibid). Another study examined the portrayal of women in advertisement in two popular magazines (*Vogue* and *Time*), over 50 years (from 1955 - 2002). This study found that there was only a slight decrease in the stereotypical depiction of women (ibid). Lindner (2004) also found that the magazine *Vogue*, which has a female target audience, depicted women more stereotypically than the magazine *Time*, which has a more general public as its target audience (ibid).

What this study will research is whether it is possible to see a change in the representation of femininity in a specific context, namely the magazine *Cosmopolitan*, when comparing two issues published 21 years apart. By using Critical Discourse

Analysis (CDA) on multimodal data, the aim is to highlight similarities and differences between the two issues.

2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodality

Within CDA, reality is seen as constructed by society and these constructions are then naturalized and rarely questioned or challenged. Language plays an essential role in the shaping of these, in that it establishes discourses. The central claim of CDA is that the way we use language, and the words we choose to use, has a significant impact on how we think about the world. The constructions can become so naturalized that they seem like the only rational or possible arrangements (Cameron, 2001). CDA is a form of analysis that strives to uncover the hidden assumptions and power ideologies embedded in written texts, such as magazines. This power can be used to uphold hegemony and is mostly based on internalized norms. In CDA the analyst strives to describe and evaluate, and it is important that the critique be based on description. In other words, CDA needs to balance description and critique. The word *critical* can be misleading, as it does not mean that the analysis is necessarily negative. Although the critical evaluation must be based on evidence, it can be both positive and negative (Hart & Cap, 2014).

CDA is a branch of *discourse analysis* which is an umbrella term that allows for big variations in both approaches and themes (Cameron, 2001). There is no single prototype of how to collect data within this type of research. It is the researcher who makes the decision of how to best combine data and methodology to answer the research question; he/she can thus incorporate a variety of approaches towards the social analysis of discourse (Fairclough, Cortese, & Ardizzone, 2012) . In this way, CDA is more an approach than a method. In other words, there are different ways to analyse discourse, but within CDA they have the same aim – to promote awareness of the intention and consequences of discourses. This study involves a critical analysis of a multimodal discourse. The methodology for this study uses CDA in light of the phenomenon of multimodality. It is thus a merger of two different fields that at the present time has not – or not yet – been merged (Leeuwen, 2013).

The term *multimodality* has, over the past 20 years, been taken up by linguists and discourse analysts to denote the integrated use of different communicative resources such as language, image, sound, and colours, in multimodal texts and communicative events (Leeuwen, 2013). Each mode can bring its own meaning, or reinforce other modes. This is in contrast to the tradition of the monomodal approach, which only considers one mode when interpreting a communicative representation. One of the main reasons for a trend toward a multimodal approach when using CDA is the increase in the blurring of the traditional roles assigned to the different modes. This development can be explained through the influence of electronic communication and globalization (Iedema, 2003). Images are easier to understand than a foreign language, and images get processed more quickly than text. By considering multimodality, the communicational representation will be described with all its complexity and richness. A multimodal approach does not favour one modality before the process of analytical research takes place. However, the process might naturally lead to more attention being given to the most dominant modes (ibid). The aim of considering multimodality in this thesis is to develop a more complete analysis. Furthermore, multimodality is a central aspect of the representation of femininity because of the tendency for women to be treated as visual objects for consumption.

3. Methodology

The methodology chapter presents different aspects of the methods that were chosen for the study. Firstly, a brief explanation of the topic choice is provided to explain why the study is focused around the magazine *Cosmopolitan*. An introduction of the magazine's history is then included to show how it has changed throughout time. Lastly, a detailed description of the study's methodological approach is presented.

3.1 Choosing research material

In 1972, the US Supreme Court passed a law making discrimination against school children based on their sex, illegal. This act has been called Title IX:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Title IX, 1972).

However, twenty years later, research showed that gender discrimination was still a problem in American schools. Congress found that gender bias was a widespread problem particularly in vocational schools, and that most such inequities had a disproportionately negative impact on girls (Gender Equity in Education Amendment, 1994) Gender bias can be unconscious and is thus a difficult thing to notice; it is a hidden form of gender discrimination. By not reflecting on the possibility of internalised gender bias, many teachers may contribute to this tendency. Congress found that equity training for teachers would be the most efficient way to eliminate this tendency (ibid).

The findings on the effects of gender bias led to the creation of the Gender Equity in Education Act in 1994. This act set out to change this tendency in the classroom, by making the teachers aware of their unconscious gender biases. In other words, there was a clear focus on how language and gender bias can lead to inequities. This project is concerned with investigating if this focus on gender bias manifested itself in the magazine *Cosmopolitan*. It is, after all, a magazine that has shown through its history that it is able to adapt and change, as the next section will illustrate.

3.2 Cosmopolitan

The first issue of *Cosmopolitan* was published in 1886, and the magazine can therefore celebrate its 130th birthday this year (2016) (Landers, 2010). Maintaining its position in a competitive market for so long has proved challenging; indeed, after only two years, it nearly had to close. It was able to continue due to a rich entrepreneur who kept it going for a few decades. However, in 1905 the magazine found itself in financial difficulties once more, before it was bought by William Randolph Hearst — the man who founded the Hearst Corporation. It has belonged to the Hearst Corporation ever since (ibid). This did not mean that the fight for survival had ended, and in 1965 The Hearst Corporation was ready to shut down the magazine for good if it had not been for a woman named Helen Gurley Brown. Brown promised to change the magazine and make it successful, and her sense of what the magazine needed to change in order to regain its popularity proved incredibly perceptive (ibid).

The popularity of the magazine has fluctuated, but it has been able to survive in a changing world, because of its capacity to adapt. Throughout the years the magazine has shown how dynamic it can be by altering its content and focus. At the very beginning, *Cosmopolitan* existed as a family literary magazine (Landers, 2010). At this time, the content was mostly articles with topics on national and international issues and fiction. It then developed to become a magazine for political commentary. This lasted for about seven years, before it transformed into a high quality fiction magazine that published stories and illustrations from popular authors and artists. Lastly, with Brown as the editor, it developed into the magazine we know today – a magazine for women that focuses on topics regarding relationships, sex, fashion, celebrities, etc., that wishes to appeal to the “fun fearless female” (ibid). Today, *Cosmopolitan* is sold in over 100 countries around the world in 61 different print editions (Cosmopolitan, 2016)

3.3 Research material

This study analyses two issues of *Cosmopolitan* (US edition). The first issue is from 1994, and the other issue is from 2015. The issue from 1994 was selected because this was the

year that the Gender Equity Education Act was presented in Congress. The issue from 2015 was selected to represent the present day. Moreover, the two magazines are published 21 years apart, and it is common to think of a generational shift to be about twenty years. Both magazines are from the month of September of their year of publication. The choice of the specific month was random and was made based on practical reasons such as how easy the magazine issues were to obtain. This study examines the content of these magazines and compare and contrasts them to see if there have been any changes in how the magazine represents femininity.

3.4 Choosing methods

This study's main task is to investigate a complex social, linguistic, and psychological phenomenon, and thus needs a methodology that can cover such complexity. Because the central claim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to become aware of the intention and consequences of discourses, it was the most appropriate framework for the task. In order for such an analysis to be satisfactory it needs to be completed in an organized way and not just be a matter of picking isolated examples to comment on (Cameron, 2001). The goal is to look for patterns in the representation of femininity. It is the repetition of patterns that contributes to naturalizing a particular discourse (ibid). In order to find patterns and in addition provide an in-depth analysis, this study combines a qualitative and quantitative approach. The aim is to deliver a comprehensive analysis that covers the data in a detailed and thorough manner. Because both issues of the magazine use a number of different modes in order to communicate its content and message, CDA is used with a focus on multimodality. This means that it is not just the text that will be considered, but also images, colours, body language, and signs.

3.4.1 Quantitative data collection

The first section consists of an analysis based on quantitative data collection where the content in each magazine has been systematized into eight categories. These categories were selected based on the seven topics that reoccurred the most, which

were: *makeup/beauty products*, *clothes/fashion*, *celebrities/entertainment*, *sex/love*, *health (physical and psychological)*, *money/career*, and *food/drink*. Topics that did not fit into any of these categories were placed in the 8th category, labelled *other*. Here is an overview of what each of the categories includes:

- Makeup/beauty products: perfume, facial wash, facial cream, deodorant, anti age cream, spray tan, body wash, teeth whitening, hairspray, etc.
- Clothes/fashion: clothes, jewellery, watches, shoes, etc.
- Celebrities/entertainment: interviews, stories, gossip, books, CDs, etc.
- Sex/love: advice, stories, tips, information, etc.
- Health: contact lenses, advice, medicine, tests, stories, fitness, etc.
- Money/career: job ads, advice, stories, etc.
- Food/drinks: coffee, soda, diet tips, recipes, etc.
- Other: information about the magazine and other articles and ads that do not fit in to any of the above categories.

While most of the content of both issues was easy to categorize, other depended on interpretation. An example of this is the article from the 2015 issue titled *How To Dress For The Job You Want*, which could belong both in the *money/career* category, and the *clothes/fashion* category. In these cases, the decision was made based on what the most prominent theme was. In this specific example, the article was placed in the *clothes/fashion* category, because the focus was mainly on clothes and fashion. Additionally, the purchase information about the items in the article was included. Another example can be found in the 1994 issue with the title *Cosmo's Guide to Sexual Wellness*. Based on this title one might believe that it belongs in the *sex/love* category. However, the article is actually about yeast infections and different types of illnesses that can develop on sexual organs, such as sexual transmitted diseases, cancer and cysts. The prominent theme was health, and this article was thus placed in the *health* category.

Categorizing the content of the magazines provided an overview that made it easier to compare and contrast the content in the two magazines. Furthermore, this formed the basis for the discussion in the qualitative analysis. In addition to placing the content in one of these eight categories, it was also placed in a sub category based on whether it

was an article or advertisement. Because these two often appear inseparable, a third sub category was added that included the hybrid content between articles and advertisement:

- Ads
- Editorial material with ratings of products, recommendations etc. where the prize information and/or brand is included.
- Articles and texts that do not include direct purchase information about a product or brand.

The results from these categorizations are presented in two charts in chapter 4. The first chart illustrates the overall content of the magazines, while the second chart illustrates how each category is divided into the three sub categories.

3.4.2 Qualitative analysis of data

The second part of the methodology chapter is a qualitative analysis of the language and images used to represent *Cosmopolitan's* image of femininity. In this analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis is applied to multimodal data in order to highlight some differences and similarities between the two magazine issues. The three items that are discussed in this section have been chosen based on their significance. Each of the topics will be analysed by using the same model. The model used in this study is inspired by Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis model, which consists of a micro-, meso-, and a macro-level. The first dimension is called the micro-level because it focuses on the details of the different modalities of the communicative item at hand. It is concerned with providing a detailed description of what is about to be analysed. This includes highlighting what modalities are most evident, describing the content, genre, and function of the text that is used, and pointing out linguistic characteristics such as rhetorical devices. Additionally, it includes information regarding the sender and target audience. After considering the item as a whole in order to provide an overview, certain aspects of interest will then be discussed in more detail in the next dimension. These aspects are considered to contribute most to the text's intention and meaning (Hellum, 2013). The second dimension is called the meso-level because it is

concerned with providing an analysis and interpretation of the most interesting aspects in the micro-level. The analysis focuses on the meaning of the use of modalities, the aim of the communicative item, and discusses the institutional frame that it operates within. The third dimension is called the macro-level because it is concerned with looking at how it all fits into a historical, social, and economic context. In other words, what context the communicative item has been created in. For the purpose of this study, the model is slightly adjusted in that dimension two and three are combined and that there will be a comparative focus between the two magazine issues throughout the whole analysis.

3.5 Reflections on the methodology

A common critique of CDA relates to the role of the analyst. Everyone has biases, whether they are conscious of them or not, and in the methodology that was chosen for this study, such biases might affect the focus of the study. Furthermore, when analysing and interpreting a magazine that is meant for a large number of people, it is impossible for the analyst to reference evidence in the text of how it is perceived by the readers. What is the evidence that these interpretations are correct, and not just the analyst imposing his/her ideological point of view or political agenda on the data? (Cameron, 2001). The question is valid, and the potential for readers to interpret a text in different ways is always there. This means that although the analyst describes the text and investigates its ideological content, it does not in any way prove that all readers will interpret it in the same way.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Chart 1 – An overall view of the content in each magazine

In the first part of this chapter, the results from the data collection are presented in two charts. The total overview of the content of each magazine can be found in the appendix.

Chart 1: Overview of content

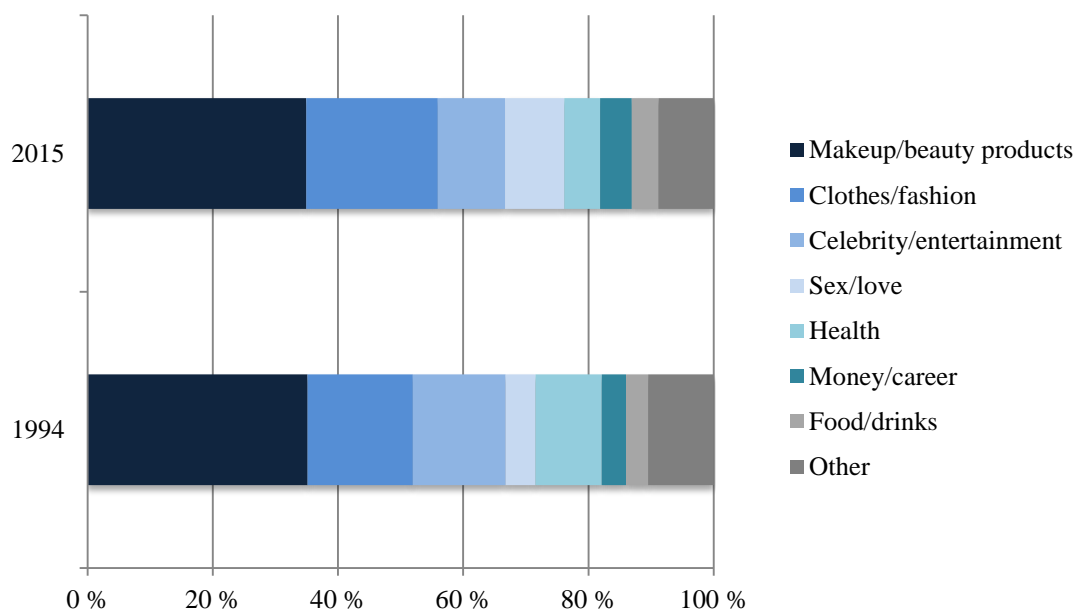


Chart 1: Overall view of magazine content.

As Chart 1 illustrates, the two magazines have a very similar distribution of themes. The largest category in both issues is *makeup/beauty products*. In the 1994 issue this category makes up 35,2% of the magazine, while in the 2015 issue it makes up 34,5% of the magazine. In other words, this category is almost exactly the same size in both magazines, and takes up over a third of the content in both cases. The category where they show the most differences is *health* where the 1994 issue has 4,9% more than the 2015 issue. The exact numbers for each category are presented on the next page.

	1994	2015	Difference
Makeup/beauty products	35,2 %	34,8 %	0,4%
Clothes/fashion	16,8 %	20,9 %	4,1%
Celebrities/entertainment	14,8 %	10,7 %	4,1%
Sex/love	4,7 %	9,4 %	4,7%
Health	10,6 %	5,7 %	4,9%
Money/career	3,9 %	5,1 %	1,2%
Food/drinks	3,5 %	4,2 %	0,7%
Other	10,5 %	8,8 %	1,7%
Total content difference averaged:			2,7%

Table 1: Content comparison of each category

4.2 Chart 2 – The sub categories

Chart 2 illustrates how each category is divided between the three sub categories. In 1994 the ads comprised 60,4% of the total; editorial material w/purchase information 2,7%; and articles 27,1%. In the issue from 2015 ads comprised 47,8% of the total; editorial material w/purchase information 13,1%; and articles 37,6%. There are thus some differences between the two issues, the main one being that the sub category *ads* is 12,6% larger in the 1994 issue than the 2015 issue, and the 2015 issue devotes 10,5% more of their content to *articles* than the 1994 issue. However, the sub category *editorial material w/purchase information* is 10,4% larger in the 2015 issue than in the 1994 issue. According to Gill (2007) beauty editors routinely receive a lot of free products from cosmetic companies in the hope that their products will appear in write-ups such as these. The same is true for clothes. It is an “informal” way to network with the editors (ibid). This tendency might have become more commonplace during the last 21 years, since there is a lot more of this type of reading material in the 2015 issue than in the 1994 issue.

Chart 2: Distribution of sub categories

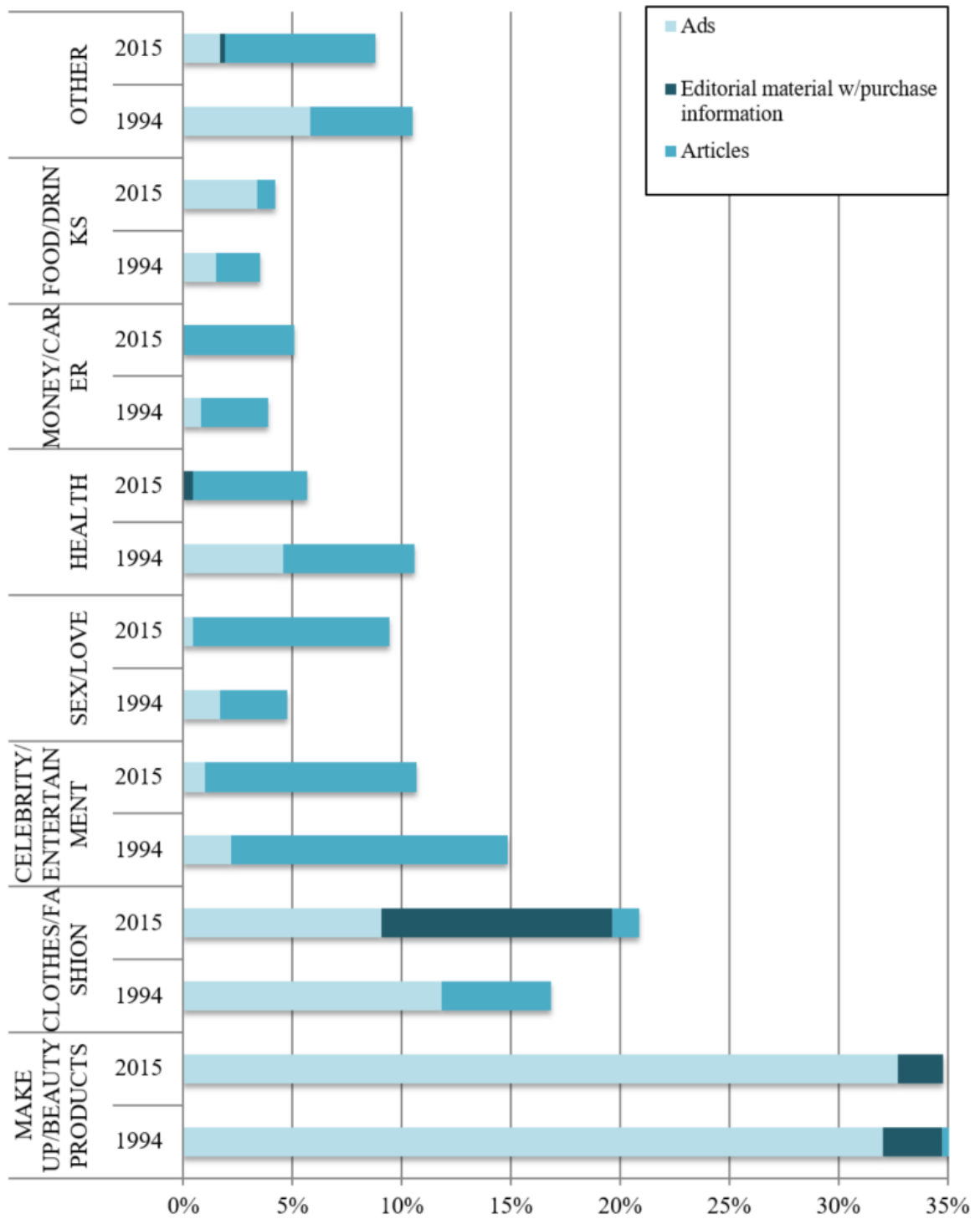


Chart 2: An overview of the sub categories within each main category

4.3 Qualitative analysis

This chapter contains an analysis of the most important tendencies. In line with the model previously described, each analysis will first include a description; then an analysis that discusses the aims, consequences, and interpretations of interesting aspects of the data; and lastly puts all these into a larger social context. Interpretation can never be objective, and the analysis is thus divided in this way to separate description from interpretation. The aim of the analysis is to highlight what the data signal about the representation of femininity in each magazine, and to compare and contrast the two. Due to the limited scope of this study, three topics have been selected for analysis. Each topic will be presented with an introduction that justifies why it was selected for further analysis. The three topics are:

1. The covers of both magazines
2. The largest category of each magazine
3. The main differences between the two magazines

4.2.1 The covers

The first topic for the qualitative analysis is the covers of both magazine issues. The reason for this is simply that the cover is the most important part of the magazine, both because it is the first thing people see and also because of everything it indexes about the contents of the magazine.

The image on the cover of the 1994 issue is of the American model and actress, Stephanie Seymour. At the time when this issue was published, she was 26 years old. The frame shows approximately 2/3 of her body, with the cut off point just below her knees. She is wearing a gold dress with leopard print around the chest. The dress is long with a cleavage ending just between her breasts. Stephanie's head is tilted to the right and she is bending slightly forward while touching her right thigh with both hands. Her nails are painted with a French manicure, and she has tanned skin. Her eyes are green and she is looking directly at the camera. Her hair is brown with

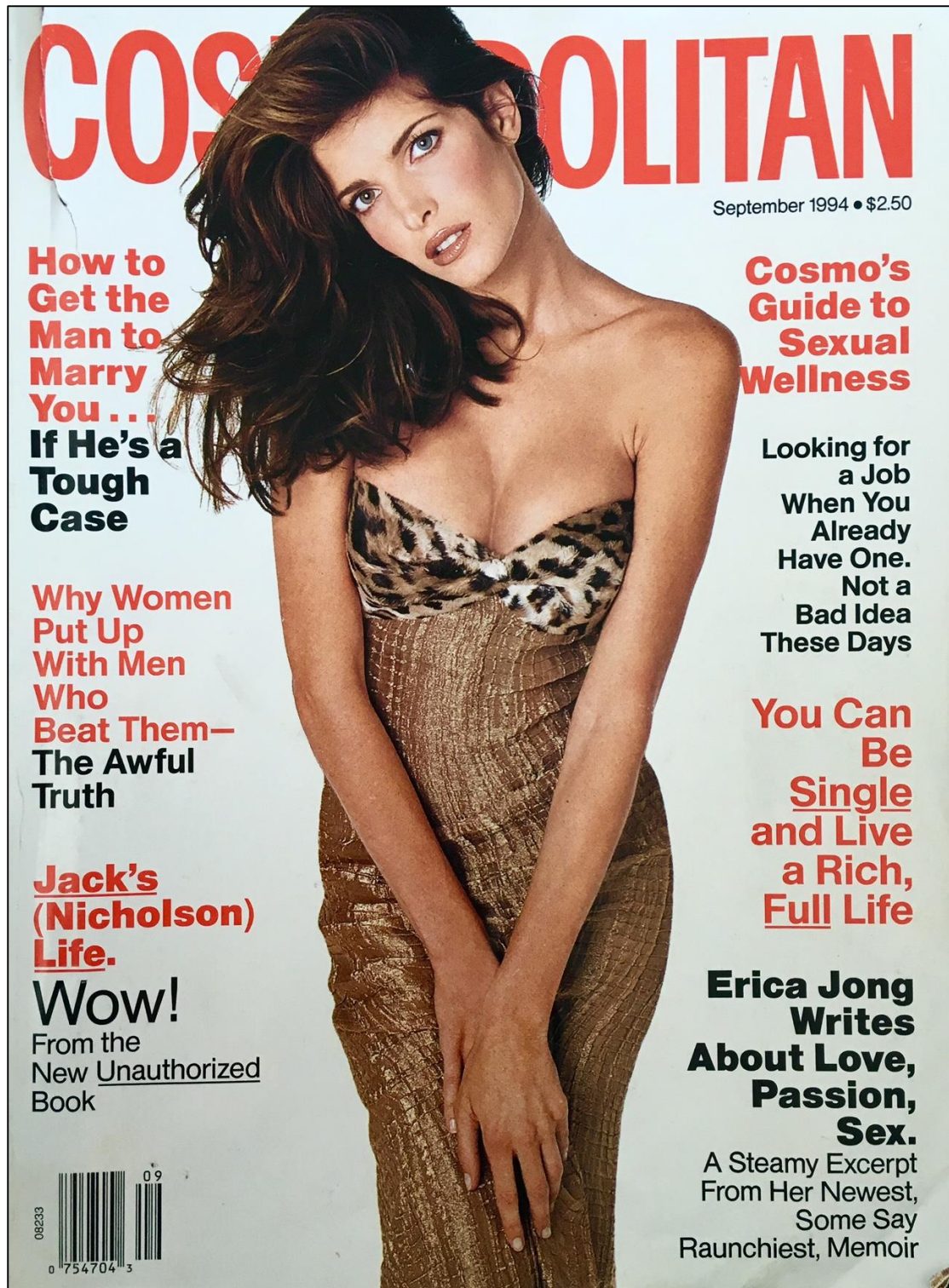


Figure 1: Magazine cover Cosmopolitan 1994 issue.

highlights and middle length. All her hair is pushed to her right shoulder. Her lips are glossy with a darker lip liner, and the rest of her makeup has a natural look. Her mouth is open so that her front teeth are showing, but she is not smiling. The title *Cosmopolitan*, written in orange capital letters, is slightly hidden behind her head.

The information about her outfit, stylist, makeup etc. can be found at the very bottom of page 9. There are seven titles on the cover written in black and orange.

1. How to Get the Man to Marry You...If He's a Tough Case
2. Why Women Put Up With Men Who Beat Them - The Awful Truth
3. Jack's (Nicholson) Life. WOW! From the New Unauthorized Book
4. Cosmo's Guide to Sexual Wellness
5. Looking for a Job When You Already Have One. Not a Bad Idea These Days
6. You Can be Single and Live a Rich Full Life
7. Erica Jong Writes About Love, Passion, Sex

A Steamy Excerpt From Her Newest, Some Say Raunchiest, Memoir

The image on the cover of the 2015 issue is of the American singer, actress, songwriter and model, Demi Lovato. At the time when this issue was published, she was 23 years old. The frame shows approximately 2/3 of her body, with the cut off point at her upper thigh. She is wearing a short silver sequin dress that stops right below her buttocks. The cleavage goes down to the middle of her stomach. Demi's left hand is placed on her hip, while her right hand is softly touching the lower right side of her neck. She is standing with her left side to the camera, with her upper body facing forward. She has brown eyes and is looking directly at the camera. Her mouth is open, so that her teeth are showing, but as with the woman on the 1994 issue, she is not smiling. She has eyelash extensions and brown eye shadow. The rest of her makeup is natural with a touch of gloss on her lips and rosy cheeks. Demi has four tattoos that are showing. One with Roman numerals on her rib case and three on her right arm of which it is only possible to see two clearly – one with ten birds, and one with the word *faith*. Her hair is black and goes down to her neck. She is wearing large hoop silver earrings and a bracelet on each wrist. There is an arrow pointing to the bracelet on her left hand with a text that reads: *Enter to Win Demi's Bling*. Her nails are painted white and she is wearing two big embedded rings on her left hand. The information about her outfit, stylist, makeup etc. can be found at the very bottom of page 32.

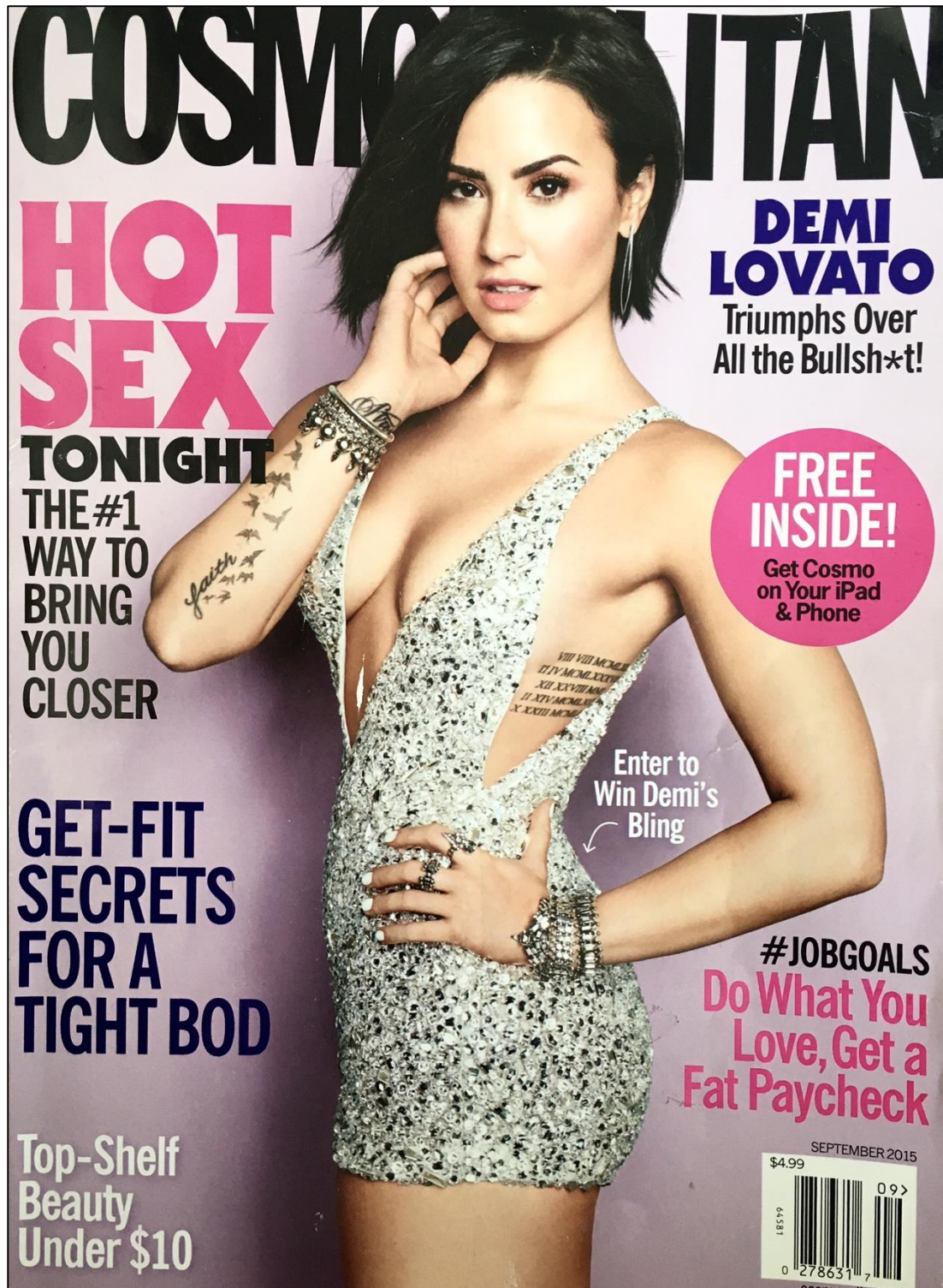


Figure 2: Magazine cover Cosmopolitan 2015 issue.

The title *Cosmopolitan*, written in capital black letters, is slightly hidden behind her head. The background is purple. There are six titles on the cover and the texts are written with pink, purple, black and white.

1. HOT SEX TONIGHT
THE #1 WAY TO BRING YOU CLOSER
2. GET-FIT SECRETS FOR A TIGHT BOD
3. Top-Shelf Beauty Under \$10
4. DEMI LOVATO
Triumphs Over All the Bullsh*t!
5. #JOBGOALS
Do What You Love, Get a Fat Paycheck
6. FREE INSIDE!
Get Cosmo on Your iPad & Phone

Most of the titles have been written either fully or partly in capital letters. Symbols such as exclamation marks are also used.

It goes without saying that in order for a magazine to survive, it needs to sell. The goal of the cover for both issues is therefore to grab potential buyer's attention so that they will wish to purchase the magazine. The cover is the first thing people see, and it is important that it sparks interest, stands out from its competitors, and is recognizable. McCracken (1993) claims that most covers try to construct an idealized image of the group of buyers that they wish to reach. The target group for *Cosmopolitan* is women between the ages 18-34 (Cosmopolitan, 2016) and this explains why both the covers show an image of a woman in her early twenties. Although these issues have been published 21 years apart, the images on the covers have a lot of similarities. Both covers show a beautiful young celebrity wearing a sexy outfit displaying their bodies while looking directly at the camera with an open mouth, without smiling. Moreover, they both had successful careers at the time when the photo was taken. Evidence suggests that people's behaviours are more likely to be influenced by the behaviour of people with high status in society, such as celebrities (Bandura, 1986). In both cases this ideal is a young, slim woman with big eyes, dark hair, flawless skin, full glossy lips, who is also successful. They are both presented as flawless versions of what constitutes the feminine ideal according to *Cosmopolitan*, and this is something that the target audience will want to identify with (McCracken, 1993). In order to sell as many magazines as possible, it is important to pay attention to what sells. Research show that consumers expect trustworthiness and

accountability when physical attractive models are used (Kamins & Gupta, 1994) and that physically attractive people are perceived as more friendly, sociable and possessing intelligence and confidence (Adams, 1977). This explains why both issues have a beautiful woman on the cover, and also why it is so appealing for women to want to improve their appearance.

The biggest difference between the two women on the covers is their body language. Stephanie Seymour, on the cover from 1994, has a tilted head, which can be seen as a signal of immaturity or modesty (Givens, 1978). Additionally, her hands are folded on top of each other in a childish way. Her body language signals submissiveness and it looks as though she needs protection. Demi Lovato's right hand is touching her neck and she is standing with a straight back. This posture signals confidence. Her left hand is placed on her hip, which accentuates it. The other big difference is the tattoos. Historically, tattoos have been associated with criminals and people of lower socioeconomic status (Orend & Gagne, 2009). Today, tattoos are a widespread phenomena in North American culture, and people get tattoos for reasons such as self-expression and rebellion. Individuality is a typical American ideal, and in the interview with Demi inside the magazine she says that she identifies herself with being a rebel and emphasises that she "finds her own way" (p.168). The interview with Demi takes up seven pages, while the interview with Stephanie is only one third of a page.

Readers usually look at the illustration/image first, then read the headline, and lastly read the body copy (Bovee & Arens, 1986). The visual image is therefore of great importance. Part of the aim of the magazine is to win consent for a particular construction of femininity (McCracken, 1993), and if the images on the covers are a representation of what constitutes the feminine ideal and the "Cosmo-girl", one could assume that the titles on the cover and content of the magazine says something about what these women are concerned with, or what one needs to do in order to become more like them and be a "fun fearless female".

Just like the images, the titles that have been selected for the covers are chosen to arouse interest. Together with the images, they signal what the magazine wants the buyer to believe is the content they can expect to find inside. However, when comparing the topics on the cover with the content in each magazine, it shows that it

is not very representative of what is inside. While the category *love/sex* stands for only 4,7% of the content inside the magazine, it stands for 42,9% of the categories on the cover from 1994. The category *health*, which stands for 10,6% of the content inside, represents 28,6% of the categories on the cover. While the largest category in the magazine, *makeup/beauty products*, is in fact not represented on the cover at all. The cover from 2015 provides a more accurate presentation of what the content of the magazine is, although still being far from presenting the actual percentage. The category *love/sex* stands for 16,6% of the cover, while only 9,4% of the content inside. The category *money/career* is also given 16,6% of the cover, while only representing 5,5% of the content inside. The biggest category *makeup/beauty products*, which stands for 34,8% of the content inside the magazine, represents 16,6% of the cover. In other words, the magazine covers do not provide an accurate representation of what the buyer can expect to find inside. The reason for this might be that the magazine issues wish to show their diversity of themes. It might also mean that they are aware that certain topics, such as sex, are more likely to catch people's attention. On the 2015 cover, the words "HOT SEX" is written in big pink letters almost three times the size as the rest of the words on the cover. This is an example of an unobtrusive, yet effective way to catch the attention of busy people in the store.

The way that the titles have been formulated implies that there are valuable answers and secrets inside the magazine about how to improve one's life. The tone resembles a friend who is giving advice on how to live your life, and what is acceptable. Examples from the 1994 issue include the titles *Cosmo's Guide to Sexual Wellness*, and *How to Get the Man to Marry You...If He's a Tough Case*. The same trend can be seen on the 2015 issue with the titles *Looking for a Job When You Already Have One. Not a Bad Idea These Days, You Can be Single and Live a Rich Full Life* and *GET-FIT SECRETS FOR A TIGHT BOD*. The use of the word *secret* further strengthens the appeal to the individual and signals to the potential buyer that there is an exclusive "Cosmo-girl" community where they share advice and secrets. The titles *#JOBGOALS Do What You Love, Get a Fat Paycheck* and *HOT SEX TONIGHT THE #1 WAY TO BRING YOU CLOSER* both use the sign #, although they mean different things in the two titles. This symbol has become much used in the last years because of social media such as Instagram and Twitter, and signals that *Cosmopolitan* and

“Cosmo-girls” keep up with current trends. With the exception of one exclamation point, such signs are not used on the 1994 cover.

4.2.2 The largest category in each magazine

The largest category, by far, in both magazines is the category titled *makeup/beauty products*. In the 1994 issue, this category comprises 35,2% of the content of the magazine. In the 2015 issue, it comprises 34,5% of the content. In other words, the two magazines contain a very similar percentage of this category even though they are published over two decades apart. Because of the numerical percentage that this category presented, it was chosen for further analysis.

The category *makeup/beauty products* includes ads, editorial material with purchase information, and articles on makeup, perfume, nail polish, facial wash, body wash, hair removal, deodorant, skin care, spray tan, hair spray, shampoo, hair styling balm, teeth whitening etc. Such products are used in order to fix, prepare and better ones looks by covering up, colouring, removing or hiding certain aspects of one’s natural appearance. This signals that there is an expectation that the reader wishes to improve her looks. This in turn presupposes that the way she looks now is not good enough. The magazine *Cosmopolitan* implies that these products are the key to becoming a “Cosmo-girl”. Furthermore, the ideology of perpetual self-improvement implies perpetual imperfection. Cosmetic products are a way to easily enhance one’s appearance, and research shows that the use of makeup heightens reported confidence levels and self-image in women (Cash & Cash, 1982). The use of cosmetics has also been positively correlated with how satisfied women report they are with their looks (ibid).

In the 1994 issue, the article titled *Beauty helpline*, imply that beauty is such an urgent matter that it needs its own helpline for those women who desperately need advice on how to look more beautiful. Women are portrayed as being in dire need for the advice that the magazine can provide. It is a common factor among all cultures that its members are required to do certain things to their appearance that changes its “natural” look to something else in order to fit the ideals of cultural beauty (Black &

Sharma, 2001). However, in certain cultures, such as in North America, there are major differences between what kind of work is required in order to be considered masculine versus feminine. Black and Sharma (2001) suggest that what is considered feminine in western countries requires a much more extensive form of care than masculinity. Although the pressure on males to look a certain way is increasing, the ideal of femininity for women requires daily upkeep in a way that is not needed for masculinity. In other words, masculinity is “real” without make-up, creams, hair-removal etc., while femininity is a state that requires daily maintenance (ibid). The motivation for upholding such an unrealistic standard is obvious, because if women were able to reach this ideal and become so independent that they no longer needed advice, the magazine would fail to secure as many readers. The goal is thus not to provide advice and help that can provide lasting solutions. This might be the reason why most of the traits that are considered feminine are lifelong goals that can never be reached once and for all. Flawless skin, glossy hair and long eyelashes are states that demand constant maintenance. Furthermore, there can always be new and better ways to reach these established goals (Conradie, 2013).

Many of the products that are advertised offer solutions to certain problems. Additionally, *synthetic personalisation* is frequently used in the ads in both magazines as a way to create the illusion of the “Cosmo-girl” community. Synthetic personalisation is “a compensatory tendency to give the impression of treating each of the people 'handled' *en masse* as an individual.” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 52). This makes the reader feel like they are being personally addressed. A text may often be written in an informal style in order to connote a higher degree of intimacy. The linguistic markers of synthetic personalization include the use of personal pronouns such as *I* and *you*. Words such as *advice* and *secret* are also used to create this feeling of intimacy, as they are words you normally associate with a close friend or someone you trust. Furthermore, language that signals empathy by saying things such as *we understand, you deserve it, we know you work hard*, etc., is also frequently used. (Cameron, 2001).

Conradie (2013) argues that the way the magazine create discourses like these is a misuse of trust. The aim of the magazine is to make their readers believe that they are there to help and guide them on how to solve a variety of problems, while these so-

called problems have been manufactured by the advertisers that keep the magazine alive. The problems are created through the use of rhetorical devices such as synthetic personalisation, presuppositions and implications. *Presupposition* is when certain meanings of the preposition needs to be accepted in order for the whole preposition to make sense (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Presuppositions can be used to construct ideological discourses. This device forces the reader to subscribe to these discourses in order for the text to make sense (ibid). An example of this is the advertisement for anti-wrinkle cream in the 1994 issue that says *A look that defies time* (p.5). In order for this advertisement to make sense, the reader is required to agree with the ideology that wrinkles are something that should be avoided, and that one should try to hide one's natural age. *Implication* is when meaning arises between the lines. An example of this is the advertisement for a face cleansing product in the 2015 issue that says *Instantly draws out 2x more dirt, oil and impurities than a basic cleaner* (p.59). The implication here is that your basic cleaner is leaving half the dirt, oil and impurities on your skin.

Here are some examples from the *makeup/beauty products* category that use rhetorical devices to implicate meaning and normalize certain discourses – from the 1994 issue (September, Vol 217):

Estée Lauder (p.12-13).

Product: foundation

Text: *A makeup that covers flawlessly...yet looks natural*

Implication: Natural looking skin is good, but only if it appears flawless.

O`Loreal (p. 24-25).

Product: hair colour

Text: *For superior gray coverage*

Implication: Gray hair is something one wants to cover.

Christian Dior (p.137).

Product: cellulite control cream

Text: *Shapes-up, Slims-down, Smooths-out*

Implication: Cellulites are a problem that needs to be controlled.

Gillette (p.67).

Product: hair razor)

Text: *So you'll get remarkably close shave even around those hard to reach places*

Implication: Body hair is bad, and even hard to reach places should be shaved.

Here are some examples from the *makeup/beauty products* category that use rhetorical devices to implicate meaning and normalize certain discourses – from the 2015 issue (September, Vol. 259):

Covergirl (p. 12-13).

Product: mascara

Text: *Lash styler for 400% bigger volume*

Implication: Eyelashes should have as much volume as possible.

Clinique (p. 16-17).

Product: foundation

Text: *Full coverage with none of the weight*

Implication: One should conceal flaws in natural skin.

O'Loreal (p. 24-25).

Product: high shine shampoo

Text: *Dull hair? Change it. Gloss it*

Implication: Natural hair is dull.

European wax center (p. 93).

Treatment: wax

Text: *Fall's must-have fashion accessory; Irresistible skin*

Implication: Hairless skin is irresistible.

Sally Hansen (p. 127).

Product: Airbrush leg makeup

Text: *Perfection is just a step away. No sun. No salon. No streaks*

Implication: Legs should look flawless and not be pale, and perfection is attainable with this product.

Although both magazines use these rhetorical devices to the same degree, there is a difference in the specific makeup and beauty products that are given the most attention in the two magazines. In the 1994 issue, ads for women's perfumes take up 18% of the category, while in the 2015 issue, perfumes for women only take up 0,8%. This might imply that a strong fragrance was a more essential part of femininity 21 years ago. Why this should be is difficult to say, but one reason might be that there has been an increasing awareness of how perfume can lead to allergies. It can also mean that the perfume industry has gone over to using different channels for advertising such as social media and Internet ads. In both issues, the product within the *makeup/beauty products* category that receives the most attention is makeup. Makeup includes mascara, foundation, lipstick, eye shadow, rouge, and lip liner. In the 1994 issue 22,6% of the category *makeup/beauty products* is makeup, while in the 2015 issue it comprises 29%.

The goal of the focus on makeup and beauty products is to sell these commodities to as many people as possible in order to receive sufficient revenue. For these (often expensive) products to sell, there needs to be a demand. Because none of these products are essential for survival, the need and desire for them must be stimulated. The economy in North-American society is such that products and goods are not simply produced in order to fulfil needs, but needs are stimulated through various media. A common way to arouse needs is by appealing to such things as *lifestyle* and *identity*. Collective identities such as lifestyle identities, are where people claim a certain membership as a way of defining who they are (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Lifestyle identities started to emerge when corporations searched for new methods of constructing demands for certain products (Machin & Van Leeuwen, 2007). The term *identity* here is used in the understanding of "who people are to each other" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 6). The magazine *Cosmopolitan* represents a certain lifestyle. In order to show that one associates with this particular lifestyle one can use certain clothes and products to signal membership. An important aspect of identifying with a certain group is also to signal what groups one is *not* a part of. Lifestyle identities play an important role in modern identity construction. The idea behind this is that one can

apparently transform one's sense of self, simply by purchasing certain goods. This promise can lead to a constant feeling of unfulfilled desire (ibid).

The close connection between a person's sense of self and the consumption of products is something that advertisers are well aware of. Aspects such as class and race have become less important, while the idea that one could purchase an identity has become more significant. Buying new things is not simply trade, but a comfort and a way of "improving" oneself. In order for people to position themselves in the social space, different goods are used to signal where they belong. Bourdieu (1984) called this "cultural capital" and saw it as a way of expression of different classes. Today this "cultural capital" is more likely to signal what sub culture one identifies with, or a certain lifestyle. The makeup and beauty products thus have a *symbolic* value as well.

The social meanings that are attached to certain goods play an essential part in how their value is estimated for advertisers. The connection between identity and consumption is strong, and Campbell (1987) even claims that we consume according to who we want to be. This is something that the creators of the magazines know and enforce by encouraging the potential buyers of a product to associate outer change with inner change and feelings. There are many examples of this in both magazines. In the 1994 issue, lipstick ads use words such as *sophisticated*, *playful*, *imaginative* and *bold*. In the 2015 issue, lipstick ads use words such as *desire*, *crave*, *unique*, *seductive*, *fantasy*, and *romance*. There are no limits to how much one can improve and change. Some claim that this extreme consumption of goods and services has replaced the authentic growth of the self, and that the tendency to portray even our identity as something that can be purchased, is a cynical development. This negative way of viewing the connection between identity and consumption comes from the Frankfurt School, which strongly critiqued the manner in which the consumer is manipulated (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In this view identity is an element that becomes exploited in order for producers to profit. Others argue that people's identity is far from being malleable and easy to manipulate, and that consumers are capable of resisting or negotiate the codes of the society they identify with (ibid).

The wish for wanting people to identify with the magazine might be the reason for one of the main differences that quickly became apparent when looking through the magazines, namely the fact that there is a much more diverse group of models used in the issue from 2015, than in the issue from 1994. Although there are a few exceptions, the majority of the models used in the *makeup/beauty products* category from the 1994 issue are white women. White women comprise the largest group of models in the 2015 issue as well, however, there are a lot more images of women of African and Asian descent as well. An attempt to count and categorize the different ethnicities proved problematic, because there was such a variety of colours, races, and mixes. Furthermore, due to the limited scope of this study, it was not possible to analyse all the images used in each magazine. The significant fact, however, is that in the 2015 issues there was a great deal more racial variety. This might imply that there has been a change in what is considered the beauty standard when it comes to skin tones and ethnicity. The world has become gradually more globalized between the publication dates between the two magazine issues and the increase in diversity might suggest that the magazine is attempting to ensure more women have someone to identify with, and in that way reach out to a larger audience. It might also be a result of the fact that more African American women have experienced an upward social mobility from the working class to the middle class in the US within the last two decades, and have thus become a more attractive target audience for *Cosmopolitan* and its advertisers (Hackett & Byars, 1996). After all, becoming a “fun fearless female” is not likely to be the main priority when struggling with poverty.

Advertisers use commonly and culturally embedded ideas of beauty to show targeted groups what the desirable goal is (Guthrie, Kim, & Jung, 2008). Although not all women will try, want, or succeed in attaining this particular standard, it forms an unavoidable backdrop. Furthermore, when men chose a partner, physical attractiveness in the woman plays a more important role than it does for women when choosing a male partner (Mazur, 1986). Many studies have showed that when asked to list the most attractive features in the other sex, there is a clear tendency for men to rate physical attributes higher than women tend to do (Fletcher et al., 2004). Social opportunities for women are therefore more closely linked with appearance, and the reward for bowing to the pressure of cultural beauty standards is thus larger (Mazur, 1986).

4.2.3 Differences

The two topics that have been discussed above have shown that there are a lot of similarities between the two magazines. The last topic for qualitative analysis will, however, focus on the two main differences that can be found in the representation of femininity. Firstly, both magazines include interviews with male celebrities, but a comparison shows that there are great differences in how they are portrayed. These examples suggest that there might have been a change in the limits between femininity and masculinity. The other difference that will be discussed is smoking, which is apparent in the 1994 issue, but cannot be found anywhere in the 2015 issue. This is included to illustrate how changes in the content of the magazine can be affected by social factors such as legislation.

The portrayal of male celebrities

In the 1994 issue, there are three articles about a male celebrity: the actor Kevin Bacon (p.178-181), the actor Kelsey Grammer (p.86-88), and the actor Jack Nicholson (p.236-275). In the 2015 issue there is only one article about a male celebrity: the singer Justin Bieber (p.184-190).

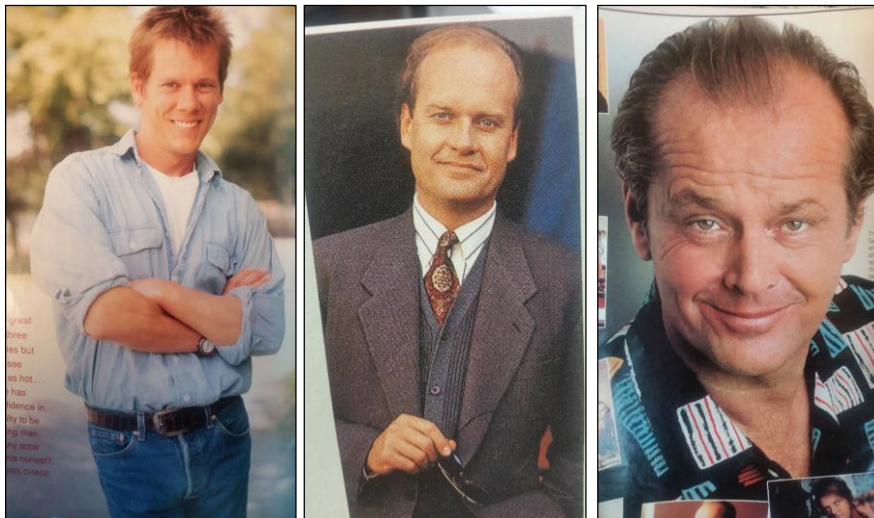


Figure 3: Male celebrities in the issue from 1994. From the left: Kevin Bacon, Kelsey Grammer, and Jack Nicholson.

In the piece about Kevin Bacon the main picture of him takes up a full page and shows 2/3 of his body. He is standing up, looking directly at the camera while smiling. His arms are crossed on his chest, and he is leaning slightly on his left leg.

He is wearing denim jeans with a leather belt and a denim shirt with a white t-shirt underneath. The title of the piece is *Totally Candid*. When this article was written, Kevin Bacon was 28 years old and had two children. In the main picture in the piece about Kelsey Grammer, he is wearing a grey suit with a striped shirt and a red decorated tie. He is standing up and holding a pair of sun glasses in his right hand. He is looking directly at the camera and smiling. The picture takes up about one tenth of the page, and shows 2/3 of his body. The title of the piece is *One Wild Romantic* with the word *wild* underlined. When this article was written, Kelsey Grammer was 39 years old. Grammer also had two children at this time, but the article does not portray him as a family man; it rather focuses on the many tragedies in his life, including his divorces. In the piece about Jack Nicholson, the main picture of him takes up a full page and shows his face and parts of his upper body. He is looking directly at the camera and smiling. He is wearing a black shirt with white and blue squares. His shirt is opened so that his chest hair is showing. Jack was 57 years old when this picture was taken and had five children. The article focuses on how adventurous he is.



Figure 4: The male celebrity in the 2015 issue: Justin Bieber.

The piece with Justin Bieber in the issue from 2105 is a combination of an interview and a photo-shoot. The purchase information about the clothes he is wearing can be found at the bottom of each page. The main picture of him takes up two pages and shows 2/3 of his body. He is sitting down on a bench press, looking to the side and not smiling. His hands lie on top of each other between his thighs. He is wearing Calvin Klein briefs and no shirt. He has four tattoos on his upper body and tattoo

sleeves on both arms. The title of the piece is *The Fighter*. Justin Bieber was 19 when this picture was taken. In contrast to the other male celebrities, he is not wearing a shirt and he is not smiling. The focus of the piece is on the pictures of him and how he looks, and there is very limited textual material to read. The text reads: *Don't stop Believing. After a handful of teenage missteps, boy wonder turned full-fledged sex symbol, Justin Bieber, rebrands, rebuilds, and flexes his muscles as a musical force to be reckoned with. We, of course, can't look away* (p.184).

This text uses presupposition and naturalization to objectify the male celebrity. Since you have to *begin* something in order to be able to stop, the first sentence presupposes that the reader is already a Justin Bieber fan. By talking about how he *used* to be a young immature boy, but that he is now a *man* with muscles, the text signals that it is ok to fancy him. The last sentence naturalizes the objectification by using the phrase *of course*, implying that the reader basically has no choice but to admire him.

Although it is difficult to generalize based on such limited material, it is noteworthy how very differently these men are portrayed. Kevin Bacon is portrayed as a sweet, humble, family man. Kelsey Grammer is portrayed as a bad boy who has been saved by love and Jack Nicholson is portrayed as a successful and adventurous man. Shared traits between these three men are that they are smiling, wearing shirts (all with collars), and look mature. Justin Bieber, on the other hand, is portrayed as a sexy rebel and the focus is not on his life or career, but rather on his looks. This is not a study of how representations of masculinity have changed; nevertheless it is noteworthy that it appears that the construction of femininity increasingly has licensed the objectification of men, especially male celebrities. Although the articles with the male celebrities show a clear tendency for more sexualised images of men in the most recent issue, there is some content in the 1994 issue that goes counter to this interpretation. The article titled *My Love Affair With Baseball, or Bun Appétit!* (p.156) talks about how the main reason why women love to watch baseball is because of the attractive players. The text in the piece reads: *The lure of the game – for us women at least – has little to do with runs, hits, and slides, but much ado about seductive backsides*. The article shows three images of male baseball players from behind, focusing on their buttocks. This is a counter example that points to the fact that the tendency to objectify men could also be found in the 1994 issue. Furthermore, this

text signals that real women are heterosexuals. This form of heteronormativity is more present in the 1994 issue than in the 2015 issue, which includes an article about how some women are turned on by gay porn and also a few images of same-sex kissing.

Smoking

In the category labelled *other* in the 1994 issue, 19,6% is attributed to advertisements of cigarettes. In the 2015 issue, there are no cigarette ads at all. This difference is most likely a result of legislation on advertising cigarettes that have occurred in the last decades (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2016).

The three ads on cigarettes each take up two full pages. The first cigarette ad is for red Marlboros (p.84-85). The ad shows cowboys in a desert landscape that looks like the Midwestern US. There are seven men and eight horses. Two of the men are riding a horse while using their lassos, while the rest of the men are sitting or leaning against a wooden fence. There are no women in the ad. Although this ad can be found in a women's magazine, it seems as though the target group for this ad is men rather than women. This might have a connection with the fact that women tend to do most of the grocery shopping in the household, and thus buy cigarette for their spouses. Furthermore, it creates a clear contrast to the "feminine" cigarettes.

The ad says *Come to Marlboro Country*, and shows a cigarette box with one cigarette lying on top. In the left corner there is a warning that reads: *SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight*. The same warning can be found in the second cigarette ad. This ad shows an image of a young woman smiling while holding a slim cigarette. She is wearing bright coloured clothes and heavy jewellery. The background is pink. The text reads: *Misty. Slim 'n sassy and Slim price. Sassy pack*. (p.132-133). There is an image of two packs of cigarettes. The boxes are white with pink, green, blue and a yellow stripe and reads: *Lights slims*. In the same ad on the page to the right there is an advertisement for jewellery such as earrings and bracelets. The text reads: *Misty jewelry. Very sassy*. At the bottom of this page there is an order form where you can order the jewellery. By signing this order you certify that you are at least 21 years of age and that you wish to receive free cigarette samples in the mail. In other words, by

ordering jewellery you are also agreeing to receive cigarettes in the mail. The ad is signalling that in order to be *sassy* you need both the jewellery and the slim cigarettes.

The third ad is for even slimmer cigarettes. The text is written in pink and blue with a bright yellow background. It reads: *There is no slimmer way to smoke. Capri super slims* (p.176-177). This ad has eight images of eight elegant women each holding a slim cigarette: five close ups of women smiling, one showing a woman dancing, one taking a walk, and one with her hands on her slim waist with a slim cigarette in her hand. All the women are wearing bright colours and they all have bright white teeth. Although this ad is clearly targeted at young women, the warning post in this ad does not say anything about the dangers of smoking during pregnancy. It says: *SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.*

Both of the ads that were targeted at women emphasize the word *slim*. The goal of this could be to get the reader to associate smoking with the word *slim*. In other words, if you smoke you will be slim. This fact happens to include some truth, as smoking suppresses appetite. The use of bright colours in these ads also suggests that they wish to signal a youthful and playful image. Bright colours and white teeth signal health and happiness. The ads are connecting smoking with thinness, health and happiness.

The fact that there are no ads for cigarettes in the 2015 issue is an example of how legislation can affect the content of women's magazines. In other words, the content is not just driven by consumer trends, but also other social factors.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to compare the representation of femininity in two issues of the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* published 21 years apart. More specifically, the research aimed at addressing the following questions: What major themes emerge in the representation of femininity in the two issues of *Cosmopolitan*? How is femininity represented with specific regards to language use in the two issues of *Cosmopolitan*? And, what role does multimodality play in the representation of femininity in the two issues of *Cosmopolitan*?

Using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, while considering multimodality, the content of each magazine issue was examined with a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. The analysis indicated seven main themes dominating the content: *makeup/beauty products*, *clothes/fashion*, *celebrities/entertainment*, *sex/love*, *health (physical and psychological)*, *money/career*, and *food/drinks*. The largest category in both magazines was the category labelled *makeup/beauty products*. The qualitative analysis provided a discussion of the different reasons for this and especially highlighted the financial dependency this magazine have with their advertisers. A comparison between the categories in each magazine revealed that the percentages were remarkably similar with the average difference being only 2,7%.

When focusing on the language, the study found that there were a number of different rhetorical devices in both magazine issues such as synthetic personalisation, presuppositions, and implications used to create and uphold certain discourses. These discourses concentrated mainly on the perpetual strive for what *Cosmopolitan* portrays as perfection. Furthermore, the social significance and influences that the normalization of these discourses might have, such as gender bias and stereotyping, were questioned and problematized.

The focus on multimodal data revealed that there were few differences when it came to the visual presentation of women in the two issues. The main difference being that there were a more diverse group of models in the issue from 2015. The qualitative analysis of the images on the covers concluded that there were only small variances

between the two, the main one being that the issue from 2015 showed a woman with a more confident pose than the earlier issue.

Previous studies suggested that social change does affect the way femininity is represented in media, and there were a few elements that supported this in the study, such as the lack of presence of cigarette ads in the 2015 issue, and in the portrayal of male celebrities. This does not mean that we can conclude that femininity is socially constructed in contrast to a matter of inborn traits, but rather that changes in society can affect the manner in which femininity is expressed in media.

The goal of this study was to investigate if there has been a change in the representation of femininity in the lifestyle magazine *Cosmopolitan* from 1994 to 2015 by using CDA. Although the methodology was able to effectively address the research question, the study is based on a small sample, and therefore has some clear limitations when it comes to how much one can generalize based on the data that was found. There is a chance that the two issues that were chosen for analysis are not representative of the magazine and its usual content. A suggestion for further research is to compare all twelve issues from the chosen years and see if the same tendencies are present in a similar data analysis.

However, based on the aspects that were considered in this study: the distribution of themes in the two issues, and the language and different modalities used to represent femininity, the results showed that femininity is represented in a very similar way in the two magazine issues despite being published a generation apart. In other words, this study did not find any signs that the Gender Equity Act and the increasing knowledge about how people are affected by stereotypes has had any impact on how femininity is represented in the magazine *Cosmopolitan*.

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Appendix

Appendix A.

A. Additional Chart data

The following content is an overview of the raw data used in the analysis. The data structure is given below.

1. Makeup/Beauty products
2. Clothes/Fashion
3. Celebrities/Entertainment
4. Sex/Love
5. Health (Physical and Psychological)
6. Money/Career
7. Food/Drinks
8. Other

The colour coding used in the tables is shown in Table 2: **Colour coding used in raw data tables.**

Category
Ads
Editorial material with purchase information
Articles
Total

Table 2: Colour coding used in raw data tables.

Total number of pages in 1994 issue: 290

Total number of pages in 2015 issue: 238

1. MAKEUP/BEAUTY PRODUCTS

1994

Makeup and Products	
Make up	22,5
Hair removal	2,3
Nails	3,3
Facial wash	3
Body wash	3
Perfume (woman)	16
Perfume (man)	5
Parfume (man&woman)	2
Deodorant	4
Skin care	5
Micro peel	1
Cellulite cream	1
Anti age cream	6
What's new (body, make up, beauty) p.48	2
Beauty Hollywood-Style (spa) p.206	6
Beauty helpline (Q&A) p.32	0,3
• Total number of pages	82,4
• Ads in percentage	25,4 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	2,7 %
• Articles in percentage	0,1 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	28,2 %

Hair Products	
Shampoo and conditioner	9
Haircolor	6
Hairspray	2
Straightening creme	1,3
Heat protector spray	1
What's hot for hair? p.154	1
• Total number of pages	20,3
• Ads in percentage	6,6 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	0,3 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	7,0 %

2015

Makeup and Products	
Make up	35
Perfume (woman)	1
Nails	5
Facial wash	4
Body wash	2,5
Hair removal	4
Perfume man	2
Face cream	2
Acne cream	1
Pills for better skin	1
Teeth whitening	1
Spray tan	1
What's your sign? p.115	2
10\$ tops p.124	1
Sexy beauty all month long p.13	1
The R word p.134	1
• Total number of pages	64,5
• Ads in percentage	25,1 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	2,1 %
• Articles in percentage	0,0 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	27,2 %

Hair Products	
Shampoo and conditioner	10
Haircolor	6
Hairspray	1
Styling balm	1
I went grey...on purpose p.122	1
• Total number of pages	19
• Ads in percentage	7,6 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	0,4 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	8,0 %

2. CLOTHES/FASHION

1994

Clothes and Fashion	
Clothes	14,5
Jewelry	4
Sport clothes	2
Sport shoes	4
Watches	2
Clothes (men only)	1
Underwear	2
Shoes	5
Patent leather for fall p.52	1
In my own mind (Bridesmaid dresses) p.56	1
Getting ready for fall p.136	0,7
Fashion (runways) p.190	12
• Total number of pages	49,2
• Ads in percentage	11,8 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0 %
• Articles in percentage	5,0 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	16,8 %

2015

Clothes/Fashion	
Clothes	17,5
Jewelry	3
Sport clothes	1
The A-line mini p.94	3
Style p.100	4,5
Style under \$50 p.112	1
Hotlist	2,5
Fall's most wanted p.178	6
How to dress for the job you want p.230	1
Fashion p.170	7
The pants that almost ruined my relationship p.84	2
Four tricky trends to try p.92	1
• Total number of pages	48,5
• Ads in percentage	9,1 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	10,5 %
• Articles in percentage	1,3 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	20,9 %

3. CELEBRITIES/ENTERTAINMENT

1994

Celebrities	
Are the stars out tonight? P.102	1,3
Red hot right now p.152	1
Cosmo tells all-people p.174	1
Kevin Bacon p.178	4
When I lost my virginity p.182	4
Jack Nicholson p.236	12
Jackie:the truth behind the fairy tale p.242	9
• Total number of pages	32,3
• Ads in percentage	0
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	11,1 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	11,1 %

Entertainment	
Books	2
Psychics	2,3
Mail order CD and cassettes (additional)	2
Movies p.26	1
Books p.38	1
Horoscope p.74	1
Travel update p.76	0,7
Update on cosmo events p.97	1
• Total number of pages	11
• Ads in percentage	2,2 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	1,6 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	3,8 %

2015

Celebrities	
Who's that girl? p.72	1
Safe--> sexy p.78	1
Interview with Demi Lovato p.163	8
All about Soo Joo p.177	1
Interview with Justin Bieber p.184	6
• Total number of pages	17
• Ads in percentage	0
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	7,2 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	7,2 %

Entertainment	
Books	1,3
Magazine add	1
35 things to do this month p.36	2
Cosmo reads p.40	1
This happened p.56	1
Horoscope p.232	2
• Total number of pages	8,3
• Ads in percentage	1,0 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	2,5 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	3,5 %

4. SEX/LOVE

1994

Sex	
Condoms	0,2
Phone sex	1
Sex audiobook	0,3
Sex education for me (video)	1
Intimate treasures	2
Sexual aides	0,3
His point of view (condoms) p.58	1
• Total number of pages	5,8
• Ads in percentage	1,6 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	0,3 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	2,0 %

Love	
What I've learned from loving a Frenchman p.130	2
Problems getting him to marry? p.222	2
Leading therapists talk about love and relationship p.238	4
• Total number of pages	6
• Ads in percentage	0
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	2,7 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	2,7 %

2015

Sex	
Cosmo's sex books	1
Sexiest gentlemen alive p.71	1
Why don't I want to have sex? P.154	1
Making love cool again p.191	3
Sex tips for one p.194	1,7
Girls who like boys who like boys p.200	4
I hired a hooker with my husband p.206	2
Sex (Q&A) p.212	2
• Total number of pages	15,7
• Ads in percentage	0,4 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	6,2 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	6,6 %

Love	
Worst dates ever p.66	1
Would you date much older or much younger man? p.196	4
Ask him anything (Q&A) p.210	1,7
• Total number of pages	6,7
• Ads in percentage	0
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	2,8 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	2,8 %

5.

5. HEALTH

1994

Health (Physical)	
Contact lenses	3,5
Yeast infection	2
Water pill and energy pill	1,5
Work out machine	0,3
Weight loss pills	1,7
Allergy medicine	3
Migrene help	1
Health memo p.62	1
Your body (Q&A) p.78	1
Agony (Q&A) p.79	1,5
• Total number of pages	16,5
• Ads in percentage	4,5 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	1,2 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	5,7 %

Health (Psychological)	
Self-help	0,3
How decisive are you? (test) p.138	2
You can be single and live a rich full life p.1	4
Who's afraid of the big bad phobia? P.218	4
Women beaten senseless by men p.228	4
• Total number of pages	14,3
• Ads in percentage	0,1 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	4,8 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	4,9 %

2015

Health (Physical)	
Contact lenses	2
Look good after a workout p.120	1
Don't hate the Healthie p.74	1
Stronger! Sexier! Faster! p.137	2
Want to save a life today? P.148	3
• Total number of pages	9
• Ads in percentage	0
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,4 %
• Articles in percentage	2,5 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	2,9 %

Health (Psychological)	
Dermatologist therapy p.? 126	2
I screwed up, now what? (advice) p.224	3
Bitch it out p.234	0,5
How flaky are you? (test) p.236	1
• Total number of pages	6,5
• Ads in percentage	0
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0
• Articles in percentage	2,7 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	2,7 %

6. MONEY/CAREER

1994

Money/Career	
Job Ads	1,3
Checks	1
Money talk p.64	1
Resolving wallet envy p.96	2
Looking for a job-when you already have one p.108	2
Women in PR p.224	4
• Total number of pages	11,3
• Ads in percentage	0,8 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	3,1 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	3,8 %

2015

Money/Career	
Be a boss p.132	1
My boss sexually harassed me.? p.156	6
Make your passion pay off p.215	4
Reward yourself p.223	1
• Total number of pages	12
• Ads in percentage	0,0 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	5,1 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	5,0 %

7. FOOD/DRINKS

1994

Food and Drinks	
Stevia	1
Water	1
Alcoholic beverages	3
Energy drink	1
Deli fresh	1
Cereal	1
Win the food court p.142	1
Real life p.144	1
• Total number of pages	10
• Ads in percentage	3,4 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	0,8 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	4,2 %

2015

Food and Drinks	
Dessert	1
Coffee	1
Beer	1
Soda	1
Breath mints	0,3
Dieter's notebook p.66	1
The politics of men, woman, and food p.166	1,6
Divorcee cheer-up night p.216	2
Recipe p.278	1,3
• Total number of pages	10,33
• Ads in percentage	1,5 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	2,1 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	3,5 %

8. OTHER

1994

Other	
Cigarettes	6
Car	3
Little drummer boy	1
Mail order (Popcorn machine, work out machine etc.)	1
Cosmo ad	2
Cosmo catalogue showcase	2
Info about where to buy interior	1
Cleaning	1
Information about the magazine	3,5
Interior design	4
Science	0,3
Why don't you...(tips) p.120	0,3
Life's little tragedies p.146	1
My love affair with baseball (Bun Apetetitt) p.156	2
A man around the house	0,5
Cosmo tells all p.170	2
• Total number of pages	30,6
• Ads in percentage	5,8 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,0 %
• Articles in percentage	4,7 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	10,5 %

2015

Other	
Toilet paper	1
Car	3
Shopping information	0,5
Cosmotivation (tweets) p.46	1
Confessions (readers stories) p.63	3
Fun, fearless...fail p76	1
The Cosmo guy p.80	1
Technology equals bad @friendship? p.204	2
Mantrophology p.208	2
Special advertising section	1
Information about the magazine	5,3
• Total number of pages	20,8
• Ads in percentage	1,7 %
• Editorial material with purchase information in percentage	0,2 %
• Articles in percentage	6,9 %
• Total percentage of the magazine	8,7 %

Appendix B.

B. The relevance of the work for the teaching profession

Being a student in the teacher-training program at NTNU has provided me with much useful experience through a variety of courses and assignments. Writing a Master's thesis was the very last project before graduating, and this process has provided me with valuable experience that will be useful in my teaching role.

Firstly, writing a Master's demands that you are able to work independently and make your own – sometimes difficult, decisions. Although you are surrounded by classmates and receive valuable guidance from your supervisor, the project forces you to learn to trust yourself and to work systematically to reach your goals.

Secondly, when writing a Master's thesis you learn how to research on your own. This includes finding relevant sources, reading, referencing, and process a great amount of information. Not only does this make you appreciate the amount of effort that lies behind research, it also makes you aware of all the limitations and weaknesses that they might involve, and thus strengthens your critical sense. This is an important skill to have in a world where information comes from so many places. This is also a very important skill to teach your students, or at least make them aware of.

Lastly, the topic of my thesis is something that is relevant for my practice as a teacher. Being aware of how gender bias can influence my methods and relations to my students will definitely be a valuable lesson to take with me. Furthermore, because I am going to work as a language teacher, I believe that it is important that I am aware of the way that language works, and how we are affected by it. Besides, this is something that the students should be made conscious about themselves.

