

UNRAVELLING COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN

SEMIOTICS
AS A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR
A MEANING-CENTRED APPROACH TOWARDS
COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN EFFECTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1. Preface	1
2. Chapter overview	3
3. Introduction to country-of-origin research	3
4. Motives behind our project	6
4.1. Country-of-origin research: importance	6
4.1.1. Empirical significance	6
4.1.2. Renewed interest	7
4.1.3. Interdisciplinary relevance	8
4.2. Country-of-origin research: problem statement	9
5. Research questions	10
6. Theoretical relevance of the dissertation	12
7. Managerial relevance of the dissertation	13
8. Dissertation outline	14
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	17
Part 1: Preface	17
1. Outline	17
2. Interdisciplinary framework	18
Part 2: Critical reflection on classic concepts and theory	19
1. Outline	19
2. Brief sketch of extant theory on coo-effects	19
3. Some conceptual considerations	21
3.1. What about conative effects?	21
3.2. Are normative effects exerted by coo?	22
3.2.1. Conceptual distinction between norms/values and country affects	22
3.2.2. Conceptual distinction between norms/values and country conations	23
4. Discrepancies between theoretical and empirical approaches	24
4.1. Empirical concept of “country image”: predominance of the cognitive component	24

4.1.1. How to measure country-specific affects and conations?	25
4.1.2. Emphasis on assessment of attitudes towards utilitarian products	25
4.1.3. Neglect of environmental conditions related to the product's coo	27
4.2. Empirical concept of "product attitude": predominance of the cognitive component	30
4.2.1. Emphasis on assessment of attitudes towards utilitarian products	30
5. Limited scope of classic theoretical paradigms	30
6. What's next?	32
Part 3: Country-of-origin	33
1. Outline	33
2. Country-of-origin: denotational complexity	33
3. Conceptualization	35
3.1. Literature review	35
3.1.1. Cognitive component	37
3.1.1.1. Content	39
3.1.1.2. Structure	40
3.1.1.2.1. Product facet	41
3.1.1.2.2 Country facet	42
3.1.2. Affective component	55
3.1.3. Conative component	56
3.2. Exploratory in-depth interviews	61
3.2.1. Findings	62
4. Summary findings	64
Part 4: Product attitude	67
1. Outline	67
2. Conceptualization	67
3. Perception as an antecedent of attitude formation	70
4. Interpretation: from information towards meaning	72
5. Summary findings	80
6. Conclusion	81
Part 5: Country-of-origin effects	83
1. Outline	83

2. Country-of-origin effects: a general view	83
3. Country-of-origin effects: moderating variables	84
3.1. Sample characteristics	84
3.2. Aspects related to the source country	86
3.3. Product characteristics	86
3.4. Characteristics of product stimulus	87
3.5. Aspects related to the setting	88
3.6. Aspects of the presentation format	89
3.7. Type of dependent variable	89
3.8. Type of measurement instrument	90
3.9. Type of survey mode	90
3.10. Type of data-analysis method	90
3.11. Time	91
4. Country-of-origin effects: a more detailed analysis	91
4.1. Cognitive mechanisms	91
4.1.1. Cognitive mediation processing mechanism	95
4.1.1.1. Halo mechanism	95
4.1.1.2. Elaboration mechanism	95
4.1.2. Cognitive heuristic processing mechanism	96
4.1.3. Cognitive default heuristic processing mechanism	97
4.1.4. Cognitive mechanisms: epilogue	98
4.2. Affective mechanism	99
4.3. Conative mechanism	99
5. Summary findings	100
6. What's next?	101
Part 6: Semiotics	103
1. Outline	103
2. Semiotics as a theoretical approach towards consumer behaviour	103
3. Major paradigms: semiotics vs semiology	104
4. Interpreting marketing stimuli: a case of semiosis	106
5. Discourse theory	109
5.1. Discourse typology: dimension 1: the sign's meaning (semantics)	110
5.1.1. Meaning as a pragma-semantic concept	110

5.1.2. Meaning as a multilayered concept	112
5.1.3. Meaning as a hierarchically structured concept	116
5.2. Discourse typology: dimension 2: the sign's use (pragmatics)	117
5.3. Discourse typology	118
6. Morrissean semiotics as a theoretical approach for the analysis of country-of-origin effects	121
6.1. The Made-in label as a sign	121
6.2. The Made-in label's semantic dimension	123
6.3. The Made-in label's pragmatic dimension	128
6.3.1. Use of Made-in labels from the marketer's perspective	128
6.3.2. Use of Made-in labels from the consumer's perspective	129
7. Evaluation of using Morrissean semiotics as a theoretical framework for the study of country-of-origin effects	132
8. Summary findings and conclusion	137
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL MODEL + HYPOTHESES	139
1. Chapter overview	139
2. Overall theoretical model	139
3. Introduction to hypotheses: from one overall model to three sub-models	142
3.1. Hypotheses for Sub-model 1: CI → formation of product beliefs	142
3.2. Hypotheses for Sub-model 2: CI → formation of product evaluation	146
3.3. Hypotheses for Sub-model 3: CI → formation of product purchase intentions	148
4. Hypotheses: a general overview	150
CHAPTER 4: PILOT TESTING	153
1. Chapter overview	153
2. Pilot test 2	154
2.1. Objective	154
2.2. Theoretical background	155
2.3. Operationalization	156
2.4. Design	159
2.5. Analysis and results	159
3. Conclusions	160

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN	163
1. Chapter overview	163
2. Subjects	163
3. Procedure	165
4. Design: internal validity	167
4.1. Setting	167
4.2. Country selection	168
4.3. Product selection	169
4.4. Conceptualization of the Country Image and Product Attitude	169
5. Design: external validity	170
5.1. Country selection	170
5.2. Product selection	171
6. Questionnaire	171
7. Concepts and measures	172
7.1. The Country Image	172
7.1.1. The cognitive component scale	172
7.1.2. The positive feelings scale	172
7.1.3. The negative feelings scale	174
7.1.4. The conative component scale	177
7.2. The Product Attitude towards beer and DVD-players	180
7.2.1. The cognitive component scales for beer and DVD-players	180
7.2.2. The affective component scales for beer and DVD-players	181
7.2.3. The conative component scales for beer and DVD-players	182
CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	185
1. Chapter overview	185
2. Hypothesis testing: Structural Equation Modeling	185
3. Measurement models: BEER survey	187
3.1. SPANISH sample	187
3.1.1. Model for Country Image construct	188
3.1.1.1. Exploratory factor analysis	188
3.1.1.2. Uni-dimensionality	192
3.1.1.3. Within-method convergent validity	196

3.1.1.4. Reliability	196
3.1.1.5. Discriminant validity	197
3.1.2. Model for Beer Attitude construct	197
3.1.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis	197
3.1.2.2. Uni-dimensionality	199
3.1.2.3. Within-method convergent validity	201
3.1.2.4. Reliability	201
3.1.2.5. Discriminant validity	202
3.2. DANISH sample	203
3.2.1. Model for Country Image construct	203
3.2.1.1. Exploratory factor analysis	203
3.2.1.2. Uni-dimensionality	207
3.2.1.3. Within-method convergent validity	209
3.2.1.4. Reliability	209
3.2.1.5. Discriminant validity	210
3.2.2. Model for Beer Attitude construct	210
3.2.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis	210
3.2.2.2. Uni-dimensionality	212
3.2.2.3. Within-method convergent validity	214
3.2.2.4. Reliability	214
3.2.2.5. Discriminant validity	215
3.3. Measurement invariance of models for Country Image construct	215
3.4. Measurement invariance of models for Beer Attitude construct	217
4. Measurement models: DVD survey	218
4.1. SPANISH sample	219
4.1.1. Model for Country Image construct	219
4.1.2. Model for DVD Attitude construct	219
4.1.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis	219
4.1.2.2. Uni-dimensionality	221
4.1.2.3. Within-method convergent validity	223
4.1.2.4. Reliability	223
4.1.2.5. Discriminant validity	224

4.2. DANISH sample	224
4.2.1. Model for Country Image construct	225
4.2.2. Model for DVD Attitude construct	225
4.2.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis	225
4.2.2.2. Uni-dimensionality	226
4.2.2.3. Within-method convergent validity	229
4.2.2.4. Reliability	229
4.2.2.5. Discriminant validity	229
4.3. Measurement invariance of models for Country Image construct	230
4.4. Measurement invariance of models for DVD Attitude construct	230
5. Structural models: BEER survey	231
5.1. Structural overall model for CI-effects on beer attitude	232
5.2. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on beer beliefs	234
5.2.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on beer beliefs	236
5.2.2. Verification of hypotheses	236
5.3. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on beer evaluation	239
5.3.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on beer evaluation	241
5.3.2. Verification of hypotheses	241
5.4. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on beer purchase intentions	243
5.4.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on beer purchase intentions	245
5.4.2. Verification of hypotheses	245
6. Structural models: DVD survey	246
6.1. Structural overall model for CI-effects on DVD attitude	247
6.2. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on DVD beliefs	248
6.2.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on DVD beliefs	250
6.2.2. Verification of hypotheses	250
6.3. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on DVD evaluation	252
6.3.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on DVD evaluation	254
6.3.2. Verification of hypotheses	254
6.4. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions	256
6.4.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions	258
6.4.2. Verification of hypotheses	258

7. General overview of the results	260
7.1. Results for the BEER survey	261
7.2. Results for the DVD survey	264
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	267
1. Chapter overview	267
2. Discussion and conclusions	267
2.1. What about the internal structure of country images?	267
2.2. What about the significance of country image effects?	269
2.3. What about the functioning of country image effects?	270
2.3.1. Country images have a high communicative efficiency	271
2.3.2. Country images have a high communicative flexibility	273
2.3.3. Country image effects are supported by composite mechanisms	273
2.3.4. Sub-effects can be subdivided into stronger and weaker effects	274
2.4. What about the role of “country typology”?	278
2.5. What about the role of “product typology”?	279
3. Managerial implications	280
4. Theoretical contributions towards the coo-field	285
5. Limitations	288
6. Agenda for future research	289
REFERENCES	291
APPENDICES	325
SAMENVATTING	377
CURRICULUM VITAE	383

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Preface

“GENOCIDE LAW MAKES BELGIUM LOSE CUSTOMERS IN U.S.”

The commotion enshrouding the possibility that political motives underlay the decision of the American Ford management to subject Ford Genk to retrenchment and lay-offs, has flared up the debate if these tough economic decisions should be ascribed to the positioning of Belgium in the Iraq debate. In this respect, the first warning was already articulated in late June by Leo Delwaide, city alderman responsible for economic activity related to the port of Antwerp, who fearfully foresaw an American economic boycott as a result of Belgium’s political stance on Iraq and its notorious genocide law, which had discredited the American president George Bush.

Thomas Leysen, president of the employers’ organisation Agoria claims that last summer, the Confederation of Belgian Industries (VBO) had already informed prominent members of the Belgian government about the negative image of our country as perceived by American business. He adds that its grievances “fell on the deaf ears” of Belgian ministers and emphasises that “American nationalism should not be underestimated”.

Last summer, the Belgian non-ferrogroup [Umicore] lost an important contract with its American customer in view of the strained political relations between both countries. Leysen adds: “As their orders suddenly stopped, we informed them about their motives. Was it about the product itself or the price? At first, we did not receive any explanation but after long insistence we were let into their motive: “We’re pissed off with Belgium”. [...]”

[De Standaard: 11-12 October 2003 – translation is ours]

International trading partners are not always doing business on the basis of purely financial and economic motives. As can be derived from the article in De Standaard, the decision taken by

U.S. purchase managers to terminate their cooperation with the Umicore-group should be seen as an expression of their irritation with the so-called “anti-American” position taken by Belgian politicians in the whole affair around the military actions undertaken by the U.S. government in Iraq. This indeed is a perfect illustration of how people’s attitude towards foreign sourced products is not necessarily determined by elements which are directly related to those products themselves (like their price or the quality of their production). In this particular case, it is demonstrated how purchase decisions are sometimes taken based on the way in which the more general environmental conditions of the country where the product is made (like its strategic position in world politics) are being perceived. Thus, apparently, for countries to be successful in positioning their products on the international market, it is of vital importance to properly manage their “national images”.

Besides industrial purchasing, this issue also affects the international marketing of “consumer” goods. Take for instance the bulk of publications on the so-called “country-of-origin effect”. The point of departure taken by scholars working within this particular field is that the average consumer carries with himself a gamut of images about other countries, regions or continents. These internally stored images in turn are believed to be capable of affecting our attitudes towards products coming from abroad. In function of whether these images arouse (un)favourable reactions among consumers, they are emphasized (or not) by marketers in their communicational efforts surrounding the product. Everybody knows some of the more popular examples where the link between product and country is traditionally stressed. Think for instance at the famous “Belgian” chocolates, “Swiss” watches, “French” wine, “Russian” caviar or “German” automobiles. Still recently, we encountered a perfect illustration of how companies make explicit use of the country-of-origin in order to create a favourable bias in people’s reaction towards their products. TEXIER, a company that produces all kind of leather and textile articles, provides its products with a text-card that addresses the client as follows:

“Chère cliente, cher client,

Bienvenue dans la grande famille **française** de la Maroquinerie de qualité. Cet article est une création Marcel et Jean-Luc TEXIER en collaboration avec leurs modélistes et **fabriqué selon les traditions françaises.**”

At the bottom of the card, it is retaken in bold that the article is “**fabriqué en France**”. As can be noticed, the association of the product with its origin is put at the center of attention here in order to improve the product’s quality image. Yet, examples of how sometimes it is best to “cover” a product’s origin exist as well. As an illustration, Johansson and Nebenzahl (1986) refer to the case where, a couple of years ago, Chrysler’s revelation of the K-car being built in Mexico resulted in negative reactions among U.S. consumers. In sum, these examples show that marketers positioning “consumer” products on the international market should take care of the images people associate with the product’s origin. In dealing accurately with this origin-related information, they can provide themselves with several strategic advantages. As will appear throughout the following sections, our dissertation is to be situated with the field of research on country-of-origin effects. More in detail, our interest will go to the psychological processes that are activated when people are confronted with foreign-sourced consumer products that carry a country-of-origin label with them.

2. Chapter overview

This chapter first presents the country-of-origin research. After a general overview of the main evolutions within this domain, the relevance of our dissertation will be motivated. This will be done in first instance by offering empirical evidence indicating that country-of-origin effects exist and that they should be seen as a factor of substantial importance when studying how consumers react towards internationally marketed products. Secondly, it will be argued that based on the continuing globalization of society there is a renewed interest into the topic. In third instance, we will show that various disciplines within the literature on international business are in demand of more insight into country-of-origin effects. Another justification for our study will be found in the lack of theory that has already been denounced at several instances within the extant literature on country-of-origin. Finally, we will provide a more detailed outline of the dissertation.

3. Introduction to country-of-origin research

In his well-known article *The World Customer*, Ernest Dichter (1962) argued that knowledge of differences and similarities among consumers in different parts of the world would increase in importance to marketers. The fundamental argument supporting his reasoning was the

observation of a market evolving from a local to a global phenomenon. As the author puts it himself: “[t]he world is opening up. The Common Market will broaden into an Atlantic Market and finally into a World Market. In order to participate effectively in this progressive development of mankind, it is essential to have a creative awareness of human desire and its strategy throughout the world – to understand and prepare to serve the new World Customer.” (Dichter 1962: 122). With the crucial role of knowledge about other countries and their people in mind, Dichter referred explicitly to the raising significance of the “Made-in” label for international marketing scholars and practitioners. In his opinion, this label “[...] can have a tremendous influence on the acceptance and success of products over and above the specific advertising techniques used [...].” (Dichter 1962: 116).

First empirical results in support of Dichter’s ideas were obtained by Schooler (1965). In a study that focussed on the context of the Central American Market, it was found that Guatemalan students gave lower evaluations to products from El Salvador and Costa Rica than to goods from their home country or Mexico. This product bias appeared to be related to a general negative attitude towards both the countries’ government and inhabitants. By examining this foreign product stereotyping among consumers, Schooler inaugurated a vast stream of studies on so-called “country-of-origin (coo) effects”.

In line with the majority of scholars working within the coo-field we think there are two milestones to be identified within the already existing literature. That is in first instance the review of Bilkey and Nes (1982) and secondly, the survey published by Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993). These subdivide the coo-field into three periods each of which is characterized by certain types of coo-studies. Bilkey and Nes (1982) for instance argued that during the 60s and the 70s, the first stream of coo-research was of a highly “exploratory” nature. Scholars were focussed almost exclusively on proving the occurrence and existence of coo-effects without really asking themselves how to explain and understand these phenomena. In addition, it was typical for these pioneering efforts to assess coo-effects within so-called single-cue settings. Thus, when respondents had to judge foreign-sourced products, the only product-related information offered to them was the product’s origin. Most of the later criticism was directed towards the fact that within such single-cue designs the size of coo-effects could have been overestimated. This gave rise to an increasing questioning of the importance ascribed to coo-effects. As Johansson (1993) put it, a rising body of marketing academics and practitioners claimed that the presumed relevance of research on this particular topic was only artificial.

The demand for more solid methodological approaches advanced by Bilkey and Nes (1982) initiated a second period of coo-research where the emphasis was put on the development of more representative study designs. From that moment on, coo-effects were much more frequently examined within multi-cue contexts and several alternative techniques for data-analysis (e.g., structural equation modeling, conjoint analysis) were applied. This led to the identification of numerous mediating and moderating variables that could affect the size of coo-effects. In addition, empirical insights were gained on which stage(s) of the product attitude formation process could be potentially influenced by the coo-cue.

Yet, as Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993) established at the beginning of the 90s, the central focus of attention within the field still was too much on the empirical assessment of coo-effects. According to them the development of a solid theoretical background had been largely ignored. Thus, as a whole, the studies already performed were instructive about the mechanisms underlying coo-effects only to a very limited extent. In pleading in favour for more extensive theoretical research, the authors encouraged scholars to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective while in their opinion, useful insights about country images could be drawn from other disciplines like psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, etc. In general, it can be stated that several efforts were undertaken to place empirical results within more solid theoretical frameworks. On the one hand, more adequate techniques serving a further fine-tuning the “country image” construct were developed, resulting in more advanced multi-dimensional conceptions. On the other hand, initiatives were undertaken to explain the processes behind coo-effects. Different theoretical frameworks were proposed within the literature, among which some of the more popular paradigms were “Cognitive Information Processing Theory”, “Social Identity Theory” and “Hedonic and Experiential Consumption Theory”.

Contrary to most of the studies already published, we will adopt a so-called “meaning-centred perspective” in studying this phenomenon. In concrete terms, this means that instead of seeing the processing of country-related information as a sequence where country stimulus → product attitude, we consider this process as a scenario where country stimulus → meaning ascribed to stimulus → product attitude. Thus, not only will we have a deeper look at the meanings people associate with a stimulus referring to the product’s origin, additionally, we will explicitly take into account these meanings as potential determinants of their attitude towards foreign-made consumer goods. Throughout the dissertation, it will become clear that, instead of referring to an individual’s prior knowledge about other products from a certain country, the term “meaning” stands for people’s images about a country’s so-called

environmental conditions (like its political system, geography, climate, history, religion, etc.). In studying how this “meaning” is internally structured and how it can be used by consumers as a determinant of their product attitude, the field of semiotics will prove itself to be of great value. Therefore, it will be the theoretical basis of our dissertation. Taken together, our efforts should be seen as an attempt to further elaborate the theoretical understanding of country images and their potential effects on the formation of consumers’ attitudes towards foreign-sourced products. The more precise contributions of our project will be discussed somewhat further.

4. Motives behind our project

More in particular, we believe a study on coo-effects to be justified because the topic itself is highly relevant, yet still confronted with a need for more theoretically-oriented research. First, we will argue that research on coo-effects can be considered as a relevant area for three reasons: (1) an extensive body of empirical evidence has already been provided, indicating that the impact of coo-effects is substantially large and therefore, should be taken seriously as a potential determinant of consumer attitudes towards products made abroad, (2) it appears there is a renewed interest in the topic due to the increasing internationalisation of society and finally, (3) it can lead to numerous useful applications in other fields within the literature on international business. In second instance, we will focus on the call for theory development that has been expressed still recently by several scholars working within the coo-field.

4.1. Country-of-origin research: importance

4.1.1. Empirical significance

In our opinion, studying the functioning of coo-effects on consumer information processing and decision making seems relevant because a considerable body of empirical evidence supports the fact that coo-cues significantly affect the way in which consumers perceive, evaluate and purchase foreign-sourced products (e.g., Baughn and Yaprak 1993; Bilkey and Nes 1982; Liefeld 1993; Özsomer and Cavusgil 1991; Samiee 1994). Although the generalizability of the coo-cue’s importance has been questioned at various instances, several quantitative meta-analyses have shown this criticism to be rather unjustified. Peterson and

Jolibert (1995) for example, analyzed 52 articles on coo-effects and found that the size of coo-effects on quality/reliability perception was .30. In case of purchase intentions, the average effect-size was smaller (.19), but still significant. More recently, Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) exerted a quantitative meta-analysis on 41 coo-studies. They concluded that “[b]ased on the grand average effect size of 0.39 found in our meta-analysis, the country-of-origin effect can be classified as a substantial factor in product evaluations.” (Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999: 537-538). Thus, on average, we can state that the coo-cue is an important factor that should be taken into account when studying how consumers receive products made abroad.

4.1.2. Renewed interest

In line with the ideas of Dichter (1962), Levitt (1983), sees the increasing globalization as one of the key characteristics of today’s society. However, radically opposed to Dichter’s opinion, Levitt argues this globalization should stimulate companies “[...] to operate as if the world were one large market – ignoring superficial regional and national differences.” (Levitt 1983: 92). As posited by Johansson (1993), this hypothesis has most certainly weakened the interest in coo-research while it indirectly questions the relevance of Made-in labels. Yet, over the last decades, Levitt’s point of view has been seriously criticised. Wind (1986) for instance thinks this concept of a “globally uniform consumer” is a pure myth. Several scholars have provided us with empirical results in support of the assumption that the profile of consumers cannot be reduced to one overall or universal concept (e.g., Alden et al. 1999; Briley et al. 2000; Kale 1991; Nakata and Sivakumar 1996; Peñaloza and Gilly 1999; Steenkamp et al. 1999; Ter Hofstede et al. 1999).

Thus, taken together, these studies indicate that instead of having an equalizing effect, globalization will accentuate national differences even more. For instance, as argued by Usunier (2000), one of the consequences linked to the fact that increasingly more aspects of our daily lives have become embedded into an international or “global” context is that more often than before we are engaged in interactions with other countries. The intensification of these contacts or interactions, whether they are of a personal, social, political, military or cultural nature, makes people become more aware of how countries differ. At several occasions already, official media have reported on cases where these perceptual differences influenced our international market behaviour. We already saw how the Belgian non-ferro

group Umicore has lost a very loyal U.S. client due to the approbation of the notorious “genocide law”.

Besides this particular case, there are plentiful other examples of how economic and commercial relationships between the U.S. and several other European countries besides Belgium have been affected by the recent developments in Iraq. The rise of the European Union can be considered as another event that stimulated the interest in how to manage national images (e.g., Askegaard and Madsen 1998; Balestrini et al. 2003; Bull and Oxley 1996; Cinnirella 1997; Grunert et al. 1995; Kale 1995; Leeftang and Van Raaij 1995; Nilsson and Solgaard 1995; Saunders and Saker 1994; Schweiger et al. 1995; Steenkamp 1993). Still recently (i.e., 2004), the *NRC Handelsblad* for example published an article in which it was reported that the European Commission is studying the potential (dis)advantages of introducing a “Made-in Europe” label for export products. In our opinion, these examples clearly illustrate how the tendency towards an increasing internationalisation of society has indeed led to a renewed interest in the topic of how people deal with their images about other countries.

4.1.3. Interdisciplinary relevance

According to Morello and Boerema, the main focus of attention within the coo-field is on “[...] the question to know whether consumers relate the image of a country to the image of products from that country. In other words: is the country-of-origin of a certain product relevant in the consumer’s purchasing process?” (Morello and Boerema 1989: 6 – translation is ours). However, although it is true that the majority of coo-studies has been focussed on the eventual relevance of “places” (i.e., regions, countries, cities, ...) for the marketing of consumer products, it should not be neglected that there are several other domains where the importance of country images has received substantial attention. For instance, as argued by Kotler et al. (1993: 20) the quality of “place images” can be an important determinant in the attraction of several potential target markets among which producers of goods and services, corporate headquarters, regional offices, outside investment, export markets, tourism and hospitality business and new residents. The fact that coo-research might lead to useful applications within a broad range of disciplines is also clearly expressed in the preface to *Product-Country Images: Impact and Role in International Marketing*, which counts as a standard work on country-of-origin. More in detail, the editors argue that:

“The subject is of vital importance to companies looking for ways to enhance their international competitiveness, whether by expanding to foreign markets or protecting their domestic consumer franchise. It is also important to academic researchers with interests in a wide range of areas, including international marketing strategy, branding, stereotyping, ethnic imagery, rules and patterns of consumer information processing and decision making, social psychology, cultural geography and anthropology, international relations at the people or country level, and many others.” (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993: xxii-xxiii).

In line with this assumption, the issue of origin perception has already been treated within numerous other international business-related fields like industrial marketing (e.g., Backhaus and Wilson 1986; Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu 1992; Kim and Chung 1997; Porter 1998), foreign direct investment (e.g., Wee et al. 1993), service marketing (Ahmed et al. 2002; Bruning 1997; Kasper et al. 1999), organizational behaviour (e.g., Hofstede 1980; Kreitner et al. 1999), communication and promotion management (e.g., De Mooij 1999; De Pelsmacker et al. 2001; Moon 1996; Tan and Farley 1987; Usunier 2000) and tourism (e.g., Iacobucci 1998).

4.2. Country-of-origin research: problem statement

Although coo-researchers have gathered extensive empirical data in support of the occurrence of significant coo-effects, it remains unclear how this coo-cue precisely functions. The need for more theoretical background is acknowledged and deplored by Papadopoulos who thinks that, with regard to the understanding of coo-effects, “[...] the field is [...] rife with debate and misunderstandings.” (Papadopoulos 1993: 13). Indeed, various scholars have already expressed their discontent with the lack of solid theoretical frameworks characterizing the traditional studies on coo (e.g., Askegaard and Ger 1998; Chen and Pereira 1999; Ger et al. 1999; Häubl 1996; Kleppe et al. 2002; Knight and Calantone 2000; Lampert and Jaffe 1998; Moon 1996; O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 2000; Phau and Prendergast 2000; Thakor and Kohli 1996; Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999). According to Johansson (1993) this explains why there is a tendency among marketers and academics to mistrust and underestimate the relevance of coo-research. Taken together, a closer examination of these criticisms towards

the theoretical status of the coo-field showed us the following three problems were systematically mentioned:

1. Classic studies on coo-effects have been capable of demonstrating that the product's coo exerts a significant effect on people's attitude towards foreign-sourced products. Yet, they remain rather vague in explaining how this coo-effect functions.

2. Surprisingly, the majority of extant studies on coo-effects fail to explain why coo-cues are capable of determining people's attitude towards products from abroad.

3. There is an overall tendency to emphasize the role of a country's production and marketing-oriented aspects as potential determinants of people's attitudes towards foreign products while the importance of a country's more general environmental conditions is seriously underestimated.

Throughout the following chapter we will argue that these shortcomings are closely related to (1) some conceptual inconsistencies, (2) a discrepancy between theoretical and empirical designs and (3) the incapacity of the traditionally followed theoretical paradigms to capture coo-effects in their full complexity. First however, the following section will present the research questions that will be addressed in our dissertation.

5. Research questions

As will be demonstrated more in detail in the next chapter, the main stream of coo-research is inclined to consider a country's more general environmental conditions as less relevant for the examination of coo-effects. A country's more general environmental conditions have been defined by Kaynak et al. as any aspect of a country that is "[...] external to a company's marketing system, and neither directly controls it nor is directly controlled by it." (Kaynak et al. 2000: 1227). Traditionally, researchers on coo-effects distinguish these environmental

conditions from production and marketing-oriented aspects related to a product's coo. Instead, environmental conditions should be considered primarily as characteristics of the country itself and its people (e.g., Baker and Ballington 2002; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000; Saghafi and Puig 1997). Examples of such environmental conditions would be for instance the country's socio-political climate, its geography, cultural identity, religion, history, traditions etc. As already stated, we will consider people's images about such environment-related aspects as the meaning that is ascribed to a coo-stimulus. Interestingly, studies as those performed by Wang and Lamb (1980, 1983) and Verlegh (2001) have provided us with empirical evidence indicating that the neglect of people's image about a country's environmental conditions would not be a good idea. Based on their findings, we formulate the following research question:

1. Does a person's image about the more general environmental conditions of a product's coo influence his attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products?

As already mentioned, the extant literature on coo-effects remains rather imprecise on the way coo-cues operate during the process where product-specific attitudinal dispositions are being formed. This lack of theoretical insight motivates our second research question:

2. How does a person's image about the more general environmental conditions of a product's coo influence his attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products?

As we will discuss throughout one of the following sections, we think it might be of special interest for marketing practitioners to gain more insight into knowing what the reasons are that explain the coo-cue's capacity of affecting people's attitudinal dispositions towards products from abroad. Therefore, we formulate the following research question:

3. What are the reasons explaining that a person's image about the more general environmental conditions of a product's coo influence his attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products?

In our opinion, finding an answer to these three “central” research questions requires a more thorough understanding of what the images about a country’s more general environmental conditions are like. Put somewhat differently, we think it is of capital importance to have a clearer view on how such images are internally structured. This explains why we formulate the following research question:

4. How is a person’s image about the more general environmental conditions of a product’s coo internally structured?

Finally, there is a bulk of studies already published within the field demonstrating there are numerous factors which can moderate the magnitude of coo-effects. The occurrence of such moderation effects is also of particular interest for marketing practitioners planning to make use of coo-cues. More in detail, our study will focus on two potential moderators, that is, the type of country and the type of product selected. Research questions are formulated as follows:

5. Does the type of country moderate the size of the effect exerted by a person’s image about the more general environmental conditions of a product’s coo?

6. Does the type of product moderate the size of the effect exerted by a person’s image about the more general environmental conditions of a product’s coo?

Now that we have presented the research questions that will be dealt with, let us have a closer look at the theoretical and managerial relevance of our dissertation.

6. Theoretical relevance of the dissertation

As previously stated, our dissertation can be seen as an attempt to improve the understanding of coo-effects in their full complexity. In our opinion, the main contribution of our study will be that it explores the so-called “meaning-centred” approach as an alternative theoretical paradigm for the study of coo-effects. Later on we will discuss how this meaning-centred approach is promoted by some of the most important representatives of theory on marketing

communications. We base ourselves on insights stemming from this particular field because, in line with our study, its central focus of attention is more precisely on the questions to know how and why people come to select and process marketing stimuli (like the product's coo). More in particular one of the key propositions behind this meaning-centred approach is that people base their attitudinal dispositions towards a product on the meanings they associate with marketing stimuli that have been linked to the product. Contrary to the majority of coo-research already performed, our study will follow this principle by explicitly taking into account people's interpretations of the coo-stimulus throughout the empirical assessment of coo-effects. Again, important to notice is that our study sees coo-effects as a sequence where coo-stimulus → meaning ascribed to coo-stimulus → product attitude. Also, let us remind that, contrary to the majority of studies already published, our project will have the term "meaning" standing for people's image about a country's environmental conditions.

In striving for such a meaning-centred approach it will appear that Peircean semiotics and more specifically "discourse theory" (e.g., Morris 1946, 1964) can be of great value. More in detail, our application of semiotics to the processing of coo-cues will make several interesting contributions towards the literature on coo-effects. In first instance, it will appear that, contrary to attitude psychology, semiotic theory is more transparent in determining what might be referred to as the basic conceptual structure behind so-called "country images". Secondly, our semiotic-based analysis of coo-effects will urge coo-researchers to reconsider their point of view on the relevance of such country images as determinants of people's attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. Thirdly, it will appear that, while the focus of classic theoretical paradigms is limited to fragments of the mechanisms underlying coo-effects, discourse theory is capable of capturing the latter in their full complexity.

In sum, as suggested by the title of our dissertation, we can state that semiotics will function as the theoretical fundament on the basis of which we will elaborate the meaning-centred approach as a new and promising avenue towards a better understanding of coo-effects.

7. Managerial relevance of the dissertation

Besides these theoretical contributions, our dissertation is aimed at improving the "practical" use of coo-stimuli. As will appear throughout the following chapters, it is not quite evident to deal with country images in a communicatively accurate manner. More in detail, we will try to identify some of the factors that might complicate managing people's internally stored

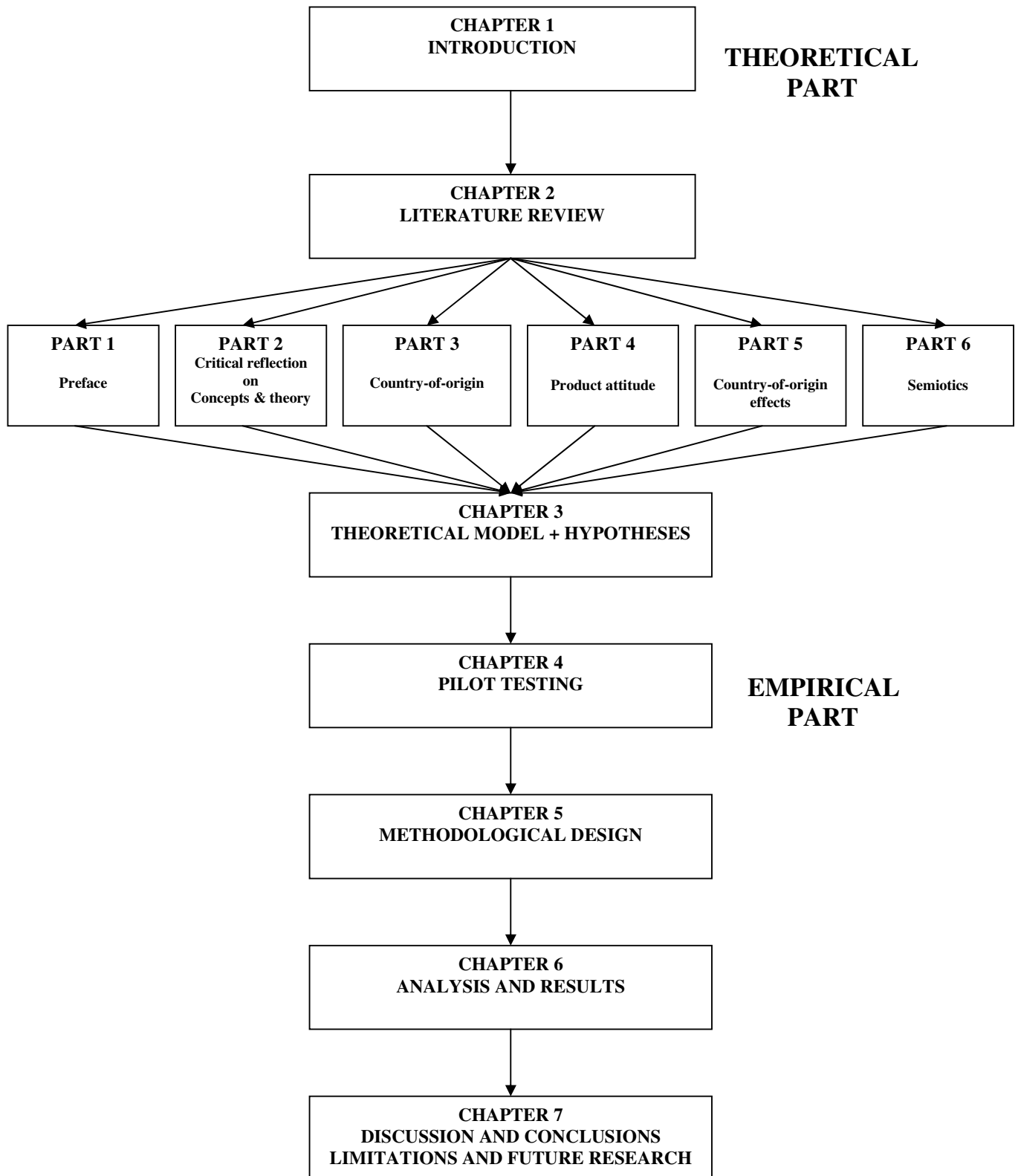
images about a product's coo. This way for instance, it will be argued that marketing practitioners would do best in taking into account the fact that the formation of our images about foreign countries is always embedded in a broader socio-psychological context. Also, we will see how the structural complexity of country images increases the risk for any internal inconsistencies to occur. This in turn might confuse people and refrain them from employing the coo-cue as a determinant of their attitudinal dispositions towards the product they are confronted with. Additionally, our study will demonstrate that when a coo-cue affects our product-attitudinal dispositions, it does not so by means of one single effect. Instead, it will be established how this process should be seen as a complex mechanism where various effects are simultaneously occurring. Finally, it will appear that the impact of these co-occurring effects is sensitive to some strategic decisions like the communicative purpose in function of which coo-cues are being used and the type of product these cues are being associated with. Important to notice is that our dissertation will also be provided with a series of practical suggestions and recommendations allowing for advertisers and marketers to work with coo-cues in a more adequate manner.

8. Dissertation outline

The following chapter will be reserved for a more detailed review of the literature. First, we will further elaborate on the main reasons that explain why the extant literature remains inapt in instructing us about why and how people's images about a country's more general environmental conditions affect their attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. In second instance, we will conceptualize the two basic constructs of our dissertation, that is, "product-country image" and "product attitude". While focussing on the latter, we will see how theory on marketing communication claims that the role of meanings people associate with marketing stimuli should receive more attention. Afterwards, we will focus on "coo-effects" themselves and present some of their most important characteristics. Then we will propose the "discourse theory" developed by C.W. Morris as a theoretical framework that might contribute to our understanding of the functioning of coo-effects. Throughout chapter 3 we will present an overall theoretical model based on which a series of hypotheses will be formulated. Chapter 4 can be seen as the first part of our empirical study. It presents the results provided by two pilot tests serving the development of a valid and reliable measurement instrument. Based on the outcome of these tests, our final questionnaire

could be composed. Chapter 5 contains a more detailed analysis of the methodological design of our large scale field survey. The data-analyses and empirical results will be presented throughout chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 is reserved for further interpretation of the results. Based on these reflections, we will come to our final conclusions. In addition, the practical and theoretical implications of our work will be discussed. Special attention will be given to some of the study's limitations and an agenda for future research based on our new findings will be proposed. On the following page Figure 1 visually represents the structure of our dissertation.

Figure 1: Visual representation of dissertation outline



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

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PART 1: PREFACE

1. Outline

The present chapter has three specific objectives. In first instance, we will focus on the two key concepts of our dissertation, that is, “product-country image” and “product attitude”. In second instance, we will have a closer look at coo-effects themselves. Finally, we will propose semiotics and more specifically, discourse theory (e.g., Morris 1946, 1964) as a framework that will improve our understanding of coo-effects. More in detail, the chapter will be subdivided into six parts. In the first section, we will pay attention briefly to the interdisciplinary character of our review. The second part presents a number of critical reflections on the concepts and theories that have been traditionally used within the coo-field. Together, these will put the problems we stated throughout the previous chapter into a broader perspective. The third part will be dedicated to the conceptual development of so-called “product-country images”. For this purpose, we will base ourselves on the literature as well as on data obtained by means of a series of exploratory in-depth interviews. The fourth part will focus on the internal structure and the formation of product attitudes. In doing so, we will turn to advertising theory where it is argued that scholars should adopt a more meaning-centred approach towards studying the functioning of marketing stimuli like the product’s coo. The fifth part is reserved for a more detailed analysis of coo-effects themselves. More precisely, we will identify their most important characteristics and additionally, we will unravel the different mechanisms that support the effects exerted by coo on product attitude formation. Finally, inspired by insights stemming from theories on marketing communication, the sixth part will focus on semiotics. First, we will position discourse theory within this field. Then, discourse theory itself will be treated. Afterwards, the discourse framework will be checked for its applicability to the coo-field. To end with, we will motivate our suggestion to use discourse theory as a framework for studying coo-effects.

2. Interdisciplinary framework

In his paper entitled *What Is Consumer research?* Holbrook (1987) deals with the increasing interdisciplinary character of research on consumer behaviour. As he puts it “[...] in the last few years the perspectives of an increasingly diverse range of disciplines have stealthily crept into the field of consumer research. These realities can scarcely be denied. They just are.” (Holbrook 1987: 128). Although some criticism towards this interdisciplinary perspective on consumer behaviour has been raised, the author clearly stresses that the interdisciplinarity of consumer research is almost inevitable while it goes in line with the complex nature of the subject it deals with. In his opinion, various disciplines like macro- and micro-economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and humanities all have contributed to the development of the consumer behaviour field.

Since research on coo-effects can be situated to a large extent within the literature on consumer behaviour, this interdisciplinary approach has been encouraged by some of the most notorious scholars within the coo-field. Papadopoulos for instance argues “[...] there is a tremendous scope for cross-fertilization of ideas and findings among various disciplines which study the images of countries and other places from a variety of perspectives.” (Papadopoulos 1993: 33). The interdisciplinary character of coo-research will become clear throughout our review of the literature. More in detail, we found coo-researchers to have drawn ideas from fields like attitudinal psychology, intercultural stereotyping and socio-psychology to geography and tourism. As will appear throughout the final part of this chapter, we will borrow insights from still another discipline, that is, semiotics. The main reasons for doing so are that semiotic theory and more specifically the Morrissean discourse framework has not been used in coo-research before and, additionally, it can be seen as some kind of meta-framework that permits us to integrate the various theoretical avenues towards the explanation of coo-effects.

PART 2: CRITICAL REFLECTION ON CLASSIC CONCEPTS AND THEORY

1. Outline

This section of the literature review will provide a more solid background to our problem statements. We think it is important do so because the latter can be considered as the fundamental cornerstones of our dissertation. It was our belief that the extant literature gives no clear insight into the functioning of coo-effects. As we will argue throughout this section, we think this is due to three specific shortcomings. In first instance, we will see that the coo-field sometimes gives a rather confusing picture due to some tenacious conceptual inconsistencies. Secondly, we will demonstrate that there is a striking discrepancy between the way concepts are being defined in theory and the manner in which these are empirically operationalized, which makes us question the theoretical representativity of results obtained so far. In third instance, we will show that the classic theoretical paradigms adopted by the majority of coo-studies focus on single aspects of coo-effects rather than capturing these in their full complexity. This obstructs the development of an integrative view on their functioning. In order to make our critical reflections somewhat easier to follow, we will start with a brief overview of the already existing theoretical frameworks.

2. Brief sketch of extant theory on coo-effects

If we take a closer look at our corpus of literature on coo-effects, it is quite clear how throughout the 80s and the 90s attitudinal psychology found its way into coo-research. It received systematically more attention and consequently became one of the coo-field's most supported theoretical paradigms for the conceptualization of the images people associate with a product's coo (i.e., so-called "country images"). In line with some of its basic propositions, scholars working on coo-effects came more often to consider these country images as attitude-like constructs. In general, attitudes consist of three components: cognition, affect and behavioural intentions (e.g., Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Fishbein 1967; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). Cognition refers to the beliefs or thoughts an individual has about a particular attitude object (like a product's coo for instance). Affect has to do with the way people feel about the attitude object. As we will discuss later, these affective experiences always imply some kind of

“evaluative judgement” or “preference” and can be subdivided into different categories. Behavioural intentions or “conative tendencies”, involve a person’s intentions to act towards an attitude object. In fact, these conative inclinations can be brought back to the idea of an individual tending to approach or avoid the attitude object. According to attitude theory, it is important to notice that past research clearly indicates how these three components are related to each other. Thus, instead of treating them as separated or isolated entities, it pleads in favour of models where knowing, feeling and doing are interacting.

As will appear more in detail throughout this chapter, there are several empirical studies where the use of qualitative-oriented techniques like in-depth interviews (e.g., Balestrini et al. 2003; Beverland and Lindgreen 2002; Ger et al. 1999; Morello 1993; O’Donohoe 1999; Shimp et al.1993) or laddering-like approaches (e.g., Askegaard and Ger 1997; Iacobucci 1998; Niss 1996) provided evidence in support of this tri-component view of the images consumers associate with a product’s coo. Some of these studies include so-called “perceptual maps” where the internal structure of such country images is visually represented. According to Askegaard and Ger these should be seen “[...] as a holistic impression with sensory (imagery), cognitive and affective aspects. Image, then, as a mental representation, is a network of meanings stored in the memory, in a particular structure and along with affective, motivational and sensory aspects.” (Askegaard and Ger 1997: 1). Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) state that in order to understand the functioning of coo-effects it is of essential importance to take this tri-component structure of country images into account. In line with Johansson (1989) and Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989) the authors argue that three specific types of coo-effects can be distinguished from each other. More in detail, they speak of them in terms of cognitive, affective and normative effects. Table 1 gives an overview of how these effects should be understood.

Table 1: Examples of cognitive, affective and normative coo-effects

EFFECT	DESCRIPTION	MAJOR FINDINGS
COGNITIVE	Coo is a cue for product quality	Coo is used as a "signal" for overall product quality and quality attributes, such as reliability and durability.
AFFECTIVE	Coo has symbolic and emotional value to consumers	Coo is an image attribute that links the product to symbolic and emotional benefits, including social status and national pride.
NORMATIVE	Consumers hold social and personal norms related to coo	Purchasing domestic products may be regarded as a "right way of conduct", because it supports the domestic economy. By the same token, consumers may refrain from buying goods from countries with objectionable activities or regimes.

SOURCE: adapted from - Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999: 524

3. Some conceptual considerations

A first thing that should be noticed is that, although this framework sees coo-effects being generated by the country image's cognitive and affective components, it remains silent about the conative component. Can we derive from this that effects emanating from the latter are non-existent? Secondly, we believe that the normative effect, as proposed by the authors, is not triggered by the coo-cue itself, but by the value system of the individual being confronted with the coo-cue. Thus, in fact, this is not to be seen as a coo-specific effect but rather as an effect that is exerted by the individual's inner value system. Let us comment somewhat further on these two issues.

3.1. What about conative effects?

As already mentioned Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) treat the cognitive as well as the affective components of a country image and provide the literature with useful insights about how they operate. However, their framework is less instructive about the consumer's conations towards a product's coo. Thus, what to think about their precise role and functioning? Based on attitudinal psychology, coo-researchers recognize it as a basic component of the images people link to coo-cues, yet most studies on coo-effects keep silent about its functioning. In fact, while reviewing the literature, we encountered only one case, that is, the well-known "eight country study" described by Heslop and Papadopoulos (1993) where the impact of the country image's conative component on product attitude formation has been empirically analyzed. More in detail, highly significant and substantial correlations were found between the country image's conative component and respondents' beliefs about two out of four product-related attributes.

Thus apparently, there is something to say in favour of further exploring the role of such country-specific conations. An additional reason that makes us believe the country image's conative component should no longer be neglected is that theories on attitude formation and change consider behavioural intentions as one of the most powerful predictors of behaviour itself (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Kothandapani 1971).

3.2. Are normative effects exerted by coo?

In our opinion, the extant literature on coo-effects does not make a clear distinction between the concepts of a person's internal system of norms and values on the one hand, and his country image on the other. Most scholars see an individual's personal norms and values as a constituent part of his image about a country (e.g., Askegaard and Ger 1997). More in detail, the concept of "personal norms and values" has been treated at various instances as an equivalent of the country image's affective or conative component.

3.2.1. Conceptual distinction between norms/values and country affects

After a more profound examination of the existing literature, we conclude that the concept of a person's value system has been frequently treated as an equivalent of the country image's affective component. At several instances, researchers speak of "ethnocentric feelings" or "patriotic emotions". Yet, in our opinion, the notion of "ethnocentrism" or "patriotism" on the one hand, and "feelings" or "emotions" on the other, are not to be seen as one and the same thing. Put differently, we are rather inclined to see them as conceptually distinct constructs. More in detail, by the country image's affective component we understand the feelings or emotions towards the country themselves and not the social or personal norms that might potentially influence such country-specific feelings or emotions. These social and personal values should rather be seen as "person variables" (and thus not as country-specific aspects), that is, as a part of the individual's personal identity (e.g., Allen 2001; Burns 1979; Markus and Nurius 1986; Mischel 1999; Rotter and Hochreich 1975; Strauss 1977), while feelings and emotions towards a coo integrally belong to what we consider as a country image.

The fact that values pertain to what might be considered as the core of a person's identity becomes clear when, in line with Rokeach (1968), Vinson et al. define a value as "[...] **a centrally held belief** which guides actions and judgements across specific situations and beyond immediate goals to more ultimate end-states of existence." (Vinson et al. 1977: 44 – bold lettertype is ours). In further analyzing the differences between values and feelings, we can see that, according to Rokeach (1973), values characterize themselves by their limited number and by their stability and endurance over time. The spectre of "feelings" or "emotions" however, is very extensive and in addition, feelings or emotions are known for their rather ephemeral character. Also, their occurrence is rather instantaneous and once activated, they can be much more easily connected to a particular stimulus as compared to

values. Put differently, feelings and emotions are to be seen in relationship with a particular “object” while this is not required for values. Finally, an individual’s affective state can be easily manipulated while one’s inner value pattern is more difficult to change. In our opinion, the difference between values and affects even becomes clear in the way we speak about them. We do not think for instance that an individual can “feel” ethnocentric. Rather we would say that an individual “is” ethnocentric (or not). The use of the verb “to be” when one speaks in terms of inner values might be seen as another indicator of the fact that values are narrowly entrenched with our personal identity, that is, with who we “are”.

3.2.2. Conceptual distinction between norms/values and country conations

We use the term “country-specific conations” for the behavioural tendencies towards the country themselves and not for the social or personal norms that might potentially arouse such actional intentions. In line with the previous section, we believe social and personal values should rather be situated at the deepest centre of the individual’s personal identity, while conations towards a coo pertain to the (more ephemere) construct we refer to as the country image. This goes perfectly in line with the well-known “theory of reasoned action” (e.g. Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) where social and personal norms or values are also clearly distinguished from behavioural intentions. Ajzen and Fishbein (1973) for instance established how behaviour could be predicted best by means of one’s behavioural intentions and how the latter appeared to be a function of the individual’s norms and values. In a simplified manner, this pattern can be pictured as follows: values → behavioural intentions → behaviour. This clearly demonstrates how an individual’s value system and his behavioural intentions towards an attitude object should be seen as distinct concepts. At several other instances in the literature on the relationship between values and consumer behaviour, this distinction between the value system itself and the constituent components of a consumer’s attitudes towards products or services has been made (e.g., Allen and Hung 1999; Bagozzi and Dabholkar 1994; Carmen 1978; Kahle and Homer 1988; Grunert and Juhl 1995; Gutman and Vinson 1979; Whartzon and Harmatz 1995). Again, let us remind that our primary reason behind discussing these conceptual considerations is to signal how instead of being focussed on the functioning of country-specific affects and conations, prior research in fact has provided us with information about the role of “values” as determinants of product attitude. Consequently, a lot remains to be done regarding the precise role of the country image’s affective and conative components.

4. Discrepancies between theoretical and empirical approaches

As already stated, we believe the traditional literature on coo is characterized by a rather noticeable discrepancy between theoretical and empirical approaches. More in detail, our belief is that the majority of studies on coo-effects operationalize the concepts of “country image” and “product attitude” in such a manner that the result is no more than a partial reproduction of the way in which these concepts have been defined in theory. We came to this conclusion after having conducted an extensive critical review of the literature¹. As can be seen under Appendix 2.1., we consulted a corpus of 213 studies on coo-effects. Taken together we could establish how for both constructs of “country image” and “product attitude”, empirical studies almost systematically emphasize the cognitive component. Put somewhat differently, our analysis indicates that the empirical scope of the majority of studies on coo-effects is often limited to country and product-related cognitions. On the contrary, affects and conations clearly have not always received the same attention. Throughout the following sections, we will present some potential explanations for the predominance of the cognitive component.

4.1. Empirical concept of “country image”: predominance of the cognitive component

In wondering whether any explanations could be found why less attention has been paid to affects and conations towards a product’s coo, we could think of three possible reasons. First of all, standard scales for the assessment of affects and conations “tout court” are not always very accurate for the measurement of affects and conations which are intimately linked to a specific context or stimulus (like a product’s coo). Secondly, respondents have been tested most often on their attitudes towards “utilitarian²” products. Finally, scholars have been rather reluctant in including environmental conditions related to the product’s coo in their studies while, more precisely, it are these so-called “general environmental conditions of a country” which have been judged to be better suited as potential triggers of a consumer’s affects or conations towards a product’s coo.

¹ For more detailed information on this literature study we refer to Appendix 2.1.

² Utilitarian goods are defined as products “[...] whose consumption is more cognitively driven, instrumental and goal oriented and accomplishes a functional or practical task.” (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000: 61)

4.1.1. How to measure country-specific affects and conations?

Several reliable and valid scales for capturing emotions and behavioural intentions “in general” have already been developed. Yet, unfortunately, these are not always useful as an approach for measuring affects and conations “related to a specific stimulus” like the product’s coo. We think for instance that several items belonging to scales that have been traditionally used for the assessment of an individual’s emotions might not be relevant when applied to or associated with the concept of a country. Similar remarks have been formulated by scholars doing research on the emotional and behavioural impact of store environment on shopping experiences. Brengman for instance refers to the fact that various researchers working within this field have denounced the lower suitability of standard emotion lists for studies that can be situated within a specific retail context:

“Yoo, Park & MacInnis (1998) note that extant studies on emotions evoked in a retail context have used standard emotions lists, which were developed for the purpose of studying human emotions generally. While these lists are useful and potentially comprehensive, they may over-represent emotions that are not integral part of the retail context (e.g., pity), and may under-represent emotions that are (e.g., frustration). It is generally preferred to tap emotions most relevant to the domain of inquiry (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). Thus, Yoo, Park & MacInnis (1998) feel that developing a list of emotional experiences, tailored to the retail context may be desirable.” (Brengman 2002: 42).

Brengman further discusses how by means of ethnographic interviews, Yoo et al. (1998) were able to identify a subset of emotions that were specifically generated within a retail context and that these “retail-specific” emotional responses contained several items that were not incorporated in the more traditional typologies of emotions. In our opinion, this particular issue might partially explain why the country image’s affective and conative components have remained rather unexplored at the empirical level.

4.1.2. Emphasis on assessment of attitudes towards utilitarian products

According to Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), the fact that traditional empirical approaches have almost systematically studied coo-effects within a setting where respondents are confronted with so-called “utilitarian” products (like cameras, computers, VCRs, television

sets or automobiles), might be a potential explanation for the disregard of country-specific affects and conations. As they reason, this approach, “[f]osters a cognitive trade-off of cues and is ill-suited for the study of affective and normative aspects of consumer decision making.” (Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999: 539). More in detail, they believe the formation of attitudes towards such products is characterized by a “rational” use of marketing stimuli (like the product’s coo). That is, respondents would rather be inclined to take decisions based on logical reasoning instead of having themselves be guided by their primary intuitions or emotions. The prevalence of “cognitive” information processing in such a situation might be related to the fact that, on average, utilitarian products are more expensive and technically complex, leading to a higher perceived risk of buying a product. Therefore, consumers think it is important to be well-informed about the product.

If we follow this reasoning and apply its insights on the use of coo-cues, this would mean that, if consumers make use of this particular cue, they are supposed to do so based on the coo’s informational quality instead of being driven by this cue’s eventual emotional or symbolic connotations. As Johansson (1989) puts it, when being confronted with utilitarian products people will employ coo-cues only if this cue is useful in an “instrumental sense”. In other words, they will make use of the product’s coo because they believe it can inform them about the product’s functional qualities. This way, the coo-cue is said to function as some kind of “indicator” from which information about the product’s quality attributes can be inferred.

Over the past decades however, increasing criticism towards the tendency of paying attention almost exclusively on information cues that might function as surrogate indicators of product quality could be detected within the literature on consumer behaviour. This questioning of the more traditional cognitively-oriented paradigms comes from the corner of researchers pleading in favour of experiential and hedonic approaches towards consumption (e.g., Aaker 1997, 1999; Belk et al. 1982; Belk and Pollay 1985; Fournier 1998; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). According to Aaker (2002) for instance, consumers do not always care as much about a product’s functional quality as they do about more emotional, sensorial or emotional benefits like style, pleasure or social status. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) acknowledge that such emotional and symbolic benefits can be important evaluation criteria. Within the field of advertising research, these insights made scholars redirect their attention to this symbolic and emotional imagery around the product (e.g., Bouchet 1994; Nijs and Peters 2002; Reynolds and Gutman 1984).

The fact that coo-cues might be valuable assets in creating such imaginative connotations has already been advanced at several instances within the literature. In fact, there is a whole substream of publications where the focus is on how coo-cues can trigger a rich set of fantasies and feelings that might be projected on the products they are associated with (e.g., Askegaard and Ger 1998; Leclerc et al. 1994; O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 2000; Phau and Prendergast 2000; Thakor and Kohli 1996; Thakor and Pacheco 1997; Zinkhan and Prenshaw 1994). With regard to the importance of these country-related symbolic and emotional connotations, Heslop and Wall state that:

“[w]hen consumers enter markets, they buy not only the physical product, but what we call in marketing the ‘augmented’ or ‘total’ product, which among other elements, includes the images of the people who sell it and the country in which it is made. Consumers buy not just a collection of products, but a lifestyle. [...] It is important, therefore, to look not only at what Canadians and Americans think of each other’s products, but also what they think of each other and each other’s country. These images can affect consumer behavior (in)directly by influencing the willingness to do business, the desire to be associated with the country through its products, the assessment of the suitability of the products depending on the similarities of lifestyles etc.” (Heslop and Wall 1993: 423).

These arguments taken together make Verlegh and Steenkamp conclude that “[i]t seems important to recognize the fact that country of origin is not just another ‘quality cue’, but that its effects on consumer behavior are based on a wider range of connotations, including affective and normative dimensions.” (Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999: 539). Throughout the following section, we will concentrate on another reason that might explain why the country image’s affective and conative components have received less attention, that is, the neglect of environmental conditions related to the product’s coo.

4.1.3. Neglect of environmental conditions related to the product’s coo

The point here is that a country’s so-called “more general environmental conditions” should be seen as important triggers of affective and conative reactions towards a product’s coo. However, these have been rather disregarded from coo-research which explains why affective

and conative coo-effects have remained largely unexplored. The reason why these environmental country-conditions have been long time disregarded from research is narrowly related to the fact that numerous studies on coo-effects traditionally saw the main role of coo-cues as limited to the function of indicating a product's quality. Consequently, only those country-specific aspects deemed appropriate as quality indicators were included into research.

It appears that a large majority of scholars considered a country's production and marketing- oriented strengths and weaknesses to be the only relevant country-related aspects for consumers to infer a product's quality. On the contrary, more general environmental conditions were seen as less informative about a product's functional quality status. Consequently, these were left out of consideration. Roth and Romeo can be seen as exemplar representatives of this particular stream of research, stating that "[w]hat consumers know (or think they know) about a country's manufacturing ability, flair for style and design, and technological innovativeness, seems much more congruent with product perception formation than do other, less production and marketing-oriented factors." (Roth and Romeo 1992: 480). This mentality led various researchers to narrow their conceptions of "country image" to such production and marketing- related aspects. Typical for this approach towards coo-effects are statements like the one formulated by Darling and Kraft who believe that consumers' perception of foreign products is "[...] a result of their past experiences with representative national products, learned stereotypes and reputations of national products, and **perhaps** more general images of traditions and customs of foreign peoples." (Darling and Kraft 1977: 520 – bold lettertype is ours). Baker and Ballington (2002) have referred to this stream of research as the "product-oriented approach".

Alternative avenues within the field have openly pronounced their disagreement with these limited conceptions of "country image". According to O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000) for instance, a country's more general environmental conditions pertain to the very essence of country images and therefore cannot be excluded from research. As they put it: "[t]he image of other nations is first and foremost an image linked to that nation's people and culture. We think about a nation in terms of the people and their culture rather than think about the nation in the abstract, divorced from people and culture." (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000: 57). On average, criticism towards product-oriented approaches is based on two arguments. First of all, there is the claim of Wang and Lamb (1980, 1983) that, contrary to what is posited by the product-oriented approach, a country's more general environmental conditions can be used to infer a product's quality status. As they put it "[...] consumers generalize their knowledge or perceptions of environmental conditions in foreign countries to

the quality of products produced ... using environmental conditions as a surrogate for a great many other pieces of unknown information.” (Wang and Lamb 1983: 72). Several other academics have demonstrated that a country’s environmental conditions indeed do contain useful information about the quality of a particular country’s products (e.g., Crawford and Lumpkin 1993; Verlegh 2001).

As argued by Batra et al. (2000) a second argument to support the inclusion of a country’s environmental conditions into coo-research was advanced by the so-called “more anthropological” stream of research within the coo-field. It contains a series of studies that connects rather to the experiential, hedonic, symbolic, and social approaches towards consumption. As already argued, these support the notion that consumption is more than the search for functional quality. Instead, they favour a more open view in stating that consumers might as well be looking for experiences, whether these are sensorial, imaginative, symbolic or emotional in nature. It is quite evident that for these approaches, marketing stimuli triggering such experiences become very important. According to several researchers within the field, coo-cues can be seen as powerful generators of such experiential effects. Baker and Ballington for instance believe that, even if a coo-cue is said to have low informational value, “[...] there still might be an effect in terms of positive or negative connotations of the country and its people [...]” (Baker and Ballington 2002: 160). O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000: 58-59) agree with this conception of country images as potential triggering cues of a rich set of connotations since they also see the concept as a “complex”, “multilayered” and “fluid” entity. As they put it in more eloquent terms, the country image can be considered as a “cacophony of images” that might stimulate consumers to buy in a rather “affectively driven way”. Zinkhan and Prenshaw (1994) give us a good illustration of this principle in stating that a coo-cue can contribute to the creation of so-called “images of the good life” which in turn might induce feelings of pleasantness or well-being and attract consumers to the product. Thakor and Kohli (1996) also argue that country images can link a rich and varied set of symbolic and emotional imagery to a product, ranging from status, luxury and wealth to maleness or femaleness, cultural ethnicity and so on.

In focussing more particularly on how this imagery is created, Johansson (1989) stated that a country’s environmental conditions would probably be more suited as potential triggers than a country’s production and marketing-oriented aspects. Thakor and Kohli (1996) as well as O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000) agree with this assumption. More in detail, they believe that production and marketing-oriented images are best suited for the role of utilitarian or functional quality indicator, while the country’s environmental-oriented facet seems most

apt in generating symbolically and emotionally connotated images. Thus, in light of these alternative approaches towards consumption, the exclusion of a country's more general environmental conditions seems unjustified. On the contrary, they appear to encourage research on this specific aspect of country images and to consider it as a promising and fruitful approach towards a better understanding of coo-effects.

4.2. Empirical concept of “product attitude”: predominance of the cognitive component

In our opinion, the major accent being put on the product attitude's cognitive component is directly related to the fact that most empirical studies on coo-effects have confronted their respondents with “utilitarian” products.

4.2.1. Emphasis on assessment of attitudes towards utilitarian products

Traditional research on product attitudes has often considered the process of attitude formation towards a product as some kind of hierarchically structured sequence where the interaction between the three constituent components of the attitude construct is assumed to be characterized by a specific order of importance. According to Solomon et al. (1999), consumers being confronted with high risk, technically complex “utilitarian” products would engage most probably in a so-called “standard learning” process where the resulting attitude towards the product is the outcome of a cognitively-oriented problem solving mechanism. More in detail, this mechanism can be represented as follows: product beliefs → product evaluation → purchase intention towards the product. This clearly demonstrates how the cognitive component functions as a “first-order construct”. Since most studies within the coo-field confronted subjects with utilitarian products, it might therefore not be surprising that the accent was put on the product attitude's cognitive component.

5. Limited scope of classic theoretical paradigms

Besides the fact that most empirical studies have worked with fragmented representations of “country image” and “product attitude” we think a thorough understanding of coo-effects is obstructed by the limited scope of the theoretical paradigms that have been traditionally used for the explanation of coo-effects. Take for instance the so-called “information theoretic”

paradigm. It is based on the key proposition that marketing stimuli like the product's coo are used as indicators of product quality. Put differently, people are assumed to process the coo-cue in a cognitive way. Although we have no problems with this assumption in itself, we are more concerned about the fact that studies having adopted such an information theoretic perspective simply neglect the possibility for coo-cues to be functioning also as determinants of people's affective and conative reactions towards products.

The same remark counts for the "experiential or hedonic" paradigm. Here, the basic idea is that marketing cues serve to arouse people's emotions or to activate all kinds of symbolic imagery. In other words, this paradigm focusses more specifically on the affective component of product attitude. Again, we do not question the validity of this theory in itself but we think it falls short in explaining the functioning of coo in its full complexity. This way, several studies have indicated that coo-cues can also be operating as determinants of people's cognitions about and conations towards a product.

Finally, there is the "social identity" paradigm which is grounded in the idea that marketing stimuli like the product's coo can be interpreted as a moral rule of conduct that will guide people in their conative reactions towards the product. Studies that have followed this approach are also characterized by the fact that they do not take into account the possibility for coo-cues to serve other purposes as well. This way, it is known that coo-cues can be used also as determinants of product-specific cognitions and affects.

Thus, taken together, we can say our main criticism towards the classic theoretical paradigms is that instead of treating the coo-effect in its full complexity, they focus on one particular facet of this phenomenon. Several scholars however have already opposed themselves to this view. Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) for instance plead in favour of what they refer to as the "interactive" approach towards coo-effects. More in detail, the authors argue that instead of treating the coo-effect as if it were supported by one single mechanism, it would be more correct to state that it rests on a "composite" mechanism where several types of "sub-effects" are simultaneously activated. In line with this assumption, Hadjimarcou and Hu (1999), agree with Li and Wyer in that coo-cues can be used in many ways "[...] simultaneously rather than that its effect results from a single underlying process." (Li and Wyer 1994: 187). Empirical evidence in support of these interactive views on coo-effects has already been provided (e.g., Häubl 1996; Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993; Verlegh 2001) but remains rather scarce.

6. What's next?

Based on these critical reflections, our prior objective will be to design a theoretical model that captures coo-effects in their full complexity. In order to make this possible, we will start with the development of a comprehensive and transparent country image concept. For this purpose, we will base ourselves on a detailed review of the literature and on data provided by a series of exploratory in-depth interviews we conducted throughout the preliminary stage of our project. Special attention will be given to the inclusion of (1) cognitions about the more general environmental aspects of the product's coo, as well as country-specific (2) affects and (3) conations. Once we have reached this objective, we will try to gain more insight into the formation of product attitudes. This will be done based on insights stemming from the field of marketing communication. As we will see, these will accentuate the importance of meanings people associate with marketing stimuli. After having surveyed the most important characteristics of coo-effects, we will propose Discourse Theory (e.g., Morris 1946, 1964) as a framework that might contribute to a better understanding of coo-effects.

PART 3: COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN

1. Outline

As already announced, this part of the review will be focussed on the conceptualization of the images consumers associate with a product's country-of-origin. To start with, we will briefly elaborate on the denotational complexity of country-of-origin. With regard to the conceptualization of the underlying structure of these images, we will base ourselves on insights provided by the literature as well as by a series of exploratory interviews. In first instance, we will review the literature. More in detail, focus will be on each of the country image's constituent components, that is, the cognitive, affective and conative component. Afterwards, we will comment on some general findings provided by our in-depth interviews and we will look to what extent these are in line with insights stemming from the literature.

2. Country-of-origin: denotational complexity

The term "country-of-origin" can be decomposed into "country" and "origin". When reviewing the literature, it becomes clear how these two constituent parts have been interpreted in various ways. As indicated by Andaleeb (1995) the term "country" should be considered as a relatively flexible construct while, depending on the situational context, it can stand for different geographical entities ranging from a nation, region or a continent to simply all countries abroad. In our project, the term "country" refers to the geo-political concept of a "nation-state".

With regard to the notion of "origin", it is interesting to establish that it has evolved from a single-dimensional construct to a multi-dimensional one. Originally, the origin of a particular product was defined as the place where the product was made or manufactured. Within the context of a rapidly globalizing market, this uni-dimensional conception had to be adapted to daily reality where buyers are confronted more frequently with so-called "hybrid" or "binational" products (e.g., Ettenson and Gaeth 1991). These were defined as products being manufactured in one country while branded in another (e.g., Han and Terpstra 1988; Johansson 1989; Johansson and Nebenzahl 1986; Johansson and Thorelli 1985). Subsequently, Chao (1993) and Ahmed and d'Astous (1996) subdivided the concept of a

product's origin into "country-of-design" and "country-of-assembly". Samiee (1994) in turn still proposed another conception and distinguished between "country-of-manufacture" and "country-of-origin" (i.e., the country with which the product's firm is associated). The latter dimension can be compared with the "country-of-brand" concept proposed by Hulland (1999). Tse and Lee (1993) advanced another origin-specific dimension, that is, "country of components". Inch and McBride (1998) even identified three different dimensions: "country of product design", "country of parts manufacture" and "country of assembly". Li et al. (2000) still went further and decomposed the origin-construct into "country of design", "country of assembly", "country of parts and components" and "country of the corporation".

According to some researchers, this tendency towards multinational production activities might be affecting the size of coo-effects. More in detail, they reason that consumers might experience difficulties in uncovering what the precise origin of a product is. This diffuse character of the coo-cue makes it less informative for them, leading to a potential risk of disregarding this particular marketing stimulus when having to decide whether to buy a foreign product or not. Therefore, some scholars have suggested to focus on what they refer to as a product's "culture/country of brand origin" (e.g., Lim and O'Cass 2001; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000; Phau and Prendergast 2000; Thakor and Kohli 1996) or "country of corporate ownership" (e.g., Thakor and Lavack 2003). Instead of indicating where a product was made, these concepts are said to activate all the imagery people might associate with the country to which a product's brand is typically associated. For instance, today, it might be difficult to extract where precisely the bottle of Coca-Cola you are buying has been made, but, in line with Thakor and Lavack (2003) we believe that most probably, you will have no doubts about the fact that Coca-Cola is an American brand. This "Americanness" in turn might activate the typical "American dream" related imagery. However, although these more recent alternative conceptions of the so-called "origin" might be useful for the successful positioning of internationally marketed products, the meta-analysis performed by Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) found no significant differences between the effect sizes of hybrid and non-hybrid products, indicating that the decomposition of a product's production-related origin might not be negatively affecting the size of coo-effects. Thus, this "Made-in" or "Assembled in" information appears to remain a valuable asset and therefore should not be neglected for future research. Given the fact that no substantial differences in effect-size have been assessed between the uni-dimensional and multi-dimensional conceptualizations of a product's origin, we will consider it as a uni-dimensional construct that stands for the country where the product was made. Having analyzed country-of-origin at the denotational level, let

us have a closer look at what we have to understand theoretically by the concept of “country-of-origin”.

3. Conceptualization

3.1. Literature review

Within the coo-literature, “country-of-origin” is traditionally approached from an information theoretic perspective. One of the basic assumptions is that a product can be considered as an array of information cues. More in detail, researchers distinguish product intrinsic cues (e.g., taste, design, material, performance, etc.) from product extrinsic cues like price, brand name, warranty and country-of-origin. The latter are also indicated by the term “image variable” defined as “[...] some aspect of the product that is distinct from its physical characteristics but that is nevertheless identified with the product.” (Erickson et al. 1984: 694). This coo-cue appears to function as an automatic and often unconscious activator of internally stored complex memory schemas or “maps”. The existence of these maps is based on learning theories which state that consumers select, process, integrate and store information on encountered persons, objects and events. Information cues externally supplied to consumers can activate and retrieve those schemas (e.g., Peter et al. 1999). Kochunny et al. (1993) refer to these memory maps as “schema-based knowledge representation frameworks”. Empirical results in support of their existence have already been provided by several scholars within the field (e.g., Askegaard and Ger 1997; Ger et al. 1999; Morello 1993; Niss 1996; Shimp et al. 1993). Since earlier studies on coo-effects have systematically offered information about a product’s origin to subjects through the use of “Made-in” labels, these underlying schemas are traditionally referred to as “Made-in images”³. Given the fact that these images activated by the “Made-in” label contain information about the country itself and its products, Papadopoulos (1993) refers to them as “Product-Country Images” (PCI). Let us concentrate now on the psychological structure underlying these product-country images.

³ In our project, the term “Made-in image” refers to the image consumers associate with the product they have to evaluate and not to the image activated by the “Made-in” label. As already mentioned, the latter image contains information specific to the product’s source **country** and its **products**. This explains why Papadopoulos refers to them as “Product-Country Images”. The underlying reasoning is that when consumers are confronted with a “Made-in” label, this PCI is activated and used by them to form an image of the product they are faced with (i.e., “Made-in image”). As stated by Schaefer (1997) it is important not to confuse both constructs with each other.

According to Poiesz (1989), images can be defined in several ways. One approach is to consider an image as some kind of equivalent of Fishbein's tri-component attitude construct. As argued by Heslop and Papadopoulos (1993) it is agreed in general that a PCI can be considered as such an attitude-like concept. Thus, a PCI can be seen as a person's "attitude" towards a country, its people and its products. As already discussed, most attitudinal psychologists seem to accept a tri-component structure of attitudes. Derbaix and Vanden Abeele for instance state that "[t]he tricomponent view has dominated most marketing thinking about attitude -structure, -formation, and -change." (Derbaix and Vanden Abeele 1998: 201).

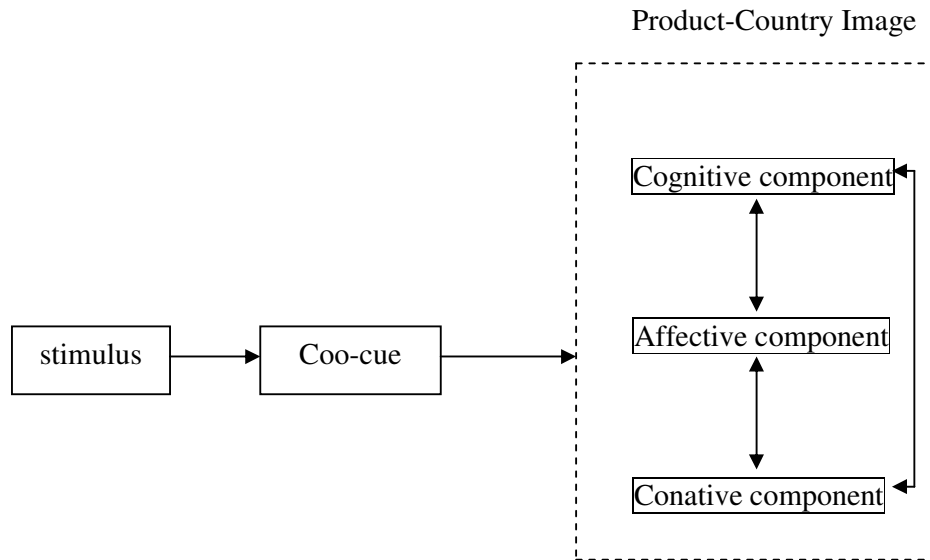
In theorizing about the attitude concept, Eiser and Van der Pligt say "[a]ttitudes are (1) concerned with *describable* objects and events, (2) *evaluations* of such objects and events, and (3) guides to how one *ought to act* with respect to such objects or events." (Eiser and Van der Pligt 1988: 18-19)⁴. Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) have referred to these three components of attitude as "cognition" (concerned about whether something is true or false), "affect" (concerned with feelings, evaluations and emotions) and "behaviour" or "conation" (concerned with intentions and decisions to act). Solomon et al. (1999) argue that the constituent components of attitude should be seen as related to each other. More in detail, they state that "[c]onsumers' attitudes toward a product cannot be determined simply by identifying their beliefs about it. For example, a researcher may find that shoppers 'know' a particular camcorder has an 8:1 power zoom lens, auto-focus and a flying erase head, but such findings do not indicate whether they feel these attributes are good, bad or irrelevant, or whether they would actually buy the camcorder." (Solomon et al. 1999: 123).

In the famous eight country study, described by Heslop and Papadopoulos (1993), this tri-component attitudinal structure has been used as a basis for the conception of product-country images. More particularly, the cognitive dimension was concerned with subjects' beliefs about the sourcing countries' degree of industrial development and technological advancement. The affective dimension implied respondents' evaluations of the sourcing countries' role in world politics, their taste, trustworthiness and likeability. Finally, the conative component was related to the participants' desired level of interaction with the source countries under study. Figure 2 retakes our view on the coo-cue and its underlying

⁴ Interestingly, the authors refer to the work of the philosopher Nowell Smith (1957) in order to signal that the tri-component structure of attitudes towards reality surrounding us is reflected in the structure of language where distinction can be made between descriptive, evaluative and gerundive MEANING (cf. semiotics !) of words. This already announces that some valuable links between attitude psychology and semiotic theory can be found. The present chapter (cf. section 6) will further explore semiotics to find out whether it can provide us with other helpful ideas for the conceptualization of country images and the explanation of coo-effects.

product-country image. It shows how we consider coo as an information cue that activates an internally stored schema (i.e., the PCI). In most studies, the Made-in label functions as a stimulus that stands for the coo-cue. The underlying PCI contains three interrelated components: cognition, affect and conation. Throughout the following section, our focus will be more particularly on the product-country image's cognitive component.

Figure 2: Conceptualization of the coo-cue and its underlying PCI



3.1.1. Cognitive component

The cognitive component of PCI has to do with knowledge. It seems that this component consists of a complex network containing everything a consumer knows (or thinks he knows) about the country (as well as its people and its products) he is confronted with. In other words, the cognitive component of PCI holds the consumer's "beliefs" about the country its people and its products. Based on the work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Erickson et al. (1984) differentiate three types of beliefs: descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs. The authors further explain how these beliefs are formed in different ways and that they can equally contribute to what an individual knows, thinks, or believes about a product's coo. More precisely, they state that descriptive beliefs derive from direct personal experiences. In our specific case, descriptive beliefs about a country would correspond for instance to an

individual's travelling and vacation experiences. Informational beliefs are said to be related to outside sources of information. Consumers, for example, can learn about foreign countries from conversations with their relatives and friends or by means of popular media like radio, television, newspapers and the internet. Inferential beliefs are defined as (in)correct inferences which are based on past experiences that can be related to the stimulus currently offered to the consumer. In line with this reasoning, Papadopoulos et al. (1990) found how sometimes, consumers' images of a country and its people are based on their experience with that country's products. More in detail, they were able to show that Hungarians' image of Japan and the Japanese was closely tied to the explicit presence of Japanese products on the Hungarian market. In other words, Hungarians inferred the image of Japan and its inhabitants from the image of Japanese products. This can be seen as some kind of "reverse" coo-effect.

Thus, with respect to the formation of consumers' beliefs about foreign countries, we agree with Heslop and Papadopoulos when they state that "[g]eneral learning theories would suggest that the sources are likely to be many and complex, including general knowledge about countries picked up everywhere from geography class in elementary school to daily newspapers and TV documentaries, friends and co-workers, and direct experiences from visits to the country. This knowledge, coupled with any prior experiences from using a country's products, can be applied to evaluating future purchases." (Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993: 62). Consequently, Martin and Eroglu argue that scholars with the intention of studying the internal structure and functioning of PCIs should take into account "[...] *the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country.*" (Martin and Eroglu 1993: 193).

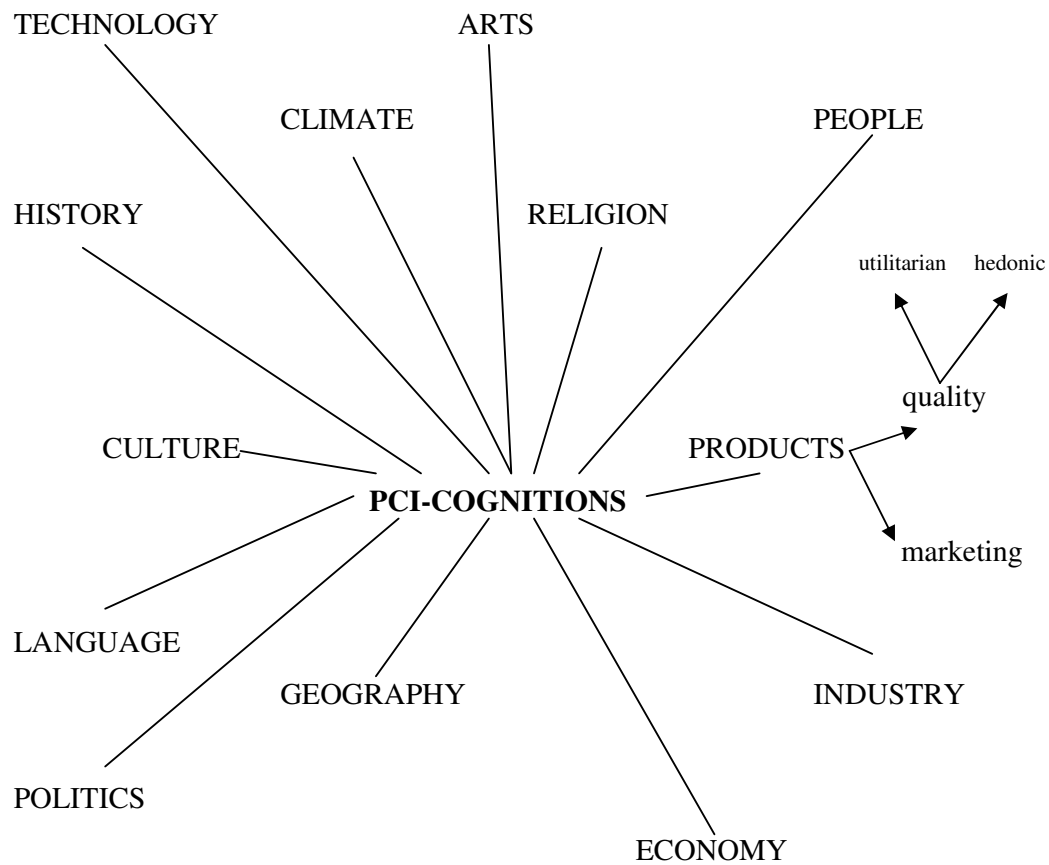
As a final thought, we would like to mention an important remark advanced by Papadopoulos (1993). In his opinion, it should be noted that, although consumers have numerous means at their disposition to gather information about foreign countries, consumers' product-country images remain "perceptions" of reality which do not always correspond to intrinsic reality itself. He continues that consumers' PCIs frequently appear to be based on a rather limited number of observations which often results in oversimplified stereotypical views. Now that we know the PCI's cognitive component has to do with knowledge, thoughts and beliefs about a product's coo, we would like to focus on the content of consumers' PCI-related beliefs. That is, we ask ourselves what precisely people might be thinking of when they are confronted with Made-in labels.

3.1.1.1. Content

Morello states that with regard to the conceptualization of PCIs, it should be noticed how “[s]tereotypical views cover the entire range of objects from products to geographic characteristics and religion.” (Morello 1993: 298). In a study performed with Boerema (e.g., Morello and Boerema 1989), he analyzed Dutch respondents’ images of several foreign countries. More in detail, subjects were asked what they were thinking of when hearing the name of a particular country. This exercise resulted in a rich and diverse variety of country-related associations. For instance, participants mentioned they were thinking of certain products, companies, typical physical and personal characteristics of the inhabitants, language, famous movie stars or politicians, cities, touristic regions, technological and industrial infrastructure, historical monuments etc. In trying to organize this complex network of associations, the authors arrived at the identification of three categories: sensorial, emotional and rational items. Graby (1993) also studied the content and structure of PCIs and among others, she distinguished the following content-related dimensions of PCI: physical properties (i.e., geography, resources, demographics, economic performance), cultural properties (i.e., history, culture, arts) and kitsch items symbolizing what she refers to as “the nation’s personality” (i.e., national flag, celebrities, monuments, and other visual symbols). Verlegh (2001) surveyed the literature on national stereotyping and ranged the set of items he encountered into three categories labeled as “people”, “socio-economics” and “geography”.

Within the coo-field, several empirical efforts have been undertaken to tap people’s foreign country perceptions. In most of these cases, data was gathered by conducting in-depth interviews. This way, Askegaard and Ger (1997) for instance were able to draw mind maps of what Turkish and German consumers associated with Denmark. A comparable initiative has been undertaken by Niss (1996) only she interviewed a sample of Danish business managers in order to uncover what they found to be typical about their home country. Other examples of such qualitative image studies can be cited. Baker and Ballington (2002) as well as O’Donohoe (1999) for instance focussed on typical features of Scotland, while Kleppe et al. (2002) were occupied with the perception of Norway. Beverland and Lindgreen (2002) in turn examined characteristics of New Zealand. Thus, overall, we can state that a PCI’s cognitive component is composed of numerous content-related aspects or dimensions. Some of the most frequently mentioned dimensions are pictured by Figure 3.

Figure 3: PCI's cognitive component: content-related aspects or dimensions



3.1.1.2. Structure

This section intends to structure these different content-related dimensions of the PCI's cognitive component. On average, the coo-literature distinguishes between aspects related to the country's image as a "nation" on the one hand, and aspects related to the country as a "producer" on the other (e.g., O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000; Phau and Prendergast 2000; Thakor and Kohli 1996). These two cognitive categories correspond to what we refer to as the "country facet" (i.e., the whole of thoughts and beliefs about a country's more general environmental conditions) and the "product facet" (i.e., a person's cognitions about everything that has to do with a country's products, its reputation as a manufacturer and its marketing-oriented capabilities). This internal subdivision of the PCI's cognitive component into a "country facet" and a "product facet" has been applied in several

empirical studies within the field (e.g., Häubl 1996; Johansson et al. 1994; Knight and Calantone 2000; Lee et al. 1992; Li et al. 1997; Manrai et al. 1998; Parameswaran and Pisharodi 1994; Pisharodi and Parameswaran 1992). Let us focus on each of these two facets of the PCI's cognitive component.

3.1.1.2.1. Product facet

As already stated, the product facet of the PCI's cognitive component should be seen as a network of internally stored cognitions about a country's production and marketing-oriented strengths and weaknesses. According to Roth and Romeo (1992) coo-research should focus on these cognitions instead of those related to a country's more general environmental conditions because the latter would be less instructive about a product's quality. More in detail they reason that a "(mis)match" between a country's production and marketing capacities on the one hand and the importance of these production and marketing capacities for the product they are confronted with on the other determines whether a (un)favourable attitudinal disposition towards that product will be generated. There are two sets of items which have been most often used within the coo-field in order to measure these so-called "production and marketing-oriented beliefs" indicating the product's quality. In first instance, there is the 24-item scale proposed by Reiersen (1967). The other frequently recurrent scale used to tap respondents' production and marketing-oriented beliefs was developed by Darling and Kraft (1977). It distinguishes between a series of production-related items on the one hand and a number of elements belonging to the traditional marketing mix on the other. Compared to the scale proposed by Reiersen (1967) these marketing items receive a somewhat more prominent place.

At a certain moment, coo-researchers started to factor-analyze the items belonging to these scales in order to extract their underlying structure. This resulted in various multi-dimensional conceptions of product quality among which the most popular one was the five-dimensional conceptualization suggested by Nagashima (1970, 1977). Various alternatives were advanced by other scholars working within the field (e.g., Chao 1993; Insch and McBride 1998; Li and Dant 1997; Roth and Romeo 1992). Besides the evolution towards multi-dimensional conceptions of the cognitive component's product facet, it is interesting to establish how during the second half of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, coo-researchers started focussing on how consumers' internally stored knowledge about production and marketing-oriented aspects would be organized in memory. This resulted in more sophisticated "multi-leveled" views on the structure of the cognitive component's product

facet. Hooley et al. (1988) for instance, argued that the aggregate of consumers' knowledge about a country's products and marketing capacities is organized in a "hierarchical" way. More in detail, they postulated that product facet-related beliefs can occur at two distinct levels. Situated at the "macro-level", consumers' beliefs would be concerned with the country's products in general. At the "micro-level" however, cognitions have to be situated at the more specific level of a particular product class. Similar hierarchical conceptions of the cognitive component's product facet have been proposed by several other academics (e.g., Parameswaran and Pisharodi 1994; Pisharodi and Parameswaran 1992; Yaprak and Parameswaran 1986). More in detail, these authors distinguished between the echelon of "general product attribute beliefs" and that of "specific product attribute beliefs". While the former contains cognitions about a country's products in general, the latter includes beliefs about a specific product (like a camera or an automobile) made in the country. Comparable hierarchical conceptions of the cognitive component's product facet have been proposed by Häubl (1996) and Lee and Bae (1999).

3.1.1.2.2. Country facet

As previously stated the central focus of attention throughout the empirical part of our dissertation will be on the role and functioning of a country's more general environmental conditions (i.e., country facet). These environmental conditions have not always been considered to be relevant for research on coo-effects. More recently however, there has been a growing interest in studying the role of a country's more general environmental conditions. This might be explained by the fact that the importance of country-specific environmental conditions has been substantially supported by scholars working on the development of foreign market entry strategies (e.g., Chen and Pereira 1999; Choi 1992; Goodnow and Hansz 1972; Hallén and Johansson 1985; Luthans et al. 1995; Samiee and Mayo 1990), industrial exporting (e.g., Kraft and Chung 1992; Saghafi and Puig 1997; Tseng and Yu 1991) and international promotion (e.g., O'Donohoe 1999; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000; Tan and Farley 1987; Thakor and Kohli 1996; Watson Dunn 1976; Zinkhan and Preshaw 1994). Goodnow and Hansz (1972) for instance studied the determinants of overseas market entry strategies and developed a "thermometrical framework" that subdivided target countries into three clusters, of "hot", "moderate" and "cold" countries, in function of these nations' environmental conditions. More specifically, they believed that entering a foreign market was determined by the targeted country's political stability, market opportunities, economic development and performance, cultural

unity, legal barriers, physiographic barriers and geocultural distance. In line with the framework developed by Goodnow and Hansz (1972), Hallén and Johanson (1985) demonstrated how national environmental conditions like the supplier country's industrial climate and the degree of cultural affinity with trading partners, are important determinants for industrial marketing strategies on an international level.

Tseng and Yu (1991) focussed on the export of industrial goods to Europe by Taiwanese firms. They also demonstrated that the selection of foreign markets (in this case, Europe) by Taiwanese exporters was influenced by features specific to the European continent. More in detail, they could establish that, although there was a growing interest in exporting to Europe among Taiwanese respondents, only a minority of the firms contacted for research were doing so. According to the authors, this situation confirmed a recurrent trend in the selection of export markets for industrial goods, namely that "[...] firms usually start exporting to countries which are psychologically close and then to other countries." (Tseng and Yu 1991: 51-52). In other words, a country's cultural or psychological distance seems to be an important determinant for contacts between international trading partners. Kraft and Chung believe that one of the reasons why industrial purchasing managers prefer to buy from sellers in their own culture may be "[...] the greater ease with which the buyer can understand and predict the behaviour of the seller with whom relationships must be established." (Kraft and Chung 1992: 63).

Watson Dunn (1976) in turn, concentrated on the development of promotional strategies towards foreign countries. Based on a series of interviews with multinational advertising managers, he found that several environmental conditions specific to the targeted country were considered as crucial determinants for planning international promotional and advertising campaigns. According to the author, the most important information to base eventual marketing transfer decisions on, was the position of the product in the targeted country, as well as its wealth and achievement, experience of personnel, degree of political nationalism, rate of economic growth, eating patterns, attitudes toward authority, character and availability of media and consumerism.

Within the coo-field, Schooler (1965) was the first taking into account characteristics specific to a product's source country and its people as potential determinants of consumers' perception of foreign goods. As already mentioned, he found that a particular case of foreign product stereotyping within the Central American Common Market was determined by negative attitudes towards other nations' government and their inhabitants. The majority of coo-studies following Schooler's paper explained this bias effect in function of one particular

environmental feature specific to the source country: its degree of economic development. As stated by Bilkey and Nes (1982), several studies found that consumers rated products from More Developed Countries (MDCs) higher than products from Less Developed Countries (LDCs). It was unfortunate that, before the studies published by Wang and Lamb (1980, 1983), no further initiatives were undertaken to examine the role of environmental conditions other than a coo's level of economic development, as potential determinants of consumers' foreign product perception. To our knowledge, the only exception worth mentioning is the work of Tongberg (1972). He found that the coo's belief system influenced consumers' judgement of foreign products. Throughout the 80s and the 90s, it was demonstrated that several other environmental conditions specific to the product's coo also affected the product evaluation process.

More in detail, our dissertation will focus on the following nine country-specific environmental conditions: (1) culture, (2) political climate, (3) language, (4) history, (5) climate, (6) landscape, (7) economic and industrial development, (8) religion and (9) people. We limit ourselves to these nine country-related aspects because of two reasons. In first instance, because subjects participating in our exploratory interview session spontaneously mentioned them when asked to report on what they were thinking of when they heard the name of a particular country. In second instance, it will be demonstrated throughout the following paragraphs that there is a vast amount of empirical data in support of the fact that these nine elements can be considered as potential determinants of consumers' attitudinal dispositions towards products. Let us have a closer look at each of these individually.

Culture

According to Venkatesh, “[i]ndividuals are products of their culture and their social groupings; therefore, they are conditioned by their sociocultural environment to act in certain manners.” (Venkatesh 1995: 29). Samiee and Mayo (1990) postulate these cultural differences should be taken into account since they can be important barriers to trade with distant foreign countries. In his book *Marketing Across Cultures*, Usunier (2000) presents an extensive overview on how cultural differences impact on different areas of marketing, among which consumer behaviour. The study of culture and cultural differences became particularly popular since the work published by Hofstede (1980)⁵.

⁵ More in detail, Hofstede operationalized national cultures by means of five dimensions (i.e., Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, Power Distance, Masculinity/Femininity and Long/Short Term Orientation). These in turn can be used to determine how close various cultures are.

Within the coo-field, cultural (dis)similarities indeed have been assessed as factors influencing consumers' perceptions of foreign-sourced products (e.g., Wang and Lamb 1983). Hong and Yi (1992) for example, found stronger coo-effects for Koreans than for Americans. Ahmed and d'Astous (1993) could establish that the Made-in label was much less important to Belgians than to Canadians. Wall and Heslop (1986) in turn, demonstrated how cultural similarity had a positive impact on product evaluations. Their study indicated that French speaking Canadians and Quebec residents had a high image of products made in France, probably due to the positive influence of cultural heritage. The same conclusions were drawn by Crawford and Lumpkin (1993) in a study on U.S. consumers' willingness to buy foreign-sourced apparel. They found that the more similar a country is to the U.S. in cultural terms, the more likely it is to be a preferred source of apparel. Only recently, efforts have been undertaken to explain how cultural differences affect coo-effects. Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000) for instance, showed how the coo-effect differed between Japanese and United States respondents due to what they refer to as the cultural-psychological principles of individualism and collectivism.

Political climate

According to Friedman (1999), political climate can be an important determinant of how consumers react towards products. As he argues, an illustration of this assumption can be found in "[...] the case of a group that finds itself dissatisfied with the government policies of a city, state, or foreign nation and acts upon its feelings by boycotting the businesses operating in the affected geographic area." (Friedman 1999: 14). Hisrich et al. (1981), agree that a country's political ideology and system is an important determinant of the consumer's foreign product perception. In their study, they focussed on U.S. respondents' attitudes towards products made in communist countries. Results indicated that 80 % of the sample supported trade with communist countries. Notwithstanding, only 64 % was willing to purchase goods from communist nations. With regard to a U.S. population's willingness to buy foreign-sourced apparel, Crawford and Lumpkin (1993) identified political freedom (or a lack of it) as an important variable in the consumers' decision making. More in detail, they established that "[...] while prepared to tolerate some restrictions on freedom in the less developed countries in the sample, the consumer was more reluctant to deal with those developed countries such as South Africa and the European ex-socialist states." (Crawford and Lumpkin 1993: 352). Johansson et al. (1994) concentrated on the potential effects of

political convictions of U.S. farmers on the decision of buying tractors from a controversial country (i.e., the New Russia), and found the political variable to be a significant factor. More in detail, they established that the more conservative farmers in the U.S. sample surprisingly were the ones who on the margin considered Russian tractors as good value for money, while liberal farmers were not the best target for tractors made in Russia.

More recently other examples of how governmental decisions and political hostility can affect foreign product attitudes have been provided within the literature. Kaynak et al. (2000) for instance could establish how Bangladeshi consumers unfavourably evaluated products carrying a Made-in India label. As they argued, “[o]ne of the possible reasons for a low product quality rating for Indian products may be attributable to the fact that India and Bangladesh have been at odds politically with each other in the past, hence the poor evaluation of Indian products.” (Kaynak et al. 2000: 1231). Beverland and Lindgreen (2002) in turn, found a comparable example in the New Zealand market. More in detail, they refer to a study performed by Quester et al. (2000) where it was found that local consumers were “[...] reluctant to purchase French products because of France’s action against Greenpeace in New Zealand territory, even though they perceive French products to be of high quality.” (Beverland and Lindgreen 2002: 149). Additional proof supportive of the source country’s political climate as another environmental feature affecting product evaluations was provided earlier by Schooler (1965) and Wang and Lamb (1980, 1983). Martin and Eroglu (1993) even consider a country’s political climate as one of the main dimensions underlying the perception of other countries.

Language

Numerous researchers working within the fields of social psychology and sociolinguistics have identified language as an important criterion for national identification. In his study on the formation of national self-images and regional identities in Russia, Petersson (2001) postulated that language is decisive in the construction of national self-identity. In her book *Europe: History, Ideas and Ideologies*, Guerrina stated that “[a]s the analysis of national identity has highlighted, language is the most common and compelling feature of identity.” (Guerrina 2002: 144). According to Kelman, “[l]anguage differences and the attendant difficulties can create almost insurmountable barriers to contacts.” (Kelman 1965: 555). When turning more specifically to our context of international product marketing, Neelankavil et al. (1995) state that the appropriate use of foreign language is a factor of

crucial importance which should be taken into account when promoting products abroad. The topic has already been discussed at several instances within the literature. In line with Cravens et al. (1987), Thakor and Pacheco for instance argue that “[...] because communication is central to marketing, language differences are critically important in the international environment.” (Thakor and Pacheco 1997: 17).

However, even though language appears to be an important factor in people’s tendency to identify with groups, sociolinguistic approaches remain exceptional within the literature on international marketing and consumer behaviour. Notwithstanding, this doesn’t mean that language-related issues have been totally ignored by market researchers. Several studies for instance, have been published on the effects of language on consumers’ cognitive information processing activities (e.g., Luna and Peracchio 2001; Pan and Schmitt 1996; Schmitt et al. 1994; Schmitt and Zhang 1998; Tavassoli 1999). Others in turn, focussed on the selection of appropriate languages in creating successful brand names in multilingual markets (e.g., Zhang and Schmitt 2001). Koslow, et al. (1994) proposed the sociolinguistic perspective as a useful approach for the study of language effects in ethnic advertising. In their study on advertising directed to United States Hispanics, they could establish that “Spanish-language advertising increased Hispanic consumers’ perception of advertiser sensitivity to Hispanic culture and people, and this perception in turn enhanced affect toward the advertisements.” (Koslow et al. 1994: 575). The authors explained these results based on what they refer to as the “accommodation theory”⁶.

We believe that, within coo-research, the influence of language on the evaluation of foreign products is still to be explored. The only two studies that concentrated on any potential effects of language on the perception of foreign-sourced products were those performed by Leclerc et al. (1994) and Thakor and Pacheco (1997). They established how phonetic properties of language influenced the perception of foreign goods. More in detail, the study performed by Leclerc et al. (1994) demonstrated how French sounding brand names made consumers perceive products as being more hedonic. The authors explained this phenomenon as follows: “[...] when hearing or reading a French name, subjects may concentrate on the mellifluous qualities of French language and infer that the product possesses hedonic qualities.” (Leclerc et al. 1994: 268).

⁶ The authors explain as follows: “In its most basic form, this theory predicts that the greater the amount of effort in accommodation (meaning choice of language) that a bilingual speaker of one group was perceived to put into this message, the more favorably he would be perceived by listeners from another ethnic group, and also the more effort they in turn would put into accommodation back to the speaker.” (Koslow et al. 1994: 576).

History

Historical contacts also appear to have a decisive influence on the way in which nations interact with each other. As argued by Friedman (1999: 132-134), the “Anti-Nazi Boycott” is probably the most well-known example of how historical events can impact consumers’ behaviour towards foreign sourced products. Klein et al. (1998) have been able to demonstrate how past political, military and economic conflicts can have devastating effects on present behaviour towards internationally marketed products. In their opinion, marketers should take these historical contacts into account when studying consumers’ reactions towards foreign sourced products. According to the authors, “[h]istory is fraught with illustrations of the dramatic and damaging effects of hostility between nations. If international tension can lead to armed conflict and atrocities, it seems plausible that animosity toward a current or former enemy also will affect willingness to buy products produced in or by firms from that country.” (Klein et al. 1998: 90). Their study, focussing on the attitude of Chinese consumers towards Japanese products, confirmed this idea. Additional evidence was provided by Crawford and Lumpkin (1993). In their study of U.S. consumers’ attitude towards foreign-sourced apparel, it was found that “[t]he least preferred sources were those countries of the communist bloc whose history displayed overt hostility to the U.S. – the U.S.S.R., Vietnam, Cuba, and China.” (Crawford and Lumpkin 1993: 352). More recently Klein (2002) found animosity effects to occur when U.S. consumers were confronted with Japanese products. The feelings of animosity causing this unfavourable reaction towards goods made in Japan were found to be related to memories about World War II (the bombing of Pearl Harbour) and economy-related issues such as Japan’s tendency towards protectionism.

Unfortunately however, it appears that, although historical conflicts are important in examining consumers’ reactions towards foreign-sourced goods, these have longtime been neglected in research. As put a couple of years ago by Klein et al.: “[...] to date, the marketing and consumer behavior literature has ignored the construct of animosity between nations and its potential impact on foreign product purchase.” (Klein et al. 1998: 90).

Climate

A country’s climatological characteristics often are mentioned by respondents when asked to form an impression about foreign countries. More specifically, climate has been identified as a determinant of decisive importance in the field of tourism where respondents are frequently

asked to evaluate different destinations. Sirgy and Su (2000) for instance, identified atmospheric conditions as one of the destination environment's cues that determines travellers' destination image. In line with this finding, Iacobucci (1998) showed how climatological features were recurrent items in travellers' cognitive networks for tourism destinations. Kastenholz and Gordon (s.d.) also consider a destination country's climate as a "basic" condition in travellers' evaluation of destinations. At several instances within the literature on coo, it has been asserted that consumers use such climatological circumstances to infer aspects related to a country's inhabitants and products. People living in Scandinavia for instance, often are considered to be rather "cold", meaning more introvert, while Mediterraneans enjoy a reputation of being rather "warm" or extrovert. Askegaard and Ger for example, analyzed Turks' perception of Danes and found that "Turks perceived Danes as living in "a drab society" where "social life is not active," and to be somewhat "cold people" with no time for friendly relations. [...] The general image is that of a content but not really happy, calm, peaceful, and stable people, without much emotion." (Askegaard and Ger 1997: 7). One of the Turkish respondents even thought that Danes cannot feel great excitement and that they cannot experience a great passionate love. Southern Germans also appeared to perceive Danes as overly calm and phlegmatic people. The reaction of one of the German respondents is illustrative to this regard: "Their calm attitude simply gets on my nerves. Sometimes you just want to shake them to make them wake up. (G, 27)" (Askegaard and Ger 1997: 7).

These climatological conditions also appear to be used by consumers to evaluate foreign-sourced products. Askegaard and Ger (1997) showed how features related to Denmark's climate and atmosphere influenced the images Turks and Germans associated with Danish products. Verlegh (2001) also identified climatological circumstances as variables potentially affecting the perception of foreign-sourced products. He argues more in detail that such climatological conditions remain particularly significant in areas like food and tourism. In his doctoral dissertation, he found that climatological features (in this case, impressions of sunshine and temperature) affected consumers' perception of tomatoes.

Landscape

Hopkins (1998) argues that images of the countryside carry a large variety of symbolic meanings and imagery with them which make them interesting tools for marketers:

“Place is both a context for consumption and a consumable entity in itself (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994). ‘Place’ is ‘a centre of felt value ... a repository of meaning’ which has a physical setting, a location and a sense of identity (Billinge, 1986, p. 346). It is the meanings, values, experiences and identities attributed to a place by the promotor that are marketed in the form of advertisements. [...] Selling images is not unique to the tourism industry; it is ubiquitous in contemporary Western society. Social life is saturated by media and advertising; we are an image-driven culture and we consume signs: consumption is symbolic as well as functional.” (Hopkins 1998: 65-81)

“Together, these codes and myths identified in the slogans and logos convey images that combine to create place myths of a symbolic countryside. What emerges is a place where the ‘natural environment’ is a central and highly valued characteristic. References to sensational outdoor experiences, spectacular landscapes and idyllic settings are conveyed many times over. The past is also held in high esteem, with slogans and logos repeatedly stressing ‘heritage’ sites, historical experiences and crafted goods. The countryside is a place of ‘community’, where innocence, safety, friendship and family values still prevail. [...] The myth of ‘spatial exotica’, of a place of transformation where the ordinary ends and adventure, fun and recreation begins, emerges as a recurrent theme, suggesting that the unusual, the extraordinary, the unique are desired and admired. And finally, the myth of countryside as ‘pastoral retreat’, a place to escape one’s own urban world of work, responsibility and routine, and adopt a simpler, more natural, ‘rustic’ way of life, if only temporarily.” (Hopkins 1998: 65-81).

Thus, a country’s landscape might be an effective tool for marketers in their effort to stimulate consumers’ fantasy and imagination. When products are associated with this particular cue, they become charged with strong symbolic connotations. As argued by Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), such country impressions can function as “image attributes”, while they transfer their symbolic meanings to the product. To put it in the words of Morello,

countrysides can “[...] serve as symbols for instant communication. They immediately trigger all kinds of associations, and, insofar as marketers are concerned, they can enrich (or harm) a brand’s perceived image.” (Morello 1993: 287). Verlegh (2001) confirmed this reasoning as he identified landscape as a geographical component of importance when studying consumers’ perception of foreign-sourced goods. In addition, Askegaard and Ger (1997) found that Turkish and German respondents associated Denmark with the image of a rural landscape, mentioning items like “green country, rural landscape and rural way of life, hardly any city-life, pure, natural”, etc. These gave the country the status of an agricultural nation and influenced subjects’ perceptions of Danish products. As put by the authors: “In both countries, Danes were seen to produce agricultural, not industrial, goods. In Turkey, only cheese was mentioned by all, and usually uttered first, followed by beer. Other products mentioned were dairy products, cake, cookies, fish products, and forestry products such as wooden toys.” (Askegaard and Ger 1997: 8). These findings are supported by Niss (1996) who states that “[i]mage surveys carried out abroad indicate that the “Made in Denmark” label is mainly associated with design goods, food produce and products related to agriculture. Conversely, Denmark’s reputation for producing industrially manufactured goods is almost non-existent.” (Niss 1996: 11).

Other examples of how products can be successfully associated with landscapes are presented by Heslop and Wall: “Moosehead beer built its market niche on a wilderness image and continues to exploit a connection to the environment. [...] In domestic marketing, Bell Canada in its advertising uses very dramatic symbols, such as Arctic wolves calling across the long empty wilderness, to reinforce the imagery associated with well-known Canadian expertise in long-distance communication.” (Heslop and Wall 1993: 426).

Economy and Industrial Activity

As already mentioned, coo-researchers have demonstrated how consumers use a country’s level of economic development to evaluate foreign sourced products (e.g., Wang and Lamb 1980, 1983). An often recurrent tendency within the field is that consumers evaluate products from More Developed Countries (MDCs) better than products coming from Less Developed Countries (LDCs). In other words, a country’s degree of economic development seems to create a hierarchy of bias (e.g., Bilkey and Nes 1982). Ahmed et al. (1994) suppose people prefer products made in MDCs, because they believe such countries have more skills, expertise and means at their disposition to produce high quality products. Cordell (1992)

argues that industrialized countries also enjoy much more experience since they have a longer history of product manufacturing and innovation. One of the consequences is that the degree of perceived economic/industrial risk for ICs is much lower compared to LDCs. Since a country's economic/industrial risk perception has been identified as one of the most important mediators of product evaluations (e.g., Hampton 1977), it is understandable that consumers prefer products from countries associated with lower levels of perceived economic/industrial risk. Alden (1993) further demonstrated how this bias effect in function of coo's perceived economic/industrial risk not only counted for high involvement products, but for low involvement goods like toothpaste as well. Therefore, it would be unwise to exclude this particular aspect from research on coo-effects towards regular consumer goods.

In sum, a country's high degree of economic/industrial development influences consumers' product evaluation due to the fact that it moderates consumers' risk perception. According to Batra et al. (2000), a country's high level of economic/industrial development can be interpreted by consumers not only as an indicator of lower risk, but as a sign of social status as well. More in particular, they found that consumers in developing countries prefer products from Western nations for status-enhancing reasons. Comparable findings have been reported by Marcoux et al. (1997) for young urban educated Polish consumers. These seemed to consider Western products as means to demonstrate their social status. As put by Baker and Ballington (2002: 163), it appears that, overall, products coming from highly industrialized Western countries seem to be carrying some kind of "snob-value" with them.

Religion

According to Usunier (2000), religious norms and values are factors that influence consumers' behaviour in the marketplace. The majority of studies that focussed on the role of these particular variables, concentrated on their eventual relationship with consumers' reactions towards advertisements. In general, it is found that religion can affect people's interpretation of marketing communications. As put by Usunier, "[m]ores and religion act as filters of advertising messages, transforming factual information into culturally interpreted meaning (e.g. a naked woman washing her hair in her bathroom) into elements of culture-based meaning (it incites people to sexual debauchery)." (Usunier 2000: 468).

Besides affecting consumers' reactions towards advertisements, Han (1990) believes that religious factors can also influence product evaluations. However, as so far, the only study within the coo-field that focussed on the potential effects of belief systems on

consumers' evaluation of foreign-sourced products was performed by Tongberg (1972). He identified a country's belief system as an explanatory variable of coo-effects. In our opinion, more research is needed on the relevance of a coo's religious system, especially in cases where consumers are characterized as being more dogmatic and conservative. As demonstrated by Anderson and Cunningham (1972), conservatism and dogmatism had a negative influence on consumers' preference for foreign products. This tendency might be explained by the fact that consumers cannot reconcile the consumption of products from countries having a different belief system with their own religious convictions. Interestingly, Shimp and Sharma (1987) found that conservatism and dogmatism indeed were narrowly related to the notorious concept of "consumer ethnocentrism". In line with this reasoning, Friedman (1999) identified religious-related issues as a frequently recurring cause of initiatives towards product boycotts. The recent boycott of Danish products instigated by several Muslim countries as a reaction against the publication of Muslim cartoons in Denmark can be seen as another example of how international trade is sensitive to religious-related issues.

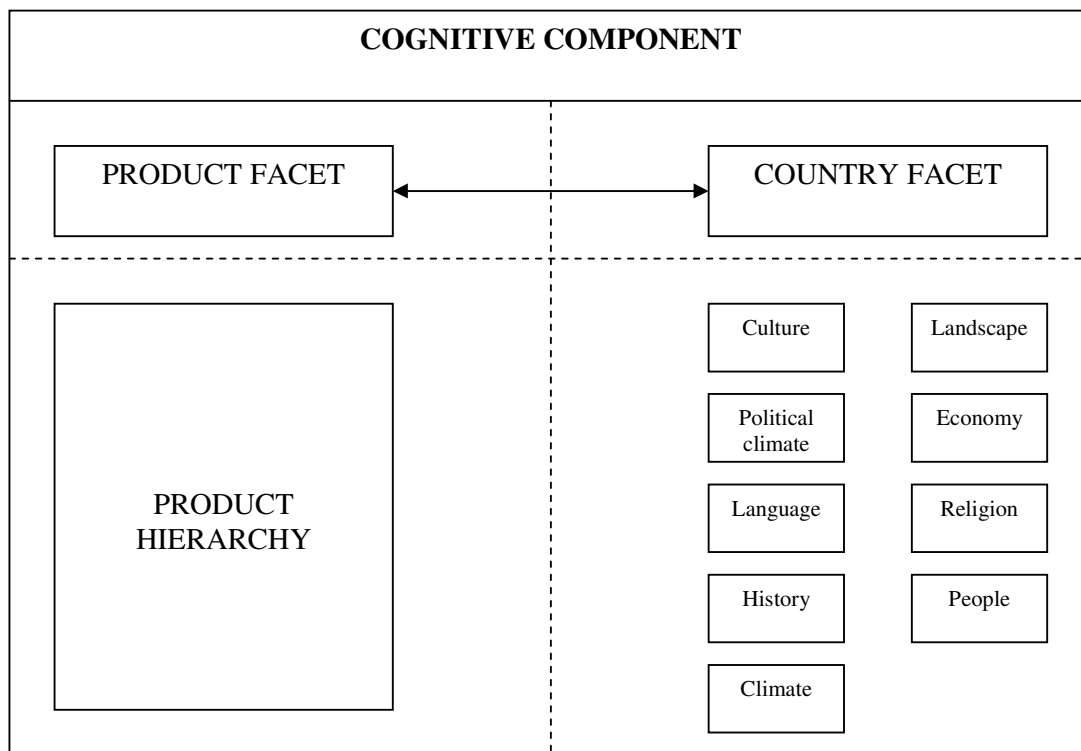
People

Apparently, consumers also seem to base their evaluation of foreign-sourced products on their perception of the sourcing countries' inhabitants (e.g., Schooler 1965). More in detail, Verlegh (2001) believes that consumers take into account the competence and creativity of a particular country's people when they have to evaluate a product coming from that country. Several other researchers argue that, besides taking into account a people's skilfulness, consumers also might use their perception of a people's (overall) personality as an evaluative criterion for product judgement (e.g., Papadopoulos et al. 1990; Parameswaran and Pisharodi 1994; Sullivan Mort and Han s.d.; Yaprak and Parameswaran 1986).

Before turning to the next component of PCI (i.e., the affective component), we would like to comment briefly on the structural difference between the cognitive component's product facet on the one hand and its country facet on the other. This way, the product facet of a PCI's cognitive component contains consumers' knowledge about one particular feature, that is, the country's products. On the contrary, the country facet of a PCI's cognitive component encloses consumers' knowledge about several features related to the country's more general environment like its culture, political system, language, religion, economy and history.

According to O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000) this content-related variety within the country facet might create a problem for marketers in that it becomes difficult to arrive at a more unified and consistent image around the product. As they put it, the country facet should be seen as a “constellation of different images” and consequently, “[...] the concept of national image does not lend itself to the sharp clarity of definition that is possible with the brand image of a product except in respect to specific product categories associated with the nation. A nation’s image has too many potential references for it to be anchored to a hard core of social facts, as is possible in the case of the brand image of a product.” (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy 2000: 60). However, as argued by Lampert and Jaffe (1998: 71), the problem of “image crystallization” (i.e., the extent to which an image is formed into a unified and consistent construct), is not specifically related to the country facet. On the contrary, in their opinion it might count for the product facet as well. Figure 4 clearly pictures the difference between the internal structure of the product and country facets⁷.

Figure 4: Product and country facet of PCI’s cognitive component: structure



⁷ With regard to Figure 4, we would like to remark that instead of seeing the various environmental conditions as completely isolated elements, these are to be considered as closely linked with each other. For instance, and as argued throughout the previous paragraphs, cultural identity is narrowly related to language, religion, people’s personality characteristics, etc. Yet, it should be noticed that the country facet’s internal relationships are not within our scope of interest. Therefore we will not explicitly take them into account throughout the dissertation.

As can be seen in Figure 4, the product and country facet maintain reciprocal interactions with each other. The underlying rationale is that an individual's beliefs about a country's products might be based on his knowledge about that country's environmental conditions and vice versa. The assumption has already been made in a paper published by Papadopoulos et al. (1990) where it was suggested that Hungarians' image of Japan and the Japanese was based on their image of Japanese products while in case of Sweden, the image of Swedish products was derived from the image of the country and its inhabitants. The topic of interactions between both country and product images was the central focus of attention in a study performed by Li et al. (1997). They provided us with empirical results in support of this "interaction hypothesis".

Thus, overall we might conclude that the PCI's cognitive component has a relatively complex internal structure. As O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000) put it in a more eloquent way, it can be seen as some kind of "constellation" or "cacophony" where cognitions related to a country's products on the one hand and cognitions having to do with a country's more general environmental conditions on the other hand are organized into an extensive internally stored mind map.

3.1.2. Affective component

We already saw how experiential and hedonic approaches towards consumption as those developed by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) state that consumers' desire for emotional experiences sometimes belong to the primary motivations behind product purchases. In line with this reasoning, several authors think it would be unwise to simply disregard emotions from research on consumer decision making (e.g., Elliott 1998; Luce et al. 2001; Zajonc 1980; Zajonc and Markus 1982, 1985). Peterson et al. (1986) for instance, stated that affects can play various roles ranging from influencing the ways in which information is processed and stored in memory to determining product choices. This claim for more emotion-oriented research also reached the coo-field where up until that moment the accent was put mostly on cognitive processing.

Throughout the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, some scholars working within the coo-field started to study how affective reactions towards a product's coo might be affecting a person's attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. Derbaix and Pham (1998), have developed a framework in which they distinguish between different types of "affects" people might link to advertising cues (like the coo-cue). More in detail, these

range from emotions, feelings, moods and temperaments to preference, attitude and appreciation. We will concentrate more specifically on the notion of “feelings”. Thus, if we speak of any “emotional connotations” or “affective reactions” evoked by the coo-cue, these should be understood as “feelings”. Together with Vanden Abeele and McLachlan (1994), Derbaix and Pham (1998), count (1) the transient nature, (2) the average to high intensity with which they are experienced and (3) the fact that they can be more easily linked to a specific stimulus among the three most distinctive characteristics of “feelings”. As for the internal structure of the PCI’s affective component, Verlegh argues that on average, “[s]tudies employing more fine-grained classifications of emotions often find that these emotions ultimately reduce to two factors, one positive and one negative (e.g., Mano and Oliver 1993)” (Verlegh 2001: 52). In line with the author, we will adopt a two-factorial conceptualization of the PCI’s affective component.

Some initiatives have been undertaken to study how such coo-specific feelings might be influencing consumers’ attitudes towards foreign-sourced products. Different kinds of feelings have already been examined. It seems that the two-dimensional structure of feelings forwarded by Verlegh (2001) is reflected somehow in these studies. More in detail, we can distinguish the positively oriented ones like pleasantness, peacefulness, likeability, trust and pride (e.g., Häubl 1996; Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993; Verlegh 2001) from negative feelings like animosity, threat, hostility and irritation (e.g., Klein 2002; Klein et al. 1998; Sullivan Mort and Han s.d.; Verlegh 2001). One of the objectives aimed by our study is to gain more theoretical insight into how such coo-specific feelings might be influencing consumers’ attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products.

3.1.3. Conative component

We already discussed how the PCI’s conative component should be considered as the behavioural intentions people experience towards a product’s coo. More specifically, it was argued that these behavioural intentions or “conations” can be manifold. According to several scholars these action tendencies should be seen as uni-dimensional bipolar constructs (e.g., Brengman 2002). Put differently, in his behavioural intentions towards an attitude object, one alters between “approaching” and “avoiding”. Since one of our objectives is to explore the functioning of this conative component, we believe it might be useful to elaborate somewhat further on the question of knowing what precisely determines whether a person decides to approach or avoid a particular country as well as its people and its products.

Based on the literature we examined, it appears that the functioning of a PCI's conative component cannot be well understood if its intimate link with social and personal norms and values is not taken into account. As argued at former instances, the topic has received special attention within the Theory of Reasoned Action. Most of its representatives clearly postulate that a person's behavioural intentions are determined to a large extent by his personal norms and values (e.g., Etzioni 1988). Put differently, we might consider this system of norms and values as a whole of "conduct rules" or "behavioural directives" determining what we "ought" (not) to do. That is, we intend to behave in function of what our personal norms and values prescribe. These prescriptions might encourage us to approach an object (in that case the prescription functions as a moral "obligation") or to avoid it (in that case the prescription functions as a moral "interdiction"). In sum, an individual's country-specific conations can be said to carry a "prescriptive connotation" that stems from the inner value system with which these conations are intimately linked.

According to several scholars working within the coo-field (e.g., Bruning 1997; Lantz and Loeb 1996; Verlegh 2001), theories on "Self and Social Identity" provide us with useful insights on how a person's norms and values might encourage approaching behaviour towards one country while stimulating avoidance behaviour towards another. As put by Tajfel (1981), one of the key propositions within Social Identity Theory is that an individual's moral values are profoundly influenced by his tendency to identify with particular groups. These groups can be manifold, ranging from family and friends to colleagues, or even the whole of individuals having the same nationality (e.g., Salazar 1998).

Babad et al. posit that the selection of groups with which an individual identifies, is not fortuitous: "[t]he groups to which persons belong are not arbitrarily defined. They are meaningful groups; belonging to them and identifying with them are important aspects of a person's self-esteem and identity." (Babad et al. 1983: 122). Serino (1998) agrees that, instead of being a purely accidental phenomenon, group formation is driven by well-defined motivational factors. More in detail, Bar-Tal assumes that "[...] individuals form groups in order to satisfy their various needs. Needs of survival, defence, social support, predictability, world understanding, uncertainty reduction, anxiety avoidance or personal adjustment are only a few examples of needs which can be satisfied through group membership." (Bar-Tal 1998: 104). Drigotas et al. (1998) believe that one of the basic motivations behind social identification processes is the individual's need for developing a favourable self-identity. They further argue that the status of the groups to which we belong helps us achieve such positive self-identity. According to Babad et al. (1983), it should be noticed that a person's

so-called “socio-identity” goes further than mere group membership. As the authors argue, socio-identity “[...] includes strong images and emotions about affiliation to the group and carries a variety of symbolic meanings for the person. “Socio-identity” is not merely “belonging” in a group: it satisfies the need of belongingness and influences the person’s self-esteem.” (Babad et al. 1983: 154).

Studies focussing on group formation found that the individual’s identification with groups goes together with a systematic tendency to search for conformity with the group one belongs to. As argued by Babad et al. (1983) the group in which a person seeks to gain or maintain acceptance involves an assimilation of its values and affiliation with its members. However, it must be noticed that this search for conformity with a group never totally annihilates an individual’s own personality characteristics. Worchel for instance, states that an individual continuously alternates between placing an emphasis on group identity and emphasizing personal differentiation: “[...] individuals are engaged in a constant struggle of balancing their desire to belong to groups and the concern of establishing their personal independence and uniqueness.” (Worchel 1998: 73). Oakes et al. (1994) show how this group confirmation mechanism apparently goes together with an inclination to favour one’s own group (i.e., “ingroup”) over other, so-called “outgroups”. As put by Hinton, “[w]e have a tendency to view an ingroup in more positive terms than an outgroup, and thus stereotypes may arise as a result, not just of individual cognition, but of a cognitive process of categorization and a motivational process of comparison.” (Hinton, 2000: 24).

Thus, in line with the foregoing, it might be assumed that an individual identifying with his home country, favours the well-being of his “ingroup”, while he will be more reluctant to affiliate with “outgroups” (in this case, foreign countries). Within the literature on coo-effects, this ingroup-favouritism appears to be confirmed by studies that found consumers to prefer products made in their home country (e.g., Baumgartner and Jolibert 1977; Darling and Kraft 1977). Han (1988) refers to this phenomenon as “patriotic consumption”. More in detail, Verlegh (2001) showed how Dutch consumers preferred home-made products based upon their “national identification tendency”. Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) state outgroup-prejudice also has been found to occur. Several studies could establish that an individual’s negative attitude towards another country’s traditional norms and values affected his attitude towards products coming from that country (e.g., Crawford and Lumpkin 1993; Klein 2002; Klein et al. 1998). Friedman (1999) even states that, instead of being based on purely economic motives, a particular consumer segment’s decision to boycott the buying of foreign sourced products, often is motivated by an offence of its norms and values.

However, it should be mentioned that individuals not always develop negative attitudes towards other countries and their products. Papadopoulos et al. (1990) for instance, found that consumers do not always prefer products made in their own country. Comparable findings were reported by Bailey and Gutierrez de Pineres (1997). They demonstrated how upper-income Mexicans preferred foreign-sourced products. The authors referred to this as a case of “malinchismo”, which is explained as follows:

“*Malinchismo* is an integral part of Mexican cultural context since the term itself evolved from the time of the Spanish conquest of Gran Tenochtitlan [Clark, 1956]. It is said that when the Spanish arrived under command of General Cortez, they communicated to the Aztec King Montezuma II through a female interpreter known as “La Malinche.” Mexican cultural historians interpret her actions and conversations with Montezuma as being traitorous. It is claimed that her translations on the behalf of Cortez were partially responsible for the destruction of the Aztec Empire by Spain. Therefore, to be called a *malinchista*, is to be described as a person who is a betrayer of Mexico through the purchasing of foreign made products.” (Bailey and Gutierrez de Pineres 1997: 27-28).

Agbonifoh and Elimimian (1999) encountered a similar situation in their study on Nigerian consumers. These were also inclined to prefer foreign-sourced products over home-made goods. The authors consider this as a manifestation of “foreignness” or “reverse ethnocentrism”. More particularly, this rather negative attitude of Nigerians towards local products is attributed to historical, psychological and economic factors, as well as to underdeveloped marketing practices and poor government regulations and control. The fact that, due to a lack of industrial and economic development, Third World countries often come to prefer Western-made products over home-made goods has been referred to by Agbonifoh and Elimimian (1999: 103) as “the colonial mentality syndrome”. O’Cass and Lim (2002) speak of it in terms of “Westernism”.

Studies performed by Batra et al. (2000) and by Marcoux et al. (1997) explained this preference for (mostly) Western products, based on the assumption that consumers associate such goods with status-enhancement. Social psychologists indeed acknowledge that this might sometimes be a motive for individuals to act in dissonance with the group to which

they belong. Pérez and Mugny (1998) refer to this as exemplar cases of “dissociation theory”. Hinkle et al. (1998) for example argue that individuals can leave their ingroup, moving to another, presumably higher-status group, in cases where they are unsatisfied with their social identity. As put by Hinton: “[...] if we are unable to achieve a positive social identity through membership of the groups we currently belong to, then we may attempt to become members of groups where we can achieve a more positive social identity.” (Hinton 2000: 114).

Páez et al. also believe that “[...] low-status groups’ socio-cognitive functioning does not always respond to the logic derived from Social Identity Theory’s statement of the need to defend one’s identity: instead of showing ethnocentrism subjects present centrism or outgroup favouritism.” (Páez et al. 1998: 212). They call this type of behaviour “altercentrism” and argue that favouritism towards First World outgroups is manifested most often in Latin America, Asia and Africa:

“Another phenomenon that characterizes dominated groups is a type of symbolic individual mobility – of which Bovarism and the cosmopolitanism of the dominant classes of Latin America is a good example. Bovarism (permanently believing one is living in Paris, London or New York, although one is really living in Puerto Hundingido) is a form of symbolic and ideal identification with the dominant outgroup. Latin Americans, although not only, those from dominant classes, view themselves as second-class or ‘transplanted’ Europeans or North Americans. The use of surnames (for instance the large amount of people called Johnny, William or Peter González), adopting customs and identifying with the values of the dominant cultures constitute a coping strategy of the accepted negative national identity.” (Páez et al. 1998: 219).

Ger et al. (1999) agree that sometimes, individuals might be striving for belonging to another group in hope to be capable of realizing their so-called “aspirational identity”. A striking case of such altercentrism within the marketing literature has been presented by Caglar (1995). She established how Turkish migrants selling Döner Kebap in Germany started adopting new names for Döner, like the more American sounding McKebab, in order to dissociate this particular product from its traditional meanings. In other words, Turks tried to detach Döner Kebap from its image of being a typically Turkish product, because in Germany, Turkish

identity is still felt to be associated with pejorative connotations. Preference for the McDonalds-like name expressed by Turks is explained by the author as follows: “[t]hey identify McDonald’s as high technology, good business, and something advanced, clear and efficient. It represents something American that is of great value.” (Caglar 1995: 223). Thus, they use McKebab as a means for giving their product a higher esteem. To put it in terms of O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000: 59), language is employed by Turkish migrants as a device allowing them to crystallize their “dream longings”.

In sum, it can be said that the conative component of a Product-Country Image should be understood as the consumer’s behavioural intentions towards the product’s coo. These so-called “conations” are to be considered as uni-dimensional bipolar constructs where the two extremities can be interpreted as indicating a tendency to approach or avoid the product’s coo. We also saw how our internally stored system of personal norms and values can charge these behavioural intentions with a prescriptive connotation. As we discussed at former instances, this conative component of PCI has remained largely unexplored. Yet, in line with Heslop and Papadopoulos (1993) and Steffenhagen et al. (2001), we believe it would be helpful to gain more insight into its precise role and functioning during the process of attitude formation towards foreign-sourced products. Therefore, we will incorporate this particular construct as a separately measured variable into the empirical part of our study. Before turning our attention to the other key concept of “product attitude”, we will put the literature aside for a moment and present an overview of the most interesting findings obtained by a series of in-depth interviews we conducted with a number of second-grade university students in order to further explore the PCI-construct.

3.2. Exploratory in-depth interviews⁸

The objectives of this initiative were twofold. In first instance, our intention was to verify whether the tri-component structure of PCI proposed by the literature would be reflected in the interviewees’ comments on the foreign countries we confronted them with. In second instance, we wanted to further explore the content-related aspect of the PCI’s cognitive component. That is, we attempted to get a clearer picture of what more precisely students were thinking of when they were confronted with a particular country.

⁸ For a more detailed description of the procedure⁸ followed while conducting these interviews we refer to Appendix 2.2.

3.2.1. Findings⁹

Besides product-related beliefs, the students we interviewed all spontaneously mentioned cognitions related to the country facet when asked to tell us what came up to their minds when hearing the name of the countries we had selected in advance. Thus, there is something to say for the two-facet structure of the PCI's cognitive component. In line with claims already made by several authors within the field, this can be seen as an additional reason to focus not only on consumers' prior knowledge about a country's products when studying coo-effects, but to take into account a country's more general environmental conditions as well since these belong to the core of PCIs. The nine country environmental conditions we selected were all spontaneously referred to by our subjects. This can be seen as a supplementary motivation behind our intention to direct the scope of our project towards these nine country-related aspects. Finally, it should be noticed that PCIs indeed are supported by a tri-component structure with cognitions clearly related to deeper lying affective and conative reactions.

In line with Martin and Eroglu (1993), we found that the PCI's cognitive component consisted of different types of beliefs. Some of our subjects' thoughts were based on personal experiences with a particular country. Of course these so-called "descriptive beliefs" were more prominent in cases where students were asked to comment on the Netherlands and France, since these are two neighbouring countries of Belgium. However, some of the interviewees mentioned they had traveled to other countries we included in our study. Respondents disposing of personal experience with a rather unfamiliar country questioned some of the typical stereotypes or clichés other respondents associated with such a less well-known country. Thus, personal experiences allowed participants to speak of a country in a much more nuanced and detailed way. Somehow, personal experience also intensified subjects' feelings towards a country. This could clearly be derived from several non-verbal channels like their facial expressions and the volume as well as the intonation of their voice. However, this affective intensity could also be observed in a more direct manner, like for instance, through the more frequent use of superlative constructions and of epithetic adjectives. Finally, personal experiences also made respondents feel more confident about their beliefs.

We also established how interviewees turned most frequently to so-called "informational beliefs" when commenting on the countries presented to them. Thus,

⁹ The more detailed findings for each country taken separately can be consulted under Appendix 2.2.

formation of PCIs appears to be influenced most extensively by secondary or outside sources of information. Our subjects indicated they obtained some of their country-related thoughts in a word-of-mouth manner from family and friends. Yet, the primary sources of information are to be found among the popular media with a prior ranking for television and movies. For instance, several respondents questioned about India said their images were largely based on movies they had recently seen and of which the story took place in that country. One subject interviewed about Kenya immediately told us she thought of a television serial about a family living in Africa she had seen a couple of years ago. Another interviewee was thinking at TV-documentaries about African nature and wildlife. One respondent said his country image was largely influenced by what he read in comic books a couple of years ago. Thus, formation of PCIs is a heavily mediatized phenomenon. This might explain why in some cases, PCIs are limited to rather simplified and inaccurate generalizations of a more complex reality.

In third instance, we had some cases in which respondents indicated how their PCI was based on so-called “inferential beliefs”. The occurrence of this type of cognitions manifested itself most frequently in cases where interviewees were questioned about unfamiliar countries. For example, one respondent being questioned about Chile told us that the country was governed by a dictatorial regime. She clearly indicated she did not really “know” whether this was correct. She “assumed” it to be so by thinking of the regime installed by Fidel Castro in Cuba. In other words, this subject clearly inferred her beliefs about the Chilean political climate from her thoughts about the political situation in Cuba, another South-American country she knew a little bit better. In commenting on India and Indian people, one respondent was thinking of “Apu”, a personage appearing in the famous animation serial “The Simpsons”.

In sum, taken together, the tri-component structure proposed by attitude theory seems to be well suited to represent the psychological structure behind product-country images. Content-wise, PCIs are rather complex and varied but on average, the whole of cognitions can be subdivided into a product and a country facet. Also, our qualitative pilot study confirms the idea that product-country images at the cognitive level are composed of descriptive, informational and inferential beliefs (e.g., Erickson et al. 1984). The frequent mentioning of the nine environmental conditions previously discussed indicates these are core elements of the country facet and therefore should not be neglected. PCIs based on personal experience are more detailed and nuanced. Additionally, these are characterized by a higher confidence value. In case people do not have any personal experience with a certain country, image formation is directed by outside sources of information (television, movies,

etc.) or by inference processing where the image of one particular country is derived from another that can be related to it.

4. Summary findings

Both the literature and our interviews suggest the tri-component attitude structure fits the internal composition of PCIs very well. At the basis, we have a “cognitive component” that contains a person’s internally stored beliefs. This cognitive knowledge framework contains two parts. On the one hand, we have the “product facet”. It is defined as the whole of production and marketing-related cognitions about a country that might be activated by the Made-in label. On the other hand, the PCI’s cognitive component includes what we referred to as the “country facet”. This is a network of internally stored cognitions about a country’s “more general environmental conditions”. Although the latter can be manifold, we commented more specifically on the following nine: (1) cultural identity, (2) political climate, (3) language, (4) history, (5) climate, (6) landscape, (7) economic and industrial development, (8) religion and (9) personal character of inhabitants. Our prior reasons to focus on these nine environmental conditions are first of all that the coo-field has not paid any substantial attention to these country-related aspects. Yet, the marketing literature clearly advances them as factors of considerable importance for the international positioning of products. In second instance, exploratory interviews revealed these nine country-specific conditions pertain to the core of the images people associate with foreign countries. Moreover, several coo-researchers argue these two cognitive entities maintain reciprocal interactions with each other.

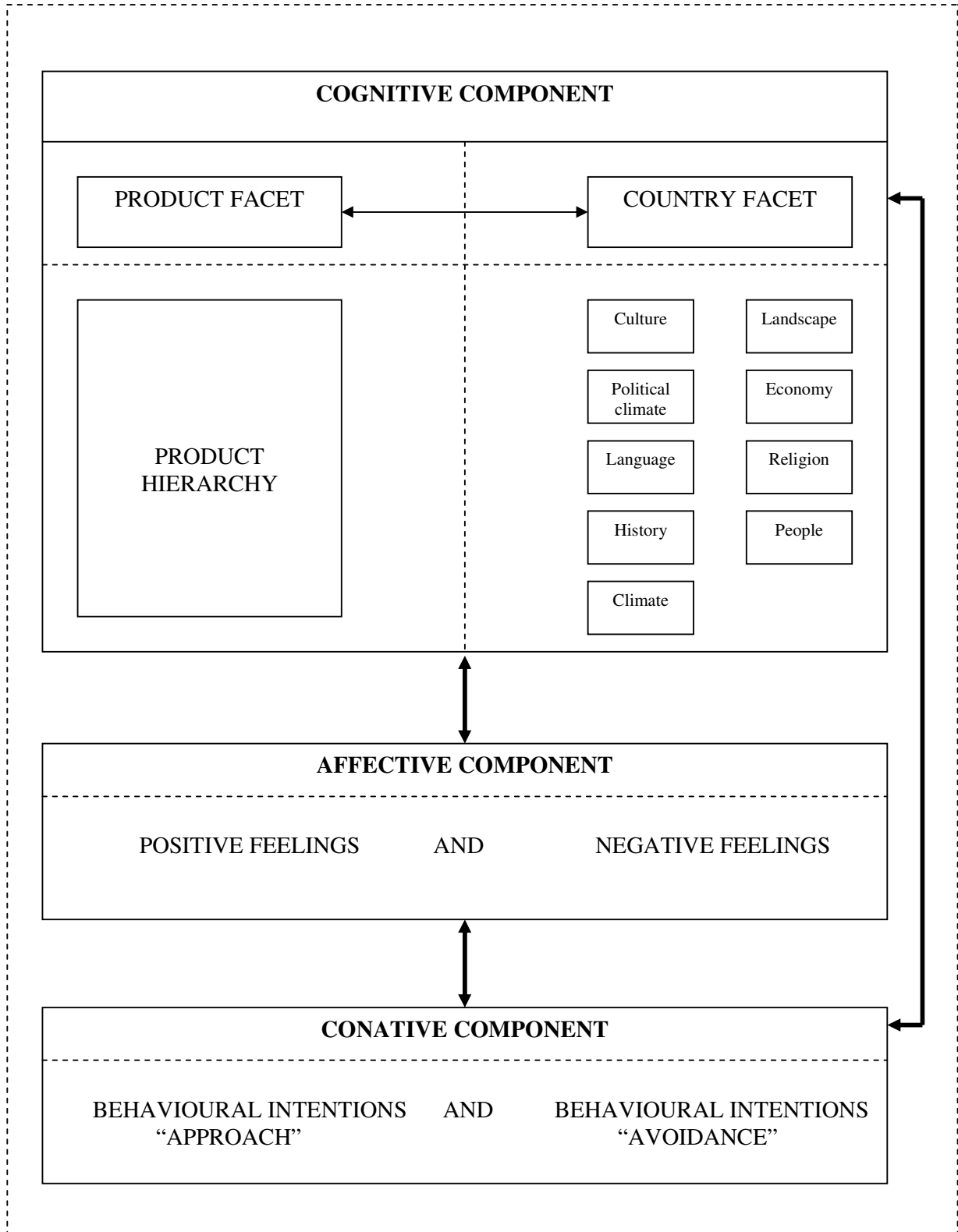
Intimately related to the cognitive component, we have the “affective component” of PCI. More in detail, we discussed how this affective component should be seen as a whole of positive and negative “feelings” towards a country and its products. According to the literature, such feelings are characterized by the fact that they can often be linked to a particular cognitive antecedent. This principle has been demonstrated throughout our interviews where respondents gave clear (non-)verbal indications of how certain country-related thoughts (like for instance their belief about a country’s climate and geography) carried with them affective connotations (i.e., positive or negative feelings) like “happiness” and “pleasantness” or “sadness” and “discontent”. The fact that the country facet of a PCI’s cognitive component consists of multiple dimensions explains why it is difficult to capture

the PCI's affective component by one, let's say "overall" feeling. Our interviews indeed showed how this affective component is rather characterized by a certain degree of internal diversity. This sometimes gives an inconsistent impression with positive and negative feelings being expressed towards the same country. The coo-literature contains several examples showing how this cognitive and affective diversity within a PCI might help in explaining the paradoxical character of some earlier reported findings where consumers have been found to dislike a country's products while liking the country itself and vice versa (e.g., Balestrini et al. 2003; Beverland and Lindgreen 2002; Klein 2002; Klein et al. 1998; O'Donohoe 1999).

Finally, PCI also contains a "conative component". By "conations" we refer to a person's behavioural intentions. These can be seen as tendencies towards approaching or avoiding a particular country and its products. As could be established by our interviews, these conations are most frequently linked to a cognitive antecedent that is affectively charged in a (un)favourable way. Avoiding or approaching countries also seems to be influenced to a considerable extent by the extent to which a PCI corresponds to the pattern of values that belong to the consumer's self and social identities. Our overall conception of Product-Country Images is presented on the following page by means of Figure 5.

Figure 5: Conceptualization of the Product-Country Image

PRODUCT – COUNTRY IMAGE



PART 4: PRODUCT ATTITUDE

1. Outline

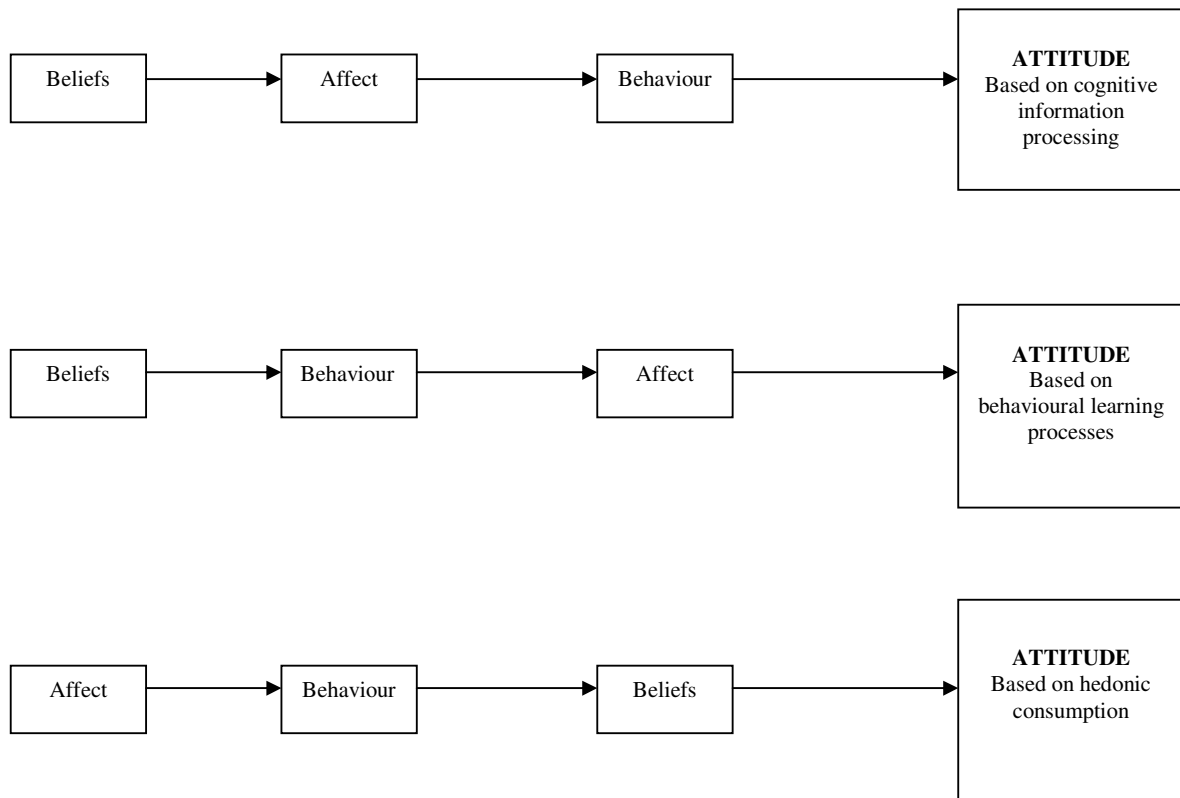
This part of the dissertation will be dedicated to the conceptualization of our second key construct, that is, product attitude. Besides focussing on the product attitude construct itself, we will elaborate somewhat further on the question of knowing how such product attitudes are formed. In doing so, we will pay special attention to the role of marketing stimuli like the coo-cue. As will become clear throughout this chapter, theories on marketing communication are very instructive about this particular issue. More in detail, these show us that “perception” of stimuli like the product’s coo is to be seen as an important antecedent of product attitudes and that “interpretation” of such a marketing stimulus is a central component of this perception process. In further exploring this act of interpretation we will argue that it should be understood as a process where information is transformed into so-called “psychological meaning” during the decoding stage. This meaning concept thus becomes the central fundament on which the consumer’s attitudinal disposition towards the product will be based.

2. Conceptualization

As already discussed, coo-researchers base themselves on insights stemming from attitude theory in conceptualizing product attitudes. More in detail, we saw how this construct is to be seen as an interaction between three components: the cognitive (i.e., one’s beliefs about the product’s attributes), the affective (i.e., one’s evaluative judgement of the product) and the conative (i.e., one’s purchase intentions towards the product). As put by Solomon et al. (1999), the majority of scholars working within the field of consumer behaviour consider these intra-attitudinal interactions as some kind of hierarchically structured sequences. According to De Pelsmacker et al. “[...] a hierarchy-of-effects model assumes that things have to happen in a certain order, implying that earlier effects form necessary conditions in order for the later effects to occur.” (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001: 60). As demonstrated by Solomon et al. (1999), different types of hierarchy-models can be distinguished, that is, (1)

the standard learning hierarchy, (2) the low-involvement hierarchy and (3) the experiential hierarchy. These are pictured in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Product attitudes as hierarchies-of-effects



SOURCE: adapted from – Solomon et al. 1999: 124

The standard learning hierarchy is believed to be the process by which most product attitudes are constructed. To put it in terms of De Pelsmacker et al. “[t]he majority of hierarchy models claim a cognitive-affective-conative sequence.” (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001: 60). As explained by Solomon et al., the consumer’s product attitude is the logical outcome of a rational problem-solving process: “[f]irst, he or she forms beliefs about a product by accumulating knowledge (beliefs) regarding relevant attributes. Next, the consumer evaluates these beliefs and forms a feeling about the product (affect). [...] Finally, based on this evaluation, the consumer engages in a relevant behaviour, such as buying the product.” (Solomon et al. 1999: 124). This hierarchy-of-effects seems to occur most often in cases

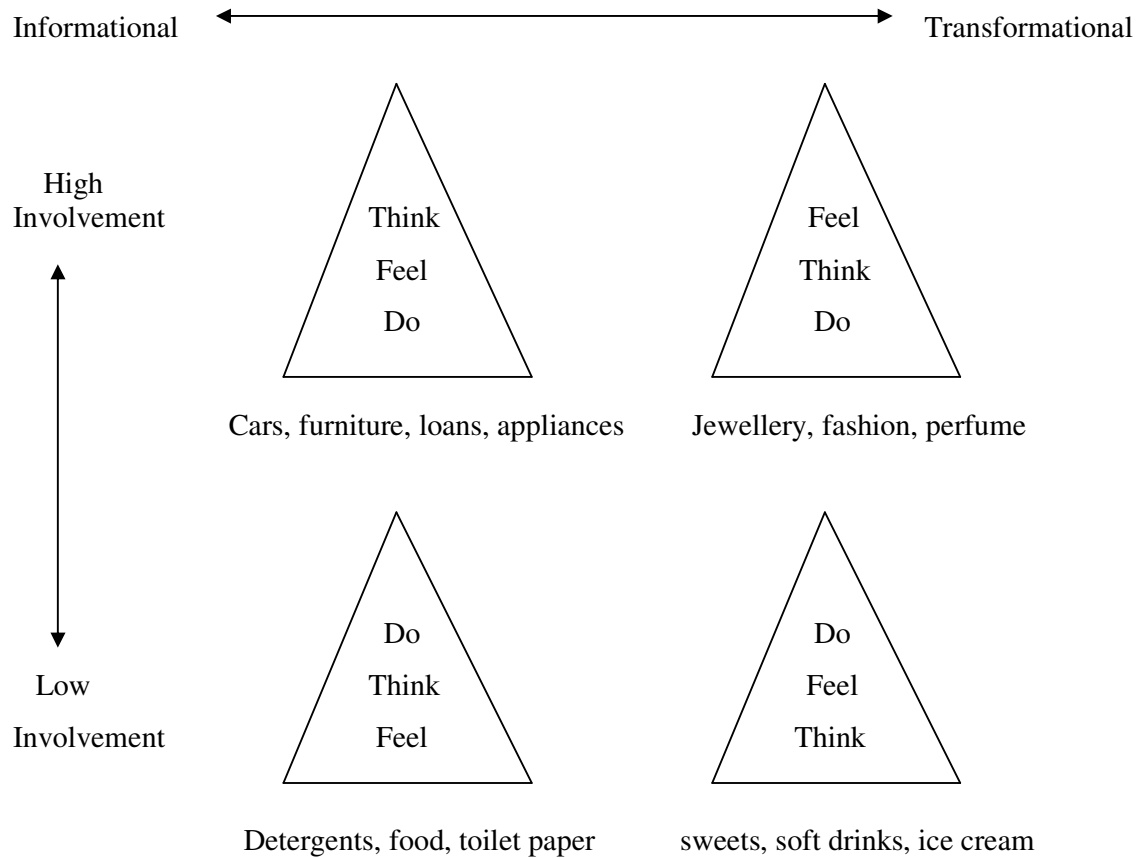
where consumers are confronted with high risk, complex products and has been adopted by the majority of coo-studies.

The low-involvement hierarchy substantially differs from the standard learning hierarchy. As argued by Solomon et al., “[i]n this sequence, the consumer initially does not have a strong preference for one brand over another, but instead acts on the basis of limited knowledge and then forms an evaluation only after the fact. The attitude is likely to come about through behavioural learning, where the consumer’s choice is reinforced by good or bad experiences with the product after purchase.” (Solomon et al. 1999: 124-125). The low-involvement hierarchy is assumed to prevail in cases where consumers evaluate less important products.

According to Solomon et al. (1999), the experiential hierarchy-of-effects is more likely to occur when the product aims at delivering sensory pleasure or at stimulating the consumer’s fantasy instead of satisfying any utilitarian needs. The underlying rationale is that “[...] consumers act on the basis of their emotional reactions [...]. Although the factors of beliefs and behaviour are recognized as playing a part, a consumer’s overall evaluation of an attitude object is considered by many to be the core of an attitude.” (Solomon et al. 1999: 125).

Still another classification of hierarchies-of-effects has been developed by Rossiter and Percy (1997). It is better known as the “Rossiter and Percy grid”, a framework which builds on the Foot-Cone-Belding grid. More in detail it classifies products and buying decisions in four distinct categories based on two dimensions, that is, high/low involvement and informational/transformational buying motive. As argued by De Pelsmacker et al., involvement can be defined as “[...] the importance people attach to a product or a buying decision, the extent to which one has to think it over and the level of perceived risk associated with an inadequate brand choice.” (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001: 61). As for the second dimension, the authors continue explaining that informational buying motives “[...] refer to reducing or reversing of negative motivations such as solving or avoiding a problem, or normal depletion.” (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001: 62). Alternatively, so-called transformational buying motives “[...] consist of positive motivations, such as sensory gratification, social approval or intellectual stimulation [...].” (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001: 62). On the following page, Figure 7 pictures how based on these two dimensions, four different hierarchical processes of attitude formation can be distinguished.

Figure 7: Hierarchies-of-effects distinguished by Rossiter and Percy grid



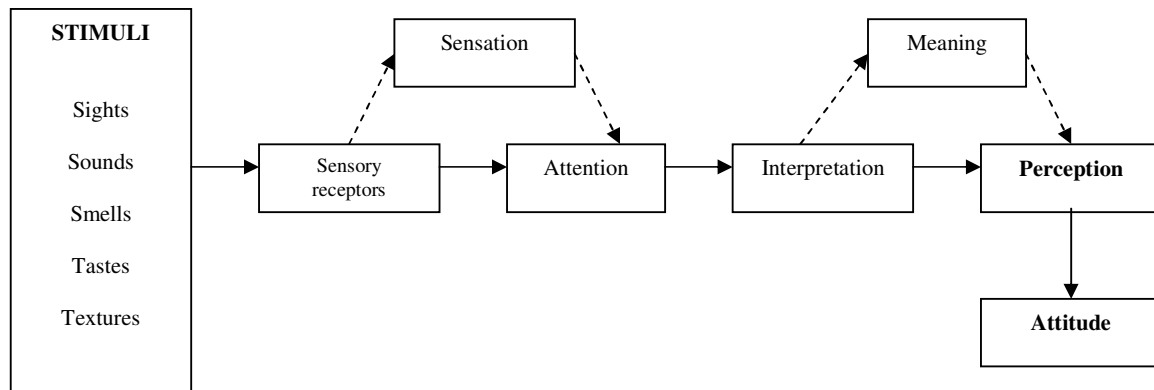
SOURCE: adapted from – De Pelsmacker et al. 2001 : 62

3. Perception as an antecedent of attitude formation

Important with regard to the understanding of product attitudes is that they are not formed out of the blue. On the contrary, product-specific attitudinal dispositions are preceded by a “perceptual process” during which consumers have to deal with all kinds of product-related stimuli offered to them. In other words, it is believed that the “perception” of these product extrinsic cues (like coo) determines consumers’ thoughts and feelings about as well as their behavioural intentions towards a product. In line with this reasoning, Friedmann and Zimmer (1988: 32) state that the consumer’s perception of such product-related stimuli is a

“necessary” condition for all sorts of consumption experiences to take place. This perception process is pictured somewhat more in detail by Figure 8.

Figure 8: Overview of the perception process



SOURCE: adapted from – Solomon et al. 1999: 40

Let us apply this schema on the processing of a coo-cue. As already indicated, most coo-researchers have presented the coo-cue to respondents by means of a verbal or textual stimulus, that is, the Made-in label. However, as argued by Papadopoulos (1993), marketers dispose of several other types of stimuli by means of which the product’s coo-cue can be activated. As can be seen in Figure 8, these can range from sights (a video clip or a picture), sounds (foreign brand name) or smells (perfume) to tastes and textures (packaging). These different stimuli act upon our system of sensory receptors resulting in what Solomon et al. (1999) refer to as “sensation”. The latter can be seen as some kind of a neuro-physiological registration. The primary objective of this sensorial experience is to capture the individual’s attention. Logically, consumers will not engage in any attitude formation process unless they “notice” a product. If not, the product will simply be ignored. Catching someone’s attention however is not an easy task if one realizes that within today’s average daily life marketplace consumers are confronted continuously with an abundant flow of sensations. In order to avoid the potential risk of “information overload”, consumers have become increasingly selective in their processing of incoming stimuli. As stated by Solomon et al. “[o]nly a very small number of the stimuli in our environment are ever noticed. Of these, even a smaller number are attended to.” (Solomon et al. 1999: 40). Once a particular stimulus has entered

consciousness, people engage in the next step of the perception procedure, that is, the interpretational stage. As will be argued throughout the following section, this is the stage where incoming information is transformed into meaning. This interpretative process is seen as the core of perception and appears to determine to a large extent consumers' final attitude towards a product.

4. Interpretation: from information towards meaning

Some of the more recent avenues within the field of marketing communication have re-accentuated how the construct of "interpretation" is of crucial importance in order to understand people's behaviour within today's market place (e.g., Joy and Sherry, Jr. 2003; McQuarrie and Mick 1999, 2003; Mick and Fournier 1998; Peñaloza 2001; Kozinets 2001). As will be argued throughout these paragraphs, the act of interpreting should be considered as a process where consumers transform incoming information into meanings. In accordance with Levy (1959), numerous scholars have already posited that the meanings people associate with products determine their product-related behaviour to a considerable extent (e.g., Appadurai 2000; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 2002). As stated by Friedmann and Zimmer "[t]his progressive recognition of the role of meaning allows one to consider meaning as a core component of the perception process, a necessary element in all paradigms attempting to explain consumer behavior." (Friedmann and Zimmer 1988: 32). Together with Denzin (1992), Heilbrunn (1998) for instance, states that human beings act towards objects based on the meanings they have for them. Solomon also claims that "[t]he symbolism embedded in many products is the primary reason for their purchase and use." (Solomon 1983: 326). He continues that "[m]arketers should be more aware of the significance of products as determinants of behavior. An abundance of products and services – from clothing, automobiles, cosmetics, and furniture to restaurants, office environments, and airlines – are rich in symbolic content." (Solomon 1983: 327). In other words, as stated by Kleine and Kernan, in explaining how consumers deal with products, it is important to realize that "[i]ndividuals always respond to their interpretation of an object (i.e., its meaning) and not to the literal "objective" object." (Kleine and Kernan 1991: 312).

Although theoretical approaches such as the Means-End-Chain Theory" (e.g., Reynolds and Gutman 1988) are fundamentally based on this assumption, McCracken (1987) argues that most of the traditional information processing paradigms completely ignore this

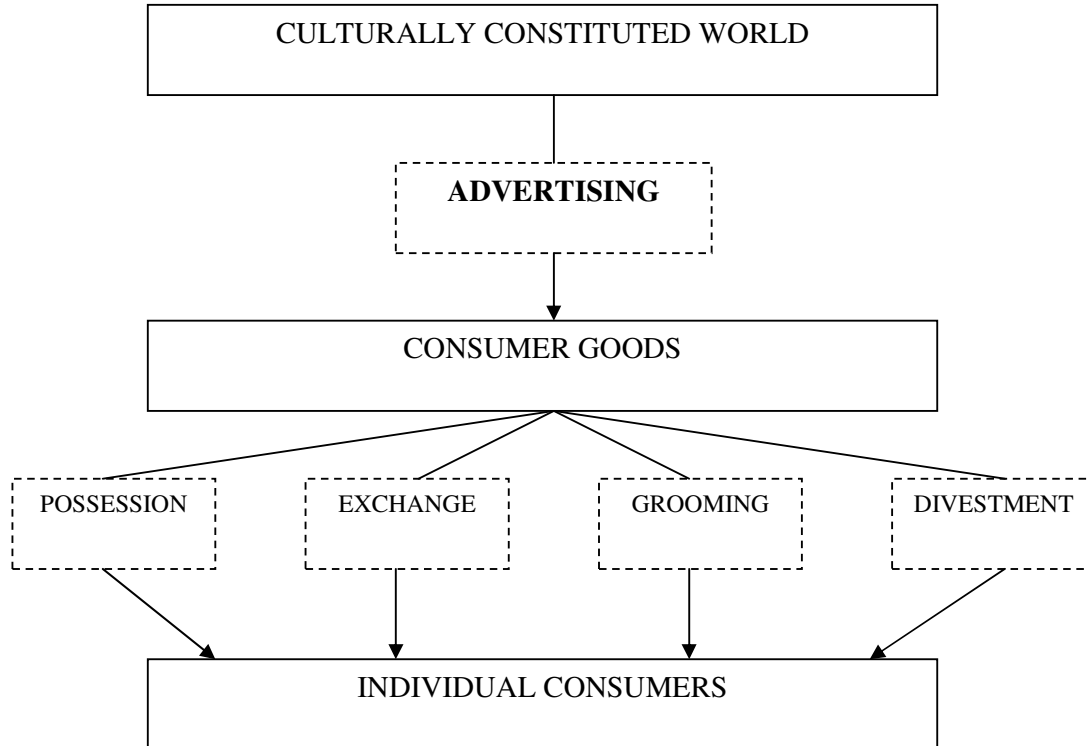
particular aspect and therefore characterize themselves by a theoretical focus which he qualifies as insufficiently “meaning-centred”. More precisely, he believes that the classic perspective on information processing “[...] provides no way of observing that the individual who is processing information is embedded in a highly structured and meaningfully constituted environment. It gives no way of permitting us to see that the individual is the recipient not just of information but also of meaning.” (McCracken 1987: 122). Mick and Buhl (1992) seem to agree and plead in favour of what they refer to as “a meaning-based approach” towards the processing of marketing stimuli. As McCracken posits, the key proposition of these alternative models is that “[c]onsumer goods have a significance that goes beyond their utilitarian character and commercial value. This significance consists largely in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning.” (McCracken 1990: 71).

In elaborating somewhat further on these “meaning-based” models, it seems they are resting on two basic premises: (1) goods have to be invested with meaning and (2) meaning formation is a process where the recipient plays an active role. The first assumption is drawn from the work of Douglas and Isherwood (1979) who state that goods do not carry meanings by themselves. In line with this, Nöth (1988) argues that a product’s meaning is not inherent to the product itself but generated by the association of the product with so-called “image attributes” that “semantize” the product. This notion of semantization should be understood as a process where certain attributes are extrinsically associated with the product and “transfer” or “project” their meaning to the product itself. As shown on the next page by Figure 9, McCracken thinks this movement of meaning consists of two subsequent stages which he explains as follows:

“Meaning is constantly flowing to and from its several locations in the social world, aided by the collective and individual efforts of designers, producers, advertisers, and consumers. There is a traditional trajectory to the movement of this meaning. Usually it is drawn from a culturally constituted world and transferred to the consumer good. It is then drawn from the object and transferred to the individual consumer. There are, in other words, three locations of meaning: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, as well as two moments of transfer: world-to-good and good-to-individual.” (McCracken 1990: 71-72).¹⁰

¹⁰ We would like to stress that, for our project, only the first moment of meaning transfer, that is, from world-to-good, will be of interest. The second transfer of meaning from good-to-the individual will not be treated here.

Figure 9: Stages of meaning-movement according to McCracken¹¹



SOURCE – adapted from McCracken 1990: 72

Thus, for McCracken, products can be charged with meanings, stemming from what he refers to as the “culturally constituted world” which should be understood as “[...] the world of everyday experience in which the phenomenal world presents itself to the senses of the individual, fully shaped by the beliefs and assumptions of his or her culture.” (McCracken 1990: 72-73). As shown by the author’s framework, meanings originating from the culturally constituted world can be transferred to products by means of various communicational strategies like advertising. In his opinion:

“Advertising works as a potential method of meaning transfer by bringing the consumer good and a representation of the culturally constituted world together within the frame of a particular advertisement. The creative director of an agency

Besides, these transfer mechanisms have already been studied thoroughly by others (e.g., Belk 1988; Belk et al. 1989; Grayson and Shulman 2000; Schouten 1991; Sherry Jr. 1983; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988).

¹¹ We would like to remark that the concept of “advertising” as it appears in the model of McCracken (1990) should be understood as a specific instance of what we have been referring to throughout this chapter as “marketing communication” in general.

seeks to conjoin these two elements in such a way that the viewer/reader glimpses an essential similarity between them. When this symbolic equivalence is successfully established, the viewer/reader attributes certain properties he or she knows to exist in the culturally constituted world to the consumer good. The known properties of the world thus come to be resident in the unknown properties of the consumer good. The transfer of meaning from world to good is accomplished.” (McCracken 1990: 77).

To put it in other words, advertising makes that a product “[...] stands for cultural meaning of which it was previously innocent.” (McCracken 1990: 79). This way, the author comes to see advertising as some kind of “lexicon of current cultural meanings”.

It is important to notice how McCracken (1990) further remarks that both advertiser and viewer/reader play an important role in the creation of successful marketing communication. This is in line with the second premise on which “meaning-based” models are based, that is, the active engagement attributed to viewer/readers. As argued by Nöth, “[t]he inclusion of unilateral interaction in the definition of communication is not very typical of communication theory on the whole. For the most part, communication is defined as a bilateral interaction between at least two organisms.” (Nöth 1995: 171). On average, communication chain models like the one developed by Shannon and Weaver (1949) clearly show how a message (in our study, a PCI) not only needs to be encoded by a source (i.e., the marketer), but that it has to be properly decoded by the recipient (i.e., the viewer/reader) as well. Let us concentrate for a moment on how to understand these acts of “encoding” and “decoding”.

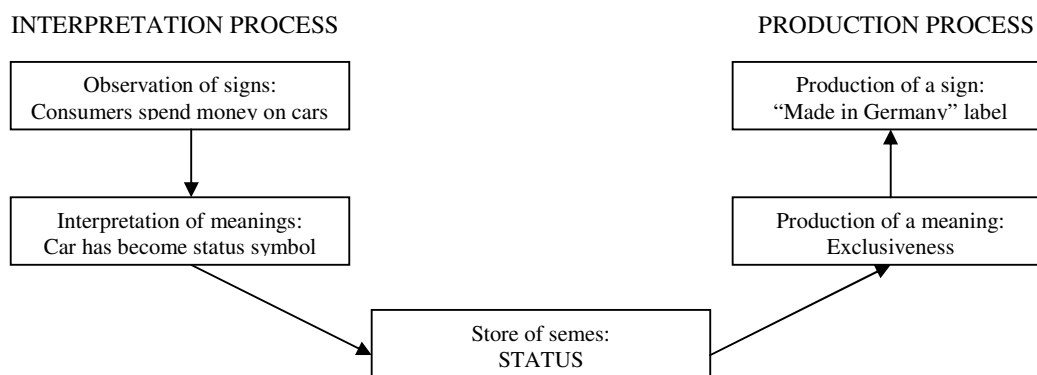
Encoding

As already highlighted, McCracken (1990) marketers “[...] decide just how the culturally constituted world is to be portrayed in the advertisement. This process will consist in reviewing all of the objects in which the selected meaning has been substantiated and then deciding which of these will be used to evoke this meaning in the advertisement.” (McCracken 1990: 78-79). Hoshino (1987) considers this to be a “semiotic marketing process” where the marketer’s creative thinking can be subdivided into two stages: an interpretation process and a production process. He explains them as follows:

“The interpretation process involves approaching the consumers’ behavior and the phenomena related to them, interpreting the hidden meanings, and understanding them. [...] The production process involves creating a new product concept from the interpreted meanings, and making a new product. In semiotic terms, thus means that the production process starts from the interpreted meanings, that is, consumers’ latent physical and psychological needs, and ends by creating a new meaning as a product concept and producing a new product.” (Hoshino 1987: 48-49).

Applying Hoshino’s framework to the ideas of McCracken, this means that marketers in first instance try to discover and understand which needs are felt by consumers. Then, they intend to look for the most suited element in the culturally constituted world to express fulfilment of this need. This element is associated with the product through communicational efforts (like advertising). This way, meaning is being transferred to the product. An example of the semiotic marketing process is pictured in Figure 10. In this example, it is demonstrated how the concept of a country can be used by advertisers as a cue to provide the product with an image of exclusiveness in order to satisfy consumers’ need for status-enhancement.

Figure 10: Encoding of marketing messages as a semiotic marketing process¹²



SOURCE – adapted from Hoshino 1987: 48

¹² The term “seme” stands for a “concept” or an “idea” that is abstracted by marketers from their personal interpretation of phenomena that present themselves in daily life reality. Dubois et al. (1994: 423) for instance define it as “a minimal unit of signification”.

Decoding

McCracken stresses that, in order for a message encoded by marketers to generate the proper effect on its viewers/readers, it has to be decoded in the appropriate way: “[i]t is worth emphasizing that the viewer/reader is the final author in the process of transfer. The director can only bring the world and consumer good into conjunction and suggest their essential similarity. It is left to the viewer/reader to see this similarity and to effect the transfer of meaningful properties. The viewer/reader is to this extent an essential participant in the process of meaning transfer.” (McCracken 1990: 79). Consequently, the importance of the viewer/reader should not be underestimated when studying the “reception” or “decoding” of marketing stimuli. According to Umiker-Sebeok (1992), it is indeed of fundamental importance not to lose out of sight the idea that the reception of incoming information should be seen as an “action” rather than a passive “re-action”. Fouquier (1988: 335) totally agrees and argues that reception should be seen as a “succession of creative acts” during which it is the receiver himself that constructs meaning. More in detail, the author continues as follows:

“[s]tarting with the obvious: the message being contemplated by the receiver – on the printed page, on a roll of film or the surface of a poster – ‘contains’ neither meaning nor meaning effects, only shapes, sounds and pigments. It is the reader’s consciousness which has the power to give meaning to these, because the reader’s consciousness contains in its memory the corresponding significans (put simply: ‘Books are reservoirs of forms awaiting their meaning’, Gérard Genette has written somewhere). If only because it consists in a succession of *acts of ascription of meaning to forms* which are devoid of meaning, if only because it actualizes a set of meanings which, without it, would remain pure virtualities: reception, therefore, is fundamentally a question of construction of meaning.” (Fouquier 1988: 335).

Mick and Buhl (1992: 333) further continue that the receiver’s propensity to personally interpret incoming information is an exemplar instance of so-called “eisegesis”. According to Mick (1992), the outcome of “eisegesis” can be seen as a form of “subjective comprehension”. As put by Friedmann and Zimmer, the basic principle behind this notion of subjective comprehension or interpretation is that “[t]he literal meaning of a word or collection of words may not be the meaning assigned to those words by the receiver. The

receiver may have gone beyond these words in specific ways and added meaning far beyond the literal meaning of the exact words used.” (Friedmann and Zimmer 1988: 34). Two elements seem to characterize this subjective comprehension. In first instance, it is argued by several scholars that an individual’s personal interpretations of incoming information should always be related to a socio-cultural context (e.g., Kleine and Kernan 1991; Mick 1992; Mick and Buhl 1992). As put by Wells (1994) this is one of the key propositions behind so-called “Symbolic Interactionism” developed by Blumer (1969). In second instance, Richins (1994) posits in line with the work of Osgood et al. (1957) that meaning is a multi-dimensional construct. As the author puts it, “[t]he multidimensionality of meaning has been recognized by writers in several disciplines.” (Richins 1994: 506). This multi-dimensionality of meaning is reflected in the internal structure Mick (1992) ascribes to his concept of “subjective comprehension”. More in detail, he distinguishes four different “levels” at which receivers can comprehend incoming information. These subjective comprehension levels have been referred to by Fouquier (1988) and Umiker-Sebeok (1992) as the different “resonances” of meaning. In situating these resonances, Fouquier explains that:

“[...] listening to a TV or radio programme, browsing through a newspaper, burying one’s self in a book, or thrilling to a film are all psychic situations, in which the receiver constructs meanings, which he then arranges into motifs. At the same time, though, these are also psychic situations in which the receiver experiences emotions as he discovers motifs, reacts to operations he himself performs, experiences enthusiasm and terror, makes associations, judges. To put it in another way, the receiver experiences a whole range of ‘subjectively felt emotions’ in response to the work, as he peruses and interprets it, and we may lump these subjectively felt experiences together and call them *resonances*.” (Fouquier 1988: 340).

As already stated, four types of resonances can be distinguished. Fouquier (1988: 340) refers to them as “emotions” (for instance, relief, fear, worry, desire, envy, hope, sadness, enthusiasm, sympathy, etc.), “evocations” (i.e., the receiver’s own imagery universe), “cognitions” (i.e., thought contents derived from things said) and “incitements” (i.e., ideas of action like goals one sets one’s self, plans, intentions to buy after seeing some advertisement, etc.). These various resonances taken together constitute what Friedmann and Lessig (1986) have referred to as “psychological meaning” of incoming stimuli. As put by Friedmann and

Zimmer, “[...] current studies define psychological meaning as a bundle of distinctive components which represent a person’s understanding and evaluation of the stimulus, his/her direct and/or vicarious experiences, images, feelings and associated behavioral responses that have accumulated over time.” (Friedmann and Zimmer 1988: 32). As discussed by Hirschman (1980), this notion of “psychological meaning” is a more eclectic concept that should be clearly distinguished from other, often more narrow and classic approaches towards meaning like the “lexical meaning” perspective developed in linguistics. According to the author, studies within the field of consumer research that focussed on the role meanings have frequently opted for this lexical meaning concept. However, in line with Szalay and Deese (1978) she believes that “[l]exical meaning is inappropriate for application to psychological processes in individual human beings ... “as it does not represent subjective meaning, (1978 p. 2)” (Hirschman 1980: 8). In further elaborating on the potential shortcomings associated with such a limited conception of meaning, Friedmann and Zimmer argue together with White (1959: 9) that “[i]n order for advertisers to “structure the experience of the potential consumer along lines of consistent and predictable satisfactions requires an understanding of the total source of meanings, the whole interaction between the consumer and the product.” (Friedmann and Zimmer 1988: 33). In their opinion, here lies the strongest argument in favour of working with the notion of “psychological meaning” because they believe “[i]t is this “whole interaction” that is tapped by psychological meaning.” (Friedmann and Zimmer: 1988: 33).

The fact that these psychological meanings should be taken into account when studying processes of attitude formation has been empirically demonstrated by several authors already mentioned (e.g., McQuarrie and Mick 1996, 1999, 2003; Mick 1992; Richins 1994; Thompson and Hirschman 1995; Umiker-Sebeok 1992). Mick (1992) for instance could establish that various levels of subjective comprehension during advertising processing influenced consumers’ ad perceptions, brand attitudes and memory. At three different instances, McQuarrie and Mick (1996, 1999, 2003), demonstrated that consumers’ personal interpretation of visual and verbal rhetorical figures in advertising affected their attitudinal responses towards the ad. In another study, Thompson and Hirschman (1995) were able to show that psychosocial meanings contribute to the shaping of consumers’ self-conceptions and body images and that these perceptions in turn appear to be functioning as motivators behind certain specific consumption behaviours and self-care practices. Thus, overall, Friedmann and Zimmer believe it can be stated that psychological meanings created by consumers when receiving incoming stimuli “[...] may lead to various cognitive, affective

and/or behavioral changes.” (Friedmann and Zimmer 1988: 37). Put differently, the consumer’s resultant attitudinal dispositions towards products seem to be determined to a considerable extent by the personal meanings he associates with them. Throughout the following section, we will retake some of the most important findings concerning the formation of product attitudes.

5. Summary findings

In this part of the dissertation, our intention was to gain more insight not only into how product attitudes can be conceptualized, but also into how these are formed. As for the conceptualization of product attitudes, most researchers on consumer behaviour seem to favour the “sequential” or “hierarchically structured” models where the three constituent components of product attitude (i.e., the cognitive, affective and the conative component) are interrelated and appearing in a certain order of importance. More in detail, three different types of “chains” are generally distinguished. Yet, we would like to stress here that the focus of our dissertation is not on the order in which the product attitude’s constituent components appear, but on their formation. More in detail, we want to examine how the coo-cue’s underlying PCI might be affecting the formation of an individual’s different attitudinal dispositions (i.e., beliefs, evaluation or purchase intentions) towards foreign-sourced products. Thus, again, for the product attitude’s constituent components, it should be noticed that the accent will be put on their formation and not on their mutual order of importance.

According to the so-called “meaning-centred” paradigm, it can be stated that the formation of an individual’s attitudinal dispositions towards products, whether these are of a cognitive, affective or conative nature, seem to be determined by the meanings he associates with that product. As for the definition of “meaning”, this alternative approach towards the explanation of consumer behaviour rests on two basic assumptions. In first instance, the meaning-based perspective sees meaning as the outcome of a process where the receiver is not just a passive recipient of information offered to him by marketers and advertisers. On the contrary, this receiver is said to literally “act upon” the incoming information, transforming it into meaning. In second instance, meaning-centred approaches oppose themselves to the fractional conceptions of meaning that have been developed by the traditional information processing paradigms within the field of consumer research. According to these more recent alternative views, meaning is a complex, multi-dimensional

construct that should go beyond the “factual” or “objective” (i.e., “lexical”) meaning of informational cues. Therefore, the more eclectic notion of “psychological meaning” has been proposed. It counts as a more encompassing conceptualization of meaning since it also incorporates the whole range of so-called “subjective interpretations” one might associate with product-related marketing stimuli.

6. Conclusion

If we apply insights stemming from the meaning-centred approach to the literature on coo-effects we must come to the unfortunate conclusion that although meaning is seen as a concept of crucial importance to the formation of product attitudes, it has been largely neglected by the majority of studies already performed within this particular field of coo-research. Let us remind how most empirical studies on coo-effects have worked with fragmented and incomplete conceptions of the meanings consumers attach to a product’s coo.

More specifically, we saw that the focus was most often on the cognitive component of PCI. In line with Hirschman (1980), we might say that coo-researchers have concentrated almost exclusively on the “lexical” meaning of a product’s coo. Yet, an individual can ascribe all kinds of “subjective meanings” (i.e., symbolic imagery, feelings, incitements, etc.) to this particular cue as well. Our exploratory in-depth interviews can be seen as excellent illustrations of how this indeed appears to be the case¹³. Since the meaning-centred approaches towards consumer behaviour attribute so much importance to these subjective meanings, we think it would be unwise to disregard them when studying how a cue like coo influences the consumer’s product attitude. In this light, ideas discussed throughout the present chapter can be seen as a first step towards a more thorough understanding of coo-effects. Most importantly, it provides us with more detailed insights into the complex network of meanings consumers attach to a product’s coo (i.e., the PCI).

However, a remaining problem is that although the meaning-centred approaches discussed in this part of our dissertation seem to suggest that PCIs (i.e., the psychological meanings associated with the coo-cue) are important determinants of product attitude formation, they do not really explain “how” such PCIs might be affecting product attitude formation. Yet, in our opinion, it would be wiser to concentrate first on the question to know

¹³ Remember how the confrontation of interviewees with a certain country resulted in a network of thoughts, feelings and behavioural intentions towards a country’s environmental conditions and its products.

“whether” PCIs influence product attitude before solving the problem of “how” they might be doing so. The former will be discussed in part 5 while the latter will be treated in part 6.

PART 5: COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN EFFECTS

1. Outline

Now that we have a clearer picture of what to understand by “country-of-origin” on the one hand and “product attitude” on the other, this part of the dissertation focusses on the effects such coo-cues and their supportive PCIs might eventually exert on the consumer’s attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. In first instance, we will have a more general view on coo-effects. That is, we will describe some of its most important characteristics. In second instance, special attention will be given to a series of factors that have been identified as potential moderators of the coo-effect’s size. In third instance, we will present a more detailed analysis of the mechanisms underlying coo-effects. More particularly, three categories of supportive mechanisms will be distinguished, that is, (1) cognitive, (2) affective and (3) conative mechanisms. As already stated at the end of the previous part, it is noteworthy that coo-researchers have undertaken extended efforts to prove consumers make use of coo-cues when forming attitudes towards foreign products. However, the questions of knowing how to understand this phenomenon and what precisely makes coo-cues so valuable as assets for shaping product attitudes remained largely unexplored.

2. Country-of-origin effects: a general view

Coo-effects have been assessed in cases where consumers had to evaluate products in general, different classes of products, specific product types and brands. Nagashima (1970, 1977) as well as Han and Terpstra (1988) even found the coo-cue to affect the evaluation of specific product attributes. Also, information on a product’s coo was found to have an impact on both industrial (e.g., Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu 1992; Kraft and Chung 1992; Saghafi and Puig 1997) and consumer purchasing decisions. In addition, the coo-effect appeared to be susceptible to variations over time. Nagashima (1977) for instance, demonstrated how foreign product images among Japanese managers had changed over an eighth-year period¹⁴.

¹⁴ Other studies have illustrated that this principle of “time-shifting” exists also among Finnish consumers (e.g., Darling 1987; Darling and Arnold 1988; Darling and Van Wood 1990), U.S. consumers (e.g., Juran 1993) and Israeli consumers (e.g., Jaffe and Nebenzahl 1993).

Let us have look now at some of the moderating variables that have been identified by previous studies on coo-effects.

3. Country-of-origin effects: moderating variables

Within the coo-literature, substantial importance has been attributed to so-called “size measurement”. This resulted in the identification of numerous moderating factors among which we can distinguish (1) sample characteristics, (2) aspects related to the source countries, (3) the type of products chosen, (4) the sort of stimulus used, (5) the setting, (6) the product information’s presentation format, (7) the type of dependent variable, (8) the measurement instrument, (9) the survey mode (10) the data-analysis method and (11) time.

3.1. Sample characteristics

Several **sample characteristics**, were identified as potential moderators of the coo-effect. These ranged from *demographic variables* like age, sex, race, education, income and nationality (e.g., Bilkey and Nes 1982) to *personality variables* like dogmatism or conservatism (e.g., Anderson and Cunningham 1972), *socio-economic variables* like ethnocentrism (e.g., Shimp and Sharma 1987) or patriotism (e.g., Han 1988) and *socio-psychological variables* like the tendency for national identification (e.g., Verlegh 2001). With regard to the influence of the sample’s nationality on coo-effects, Baughn and Yaprak (1993) believe that the use of cross-national samples in coo-studies merits special attention because national (and even within-country regional) differences might affect the research outcome. An exemplar case was presented by Cattin et al. (1982). In their study of American and French Made-in images, they established how respondents differently perceived indicators used to tap their Made-in images. Consequently, semantic differential data offered to subjects had to be adapted. Alternative experiences have been reported by Yavas and Alpay (1986) for culturally similar samples. More in detail, they demonstrated that cultural proximity between Bahraini and Saudi consumers led to similarities in the perception of Made-in labels.

Since a substantial part of the coo-literature consists of studies using U.S. samples, Peterson and Jolibert (1995) were interested in knowing whether this would create a limited and over-simplified image of the coo-effect’s magnitude. According to the results of their

meta-analysis, this was not the case. That is, for quality/reliability perceptions, coo-effect sizes did not differ significantly for U.S. and non-U.S. samples. Although effect sizes were significantly different for purchase intentions, the authors explicitly add that these differences could not be considered as substantive.

A second category of sample features that have been identified as potential moderators of the coo-effect can be labeled as *cognitive variables*. These range from product familiarity, experience and prior knowledge (e.g., Erickson et al. 1984; Han 1989,1990; Johansson 1989; Johansson et al. 1985; Steffenhagen et al. 2001; Verlegh 2001) to product class involvement, (e.g., Eroglu and Machleit 1989), or various information processing motives (e.g., Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000), and the respondent's need for cognition. The latter has been defined by Zhang as “[...] the individual's intrinsic enjoyment and motivation to engage in effortful cognitive information processing.” (Zhang 1997: 268). Most studies are concentrated on the role of the consumer's so-called product familiarity. In our opinion, this is not coincidental. For instance, as argued by Johansson (1989), the consumer's familiarity with a country's products is a factor that determines the coo-cue's “confidence value”. Together with the coo-cue's “predictive value”, it is of central importance to an individual's propensity to use the coo-cue (e.g., Heimbach et al. 1989). More in detail, higher levels of confidence and predictive value seem to increase coo's chances of being used by consumers¹⁵.

Peterson and Jolibert (1995) demonstrated that a third category of, more “technical” characteristics of the sample could moderate the coo-effect. For instance, they showed that the *sample's size* affected the magnitude of coo-effects. More precisely, their meta-analysis established that sample size moderately correlated with the coo-effect size for both perception and purchase intention variables. Larger samples (260 respondents or more) produced larger effect sizes than those engendered by smaller samples (less than 260 respondents). Another important sample characteristic that has been identified as a potential moderator of the coo-effect is the *sample type*. In general, three types of samples can be distinguished within the literature: consumers, students and opinion leaders like businessmen or professional buyers and sellers. Peterson and Jolibert (1995) showed that effect sizes differed significantly between student and non-student samples in cases where purchase intentions were being examined. Notwithstanding, the effect size did not differ significantly for subjects' quality/reliability perceptions. Smaller effect sizes for student samples were

¹⁵ We will come back on the concepts of “confidence value” and “predictive value” in paragraph 4.1.

ascribed to the fact that products traditionally offered to subjects often are financially expensive utilitarian items like cars, electric appliances, etc.

The meta-analysis performed by Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) revealed that effect sizes did not differ between student and non-student samples. Another meta-analysis of experiments on coo-effects was carried out by Liefeld (1993). He established that the comparison between studies using student and non-student samples revealed no significant differences in the estimates of coo-effect sizes. However, the mean value of coo-effect size was somewhat lower for consumer-based experiments. According to the author, this finding was in the expected direction while student samples are more apt in discovering a study's objectives, resulting in a positive demand effect. He adds that, overall, students are less knowledgeable about products compared to consumers. Consequently students are inclined to rely more rapidly on external cues such as coo. Baughn and Yaprak (1993) state that because of their homogeneous composition, student samples are on the average better suited to control demographic and socio-economic variables. According to the authors, this explains why coo-researchers focussing on a study's internal validity make such frequent use of student samples.

3.2. Aspects related to the source country

Aspects related to the source countries selected for study also function as eventual moderators of the coo-effect. Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) for instance, found results in support of the hypothesis that coo-effects are larger when subjects are asked to compare products from More Developed Countries (MDCs) to products from Less Developed Countries (LDCs), instead of products coming from either MDCs or LDCs among themselves. Peterson and Jolibert (1995) focussed more on the distorting influence of the number of source countries selected. Only in cases where respondents' purchase intentions were measured did studies including more than ten source countries generate larger coo-effects. No differences however were assessed for studies with subjects'(cognitive) perception functioning as dependent variable.

3.3. Product characteristics

A third set of moderating variables is related to **characteristics of the products** used for examination of coo-effects. As stated by Liefeld (1993), the product items selected by coo-

researchers vary in function of several criteria like technical complexity, financial risk, utilitarianism/hedonism, male/female dominance, etc. More in detail, he states there are indications within the field that coo-effect size estimates are larger for technically complex, fashion-oriented and expensive products than for products which are low in technical complexity, inexpensive or not fashion-oriented. As for the role of a product's technical complexity, Eroglu and Machleit (1989) could establish that it affected the perceived value of coo as a quality indicator and consequently exerted an indirect influence on the coo-effect size.

Still another moderator of coo-effects is the product category itself. As already stated, the review of Bilkey and Nes (1982) asserted that coo-effects exist for industrial as well as for consumer goods. Yet, Peterson and Jolibert (1995) discovered that, in cases where the focus was on subjects' purchase intentions, significant differences in effect size were manifested in function of the product category (i.e., industrial or consumer items). Comparable findings were reported by Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999). Although they found that the coo-effect was not significantly larger for consumer goods than for industrial goods, the observed difference was in the direction they hypothetically expected. That is, coo-effects were larger for consumer goods than for industrial goods. The underlying reasoning was that industrial goods are approached by professional purchasing agents and that these can be considered as product specialists. That is, they are assumed to be more rational in their decision making while they are better informed than the average household buyer. Ahmed and d'Astous (1995) indeed state that one of the characteristics of "rational buyers" is to be less influenced by extrinsic product information cues like a product's coo. Liefeld (1993) however, disagrees while he found that purchasing agents placed more importance on coo than consumers.

3.4. Characteristics of product stimulus

A fourth category of moderators can be referred to as **characteristics related to the product stimulus**. Within the coo-field researchers have confronted subjects with different kinds of product stimuli. Most coo-studies made use of intangible product stimuli. These ranged from verbal stimuli like a short description of the product to visual stimuli like print ads. In contrast, only a minority of studies (e.g., Alden 1993; Tse and Gorn 1992; Tse and Lee 1993) worked with tangible stimuli that could be experienced by the subjects. Schooler and Sunoo (1969) together with Bilkey and Nes (1982) believed that coo-effect sizes could vary in

function of the stimulus type selected for study. Peterson and Jolibert (1995) as well as Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) agreed on the fact that effect sizes can be artificially inflated through the use of verbal product descriptions. Although Liefeld (1993) found no statistically significant differences in sizes due to the type of product stimulus used, his results went in the same direction.

3.5. Aspects related to the setting

A fifth category of moderators contains **aspects related to the setting** of coo-studies. In first instance, there is the difference between single-cue and multiple-cue settings. As already discussed, Bilkey and Nes (1982) claimed that one of the major shortcomings of first stream coo-studies was their systematic use of single-cue designs. These are characterized by the fact that the coo-cue is the only product-related information offered to respondents. The external validity of these studies can be seriously questioned while such a situation does not correspond to the real life purchase context where consumers are overwhelmed with marketing stimuli. Therefore, researchers started to examine coo-effects within so-called multi-cue settings. That is, besides offering subjects the product's coo, other kinds of information were communicated to them as well.

This way, the coo-cue has been presented together with product **extrinsic attributes** like (1) *brand* (e.g., Ahmed and d'Astous 1993, 1996, 2003, 2004; Ahmed et al. 1997; Cordell 1993; Ettenson 1993; Ettenson et al. 1988; Han and Terpstra 1988; Hulland 1999; Hulland et al. 1996; Jo et al. 2003; Johansson and Nebenzahl 1986; Johansson and Thorelli 1985; Tse and Gorn 1992; Tse and Lee 1993), (2) *price* (e.g., Ahmed and d'Astous 1993; Ahmed et al. 1997; Akaah and Yaprak 1993; Chao 1993; Cordell 1993; Elliot and Cameron 1994; Ettenson et al. 1988; Liefeld et al. 1996; Orth and Firbasová 2003; Wall et al. 1991), (3) *retail store image* (e.g., Lin and Sternquist 1994; Reiersen 1967; Thorelli et al. 1988), and (4) *warranty* (e.g., Ahmed and d'Astous 1995, 1999; Schooler et al. 1987; Thorelli et al. 1988). Besides the use of product extrinsic cues, researchers also combined the coo-cue with product **intrinsic attributes** like *performance*, *reliability*, *design*, *durability*, *workmanship*, etc. (e.g., Akaah and Yaprak 1993; Amine and Shin 2002; Liefeld et al. 1996; Pecotich and Rosenthal 2001).

On average, it can be asserted that the type of setting does have an impact on the size of coo-effects. Both meta-analyses performed by Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) were in support of the assumption that single-cue studies engender

larger coo-effect sizes than multi-cue settings. Results obtained by Liefeld (1993) revealed that the number of information cues did not significantly affect the size of coo-effects, but that the mean effect size was slightly lower in case of multi-cue settings. However, although it appeared that the coo-effect was reduced within multi-cue designs, it is important to notice that it did not completely disappear. Maheswaran (1994) for example, demonstrated that respondents are even more inclined to make use of the coo-cue instead of additional product information in cases where this supplementary information is too ambiguous. Comparable findings were reported by Rogers et al. (1994). They established that the inconsistency between price and quality cues enlarged the size of the coo-effect.

3.6. Aspects of the presentation format

Properties of the product information's presentation format also functioned as moderators of coo-effects. Liefeld et al. (1996) for instance, stated in their model of product choice determinants that the consumer's choice of information cues is determined not only by personal and product-related characteristics, but also by situational aspects like the presentation format of the product information. Empirical results in support of this statement have been obtained by Lim et al. (1994) and Reiersen (1967). The latter for instance, found various communication media types to exert different influences on the formation of foreign product images among American consumers. Still recently, Verlegh et al. (2005) reported how so-called "claim-favourability" should also be taken into account as another aspect related to the presentation format that might affect coo-effects.

3.7. Type of dependent variable

Also, the coo-effect size seems to vary in function of **the type of dependent variable** selected for study. Traditional coo-studies most often ask subjects to form an attitude or overall evaluation of the product. Different types of attitudinal constructs have been identified within the field, ranging from beliefs to preferences or behavioural intentions. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) cover these different attitudinal constructs by the term "evaluative tendencies". Studies of Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) came to the conclusion that the coo-effect size varied in function of the dependent variable selected. In general, coo-effects are largest for quality perception and smallest for purchase intentions with attitude judgements falling in between.

3.8. Type of measurement instrument

Jaffe and Nebenzahl (1984) focussed more on the importance of **the type of measurement instrument** used. More in detail, they examined reliability and validity of two different questionnaire formats. It was established that individual coo-studies which had used different questionnaire formats could not be compared, even when the scale items were identical. We already saw how Cattin et al. (1982) pointed out that special attention needs to be attributed to the fact that, in case of cross-cultural samples, differences in interpretation of scale-items are likely to occur.

3.9. Type of survey mode

Han et al. (1994) took a closer look at three different **survey modes** applied in coo-studies. These were personal as well as telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaires. They found significant interactions between the type of survey mode used and the product's coo-effect. More particularly, it was established that personal interviews were susceptible to demand artefacts while self-administered surveys were vulnerable to halo biases. In addition, results suggested that social desirability bias was most likely to occur in cases where data was gathered by means of telephone interviews.

3.10. Type of data-analysis method

Still another methodological issue at stake is the large variety of **data-analysis methods** used within the coo-field. Some studies addressed the coo-effect applying structural equation modeling (e.g., Han 1989), or conjoint analysis (e.g., Ahmed et al. 1994; Ettenson et al. 1988), while others simply used correlation analysis (e.g., Schaefer 1997) or analysis of variance (e.g., Akaah and Yaprak 1993; Chao 1998; Maheswaran 1994). The question remains to know what kind of approach is able to uncover coo-effects under what kind of circumstances and what kind of analysis would seem best in estimating the actual size of the coo-effect.

3.11. Time

Finally, Hong and Wyer (1990) focussed more specifically on the time aspect. They were able to demonstrate moderating effects of time interval between subjects' knowledge about a product's coo and information about its specific attributes. More particularly, they found that coo had a larger influence when it was presented before additional information about a product's attributes was offered.

4. Country-of-origin effects: a more detailed analysis

Now we will have a closer look at the different mechanisms underlying coo-effects. As already indicated, three different types of mechanisms supporting coo-effects can be distinguished. The first category regroups a series of "cognitive" mechanisms where the coo-cue's underlying PCI is said to affect the formation of an individual's beliefs about a product (i.e., the cognitive component of product attitude). "Affective" mechanisms occur in case the PCI influences a person's evaluative judgement of a product (i.e., the affective component of product attitude). Finally, "conative" mechanisms manifest themselves when PCI exerts an impact on the consumer's purchase intentions towards a product (i.e., the conative component of product attitude).

4.1. Cognitive mechanisms

The mechanisms pertaining to the first category are labeled as "cognitive" because they impact on the formation of consumer's beliefs about the product. In other words, these mechanisms stand for the various ways in which the PCI determines how we "think" of the product's quality. More in detail, three types of cognitive mechanisms can be identified within the literature. These are (1) the cognitive mediation mechanism, (2) the cognitive heuristic processing mechanism and (3) the cognitive default heuristic processing mechanism. However, before having a closer look at these different cognitive mechanisms, we will focus on two fundamental determinants of consumers' propensity to use the coo-cue's underlying PCI as a source of information about the product's quality. As already mentioned throughout paragraph 3.1., the tendency to make use of the coo-cue as a quality indicator is determined to a considerable extent by the cue's confidence and predictive value.

Confidence value

With regard to the confidence value of coo-cues, Johansson follows Cox (1962: 416) in defining confidence as “[...] how certain the consumer is that the cue is what she thinks it is.” (Johansson 1989: 54). He further reasons that “[...] in order to make use of their knowledge about specific countries, people should also have confidence in it. If they do not feel certain about their country perceptions (for example, if they feel that their perceptions represent crude and perhaps unfair stereotyping only), the individuals might make a conscious effort to avoid using them [...]” (Johansson 1989: 54). Logically, consumers basing their expertise on direct experiences will be more confident in their judgement than consumers gathering information on basis of indirect experiences where the reliability of the sources consulted is more difficult to control. This idea is subscribed by Sauer et al. who follow Fazio (1985) and Fazio and Zanna (1981) in their claim that “[...] information in the form of direct experience with the attitude object, results in beliefs that are held more confidentially compared to other forms of information.” (Sauer et al. 1991: 36). We already argued that the consumer’s level of familiarity can be seen as an important determinant of the coo-cue’s confidence value. That is, the more/less familiar an individual is with a certain country, more/less confident he will be in his PCI, resulting in a higher/lower propensity to make use of the coo-cue (e.g., Heimbach et al. 1989; Johansson 1989).

Predictive value

Eroglu and Machleit define predictive value as “[...] the degree to which a consumer believes the cue is indicative of a particular product characteristic of interest.” (Eroglu and Machleit 1989: 29). For a particular marketing cue to be predictive, it must stand for information that is sufficiently (1) distinctive and (2) relevant (i.e., content-wise related somehow to the product’s quality).

With regard to the coo-cue’s distinctiveness, Johansson (1989) argues that, during the attitude formation process, consumers will only turn to information cues that point at meaningful (i.e., clearly noticeable) differences. Put differently, a coo-cue’s distinctive quality is determined by the so-called degree of “country variability between” and “country variability within”. As for the former, Johansson states that “[p]eople will use the country of origin cue when there are perceived systematic differences between countries and people are informed about the country as producer of the product. These consumers will be particularly likely to use it when there are wide variations in product attributes across countries, when

there is a lot of product differentiation.” (Johansson 1989: 53). The premise concerning “country variability within” is based on the idea that “[f]or a country that has many different products and brands at various quality levels, the country of origin labelling will generally be worthless.” (Johansson 1989: 53-54). Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989) refer to this phenomenon as “country-brand heterogeneity”.

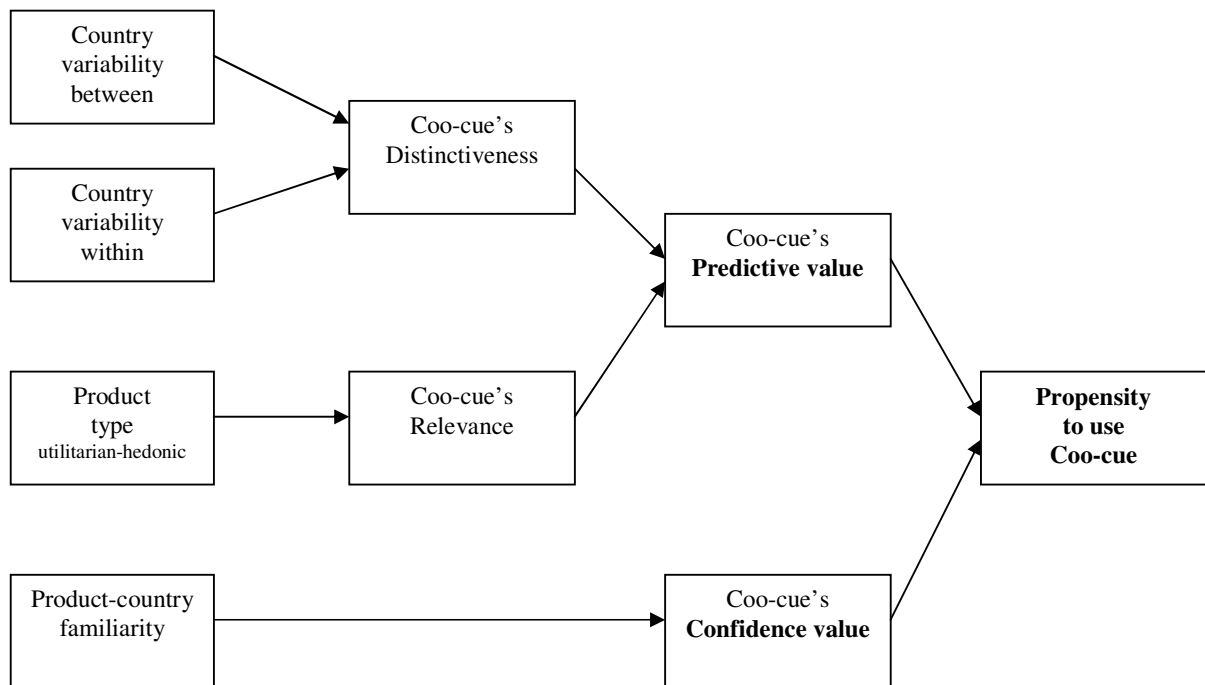
A coo-cue also has to be sufficiently relevant in order to reach a minimum level of predictive value for consumers. This means that it has to be “instructive” about the product’s quality. Yet, as already argued, the notion of product quality is relatively complex and can differ from one type of product to another. On average, a distinction is made between “utilitarian product quality” and “hedonic product quality”. Utilitarian goods are defined by Dhar and Wertenbroch as products “[...] whose consumption is more cognitively driven, instrumental and goal oriented and accomplishes a functional or practical task.” (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000: 61). According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), the consumer’s evaluation of such products is rather based on objectively verifiable features. Mittal et al. (1990) subscribe to this assumption and state that attitudes towards utilitarian products are determined by functional product attributes (i.e., attributes which are mainly concerned with the physical function and properties of the product). Several researchers on information processing have found evidence in support of the fact that for utilitarian products, intrinsic attributes have larger effects on quality judgements than extrinsic ones (e.g., Gerstner 1985; Jacoby et al. 1971; Jacoby et al. 1977; Olson and Jacoby 1972). Thus, on average, it can be concluded that information about a product’s intrinsic and functional attributes is more relevant for the evaluation of utilitarian products. This higher degree of relevance in turn, augments the predictive value of such information cues and increases their chance of being used by consumers as a criterion for evaluating the product’s quality.

For hedonic products, the situation is quite different. We already discussed how the hedonic or experiential approach has been defined by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as a perspective that focusses more on the symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic nature of consumption. As they put it themselves, “[t]his view regards the consumption experience as a phenomenon directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun.” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982: 132). Mittal et al. (1990) reason that for this kind of products, consumers’ attention goes rather to expressive attributes. Verlegh (2001) states that such expressive attributes can generate direct and/or indirect responses. Direct responses result from immediate sensory stimulation while indirect responses are characterized by more extensive mental processes where consumers come to link the product with emotional or symbolic images. As put by

Mittal et al., expressive attributes serve to “[...] express or enact one’s deep values as well as personality traits including moods, transitory associations, and emotional surges.” (Mittal et al. 1990: 138). Empirical evidence for the prevalence of expressive attributes during product attitude formation towards hedonic products has been reported in a laddering study performed by Claeys et al. (1995).

When applying these insights to the coo-field, this would mean that if a consumer is confronted with a utilitarian product, his propensity to use the coo-cue will be higher if this cue stands for information that indicates functional quality. However, in case of a hedonic product, the consumer’s intention to use the coo-cue will be highest if this cue indicates the product’s expressive qualities. Figure 11 pictures how these different factors determining consumers’ propensity to use the coo-cue when engaging in cognitive processing should be related to each other.

Figure 11: Factors determining propensity to use coo-cues during cognitive processing



Having discussed the most important determinants of consumers' propensity to make use of coo-cues and their underlying PCIs, we will turn to the different mechanisms that might occur in case coo-cues are cognitively processed. Let us remind here that "cognitively processed" should be understood as "used for informative purposes", that is, employed in order to form beliefs about the product's quality status.

4.1.1. Cognitive mediation processing mechanism

The cognitive mediation mechanism should be seen as a process where the PCI activated by the coo-cue exerts an indirect (i.e., a "mediated") impact on the consumer's overall evaluative judgement of the product through the formation of attribute beliefs. Put differently, in this particular case, consumers turn to the coo-cue in order to form an opinion about the product's quality status and this quality-related opinion in turn serves as a basis for evaluating the product. Within the literature, two different types of these cognitive mediation effects can be distinguished, that is, the "halo mechanism" and the "elaboration mechanism".

4.1.1.1. Halo mechanism

The most frequently mentioned mechanism is the "halo mechanism". Han (1989) demonstrates how this haloing should be understood as an "inference process" where consumers use the coo-cue in order to derive the product's quality status. In other words, as put by Johansson (1989), consumers use the coo-cue as some kind of surrogate product quality indicator. According to several authors within the field, the halo mechanism occurs most often in cases where consumers are unfamiliar with the product they are confronted with (e.g., Erickson et al. 1984; Han 1989; Johansson et al. 1985) or when the additional product-related information presented to them is too ambiguous (e.g. Maheswaran 1994; Rogers et al. 1994).

4.1.1.2. Elaboration mechanism

The "elaboration mechanism" has been proposed by Hong and Wyer (1989, 1990) as another variant of cognitive mediation effects. The major difference with the halo mechanism is that the so-called "cognitive elaboration hypothesis" concentrates on the relationships between the coo-cue on the one hand and additionally offered product-related information on the other. The halo mechanism however is said to manifest itself more specifically when such additional information is missing or disregarded by consumers because of its ambiguity. Also, the halo

mechanism can be seen as a rather general process while the elaboration mechanism is of a more analytical nature. According to Hong and Wyer (1989), cognitive elaboration should be understood as a mechanism where a product's coo excites general curiosity about the quality of a product and consequently stimulates consumers to think more extensively about information related to the product's quality attributes. As argued by Hadjimarcou and Hu (1999) this more elaborate thinking can manifest itself through the way in which consumers "interpret" or "select" such additional attribute information. In line with Bodenhausen (1988), they define the "interpretation hypothesis" as a process where the activation of stereotypical representations pertaining to a PCI "[...] may lead individuals to interpret information differently, perhaps in a stereotype-consistent direction, than they otherwise would." (Hadjimarcou and Hu 1999: 410). In line with this, Hong and Wyer (1990) indeed established how coo-cues, if presented before any other product-related information, affected the interpretation of attribute descriptions additionally offered to them. The "selection hypothesis" on the other hand, posits that "[...] individuals engaging in selective processing would attend to and elaborate upon information that closely corroborates the overall theme of the stereotype." (Hadjimarcou and Hu 1999: 410-411). Put differently, it is assumed that consumers will process only those informational cues that are consistent with the content of the PCI. The authors add as a final remark that in their opinion, both forms of biased processing may occur simultaneously.

4.1.2. Cognitive heuristic processing mechanism

Besides these cognitive mediation processing mechanisms, Han (1989) identified a second type of mechanism where the coo-cue is said to operate as a so-called "heuristic proxy". Typical for this kind of mechanism is that the coo-cue is not used as a surrogate indicator from which product attributes are inferred, but as a summary construct which directly influences the consumer's product quality evaluation. Han defines this summary construct as "[...] a file of information about various brands from a country that consumers develop over time, store in their memory in the form of overall evaluations of products from the country and retrieve readily when evaluating the brands." (Han 1990: 34). Johansson (1989) argues that consumers who dispose of such a file or summary construct will use it as a heuristic proxy or cognitive shortcut in order to simplify their decision efforts. In other words, these consumers are expected to refrain from a detailed and cognitively intensive examination of all the attribute information reached to them. Instead, they will be rather inclined to base their

evaluation directly on this automatically activated data base which is already filled with detailed information about the product's quality status.

In our opinion, Johansson (1989) rightfully mentions that the existence of this heuristic proxy mechanism refutes the “no-effect” hypothesis which states that increasing familiarity with products diminishes the use of coo-cues. Therefore, we think that the findings obtained by Maheswaran (1994), who found product experts to discount coo when product information was available and unambiguous, should be put in the proper context. As for the profile of consumers using the coo-cue as a heuristic proxy, Johansson (1989) further reasons that these are supposed to be specialists, that is, to be highly familiar with the product category they have to evaluate. As he puts it, “[t]he person who knows cameras also knows the difference between the Japanese and the German manufacturers. It takes little insight to realise that it is these well-informed “opinion leaders” who will be among the first to possess the product-specific knowledge about a country that is necessary in order to use country of origin cues to evaluate products.” (Johansson 1989: 51-52).

4.1.3. Cognitive default heuristic processing mechanism

More recently Manrai et al. (1998) proposed the “default heuristic process” as a third type of cognitive mechanism. In line with the earlier mentioned elaboration mechanisms, it is important to notice that in case of a default heuristic process, the use of a coo-cue is to be seen in relationship with product-related information that is additionally provided to the consumer. The authors explain how the occurrence of this variant is linked to a specific market phenomenon. They argue that the gradual transition of socialist and formerly socialist countries toward marketization changed the traditionally supported dualistic representation of the international marketplace. From that moment, Newly Marketizing Countries (NMCs) and Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) could be distinguished from the Highly Developed Countries and the Low Developed Countries. According to the authors, the country-product familiarity of these NMCs and NICs can be situated at a “moderate level”, that is, “[...] somewhere between that for developing countries (low) and that for highly developed countries (high).” (Manrai et al. 1998: 600). In order to understand the type of processing mechanism that takes place for products sourced in NMCs or NICs, they proposed to expand the conceptualization of halo and heuristic proxy mechanisms by introducing the intermediary notion of default heuristic. It was defined as a mechanism where beliefs based

on both product information externally supplied and the internally stored PCI “[...] have a simultaneous influence or interactively affect product evaluations.” (Manrai et al. 1998: 601).

4.1.4. Cognitive mechanisms: epilogue

Thus, cognitive mechanisms are initiated in cases where consumers use the PCI activated by the coo-cue to get informed about the product’s quality. Different types of mechanisms have been distinguished in function of how the PCI is processed during the formation of such quality attribute-related beliefs. We speak of a halo mechanism when PCI is used to “form”, that is to “infer” attribute beliefs. Mechanisms labeled as “elaborative”, refer to instances where consumers turn to PCI, not to “form” beliefs about the product, but to “interpret” or “select” attribute-related information additionally offered to consumers. The heuristic mechanism was explained as a process where product-country specialists avoid elaborate and consequently more intensive processing of additional information by using the coo-cue as a cognitive shortcut. The default heuristic mechanism can be seen as an intermediary track where both PCI and additional product-related information are simultaneously processed.

With regard to these cognitive mechanisms, we found it a bit surprising to establish that the literature rests almost silent on the “antecedents” or “the drivers” of these mechanisms. In other words, we know for instance that a PCI can regulate how consumers form beliefs about a product’s attributes, namely through inference. Yet we have no idea about which aspect related to that PCI (i.e., the cognitive, affective or conative component) is used more specifically as a basis for inference. To our knowledge one of the rare occasions where the emphasis was put on the question to know which PCI-related aspects might affect the consumer’s product beliefs was a working paper published by Steffenhagen et al. (2001). More in detail, they developed a model where it was shown that the consumers’ informational efforts towards a product theoretically might be determined by each of the PCI’s constituent components. We already saw how substantial empirical data has been provided in support of the effect exerted by the PCI’s cognitive component on the formation of product beliefs. However, the possibility for the PCI’s affective and conative component to be influencing belief formation as well, has remained largely unexplored.

With our final objective of wanting to formulate some recommendations regarding a more adequate use of PCIs for advertisers and marketers in mind, we think that knowing a PCI can serve to infer product beliefs is one thing, but that being capable of ascribing an inferred product belief to its more precise “antecedent” or “source” within the PCI might

even be more useful. To put it in terms of Fouquier (1988: 342) we believe that a method of “a posteriori ascription” of coo-mechanisms to their “causes” in the PCI would simply allow practitioners to manipulate PCIs in a much more effective way.

4.2. Affective mechanism

The affective mechanism behind coo-effects occurs in case consumers use the coo-cue when forming an evaluative judgement of a product they are confronted with (i.e., the affective component of product attitude). According to several authors within the field, this affective mechanism should be understood as a “transfer” or “projection” of affective reactions triggered by the coo-cue to the product that has to be evaluated (e.g., Johansson 1989; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1989; Sauer et al. 1991; Steffenhagen et al. 2001). Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989) think the importance of such an affective mechanism should be taken seriously since it can bypass the influence exerted by an individual’s beliefs about the product’s attributes. Put differently, even in cases where attributes beliefs indicate a favourable overall quality, consumers can dislike the product in question due to negative emotions related to that product’s coo. Several examples have already been cited where it was found that such affective mechanisms override the effect of a consumer’s product-related beliefs on the formation of an evaluative judgement.

With regard to the affective mechanism behind coo-effects, it is interesting to establish how Steffenhagen et al. (2001) leave open the possibility for the transfer of country-specific cognitions or behavioural intentions. In other words, the authors believe the consumer’s evaluative judgement of a product can be determined not only by the PCI’s affective component, but by its cognitive and conative components as well. Of particular interest for our study is that the coo-literature has not yet verified the potential of the PCI’s conative component to affect evaluative judgements of foreign products. Thus, the precise functioning of the affective mechanism, defined as the process where the PCI activated by the coo-cue impacts on the consumer’s product evaluation, is not yet fully understood.

4.3. Conative mechanism

By the term “conative mechanism” we understand a process by means of which the consumer’s purchase intentions towards the product (i.e., the conative component of product attitude) are influenced. As argued by Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989) and Sauer et al.

(1991) for a coo-cue in order to be capable of triggering such a direct effect on the consumers' purchase intentions, it must be experienced as a "salient" cue, that is, a cue marked by a high level of personal "relevance" or "importance". We already discussed how the coo-cue's underlying PCI becomes highly significant for consumers when it is overtly (in)congruent with the norms and values that constitute the core of their social or self identity. More specifically, this (in)congruency stimulates people to approach or avoid (i.e., purchase or not) products from the country in question. In line with the framework proposed by Steffenhagen et al. (2001), we think a consumer's purchase intentions towards foreign-sourced products might be influenced by each of the three constituent components of the PCI. However, no empirical results are provided on the potential of the PCI's conative component to determine a consumer's purchase intentions.

5. Summary findings

This part of our dissertation shows us that coo-effects do exist. In other words, PCIs indeed are to be considered as potential determinants of product attitude formation. Coo-effects are characterized by the fact that they occur at each level of the product hierarchy (i.e., at the level of products overall, product category, product type, specific brand and even at the attribute level). In addition, coo-effects have been found for consumer as well as industrial products. Also, coo-effects might be changing over time.

On average, the size of coo-effects has been found to be significant. Numerous moderators have been identified that might "temper" or "boast" the PCI's impact on product attitude. However, for some of the factors discussed, no sound conclusions concerning their status as moderators can be drawn. A more detailed analysis of coo-effects showed us how the PCI has the potential of influencing each of the product attitude's constituent components. Put differently, a consumer's PCI might affect the way he thinks and feels about, or acts towards products made abroad. If the PCI somehow determines how the consumer informs himself about the product (i.e., the cognitive component of product attitude), it is said that the coo-effect is supported by a "cognitive mechanism". Different types of cognitive mechanisms have been distinguished in function of whether the PCI is used as a surrogate quality indicator (i.e., halo mechanism), as a summary cue that simplifies cognitive efforts (i.e., heuristic proxy mechanism), as a guide for selecting or interpreting additional product-related information (i.e., elaboration mechanisms) or as an information

cue that is processed simultaneously with supplementary information about the product (i.e., default heuristic mechanism). The coo-effect is said to be supported by an “affective mechanism” in case the coo-cue’s underlying PCI affects the way in which consumers evaluate a product. Finally, we speak of “conative mechanisms” if the PCI impacts on the consumer’s purchase intentions towards a particular product.

6. What’s next?

With regard to these different mechanisms, we argued it might be of great help for advertisers and marketers to have a somewhat clearer view on their causal antecedents while it might contribute to a more effective use of coo-cues. Therefore, the focus of the next part will not be on the question to know “whether” PCIs might affect the formation of product attitudes. Rather, we will ask ourselves “how” and “why” PCIs have the potential of determining an individual’s attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. In answering this question, our reasoning will further build on the basic premise behind the meaning-centred approaches we discussed in part 4. More in detail, these postulate that consumers’ attitudinal dispositions towards products are determined by the “psychological” meanings these products carry. In drawing ideas from the field of “semiotics”, it will be argued in part 6 that consumers might be attracted to the coo-cue when having to form an attitude towards a product more precisely because of the fact that the complex network of psychological meanings a coo-cue might activate (i.e., the PCI) is to be seen as an adequate “means” or “tool” to fulfil one’s attitude-related needs of having (1) to get informed about a product, (2) to form an evaluative judgement of it, or (3) to decide whether to purchase it or not. Put in a somewhat more simplified way, it will be reasoned that the “semantic richness” of the coo-cue explains why this cue might be of great service for consumers when having to form an attitude towards foreign-sourced products.

Even more important than the “why question” will be our search for knowing, “how” the network of psychological meanings consumers associate with the coo-cue (i.e., the PCI) might be influencing the formation of product attitudes. Again, our reasonings will be fundamentally based on insights stemming from “semiotics”. More particularly, we will see that semiotic theory might contribute to understanding (1) what the constituent components of meaning are, (2) how these are internally structured, (3) for which purposes they might be used by consumers when being confronted with products and (4) how meaning components

can be used in order to attain these goals. Insight into the latter will allow marketing practitioners to ascribe a particular attitudinal disposition (like for instance the consumer's product beliefs or his decision not to purchase a product) to its concrete causal antecedent(s) in a much more "refined" or "accurate" way, turning the complex and abstract notion of a Product-Country Image into a much more "manageable" and "intelligible" construct. In sum, together with Holbrook (1987: 78), we believe semiotics might substantially contribute to the investigation of what he refers to as the PCI's "communicative efficacy".

PART 6: SEMIOTICS

1. Outline

In this part of our dissertation the focus of attention will be on the questions to know “why” and “how” consumers make use of the coo-cue’s underlying PCI during attitude formation towards foreign-sourced products. Our reasoning will be grounded in the basic premise behind the meaning-centred paradigm, that is, the idea that consumers’ attitudes towards products are determined by the meanings these products have for them. In our intent to explain how this concept of meaning should be understood, we will turn to the field of semiotics. The first section will be dedicated to a brief presentation of the discipline. More in detail, we will first (1) demonstrate that semiotic theory has made substantial progress within the literature on marketing communication and consumer behaviour and (2) present the major paradigms that are traditionally distinguished within the field. Subsequently, we will (3) demonstrate that semioticians see consumers’ interpretation of stimuli (like the Made-in label) as a full-worthy example of “semiosis” which allows us to apply semiotic theory to the topic of our project, that is, coo-effects. Then, we will (4) propose the so-called “discourse theory”, developed by C.W. Morris as a potential framework for a better understanding of how consumers use the meanings they attach to coo-cues (i.e., the PCI) when they form an attitudinal disposition towards foreign-sourced products. Afterwards, we will (5) apply this discourse theory to the phenomenon of coo-effects. In final instance, we will (6) motivate why we think discourse theory might serve as a useful approach towards a better understanding of coo-effects.

2. Semiotics as a theoretical approach towards consumer behaviour

As put by Antonides and Van Raaij, “[i]n semiotics, people’s interpretations and the meanings of signs for them are studied.” (Antonides and Van Raaij 1998: 139). The application of semiotic theory within the literature on marketing communication and consumer behaviour has been explored and encouraged by a whole stream of researchers that can be ranged under to the generation of what Brown (1998) refers to as “post-modern” marketers (e.g., Bachand 1993; Boutaud 1999; Dano 1996; Floch 2001; Gottdiener 2000; Grayson and Shulman 2000; Holbrook and Hirschman 1993; Langrehr and Caywood 1995;

Mick 1986; Nöth 1995; Pinson 1998; Umiker-Sebeok 1987; Williamson 2002). More in detail, David Glen Mick who counts as one of the pioneers in promoting semiotics for the study of consumer behaviour has put it as follows:

“[s]o why semiotics and consumer research? Because consumers behave based on the meanings they ascribe to marketplace stimuli. And yet consumer researchers, with few exceptions, have characteristically avoided detailed and systematic inquiry into meaning processes. Perhaps this reflects the shortcomings of current theory and methodologies in consumer research. Or perhaps the role of meaning appears obvious, but also ineffable or intractable. To its advantage, semiotics is a mosaic of terminology and methods that can help us clarify and understand the role of meaning as embodied in the semiosis of consumer behavior as well as researchers behavior. Fortunately, a few in our field have already recognized the value of a semiotic perspective and their work deserves review.” (Mick 1986: 201).

Still recently, Mick et al. (2004) effectuated a large-scale international review of marketing and consumer research founded on semiotics. They established that over the last two decades the increased interest in meaning brought numerous marketing and consumer researchers to base their work on insights stemming from semiotic theory. As already mentioned, our project will also adopt a semiotic perspective on coo-effects. Throughout the following section, we will briefly present the major paradigms that can be distinguished within the field of semiotics.

3. Major paradigms: semiotics vs semiology

As discussed by Holbrook and Hirschman (1993), semioticians traditionally distinguish between “neopositivistic semiotics” on the one hand and “interpretive semiology” on the other. The former paradigm stems from sign theory as it was developed by C.S. Peirce (1931-1958) while the latter is grounded in the *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, a text based on the ideas of F. De Saussure (1915/1966). Table 2 presents what according to Holbrook and Hirschman (1993) can be seen as both paradigms’ most typical properties.

Table 2: Neopositivistic semiotics versus interpretive semiology

	NEOPOSITIVISTIC SEMIOTICS	INTERPRETIVE SEMIOLOGY
AIMS	Focus on all kinds of signs, including ICONS (pictorial, art), INDICES (music, dance), SYMBOLS (conventional language)	Focus on communication via symbols organized into languages and codes (food, clothing, furniture, high art, pop culture, myths, rituals)
CONCEPTS	A TRIADIC relation among a SIGN (icon/index/symbol), an OBJECT (designatum), and an INTERPRETANT (disposition to respond); inclusion of the object encourages a neopositivistic emphasis on denotation	A DYADIC relation between a SIGNIFIER (form, expression) and a SIGNIFIED (concept, content); extends this dyadic scheme to multiple levels of meaning (involving connotation and metalanguage)
METHODS	The neopositivistic bias emphasizes the PRAGMATIC aspects of semiosis found in its interpretants, involving behavioral responses of sign users	The postpositivistic bias toward interpretation emphasizes the SEMANTIC and SYNTACTIC aspects of multiple levels of meaning

SOURCE – adapted from Holbrook and Hirschman 1993: 11

Although some fundamental differences between these two perspectives can be distinguished, Umiker-Sebeok (1992) states they should not be seen as totally irreconcilable with each other. On the contrary, the author argues that “[o]ver the last dozen years, there has been such a vital cross-fertilization of ideas between the Saussurean, code- and language-centered semiology and the pragmatic, interpretive, Peircean-inspired semiotics that it would be difficult to find any semiotician today who did not believe in the necessity of developing an interpretive-pragmatic sociosemiotics. This has been especially fruitful for the study of marketplace behavior and communication, resulting in a flowering of hybrid studies combining sophisticated narrative and rhetorical analyses not just of texts (in the broad sense this term has in semiotics) but of consumer responses to them.” (Umiker-Sebeok 1992: 47).

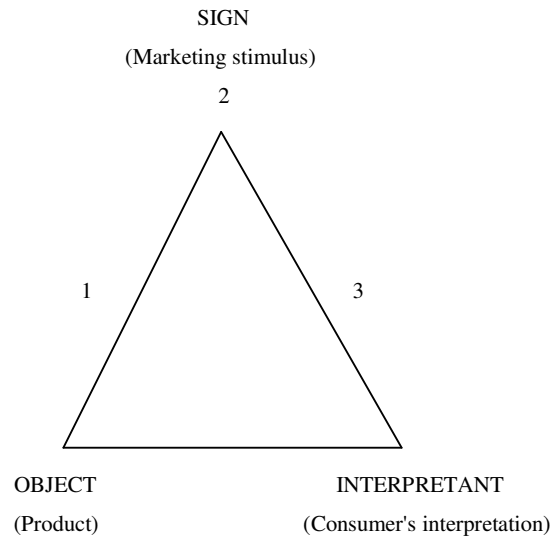
In fact, our project somehow follows the approach where insights stemming from both paradigms complement each other. More in detail, we can say that the third part of this chapter falls primarily under the semiological “interpretive” approach, since the focus of

attention was on the question to know how people might interpret coo-cues (i.e., semantic aspect of meaning). Remember that, through analyzing students' (non)verbal discourse, we examined the network of psychological meanings people associate with coo-cues. This network is referred to as the coo-cue's underlying PCI. Throughout the empirical part of our dissertation however, our efforts go to the question of knowing how people "make use" of these PCIs. In other words, our attention is directed more specifically towards the "pragmatic" aspect of meaning. Therefore, this section of the project will be based on the so-called "neopositivistic semiotical" approach. More in detail, we will draw on the work of C.W. Morris who counts as one of the classics within this paradigm (e.g., Posner 1979). Yet, before having a closer look at his "sign theory", we will first demonstrate that the action of interpreting a stimulus (like the Made-in label) can be considered as an exemplar case of "semiosis".

4. Interpreting marketing stimuli: a case of semiosis

We already saw that marketers combine products with elements from the "culturally constituted world" in order to charge the product with specific meanings. This "semantization" of the product was represented as a process where marketing stimuli are interpreted by consumers. These interpretations in turn are "transferred" or "projected" to the product. According to Nöth (1995) this can be considered as an exemplar case of "semiosis". As highlighted by Deledalle (1979), C.S. Peirce conceptualized semiosis as a three-way interaction between a "sign" being anything that stands for something (i.e., the "object" or "designatum") to somebody (i.e., the "interpreter"). Finally, a person's "interpretation of", or "disposition to respond to" the sign is referred to as the sign's "interpretant". According to Antonides and Van Raaij (1998) this sign-model can be applied to the interpretation of marketing stimuli, with the product functioning as "object", the marketing cues associated with the product operating as a "sign" and the meaning consumers attach to these stimuli being the "interpretant". This process is pictured by Figure 12.

Figure 12: Interpretation of marketing stimuli as an example of semiosis



As noticed by Umiker-Sebeok (1992), this Peircean view of semiosis should be seen as an approach that accentuates the “pragmatic” aspect of meaning. Consequently, the author puts that in Peirce’s sign theory, “[...] the intentions and problem-solving goals of sign users also become an indispensable part of the semiosis.” (Umiker-Sebeok 1992: 47). Put differently, Peircean semiotics seems to be most suited as a provider of useful insights on how consumers “make use” of signs (like the Made-in label). Therefore, since our empirical research will be focussed on the pragmatic implications of coo-cues (i.e, on the different manners in which they are used during attitude formation), our hypotheses will be grounded in Peircean semiotics.

More in detail, we will be drawing from a theoretical framework developed by C.W. Morris. As indicated by Posner (1979) his ideas are fundamentally based on the Peircean “triadic” conception of a sign. In his *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, Morris (1938) subdivides the study of semiosis into three disciplines: (1) semantics, (2) syntactics and (3) pragmatics. Semantics is concerned with the relations of signs to their objects. More in detail, Morris believed that a sign can be related to its object in three possible ways. As an “icon”, the sign shares characteristics in common with its object (e.g., a picture). As an “index”, the sign directs attention to its object (e.g., a weathercock). As a “symbol”, the sign refers to its object by arbitrary social agreement (e.g., a traffic sign). Nöth (1995) signals that, later on, Morris extended the scope of semantics to cover the study of signs and their (conceptual) signification as well. Syntactics studies the formal relations of signs to one another. Finally,

pragmatics examines the relation of signs to their interpretants. One of the prevailing topics within pragmatics is the question of knowing how signs are used. These three sub-disciplines can be used as an organizing framework for the coo-literature in general. First, there is a series of (semantic) studies within the field that focussed on the question of knowing what meanings consumers associate with the coo-cue. In second instance, we have a large amount of (syntactic) studies that treated the relation with, and interactions between the coo-cue and other product and marketing-related attributes during product evaluation. These are traditionally referred to as the “multi-cue studies”. Finally, there is a rather limited group of (pragmatic) studies that concentrated on the theoretical explanation of the mechanisms behind consumers’ use of the coo-cue. The empirical part of our dissertation will intend to contribute to this stream of so-called “pragmatically-oriented” studies on coo-effects.

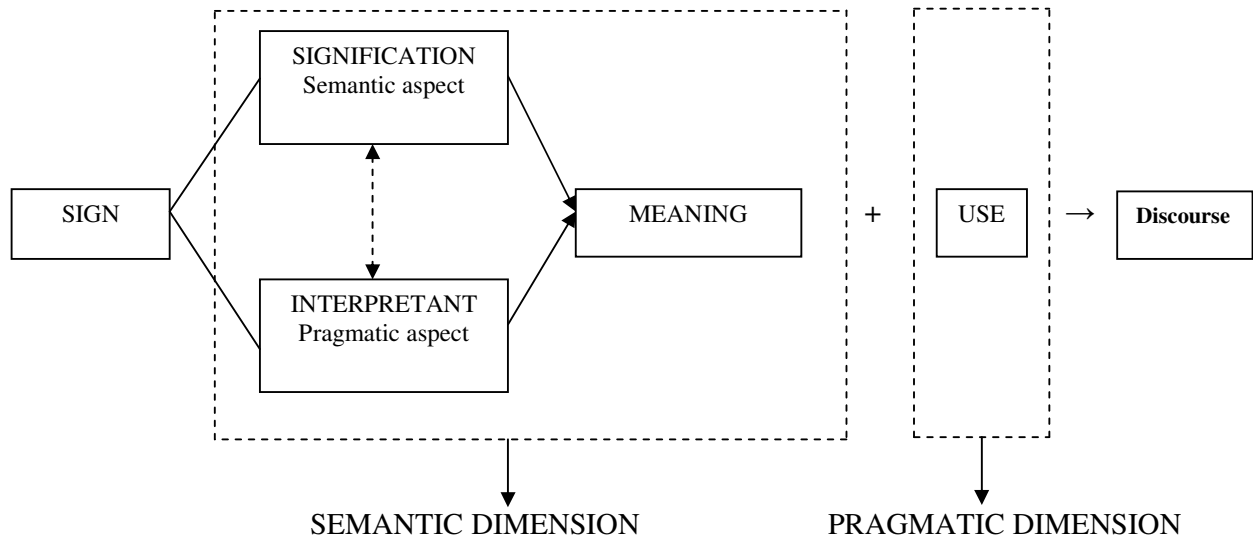
However, although our focus of attention will be more specifically on the pragmatic aspect of meaning, it should not be overlooked that the three basic components of semiosis, that is, semantics, syntactics and pragmatics cannot be completely separated from each other. In line with Singer (1984: 24) for instance, Holbrook and Hirschman argue that, “[...] one can seldom (if ever) completely untangle the inter-related semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic aspects of interest. [...] In any given domain of product usage, one therefore tends to encounter interdependent issues of semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics – as in meaning, matching, and mattering – that arise *simultaneously*.” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1993: 16). This interdependency between the different aspects of semiosis will be reflected in “discourse theory” which has been developed by Morris (1946, 1964) as an intent to explain why and how individuals make use of signs. More particularly, we will see that according to Morris, signs are to be seen as “means to an end”. That is, signs like a Made-in label are said to be used by an individual in order to attain particular goals (these can range from retrieving information about the product that carries this label or forming an evaluative judgement of it to deciding on how to behave towards that product). This should be considered as the “pragmatic aspect” of semiosis. Yet, additionally, Morris argues that the adequacy with which these different goals can be achieved by a sign is related to that sign’s signification. This reflects the “semantic aspect” of semiosis.

Thus, in sum, we can state that discourse theory as it has been proposed by Morris indeed relates meaning (i.e. semantics) and use (i.e., pragmatics) of signs like the Made-in label to each other. The following section will comment on discourse theory.

5. Discourse theory

As indicated by Nöth (1995), Morris believes that individual signs or more complex sequences of signs (like a literary text or a marketing message) can be distinguished in function of two criteria, that is, their meaning (i.e., semantic aspect) and the purposes for which they are used (i.e., pragmatic aspect). In function of these two aspects Morris subdivides these signs or sign sequences into what he refers to as a series of “discourse types”. Although discourse theory has found most of its applications within the field of text semiotics and literary analysis (the discourse typology for instance, served as a useful approach to organize the broad spectre of texts into different “genres”), we believe it might be a valuable approach for the study of coo-effects as well. More in detail, we see the Made-in label as a sign that is associated with a so-called “PCI”, defined as a complex network of meanings (i.e., the semantic aspect) which can be used by consumers in order to satisfy various potential needs like the desire to get informed about a product, to form an evaluative judgement of it or to decide on whether to purchase it or not (i.e., the pragmatic aspect). Figure 13 pictures how according to Morris the notion of “discourse” might be represented as a two-dimensional construct.

Figure 13: Concept of discourse according to Morris



As can be derived from Figure 13, Morris considers the concept of “meaning” as a “pragma-semantic” unity. That is, he looks upon meaning as the relationship between a sign’s

signifying mode (semantics) and a corresponding interpretant. The latter should be understood as a particular disposition to “respond” to the sign (pragmatics). However, as will be argued later on, a clear distinction should be made between the interpreter’s disposition to respond to a sign and the actual response itself. More precisely we will see that, the interpreter not necessarily responds to the sign in accordance with his response disposition. Next, we will comment somewhat further on the first “semantic” dimension of the discourse typology, that is, the sign’s meaning.

5.1. Discourse typology: dimension 1 – the sign’s meaning (semantics)

With regard to the concept of “meaning”, three remarks should be made. The first remark has to do with the pragma-semantic conception of meaning proposed by Morris. More precisely, he argues that meaning always should be seen as some kind of “unity” between a specific “signification” or “signifying mode” on the one hand and a corresponding “interpretant” or “disposition to respond to a sign” on the other. In second instance, it is important to notice that according to Morris, one particular sign or sequence of signs can signify in two or three different modes at the same time. In other words, one might say that a sign can have multiple meanings coinciding. This idea is at the basis of what we will refer to as the “multilayered” conception of meaning. Finally, Morris assumes that if a sign signifies in several different modes simultaneously (thus, if a sign can be associated with multiple meanings at the same time) these significations are to be seen as hierarchically related to each other (and thus, not as completely separated from one another). In having a closer look at these three issues, we will base ourselves to a considerable extent on the work of Richard A. Fiordo (1977) who counts as one of the specialists in Morissean semiotics.

5.1.1. Meaning as a pragma-semantic concept

With regard to the sign’s meaning, we already mentioned how Morris (1946, 1964) clearly identifies two constituent components within this particular concept, that is, the sign’s signification on the one hand and its “interpretant” on the other. With regard to the sign’s signification, it is important to notice that Morris distinguishes between different modes (or ways) of signifying. In other words, he believes signs can have different significations for their interpreters. More in detail, Morris states that signs can have a (1) descriptive signification (i.e., signs signifying the characteristics of objects → “black”), (2) an appraisive

signification (i.e., signs signifying a preferred status of an object in relation to particular goals of an organism → “good”), or (3) a prescriptive signification (i.e., signs signifying how an object is to be reacted to by an organism → “ought”)¹⁶. In fact, these signifying modes can be compared to what Fouquier (1988) and Umiker-Sebeok (1992) referred to as the different “resonances” or psychological “dimensions” of meaning.

However, Morris continues that a sign’s mode of signifying goes hand in hand with the interpreters’ interpretation of (or disposition to respond to) the sign. Put differently, each specific mode of signifying engenders a corresponding type of interpretant. Fiordo for instance puts that, in accordance with the designative aspect of a sign’s signification is the designative aspect of its interpretant and that in this particular case: “[...] the interpretant would be a disposition to react to the designated object as if it had certain observable properties. Thus if one is told that there is a black object in an adjoining room, one is set for certain visual experiences on entering the room.” (Morris in - Fiordo 1977: 88). As Morris puts it himself, a sign of which the meaning is characterized by such a pragma-semantic profile is to be labeled as a “designator” which he defines as “[a] sign that signifies characteristics or stimulus-properties of stimulus-objects.” (Morris 1946: 347). As he further states, a designator’s so-called “significatum” (i.e., signification) itself is to be labeled as “discriminatum”.

Corresponding to the appraisive mode of a sign’s signification is the appraisive aspect of its interpretant. With regard to these appraisive interpretants, Fiordo tells us that they:

“[...] dispose us to look with favor or disfavor upon something, to slant our preferences, to select or reject this rather than that. They ... chronicle the goodness or badness of things. A certain odor disposes us to reject the odoriferous egg. ... If we are told ... there is something good in the next room we are not informed what kind of thing is there, but we are inclined to seek it out, to pay attention to it, to favor it. If we are told that the orange on the table ... is better than the orange on the windowsill we ... are disposed to prefer the one to the other.” (Morris in – Fiordo 1977: 89).

To put it in terms of Morris himself, a sign of which the significatum is characterized by such a pragma-semantic composition is referred to as an “appraisor”, which he defines as “[a] sign

¹⁶ We exclude the 4th signification mode of “formative signification” since it is less relevant for our project.

that signifies something as having a preferential status for behavior.” (Morris 1946: 345). The significatum of such an appraiser is called its “valuatum”.

Finally, in correspondence with the sign’s prescriptive mode of signification is the prescriptive aspect of its interpretant. According to Fiordo, this prescriptive interpretant “[...] would be a disposition to act in a certain way to the designated object or situation. If a person trying unsuccessfully to open a door is told that he ought to press down on the knob, he is disposed to perform that kind of action and in most cases to expect that in so performing it he will be able to get out of the room.” (Morris in – Fiordo 1977: 89). As Morris says, a sign of which the significatum is characterized by such a pragma-semantic profile is to be labeled as a “prescriptor”, which he defines as “[a] sign that signifies the requiredness of certain response-sequences.” (Morris 1946: 353). The significatum of such a prescriptor is to be referred to as its “obligatum”.

As a resume, Fiordo concludes in more concrete terms that “Morris distinguishes sign modes on the basis of their significations and corresponding interpretants. Consequently, a sign mode may have a designative signification which disposes a person to perceive some object; an appraisive signification which prepares a person to prefer some object; a prescriptive signification which disposes someone to act in a certain way [...]” (Fiordo 1977: 90). The author further demonstrates that, based on the different modes of meaning, Morris distinguishes between different types of sign combinations or sentences. These range from statements (like “That is a deer.”), to appraisals (like “He is a fine fellow.”) and prescriptions (like “Come here!”).

In sum, signs or combinations of signs (i.e., sentences) all have a certain meaning. This meaning is to be seen as a pragma-semantic unit, that is, as some kind of “partnership” between a particular signifying mode or significatum (i.e., semantic aspect) and a corresponding interpretant or disposition to respond (i.e., pragmatic aspect). Or, as put by Morris himself, “[...] the “meaning” of a sign is *both* its signification and its interpretant, and neither alone.” (Morris 1964: 9).

5.1.2. Meaning as a multilayered concept

Besides signalling that the signification of individual signs or sign sequences should be understood as a pragma-semantic unit, Morris clearly accentuates that the three modalities of signification that can be distinguished (i.e., the designative, the appraisive and the prescriptive) can co-occur. Put differently, sometimes a particular sign can be associated with

two or even three significata at the same time. In such cases, the sign's meaning is said to be multilayered, that is, built up of different levels or dimensions of signification. As Morris (1964: 4) puts it himself, a sign's meaning might exhibit "tridimensionality". With regard to this particular aspect, he continues somewhat further that, "[i]t is proposed that every sign be regarded as having three dimensions, though some signs will be strongest on certain dimensions, and in some cases they will have a null weighting on certain dimensions." (Morris 1964: 4-5). Fiordo presents an interesting example where Morris tries to illustrate how one and the same sign or sequence of signs indeed can potentially have multiple significations:

"[w]hen taken out of context, the sentence "All men are equal" acquires a richness of complexity and multiplicity in its potential meaning. That is, it *at least* "designates that persons are identical", "appraises all men as equal in dignity", and "prescribes that we extend equal opportunities to all persons" (1948a: 57)." (Morris in - Fiordo 1977: 92).

Additional support for this multilayered conception of meaning can be found within the work of numerous other respected semioticians like Hjeltmslev (1943) and Barthes (1964). In his *Eléments de Sémiologie* for instance, the latter argues that the concept of meaning can be decomposed into two levels, that is, "denotation" and "connotation". According to Dubois et al. (1994), the former can be defined as the stable, objectively verifiable and non-subjective dimension of a sign's meaning, while the latter is described as the variable or subjective dimension of a sign's meaning. Denotation thus, might be seen as an equivalent of what we referred to as "designative signification", while the notion of "connotation" might be considered as an equivalent of "appraisive," or "prescriptive signification".

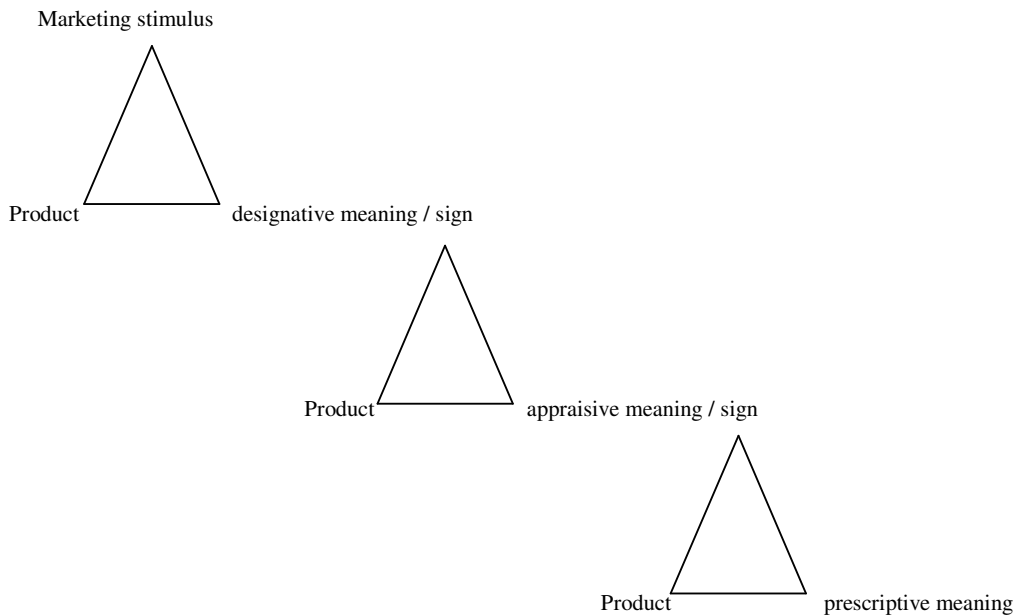
We notice here that this multilayered conception of meaning advanced by Morris corresponds well with the multidimensional conceptualizations of "psychological meaning" as they have been developed by representatives of the "meaning-centred" paradigm. In our opinion, the following example treated by Solomon et al. (1999) clearly illustrates how one marketing stimulus can have multiple significations simultaneously:

"[a] marketing message such as a Marlboro ad, can be read on different levels. On the lowest level of reading, the **object** would be the product that is the focus of

the message (e.g. Marlboro cigarettes). The **sign** is the sensory imagery that represents the intended meanings of the object (the contents of the ad, in this case, the cowboy). The **interpretant** is the meaning derived (e.g. this man smokes these cigarettes). But this man is not any man. He is a cowboy – and not just any cowboy. The interpretant ‘man (cowboy) smoking these cigarettes’ in itself becomes a sign, especially since we have already seen many examples of these ads from this company. So, on the second, connotative level, this sign refers to the fictive personality of ‘the Marlboro Man’, and its interpretant consists of all the connotations attached to the Marlboro Man, for example him being a ‘rugged, individualistic American’. On the third level, called the ideological level, the interpretant of the ‘rugged, individualistic American’ becomes a sign for what is stereotypically American. So its object is ‘America’, and the interpretant all the ideas and characteristics that we might consider as typically and quintessentially American.” (Solomon et al. 1999: 57).

According to Eco (1984), the creation of such multilayered meanings can be explained by a process which he refers to as “unlimited semiosis”. Mick presents unlimited semiosis as a mechanism where “[...] any initial meaning can be re-interpreted (and often is) [...]” (Mick 1986: 199). In light of this assumption, there seems to be no problem in stating that the designative signification an individual might associate with a particular marketing stimulus can thus be re-interpreted in an appraisive or prescriptive way. Indeed, Mick argues that “[...] each interpretant is thus a sign leading to another interpretant, and so on ad infinitum. This double nature of the interpretant – as both the interpreted sign and the interpreting sign – confers unlimited regress or extrapolation in semiosis [...]” (Mick 1986: 199). Figure 14 pictures how this process of unlimited semiosis can be visualised.

Figure 14: Unlimited semiosis



Marketing stimulus →	Designative meaning →	Appraisive meaning →	Prescriptive meaning
	DENOTATIONAL LEVEL	CONNOTATIONAL LEVEL	

In sum, signs like marketing stimuli might generate a process called “unlimited semiosis”. The latter is to be seen as a mechanism where an individual systematically re-interprets the significations he ascribes to the stimuli he is confronted with. This in turn explains why some of those marketing stimuli carry so-called “multilayered” or “multidimensional” meaning. The various significations an individual might associate with a specific stimulus can be situated at the denotative level (i.e., designative meaning) or at the connotative level (i.e., appraisive or prescriptive meaning). Or, as put by Morris, “[...] there is some evidence that certain terms do have signification on the three dimensions, and that there is some agreement as to their relative strength on these dimensions.” (Morris 1964: 5).

5.1.3. Meaning as a hierarchically structured concept

Based on the foregoing, we can say that in some cases, a sign's meaning is composed of different "levels" or "modes" of signification. In focussing on the internal structure of these so-called multilayered meanings, Morris argues that, a sign's different signifying modes are to be seen as related to each other and thus not as completely independent entities. More in detail, Holbrook and Hirschman indicate how Morris believed the relationships between a sign's different signifying modes could be captured within a specific hierarchical structure: "[i]ndeed, Morris (1946: 103) proposed a kind of rudimentary hierarchy of effects in which prescriptive modes of signifying depend on appraisive modes which, in turn, draw upon designative modes [...]" (Holbrook and Hirschman 1993: 6). The following fragment which is retrieved from the work of Fiordo, clearly illustrates how Morris sees the different levels of signification to be hierarchically related to each other:

"According to Morris, "prescriptions rest on appraisals and appraisals on statements in a way in which statements do not need to be followed by appraisals and appraisals by prescriptions (89-90). [...] Moreover, an object "designated can always be appraised and can always be made the basis of a prescription". It is also possible to designate appraisals, prescriptions, [and formulizations] as well as to appraise and prescribe designations, appraisals, and prescriptions (90). The four types of sentences therefore complement one another in a manner similar to that of the sign modes from which they derive." (Morris in – Fiordo 1977: 95).

In sum, consumers when being confronted with marketing signs engage in a process of interpretation which should be seen more particularly as an act of meaning formation, that is, a sequence where "[...] level 1 is assumed to be necessary to some degree before any remaining levels are engaged." (Mick 1992: 413). Throughout the following section, our attention will be focussed on the second "pragmatic" dimension of discourse. More in detail, it has to do with the purposes for which signs might be used by consumers.

5.2. Discourse typology: dimension 2 – the sign’s use (pragmatics)

As already mentioned, Morris distinguishes his different discourse types not only based on a semantic dimension, but on a pragmatic dimension as well. In other words, for Morris, determining which type of discourse one is confronted with is also a matter of studying how people use the meanings they attach to a body of signs or sentences. As highlighted by Fiordo, Morris believes people use signs (or sequences of signs) for several purposes:

“[a]n individual may use signs to inform himself or others about what has been or is or will be, with respect to signs or non-semiosical events. He may use signs to confer for himself or others a preferential status upon something – upon things, persons, needs, or even signs (as where he wants the signs he himself produces to be approved as “fine writing” or “fine speech”). He may use signs to incite a particular response in himself or in others to objects or signs, or to call out submission in someone else, or to get the reply to a question which bothers him, or to provoke co-operative or disruptive behavior in the members of some community. And he may use signs to further influence behavior already called out by signs, whether this behavior be to signs themselves or to something other than signs.” (Morris in - Fiordo 1977: 97).

Overall, Morris distinguishes four general or “primary” purposes for which signs can be used. These four “goals” can be of an informative, valuative, incitive, or systemic nature respectively¹⁷. Fiordo argues more in detail that a person is said to use signs informatively “[...] when he tries to cause himself or another, through signs, ‘to act as if a certain situation has certain characteristics’.” (Morris in – Fiordo 1977: 97). A person uses signs valuatively, “[...] when he tries to cause in himself or another, through signs, ‘preferential behavior to certain objects, needs, preferences, responses or signs ...’.” (Morris in - Fiordo 1977: 98). Finally, a person is said to use signs incitively “[...] when he tries to cause himself or another through signs ‘to determine how the interpreter of the sign is to act to something, that is, to call out more or less specific responses.’” (Morris in – Fiordo 1977: 99). Once Morris has determined how signs can signify and for which purposes these signs can be used, he

¹⁷ We will not pay further attention to the systemic use of signs, since this particular use is not of interest for our project.

combines both dimensions with each other and arrives at his so-called “discourse typology”. This will be commented in the next section.

5.3. Discourse typology

Morris arrives at his classification of discourse types by combining the sign’s various signification modes with the different purposes for which the sign can be used. If we exclude the notion of “formative signification” on the semantic dimension and that of “systemic use” on the pragmatic dimension of discourse, we arrive at a framework that contains nine distinct types of discourse. This discourse typology is represented in Table 3.

Table 3: Partial representation of the discourse typology developed by Morris

MODE \ USE	Informative	Valuative	Incitive
Designative	Designative Informative SCIENTIFIC	Designative Valuative FICTIVE	Designative Incitive LEGAL
Appraisive	Appraisive Informative MYTHICAL	Appraisive Valuative POETIC	Appraisive Incitive MORAL
Prescriptive	Prescriptive Informative TECHNOLOGICAL	Prescriptive Valuative POLITICAL	Prescriptive Incitive RELIGIOUS

SOURCE – adapted from Fiordo 1977: 102

As can be derived from Table 3, Morris assumes that basically, each of the sign’s different signification modes (i.e., semantic dimension) can be combined with any of the potential purposes for which the sign can be used (i.e., pragmatic dimension). This means that, for instance, a sign (like a marketing stimulus) signifying in the designative mode might eventually be used by consumers in cases they wish to get informed about a product, but also if their purpose would be to “valueate” the product or to “incite” their behaviour towards it. Interestingly however, among the nine potential combinations between a sign’s signification

mode on the one hand and the purpose for which it is used on the other, Morris seems to consider three of them as more “probable” or “evident”. That is, Morris suggests that these three specific combinations (or discourse types) might be expected to occur most frequently. This way, Morris believes for example that signs signifying in the designative mode will be used primarily for the attainment of informative purposes while appraisive signs are assumed to be better suited as a means for the fulfilment of valuative goals. Finally, signs signifying prescriptively are supposed to be employed most often in those specific cases where incitement is the final purpose. Or, as put by Fiordo, “Morris relates his four general sign uses to four of his sign modes. Although there is no necessary correlation between the sign uses and modes, generally speaking the primary use of designative sign modes is informative, of appraisive sign modes valuative, of prescription incitive and of formative systemic.” (Fiordo 1977: 97)¹⁸. In line with Fiordo, Holbrook and Hirschman notice how Morris “[...] acknowledged that, though independent conceptually, the modes and uses tend to show empirical correspondences so as to appear in the form of scientific discourse (descriptive-informative), poetic discourse (appraisive-valuative), and religious discourse (prescriptive-incitive).” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1993: 6). These three discourse types are traditionally referred to as “primary” discourse types while the six remaining ones are labeled as “secondary”. More in detail, the criterion in function of which this distinction between primary and secondary discourse types is made, is their level of “adequacy”. With regard to this principle of “adequacy”, Morris puts that “[a] sign is *adequate* to the degree to which it achieves the purpose for which it is used. Signs adequate for some purposes may be inadequate for others. To say that a sign is adequate is to say that its use reaches a goal in a particular occasion or that in general it facilitates the attainment of a certain goal.” (Morris 1946: 93). In other words, according to Morris, using signs signifying designatively for informative purposes would be more “accurate” than using them for “valuative” or “incitive” ends. Appraisive signs in turn are said to be most “adequate” for valuative purposes, while signs signifying in the prescriptive mode are assumed to be most “efficient” in case the sign user is focussing on an “incitive” goal.

However, it is important to notice that, although each purpose for which the sign might be used (like for instance the informative one) is believed to be attained most adequately by that sign if it signifies in one specific corresponding mode (in this case the

¹⁸ Again, Fiordo speaks in terms of four sign uses and four sign modes. We however will limit our scope to only three sign uses and three sign modes. As already indicated “formative signification” and “systemic use” will not be excluded from our study.

designative mode), the possibility exists for other, less accurate signifying modes (in this case, these would be the appraisive or the prescriptive modes) to contribute to the fulfilment of that same (informative) purpose. Put differently, besides turning to signs signifying in the designative mode, informative goals might also be realized by means of signs signifying in the appraisive or the prescriptive modes. The possibility for these so-called “secondary” discourse types to occur clearly comes to the fore in the two previous citations we retrieved from the work of Fiordo (1977) and Holbrook and Hirschman (1993). Consider for instance how each of these authors stresses that there is no *necessary* correlation or correspondence between a sign’s different significations and uses. In other words, for the attainment of a particular goal in function which a sign is used, the sign in question does not necessarily or exclusively have to signify in one specific mode.

Consequently, for signs signifying in different modes simultaneously (these would be signs with a multilayered meaning) the purpose behind the sign’s use might be attained by several of that sign’s significations. Or, put somewhat differently, a sign characterized by a multi-leveled meaning structure will realize the goal in function of which it is used through a process where its primary as well as secondary significations might be interacting with each other. Thus, a person being confronted with a sign signifying at the designative, appraisive and prescriptive levels of meaning might fulfil his informational needs not only by means of the sign’s designative signification (i.e., primary discourse type), but through the sign’s appraisive and/or prescriptive significations (i.e., secondary discourse types) as well. Yet, it in light of the adequacy principle, it is expected that within this interaction mechanism, the effect to which most “weight” or “impact” can be ascribed, will be exerted by the signification mode that primarily corresponds to the purpose for which the sign is used. Thus, in case of informational purposes, the effect exerted by the sign’s designative signification is assumed to be larger than the impact of the sign’s appraisive and/or prescriptive significations.

In sum, we think that based on the discourse theory developed by Morris the following two conclusions can be drawn. First of all, a sign characterized by a multi-leveled meaning structure can achieve the purpose in function of which it is used by means of a process where the sign’s different signification modes are simultaneously interacting with each other. Secondly, it is expected that within this interaction, the size of the effect exerted by the signification mode that primarily corresponds to the purpose for which the sign is used will override the impact of the effects generated by the other (i.e., secondary) modes in which the sign is signifying.

Throughout the following sections we will argue that the theoretical insights provided by Morrissean semiotics can be applied to the study of coo-effects. We will also demonstrate that discourse theory might offer a solid framework for further integration and fine-tuning of the existant theoretical approaches towards this coo-phenomenon.

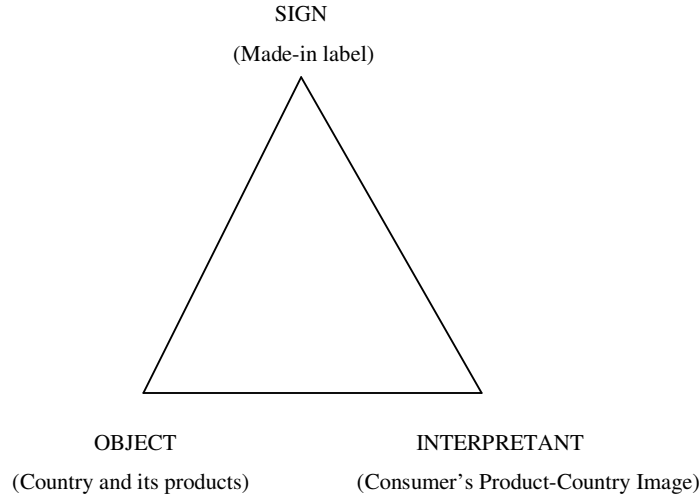
6. Morrissean semiotics as a theoretical approach for the analysis of country-of-origin effects

In first instance, we will argue that the Made-in label is a marketing stimulus that can be perfectly captured by the triadic conception of a sign. In second instance, our focus will be on the semantic dimension of the Made-in label, represented as a sign that is associated with the product. More in detail, we will demonstrate that the meaning consumers ascribe to a Made-in label in fact should be seen as a multilayered concept. In other words, our assumption will be that consumers might be constantly re-interpreting a Made-in label. In third instance, we will comment on the purposes for which signs like a Made-in label might be used. This will be done from the perspective of the marketer on the one hand and from the consumer's perspective on the other. In final instance, we will argue that, because of the fact that the Made-in label can signify at several levels of meaning, it should be seen as a sign that accomplishes the purposes for which it is used not by means of one particular type of discourse but by means of a process where different types of discourse are simultaneously interacting with each other.

6.1. The Made-in label as a sign

In our opinion, there is no problem in representing the Made-in label as a sign that refers to an object and that can be interpreted by consumers. Figure 15 pictures the triadic conception of the Made-in label.

Figure 15: Triadic conception of Made-in label as a sign



As can be seen, the Made-in label can be considered as a sign since it “represents” or “refers to” something that is not actually present itself. According to Van Zoest, this absent “object” as it is traditionally referred to “[...] doesn’t have to be anything concrete, it can be abstract as well. [...] [The object] can be something that exists, but also something that has existed, something of which we suppose that it has existed or that it will exist. It can be conceivable, but inconceivable as well. All the thinkable and unthinkable can be [object] of a sign.” (Van Zoest 1978: 30 – translation is ours). In this particular case the sign’s object can be defined as anything that has to do with a specific country (like France), its people and its products. The image this Made-in label activates in the consumer’s mind when being confronted with this marketing stimulus should be understood as the sign’s “interpretant”. In this case, the interpretant can be referred to as a complex internally stored map which we referred to as the “Product-Country Image”. Through marketing communication, the Made-in label can be associated with a product. As we already discussed, this link with the product makes that the interpretations consumers associate with that label (i.e., the PCI) can be projected from the label itself to the product. This is how a product becomes “semantized”, that is, charged with meaning.

Let us translate this case of “semiosis” to a concrete, daily life example. Imagine a person looking for a good quality wine, entering a supermarket. He goes to the wine department and finds himself confronted with a large variety of wines. This particular supermarket doesn’t offer the possibility for consumers to taste wine and, additionally, the

person in question is not a wine specialist. So, what will he do to estimate the quality of the varieties offered? A first possibility might be to look for the price. The person in question might reason that expensive products are of a higher status and that, consequently, higher priced bottles will be of better quality. But what if, after a first selection based on price, there are still different options left? In such a case, one might turn to the wine's coo. Generally, this coo is communicated to consumers by means of the Made-in label. We already saw that this label functions as a sign that stands for a particular country, its people and its products (i.e., the object). This label will activate an internally stored PCI that contains all kinds of associations related to the country (and its products). For instance, when confronted with wine Made-in France (i.e., the sign), the consumer might think of items like good weather, vacation, vineyards, etc. (i.e., the interpretant). Because of the label's linkage with the product, these interpretants in turn, might be used to infer the wine's quality attributes. This would imply for example, that the activated image of France's sunny and warm climate (i.e., sign) might be re-interpreted as indicating that the wine (i.e., object) probably has a good taste (i.e., interpretant). Or, the elicited image of the "typical vineyards in France" (i.e., sign) might be standing for a longstanding tradition and extensive expertise in the cultivation and production (i.e., interpretant) of wine (i.e., object). In other words, the consumer's PCI (i.e., sign) might be re-interpreted as a standard for attributes indicating good overall quality (i.e., interpretant) of the product (i.e., object) with which the original Made-in stimulus is associated.

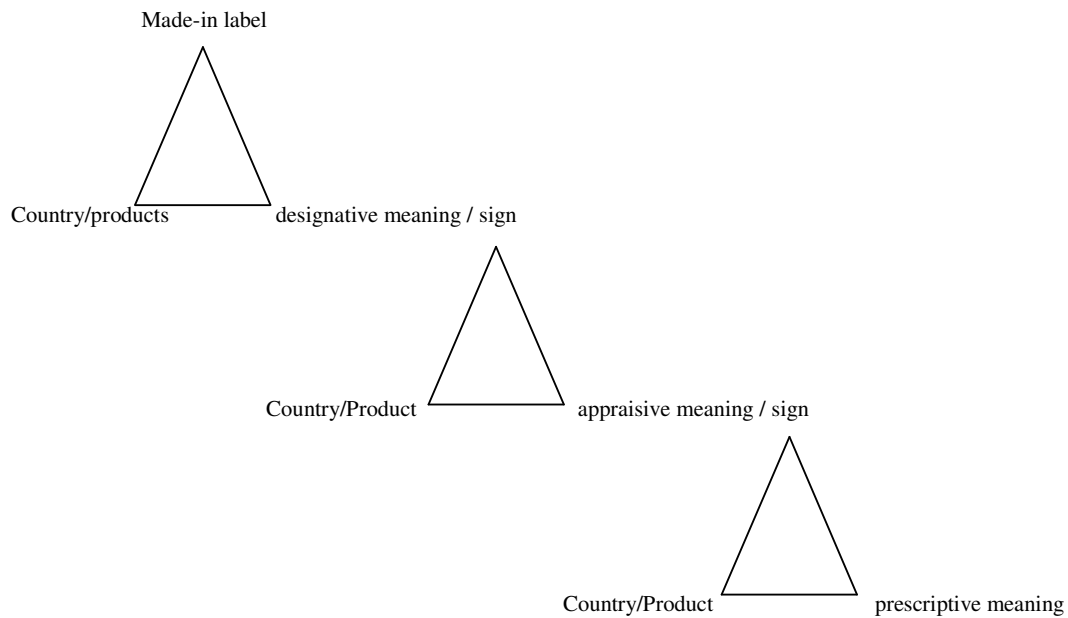
Thus, it seems that Made-in labels indeed can be represented as signs by means of which products can be charged with meaning. In the following section, we will focus on the semantic dimension of Made-in labels. In other words, we will have a look at the different modes in which these labels can signify.

6.2. The Made-in label's semantic dimension

Throughout the previous section, we demonstrated that consumers can associate the Made-in label with all kinds of aspects related to a country and its products and that these product-country associations might be functioning as signs for product attributes. In the previous example, we presented the Made-in France label as a sign signifying in the designative mode, since the label referred to (descriptive) characteristics (like the good weather or the presence of vineyards) of the object (in this case France). "Good weather" for instance, can be considered as a "descriptive" feature because it is "observable" or, to put it in other words, it

is a “verifiable” country item. However, as discussed previously, Morris states that, besides signifying designatively, signs can signify in the appraisive and prescriptive modes as well. More particularly, we saw that multiple levels of meaning could be attributed to the same marketing stimulus due to a phenomenon called “unlimited semiosis”. It was defined as a process where the sign user constantly re-interprets his interpretations of the sign so that through the designative and appraisive levels of meaning, a sign might even come to signify in the prescriptive mode. In our opinion, it is one of the typical properties of Made-in labels that they can engage consumers in such a process of continuous re-interpretation which makes that Made-in labels almost inevitably come to signify at different levels of meaning. Put differently, we are inclined to believe that Made-in labels in most cases are characterized by the fact that they carry a multi-leveled meaning with them. This is pictured somewhat more in detail in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Made-in labels as initiators of unlimited semiosis



The fact that Made-in labels can signify at different levels of meaning has also been demonstrated by our exploratory interviews where it could be established that the images respondents associated with a particular country consisted of descriptive, appraisive and

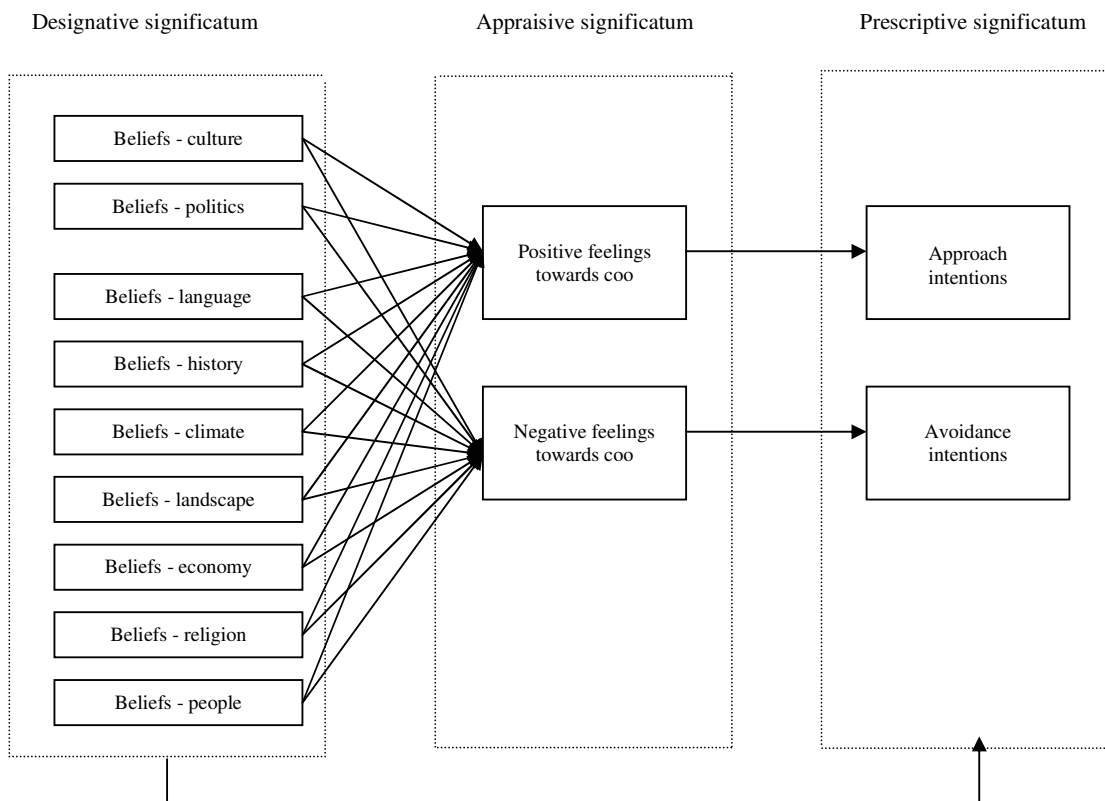
prescriptive items. More in detail we found that, in line with Morris's hierarchical conception of the internal structure of multilayered meaning, a sign (like the Made-in label) that signifies in different modes does so by means of a process of re-interpretation where the sign's meaning progresses from the levels of designative and appraisive signification to that of prescription.

Transposed to our example of wine Made-in France, this would mean that, through its designative signifying mode, the Made-in France label can become a sign signifying in the appraisive mode as well. To put it in more concrete terms, through its association with descriptive country features (like good weather), the Made-in France label can be charged with affective tags (like feelings of joy, pleasure or optimism) because most people like (i.e., "appraise") a warm and sunny climate. This way, the label comes to signify not only at the denotational but at the connotational level as well. A good illustration of how the Made-in France label might even become a sign signifying at the prescriptive level of meaning, has been provided by Beverland and Lindgreen (2002). These authors mention the case of New Zealand consumers refraining from the purchase of French products because of the French government's decision to organize a nuclear test program in the Pacific. From a semiotic perspective, this can be seen as an exemplar case of how people might come to associate signs like the Made-in label with prescriptive significations.

When analyzed in function of Morrisian semiotics, we might say that in this particular case, the Made-in label activates New Zealand consumers' memorized cognitions about the French actions in the Pacific (i.e., designative signification). These in turn, trigger negative feelings (like hostility) because inhabitants of New Zealand are still irritated by the French nuclear test program being held in their neighbourhood (and not in France). These negative feelings can be seen as some kind of re-interpretation of the original designative signification associated with the label. Since such negative feelings in fact are specific expressions of overall "dislike", there is no problem in treating them as manifestations of so-called appraisive signification. Through the label's (negative) appraisive signification, New Zealand consumers were brought to interpret the mere indication of "Frenchness" as some kind of "moral inhibition" (i.e., prescriptive signification), stimulating them to "avoid" French imports. In sum, we might represent the meaning New Zealand consumers associate with the Made-in France label as some kind of "signification chain" where memories of French nuclear program (designative signification) → negative feelings (appraisive signification) → boycott French products (prescriptive signification). Let it be noticed that in cases where the link between a sign's designative signification and its corresponding

prescriptive signification is almost self-evident, it might be reasonable to suggest that the designative significatum immediately activates the prescriptive significatum. If we apply this semiotic perspective on meaning to the conceptualization of PCI as we developed it at previous instances, we arrive at a construct as it is pictured in Figure 17.

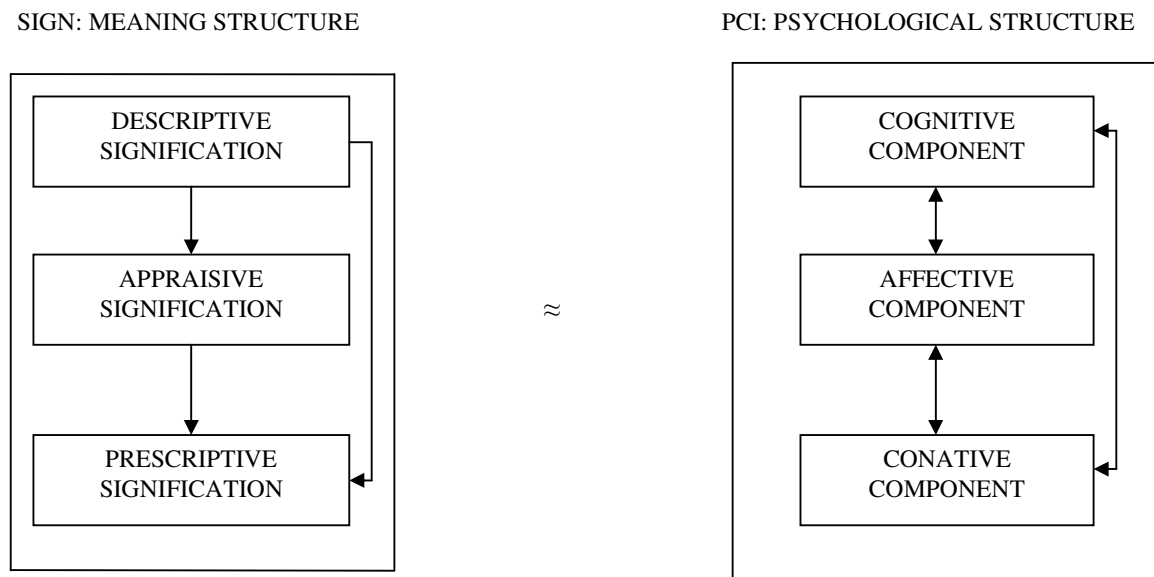
Figure 17: Product-Country Image from a semiotic perspective



As can be derived from Figure 17, Morris’s theoretical conception of meaning is perfectly suited as a blueprint for the structure of the images (i.e., attitudes) people form of a country and its products. Holbrook and Hirschman seem to agree since they reason that the hierarchical ordering behind a sign’s meaning “[...] suggests a progression from information to evaluation to persuasion that anticipates the chain from cognition to affect to behavior that underlies much consumer research on information processing, persuasion, and choice.” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1993: 6). In other words, according to Holbrook and Hirschman,

an interesting parallel can be found between Morris's theory about a sign's meaning and the internal structure of PCI. As previously demonstrated, the psychological structure underlying the PCI also consisted of three interacting components: cognitions, affects and conations. Thus, Morris's views on a sign's meaning are analogous to some extent with the structure attitudinal theory accords to the PCI-construct. This is pictured by Figure 18.

Figure 18: Analogy between a sign's meaning and the psychological structure of PCI



An important difference however between semiotics on the one hand and attitude theory on the other is that while the latter accepts several variations on the sequence of cognitions → affects → conations, the former is strict in its claim that there is only one basic conceptual hierarchy for the structure of meaning, that is, descriptive signification → appraisive signification → prescriptive signification. Put differently, semioticians are much more uniform in determining the basic conceptual structure of PCI than scholars working within the field of attitude psychology. This can be explained by the fact that while semiotic theory is more concerned with the “logical” connection between the basic constituent components of constructs like PCI, attitude theory is inclined to emphasize their “chronological” relationships. Put somewhat differently, we might say that Morris sees the so-called “hierarchies-of-effects” proposed by attitude theory as no more than chronological variations

of one and the same basic logical order, that is, cognitions → affects → conations. Thus, while the logical relationship between the three components is always identical, their chronological order (i.e., the time at which each of these components occurs) is allowed to vary.

In the following section, we will focus on the second dimension of the Made-in label, functioning as a sign, that is, the pragmatic dimension. In other words, we will have a closer look at the various purposes in function of which Made-in labels might be used by consumers.

6.3. The Made-in label's pragmatic dimension

Since marketing communication stands for an interactive process (e.g., McCracken 1990), the use of coo-cues as signs can be approached from two different perspectives, that is, from the marketer's point of view and from the perspective of the consumer (i.e., the so-called "recipient" or "viewer/reader").

6.3.1. Use of Made-in labels from the marketer's perspective

Marketers use aspects from the culturally constituted world as marketing stimuli in order to charge products with meaning. They use these stimuli, or signs, with a certain purpose, that is, to influence the consumer's attitudinal dispositions towards the product. In other words, through their use of different signs marketers intend to create some kind of "text" or "discourse" around the product with the intention of positively affecting the consumer's attitude towards it. Signs differ in their potential adequacy of attaining the purpose for which they are used. More in detail, four goals in function of which signs are used could be distinguished: informative, valuative, incitive and systemic¹⁹. Signs are used "informatively" if their objective is to inform the sign's interpreter about something while signs are used "valuatively" when the underlying intention is to cause a preferential state towards the object the sign is associated with. Finally, signs are used "incitively" if their purpose is to determine how the interpreter is to act towards something. With regard to these primary sign usages Morris remarks that they "[...] correspond in some sense to the modes of signifying which we have isolated." (Morris 1946: 94). In other words, he believes that the purposes for which

¹⁹ We excluded the systemic usage from our scope of interest.

signs are used are achieved best by means of signs signifying in the mode that corresponds most intimately with the goal in function of which the sign is used. This way, Morris argues that informing interpreters can be done best by using signs signifying in the designative mode while making interpreters confer a preferential status upon something can be achieved best by using signs signifying in the appraisive mode. Determining how interpreters are to act towards something is most adequately attained by using signs signifying in the prescriptive mode. Yet, besides being capable of fulfilling their “primary” (i.e., most corresponding) purpose, signs signifying in a particular mode also can be used for the achievement of so-called “secondary” goals. For example, instead of being used informatively, designative signs can also be used valuatively or incitively. The same counts for signs signifying in the appraisive or prescriptive mode.

6.3.2. Use of Made-in labels from the consumer’s perspective

Consumers also use signs (like *coo*) as means-to-an-end, that is, in function of particular purposes. The adequacy with which these purposes are achieved, is related to a certain extent to the correspondence of the sign’s signifying mode with the purpose for which the sign is used. If we make use of Morris’s terminology, we might say that if the consumer’s intention is to get informed about the product (i.e., cognitive component of product attitude), he will use advertisement stimuli for “informative” purposes. If however his objective is to determine preference towards one of the various product alternatives confronted with (i.e., affective component of product attitude), he is said to use marketing stimuli for “valuative” ends. Finally, if the consumer’s purpose is to determine how he ought to react towards the product (i.e., conative component of product attitude) he will use marketing stimuli “incitively”. In line with Morris’s basic principle of “adequacy”, we assume that when consumers want to inform themselves about a product, they will primarily turn to signs signifying designatively while they will look more intensively for signs signifying in the appraisive mode when their purpose is to determine preference towards a product. Finally, we suppose consumers will make more substantial use of signs signifying in the prescriptive mode when they intend to determine how they ought to behave towards a product.

However, also from the consumer’s perspective, it should be mentioned that signs signifying in a certain mode can be used for other purposes than their primary corresponding ones. This way, consumers for instance can use designative signs not only informatively, but valuatively or incitively as well. Nevertheless, Morris argues that, if the intention is to inform

someone or oneself, “[d]esignators are normally the best signs for this purpose [...]” (Morris 1946: 99).

Thus, consumers, when being confronted with products, use marketing stimuli as signs in function of particular purposes. These underlying goals can vary from gathering information about (absent) product characteristics (i.e., informative use) to determining one’s preference towards a product (i.e., valuative use) or deciding on how to act towards goods (i.e., incitive use). Each of these intentions is normally achieved best by means of signs signifying in the mode that corresponds most intimately with the purpose for which these signs are used. Notwithstanding, signs signifying in a particular mode can also be used for other, so-called “secondary” purposes.

For signs carrying multiple levels of meaning, the possibility for secondary discourses to occur, implies that one specific purpose can be attained by that sign through a process where several of its signification modes are simultaneously operating. Let us remind that the Made-in label is capable of affecting a consumer’s information processing by means of several simultaneously occurring mechanisms. More in detail, the Made-in label might serve as a cue on the basis of which beliefs about the product can be formed (i.e., halo mechanism). This process should be seen more precisely as a mechanism where the Made-in label’s designative significations (i.e., cognitions about the country and its products) are used as surrogate indicators from which attribute beliefs are inferred. At the same time however, the Made-in label can affect the way in which consumers interpret or select additionally offered information about the product (i.e., elaboration mechanisms).

In our opinion, it seems reasonable to suggest that these two aspects of the consumer’s information processing might be co-determined by the Made-in label’s appraisive and/or prescriptive connotations. For instance, we think there is no problem in assuming that additional product information might be interpreted in a more favourable manner because of the fact that the Made-in label elicits positive feelings. This way, a consumer might perceive a product’s quality attributes in a more favourable way, simply because of the fact that he likes the country where the product has been made. Similarly, consumers might disregard a product and refrain from processing any information about it (i.e., a selection mechanism) due to the fact that the Made-in label carries a negative prescriptive connotation. For example, it seems acceptable to suppose that consumers exclude certain products as alternatives from their consideration set simply because the Made-in label refers to a country that the consumer rather wishes to avoid.

In sum, during information processing, consumers use Made-in labels because this label's designative signification has certain informational value for them. Yet, it should not be overlooked that they might be under (unconscious) influence of the label's appraisive and/or prescriptive connotations as well. Although the latter are supposed to be more effective as tools for reaching valuative or incitive goals, this does not a priori exclude them as potential determinants of a consumer's information processing efforts. The fact that appraisive connotations evoked by marketing stimuli for instance, can affect consumers' information processing in many ways is clearly suggested by Isen when she puts that "[...] the evidence suggests that rather than causing people not to think, affect (at least some affects) can influence thought by influencing what people think about, how they relate things to one another, what they try to accomplish, and how they go about solving problems. Thus feelings can have a substantial influence on thought processes and resultant behaviour." (Isen 1989: 113). In our opinion, this has important implications for marketing stimuli that have been traditionally disregarded by researchers on information processing simply because they would be less useful for consumers as informational sources for a product's quality attributes.

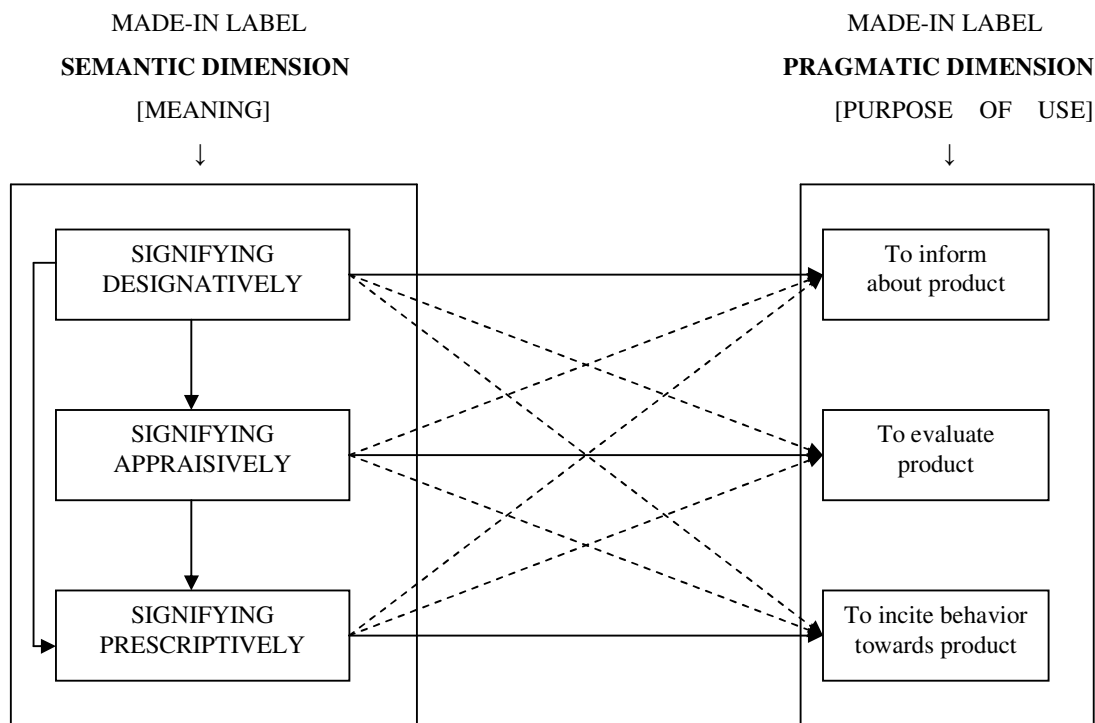
When focussed more specifically on the Made-in label, we already mentioned that some coo-researchers have argued that a country's more general environmental conditions are irrelevant for the study of coo-effects since these are low of informational value (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992). Put differently, it is said they cannot teach us much about the product's quality attributes. However, in light of Morris's idea that (1) signs, besides purely "denoting", might be charged with appraisive and prescriptive connotations and (2) that these make signs become suited as well for the attainment of informational purposes (like the interpretation or selection of additional information), we think the importance or value of these more general environmental conditions should be seriously reconsidered. As posited by discourse theory, their capacity of signifying at different levels extends the set of communicative goals in function of which they might be used. In other words, the semantic richness or "polysemy"²⁰ significantly increases their communicative "accuracy" or "efficiency". Or to put it in semiotic terms, the "semantic" flexibility that characterizes "signs" referring a country's environmental conditions increases their "pragmatic" relevance while it makes them suited for the attainment of a wider variety of communicative purposes.

As will become clear throughout the empirical part of our dissertation, our study will be aimed at uncovering whether the functioning of coo-effects indeed corresponds to this

²⁰ The term "polysemy" refers to the capacity of a marketing stimulus to evoke a rich variety of significations.

picture of a composite mechanism with primary and secondary effects operating simultaneously. Figure 19 retakes the foregoing and shows how, consumers are believed to make use of signs like the Made-in label when (1) informing about a foreign sourced product, (2) evaluating it or (3) deciding to purchase it or not. Full arrows stand for so-called “primary effects” while broken arrows represent “secondary effects”.

Figure 19: Discourse theory applied to use of Made-in label



7. Evaluation of using Morrissean semiotics as a theoretical framework for the study of country-of-origin effects

So why applying Morrissean semiotics? As said, we have taken quite an unconventional approach in combining coo-research and semiotics. Having arrived at the models presented by Figures 18 and 19, we would like to take a moment for evaluating our approach. Will it

make sense? Will it provide new and useful insights? In general, we think that Morris's semiotic theory seems appealing for the study of coo-effects for several reasons. First of all, it is important to realize that Morrissean semiotics can be applied to the study of coo-effects. This theoretical "suitability" has been demonstrated by means of some interesting parallels that could be assessed between the psychological structure underlying the PCI on the one hand and the multi-leveled conception of a sign's semantic dimension on the other. However, besides its mere "applicability" to the basic concepts within the field of coo-research, we believe that Morris's semiotic theory can make several interesting contributions to the already existing literature.

First of all, the discourse theory developed by Morris fundamentally agrees with the assumption that more attention should be paid to the role of a marketing stimulus' meaning during the formation of product attitudes. However, it still goes one step further in that it also explains us "why" meaning is so important. As previously discussed, this framework rests on the key proposition that meaning is a concept that should be taken into account while it is said to determine to a large extent how "adequate" a particular stimulus might be for consumers in order to attain the purpose in function of which such a stimulus might be used. The Made-in label's meaning can be considered as what Fouquier (1988) referred to as a "causal antecedent" of coo-effects, or as some kind of "predictor" of how the label can be expected to be used by consumers. Even more interestingly, Morris shows us which of a sign's various signification modes probably makes the sign most accurate for the attainment of a particular communicative purpose. In other words, he offers us a framework on the basis of which a marketing stimulus' maximum potential of communicative efficacy can be derived²¹.

In second instance, we think the discourse theory further fine-tunes the basic conceptual structure behind the construct of PCI and the typology of coo-effects researchers have been working with up until now. As for the already existing classification of coo-effects, it should be noticed that it is the outcome a longstanding tradition where coo-effects have been studied almost exclusively from a "pragmatic" perspective. That is, the extant literature has consistently focussed on examining for which (pragmatic) purposes Made-in labels are used by consumers. It is in function of these different usage goals that coo-effects have been identified and categorized as cognitive, affective and conative effects (e.g.,

²¹ Clearly this would be an insight of great value for advertisers and marketing practitioners since it will make stimuli referring to the complex notion of a product's coo more manageable.

Johansson 1989; Obermiller and Spangenberg 1989; Sauer et al. 1991; Steffenhagen et al. 2001; Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999). The most important difference between these classic approaches and discourse theory is that Morris sees the use of signs (like the Made-in label) in relation with the meaning these signs have for their interpreters. In other words, his theory reasons that a classification of coo-effects should be seen as a framework where the Made-in label's pragmatic dimension is narrowly related to that label's semantic dimension. Table 4 gives an overview of how Morris's discourse theory can be considered as a framework that might lead to a more advanced version of the traditional classification of coo-effects.

Table 4: Coo-effect typology based on Morrisian discourse theory as a more advanced version of traditional classifications of coo-effects (see Figure 19)

TRADITIONAL COO-EFFECT TYPOLOGY	MORRISSAN COO-EFFECT TYPOLOGY
COGNITIVE COO-EFFECT (= informative use of coo-cue)	PRIMARY COGNITIVE COO-EFFECT (informative use of coo-cue signifying designatively)
	SECONDARY COGNITIVE COO-EFFECT (informative use of coo-cue signifying appraisively)
	SECONDARY COGNITIVE COO-EFFECT (informative use of coo-cue signifying incitively)
AFFECTIVE COO-EFFECT (= valuative use of coo-cue)	PRIMARY AFFECTIVE COO-EFFECT (valuative use of coo-cue signifying appraisively)
	SECONDARY AFFECTIVE COO-EFFECT (valuative use of coo-cue signifying designatively)
	SECONDARY AFFECTIVE COO-EFFECT (valuative use of coo-cue signifying incitively)
CONATIVE COO-EFFECT (= incitive use of coo-cue)	PRIMARY CONATIVE COO-EFFECT (incitive use of coo-cue signifying prescriptively)
	SECONDARY CONATIVE COO-EFFECT (incitive use of coo-cue signifying designatively)
	SECONDARY CONATIVE COO-EFFECT (incitive use of coo-cue signifying appraisively)

In third instance, Morris's discourse theory makes the extant literature progress from a mere identification and categorization of coo-effects to a place where more insight can be gained into the way in which these effects relate to one another. As signalled by Hadjimarcou and Hu (1999), this is an issue which has not yet been completely sorted out by coo-researchers. While together with authors like Hong and Wyer (1989, 1990) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), they seem to be in favour of the possibility for a coo-cue to trigger several types of effects simultaneously, others seem to be suggesting that the role of Made-in labels often is

restricted to its function as an indicator of product quality (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992). Thus, no clear-cut information is offered on how these mechanisms are to be situated towards each other.

Based on our review of the literature and on a series of exploratory interviews, we could establish that the Made-in label is a sign that signifies at the three different levels of meaning. According to discourse theory it is highly probable that these different signification modes co-operate in achieving the communicative goal in function of which the sign is used. The originality of Morrissean discourse theory resides more precisely in that it provides us with a solid theoretical framework that favours a “composite” view on the functioning of coo-effects. As demonstrated by Table 4, classic approaches argue that coo-effects should be understood as being supported by a “single” mechanism²².

In fourth instance, Morrissean semiotics will “upgrade” the status of a country’s more general environmental conditions within the coo-field. As mentioned before, these have been neglected by the major stream of research since they would be of limited informative value. That is, as indicators or “informational sources” of product quality, they would be less valuable for consumers. Although we admit that, as such, this statement could make sense we think this does not automatically mean that such environmental aspects simply can be disregarded. In doing so, we base ourselves on Morris’s idea that even if a sign’s designative signification cannot be used in order to get informed about a product’s quality status, it might affect the selection and processing of other informational cues by means of its appraisive and/or prescriptive significations. Additionally, the latter have been advanced by Morris as most accurate for the attainment of other, so-called “valuative,” and “incitive” communicative purposes. Thus, here discourse theory offers another argument indicating it would be unwise to underestimate the importance of environmental aspects related to a product’s coo.

As a fifth argument Morrissean semiotics provides us with more detailed insights on the role of a PCI’s affective and conative components. As we pointed out already, one of the main shortcomings Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) attributed to traditional coo-research was that most studies within the field rather neglected the role of affective and prescriptive connotations associated with coo-cues during the attitude formation process. As we discussed at former instances, the incorporation of theoretical models stemming from attitudinal and

²² Contrary to the so-called “single” view on coo-effects, the “composite” view reasons that the coo-effect can be decomposed into two or more simultaneously operating sub-effects depending on how many of the PCI’s constituent components have been activated by the coo-stimulus.

social psychology within the coo-field, resulted in a progress of our knowledge about the concept of coo-cues and their underlying PCI. However, these disciplines did not provide us with theoretical insights into how consumers make use of such appraisive or prescriptive meanings related to the coo-cue. In other words, understanding the effects such connotations could possibly have on the consumer's attitude formation remained unclear. Morrissean semiotics can help us in overcoming this lack of knowledge since it focusses on how people interpret and make use of signs like coo. Morris not only recognizes affective and prescriptive connotations as basic constituents of the Made-in label's semantic dimension, but he also reasons on how these connotative meanings are expected to be used. In sum, his framework might serve as a valuable approach to filling this particular gap within the literature on coo-effects.

Finally, the PCI can be seen as the meaning consumers associate with the Made-in label. As stated by Fouquier (1988: 333), the inner complexity of "meaning" inevitably requires for "eclectic" theoretical approaches in order to be capable of developing a good, that is, a sufficiently comprehensive conceptual model for this construct. In our opinion, Morrissean semiotics satisfies this need better than the theoretical approaches already proposed within the field. As already mentioned, three paradigms can be identified in function of which coo-researchers have tried to explain coo-effects: (1) the cognitively-oriented information theoretic perspective being related to the coo-cue's designative meaning, (2) the "hedonic" or "experiential" paradigm being related to the Made-in label's emotional and symbolic connotations (i.e., appraisive), and (3) social identity theory related to the Made-in label's normative (i.e., prescriptive) connotations.

Each of these theoretical frameworks has made valuable contributions towards the literature, but unfortunately, they approached coo-effects only in function of one particular dimension of the Made-in label's meaning. On the contrary, discourse theory incorporates each of these different levels of signification into the concept of meaning. Consequently, it allows us to capture the functioning of the Made-in label's meaning in its full complexity. As such, it can be considered as a useful framework towards further integration of the different theoretical approaches already proposed within the coo-literature.

8. Summary findings and conclusion

This part of our dissertation turned towards the field of semiotics. Our first objective was to demonstrate that the interpretation of marketing stimuli like the Made-in label can be seen as a case of “semiosis” and that consequently, insights from this discipline might be used for the study of coo-effects. After consideration of the major paradigms within the field, we arrived at the Peircean-based discourse theory, developed by C.W. Morris as a potentially interesting theoretical framework for our project. It rests on the key proposition that the adequacy with which a sign attains the purpose for which it is used is determined to a large extent by that sign’s meaning. Here, the main reason can be found explaining why the meaning-centred approaches towards information processing postulate that meaning should be seen as a concept of crucial importance for determining the consumer’s attitudinal dispositions towards a product.

In theorizing on how the sign’s semantic dimension (i.e., meaning) should be conceptualized, Morris argues first of all that meaning is a pragma-semantic unity where a particular signification mode always goes hand in hand with a corresponding disposition to react to the sign. More in detail, three modalities of meaning can be distinguished, ranging from the designative to the appraisive and the prescriptive mode. In second instance, Morris puts that signs can signify in several of these modes simultaneously and that in such cases a sign’s meaning should be seen as a multilayered concept. The fact that one sign can carry multiple significations is explained by means of a phenomenon called “unlimited semiosis”. It should be seen as a process of systematic re-interpretation. In third instance, Morris indicates how so-called multilayered meaning should be conceptualized as a hierarchically ordered construct with designative significations at the basic level, subsequently followed by appraisive and prescriptive levels of signification respectively. The so-called “pragmatic” dimension of discourse theory has to do with the different purposes for which signs can be used. According to Morris, signs can be used in function of informative, valuative or incitive goals. However, for the attainment of these purposes, signs differ in “degree of accuracy”. More in detail, the sign’s efficacy is said to be determined by the sign’s signification mode. For each purpose taken separately, one particular signification mode is assumed to be more adequate than the other two. This makes Morris distinguish between signification modes that are expected to be used in “primary” or “secondary” instance (cf. Figures 18 and 19). Based on this adequacy principle, he develops a so-called “discourse typology”. In our opinion, this

framework might serve as a valuable approach towards studying coo-effects for several reasons already discussed.

Throughout the following chapter we will use Morris's discourse theory as a basis for the formulation of a series of hypotheses on the ways in which consumers are expected to be using the meanings they associate with Made-in labels.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL MODEL + HYPOTHESES

1. Chapter overview

The main objective of this chapter is to formulate a series of hypotheses on the mechanisms that support the effect exerted by “Country Image” (CI)²³ on “Product Attitude”. In order to do so, we will start from a theoretical overall model which is based on the insights provided by our review of the literature. In second instance, we will indicate more specifically on which parts of this overall model our empirical research will be focussed. Once these particular zones within the overall model have been delineated, we further decompose it into three specific sub-models. These three micro-models allow us to examine in a somewhat more convenient way how the CI potentially influences a subject’s attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. This way, the first model will show how the CI is assumed to affect the respondent’s formation of beliefs about a product (i.e., the cognitive component of product attitude) while the second model represents how the CI is expected to be determining the subject’s evaluative judgement of a product (i.e., the affective component of product attitude). Finally, the third model demonstrates how the CI is hypothesized to influence an individual’s purchase intentions towards a product (i.e., the conative component of product attitude).

2. Overall theoretical model

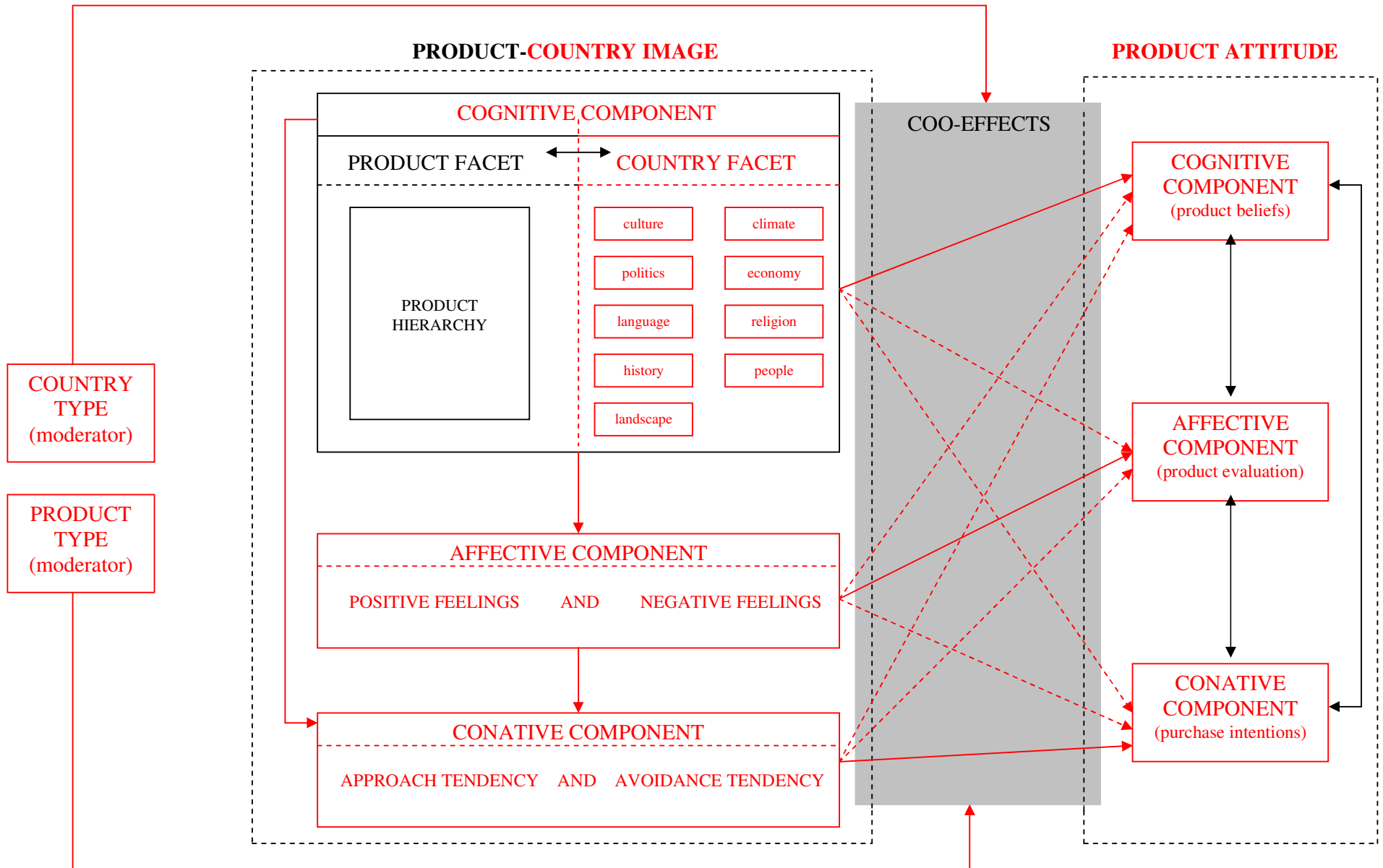
Figure 20 (cf. page 141) gives us an overall picture of how the PCI is supposed to affect the consumer’s attitude towards foreign-sourced products. In light of what we discussed throughout the previous two chapters, the overall model includes two key concepts, that is, (1) product-country image and (2) product attitude. In first instance, our empirical research will

²³ Let us remind here how, for reasons already mentioned at former instances, our dissertation concentrates more specifically on the part of the PCI we referred to as the Country Image (CI) and not on the Product Image.

focus more specifically on the internal structure of the country image. More in detail, we will try to find an answer to the question of knowing whether the basic hierarchical composition Morris accorded to the concept of a sign fits the structure underlying the CI-construct. Hypotheses to this regard are grouped under set 1. Secondly, most of our attention goes to the relationships between the individual's CI on the one hand and his product-specific attitudinal dispositions on the other. More in detail, we will try to gain more insight into the questions of knowing whether the overall effect exerted by the country image in general is supported by a single or a composite mechanism (hypothesis 2). Still going one step further, we will try to find out which of the sub-effects exerted by the country image's basic constituent components should be seen as primary (i.e., stronger) effects and secondary (i.e., weaker) effects (hypothesis 3). Finally, our empirical study will also examine whether there are any factors that might moderate the size of coo-effects (hypotheses 4 and 5).

Thus, as indicated in Figure 20, our empirical study will concentrate exclusively on those particular paths and constructs of the overall model which have been marked in red. Notice that, for the PCI concept, the focus is limited to the part we have been referring to as the individual's country image. Let us remind that our primary concern goes to the paths lying within the zone that has been marked in grey and that carries the label "Coo-effects". The variables labeled as "country type" and "product type" should be understood as potential moderators of coo-effects. The paths connecting these two variables with the grey zone of coo-effects are therefore to be interpreted as the moderation effects that might be exerted by country type and product type.

Figure 20: Overall theoretical model for country-of-origin effects



3. Introduction to hypotheses: from one overall model to three sub-models

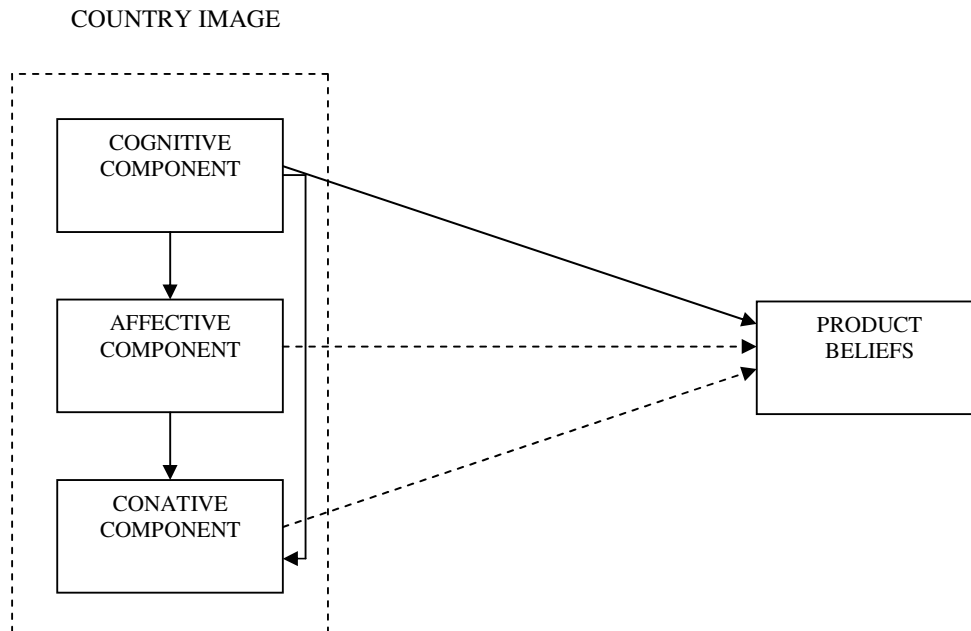
Before formulating our hypotheses it should be noticed that, contrary to the operational procedure followed for the CI-construct, the concept of “product attitude” will not be retained in its original form for subsequent analyses. Put differently, the models used to test our hypotheses do not include a three-dimensional “product attitude” concept as it was represented in the overall theoretical model (see Figure 20). We decided to further decompose the concept of product attitude with each of its constituent parts functioning as a dependent variable appearing in three separately estimated models. This way, the effects triggered by the CI will be assessed on each of the product attitude’s constituent parts taken separately. Reasons for doing so will be discussed more in detail in chapter 6 (cf. sections 5.1 and 6.1) where we will focus on data-analysis procedures. However, at this stage already, we can say that one of the reasons for further subdividing the overall theoretical model into three specific sub-models lies in our intention to make the empirical analyses more transparent. Additionally, we believe there is no harm in isolating these three constituent parts of product attitude from each other because the main objective of our study is to examine how the CI influences their (individual) “formation” and not their (reciprocal) “order” or their “interrelationships”.

Throughout the following paragraphs we will have a closer look at each of the three sub-models. The first model shows how the CI is assumed to affect an individual’s beliefs about the product (i.e., cognitive component of product attitude). The second model represents how the CI is supposed to affect a person’s evaluative judgement of the product (i.e., the affective component of product attitude). The third model will demonstrate how the CI is expected to influence a subject’s purchase intentions towards the product (i.e., the conative component of product attitude).

3.1. Hypotheses for Sub-model 1: CI → formation of product beliefs

Figure 21 pictures in a conceptually somewhat more simplified manner how we assume the CI to affect the formation of an individual’s product beliefs (i.e., the cognitive component of product attitude). The full arrow stands for a primary (i.e., stronger) effect while broken arrows represent secondary (i.e., weaker) effects.

Figure 21: Theoretical model showing how the CI is expected to influence the product attitude's cognitive component



The first set of hypotheses is related to the structure underlying the CI-construct. As argued throughout the section on semiotics (cf. chapter 2), we believe the internal structure of a sign as it was developed by Morris is a valuable approach towards conceptualizing the CI-construct. More in detail we discussed how he believes a sign to consist of three interrelated and hierarchically ordered components with coo's designative signification (i.e., country-specific cognitions) leading to appraisive signification (i.e., country-specific feelings) and these in turn giving rise to the coo's prescriptive signification (i.e., country-specific conations). In addition, a sign's designative signification might be linked in a direct manner to its prescriptive signification. Based on this semiotic perspective, we formulate the following hypotheses concerning the composition of the CI's internal structure:

H1.1: There is a positive effect from the country image's cognitive component on the country image's affective component.

H1.2: There is a positive effect from the country image's affective component on the country image's conative component.

H1.3: There is a positive effect from the country image's cognitive component on the country image's conative component.

As already stated, the operationalization of CI as a tri-dimensional construct will allow us to examine whether the coo-effect should be understood as a composite mechanism or not. The term “composite” refers to the idea that several of the CI’s constituent components are simultaneously operating. Based on Morrisian semiotics, it is reasonable to suggest that the coo-effect is supported by a composite mechanism. More specifically Morris would speak of the CI-construct in terms of the sign’s meaning with each of its basic components corresponding to one particular signification mode. As we saw, he thinks it is highly probable that instead of using only one of the sign’s significations, a person will turn to several of these in order to satisfy their communicative needs (in this case, the desire to get informed about a product). Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: The effect exerted by an individual’s country image on the formation of his beliefs about products coming from that country is supported by a COMPOSITE mechanism.

It is interesting to establish that within this “composite” mechanism, Morris distinguishes between so-called “primary” (i.e., stronger) effects and “secondary” (i.e., weaker) effects. As for the first sub-model, the designative mode of signifying (i.e., the CI’s cognitive component) is expected to be more effective for the achievement of a person’s informational needs than the appraisive mode (i.e., the CI’s affective component) or the prescriptive mode (i.e., the CI’s conative component). Therefore, the impact of this more adequate or “primary” signifying mode is assumed to be stronger than the size of the effect exerted by the less accurate or “secondary” signifying modes. In light of this reasoning, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3a: If an individual uses his country image to form beliefs about products coming from that country, it can be expected that the effect emanating from the country image’s cognitive component is stronger than the effects exerted by the country image’s affective and conative components.

Finally, there are two hypotheses left to be formulated for sub-model 1. First, we have hypothesis 4 focussing on whether the type of country an individual is confronted with operates as a moderator of the effects exerted by his CI. Several criteria can be employed in

order to distinguish countries from each other. One of these for instance is a country's "national culture". The fact that countries can be clustered into different groups based on their cultural profile is a widely accepted idea (e.g., Hofstede 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997). This way, it becomes possible to make a distinction between countries that are culturally more (or less) "congruent" with each other. In our opinion, such country-specific (dis)similarities can be of importance when people are confronted with foreign-sourced products. Sirgy (1982) and Sirgy and Su (2000) for instance argue that the more/less congruent the (country) image surrounding a product with an individual's (ideal) self-image, the more/less attracted that individual will be to that product. In other words, somehow similarity between one's (ideal) self-image and the image evoked by a marketing stimulus (like coo) appears to be affecting the formation of our product attitudes. Based on the idea that national culture in particular plays such an important role in subdividing countries into different types or groups we formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: The level of cultural similarity between a product's coo and an individual's self-image moderates the size of the effect exerted by the country image on the formation of his beliefs about products from that country in such a way that higher similarity results in a stronger effect.

Finally, we would like to advance "product type" as another factor that might eventually moderate the size of coo-effects. Among other criteria like technical complexity or financial risk, products can be subdivided into different categories in function of the consummatory needs they are to fulfil. We already indicated how some products have been created for "utilitarian" ends while other are rather aimed at the achievement of "hedonic" desires.

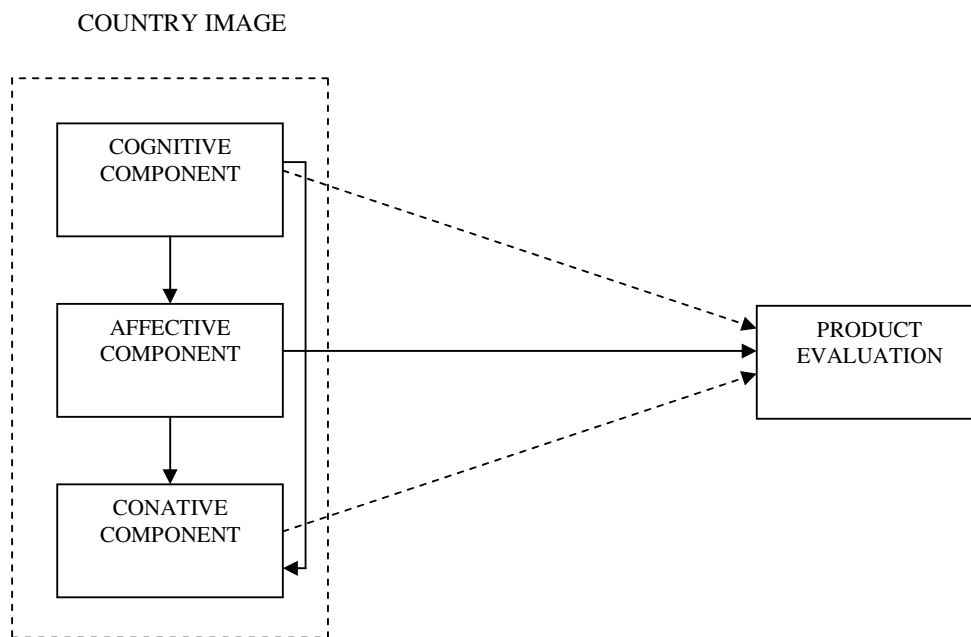
Of particular interest for our project is the fact that this distinction between utilitarian and hedonic products is believed to affect consumers in their selection and processing of marketing stimuli. Since people are predisposed somehow in their reliance on expressive cues when being confronted with hedonic products, we assume that, within the context of our project, the coo-cue (defined as an expressive stimulus) will have a more powerful effect on the formation of product beliefs in cases where subjects are faced with a hedonic product while the effect will be weaker for a utilitarian product. Following this reasoning, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H5: The product's typology moderates the size of the effect exerted by the country image on the formation of an individual's beliefs about products from that country in such a way that effects will be stronger in case the individual is confronted with a hedonic product than when the individual faces a utilitarian product.

3.2. Hypotheses for Sub-model 2: CI → formation of product evaluation

Figure 22 gives an overview of how we expect the subject's CI to be affecting the formation of his evaluative judgement of the product (i.e., the affective component of product attitude). Again, discourse theory functions as the organizing theoretical framework.

Figure 22: Theoretical model showing how the CI is expected to influence the product attitude's affective component



In line with the previous model, the first set of hypotheses is formulated with regard to the CI's internal structure. Also in this case, Morrissonian semiotics functions as the theoretical basis:

H1.1: There is a positive effect from the country image's cognitive component on the country image's affective component.

H1.2: There is a positive effect from the country image's affective component on the country image's conative component.

H1.3: There is a positive effect from the country image's cognitive component on the country image's conative component.

Conform the discourse typology, it is assumed that the CI affects the individual's product evaluation by means of a mechanism where the CI's constituent components are simultaneously processed. Consequently, hypothesis 2 posits that:

H2: The effect exerted by an individual's country image on his evaluation of products coming from that country is supported by a COMPOSITE mechanism.

Since Morris supposes that the Made-in label's appraisive signification will be most accurate for attaining the valuative purpose in function of which the label might be used, we expect that the CI's affective component will have a stronger impact on a person's evaluative judgement than the CI's cognitive and conative components. Put differently, we think a "primary" effect will be emanating from the CI's affective component while the cognitive and conative components are assumed to be generating "secondary" effects. Based on these insights, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3b: If an individual uses his country image to form an evaluative judgement of products coming from that country, it can be expected that the effect emanating from the country image's affective component is stronger than the effects exerted by the country image's cognitive and conative components.

In line with our assumptions concerning the previous model, we propose the next two hypotheses with regard to the potential moderating role of country and product typology:

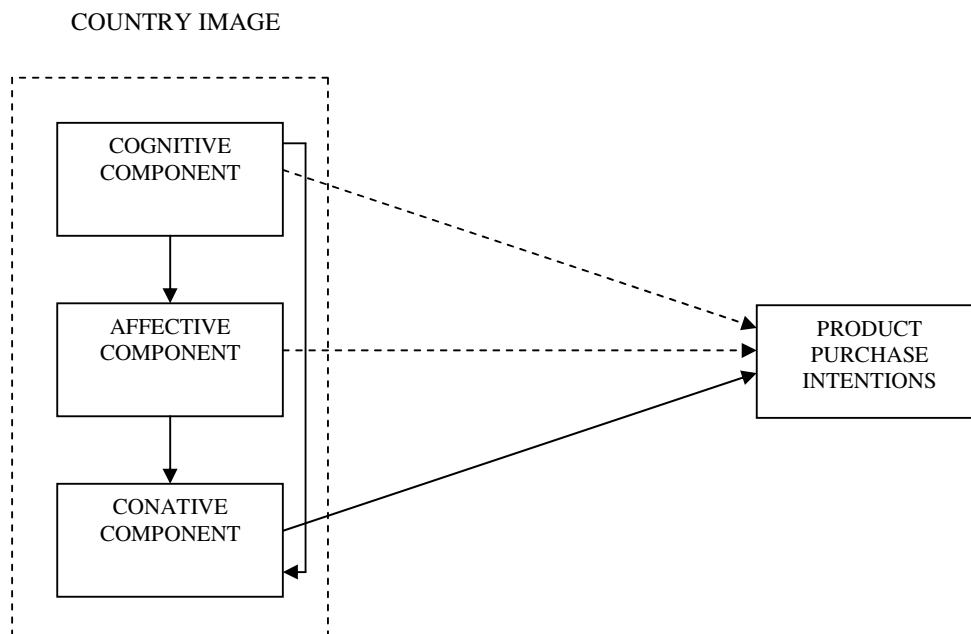
H4: The level of cultural similarity between a product's coo and an individual's self-image moderates the size of the effect exerted by the country image on the formation of his evaluation of products from that country in such a way that higher similarity results in a stronger effect.

H5: The product's typology moderates the size of the effect exerted by the country image on the individual's evaluation of products from that country in such a way that effects will be stronger in case the individual is confronted with a hedonic product than when the individual faces a utilitarian product.

3.3. Hypotheses for Sub-model 3: CI → formation of product purchase intentions

Figure 23 represents how the subject's CI influences the formation of his purchase intentions towards the product (i.e., the conative component of product attitude). Again, discourse theory functions as the organizing theoretical framework.

Figure 23: Theoretical model showing how the CI is expected to influence the product attitude's conative component



In line with the previous two models, the first set of hypotheses concentrates on the internal structure of the CI-construct:

H1.1: There is a positive effect from the country image's cognitive component on the country image's affective component.

H1.2: There is a positive effect from the country image's affective component on the country image's conative component.

H1.3: There is a positive effect from the country image's cognitive component on the country image's conative component.

In addition we assume that the effect exerted by the CI will be supported by a mechanism where the CI's constituent components are operating simultaneously. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: The effect exerted by an individual's country image on his purchase intentions towards products coming from that country is supported by a COMPOSITE mechanism.

As can be seen in Figure 23, a "primary", that is, a stronger effect is expected to be emanating from the CI's conative component in case subjects make use of the Made-in label when determining whether to purchase the product or not. This primary effect is accompanied by two weaker or "secondary" effects. These are assumed to be generated by the CI's cognitive and affective components. In light of this reasoning, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3c: If an individual uses his country image to form his purchase intentions towards products coming from that country, it can be expected that the effect emanating from the country image's conative component is stronger than the effects exerted by the country image's cognitive and affective components.

Finally, the following two hypotheses on the eventual moderating role of country and product typology on the CI's effect on purchase intentions:

H4: The level of cultural similarity between a product’s coo and an individual’s self-image moderates the size of the effect exerted by the country image on the formation of his purchase intentions towards products from that country in such a way that higher similarity results in a stronger effect.

H5: The product’s typology moderates the size of the effect exerted by the country image on the individual’s purchase intentions towards products from that country in such a way that effects will be stronger in case the individual is confronted with a hedonic product than when the individual faces a utilitarian product.

4. Hypotheses: a general overview

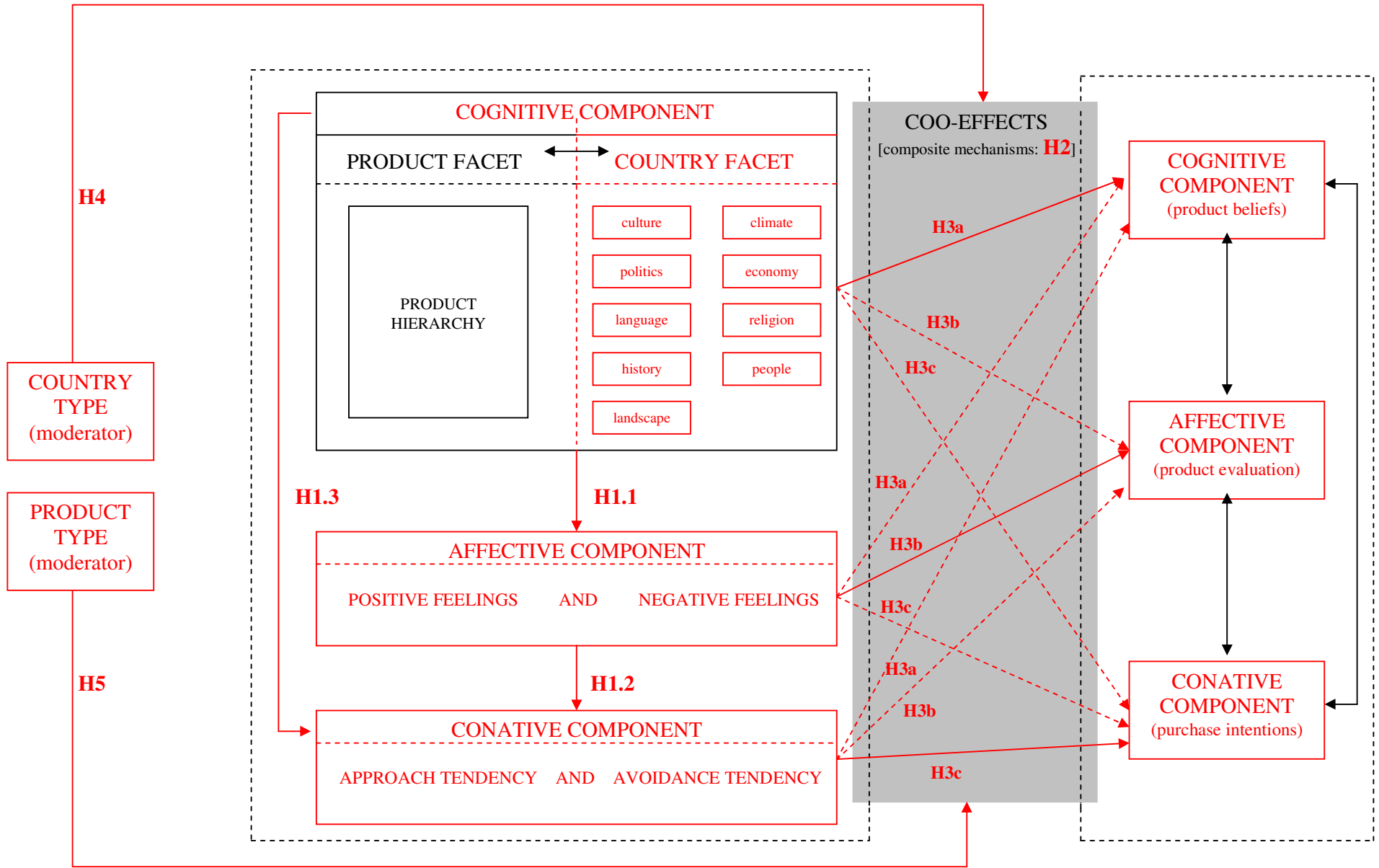
Table 5 brings together the hypotheses that will be tested throughout the empirical part of our dissertation. It is followed by a visual overview (cf. Figure 24).

Table 5: General overview of hypotheses that will be empirically tested²⁴

SUB-MODEL 1 CI → product beliefs	SUB-MODEL 2 CI → product evaluation	SUB-MODEL 3 CI → product purchase intentions
H1.1: country cognitions → country affects	H1.1: country cognitions → country affects	H1.1: country cognitions → country affects
H1.2: country affects → country conations	H1.2: country affects → country conations	H1.2: country affects → country conations
H1.3: country cognitions → country conations	H1.3: country cognitions → country conations	H1.3: country cognitions → country conations
H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism	H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism	H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism
H3a: cognitive effect > affective/conative effect	H3b: affective effect > cognitive/conative effect	H3c: conative effect > cognitive/affective effect
H4: Country type = moderator	H4: Country type = moderator	H4: Country type = moderator
H5: Product type = moderator	H5: Product type = moderator	H5: Product type = moderator

²⁴ Notice that for Hypothesis 4, “country type” refers more specifically to the country’s national culture.

Figure 24: General overview of hypotheses that will be tested



CHAPTER 4

PILOT TESTING

1. Chapter overview

The empirical section of our dissertation will consist of four chapters. Chapter 5 will focus on the methodological design of our main study while chapter 6 deals with data-analysis and results. Finally, chapter 7 will be reserved for further discussion, conclusions, limitations and suggestions for future research. However, in first instance, chapter 4 will deal with a two-stage pilot test we conducted with the intention of creating an adequate measurement instrument for the assessment of the country image's cognitive component²⁵. As already discussed, the latter was defined as an individual's cognitions about nine country-specific more general environmental conditions. Those selected for our study were (1) culture, (2) political climate, (3) language, (4) history, (5) climate, (6) landscape, (7) economy, (8) religion, and (9) people.

Two tests were conducted with each following an alternative approach towards the operationalization of the CI's cognitive component. This two-stage scenario was deemed appropriate because it allowed us to compare both options so that optimal decisions concerning measurement could be taken. The basic rationale behind the first pilot test was to stay as close as possible to the cognitive component's original structure. More in detail, this means that we tried to preserve the multi-dimensional character of each of the nine cognitive entities to a maximum extent by having them measured with multiple items. In fact this strategy goes in line with the procedure for developing country image scales followed by Martin and Eroglu (1993)²⁶. This approach however resulted in rather unsatisfactory results²⁷.

²⁵ Our pilot tests were focussed on the CI's cognitive component because (1) the internal structure of this component was very complex and (2) it was rather difficult to obtain good, that is, valid and reliable indicators for its measurement. On the contrary, as will appear throughout chapters 5 and 6, for the CI's affective and conative components, the scale development procedure was less difficult to achieve.

²⁶ These authors had cognitions about three specific environmental aspects (i.e., political climate, economy and technological development) measured by multiple-item scales.

²⁷ Of the nine environmental conditions measured, 7 did not reach minimum scores for Cronbach's α . In addition, for these 7 concepts, the measurement items used never explained more than 52% of the total variance. The only two exceptions were "climate" with Cronbach's α of (.76) and 68% of the total variance explained

Consequently, we organized a second pre-test during which an alternative strategy was being explored. This time, the nine cognitive entities constituting the CI's cognitive component were operationalized as "stereotypes". That is, we treated them in a content-wise more simplified manner and, in conformity with the literature on intercultural communication and stereotyping, each entity was being assessed by means of an "importance" and a "valence" item. Although the outcome of this approach still showed some deficiencies, the results were better than the ones obtained by our first test. Let us have a closer look now at this second pilot test.

2. Pilot test 2

2.1. Objective

The most striking difference with the first test was that this time, we content-wise reduced or simplified the nine dimensions supporting the cognitive component construct at the operational level. That is, the nine environmental conditions were not measured by means of multi-item scales. Instead, we decided to operationalize them as "stereotypical" entities with each environmental condition being measured by an "importance" and a "valence" item.

This decision was taken based on two reasons. The first one is of a methodological nature. In line with Kotler et al. (1993: 54) we believe this content-related simplification will reduce the complexity of our questionnaire. This in turn will decrease the risk for any potential demand bias or measurement errors to occur. Our second motivation is directly related to the fact that we adopted another theoretical perspective towards the concept of a CI's cognitive component. In asking ourselves where we could encounter any interesting ideas on how to measure an individual's prior knowledge about a foreign country's more general environmental conditions, we returned to the literature and were confronted at a certain moment with the following statement made by Papadopoulos: "[a]lthough the link between stereotyping and PCI is direct and immediately obvious, marketing researchers, surprisingly, have not drawn upon the literature on the former to help in explaining the latter." (Papadopoulos 1993: 34). This encouraged us to explore the notion of a stereotype somewhat

and "religion" with Cronbach's α of (.76) and 69% of the total variance explained. These unsatisfactory results however should be seen in relation with the small size of the sample (only 60 cases).

further. This test's main objective was to explore this stereotype-specific operationalization procedure as a potential approach for the measurement of the CI's cognitive component.

2.2. Theoretical background

The field of intercultural communication is occupied with the study of interactions between different groups. In our opinion, the case where people are confronted with foreign-sourced products can be seen as a special instance of such group interaction. Although it is true that there is no question of any contact between "persons" of different groups, we believe some of the basic principles behind inter-personal contact mechanisms can be applied to the context of consumers facing outgroup "objects" (in this case products made abroad).

Interestingly, studies on intercultural communication accord a role of fundamental importance to the stereotype concept. It is argued that contacts between persons from other cultures or nations are heavily influenced by the way people think of or perceive each other. These thoughts or perceptions are traditionally believed to be formed by means of a process called "stereotyping". The Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice, developed by Stephan and Stephan (1996) for instance, posits that stereotypes are to be considered as one of the basic potential barriers of effective inter-group communication. This has been confirmed by several other researchers working within the field (e.g., Carbaugh 1990; Cushner and Brislin 1996; Gudykunst and Mody 2002; Wiseman and Koester 1993). Thus, when studying intercultural or international contacts (like consumers being confronted with foreign-made products), stereotypes (in our specific case these are to be seen as cognitions about that country's environmental conditions) should be taken into account. However, before having a closer look at the way in which stereotypes are measured, we will explain briefly how this concept of "stereotype" should be theoretically understood. Overall, two main streams can be distinguished within stereotyping theory, that is, the cognitive and the motivational approach. The most important distinction between both perspectives is that the cognitive paradigm considers a stereotype to be a purely cognitive construct while the motivational approach sees a stereotype as a cognitive entity that carries some kind of affective tag (e.g., Dijker 1991; Hinton 2000; Pickering 2001). According to Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002), the affective tags associated with stereotypical cognitions should be included into research on interaction between different groups. For instance, they explicitly state that "[t]he impact of stereotypes on intergroup attitudes is related to both the strength and the valence of the components of a stereotype." (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern 2002: 617). In line with Eagly

and Mladinic (1989), they argue that “valenced” attributes (i.e., attributes that carry an affective or evaluative tag) are strongly related with groups and would have greater predictive utility and validity in estimating intergroup attitudes. Therefore, they believe this notion of “stereotype valence” should be taken into account in order to arrive at what they consider to be a “consensual stereotype measure”.

2.3. Operationalization

As for the concrete measurement of the country image’s cognitive component, we borrowed the approach proposed by Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002), although we slightly adapted it to the topic of our study. They argue that an adequate stereotype measure should assess “strength²⁸” and “valence”. We modified “strength” into “importance” because the nine country-specific aspects we included in our study can already be considered as “typical” for our cognitive representation of a country. That is, our exploratory interviews as well as our literature review identified them as pertaining to the essence of our cognitive conception of what an average country is. In other words, it appears that respondents, when asked to define what comes to their mind when they think of a “country”, generally mention or refer to these nine aspects. This is precisely why we systematically speak of **country-specific** aspects. Of course, it would be a bit strange to ask respondents to indicate how strongly they believe an a priori essential country component to be “typical” for a certain country. Yet, although our nine country-specific components can be seen as constituent parts of our basic cognitive conception of countries in general, it might well be that some of these country-specific components are seen as more or less important than others in forming an image of a specific country.

For the assessment of “valence”, a comparable approach to the one proposed by Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) was applied. More in detail, “importance” for each of the nine country-specific aspects selected for our study was measured by means of a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “very important” (7) to “not important at all” (1). The “valence” of these country-related aspects was assessed by a 7-point semantic differential scale, ranging from “positive” (7) to “negative” (1). In line with the procedure followed by Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) and Eagly and Mladinic (1989), a so-called composite (importance × valence) stereotype index was created. For each of the nine country-specific attributes, the

²⁸ According to Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) stereotypical “strength” stands for how “typical” a certain trait is believed to be for a particular person, object (in our case a foreign country) or event.

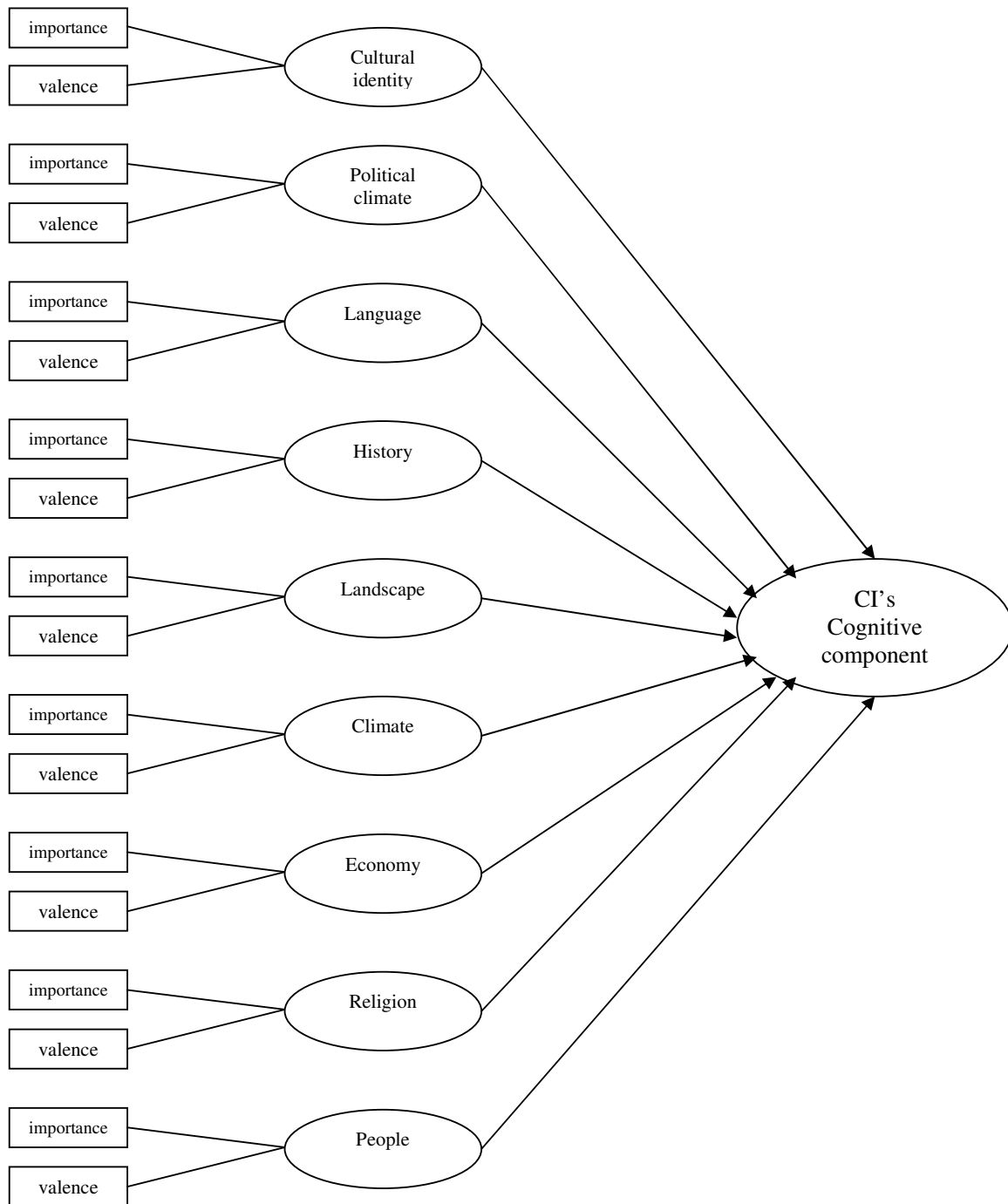
importance rating of the attribute (1-7) was multiplied by the valence rating (1-7). In order to bring back the results within a range of 1 to 7, the multiplication coefficient was divided by seven. Each of these nine “weighted” scores represents the stereotype about one country-specific aspect. Table 6 presents an overview of the 18-item scale measuring the nine “stereotypes” that compose the CI’s cognitive component.

Table 6: 18-item scale measuring the CI’s cognitive component

	Cognitive component - dimension 1: CULTURAL IDENTITY
IMPORTANCE	How important is cultural identity to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish cultural identity is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component - dimension 2: POLITICAL CLIMATE
IMPORTANCE	How important is political climate to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish political climate is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension3: LANGUAGE
IMPORTANCE	How important is language to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish language is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension 4: HISTORY
IMPORTANCE	How important is history to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish history is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension 5: LANDSCAPE
IMPORTANCE	How important is landscape to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish landscape is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension 6: CLIMATE
IMPORTANCE	How important is climate to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish climate is (positive– negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension 7: ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY
IMPORTANCE	How important are economy and industry to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish economy and industry is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension 8: RELIGION
IMPORTANCE	How important is religion to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spanish religion is (positive – negative)
	Cognitive component – dimension 9: PEOPLE’S PERSONAL CHARACTER
IMPORTANCE	How important is people’s personal character to you when you form an image about Spain?
VALENCE	My image of Spaniards’ personal character is (positive – negative)

Figure 25 shows that cognitions about the nine country-specific aspects selected for our study are to be considered as stereotypes consisting of a strength and valence component.

Figure 25: Conception of the country image's cognitive component as an entity of stereotypes



2.4. Design

The second pre-test was executed at a Belgian university. Data was gathered by means of self-administered questionnaires. Our sample consisted of 113 second-grade students (age between 18 and 22) with 57 males and 56 females participating. Questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of a regular classroom session and students were informed about the main objectives. The country selected for our study was Spain. The section measuring the CI's cognitive component consisted of 18 items. Participants took about 15 minutes to complete the whole questionnaire.

2.5. Analysis and results

First, composite (importance x valence) indexes for each of the nine dimensions underlying the cognitive component construct were calculated. These in turn were subjected to a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation. Results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Solutions obtained by means of principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation for the cognitive component construct

	CI's cognitive component		
	Factor 1 Geography	Factor 2 Socio-economy	Factor 3 Culture
Eigenvalue	1,073		
Total variance explained	49,32%		
Cultural identity		.67	
Political climate		.48	
Language			.42
History			.80
Landscape	.77		
Climate	.82		
Economy		.53	
Religion		.42	
People's		.67	
Cronbach's α	.62	.48	.25

Although these results are not optimal either, two specific improvements can be detected. Firstly, the nine constituent components load quite well on their underlying factors. Secondly, it was easier to label the three factors underlying the cognitive component construct in a clear-cut way. In other words, the factorial structure underlying the 18-item scale used to measure the CI's cognitive component seemed to be somewhat more transparent and coherent than before. As can be seen in Table 7, the first factor was labeled "Geography" while it regrouped components situated within this discipline (i.e., landscape and climate). The second factor carries the label "Socio-economy" since it contains items referring to some of the country's societal aspects on the one hand (i.e., cultural identity, political climate, religion and people) and to its economic development on the other. The third factor contains items pertaining to the country's cultural properties (i.e., language and history). Therefore, it was named "Culture". Nevertheless, two major shortcomings have not yet been overcome by changing our measurement strategy. First of all, there is the unsatisfactory percentage of total variance explained by the three factors extracted ($\pm 49\%$), indicating that changes in the cognitive component can be attributed only to a limit extent to the set of items we included in our questionnaire. Moreover, two out of the three factors identified have a reliability score that does not reach the traditional minimum level (i.e., "Socio-economy" and "Culture").

3. Conclusions

As an overall conclusion, we might state that measuring an individual's internally stored knowledge about a country's more general environmental conditions is a rather difficult matter. This is probably related to the fact that the CI's cognitive component is an extremely complex entity while numerous environmental conditions might be associated with a particular country. Additionally, the multi-dimensional character of these environmental conditions makes the development of an adequate measurement strategy become even more complicated. Of course, one might ask himself why we didn't turn to one of the already existing country image scales like those developed by Kotler et al. (1993), Martin and Eroglu (1993) or Parameswaran and Pisharodi (1994). The answer is clear: one of the objectives of our dissertation is to find out more precisely whether other environmental conditions than the ones already included into the existing scales have the potential of affecting the consumer's attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products.

In trying to develop a measurement scale for an individual's internally stored knowledge about the nine country-related aspects we selected for our study, we experimented with two different approaches. The first test led to unsatisfactory results while the second one produced somewhat better results. We decide to continue working with the 18-item scale based on the following four reasons: (1) its underlying dimensions show a more transparent structure, (2) the items have been found to load better on their corresponding factors, (3) the length of the questionnaire was considerably reduced so that the chances for any response bias to occur were significantly reduced and (4) the operational procedure behind this scale rests on a solid theoretical basis.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

1. Chapter overview

In this chapter of the dissertation we will discuss the design of our final empirical study. The chapter will be structured as follows. In first instance, we will have a look at the profile of the subjects that participated to our study. In second instance we will briefly comment on the procedure that was followed while collecting the data. Afterwards we will elaborate somewhat further on the internal as well as the external validity of our research design. Then we will concentrate on the structure of the questionnaire. Finally, we will analyze the operationalization of the different concepts we incorporated in our study.

2. Subjects

In line with a considerable stream of coo-studies, the empirical part of our project has been performed within a cross-sectional survey design and by means of an administered questionnaire. As for the selection of respondents, we already indicated throughout the literature review that studies within the coo-field have made use of different types of respondents, ranging from students to average consumers and so-called “opinion leaders” like businessmen, professional buyers and sellers etc. We opted for a student sample. This decision was certainly not taken out of the blue. Although some scholars within the field have expressed their scepticism towards the use of student samples in studying coo-effects, we believe that, in line with the purposes of our study, the use of a student sample can be fully justified. More specifically, we take the following arguments into consideration.

In first instance, it is important to realize that most of the criticism concerning the use of student samples is directed towards their presumed tendency to enlarge the size of coo-effects. However, contrary to a large majority of coo-studies, the main objective of our project is the development and testing of theory, not size measurement. In other words, instead of focussing on the question of knowing how important coo-effects are, our efforts go more

particularly towards a better understanding of their functioning. Moreover Liefeld (1993) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) revealed that effect sizes do not differ significantly between student and non-student samples.

In second instance, there is the more homogeneous composition of a student sample (e.g., Baugh and Yaprak 1993; Enis et al. 1972). On average, this makes such samples better suited to control for demographic as well as socio-economic variables which might possibly cause any distorting effects.

In third instance, we considered students as more appropriate for our project, because, as noted by Billiet (1990), the administration of attitude questionnaires where respondents are encouraged to express their personal opinions, is not always that evident. It seems that average respondents sometimes have difficulties in answering questions probing for personal opinions, because they tend to see them as knowledge questions. Consequently they start looking for a “correct” answer. However, as argued by Billiet it is characteristic for attitude questions that there “[...] is strictly taken no ‘true’ answer that can be verified by external sources.” (Billiet 1990: 171 – translation is ours). Based on the idea that students are frequently asked to participate in scientific research projects, it can be argued that they are more familiar with the procedure of filling in such questionnaires. Finally, there are some financial and practical reasons motivating our choice. Gathering data by means of a non-student sample can be relatively expensive and is very time consuming. Students however are easier to reach. Given the means and time at our disposition, consulting a student sample seemed to be the best option.

Our study was carried out in the provinces of Antwerp and Limburg. These are to be situated in the Flemish-speaking north-eastern part of Belgium. We personally contacted several Higher Education institutes within this region and asked for their willingness to participate to our project. Positive reactions came in from the ‘Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen’ (Turnhout, Geel), the ‘Hogeschool Hasselt’ (Hasselt), the ‘Provinciale Hogeschool’ (Hasselt), the ‘Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg’ (Diepenbeek) and the ‘Limburgs Universitair Centrum’ (Diepenbeek). We informed them about the fact that we looked for students having the Belgian nationality²⁹ and that different departments could take part in the study. The process of data collection took about six weeks and lasted from the 20th of September till the 29th of October 2004. This resulted in a student sample of 1225 respondents which was

²⁹ Our decision to work with Belgian students was based on practical reasons. More in detail, Belgian students were much easier for us to reach. In addition, linguistically, we had to develop only one “Flemish” version of the questionnaire. In contacting the various educational institutions, accent was put on the fact that all participants had to be Belgians in order to avoid distorting effects that might be caused by national differences in the sample.

randomly subdivided into two separate same sized sub-samples. The first group was composed of subjects who had administered a questionnaire concerning Spain, while the second one consisted of respondents who had filled in a questionnaire regarding Denmark³⁰. These were the two countries-of-origin included in our study. The respondents' age was between 17 and 28. Table 8 presents a more detailed overview of the sample's composition.

Table 8: Distribution of students over the various departments that participated to our study

	SAMPLE 1: SPAIN	SAMPLE 2: DENMARK
Department of secondary teacher training (Highschool)	Male: 70 Female: 152	Male: 71 Female: 145
Department of health care and nursing (Highschool)	Male: 2 Female: 19	Male: 7 Female: 19
Department of business administration (Highschool)	Male: 64 Female: 113	Male: 68 Female: 106
Department of electronic engineering (Highschool)	Male: 7 Female: 0	Male: 8 Female: 0
Department of business administration (University)	Male: 111 Female: 51	Male: 105 Female: 53
Department of business informatics (University)	Male: 20 Female: 7	Male: 22 Female: 5
SUBTOTALS	Male: 274 – 44,5% Female: 342 – 55,5%	Male: 281 – 46,1% Female: 328 – 53,9%
TOTALS	616 respondents	609 respondents
	1225 respondents	

3. Procedure

Depending on the circumstances, respondents received a questionnaire either at the beginning or at the end of a normal classroom session. However, in order to ensure a maximum of concentration, we systematically asked our contact persons whether it would be possible to distribute questionnaires at the beginning of a session and to remain in the room during the 30-minute procedure we needed. This appeared to be no problem. In most cases, we were

³⁰ The motives behind the selection of these two countries will be further commented in section 4.2.

briefly introduced to the group and students were explicitly urged to take the questionnaire seriously in order to guarantee the quality of our data. Before distributing the questionnaires, students were asked to wait for instructions before filling it out. For each group, questionnaires were arranged in such a manner that students randomly received a questionnaire concerning Spain or Denmark.

In first, instance, we briefly situated the context of our questionnaire. Students were informed that it framed within a project on country and product images. More in detail, we told them that the two countries (Spain and Denmark) as well as the two product categories (beer and DVD-players) were selected for our study because both countries under study could not only be considered as producers of beer and DVD-players, but as actual or potential future suppliers of the Belgian market³¹. In our opinion, this information increased the perceived relevance of our study which encouraged subjects to develop the appropriate attitude towards our questionnaire.

In second instance, we stressed that students would be dealing with an attitude questionnaire. As already mentioned, there is a potential risk of mistaking the true objective of questionnaires alike. We systematically drew students' attention to the fact that the questionnaire was not to be taken as a "knowledge test" but rather as an instrument allowing us to check for personal views. Accordingly, we encouraged them to indicate their answer even in cases they were less confident in their own opinion.

In third instance, before allowing students to start filling out the questionnaire, a few checks were done. To begin with, we ensured ourselves of the fact that subjects all had the Belgian nationality. Then, we checked for the potential presence of any product-specific prior knowledge that might have created disturbing effects³². We believe it needs no further explanation that such prior product-specific knowledge might have caused for interference with the effect exerted by country-specific environmental aspects. In order to test for the potential presence of such product-specific prior knowledge, we asked respondents on different occasions whether they could mention any brands that fitted the product-country

³¹ Additional reasons explaining why these two product categories were selected for our study are presented under section 4.3.

³² We realize of course that such a check for product-specific prior knowledge (i.e., prior knowledge about Spanish/Danish beer/DVD-players) cannot prevent the occurrence of effects exerted by a subject's prior knowledge about other Danish or Spanish products. However, we think it is impossible to realize a setting which can ensure that the subject's product attitude is influenced exclusively by his attitude towards country-specific environmental cues. In other words, we believe that if a person has any experience with or prior knowledge about products from a certain country, this will always interfere somehow with the effect generated by a country's environmental aspects. Nevertheless, we believe there is no harm in trying to create a setting where as much interfering factors as possible are excluded.

profile we selected for our project. For instance, we asked them whether they knew any DVD-players made in Denmark, or beer produced in Spain. On average, respondents were unable to do so. This was considered as an indication of the fact that respondents did not have any (in)direct experience with our stimuli (i.e., Spanish/Danish beer/DVD-player) which might have affected the effect exerted by Spanish/Danish environmental aspects.

Finally, we told students that if there would be any doubt about the correct interpretation of a particular term or statement, they could always ask for an explanation. In order to limit the occurrence of any social desirability bias, we asked students to work individually and we ensured them that results would be treated anonymously. The fact that subjects could keep their opinions to their own was considered to be an extra stimulus to overtly express their attitudes towards the objects under study.

Completing the questionnaire took about 20 minutes. Students were always asked to check whether they had answered all questions. This was done to prevent the loss of any interesting data. After having collected the questionnaires, we checked for any potential positive demand effects. In other words, we examined whether respondents had become cognizant about the objectives of our study. This did not appear to be the case. Finally, respondents were thanked for their participation.

4. Design: internal validity

4.1. Setting

Making use of standard terminology within the coo-field, we categorize our study within the stream of so-called “single-cue” studies. In other words, our study is designed in such a manner that, besides mentioning the coo, no other information about the product is offered to respondents. In addition, the stimuli (i.e., Spanish/Danish beer/DVD-players) remained intangible and were presented to subjects in an exclusively verbal mode. Such single-cue studies have been criticised for their overestimation of the coo-effect (e.g., Bilkey and Nes 1982). Nevertheless, we have opted for this type of design for reasons already mentioned. Important is that we want to analyze the functioning of coo-effects at a theoretical level. In addition, by offering no additional product-related information to our subjects, we would like to keep the coo-effects as “pure” as possible. Of course, this does not prevent these effects to be immune to any interference caused by other internal or external cues such as the

respondent's eventual prior product knowledge³³. Yet, as in line with traditional coo-research, by excluding any supplementary information about the product, we would like to put the accent on internal validity. That is, before studying the degree to which theory might be generalized to external reality, we would like to verify the quality of the theoretical models themselves.

4.2. Country selection

Spain and Denmark were chosen as countries-of-origin in our study. We motivate this selection first of all by the fact that both countries clearly vary on a number of so-called “environmental aspects”. As often appears to be the case, basic geographical differences reflect themselves in a series of other country-specific characteristics. Askegaard and Ger (1997) as well as Niss (1996) for instance, established that the geographical location of Denmark in Northern Europe not only influences the way in which people imagine its climate and landscape, but also determines their perception of its inhabitants and its typical products. This way, some of the most frequently mentioned images associated with Danes for example are that they would be rather cool and introvert. Contrary to Denmark, Spain is often perceived as a typically Mediterranean country where people are seen as more extrovert and happy. Interestingly, Spain and Denmark also differ in their cultural profile. This is clearly indicated by the results reported by Hofstede (2000). If we compare Spanish and Danish national culture with the profile of our Belgian subjects, it can be concluded that Spain is more “congruent” than Denmark. Table 9 demonstrates how both countries have significantly diverging scores on the four constituent dimensions of “culture”.

Table 9: Scores of Denmark, Spain and Belgium on four dimensions of culture as computed by Hofstede

Country	Power distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty avoidance
DENMARK	18	74	16	23
SPAIN	57	51	42	86
BELGIUM	65	75	54	94

³³ As already mentioned subjects' prior knowledge about other Spanish/Danish products besides beer and DVD-players has not been explicitly measured. However, the fact that such prior knowledge has not been captured by our measurement instrument does not prevent it from playing an active role. In other words, we believe it will probably have operated as some kind of ‘unmeasured effect’. In line with several researchers within the field (e.g., Li et al. 1997; Manrai et al. 1998), we presume some interaction between effects generated by the country facet and the product facet. However, the scope of our dissertation is not directed towards these interaction effects.

Besides the existence of clearly outspoken country-specific differences, Spain and Denmark seemed perfectly suited for our study, because they were two reasonably well known countries for our student sample. This was an important criterion for the efficiency of our measurement instrument.

4.3. Product selection

The two product categories selected for our study are beer and DVD-players. These have been chosen because they are relatively well known to students. Consequently, it was expected that students wouldn't feel uneasy in having to determine their personal attitudes towards these products. Several researchers on coo-effects which made use of a student sample already have included these, or comparable products in their studies (e.g., Au and Sha 2003; Eroglu and Machleit 1989; Cordell 1993; Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000; Hadjimarcou and Hu 1999; Hong and Yi 1992; Hong and Wyer 1989, 1990; Manrai et al. 1998; Roth and Romeo 1992; Schaefer 1997)³⁴. Therefore, we considered beer and DVD-players to be well suited product categories for our project.

Also, we consciously kept in mind the distinction between so-called "utilitarian" and "hedonic" products (e.g., Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) while it is hypothesized that effects generated by country-specific environmental aspects are affected by the type of product under study. We proposed the DVD-player as a "utilitarian" product category, and "beer" as a more "hedonic-oriented" item. Several marketing scholars already provided support for the assumption that DVD-players can be considered as typically utilitarian and beer as rather hedonic³⁵. (e.g., Ratchford 1987; Rossiter and Percy 1997; Cafferata and Tybout 1989; Vaughn 1986).

4.4. Conceptualization of the Country Image and Product Attitude

As discussed in chapter 2 we believe a more comprehensive understanding of coo-effects requires some serious fine-tuning of the conceptual and structural models researchers have traditionally been working with. We saw that the "image" concept can best be represented as

³⁴ This remark counts more specifically for the DVD-player instead of which most studies used the more traditional VCR.

³⁵ Additional supportive evidence for the characterization of beer as a "hedonic" product lies in the fact that, apparently, this counts for beverages overall. For example, besides beer, Ratchford (1987) also found soft drinks and wine to be hedonic-oriented. Comparable findings regarding fruit juice and coffee were reported by, Kover and Abruzzo (1993) and Coulter and Sewall (1994).

a three-component attitude construct. However, most coo-studies already performed do not incorporate these three components into their instruments for the measurement of CI and product attitude. This conceptual incompleteness inevitably leads to the loss of some hypothetically possible coo-effects. As a result, several questions regarding the functioning of coo-effects remain unanswered. In operationalizing the CI-concept as a sign and in building on discourse theory when hypothesizing on the CI's effect on product attitudes, we provide the literature with a series of assumptions that have not been tested yet within classical studies.

5. Design: external validity

5.1. Country selection

Even if the accent in our study is put more on internal validity, external validity cannot be neglected. The decision to choose for two relatively well-known countries was driven by the intention of creating a design that would be applicable to external reality. The reason for doing so is based on our review of the literature. It appears that the majority of studies concentrating on the role of country-specific aspects have opted for designs which are difficult to generalize to our daily life context. Verlegh (2001) for instance already mentioned that most of the studies already performed are characterized by the fact that respondents perceive a product's coo not as simply different, but as a cue that triggers extremely powerful reactions.

In such cases, it is not surprising that considerable coo-effects are detected. It was one of Verlegh's (2001) intentions to put these results into a broader and more realistic daily-life context. In other words, he wondered whether coo-effects emanating from country-specific aspects would also occur in an externally more valid setting where the products' coo is expected to be charged with a rather normal dose of connotations. He found that country-specific aspects also significantly operated within such a more realistic setting. Therefore, we think there is no problem in examining the functioning of coo-effects within such a more realistic setting. Spanish/Danish beer and DVD-players were selected for our study more precisely because of the fact that they can be brought into relationship with our subjects' daily life. For instance, Danish beer (e.g., Carlsberg) as well as Danish DVD-players (e.g., Bang and Olufsen) are being sold on the Belgian market. Although no Spanish beer or DVD-players

are marketed in Belgium yet, it is not unrealistic to suppose that this might be the case in the (near) future. For example, Spanish DVD-players (e.g., Vieta) are exported already throughout large parts of Europe.

5.2. Product selection

Two different product types were included in our study. DVD-players were chosen as utilitarian products while beer was proposed as an example of a more hedonic-oriented product. Although our research design was limited to only two product categories, implying that it is much too early to generalize any of our results, it could be argued that the inclusion of two different types of products enlarges the external validity of our study at least to some (minimal) extent.

6. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of four pages containing seven different sections. At the top of page one, students could consult some of the most important instructions regarding the correct administration of the questionnaire. During our five minutes introduction, these guidelines were further explained or illustrated where necessary.

Section one was attributed to some demographic information. Besides indicating their gender, subjects had to mention their age. Sections 2 to 7 measured the different concepts included in our theoretical models. More in detail sections 2 to 4 were dedicated to the measurement of the Country-Image concept, that is the image about Spain or Denmark, depending on the questionnaire received. Sections 5 to 7 presented items measuring the two product attitude concepts, that is, respondents' attitude towards Spanish/Danish beer and Spanish/Danish DVD-players. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 63 "personal opinion" questions and statements. In case any of the sub-scales retrieved from the literature had to be translated from English to Dutch, it was subjected a forward-backward translation test (e.g., Brislin 1980). A copy of the original questionnaires can be found under Appendices 5.1. (list for Spain) and 5.2. (list for Denmark).

7. Concepts and measures

As already highlighted in previous sections, we consider the concepts of CI and product attitude as consisting of three components: cognitions, affects and conations. First we will discuss the operationalization of the CI-construct, then we will continue with the measurement of “attitude towards beer” and “attitude towards DVD-players”.

7.1. The Country Image

For measuring the CI-construct, we developed a three-dimensional 43-item scale which can be further subdivided into four sub-scales. More in detail, these are (1) the cognitive component scale [18 items], (2) the positive feelings scale [10 items], (3) the negative feelings scale [10 items], and (4) the conative component scale [5 items].

7.1.1. The cognitive component scale

The CI’s cognitive component was assessed throughout section 2 of the questionnaire. For a more detailed analysis of the scale measuring this construct we would like to refer to section 2.3. of the previous chapter. The nine dimensions discerned within the cognitive component construct are all measured by means of two items (i.e., one item asking for “importance” and one probing for “valence”) which makes that the whole scale includes 18 items.

7.1.2. The positive feelings scale

Section 3 of the questionnaire included items measuring the second component of our country-image concept, that is, the affective component. After studying some relevant scales we decided to use the PANAS scales, developed by Watson et al. (1988) as measurement instruments³⁶. More in detail, we borrowed the scale descriptors but placed them in a question format that seemed better suited for our study. This way, the first part of section 3 presented the uni-dimensional 10-item scale for positive feelings while the second part contained the

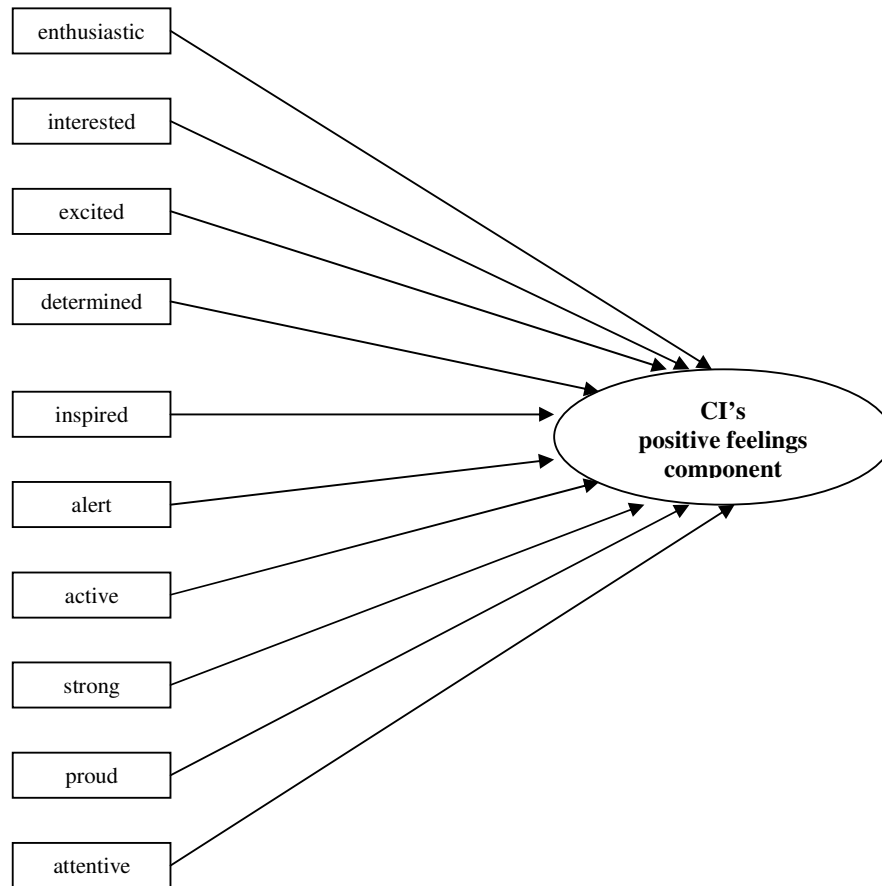
³⁶ Scores for the PA (Positive Affect) scale on internal consistency reliability for six different samples ranged from .86 to .90 and for the NA (Negative Affect) scale Cronbach’s α coefficients varied from .84 to .87. Scale validity is supported with convergent correlations ranging from .89 to .95 while the discriminant correlations vary between -.02 and -.18. Item validity is also supported with loadings on the appropriate factor all at a minimum level of .50 and loadings on the other factor acceptably low (e.g., Watson et al. 1988).

uni-dimensional 10-item scale for negative feelings. As shown in Table 10, the items were all placed on a 7-point semantic differential scale ranging from 1 to 7. For a visual representation (cf. Figure 26).

Table 10: Questionnaire section 3a – 10-item scale measuring positive feelings

1.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel enthusiastic ? Very enthusiastic (7) – Not enthusiastic at all (1)
2.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel interested ? Very interested (7) – Not interested at all
3.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel excited ? Very excited (7) – Not excited at all
4.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel determined ? Very determined (7) – Not determined at all (1)
5.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel inspired ? Very inspired (7) – Not inspired at all (1)
6.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel alert ? Very alert (7) – Not alert at all (1)
7.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel active ? Very active (7) – Not active at all (1)
8.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel strong ? Very strong (7) – Not strong at all (1)
9.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel proud ? Very proud (7) – Not proud at all (1)
10.	To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel attentive ? Very attentive (7) – Not attentive at all (1)

Figure 26: Conception of the CI's positive feelings component



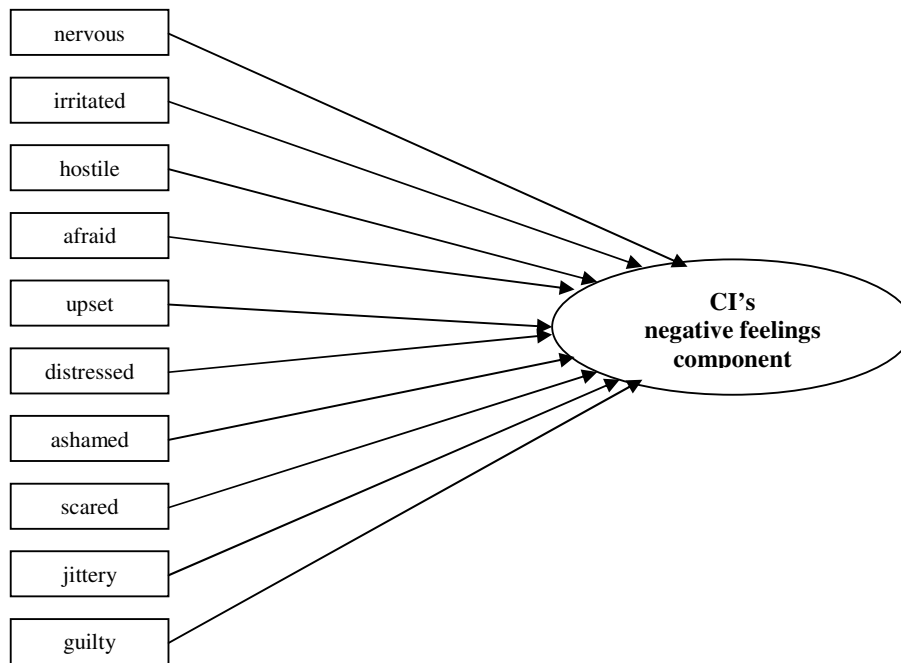
7.1.3. The negative feelings scale

As already stated, section 3b of our questionnaire included the uni-dimensional 10-item scale for the measurement of the CI's negative feelings component. In line with the scale assessing respondents' positive feelings towards the product's coo, the ten items were placed on a 7-point semantic differential scale ranging from 1-7. Table 11 presents the question format in which these items were presented to subjects. It is followed by Figure 27 which visualizes how the CI's negative feelings component is to be represented.

Table 11: Questionnaire section 3b – 10-item scale measuring negative feelings

1.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel nervous?</p> <p>Very nervous (7) – Not nervous at all (1)</p>
2.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel irritated?</p> <p>Very irritated (7) – Not irritated at all (1)</p>
3.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel hostile?</p> <p>Very hostile (7) – Not hostile at all (1)</p>
4.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel afraid?</p> <p>Very afraid (7) – Not afraid at all (1)</p>
5.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel upset?</p> <p>Very upset (7) – Not upset at all (1)</p>
6.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel distressed?</p> <p>Very distressed (7) – Not distressed at all (1)</p>
7.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel ashamed?</p> <p>Very ashamed (7) – Not ashamed at all (1)</p>
8.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel scared?</p> <p>Very scared (7) – Not scared at all (1)</p>
9.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel jittery?</p> <p>Very jittery (7) – Not jittery at all (1)</p>
10.	<p>To which extent do Spain and Spaniards make you feel guilty?</p> <p>Very guilty (7) – Not guilty at all (1)</p>

Figure 27: Conception of the CI's negative feelings component



Although the scale for negative feelings has been incorporated into our questionnaire, the data obtained for this particular variable have not been used for subsequent analysis. The reason is three different “channels” (i.e., correlation analysis, literature and respondents) clearly suggesting us that within an average daily-life context these negative feelings might be too “soft” in order to be of any substantial significance for the formation of a consumer’s attitude towards foreign-sourced products. In first instance, we could establish this rather limited role of negative feelings based on the results of a Pearson’s correlation analysis (cf. Table 12).

Table 12: Pearson’s correlation analysis between the negative feelings and product attitude components

RESULTS OBTAINED FOR DATA-SET OF MAIN STUDY (1225 respondents)						
RESULTS FOR “SPANISH” SAMPLE (616 respondents)						
	Beer	Beer	Beer	DVD	DVD	DVD
	Beliefs	evaluation	purchase int.	Beliefs	evaluation	purchase int.
Negative feelings	r: -.06	r: -.09*	r: -.11**	r: -.16**	r: -.15**	r: -.17**
RESULTS FOR “DANISH” SAMPLE (609 respondents)						
	Beer	Beer	Beer	DVD	DVD	DVD
	Beliefs	evaluation	purchase int.	Beliefs	evaluation	purchase int.
Negative feelings	r: -.01	r: -.04	r: -.03	r: -.11**	r: -.13**	r: -.13**

** significant at the 0.01 level

* significant at the 0.05 level

As can be derived from Table 12, there are almost no significant correlations between the negative feelings variable on the one hand and the different attitude components towards beer on the other. This indicates that we probably do not have to be expecting any significant effects emanating from coo-related negative feelings in case we are focussing on “beer”. For DVD-players, the situation is somewhat different in that significant correlations exist between the negative feelings-variable on the one hand and the different attitude components towards DVD-players on the other. Yet, the correlation coefficients obtained remain rather low. This indicates that the impact of effects generated by negative feelings on attitude formation towards DVD-players is of no substantial importance.

Besides these “empirical indications” of how the role of so-called “soft” negative feelings during the process of product attitude formation might be expected to be rather limited, we found other indications in support of this assumption within the literature on coo-effects (e.g., Cinnirella 1997; Schweiger et al. 1995; Verlegh 2001). In addition, respondents themselves questioned the role of negative feelings. At several occasions for instance subjects having completed the questionnaire were invited to comment on the items they had been confronted with. Interestingly, a frequently recurrent remark mentioned by them was that they “felt a bit strange” about the section probing for any potential negative feelings towards Spain/Denmark. When asked to further explain this, several respondents said that they found these questions to be irrelevant because they were not unfavourably disposed at all towards these two countries. On the contrary, subjects gave us the impression that they saw Spain and Denmark as some kind of “fellow countries” with not many fundamental disturbances or differences with their home country (i.e., Belgium) to be thinking of. This made us decide not to retain the data concerning negative feelings for subsequent analysis.

7.1.4. The conative component scale

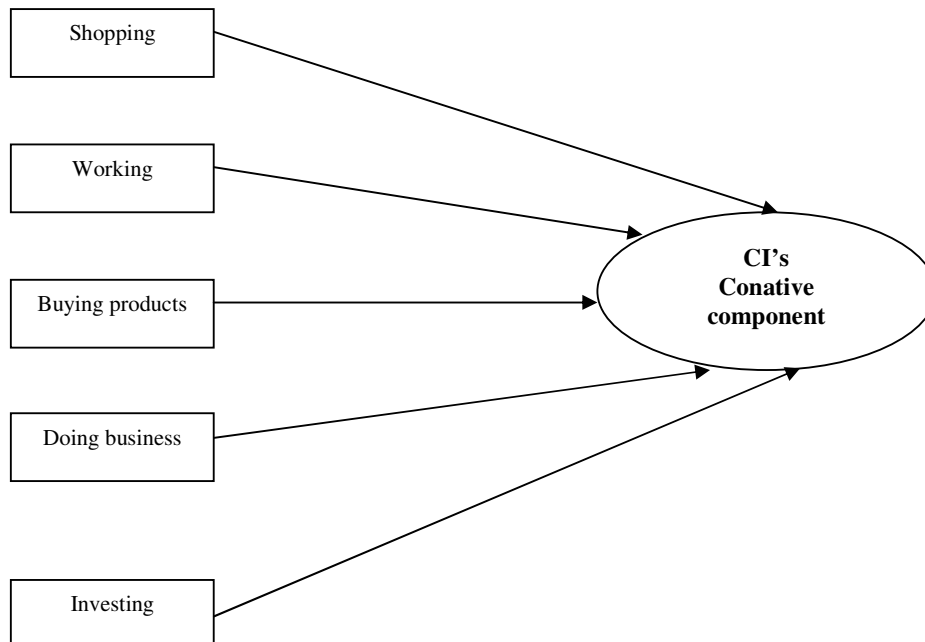
Section 4 of our questionnaire measured the CI’s conative component. Table 13 gives an overview of the five-item conative component scale as it was presented to our respondents. They had to rate these items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “totally agree” (7) to “totally disagree” (1).

Table 13: Questionnaire section 4 – 5-item scale measuring the CI's conative component

1.	I would like to shop in Spain
2.	I Would like to work in Spain
3.	I would like to buy products that are made in Spain
4.	I would like to do business with Spain
5.	I would like to invest in Spain

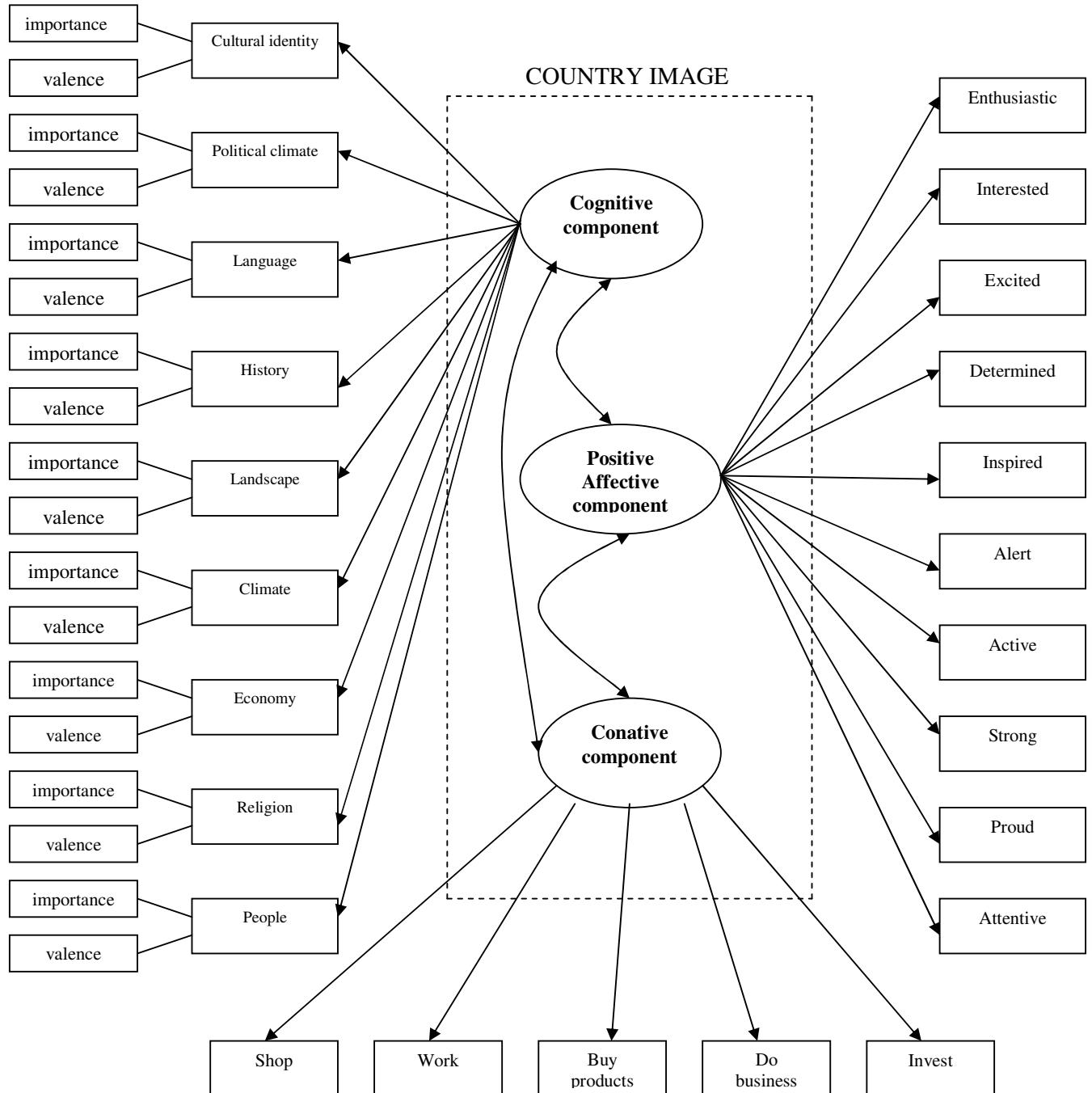
Figure 28 pictures our conceptualization of the CI's conative component.

Figure 28: Conception of the country image's conative component



This overview brings us to Figure 29 which pictures a complete overview of our measurement model for the Country Image³⁷.

Figure 29: Measurement model for the Country Image concept



³⁷ Important to notice here is that Figure 29 pictures the MEASUREMENT model for the CI-construct and not the THEORETICAL model. This explains while double-headed arrows appear between the three latent variables instead of single headed paths as was the case in the overall theoretical model as it was pictured in chapter 3.

7.2. The Product Attitude towards beer and DVD-players

Sections 5, 6 and 7 of our questionnaire were reserved for the measurement of respondents' attitude towards the two product categories selected for our study, that is, beer and DVD-players. In line with the CI-concept, respondents' product attitudes were operationalized as three-dimensional constructs, consisting of a cognitive, an affective and a conative component. Each of these components was measured by a specific sub-scale. These will be discussed somewhat further throughout the following paragraphs.

7.2.1. The cognitive component scales for beer and DVD-players

Section 5 of our questionnaire concentrated on the measurement of the two cognitive components. The selection of the beer and DVD-player attributes included in our study was based on a review of the coo-literature. Items concerning beer were retrieved from a study performed by Verlegh (2001). Although he examined coo-effects towards tomatoes instead of beer, we believe the tomato attributes he incorporated into his design (i.e., tasty, natural and aromatic) can be applied to beer as well. "Prestige" was added as a fourth, more symbolically connotated item. The DVD-player attributes we have chosen (i.e., durability, reliability, performance and easiness to use) were items that have been typically associated with utilitarian products. Since the literature provides sufficient support for face validity of the attributes we selected, these have not been separately pre-tested.

So, section 5 of our questionnaire contains a four-item scale measuring the consumer's beliefs about beer and a four-item scale measuring the consumer's beliefs about DVD-players. In each case, respondents had to indicate the degree to which they believed the items could be ascribed to the products under study. Every item was placed on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from "totally agree" (7) to "totally disagree" (1). Tables 14 and 15 present the items that appeared under section 5 of the questionnaire.

Table 14: Questionnaire section 5a- 4-item scale measuring the cognitive component of attitude towards beer

1.	Spanish beer is tasty
2.	Spanish beer is natural
3.	Spanish beer is aromatic
4.	Spanish beer is prestigious

Table 15: Questionnaire section 5b – 4-item scale measuring the cognitive component of attitude towards DVD-players

1.	Spanish DVD-players are durable
2.	Spanish DVD-players are reliable
3.	Spanish DVD-players deliver good performances
4.	Spanish DVD-players are easy to use

7.2.2. The affective component scales for beer and DVD-players

Section 6 in turn measured the affective component of the consumer’s attitude towards beer and DVD-players. Several coo-researchers have conceptualized consumers’ affective reactions towards products as cases of evaluative judgement (i.e., expressions of preference). The items we incorporated in order to measure the affective component of the consumer’s attitude towards beer and DVD-players (i.e., good quality, likeable, appealing) were drawn from classical studies on coo-effects. More in detail, we constructed a three-item 7-point semantic differential scale ranging from 1 to 7. Tables 16 and 17 present the items that appeared under section 6 of our questionnaire.

Table 16: Questionnaire section 6a – 3-item scale measuring the affective component of attitude towards beer

1.	What do you think of the quality of Spanish beer? Very good (7) – not good at all (1)
2.	Would you like Spanish beer? Would like very much (7) – would not like at all (1)
3.	Would you find Spanish beer appealing ? Would find it very appealing (7) – would not find it appealing at all (1)

Table 17: Questionnaire section 6b – 3-item scale measuring the affective component of attitude towards DVD-players

1.	What do you think of the quality of Spanish DVD-players? Very good (7) – not good at all (1)
2.	Would you like Spanish DVD-players? Would like very much (7) – would not like at all (1)
3.	Would you find DVD-players appealing ? Would find it very appealing (7) – would not find it appealing at all (1)

7.2.3. The conative component scales for beer and DVD-players

The final section of our questionnaire (i.e., section 7) measured the conative component of consumers' product attitudes. Items to measure this construct (would be willing to buy, would consider buying, chance of buying) were retrieved from traditional studies on coo-effects. More in detail, a three-item 7-point semantic differential scale ranging from 1 to 7 was constructed. Tables 18 and 19 present the scales as they were included in our questionnaire.

Table 18: Questionnaire section 7a – 3-item scale measuring the conative component of attitude towards beer

1.	Imagine you would like to buy beer in the near future. Would you be willing to buy Spanish beer? Very willing (7) – not willing at all (1)
2.	Imagine you would like to buy beer in the near future. Would you consider buying Spanish beer? Would certainly consider (7) – would not consider at all (1)
3.	Imagine you would like to buy beer in the near future. Would there be a chance you'd buy Spanish beer? There would certainly be a chance (7) – there would not be a chance at all (1)

Table 19: Questionnaire section 7b – 3-item scale measuring the conative component of attitude towards DVD-players

1.	Imagine you would like to buy a DVD-player in the near future. Would you be willing to buy a Spanish DVD-player? Very willing (7) – not willing at all (1)
2.	Imagine you would like to buy a DVD-player in the near future. Would you consider buying a Spanish DVD-player? Would certainly consider (7) – would not consider at all (1)
3.	Imagine you would like to buy a DVD-player in the near future. Would there be a chance you'd buy a Spanish DVD-player? There would certainly be a chance (7) – there would not be a chance at all (1)

On the following two pages, Figures 30 and 31 picture the overall measurement models for the consumer's attitudes towards beer and DVD-players³⁸.

³⁸ Notice that in line with the model for Country Image (cf. Figure 29), the models pictured for attitude towards beer and DVD-players are measurement instead of theoretical models.

Figure 30: Measurement model of the beer attitude concept

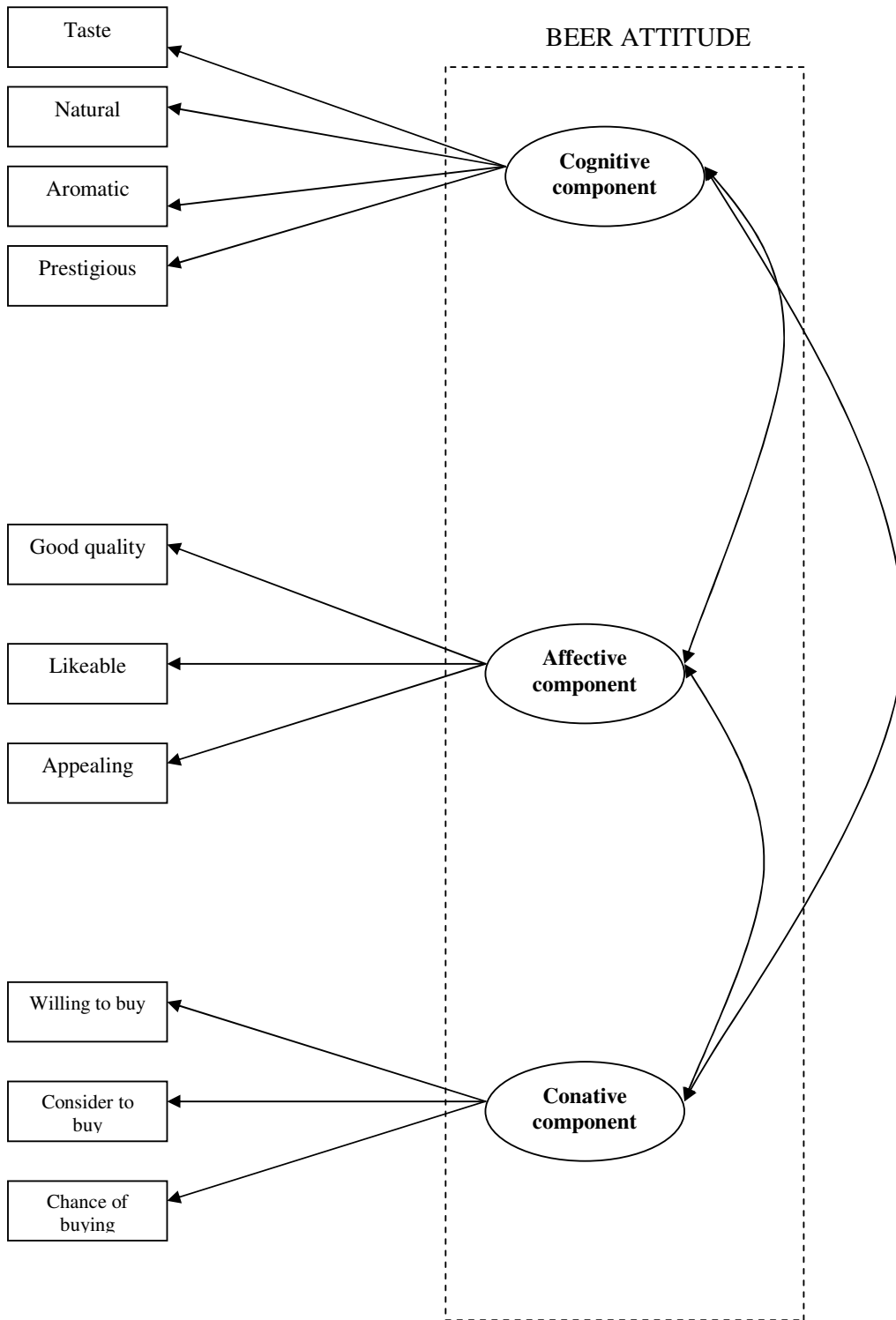
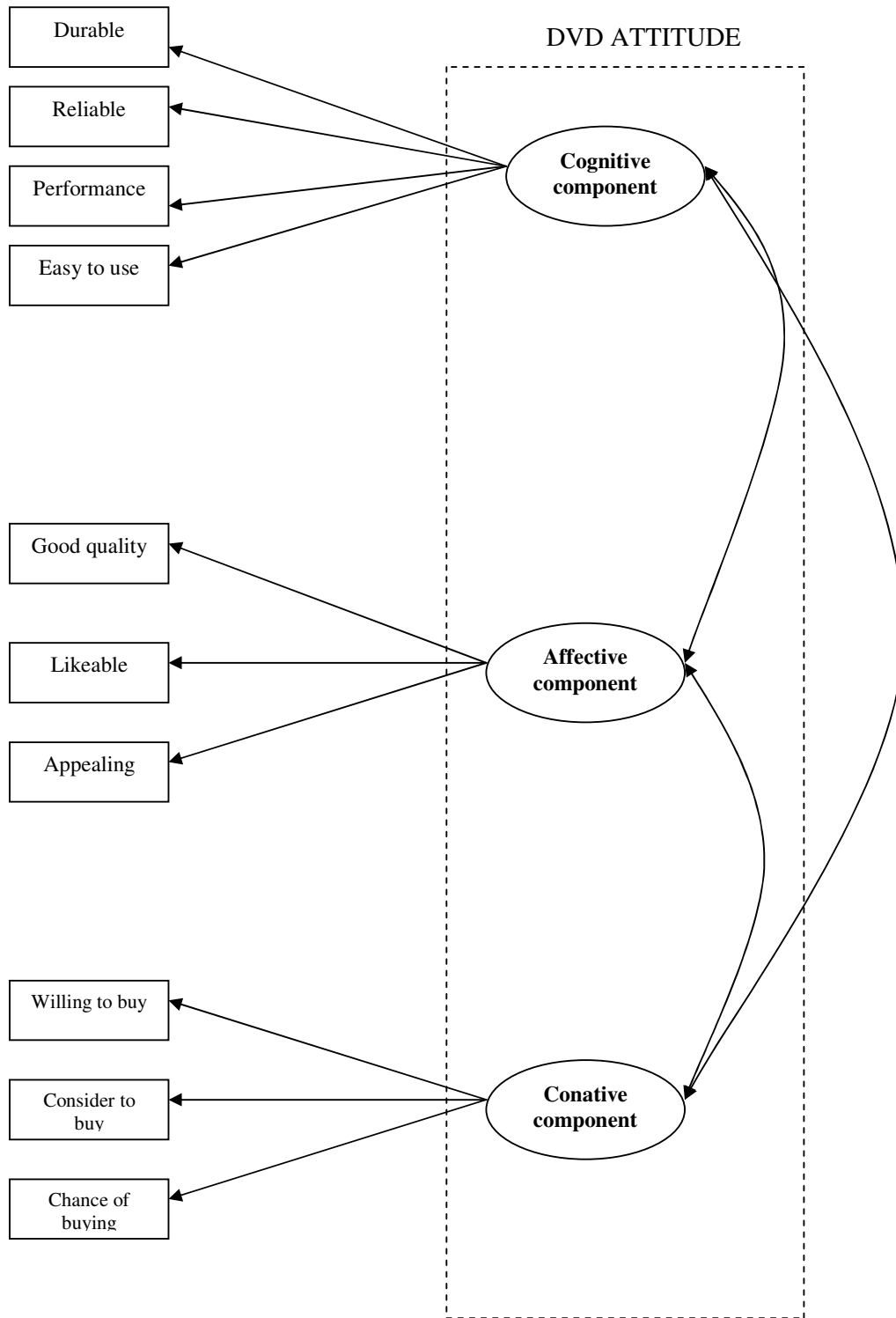


Figure 31: Measurement model of the DVD attitude concept



CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

1. Chapter overview

In chapter 6 of the dissertation we will turn to the verification of the hypotheses that we proposed in chapter 3. In order to make the various data-analysis procedures somewhat more comprehensible, we believe it might be useful to come back on the structure of our survey. In fact, two surveys were carried out. The first survey gathered data on the effects of CI towards a hedonic product (i.e., beer) while the second one was focussed on the assessment of CI-effects towards a utilitarian product (DVD-players). For both surveys, two independent treatment groups have to be distinguished from each other. Thus, for instance in case of the beer survey, a first group of respondents was questioned about Spanish beer while a second group received a questionnaire about Danish beer.

2. Hypothesis testing: Structural Equation Modeling³⁹

Hypotheses will be tested by means of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). According to Byrne (2001), this technique has several advantages over the older generation of multivariate data-analysis procedures. Hair et al. argue there are two fundamental characteristics which set SEM apart from the more traditional techniques: “[...] (1) estimation of multiple and interrelated dependence relationships, and (2) the ability to represent **unobserved concepts** in these relationships and account for measurement error in the estimation process (...) In simple terms, SEM estimates a series of separate, but interdependent, multiple regression equations simultaneously by specifying the **structural model** used by the statistical program.” (Hair et al. 1998: 584). Given the nature of the hypotheses to be tested, we found SEM to be the most

³⁹ Remind that the variable “negative feelings” will not be taken into account for reasons presented throughout section 7.1.3. of the previous chapter.

suitable technique to analyse our data. More particularly, analyses were performed in AMOS 5.0 (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999). For each survey (beer and DVD-players) analyses were performed within a multi-group procedure with each country (Spain and Denmark) constituting a separate group. This way it becomes possible to estimate structural models with some of the parameters free to differ across groups and others constrained to be equal. Such constraints allow us to verify hypothesis 4.

According to several scholars like Anderson and Gerbing (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Byrne (2001), testing structural models within SEM is done best by means of a two-step procedure. More in detail, they advise to have measurement models estimated before structural models instead of having these estimated simultaneously. Thus, our first task will be to decompose the structural models for both our surveys into their constituent measurement models. Let us have a closer look at both stages of the analysis procedure.

STEP 1: Estimation of Measurement Models

As will become clear later, for both surveys, the identification of measurement models has passed through three stages. First, our final structural models were decomposed into their basic constructs. Then we started with an exploratory factor analysis in order to arrive at what we might call a “preliminary” measurement model that would capture these constructs’ underlying structure. Subsequently, we subjected those models to a confirmatory factor analysis. Besides verifying whether it fits the data well confirmatory factor analysis permits us to check a model’s so-called “construct validity”. This is done by testing it on four criteria: (1) uni-dimensionality, (2) within-method convergent validity, (3) reliability and (4) discriminant validity. It is important to notice that estimating a structural model can only be done in an adequate manner if its constituent measurement models have sufficiently accomplished these conditions.

The fact that analyses for both our surveys are performed within a multi-group procedure makes the whole scenario become somewhat more complicated in that Byrne (2001: 202) strongly advises to have the identification (by means of exploratory factor analysis) as well as the verification (by means of confirmatory factor analysis) of measurement models done for each group taken separately. This implies that for both our surveys (beer and DVD-players) identification and verification of measurement models for the Spanish and Danish sample are to be effectuated separately. Once the so-called “baseline models” have been obtained, we can proceed with the next step of the multi-group analysis procedure, that is, to check whether those baseline models are (partially) invariant across

groups. This is done because we can estimate and validate structural models across groups only if (partial) group invariance of the measurement models has been ascertained (e.g., Byrne 2001; Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998)⁴⁰.

STEP 2: Estimation of Structural Models

Once the (partially) invariant measurement models have been translated into a structural model, the latter will be cross-validated by having it checked for its structural equivalence across groups. This is done by examining whether the different pathways within the structural model can be constrained equal across groups without deteriorating the original (unconstrained) model fit. If cross-validity can be ascertained, hypotheses are to be verified based on the results obtained for the model where parameter estimates for the structural paths have been constrained to be equal across countries (e.g., Verlegh 2001: 77). Throughout the following sections we will concentrate on the first step of our analysis procedure, that is, the estimation of the measurement models. First we will focus on the beer survey.

3. Measurement models: BEER survey

As already indicated throughout the previous section, data for both surveys have been collected by means of two independent samples. First, our attention will go to the estimation of the measurement models for the Spanish sample.

3.1. SPANISH sample

For the Spanish sample as well as for the Danish sample, the same three-stage procedure towards estimation of the measurement models has been followed. As previously explained, the first step is to identify the basic constructs included in our final structural models. A closer examination of the hypotheses reveals that these are focussed on the relationships between two particular constructs, namely (1) Country Image and (2) Beer Attitude. First we will pay attention to the measurement model for the Country Image construct. Then we will repeat this procedure for the Beer Attitude concept.

⁴⁰ Let us remind to this regard that hypothesis 4 is focussed more specifically on the comparison of structural relations across groups. As argued by Verlegh (2001: 71) in order for such inter-group comparisons of structural relations to be meaningful, (partial) invariance of the measurement models has to be assured.

3.1.1. Model for Country Image construct

Now that the Country Image has been identified as one of the basic constructs of our structural model, the next step of our analysis will be to develop a preliminary measurement model that gives us an indication of the factorial structure underlying this construct. This will be done by performing an exploratory factor analysis. Afterwards, the exploratory model will be subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis in order to check its construct validity.

3.1.1.1. Exploratory factor analysis

In order to verify the structure behind the CI's three basic components, we conducted a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation in SPSS 11.5 on each sub-scale measuring one of the three respective constituent components (i.e., the cognitive component, the affective component and the conative component)⁴¹.

Results concerning the CI's cognitive component seem to suggest a two-dimensional structure for this particular construct. The two factor solution is extracted with Eigenvalue exceeding unity (1, 356) and as a whole, explaining 44,7% of the variance (or respectively 29,6% and 15%). Table 20 presents an overview of the factor loadings when two factors are extracted.

Table 20: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Spanish cognitive component

Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Culture	,47	
Politics		,71
Language	,67	
History		,47
Landscape	,79	
Climate	,79	
Economy		,72
Religion		,55
People	,46	

⁴¹ Remind that the components loading on the country image's cognitive dimension in fact are composite indexes, while those pertaining to the two other country image dimensions are not.

The composite reliability of the two factors extracted seems sufficiently adequate for the first, but rather unsatisfactory for the second. Cronbach's α was .69 for the first factor and .54 for the second⁴². In addition the distribution over the two factors of the scale-items measuring the cognitive component is not always clearly pronounced. Consider for instance the factor loadings. Normally, an item is said to belong clearly to a factor when its loading on that factor is at a minimum of .60 while its loading on the other factor might not be higher than .15. Table 20 shows that not all items meet these habitual cut-off values. For instance, two items ("culture" [.47] and "people" [.46]) did not load sufficiently well on the first factor. In addition, "culture" had a loading of .41 on the other factor, which indicates that it is a component that cannot be clearly ascribed to one of the two factors. Rather weak loadings were also found for some of the items pertaining to the second factor. Two out of four components ("history" [.47] and "religion" [.55]) had loadings lower than .60. However, "religion" was very close to the minimum level. On average, the corrected item-total correlations were also rather low (most of them ranging between .39 and .50 for factor 1 and values between .29 and .40 for factor 2) while the minimum level for this criterion is often placed at a value of .50 (e.g., Green et al. 1988; Tabachnik and Fidell 1989).

These results indicate that the structure of the factors underlying the cognitive component construct is not always "transparent". Consequently, the CI's cognitive component gives the impression of being a rather "vague" concept. In our opinion, this "fuzziness" might be due to the fact that the indexes entering the factor analysis are to be considered as proxies, that is, as content-wise simplified representations standing for conceptually much more complex constructs. One of the negative consequences linked to such an operational simplification is that it becomes difficult to attribute a specific component to one particular factor. The underlying reasoning would be that one specific component is covering such a wide content that it also might belong to another factor than the one under which it is ranged by the factor analysis.

Nevertheless, we conclude that the CI's cognitive component is a two-dimensional construct. The first dimension is labeled "geo-cultural stereotypes" and consists of the following five items: "culture", "language", "landscape", "climate" and "people". The second dimension is called "socio-economic stereotypes" and regroups four components: "politics", "history", "economy" and "religion". Next, we will focus on the scale measuring the CI's

⁴² For this criterion, the cut-off level proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) is .60.

affective component⁴³. The CI's affective component seems to be measured relatively well. The ten items clearly support a uni-dimensional "positive feelings" construct, with 42,9% of the total variance explained and an Eigenvalue of 4,294. Cronbach's α was .85. The factor scores are presented in Table 21. Only two items "alert" and "strong" loaded below .60.

Table 21: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Spanish affective component

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Enthusiastic	,72
Interested	,77
Excited	,73
Determined	,62
Inspired	,68
Alert	,54
Active	,65
Strong	,46
Proud	,61
Attentive	,73

Also with regard to the five items measuring the CI's conative component a one-factor solution was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,507 and 50,1% of the total variance explained. Cronbach's α was .74 and thus exceeded the proposed cut-off level. All items, except for "shopping" (.55) loaded sufficiently well on the factor. Results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Spanish conative component

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Shopping	,55
Working	,66
Buying products	,71
Doing business	,83
Investing	,76

⁴³ As indicated throughout chapter 5 (section 7.1.3.), the CI's affective component is limited to "positive feelings" with "negative feelings" not taken into consideration.

In sum, the exploratory factor analysis indicates that the CI-concept is supported by a four-dimensional structure. The cognitive component consists of two dimensions (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes and socio-economic stereotypes) while the affective as well as the conative components were found to be uni-dimensional.

As will become clear when discussing the structure underlying the CI-construct for Denmark there are three components belonging to the CI's cognitive component (i.e., "culture", "religion" and "people") which create some discrepancy between the CI-models for the Spanish sample on the one hand and that of the Danish sample on the other. In order to make the two data-sets as uniform as possible, we decided to delete these three "disturbing" items from our model for the CI's cognitive component⁴⁴. Then we reconsidered the structure underlying the six remaining items supporting the CI's cognitive component. Again, the principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation suggested a two-factor solution. It was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 1,288 and 56,8% of the variance explained (or respectively 35,3% and 21,5%). Table 23 gives an overview of the factor loadings. All components substantially load on their factor with values exceeding the .60 norm, except for "history" (.57). In addition "history" has a loading on the other factor of .22, slightly going over the .15 cut-off level. This indicates that the transparency of the internal structure of the two-dimensional cognitive component has somewhat improved. However, Cronbach alpha of the factor labeled "socio-economic stereotypes" had a coefficient of .50 only. The second factor "geo-cultural stereotypes" scored better with a value of .68.

Table 23: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Spanish cognitive component

Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Language	,67	,18
Landscape	,83	,09
Climate	,82	,02
Politics	-,02	,77
History	,22	,57
Economy	,08	,76

⁴⁴ The fact that measurement models have to be uniform across groups in order for any multiple-group analysis to take place is a necessary condition. Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998: 79) for instance state that the same set of items has to be used to operationalize the construct(s) of interest. Therefore, discrepant items have been excluded from the measurement model for the CI-construct.

3.1.1.2. Uni-dimensionality

To test the proposed theoretical structure underlying our measurement instrument, a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis is conducted on the 21 remaining indicators of the CI-construct taken together, using AMOS 5.0 (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999). Based on our exploratory factor analysis, four correlated dimensions are assumed to underlie this CI-concept: “geo-cultural stereotypes”, “socio-economic stereotypes”, “positive feelings” and “behavioural intentions”.

According to Byrne (2001: 75), measurement model assessment should focus on the adequacy of the parameter estimates on the one hand and on the model as a whole on the other. The fit of individual parameters in the model concerns three specific aspects: the feasibility of the parameter estimates, the appropriateness of the standard errors and the statistical significance of the parameter estimates. Byrne argues that parameters in order to be “feasible”, “[...] should exhibit the correct sign and size, and be consistent with the underlying theory.” (Byrne 2001: 75). She continues that examples of unreasonable parameters are correlations >1.00, negative variances, and covariance or correlation matrices that are not positive definite. No unreasonable parameters could be identified for our CI-model. A second criterion for individual parameter fitting is the appropriateness of the standard errors. In line with Jöreskog and Sörbom (1989), Byrne (2001) signals that excessively large or small standard errors are indicators of poor model fit. Also this criterion was met by the model. Finally, there is the statistical significance of parameter estimates. Together with Arbuckle (1997), Byrne puts that: “[t]he test statistic here is the critical ratio (c.r.), which represents the parameter estimate divided by its standard error; as such, it operates as a z-statistic in testing that the estimate is statistically different from zero. Based on a level of .05, the test statistic needs to be $>\pm 1.96$ before the hypothesis (that the estimate equals 0.0) can be rejected.” (Byrne 2001: 76). After having consulted the AMOS Text Output, we can conclude that the parameter estimates also meet this particular criterion.

However, although individual parameter estimates all met the standard criteria, the overall goodness-of-fit of the model as a whole was not satisfactory ($\chi^2= 939,671$; $df= 183$; $\chi^2/df= 5,135$)⁴⁵. As discussed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993), large χ^2 relative to degrees of freedom already indicates a need to modify the proposed model in order to better fit the data. In addition, insufficient goodness-of-fit index (GFI =.851) and comparative fit index (CFI

⁴⁵ As argued by Brengman (2002), the overall fit of the model is an indication of the fit between the calculated variance-covariance matrix and the real variance-covariance matrix. A good model shows no significant difference (p-value >0.05) or for larger samples has a chi-square/df <3 or <5.

=.810) suggested that the model did not represent an adequate fit to the data⁴⁶. Although the index for the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = .082) did not exceed the cut-off level of >.10, a value of ≤.080 represents reasonable errors of approximation in the population. This can be interpreted as indicating only mediocre model-fit⁴⁷. During the next stage of our data analysis procedure we tried to improve the fit of our model. As argued by Jöreskog (1993), a lack of model fit can be related to misspecifications within the model. Byrne (2001: 88) explains how AMOS yields two types of information which are helpful in identifying areas of misfit in the model. These are the standardized residuals and the modification indices. As pointed out by Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991), large standardized residuals⁴⁸ indicate potential multidimensionality. Values exceeding the >2.58 limit were detected. The six items (“determined”, “alert”, “active”, “strong”, “shopping” and “working”) causing these high values for standardized residuals were carefully examined. More in detail, we first verified whether there was any subset of items within a factor that might be forming another separate factor⁴⁹. In second instance, we checked for items that might have been related to the wrong factor⁵⁰. However, no such pattern for re-specification was found. Therefore, the six items in question were dropped from the model⁵¹.

Then we verified whether too large modification indices could be detected. As discussed by Byrne (2001), the modification indices can be considered as a second type of information related to misspecification. They reflect the extent to which the hypothesized model is appropriately described. More in detail, she states that: “[e]vidence of misfit in this regard is captured by the modification indexes (MIs) which can be conceptualized as a χ^2 statistic with one degree of freedom (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1988). Specifically, for each *fixed* parameter specified, AMOS provides an MI, the value of which represents the expected drop in overall χ^2 value if the parameter were to be freely estimated in a subsequent run (...).” (Byrne 2001: 90). In examining the error-covariance matrix, we found the index representing

⁴⁶ Cut-off levels for these indexes are >.90 for GFI and >.95 for CFI (e.g., Byrne 2001)

⁴⁷ An RMSEA-index of <.050 indicates good model fit (e.g., Byrne 2001)

⁴⁸ In line with Jöreskog and Sörbom (1988), Byrne (2001: 89) defines standardized residuals as fitted residuals divided by their asymptotically (large sample) standard errors. Values exceeding the >2.58 are considered too large, suggesting misspecification.

⁴⁹ According to Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991: 287) the possibility for a subset of items to constitute a separate factor might exist in case such a subset has large negative standardized residuals (representing overfitting) with the other items pertaining to the same factor, and large positive residuals among each other (representing underfitting).

⁵⁰ Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991: 287) argue that an item related to the wrong factor will generally have large negative residuals with the other items of that factor and large positive residuals with the items of the so-called “correct” factor.

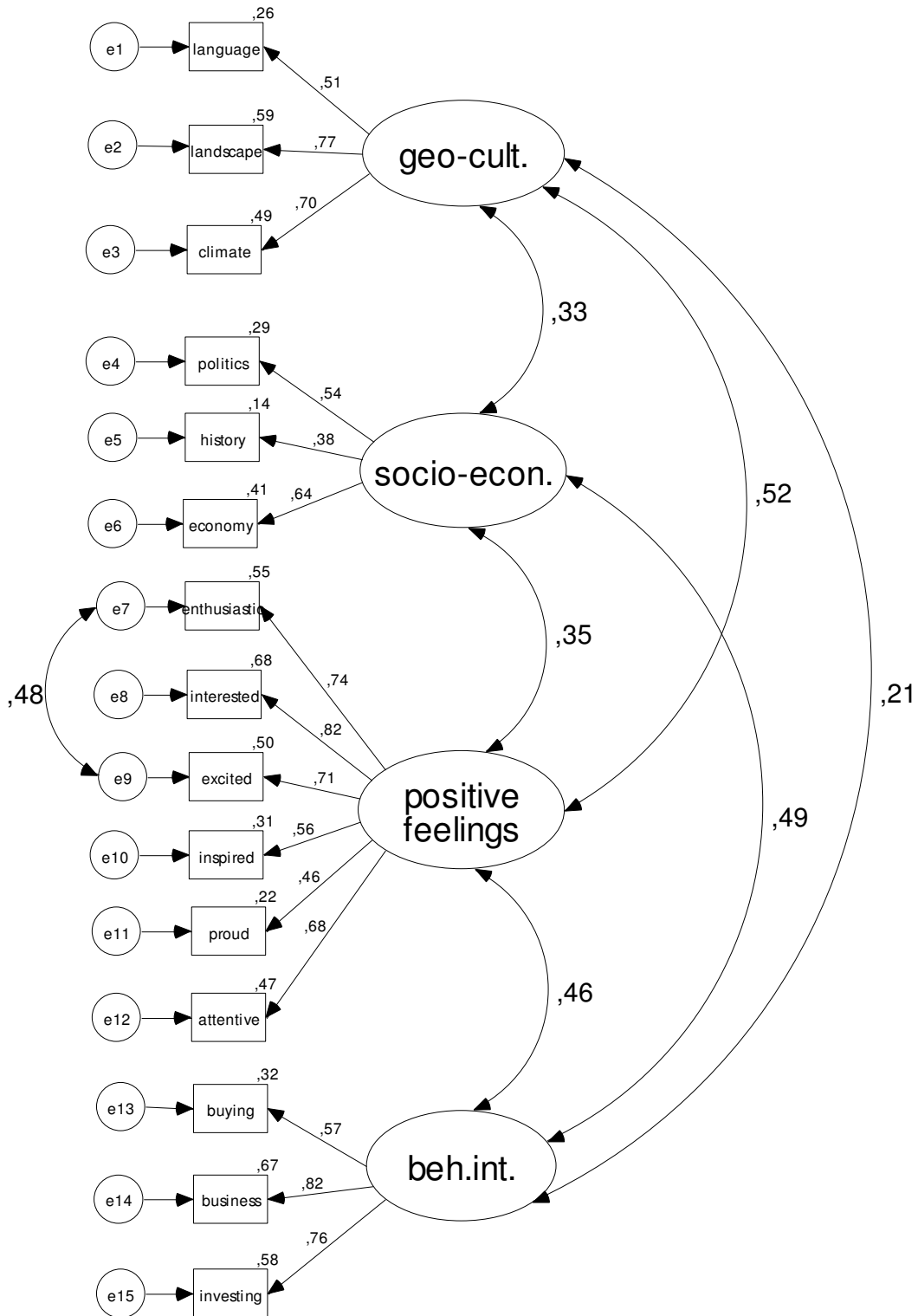
⁵¹ Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991) suggest that if no clear pattern suggesting misspecification emerges, as in our specific case here, it is best to delete the defective items.

the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” to be out of range. Therefore, we re-specified our model adding the additional constraint of correlating the errors in question. This resulted in our final four-dimensional model pictured on the following page by Figure 32. Table 24, presents the most important overall goodness of fit measures. Acceptable values indicating good fit (e.g., Marsh and Hovecar, 1985; Bentler 1990; Bagozzi and Baumgartner 1994; Sharma 1996; Baumgartner and Homburg 1996) appear in the first column of this table. Overall, they clearly indicate that this four-dimensional model has very satisfactory goodness of fit.

Table 24: Goodness-of-fit indices for the 4-dimensional structure in the Spanish country image scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	4-dimensional model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	252,897 (83)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	3,047
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	.948
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	.925
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.923
Benler’s normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.939
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.058
Standardized residuals >2.58	No	7
Factor regression coefficients >.50	Yes	13 out of 15

Figure 32: Path coefficients in the 4-dimensional model underlying the country image concept for Spain in our sample



3.1.1.3. Within-method convergent validity

As discussed by Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991: 289) within-convergent validity has to do with the extent to which multiple applications of the same method are in agreement. They argue it should be tested before assessing the reliability of the measurement instrument. Provided that the overall model fit is satisfactory, they posit that a condition for within-method convergent validity is that the factor regression coefficients on a specific item are statistically significant (weak condition) and substantial (stronger condition). As for the latter criterion, Hildebrandt (1987) claimed that the correlation between the item and the underlying factor should exceed .50. When turning to our specified four-dimensional country image model, it appears that all the factor regression coefficients exceed the .50 norm, except for “history” (.38) and “proud” (.46). Yet, each regression coefficient was statistically highly significant with critical ratios sufficiently above the proposed cut-off level of 1.96⁵². Thus, within-method convergent validity could be supported.

3.1.1.4. Reliability

According to Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991: 289), reliability deals with the degree to which measures are free of any potential random errors. It should be assessed only if within-method convergent validity is ascertained (e.g., Bagozzi 1981; Bagozzi and Yi 1990; Steenkamp and Van Trijp 1991). As for the reliability of the individual items, it has been suggested by Bagozzi and Baumgartner (1994) that the lower acceptable bound for the squared correlation between the item and the construct should be .40. Of the 15 items included in our model, the following six did not meet this criterion: “language” (.26), “politics” (.29), “history” (.14), “inspired” (.31), “proud” (.22) and “buying products” (.32). To estimate the reliability of the four factors, composite reliability together with the average variances extracted should be determined⁵³. (e.g., Bagozzi 1980; Bagozzi and Baumgartner 1994; Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Baumgartner and Homburg 1996; Fornell and Larcker 1981; Steenkamp and Van Trijp 1991). The “geo-cultural” factor had a composite reliability of .68 and an average variance extracted of .62. For the “socio-economy” factor, composite reliability only reached .50 with an average variance extracted of .51. With regard to the “positive feelings” factor composite reliability amounted to .82 with an average variance extracted of .55. Finally, the “behavioural

⁵² A regression weight reaches statistical significance at the .05 level if the critical ratio exceeds 1.96. (e.g., Arbuckle 1997: 292).

⁵³ For a scale to possess good reliability, its composite reliability should be between .60 and .80 and the average variance extracted minimally .50 (e.g., Bagozzi and Yi 1988).

intentions” factor had a composite reliability of .75 and an average variance extracted of .67. Thus, overall, we might conclude that most of our factors score relatively well on the different reliability tests. The only factor where clearly some random error was captured is the “socio-economy” factor. In our opinion, this is related to the fact that, although the items for this particular factor capture content-wise multi-dimensional concepts, they are operationalized in a proxy-like manner.

3.1.1.5. Discriminant validity

To test whether different dimensions do not involve one and the same dimension, we checked for the CI scale’s discriminant validity. As discussed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) a scale possesses discriminant validity if the average variance extracted by the underlying construct exceeds the shared variance (i.e., the squared intercorrelation) with other latent constructs. It appeared that for each of the four factors included in our model, the average variance extracted was larger than the squared correlation with the other latent constructs. Thus, besides a good model fit, satisfactory within-method convergent validity and acceptable reliability, these results support the assumption that our CI measurement instrument evidences sufficient discriminant validity. Throughout the following section, we will focus on the construct validation of the “Beer Attitude” scale.

3.1.2. Model for Beer Attitude construct

In line with the approach followed for the CI-concept, construct validation for Beer Attitude was tested by means of a two-stage procedure. More in detail, this construct was subjected to an exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis. The latter allowed us to test the model’s within-method convergent validity, reliability and discriminant validity. We will concentrate first on the outcome of the exploratory factor analysis.

3.1.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis

A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was executed on the four items measuring the beer attitude’s cognitive component. This resulted in a single-factor solution with Eigenvalue of 2,620 and 65,5% of the total variance explained. As shown in Table 25, all items loaded substantially on the underlying factor. Each component had a loading that

exceeded the .60 cut-off level. The factor's reliability coefficient was also very satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$).

Table 25: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the cognitive component (Spanish beer)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Tasty	,84
Natural	,67
Aromatic	,90
Prestigious	,81

The three items measuring the beer attitude's affective component also loaded on one single factor with an Eigenvalue of 2,650 and 88,3% of the total variance explained. Each item loaded substantially on the underlying dimension with factor loadings larger than .60. Cronbach's alpha was also considerably high (.93). Factor loadings are presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the affective component (Spanish beer)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Quality	,92
Likeability	,96
Appeal	,94

Finally, exploratory factor analysis indicated that the three-item scale measuring the beer attitude's cognitive component was also supported by a uni-dimensional factor structure. Eigenvalue was 2,455 and 81,8% of the total variance in the construct was explained. All items loaded very well on the underlying factor with all factor loadings exceeding the norm of .60. Cronbach's alpha again was very satisfactory (.89). Table 27 presents the components' factor loadings.

Table 27: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the conative component
(Spanish beer)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Willing	,91
Consider	,92
Chance	,88

Thus, overall exploratory factor analysis seems to suggest that the 10-item scale measuring the beer image construct is supported by a three-dimensional structure.

3.1.2.2. Uni-dimensionality

A maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis in AMOS 5.0 (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999) was conducted on the 10-item scale measuring the beer image concept in order to verify the underlying structure proposed by the results of the exploratory factor analysis. First, the usual tests for individual parameter fit were executed. It appeared that all parameters could be considered as “reasonable”. In addition, the test for appropriateness of the standard errors was successfully completed. Finally, all parameter estimates were statistically significant (with critical ratios highly above the 1.96 norm). However, the overall goodness-of-fit of the model was rather questionable with scores of $\chi^2= 338,929$; $df= 32$; $p= .000$; $\chi^2/df= 10,592$. The most important additional goodness-of-fit indicators also indicated insufficient model fit with GFI (.895), CFI (.939) and RMSEA (.125).

Therefore, it was examined whether the model contained any misspecifications. First, the values for standardized residuals were verified. It appeared there was only one value exceeding the 2.58 norm. As put by Hair et al. (1998), this falls within the acceptable range of 1/20. Consequently, we examined another criterion for model misspecifications, that is, the modification indices. The index for two pairs of error covariances (i.e., the errors associated with “natural” and “aromatic” on the one hand and the errors associated with “likeable” and “appealing” on the other) immediately drew our attention because they were substantially larger than the values of the remaining indexes. This is a clear expression of misspecification. Therefore, the model was re-specified with these parameters freely estimated. The goodness-of-fit scores for this re-specified model improved significantly and were now falling within

the traditional bounds of acceptance. Figure 33 pictures the re-specified model and Table 28 presents an overview of the most important overall goodness-of-fit measures.

Figure 33: Path coefficients in the 3-dimensional model underlying the Spanish beer attitude concept in our sample

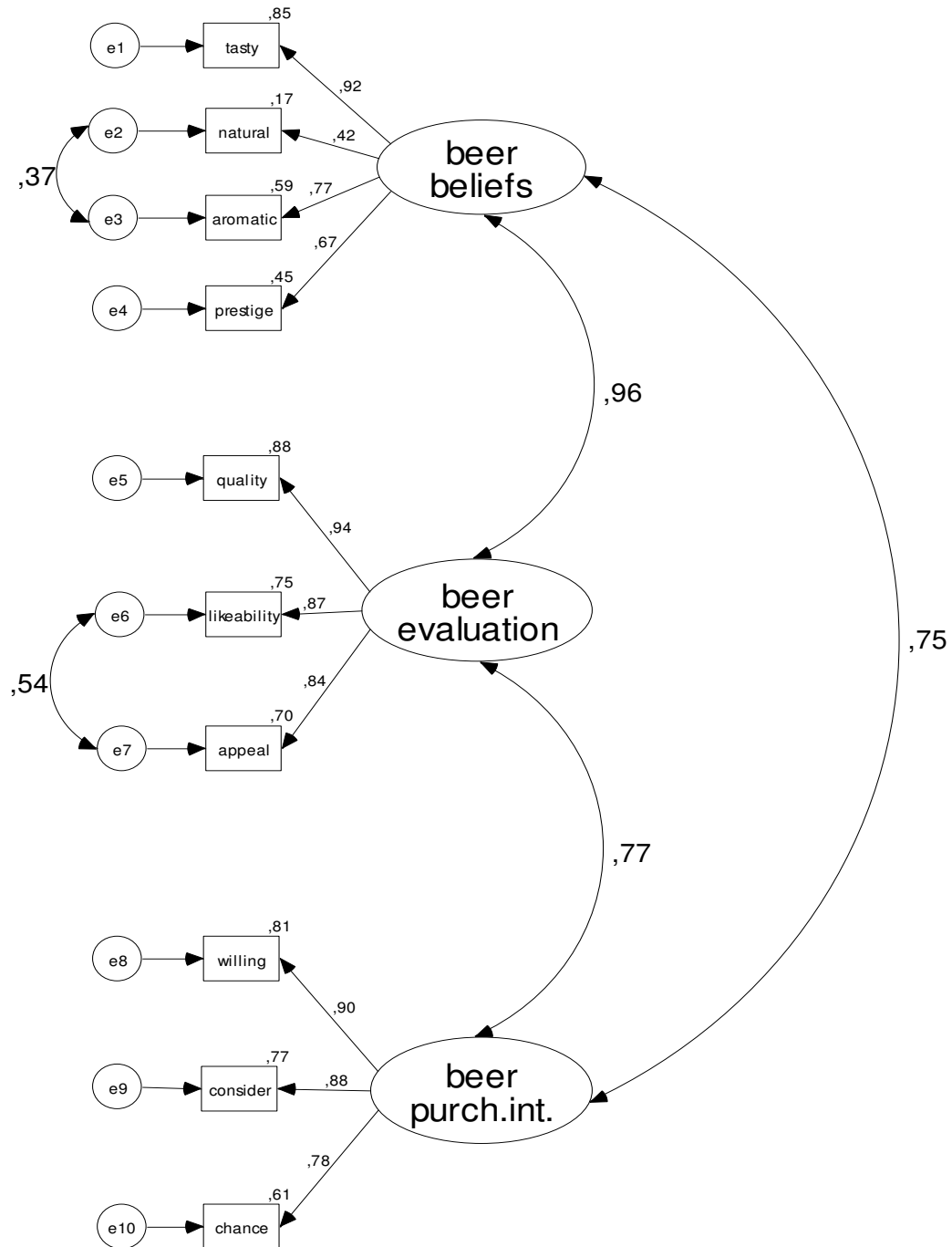


Table 28: Goodness-of-fit indices for the 3-dimensional structure in the Spanish beer attitude scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	3-dimensional model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	133,695 (30)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	4,457
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	.957
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	.922
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.969
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.979
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.075
Standardized residuals >2.58	No	1
Factor regression coefficients >.50	Yes	9 out of 10

3.1.2.3. Within-method convergent validity

As already explained, testing a model's within-method convergent validity means we verify whether the factor regression coefficients are statistically significant and substantial enough. In case of our three-dimensional beer attitude scale, it appears that all the regression weights can be considered as highly substantial because they largely exceed the .50 norm, except for "natural" (.42). In addition, they were significant with critical ratios all substantially surpassing the minimal norm of 1.96. Thus, it can be said that our model gives proof of sufficient within-method convergent validity.

3.1.2.4. Reliability

If a model's within-method convergent validity is satisfactory enough, reliability can be established. As for the individual item reliability, it appears that each item (with the exception of "natural" [.17]) is highly reliable while the squared correlations between the items and their respective underlying factors all substantially exceed the minimum level of .40. As already discussed, the overall reliability of the factors can be assessed by calculating their composite reliability and the average variance extracted. The beer attitude's cognitive dimension was very reliable with a Cronbach's α score of .82 and an average variance extracted of .65. The same counts for the beer attitude's affective dimension. We already saw how Cronbach's

alpha coefficient reached a level of .93 with an average variance extracted of .88. The beer attitude's conative component also was very reliable with a Cronbach's α of .89 and an average variance extracted of .82. Thus, individual items as well as the respective underlying dimensions gave proof of substantial degrees of reliability.

3.1.2.5. Discriminant validity

A test for discriminant validity seemed more appropriate this time since the beer attitude's cognitive and affective dimensions were highly correlated (.96). A scale is said to possess discriminant validity if the average variance extracted by the underlying construct exceeds the shared variance (i.e., the squared intercorrelation) with other latent constructs (e.g., Fornell and Larcker 1981). In our measurement model, the squared correlation among the cognitive and the affective dimension (.92) exceeds the variance extracted by the cognitive dimension scale (.65) and by the affective dimension scale (.88).

Therefore, an additional, less stringent analysis of discriminant validity, developed by Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991), was performed. They argue that discriminant validity can be assessed as well by examining whether applying an additional restriction of perfect correlation between two dimensions does not result in a better fit. This can be tested by determining the difference between the χ^2 of the nested model (i.e., the more restricted model with the constraint of perfect correlation between the cognitive and the affective dimension) and the χ^2 of the original model (allowing for free correlation) and dividing this result by the difference in degrees of freedom between the two models (e.g., Sharma 1996). This procedure has also been followed by other scholars working within the coo-field (e.g., Klein et al. 1998; Li et al. 1997). In our case, this alternative test $[(166,449-133,695)/(31-30) = 32,754 > 3,84$ ($\chi^2_{0.95, 1df}$)] did not result in a better model fit⁵⁴. In other words, this test reveals that the additional constraint of perfect correlation between the cognitive and the affective dimensions is not justified. The model assuming free correlation between the two factors fitted the data significantly better than the model constraining the correlation to one. Thus, the beer attitude's cognitive and affective dimensions appear to be two highly correlated but separate factors. For the discriminant validity between the cognitive and the conative dimensions on the one hand, and between the affective and the conative dimensions on the other, the squared correlations between the factors in question did not exceed the average variances extracted by

⁵⁴ Additional goodness-of-fit indicators of the nested model also indicated less model fit with χ^2/df (5,369), GFI (.949), AGFI (.909), CFI (.973), TLI (.961) and RMSEA (.084).

each of the factors individually. This way, the discriminant validity between the scales measuring the various dimensions within the beer attitude concept, was ensured.

Now that we have estimated the measurement models for “Country Image” and “Beer Attitude” of the Spanish sample, we will repeat the same procedure only this time based on the data obtained for the Danish sample.

3.2. DANISH sample

In line with the Spanish sample, we will first concentrate on the measurement model for the Country Image construct. Then we will proceed with the model for the concept of Beer Attitude.

3.2.1. Model for Country Image construct

First we will conduct an exploratory factor analysis in order to get an idea of the structure underlying the Country Image concept. Then, this exploratory model will be subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis in order to check its construct validity.

3.2.1.1. Exploratory factor analysis

As for the Spanish sample, the measurement instrument for the CI-construct consisted of three subscales, each one capturing one of the three components we identified within the CI-concept. In order to get an idea of their underlying structure, a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on each of these subscales taken separately. We started with the nine items supporting the CI’s cognitive component. Results seemed to favour a two-factorial solution. It was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 1,173 and taken together the two factors explained 43,9% of the total variance (or respectively 30,9% and 13%). Table 29 gives an overview of the factor loadings.

Table 29: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Danish cognitive component

Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Culture	,62	
Politics	,78	
Language		,51
History	,60	
Landscape		,71
Climate		,74
Economy	,72	
Religion		,38
People	,44	

Reliability of first factor was unsatisfactory. It had a Cronbach's α score of only .50. Reliability for the second factor was much more acceptable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient reaching a sufficient value of .69. The item "people" did not load substantially on its underlying factor (.44). In addition, it had a loading of .34 on the other dimension. The latter also counts for "history". Although it reaches the minimal value on its own factor (.60), it still loads at a level of .33 on the second factor. This second factor contains two items that do not load in a satisfactory manner on their underlying construct. These are "language" (.51) and "religion" (.38). Overall, the corrected item-total correlations were also rather low (most of them ranging between .38 and .50 for the first factor and values between .25 and .36 for the second) while the minimum level for this criterion is traditionally placed at .50 (e.g., Green et al. 1988; Tabachnik and Fidell 1989).

Thus, on average, we might conclude that the cognitive component of respondents' CI is supported by a somewhat vaguely composed two-dimensional structure. The first factor contains five items (i.e., "culture", "politics", "history", "economy" and "people") that might be captured by the label "Danish socio-economic stereotypes" while the second factor is composed of four items (i.e., "language", "landscape", "climate" and "religion") and therefore can be labeled as grouping "Danish geo-cultural stereotypes".

With regard to the ten-item scale measuring the CI's affective component, results suggested a single-factorial solution with an Eigenvalue of 5,011 and 50,1% of the total variance explained. Cronbach's α was very high, reaching a score of .89. Except for the item "strong" (.51), all components had substantial loadings on their underlying factor. Results are presented in Table 30.

Table 30: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Danish affective component

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Enthusiastic	,79
Interested	,75
Excited	,77
Determined	,68
Inspired	,73
Alert	,62
Active	,78
Strong	,51
Proud	,70
Attentive	,70

The five-item scale measuring the CI's conative component was also supported by a single-factor structure. This solution was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,500 and 50,% of the total variance explained. Cronbach's alpha was satisfactory with a score of .74. As indicated by the results in Table 31, all items except for "shopping" (.42) loaded substantially on the underlying factor.

Table 31: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Danish conative component

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Shopping	,42
Working	,72
Buying products	,71
Doing business	,82
Investing	,80

Thus, exploratory factor analysis suggests that the CI-scale is supported by a four-dimensional structure. The cognitive component consists of two dimensions ("Danish socio-economic stereotypes" and "Danish geo-cultural stereotypes") while the affective as well as the conative components were found to be uni-dimensional.

Before turning to the next stage of analysis, we would like to stress that the objective of this exploratory stage of analysis is not only to determine the structure underlying the product-country image construct, but also to identify any eventual discrepancies which might prevent us from performing a multiple-group analysis. Put differently, the second objective is to reach a maximum of uniformity between the two CI-models for Spanish and Danish samples. Based on previous analyses it appears that for both groups, the CI-models are supported by a four-dimensional structure. Thus, at first sight, no differences worth to be mentioned seem to exist.

However, if we take the model for the Spanish group, it becomes clear that a closer examination of the two-dimensional cognitive component reveals a different internal structure compared to the one obtained for Denmark. More particularly, there are three items pertaining to the cognitive component that should be deleted in order to arrive at two identically structured factors. These are “culture”, “religion” and “people”. Therefore, these three “disturbing” items were dropped. For the rest, no fundamental differences could be detected between the Spanish and Danish CI-models.

Thus, during the second stage of our exploratory factor analysis procedure, we reconsidered the cognitive component of the CI-model obtained for the Danish sample. That is, for a second time we performed a principle component exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation on the cognitive component, but this time, we only took into consideration six of the original nine items. These were “politics”, “language”, “history”, “landscape”, “climate” and “economy”. In line with the previous analysis, results suggest a two-factorial structure with an Eigenvalue of 1,162 and 54,1% (or respectively 34,7% and 19,4%) of the total variance explained. Table 32 presents the factor loadings. All components load substantially on their factor while all values exceed the minimum level of .60, except for “language” (.50). Only “language” (.34) and “history” (.32) have a loading on the other factor that exceeds the maximum level of .15. This indicates the internal structure of the two-dimensional cognitive component is sufficiently transparent. However, Cronbach’s α were found to be rather unsatisfactory with a coefficient of .46 for the first factor and .62 for the second.

Table 32: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the Danish cognitive component

Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Language	,34	,50
Landscape	,04	,75
Climate	,02	,76
Politics	,80	-,06
History	,66	,32
Economy	,75	,10

3.2.1.2. Uni-dimensionality

In order to verify the structure underlying our measurement instrument for CI, a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the remaining 21 items taken together. This was done by means of AMOS 5.0 (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999). In first instance we checked the fitting of individual parameter estimates. All parameter estimates could be considered as reasonable while no excessive values could be detected. Values for standard errors were deemed “appropriate” since they all fell within acceptable ranges. Finally, the estimated parameters were also statistically significant because coefficients for critical ratios all substantially exceeded the 1.96 cut-off level. The model’s overall goodness-of-fit indicators suggested unsatisfactory fit to the data ($\chi^2= 839,049$; $df= 183$; $p= .000$; $\chi^2/df= 4.585$). Together with unacceptable scores for GFI (.867) and CFI (.849) the value for RMSEA (.077) pointed at the rather mediocre fit of the model.

Therefore, our attention was focussed on possible areas of misspecification within the model. We first turned towards the matrix for standardized residuals. Several values exceeding the 2.58 norm were found. As already stated, these might stand for potential multidimensionality within a particular construct. However, no such pattern could be detected. We also checked for the possibility of items being related to the wrong factor. Yet again, no such misspecification could be found. Therefore, we decided to drop the six defective items (i.e., “determined”, “alert”, “active”, “strong”, “shopping” and “working”) from the model. Then, we looked for the potential presence of excessively large modification indices in the sections for covariances and regression weights. However, no modification indices of substantial interest could be found. Thus, the resulting measurement model contained 15 items and consisted of four dimensions. Table 33 presents an overview of the

most important overall goodness-of-fit measures. These clearly indicate that this four-dimensional model has satisfactory goodness-of-fit. Figure 34 visualizes the model more in detail.

Figure 34: Path coefficients in the 4-dimensional model underlying the country image concept for Denmark in our sample

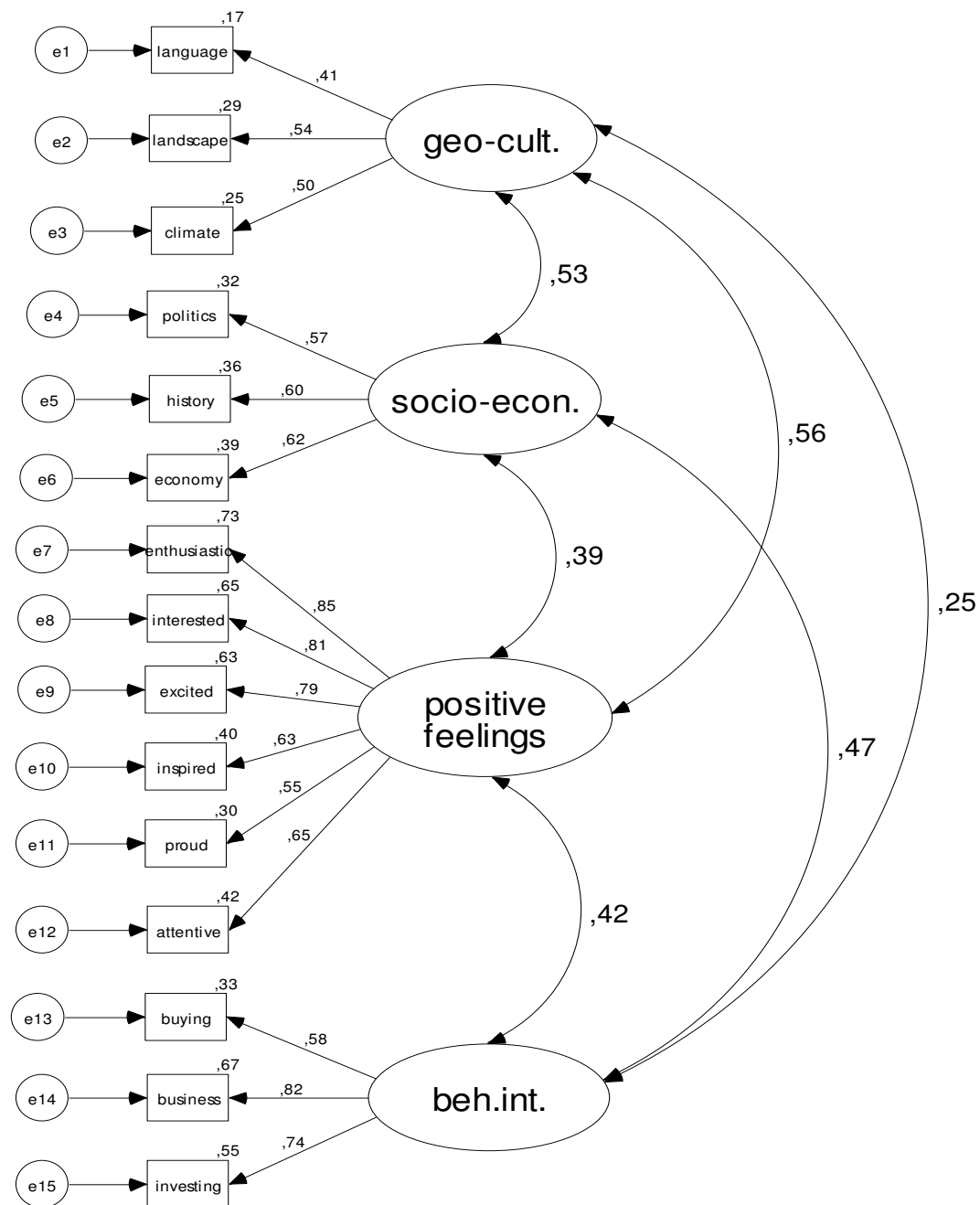


Table 33: Goodness-of-fit indices for the 4-dimensional structure in the Danish country image scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	4-dimensional model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	235,104 (84)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2,799
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	.952
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	.932
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.931
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.945
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.054
Standardized residuals >2.58	No	4
Factor regression coefficients >.50	Yes	14 out of 15

3.2.1.3. Within-method convergent validity

In order to test the model's within-method convergent validity, the values for the factor regression coefficients on the items were checked. These appeared to be statistically significant (scores for critical ratio all exceeded the minimal norm of 1.96). In addition, most of them were substantial with regression coefficients exceeding the traditionally proposed .50 cut-off level, except for the item "language" (.41). Thus, on average, the model's within-method convergent validity was very satisfactory.

3.2.1.4. Reliability

For an individual item to be sufficiently reliable, the value standing for the squared correlation between the item and its underlying construct should reach the lower acceptable bound of .40. Of the 15 items included in our model, eight did not meet this criterion. Most of these were items loading on the cognitive factors (i.e., "language" [.17], "landscape" [.29], "climate" [.25], "politics" [.32], "history" [.36] and "economy" [.39]). The two other items (i.e., "proud" [.30] and "buying products" [.33]) pertained to the "positive feelings" and the "behavioural intentions" factors. Reliability for the factors was verified by means of the composite reliability coefficient and the average variance extracted. As mentioned at former instances, composite reliability scores should be between .60 and .80 and the total variance extracted

should reach at least a value of .50. With regard to the first factor, reliability was found to be rather unsatisfactory with a Cronbach's alpha of .46 and an average variance extracted of .49. The "socio-economic" factor scored slightly better with a Cronbach's α of .62 and an average variance explained of .57. The third factor labeled as "positive feelings" has very satisfactory reliability scores with Cronbach's α of .86 and an average variance extracted of .60. Finally, the "behavioural intentions" factor was also sufficiently reliable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient reaching .75 and an average variance extracted of .67.

3.2.1.5. Discriminant validity

In testing the discriminant validity of the dimensions included in our model, it was verified whether the average variance extracted by the underlying constructs exceeded the shared variance (i.e., the squared intercorrelation) with other latent constructs. It appeared that for each construct in our model, the average variance extracted was larger than the squared intercorrelation with the other underlying factors. Thus, overall, the model's discriminant validity seemed to be guaranteed. We will now turn to the construct validation of the "Beer Attitude" scale.

3.2.2. Model for Beer Attitude construct

In line with the procedure for the CI-concept, the model for Beer Attitude was tested by means of a two-stage procedure. More in detail, an exploratory factor analysis gave us more insight into the structure underlying this construct while a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test for within-method convergent validity, reliability and discriminant validity. We will concentrate first on the outcome of the exploratory factor analysis.

3.2.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis

In order to identify the structure underlying the three subscales measuring the beer attitude construct, a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on each of the sub-scales taken separately. The four-item scale measuring the beer attitude's cognitive component was supported by a uni-dimensional structure. The factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,410 and 60,3% of the total variance explained. All items loaded substantially on their underlying factor as indicated by the factor loadings in Table 34. Cronbach's alpha was satisfactory, reaching a value of .77.

Table 34: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the cognitive component
(Danish beer)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Tasty	,80
Natural	,67
Aromatic	,87
Prestigious	,74

The three-item scale measuring the beer attitude's affective component is also sustained by a uni-dimensional structure. The single-factor solution was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,516 and 83,9% of the total variance explained. Each item loaded sufficiently on the factor and Cronbach's α had a very high coefficient of .90. Factor loadings are presented in Table 35.

Table 35: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the affective component
(Danish beer)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Quality	,88
Likeability	,94
Appeal	,93

The three-item scale measuring the beer attitude's conative component was supported by a single dimensional structure. The factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,395 and 79,8% of the total variance explained. All three components clearly loaded on their factor, as indicated by the coefficients in Table 36. Cronbach's α was high, reaching a score of .87

Table 36: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the conative component
(Danish beer)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Willing	,91
Consider	,92
Chance	,85

3.2.2.2. Uni-dimensionality

We tested the theoretical structure underlying the beer attitude scale by performing a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis on the ten measurement items taken together. In line with previous analyses, this was done by means of the AMOS 5.0 software (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999). We started by checking the fit of the individual parameter estimates of our initial model. Besides being reasonable, parameter estimates were found to be statistically significant while all critical ratios were substantially above the 1.96 minimum level. No excessively large standard errors could be retrieved either. Although individual parameter estimates were found to be fitting well, the overall model clearly lacked good fit to the data ($\chi^2= 246,091$; $df= 32$; $p= .000$; $\chi^2/df= 7,690$). Additional goodness-of-fit indicators also suggested marginally acceptable to even unsatisfactory fitting of the model with GFI (.923), CFI (.946) and RMSEA (.105).

Therefore, the model was checked on potential areas of misspecification. As for the standardized residuals, it appeared that there were only two values exceeding the 2.58 norm. Since no specific pattern for re-specification of the model could be clearly identified, it might be argued that the so-called defective items should be deleted from the model. However, according to Hair et al., the two exceeding standardized residual values identified for our model fall within “[...] the acceptable range of one in 20 residuals exceeding 2.58 strictly by chance.” (Hair et al. 1998: 625). This argument, together with our concern of including as much information as possible in our model, made us decide not to omit any indicators.

Then we verified the modification indices. We found that the modification index scores for the covariance between two pairs of errors were exceedingly large compared to the remaining indexes. In first instance, we re-specified the original model by adding the additional constraint of correlating the errors associated with “natural” and “aromatic”. This

not only resulted in better scores on the goodness-of-fit indicators, but also made our total of exceeding standardized residuals go from two to one. In second instance, we re-specified the model, this time correlating the errors associated with “likeable” and “appealing”. This again improved the goodness-of-fit and thus resulted in what we considered to be our final model. Figure 35 pictures this three-dimensional model and Table 37 presents the results obtained for the most important goodness-of-fit indicators.

Figure 35: Path coefficients in the 3-dimensional model underlying the Danish beer attitude concept in our sample

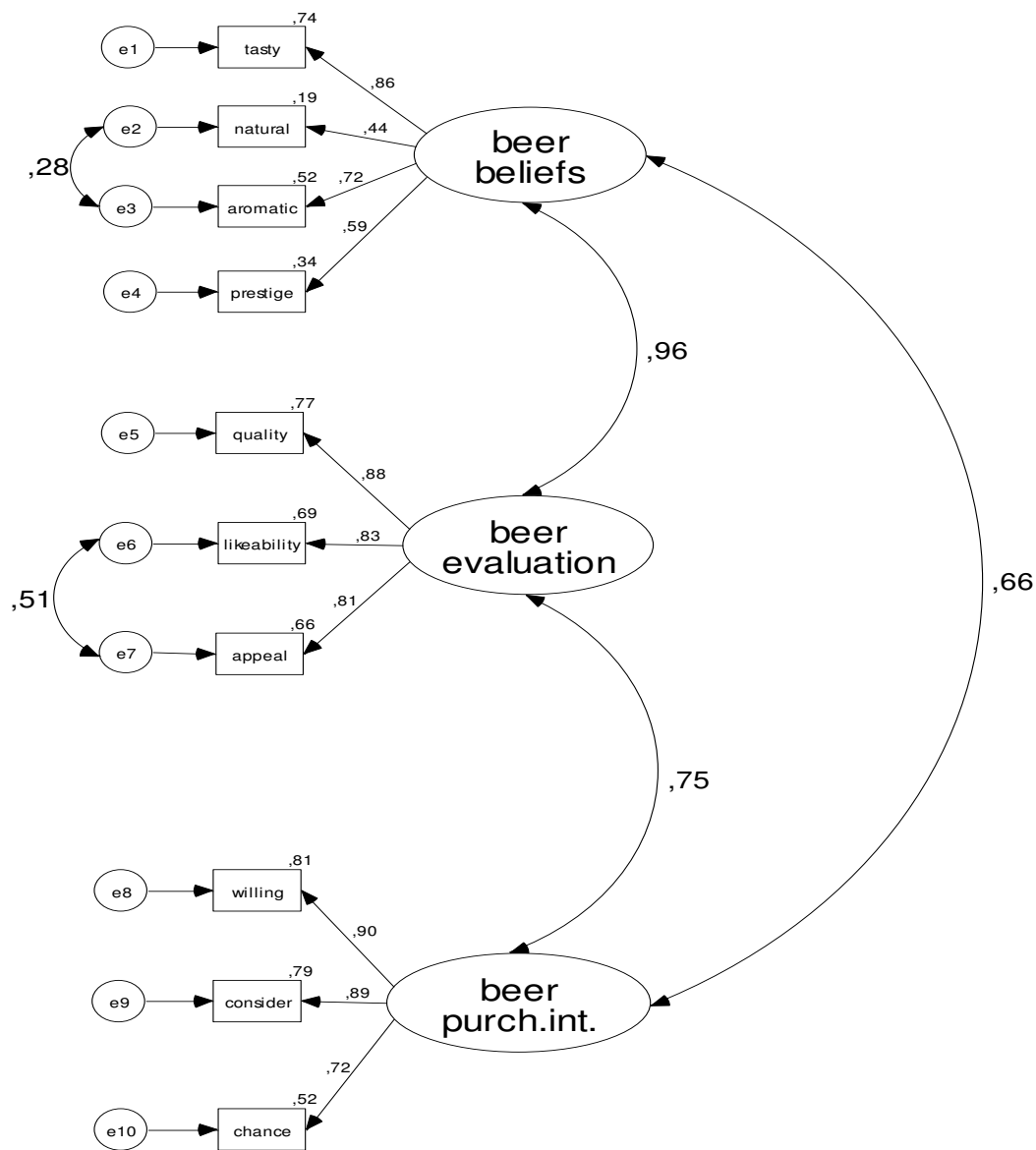


Table 37: Goodness-of-fit indices for the 3-dimensional structure in the Danish beer-attitude scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	3-dimensional model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	116,161 (30)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	3,872
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	.964
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	.934
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.967
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.978
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.069
Standardized residuals >2.58	No	1
Factor regression coefficients >.50	Yes	9 out of 10

3.2.2.3. Within-method convergent validity

As already indicated, our test for within-method convergent validity focusses on the factor regression coefficients on the items included in the model. These should be significant and substantial. The criterion for statistical significance was reached by all of the items while the critical ratios systematically exceeded the 1.96 cut-off level. Overall, they were also found to be substantial since the correlation between the items and their underlying constructs was always larger than .50, except for one item, that is, "natural" (.44).

3.2.2.4. Reliability

For individual items to be sufficiently reliable, the squared correlation with their underlying construct should be at least .40. This criterion was met by all the items in our model, except for the items "natural" (.19) and "prestigious" (.34). Reliability of the factors was assessed by calculating the composite reliability together with the average variance extracted. For the cognitive dimension, composite reliability was satisfactory with a Cronbach's α coefficient that reached .77. The average variance extracted of .60 exceeded the minimum level of .50. As already mentioned, the beer attitude's affective dimension had a very good reliability with a score on Cronbach's α of .90 and an average variance extracted of .84. Finally, the conative dimension was also reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of .87 and an average variance extracted of .80.

3.2.2.5. Discriminant validity

In assessing a scale's discriminant validity, it is verified whether the average variance extracted by the underlying construct exceeds the shared variance (i.e., the squared intercorrelation) with other latent constructs. Because of their high correlation (.96), our attention was focused more particularly on the cognitive and affective dimensions. Since the squared intercorrelation (.92) was larger than the average variances extracted by the two factors (respectively .60 and .84), it could not be ensured that these two constructs were to be seen as fully separated. Therefore, we performed a second test for discriminant validity. As previously explained, we checked whether a nested model (with the additional constraint of perfect correlation between these two factors) resulted in a significantly better fit. This can be done by determining the difference between the χ^2 of the nested model and the χ^2 of the original model and dividing this result by the difference in degrees of freedom between the two models. The outcome of this test $[(127,393 - 116,161) / (31 - 30) = 11,232 > 3,84 (\chi^2_{0.95, 1df})]$ indicated that the nested model did not result in better goodness-of-fit⁵⁵. In other words, the cognitive and affective factors can be seen as two highly correlated but separated dimensions within the beer attitude concept. No further problems concerning discriminant validity were encountered for the beer attitude scale.

Now that we have estimated the measurement models for "Country Image" and "Beer Attitude" for both our samples taken separately, the next step towards creating our structural models will be to check the invariance of these models across the two groups. This will be done in the following two sections. First we will focus on the measurement invariance of the models for the Country Image construct.

3.3. Measurement invariance of models for Country Image construct

As argued by Verlegh (2001: 70) measures have to be invariant across the two samples in order to be capable of estimating meaningful structural parameters reflecting relationships between latent variables in each group. According to Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), a meaningful comparison of structural relations across groups requires more specifically that configural and metric invariance be assured. While configural invariance refers to the invariance of the factor structures across groups, metric invariance is somewhat more stringent in that it stands for invariance of the factor loadings. Ideally, models should be fully

⁵⁵ Additional goodness-of-fit indicators of the nested model also indicated the loss of overall fit with χ^2/df (4,109); GFI (.961); AGFI (.931); TLI (.965); CFI (.976); RMSEA (.072).

invariant. However, as argued by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998: 81) such full measurement invariance frequently does not hold in practical applications. In a situation where full invariance cannot be guaranteed, the researcher should at least ascertain what Byrne (2001: 204) refers to as the model's "partial measurement invariance". More in detail, such partial invariance allows for a restricted number of parameters to vary between groups. If we turn to the CI-models we obtained for our two samples (see Figures 32 and 34), then it immediately becomes apparent that these two models will only be "partially invariant", while the model for the Spanish sample varies from the Danish model in that it has one additional parameter, that is, the error covariance between "enthusiastic" and "excited". In line with the procedure described by Byrne (2001), tests for configural and metric invariance between the CI-models for Spain and Denmark will be executed with this particular parameter estimated freely for the Spanish model while constrained to zero for the Danish model.

Configural invariance is tested by simultaneously estimating a model in which the factor structure is identical across both groups and where factor loadings are allowed to vary except for one so-called "marker" item per construct for which the loading was fixed at unity. In line with the advice of Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998) the same items across both groups were selected as markers. This model of partial configural invariance had a good fit [χ^2 (167) = 488,001; CFI = .94; TLI = .93; RMSEA = .040]. Metric invariance is checked by means of a more restricted and thus "nested" model where factor loadings are constrained equal across groups. This model performed slightly worse in terms of chi-square [χ^2 (178) = 505,403], although CFI (.94), TLI (.93) and RMSEA (.039) remained equal. Additionally, it appears that the more formal test (e.g., Byrne 2001; Sharma 1996) of determining the difference in chi-square between the nested model (with factor loadings constrained equal) and the unconstrained model (with factor loadings left open to vary) and dividing this result by the difference in degrees of freedom between the two models indicated the nested model fitted the data significantly better than the unconstrained baseline model [(505,403 – 488,001) / (178 – 167) = 1,582 < 19,68 ($\chi^2_{0.95}$, 11df)]. Therefore, metric invariance of the CI-models obtained for the Spanish and Danish groups can be ascertained. It is this model of metric invariance that will be used for subsequent analyses. Composite reliabilities, factor variances explained as well as standardized loadings for the Country Image model are presented in Table 38.

Table 38: Standardized factor loadings, composite reliabilities (C.R.) and variances explained (V.E.) for CI-model of the BEER survey

		SPAIN			DENMARK		
		C.R.	V.E.	Loading	C.R.	V.E.	Loading
Geo-cultural stereotypes	Language	.68	.62	.52	.46	.49	.38
	Landscape			.77			.53
	Climate			.69			.54
Socio-economic stereotypes	Politics	.50	.51	.53	.62	.57	.58
	History			.43			.56
	Economy			.60			.66
Positive feelings	Enthusiastic	.82	.55	.78	.86	.60	.83
	Interested			.82			.81
	Excited			.72			.80
	Inspired			.53			.65
	Proud			.45			.55
	Attentive			.65			.68
Behavioural intentions	Buying products	.75	.67	.56	.75	.67	.58
	Doing business			.81			.83
	Investing			.78			.73

3.4. Measurement invariance of models for Beer Attitude construct

In line with the procedure followed for the CI-models, the measurement models for the Beer Attitude construct were tested for their configural and metric invariance. Configural invariance was checked by means of a simultaneously estimated model where factor structure was identical across groups and where the same items were selected as markers. This model had a good fit [$\chi^2(60) = 249,856$; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .051]. The more stringent model of metric invariance with factor loadings constrained to be equal across groups scored somewhat worse on the chi-square statistic [$\chi^2(67) = 258,600$] but additional goodness-of-fit indicators remained equal or even improved with CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .048. Also the difference in chi-square between both models divided by the difference in degrees of

freedom indicated that it was justified to constrain factor loadings equal across both samples $[(258,600 - 249,856) / (67 - 60) = 1,25 < 14,07 (\chi^2_{0.95}, 7df)]$. Consequently, this model of metric invariance was retained for further analyses. Scores for the factors' composite reliability, total variances explained and factor loadings are reported below in Table 39.

Table 39: Standardized factor loadings, composite reliabilities (C.R.) and variances explained (V.E.) for Beer Attitude model of the BEER survey

		SPAIN			DENMARK		
		C.R.	V.E.	Loading	C.R.	V.E.	Loading
Beer beliefs	Tasty	.82	.65	.92	.77	.60	.86
	Natural			.44			.41
	Aromatic			.76			.73
	Prestigious			.68			.57
Beer evaluation	Quality	.93	.88	.94	.90	.84	.88
	Likeability			.87			.82
	Appeal			.85			.79
Beer purchase intentions	Willing	.89	.82	.90	.87	.80	.90
	Consider			.88			.89
	Chance			.78			.72

Now that the measurement models for the beer survey have been tested on measurement invariance, the same procedure will be retaken for the DVD survey.

4. Measurement models: DVD survey

The only difference with the analyses for measurement models of the beer survey is that in this case, the two constructs for which measurement models will have to be developed are "Country Image" and "DVD Attitude" instead of "Beer Attitude". First, our attention goes to the measurement models of the Spanish sample.

4.1. SPANISH sample

For the Spanish as well as for the Danish sample taken separately, measurement models for “Country Image” and “DVD Attitude” will be developed. First we will concentrate on the model measuring the CI-construct.

4.1.1. Model for Country Image construct

With regard to the CI- measurement model for the Spanish sample of the DVD survey, our comments will be rather brief in that it is a copy of the model developed for the CI-construct of the beer survey’s Spanish sample. This is due to the fact that we are dealing with the same sample (616 respondents) participating in both surveys (beer and DVD-players). Consequently, for more insight into the development and estimation of this model we refer to section 3.1.1. of the present chapter.

4.1.2. Model for DVD Attitude construct

For the DVD Attitude construct however a measurement model still has to be developed. We will start with the exploratory factor analysis so that we have a first indication of the factorial structure underlying this concept. Then we will proceed with a confirmatory factor analysis in order to further estimate and validate the exploratory model.

4.1.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis

In order to examine the factorial structure underlying our measurement scale for the DVD attitude concept, a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on each of its sub-scales. The four items measuring the cognitive dimension of the DVD attitude appear to load on one single factor with an Eigenvalue of 2,894 and 72,3% of the total variance explained. Cronbach’s alpha reached a value of .87. Table 40 presents the factor loadings. These clearly indicate that the four components all loaded substantially on their underlying dimension with values exceeding the .60 norm.

Table 40: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the cognitive component
(Spanish DVD)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Durability	,83
Reliability	,93
Performances	,93
Easiness of use	,70

With regard to the DVD attitude's affective component, comparable results were obtained. The three measurement-items substantially loaded on a uni-dimensional underlying factor with Eigenvalue of 2,544 and 84,8% of the total variance explained. Cronbach's alpha was very satisfactory (.91). Table 41 presents the factor loadings.

Table 41: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the affective component
(Spanish DVD)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Quality	,91
Likeability	,95
Appeal	,91

The three items measuring the DVD attitude's conative component also loaded on a single factor. Eigenvalue was at a level of 2,486 with a total variance explained of 82,9%. Coefficient for Cronbach's α was substantially above the minimum level of acceptance (.90). In line with previous dimensions, factor loadings all reached high values. They are presented in Table 42.

Table 42: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the conative component (Spanish DVD)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Willing	,92
Consider	,94
Chance	,88

Thus, overall, the DVD attitude construct seems to be supported by a three-dimensional structure.

4.1.2.2. Uni-dimensionality

A maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the ten-item instrument measuring the DVD attitude concept. In line with the aforementioned analyses, this was done in AMOS 5.0 (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999). Our initial three-dimensional model was first tested on the traditional fit criteria for individual parameter estimates. Not only were they reasonable, but in addition, parameter estimates appeared to be statistically significant with critical ratios all substantially exceeding the 1.96 norm. The values for the standard errors were also found to be appropriate since no substantially excessive scores could be detected. With regard to the overall goodness-of-fit, the model scored relatively well ($\chi^2=148,091$; $df= 32$; $p= .000$; $\chi^2/df= 4,628$). Although the coefficients for GFI (.954) and CFI (.978) indicate satisfactory model fit scores, the RMSEA (.077) suggested there only was a mediocre model-fit.

Therefore, we checked for any possible misspecifications within the model. In first instance, the standardized residual coefficients were examined. However, no exceeding values could be detected, indicating that our model was free of any potential multi-dimensionality within the factors previously identified. In second instance, we had a look at the modification indices. The index for one of the error covariances (i.e., error between “likeable” and “appealing”) immediately drew our attention while it substantially exceeded the values of the other indexes. Therefore, we re-specified the initial model by having this particular parameter freely estimated. The result was a model that fitted substantially better than the original one.

Figure 36 pictures the re-specified model and Table 43 presents an overview of the most important overall goodness-of-fit measures.

Figure 36: Path coefficients in the 3-dimensional model underlying the Spanish DVD attitude concept in our sample

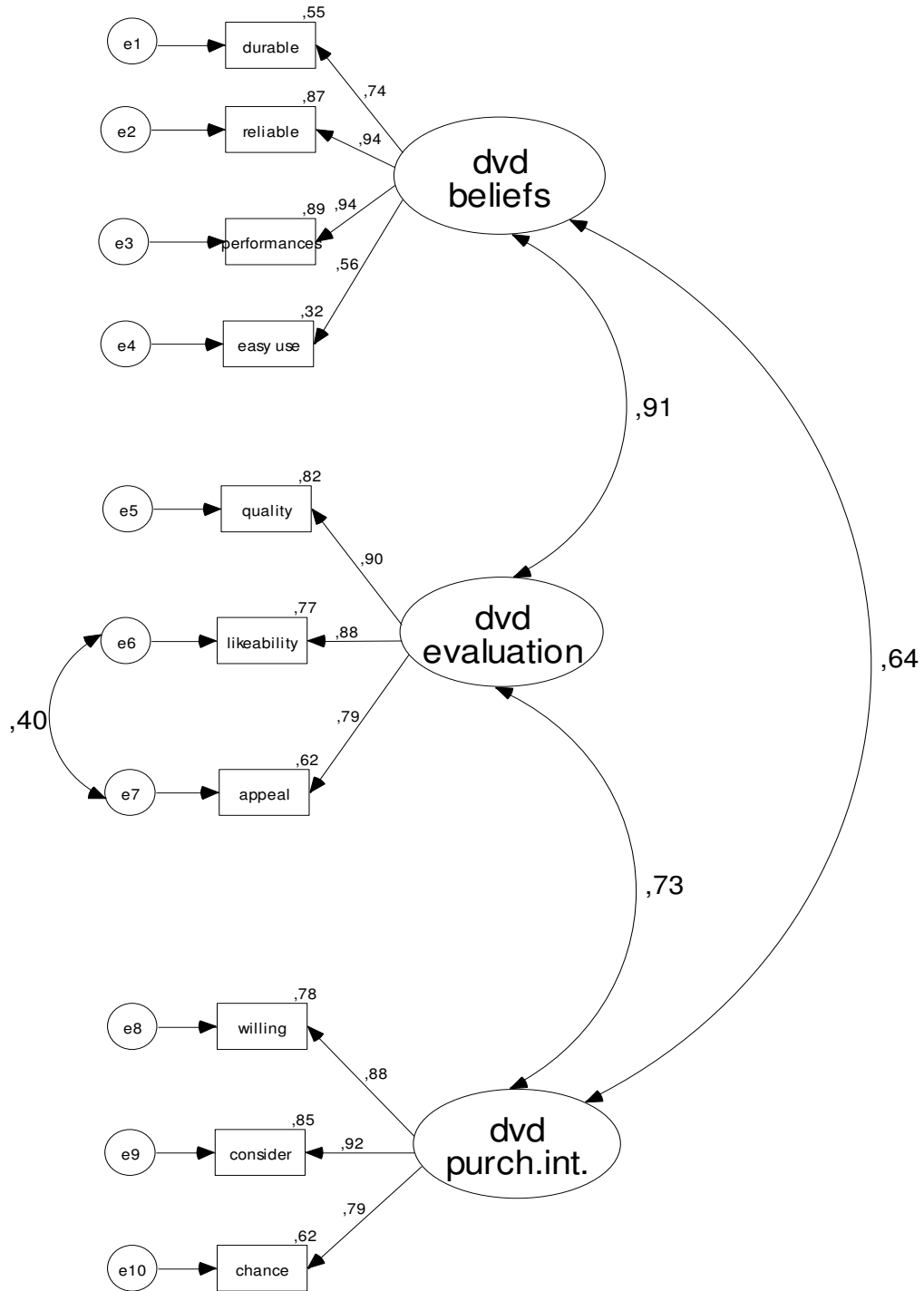


Table 43: Goodness-of-fit indices for the 3-dimensional structure in the Spanish DVD-attitude scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	3-dimensional model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	89,980 (31)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2,903
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	.973
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	.951
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.983
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.989
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.056
Standardized residuals >2.58	No	No
Factor regression coefficients >.50	Yes	10 out of 10

4.1.2.3. Within-method convergent validity

In line with previous analyses, we verified whether the factor regression coefficients are statistically significant and substantial. In our three-dimensional DVD attitude model, all factor regression scores exceeded the .50 norm. Consequently, they can be considered to be substantial. Moreover, they seemed to be highly significant because critical ratios considerably exceeded the 1.96 minimum level. This supports the model's within-method convergent validity.

4.1.2.4. Reliability

With the condition of sufficient within-method convergent validity being fulfilled, the reliability for the individual items was tested. Of the ten items included in our measurement model, only the item "easiness of use" did not appear to be sufficiently reliable. The squared correlation between this item and its underlying factor (.32) did not reach the proposed cut-off level of .40. Composite reliability was also well supported. As already mentioned, the cognitive factor had a high Cronbach's α coefficient (.87) with an average variance extracted of .72. The affective dimension also had a substantial score on the Cronbach's alpha (.91)

with an average variance explained of .85. Finally, the conative factor had a Cronbach's alpha reaching .90 with an average variance extracted of .83.

4.1.2.5. Discriminant validity

Figure 36 shows a very high correlation between the DVD attitude's cognitive and affective dimensions. Therefore, a first test for discriminant validity was conducted. As previously discussed, this initial test consisted in verifying whether the shared variance (i.e., the squared intercorrelation) between these two constructs was smaller/larger than the average variance extracted by each construct. It appeared that, although the squared correlation between the two dimensions (.83) was smaller than the average variance extracted by the affective dimension (.85), it exceeded the average variance extracted by the cognitive dimension (.72).

Given this "questionable" result, another test on discriminant validity was performed $[(92,856 - 89,980) / (32 - 31) = 2,876 < 3,84 (\chi^2_{0.95}, 1df)]$. It revealed that the additional constraint of perfect correlation between the two dimensions might be justified while the initial model assuming free correlation between the two factors did not fit the data significantly better than the nested model where the correlation was constrained to one⁵⁶. Thus, the fact that the cognitive and the affective dimensions are clearly separate might be questioned. However, discriminant validity did not appear to be a problem between the cognitive and conative dimensions on the one hand, and the affective and the conative dimensions on the other. That is, squared correlations between these constructs were always smaller than the average variance extracted by each construct. Throughout the following section, measurement models obtained for the Danish sample will be discussed.

4.2. DANISH sample

In line with the approach for the Spanish sample we will first concentrate on the measurement model for the Country Image construct and continue with the model for the DVD Attitude concept.

⁵⁶ The nested model had goodness-of-fit scores ($\chi^2/df= 2,902$; GFI=.972; AGFI= .951; TLI= .983; CFI= .988; RMSEA= .056) which were almost identical to the ones obtained for the initial model.

4.2.1. Model for Country Image construct

The same remark as the one made for the model measuring the CI-construct in the Spanish sample can be made for the Danish group. That is, the CI-measurement model for the Danish group of the DVD survey corresponds exactly to the CI-model obtained for the Danish sample of the beer survey while both samples are in fact the same. Thus, for more insight into the development of the model measuring the CI-construct in the Danish group of the DVD survey, we refer to section 3.2.1. of the present chapter.

4.2.2. Model for DVD Attitude construct

In developing a measurement model for the DVD Attitude concept we first conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the data in order to have somewhat more insight into the structure underlying this construct. Subsequently, we subjected this exploratory model to a confirmatory factor analysis. This allowed us to test the model's construct validity.

4.2.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis

The structures underlying the three sub-scales that constitute our instrument measuring the DVD attitude concept have been explored by means of a principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation, performed on each sub-scale taken separately. The four-item scale measuring the DVD attitude's cognitive component was clearly supported by a uni-dimensional structure. The single-factor solution was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,884 and 72,1% of the total variance explained. As illustrated by Table 44, each item loaded substantially on the underlying factor. Cronbach's alpha reached a very satisfactory score of .87.

Table 44: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the cognitive component (Danish DVD)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Durability	,81
Reliability	,90
Performances	,92
Easiness of use	,74

The three-item scale measuring the DVD attitude's affective component was also supported by a uni-dimensional factor structure. The factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,496 and 83,2% of the total variance explained. All three items loaded substantially on their factor. Cronbach's alpha was very high (.90). Factor loadings are presented in Table 45.

Table 45: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the affective component (Danish DVD)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Quality	,90
Likeability	,94
Appeal	,90

The DVD attitude's conative component was measured by a three-item scale. Also in this case, the exploratory factor analysis procedure suggested a single-factor structure. One factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2,439 explaining 81,3% of the total variance. All items loaded substantially on the factor and Cronbach's α coefficient was very high (.88). Table 46 presents the factor loadings.

Table 46: Principal component factor loadings with varimax rotated solution for the conative component (Danish DVD)

Component Matrix

	Component
	1
Willing	,91
Consider	,94
Chance	,86

4.2.2.2. Uni-dimensionality

To test the proposed three-dimensional structure underlying our DVD-player attitude scale, a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis in AMOS 5.0 (e.g., Arbuckle and Wothke 1999) was performed on the ten measurement items taken together. First the fitting of the model's individual parameter estimates was verified. These parameter estimates were found

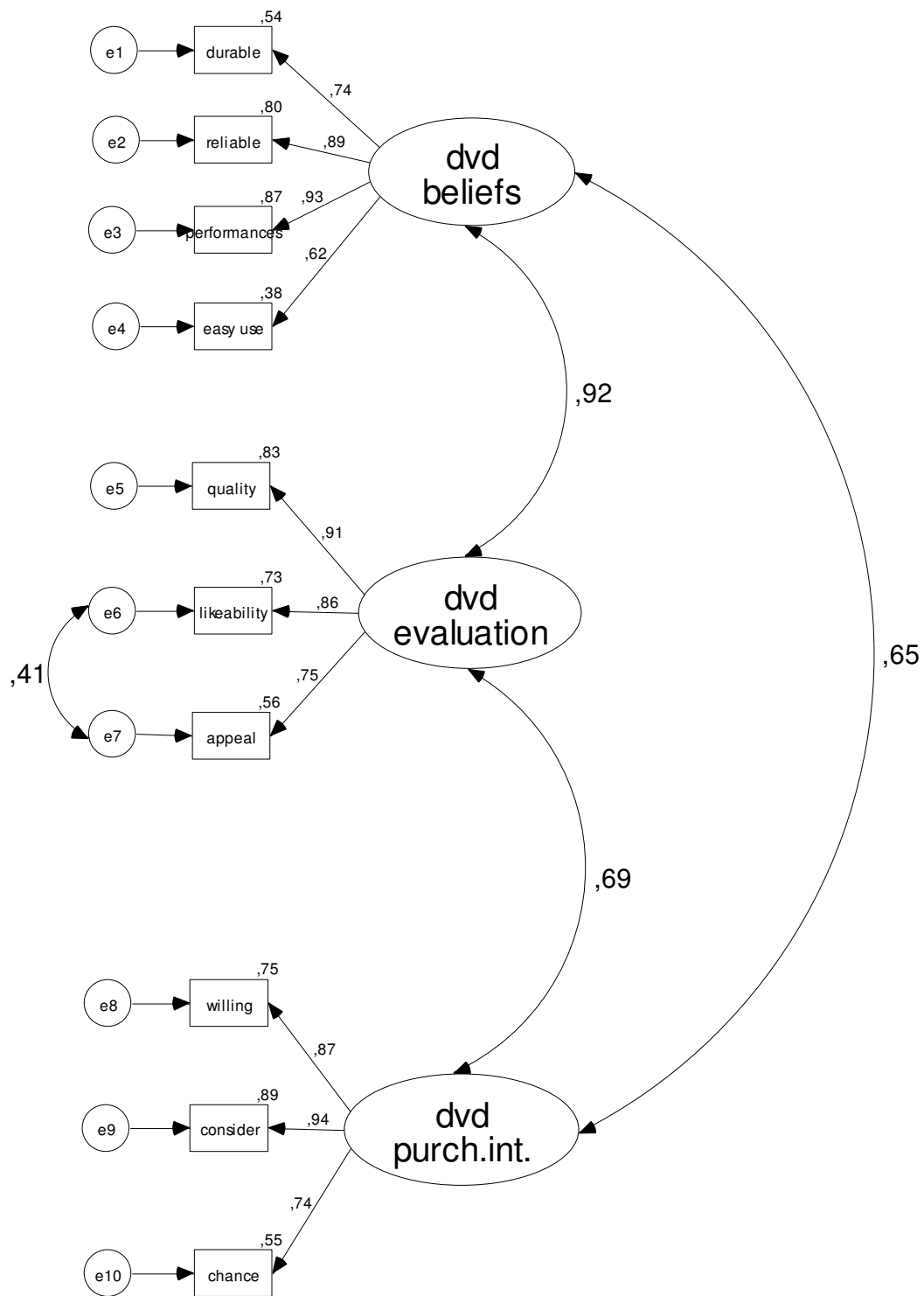
to be reasonable and statistically significant with critical ratio values all exceeding the 1.96 minimum level. In addition, standard errors were appropriate since no excessive coefficients could be detected. Overall goodness-of-fit for the initial model was rather unsatisfactory ($\chi^2=184,987$; $df=32$; $p=.000$; $\chi^2/df=5,781$). Additional goodness-of-fit indicators also suggested a mediocre fit of the model to the data with GFI (.940), CFI (.968) and RMSEA (.089).

Therefore we examined the model more closely and checked for any potential misspecifications. In first instance, we verified whether there were any standardized residuals that exceeded the 2.58 cut-off level. This was not the case, meaning that our model can be considered as free of any multidimensionality within the factors we initially identified and that the items were correctly related to the factors. In second instance, we had a closer look at the modification indices. We found the index standing for the covariance between error 6 and 7 (i.e., the errors associated with “likeable” and “appealing”) to be excessively large. Consequently, we re-specified our original model by allowing it to freely estimate this parameter. This additional constraint resulted in significantly better goodness-of-fit. Figure 37 pictures the three-dimensional model measuring the DVD Attitude concept. Table 47 presents the scores for the most important goodness-of-fit indicators.

Table 47: Goodness-of-fit indices for the 3-dimensional structure in the Danish DVD-player attitude scale

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	3-dimensional model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	114,783 (31)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	3,703
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>.90	.964
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	>.90	.935
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.975
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.983
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.067
Standardized residuals >2.58	No	No
Factor regression coefficients >.50	Yes	10 out of 10

Figure 37 Path coefficients in the 3-dimensional model underlying the Danish DVD-player attitude concept in our sample



4.2.2.3. Within-method convergent validity

In order to test the model's within-method convergent validity, the factor regression coefficients on the items are verified. These should reach the minimum level of .50. It appeared that all coefficients largely exceeded this cut-off level. Moreover, factor regression coefficients were statistically significant with critical ratios substantially above the 1.96 norm. These results support the model's within-method convergent validity.

4.2.2.4. Reliability

For each item individually, satisfactory reliability could be assessed, except for the item "easy to use" (.38). However, the squared correlation between this item and its underlying construct was very close to the norm of .40. The reliability of the factors was verified by means of their composite reliability and the average variance extracted. For the cognitive factor, composite reliability was very high with a Cronbach's α of (.87) and the average variance extracted by the factor (.72) also substantially exceeded the .50 norm. The affective factor also had very satisfactory composite reliability with a Cronbach's α reaching .90. Also for this factor, the average variance extracted (.83) was largely sufficient. Finally, the conative factor had good composite reliability too with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .88. The average variance extracted (.81) was substantially exceeding the .50 cutpoint.

4.2.2.5. Discriminant validity

As illustrated by Figure 37, the cognitive and affective factors are highly correlated (.92). Therefore, we checked for discriminant validity. This was done by verifying whether the shared variance (i.e., the squared intercorrelation) between the two factors was smaller/larger than the average variance extracted by each of the factors taken separately. It appeared that the squared correlation (.84) exceeded the average variance extracted by both factors (respectively .72 and .83). We subjected the two factors to an additional test for discriminant validity. We examined whether an additional constraint of perfect correlation between the two factors would result in significantly better goodness-of-fit. This was done by dividing the difference between the χ^2 of the nested model and the χ^2 of the initial model by the difference in degrees of freedom between the two models. The result of this test $[(120,639 - 114,783)/(32-31) = 5,856 > 3,84 (\chi^2_{0.95}, 1df)]$ indicated that the nested model did not fit the data better

than the model where the correlation between the two factors was freely estimated⁵⁷. Therefore, the cognitive and affective factors can be seen as two highly correlated, but separate dimensions within the DVD-player attitude concept.

With measurement models for each group taken separately being estimated, we proceed towards the next stage of our analyses, that is, verifying whether the models measuring the Country Image and DVD Attitude are invariant across both samples.

4.3. Measurement invariance of models for Country Image construct

Since for the DVD survey, the models measuring the CI-construct were identical compared to the ones developed for the beer survey, there was no need to repeat the tests for configural and metric invariance. For more detailed information we simply refer to section 3.3. of the present chapter.

4.4. Measurement invariance of models for DVD Attitude construct

As already explained, configural invariance across groups is done by means of a model where the factor structure is identical and where the same item per construct is selected as a marker. In case of the DVD Attitude concept, this model resulted in good fit [χ^2 (62) = 204,764; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .043]. The more stringent model of metric invariance is nested in the previous model and has factor loadings constrained equal across groups. This model performed slightly worse in terms of chi-square [χ^2 (69) = 215,145] although additional goodness-of-fit indicators remained almost equal with CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .042. The more formal test of calculating the difference in chi-square between the two models and dividing it by the difference in degrees of freedom indicated that it was justified to have the factor loadings constrained equal across both samples [(215,145 – 204,764) / (69 -62) = 1,483 < 14,07 ($\chi^2_{0.95}$, 7df)]. Therefore, the model of metric invariance was retained for further analysis. The factors' composite reliabilities, total variances explained as well as the factor loadings are presented on in Table 48.

⁵⁷ The goodness-of-fit indicators of the nested model (χ^2/df = 3,770; GFI= .961; AGFI= .933; TLI= .974; CFI= .981; RMSEA= .067) indicate worse overall fit of the model to the data.

Table 48: Standardized factor loadings, composite reliabilities (C.R.) and variances explained (V.E.) for DVD Attitude model of the DVD survey

		SPAIN			DENMARK		
		C.R.	V.E.	Loading	C.R.	V.E.	Loading
DVD beliefs	Durable	.87	.72	.75	.87	.72	.72
	Reliable			.94			.89
	Performances			.94			.93
	Easiness of use			.58			.60
DVD evaluation	Quality	.91	.85	.91	.90	.83	.90
	Likeability			.87			.87
	Appeal			.78			.76
DVD purchase intentions	Willing	.90	.83	.88	.88	.81	.87
	Consider			.92			.94
	Chance			.79			.74

With the measurement models for both surveys being estimated, the next step of our analysis procedure will be to translate these measurement models into structural models. Estimation of the latter will allow us to test the hypotheses. First we will focus on the structural models of the beer survey.

5. Structural models: BEER survey

Translation of the measurement models into structural models was done by adding pathways between the different latent constructs for which measurement models had been previously developed. More in detail, these paths stand for relationships we theoretically hypothesized to occur. In case of the beer survey, the structural model is based on the two multi-dimensional constructs, that is, “Country Image” (four dimensions) and “Beer Attitude” (three dimensions). Throughout the following section we will concentrate on the estimation of the structural model in which these two constructs are connected with each other.

5.1. Structural overall model for CI-effects on beer attitude

A figure picturing the structural overall model for the effects exerted by the Country Image on Beer Attitude can be retrieved in Appendix 6.1. We refer to this model as the “overall” model because of the fact that both constructs have been fully integrated in the structural model. That is, each construct is represented in its full complexity. More particularly, we can see that the CI-construct consists of four constituent components while Beer Attitude consists of three underlying dimensions. Appendix 6.1. also presents the goodness-of-fit indicators of this structural overall model. Table 49 gives an overview of the structural parameter estimates. In line with the procedure followed by Verlegh (2001: 77), these parameters were constrained to be equal across both groups (i.e., Spain and Denmark).

The first part of Table 49 contains twelve paths standing for the effects that might be exerted by the CI. In fact, the core of our dissertation is concentrated on these particular relationships. If we have a closer look now at the results obtained for the “overall” model, it is striking to establish how the majority of potential CI-effects fails to reach statistical significance. Only five out of twelve effects were found to be significant. Additionally, it can be noticed that on average, the magnitude of the CI-effects remains low. This way, the most powerful effect has a coefficient situated only at a level of .16 (Behavioural intentions → beer purchase intentions). This is in sharp contrast with the much more powerful effects generated by product-specific beliefs and evaluation. These are represented in the third part of Table 49. For instance, the effect exerted by beer beliefs on beer evaluation has a size-coefficient of 1.48. In addition, it can be seen how beer evaluation has a substantial impact on beer purchase intentions (.87).

Thus, apparently, the formation of these product-specific attitudinal dispositions depends more fundamentally on the other components supporting the beer attitude-construct than on the various components underlying the internally stored images about the country where the beer has been made. Put somewhat differently, effects generated by product-specific attitudinal dispositions seem to be overshadowing the majority of effects that might be triggered by the CI's constituent components. In order to prevent the risk of losing too much “significant” information on the occurrence of CI-effects, we thought it would be more fruitful to leave out of consideration effects exerted reciprocally between the product attitude's three constituent dimensions. This was done by decomposing the structural overall model into three separately estimated sub-models with one “autonomous” model for each of the product attitude's three constituent components.

Table 49: Structural parameter estimates for overall model of the BEER survey

PATH	b**	t
Geo-cult → beer beliefs	.02	0.42
Geo-cult → beer evaluation	.04	1.06
Geo-cult → beer purch.int.	.04	0.81
Socio-econ → beer beliefs	.12*	2.38
Socio-econ → beer evaluation	-.12*	-2.61
Socio-econ → beer purch.int.	.05	0.84
Posfeel → beer beliefs	.11*	2.89
Posfeel → beer evaluation	-.03	-0.76
Posfeel → beer purch.int.	.05	1.31
Behint → beer beliefs	.16*	4.55
Behint → beer evaluation	.08*	2.55
Behint → beer purch.int.	.06	1.40
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	8.99
Geo-cult → behint	-.11	-1.86
Socio-econ → posfeel	.24*	4.85
Socio-econ → behint	.48*	7.32
Posfeel → behint	.39*	7.75
Beer beliefs → beer evaluation	1.48*	22.24
Beer beliefs → beer purch.int.	-.44	-1.44
Beer evaluation → beer purch.int.	.87*	4.33

* t > 1.96 , b significant at $\alpha = .05$

** b-values stand for unstandardized coefficients

Although one might object that it would be less interesting for marketers to study CI-effects on each of the product attitude's constituent components taken separately, we think this is not necessarily the case because of the fact that, rarely, marketing stimuli (like the coo-cue) are used by marketers in order to affect several of the receiver's attitudinal dispositions at the same time. That is, most often marketing stimuli are used in function of one specific communication goal. This way, "informative" campaigns directed towards consumers' "beliefs" about a product have to be distinguished from "valuative" or "incitive" ones where the objectives are respectively to change a consumer's evaluation of a product or to influence his product-specific behaviour. Since each approach asks for a different communication

strategy, it seems reasonable to study CI-effects within models where these different communication goals (informing, valuating or inciting) are separated from each other.

Thus, based on previous thoughts, the hypotheses will be tested by means of three separately estimated sub-models. More in detail, the first model will concentrate on the effects exerted by CI on respondents' beliefs about beer while the second model will be dealing with CI-effects on subjects' evaluation of beer. Finally, the third sub-model will analyze CI-effects on respondents' purchase intentions towards foreign-sourced beer.

5.2. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on beer beliefs

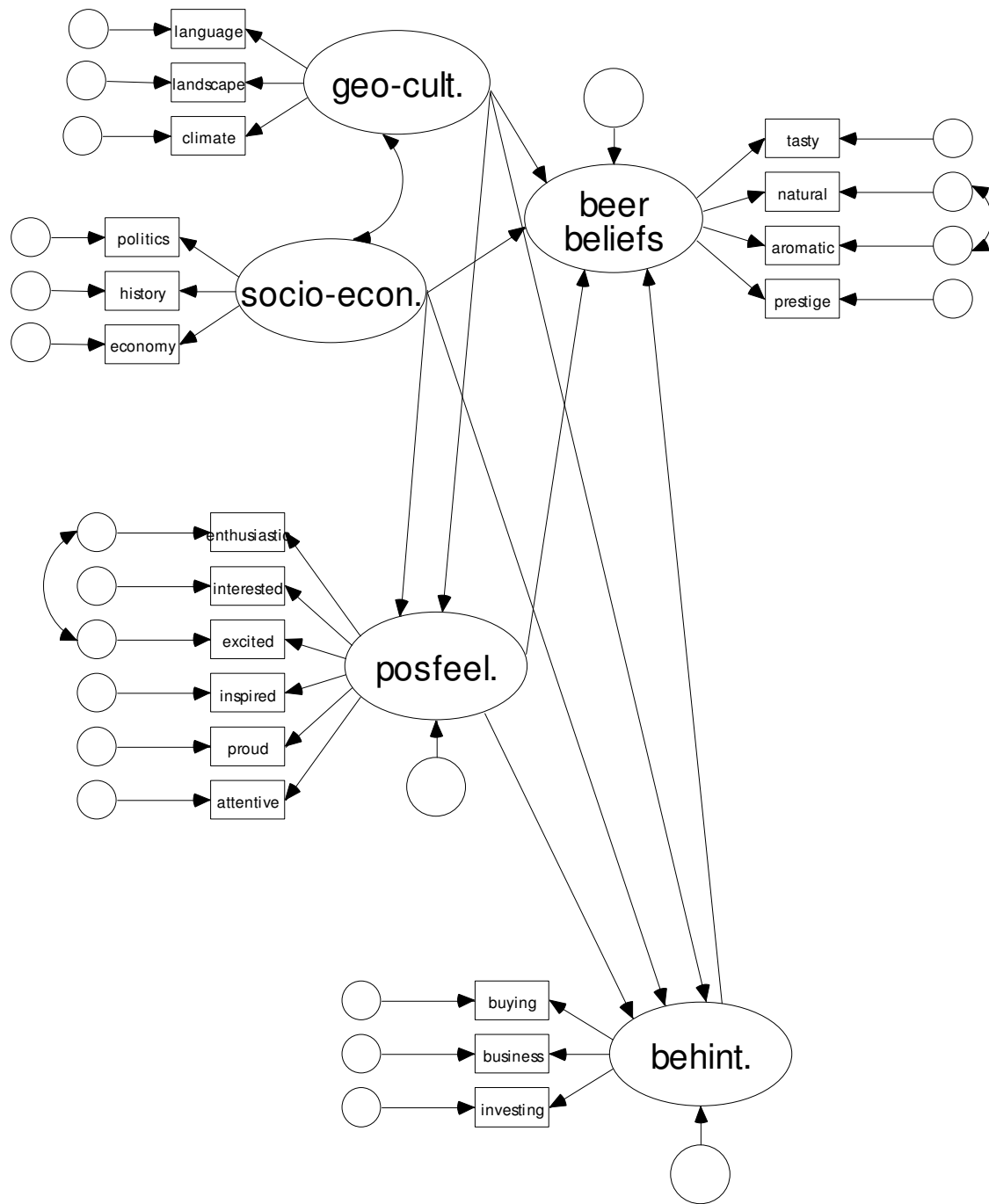
Estimating structural equation models within a multiple-group design is generally executed in two stages (e.g., Byrne 2001). In first instance, a baseline model (without equality constraints imposed for the structural paths) is simultaneously estimated for the different groups. This is done in order to check whether the model fits the data well. In second instance, it is verified whether the model is “structurally equivalent” across groups. This is done by having the model re-estimated only this time with the additional constraint of equality for the structural paths. Thus, in fact this constrained model should be seen as nested in the previous one. If these additional equality constraints do not deteriorate the fit of the model, structural equivalence of the model can be ascertained. In fact, this test can be seen as some kind of cross-validation of the causal structure. Figure 38 pictures the first structural sub-model⁵⁸. Table 50 presents the goodness-of-fit indicators of the unconstrained baseline model. As can be seen, it appeared that this model fitted the data very well.

Table 50: Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural baseline model analyzing CI-effect on beer beliefs

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Baseline model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	710,913 (292)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.435
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.93
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.94
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.034

⁵⁸ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

Figure 38: Hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on beer beliefs



Now that the baseline model has been found to fit the data well, we will pass on to the next stage of our analysis. This will be a test of the model's structural equivalence across the Spanish and Danish samples. Once this has been established, we can proceed with the verification of our hypotheses.

5.2.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on beer beliefs

As already mentioned, structural equivalence can be tested by means of a simultaneously estimated model of which the parameters for the causal paths are constrained to be equal across groups. As such, this constrained model is nested in the baseline model. In order to verify whether the nested model fits the data better or not, we have to calculate the difference in chi-square between both models, divided by the difference in degrees of freedom (e.g. Byrne 2001; Verlegh 2001). In our case, the constrained model appeared to fit the data well [$\chi^2(301) = 726,148$; CFI = .94; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .034]. The additional test showed that this constrained model fitted the data significantly better than the unconstrained baseline model, indicating that it is justified to constrain the sub-model's causal structure to be equal across both our samples [$(726,148 - 710,913) / (301 - 292) = 1,69 < 16,92 (\chi^2_{0.95}, 9df)$]. Let us have a look now at the verification of our hypotheses.

5.2.2. Verification of hypotheses

In verifying our hypotheses we will base ourselves on the results presented in Table 51. It contains structural parameter estimates of the constrained model. The upper section allows us to verify hypotheses 2, 3, 4 and 5 while the lower section serves to verify hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 51: Parameter estimates for constrained model picturing CI-effect on beer beliefs

PATH	CONSTRAINED MODEL	
	b	t
Geo-cult → beer beliefs	.02	0.37
Socio-econ → beer beliefs	.20*	2.65
Posfeel → beer beliefs	.18*	3.05
Behint → beer beliefs	.21*	4.09
Geo-cult → posfeel	.45*	9.09
Socio-econ → posfeel	.23*	4.53
Geo-cult → behint	-.13*	-2.11
Socio-econ → behint	.49*	7.32
Posfeel → behint	.40*	7.88

* $t > 1.96$, b significant at $\alpha = .05$

Results presented in the lower part of Table 51 indicate that our first set of hypotheses on the internal structure of the CI-construct was fully supported by our data. More in detail, hypothesis 1.1 stated that the CI's cognitive component would exert a positive effect on the affective component. This appeared to be the case for both of the cognitive component's underlying dimensions with a somewhat more powerful effect exerted by "geo-cultural stereotypes" ($b = .45$; $t = 9.09$) than by "socio-economic stereotypes" ($b = .23$; $t = 4.53$). Hypothesis 1.2 assuming a positive effect from the CI's affective component on the conative component was also supported by our data ($b = .40$; $t = 7.88$). Finally, partial supportive evidence could be provided for hypothesis 1.3 positing that the cognitive component also generates a positive effect on the CI's conative component. However, a distinction should be made between the significant (positive) effect triggered by "socio-economic stereotypes" ($b = .49$; $t = 7.32$) and the negative effect generated by "geo-cultural stereotypes" ($b = -.13$; $t = -2.11$).

The upper part of Table 51 allows us to verify hypotheses 2, 3a and 4. Given the fact that our model appeared to be structurally equivalent across both samples, these hypotheses are to be verified by means of the results obtained for the "constrained" model. Hypothesis 2 stated that, in case of product-specific beliefs, the effect exerted by the CI-construct would be supported by a composite mechanism. Our analysis clearly supports this assumption with significant effects simultaneously emanating from each of the CI's constituent components.

The only exception is the insignificant effect triggered by “geo-cultural stereotypes” ($b = .02$; $t = 0.37$). Hypothesis 3a assumed that the different CI-effects would be hierarchically ordered somehow with effects emanating from the CI’s cognitive component being stronger (i.e. primary effect) than the effects triggered by the CI’s affective and conative components (i.e., secondary effects). This hypothesis was not supported by our data. Contrary to our expectations, the most powerful effect was exerted by the conative component ($b = .21$; $t = 4.09$). However, the effect emanating from “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .20$; $t = 2.65$) had a slightly more profound impact than the effect triggered by the affective component ($b = .18$; $t = 3.05$).

Finally, hypothesis 4 posited that country typology (i.e., the country’s national culture and its level of similarity with the cultural profile of the respondent) might moderate the size of coo-effects in such a manner that the more similar country (i.e. Spain) would exhibit stronger CI-effects. In fact, an answer to this question was already provided when we tested our model on its structural equivalence. More in detail, we saw how the constrained model performed significantly better than the unconstrained variant, indicating that no significant differences concerning the strength of CI-effects exist between the Spanish and Danish sample. As discussed by Verlegh (2001: 84) there is a more formal test to verify this hypothesis. It consists in that, for each path standing for a CI-effect, the difference is calculated between the absolute value for the parameter estimate for the Spanish sample and the absolute value of the parameter estimate for the Danish sample. The standard error of this difference is computed by taking the square root of the sum of the squared standard errors of the respective parameters for both samples (which are then restricted to be equal). The results are given in Table 52.

Table 52: Differences in absolute parameter estimates for the effects of CI-components on beer beliefs

	Difference in absolute values
Geo-cultural stereotypes → beer beliefs	0.012 ($t = 0.72$)
Socio-economic stereotypes → beer beliefs	0.213 ($t = 0.74$)
Positive feelings → beer beliefs	0.076 ($t = 0.69$)
Behavioural intentions → beer beliefs	0.097 ($t = 0.67$)

As can be seen, all difference scores are larger than 0, indicating that some variation in size between both samples exists, but the t-values show that these variations are not statistically

significant. Thus, hypothesis 4 could not be supported by our data. Hypothesis 5 cannot be verified yet because results for the DVD survey are still to come. Throughout the following section, we will turn to the second sub-model of the beer survey. More particularly, this model pictures the CI-effects on beer evaluation.

5.3. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on beer evaluation

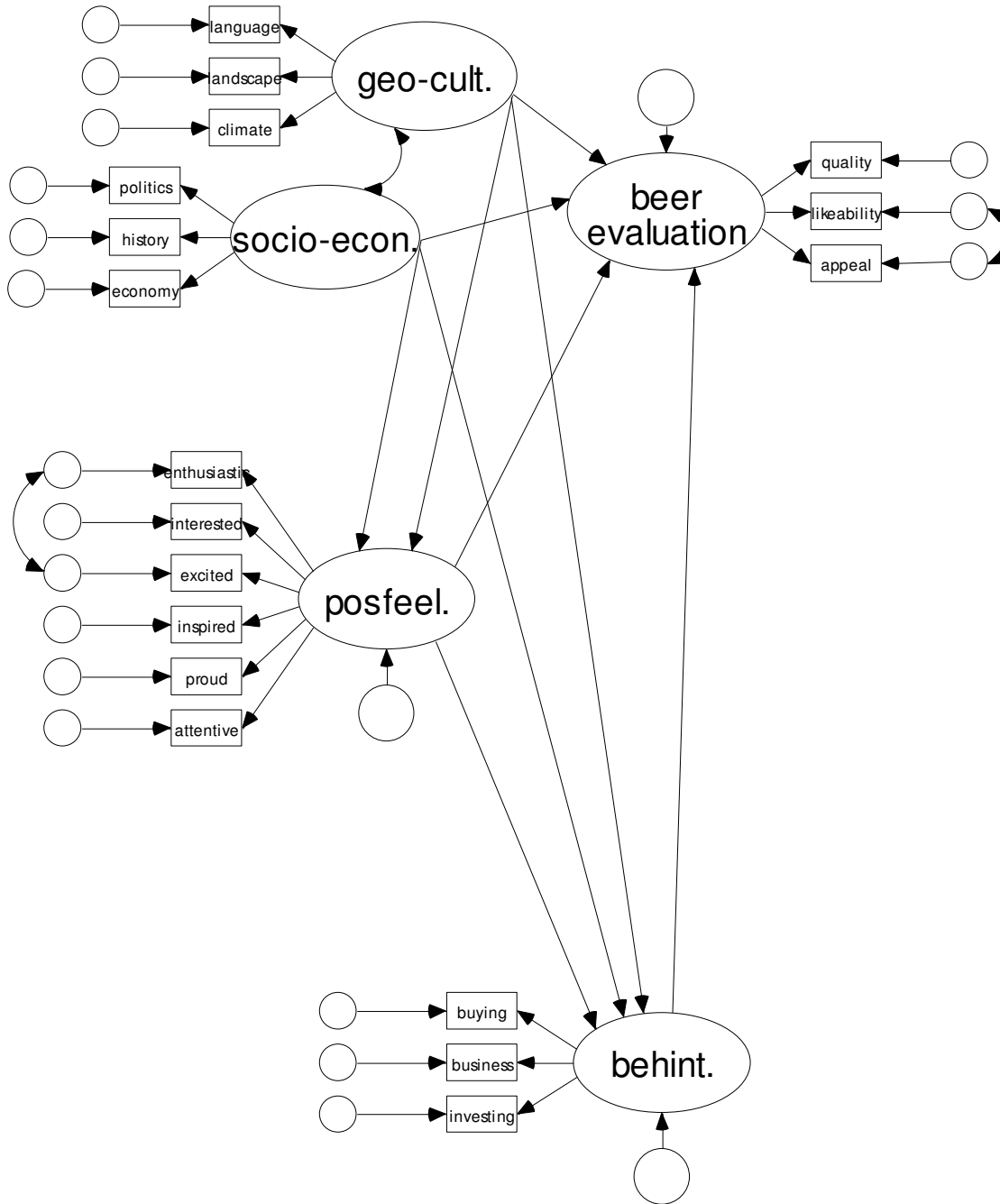
In line with the procedure followed for the first sub-model, we started by (simultaneously) estimating the unconstrained baseline model for both samples in order to see whether it fitted the data well. Table 53 gives the goodness-of-fit indicators. These demonstrate that the structural baseline model has a decent overall fit. Figure 39 visualizes the hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on beer evaluation⁵⁹.

Table 53: Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural baseline model analyzing CI-effect on beer evaluation

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Baseline model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	637,371 (261)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.442
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.96
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.034

⁵⁹ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

Figure 39: Hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on beer evaluation



5.3.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on beer evaluation

Structural equivalence was tested by means of the more stringent model where structural parameters were constrained to be equal across both groups. This constrained model fitted the data well [χ^2 (270) = 659,118; CFI = .95; TLI = .95; RMSEA = .034]. In computing the difference in chi-square between the (unconstrained) baseline model and the nested constrained model it even appeared the latter fitted the data significantly better, indicating that it was justified to constrain the causal structure to be equal across both samples [(659,118 – 637,371) / (270 – 261) = 2,42 < 16,92 ($\chi^2_{0.95}$, 9df)]. The next section will verify the hypotheses for the second sub-model of CI-effect on beer evaluation.

5.3.2. Verification of hypotheses

For the verification of the hypotheses we will base ourselves on the results reported in Table 54.

Table 54: Parameter estimates for constrained model picturing CI-effect on beer evaluation

PATH	CONSTRAINED MODEL	
	b	t
Geo-cult → beer evaluation	.07	1.08
Socio-econ → beer evaluation	.07	0.91
Posfeel → beer evaluation	.13*	2.24
Behint → beer evaluation	.30*	5.73
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	8.99
Socio-econ → posfeel	.24*	4.84
Geo-cult → behint	-.11	-1.88
Socio-econ → behint	.49*	7.32
Posfeel → behint	.39*	7.75

* t > 1.96 , b significant at $\alpha = .05$

Table 54 clearly indicates that hypotheses on the internal structure of the CI-construct were again supported by our data. Hypothesis 1.1 stating the CI's cognitive component will exert a

positive effect on the affective component was supported for both the cognitive component's underlying dimensions. In line with findings obtained for the previous model, this effect was stronger for "geo-cultural stereotypes" ($b = .42$; $t = 8.99$) than for "socio-economic stereotypes" ($b = .24$; $t = 4.84$). Hypothesis 1.2 assuming the affective component has a positive effect on the conative component could be sustained as well ($b = .39$; $t = 7.75$). Thirdly, hypothesis 1.3 expecting a positive effect from the cognitive component on the conative component was partially supported with a significant effect for "socio-economic stereotypes" ($b = .49$; $t = 7.32$) but not for "geo-cultural stereotypes" ($b = -.11$; $t = -1.88$).

As can be seen, hypothesis 2 stating that the CI-effect would be supported by a composite mechanism with different components of the CI to be activated simultaneously was supported by our data. We can see how the CI-effect on beer evaluation can be further decomposed into two component-specific effects with one emanating from the CI's affective component ($b = .13$; $t = 2.24$) and another departing from the conative component ($b = .30$; $t = 5.73$). These coefficients already indicate that hypothesis 3b could not be supported by our data. That is, contrary to our expectations, the effect triggered by the CI's conative component was stronger than the effect generated by its affective component.

In line with the previous model, hypothesis 4 assuming that the type of country (i.e. the country's national culture and its level of similarity with the cultural profile of the respondent) would be moderating the size of CI-effects could not be supported. Our test for structural equivalence already indicated that the constrained model fits the data better than the unconstrained variant which means that no significant differences between both samples can be detected. Our additional test came to the same conclusion. As can be seen in Table 55, the scores for difference in absolute values are different from zero, suggesting that minor variations in CI-effects between both samples exists. Nevertheless, the t-values signal these deviations do not reach statistical significance. In sum, the type of country does not seem to moderate the size of CI-effects on beer evaluation.

Table 55: Differences in absolute parameter estimates for the effects of CI-components on beer evaluation

	Difference in absolute values
Geo-cultural stereotypes → beer evaluation	0.12 (t = 0.72)
Socio-economic stereotypes → beer evaluation	0.18 (t = 0.74)
Positive feelings → beer evaluation	0.17 (t = 0.69)
Behavioural intentions → beer evaluation	0.12 (t = 0.68)

In the next section, our focus will be on the third sub-model where CI-effects on respondents' purchase intentions towards beer will be further analyzed.

5.4. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on beer purchase intentions

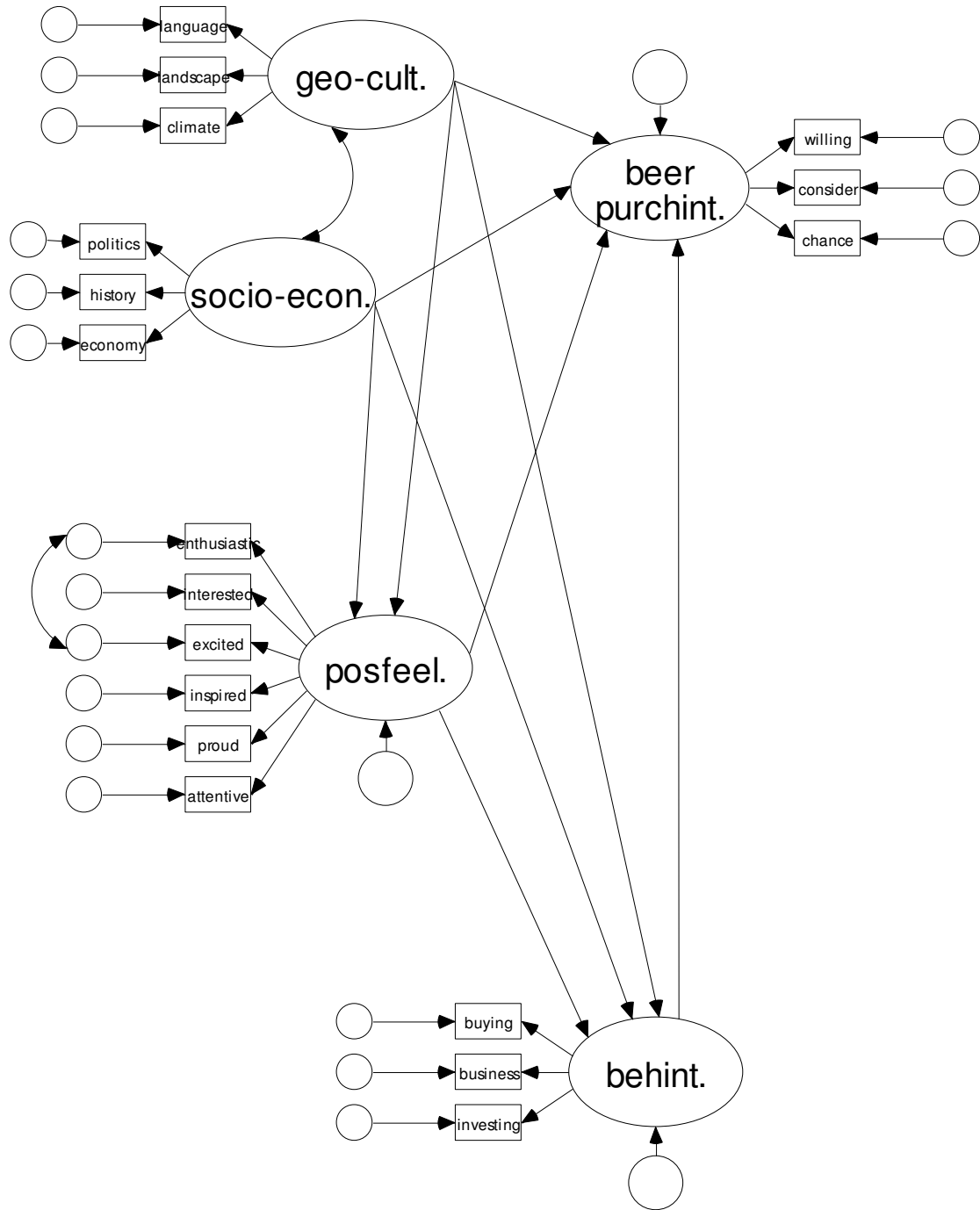
Table 56 presents the goodness-of-fit indicators obtained for the unconstrained baseline model. These indicate that the hypothesized causal structure fits the data well. First, a visual representation of the structural model analyzing CI-effect on subjects' purchase intentions towards beer can be consulted by means of Figure 40⁶⁰.

Table 56: Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural baseline model analyzing CI-effect on beer purchase intentions

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Baseline model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	629,208 (262)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.402
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.034

⁶⁰ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with "enthusiastic" and "excited" is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

Figure 40: Hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on beer purchase intentions



5.4.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on beer purchase intentions

In order to check for the model's structural equivalence we constrained the parameters of the causal paths to be equal across both samples. This constrained model had very satisfying scores on the goodness-of-fit indicators [χ^2 (271) = 652,119; CFI = .95; TLI = .95; RMSEA = .034]. The difference in chi-square between both the (unconstrained) baseline and constrained models showed that the latter fitted the data significantly better than the former [(652,119 – 629,208) / (271 – 262) = 2,55 < 16,92 ($\chi^2_{0.95}$, 9df)]. Therefore, it is justified to work with the model of which the causal structure was constrained to be equal across both groups. Hypotheses concerning this model will be verified based on the outcome for this “constrained” model.

5.4.2. Verification of hypotheses

Hypotheses concerning the third sub-model will be verified by means of the results given by Table 57.

Table 57: Parameter estimates for constrained model picturing CI-effect on beer purchase intentions

PATH	CONSTRAINED MODEL	
	b	t
Geo-cult → beer purch.int.	.09	1.59
Socio-econ → beer purch.int.	.05	0.84
Posfeel → beer purch.int.	.13*	2.61
Behint → beer purch.int.	.26*	5.76
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	8.98
Socio-econ → posfeel	.24*	4.84
Geo-cult → behint	-.11	-1.85
Socio-econ → behint	.48*	7.28
Posfeel → behint	.39*	7.76

* t > 1.96 , b significant at $\alpha = .05$

Similar to what we found for the previous two models, hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 were substantively supported by our data. In line with hypothesis 1.1, a significant positive effect from the CI's cognitive component to the affective component could be established. More in

detail, the effect exerted by “geo-cultural stereotypes” ($b = .42$; $t = 8.98$) was stronger than the effect generated by “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .24$; $t = 4.84$). Hypothesis 1.2 stating that the CI’s affective component would be exerting a significant positive effect on the conative component could be sustained as well ($b = .39$; $t = 7.76$). For hypothesis 1.3, supportive evidence could be provided for “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .48$; $t = 7.28$) but not for “geo-cultural stereotypes” ($b = -.11$; $t = -1.85$).

As for hypothesis 2, results clearly indicate that the overall CI-effect on respondents’ purchase intentions towards beer is supported by a composite mechanism with the affective component ($b = .13$; $t = 2.61$) and the conative component ($b = .26$; $t = 5.76$) being simultaneously processed. These parameter estimates also indicate that hypothesis 3c, assuming that the effect exerted by the CI’s conative component would be stronger than the effects exerted by the other constituent components of the CI-construct, could be sustained.

In final instance, our analyses indicate that hypothesis 4 was rejected by our data. That is, no statistically significant differences in CI-effect size appeared to exist between both samples. As can be derived from the t-values mentioned in Table 58, the additional more formal test confirmed this finding.

Table 58: Differences in absolute parameter estimates for the effects of CI-components on beer purchase intentions

	Difference in absolute values
Geo-cultural stereotypes → beer purchase intentions	0.009 ($t = 0.69$)
Socio-economic stereotypes → beer purchase intentions	0.024 ($t = 0.71$)
Positive feelings → beer purchase intentions	0.028 ($t = 0.67$)
Behavioural intentions → beer purchase intentions	0.032 ($t = 0.65$)

Now that we have verified the hypotheses for the models of the beer survey, we will repeat this procedure for those of the DVD survey.

6. Structural models: DVD survey

In line with the approach followed for the beer survey we will first concentrate on the so-called structural “overall” model for the DVD survey. Then we will further decompose it into three sub-models. As already discussed, the overall model incorporates both of our core constructs (i.e., Country Image and DVD Attitude) in their full complexity. This way, the

Country Image is built up out of four dimensions while the DVD Attitude is supported by a three-factorial structure. Both concepts are connected by means of structural paths that have been previously hypothesized to occur.

6.1. Structural overall model for CI-effects on DVD attitude

A visual representation of the hypothesized structural overall model for CI-effects on DVD attitude can be retrieved under Appendix 6.2. Additionally, Appendix 6.2 gives an overview of the goodness-of-fit indicators obtained for this model. Below, Table 59 presents the structural parameter estimates for the constrained overall model of the DVD survey.

Table 59: Structural parameter estimates for overall model of the DVD survey

PATH	b**	t
Geo-cult → DVD beliefs	.04	1.08
Geo-cult → DVD evaluation	.02	0.80
Geo-cult → DVD purch.int.	.05	1.19
Socio-econ → DVD beliefs	.10*	2.71
Socio-econ → DVD evaluation	.03	0.90
Socio-econ → DVD purch.int.	-.02	-0.38
Posfeel → DVD beliefs	-.01	-0.23
Posfeel → DVD evaluation	-.04	-1.43
Posfeel → DVD purch.int.	.00	-0.12
Behint → DVD beliefs	.28*	9.32
Behint → DVD evaluation	.08*	3.23
Behint → DVD purch.int.	.19*	4.70
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	9.02
Geo-cult → behint	-.10	-1.76
Socio-econ → posfeel	.23*	4.84
Socio-econ → behint	.47*	7.42
Posfeel → behint	.39*	7.92
DVD beliefs → DVD evaluation	1.19*	19.36
DVD beliefs → DVD purch.int.	-.11	-0.87
DVD evaluation → DVD purch.int.	.78*	7.59

* $t > 1.96$, b significant at $\alpha = .05$

** b-values stand for unstandardized coefficients

Based on the outcome for the constrained overall model of the DVD survey, we can conclude that there is a limited number of statistically significant effects generated by the CI-construct. Only four out of twelve CI-effects had a t-value that surpassed the 1.96 cut-off level. Additionally, for a majority of the CI-effects the size is almost negligible, with b-values only reaching a maximum level of .28. These weak CI-effects are overshadowed by much more powerful effects that are reciprocally exerted between the three components of the DVD attitude construct. For instance, the effect of DVD beliefs on DVD evaluation has a b-value of 1.19 with $t = 19.36$. Similarly, DVD evaluation has a substantial effect on DVD purchase intentions ($b = .78$; $t = 7.59$). In order to prevent a loss of too much information on effects exerted by the CI-construct we decided to decompose the overall model into three separately estimated sub-models. These will be further discussed throughout the following sections, starting with the sub-model that concentrates more specifically on CI-effects towards DVD beliefs.

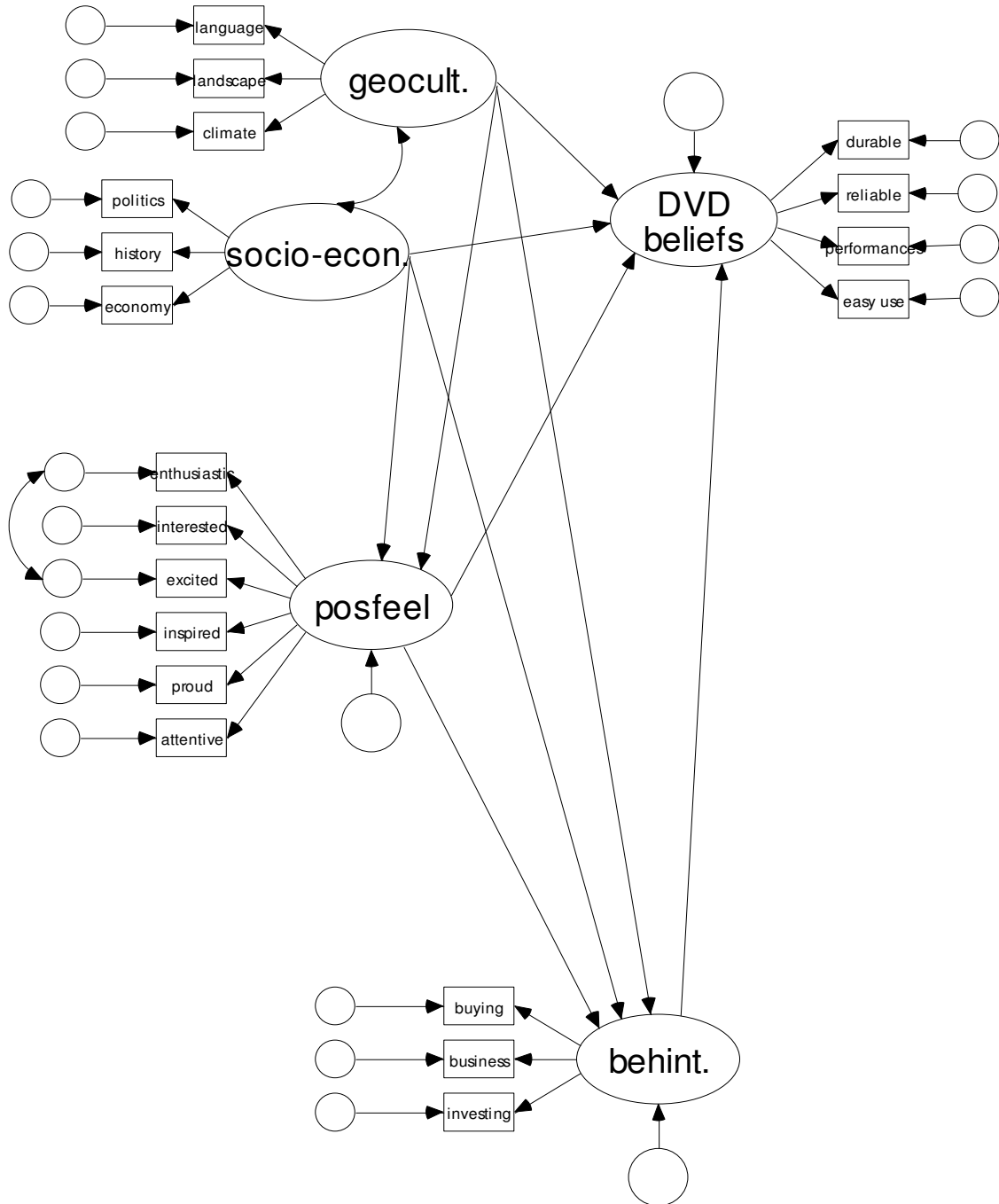
6.2. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on DVD beliefs

On the following page Figure 41 pictures the hypothesized structural model for CI-effect on DVD beliefs. First, Table 60 presents the goodness-of-fit indicators. These indicate that the unconstrained baseline model fitted the data very well.

Table 60: Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural baseline model analyzing CI-effect on DVD beliefs

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Baseline model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	756,769 (297)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.548
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.94
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.036

Figure 41: Hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on DVD beliefs⁶¹



⁶¹ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

6.2.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on DVD beliefs

Equivalence of the model's causal structure was tested by means of a model where structural parameters were constrained to be equal across both samples. This constrained model had very satisfactory goodness-of-fit [χ^2 (306) = 783,774; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .036]. In calculating the difference in chi-square between the unconstrained baseline model and the nested model it could be established that the constrained model fitted the data significantly better than the unconstrained variant $[(783,774 - 756,769) / (306 - 297) = 3,00 < 16,92 (\chi^2_{0.95, 9df})$. Consequently, it is the constrained model that will be used to verify the hypotheses.

6.2.2. Verification of hypotheses

Structural parameter estimates for the constrained sub-model concentrating on the CI-effect towards DVD beliefs are presented in Table 61.

Table 61: Parameter estimates for constrained model picturing CI-effect on DVD beliefs

PATH	CONSTRAINED MODEL	
	b	t
Geo-cult → DVD beliefs	.04	1.08
Socio-econ → DVD beliefs	.11*	2.80
Posfeel → DVD beliefs	.00	-0.12
Behint → DVD beliefs	.28*	9.23
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	9.01
Socio-econ → posfeel	.23*	4.84
Geo-cult → behint	-.10	-1.79
Socio-econ → behint	.47*	7.37
Posfeel → behint	.39*	7.88

* $t > 1.96$, b significant at $\alpha = .05$

The lower part of Table 61 clearly illustrates how hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 on the internal structure of the CI-construct are supported by our data. In line with hypothesis 1.1, both dimensions underlying the CI's cognitive component generate a significant positive effect on

the affective component. More particularly, the impact of “geo-cultural stereotypes” ($b = .42$; $t = 9.01$) appears to be more powerful than the influence exerted by “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .23$; $t = 4.84$). In agreement with hypothesis 1.2, the affective component was found to have a significant positive effect on the CI’s conative component ($b = .39$; $t = 7.88$). Finally, hypothesis 1.3 stating that the CI’s cognitive component also has a significant positive effect on the conative component, could be sustained for “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .47$; $t = 7.37$), but not for “geo-cultural stereotypes” ($b = -.10$; $t = -1.79$).

Hypothesis 2 expecting the CI-effect to be supported by a composite mechanism was accepted by our data. If we take a closer look at the results we can see that the CI-effect on DVD beliefs is based upon a mechanism where both “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .11$; $t = 2.80$) and the conative component ($b = .28$; $t = 9.23$) are simultaneously processed. However, hypothesis 3a assuming that the effect generated by the CI’s cognitive component would be stronger than the effects emanating from the affective and conative components could not be supported. Contrary to our expectations the conative component had a more powerful influence on DVD beliefs than the CI’s cognitive component. The effect triggered by the affective component was not significant.

No supportive evidence for hypothesis 4, stating that the country type (i.e., the country’s national culture and its level of similarity with the cultural profile of the respondent) would moderate the size of CI-effects, could be provided. As indicated by the t-values in Table 62, this was confirmed by the results of the additional test for differences in absolute parameter values for both groups.

Table 62: Differences in absolute parameter estimates for the effects of CI-components on DVD beliefs

	Difference in absolute values
Geo-cultural stereotypes → DVD beliefs	0.015 ($t = 0.61$)
Socio-economic stereotypes → DVD beliefs	0.085 ($t = 0.62$)
Positive feelings → DVD beliefs	0.052 ($t = 0.58$)
Behavioural intentions → DVD beliefs	0.053 ($t = 0.59$)

Now that we have the results for the DVD survey, we can also verify hypothesis 5. More in detail, it stated that the product typology (i.e., utilitarian or hedonic) would be affecting the size of CI-effects in such a way that we would encounter stronger effects for a hedonic product (in this case “beer”) and weaker effects for a utilitarian item (in our study “DVD-

players”). If we compare the results presented in Table 51 with those of Table 61, we can see that this hypothesis was only partially supported. More in detail, we can see how stronger CI-effects on beliefs about beer were assessed for “socio-economic stereotypes” (.20 vs .11). For CI-effects emanating from “geo-cultural stereotypes”, no real conclusions can be drawn since the effect remained insignificant for both surveys. With regard to the effect generated by the CI’s affective component, it is interesting to establish that significance was reached for the beer survey while this effect remained insignificant for the DVD survey. Thus, instead of operating as a so-called “moderator”, the difference in product typology seems to function as a “determinant” of whether the CI’s affective component plays a significant role or not when respondents form beliefs about the product they are confronted with. Finally, for effects emanating from the CI’s conative component (.21 vs .28) results were opposed to what we expected to encounter. That is, instead of being stronger, this particular effect was weaker for beer than for DVD-players.

Now that we have tested the hypotheses concerning the first sub-model we will proceed with the next model where CI-effects on DVD evaluation are analyzed.

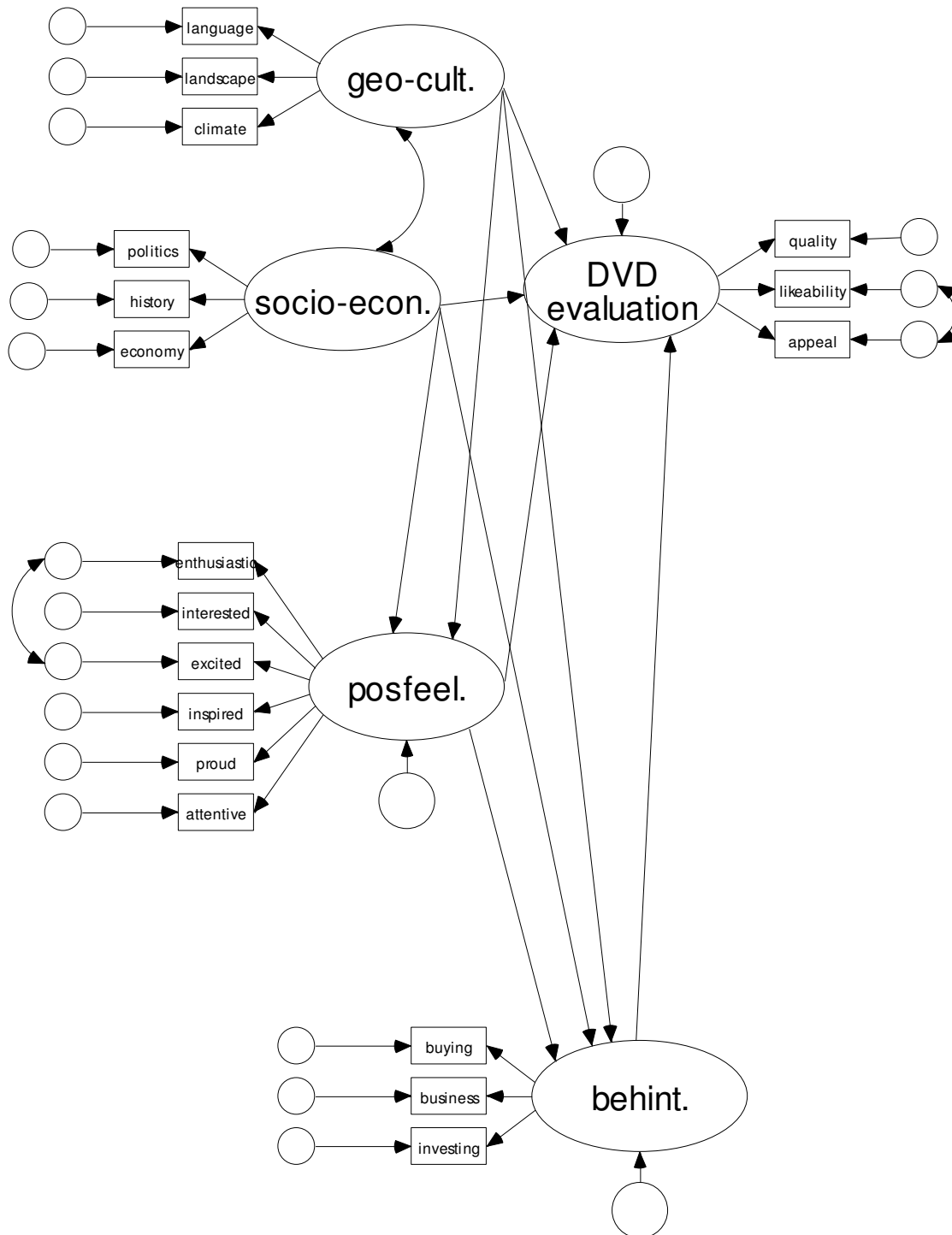
6.3. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on DVD evaluation

Figure 42 pictures the hypothesized structural model for CI-effect on DVD evaluation. First however Table 63 presents the goodness-of-fit indicators. These were all at a very satisfactory level.

Table 63: Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural baseline model analyzing CI-effect on DVD evaluation

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Baseline model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	706,126 (261)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.705
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.94
Benler’s normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.037

Figure 42: Hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on DVD evaluation⁶²



⁶² Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

6.3.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on DVD evaluation

In order to be capable of testing the model's structural equivalence, we first estimated the nested model with parameters for structural pathways constrained to be equal. This model fitted the data very well [$\chi^2(270) = 730,846$; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .037]. Then we calculated the difference in chi-square between the nested and the unconstrained baseline model. The result indicated that the constrained model fitted the data significantly better than the baseline model [$(730,846 - 706,126) / (270 - 261) = 2,75 < 16,92 (\chi^2_{0.95}, 9df)$]. Thus, equivalence of the model's causal structure across both samples could be supported. The hypotheses concerning this model will be verified in function of the constrained model.

6.3.2. Verification of hypotheses

Structural parameter estimates for the model where CI-effects on DVD evaluation are analyzed, will be presented in Table 64.

Table 64: Parameter estimates for constrained model picturing CI-effect on DVD evaluation

PATH	CONSTRAINED MODEL	
	b	t
Geo-cult → DVD evaluation	.07	1.44
Socio-econ → DVD evaluation	.16*	2.88
Posfeel → DVD evaluation	-.03	-0.82
Behint → DVD evaluation	.41*	9.88
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	9.02
Socio-econ → posfeel	.23*	4.85
Geo-cult → behint	-.10	-1.77
Socio-econ → behint	.47*	7.37
Posfeel → behint	.38*	7.88

* $t > 1.96$, b significant at $\alpha = .05$

In line with our findings for the previous model, hypotheses on the internal structure of the CI-construct were all supported by our data. For hypothesis 1.1, significant positive effects emanating from “geo-cultural stereotypes” ($b = .42$; $t = 9.02$) and from “socio-economic

stereotypes” ($b = .23$; $t = 4.85$) could be established. Hypothesis 1.2 stating the affective component has a significant positive impact on the CI’s conative component was also supported with $b = .38$; $t = 7.88$. Finally, supportive evidence for hypothesis 1.3 could be retrieved with a significant positive effect from “socio-economic stereotypes” on the CI’s conative component ($b = .47$; $t = 7.37$). However, the effect generated by “geo-cultural stereotypes” did not reach statistical significance ($b = -.10$; $t = -1.77$).

Hypothesis 2 assuming that the CI-effect on subjects’ evaluation of DVD-players is supported by a composite mechanism was sustained by our data. We can see how significant effects are simultaneously triggered by “socio-economic stereotypes” ($b = .16$; $t = 2.88$) and by the CI’s conative component ($b = .41$; $t = 9.88$). Hypothesis 3b expecting that effects generated by the CI’s cognitive and conative components will be weaker than the effect triggered by the affective component could not be supported. In fact, the effect emanating from the CI’s affective component did not even reach statistical significance. The most powerful effect was generated by the CI’s conative component ($b = .41$; $t = 9.88$).

With regard to hypothesis 4, our test for structural equivalence of the model already suggested that no significant differences in function of the type of country (i.e., the country’s national culture and its level of similarity with the cultural profile of the respondent) could be detected. Put differently, country type does not moderate the size of CI-effects. This is confirmed by the t-values pictured in Table 65.

Table 65: Differences in absolute parameter estimates for the effects of CI-components on DVD evaluation

	Difference in absolute values
Geo-cultural stereotypes → DVD evaluation	0.007 ($t = 0.66$)
Socio-economic stereotypes → DVD evaluation	0.059 ($t = 0.68$)
Positive feelings → DVD evaluation	0.000 ($t = 0.64$)
Behavioural intentions → DVD evaluation	0.047 ($t = 0.64$)

Finally, a comparison of the results presented in Table 54 and Table 64 makes us conclude that hypothesis 5, stating CI-effects would be stronger for the evaluation of a hedonic instead of a utilitarian product, was not supported. Since the effect triggered by “geo-cultural stereotypes” remained insignificant for both surveys, no meaningful conclusions for this effect can be drawn. As for the effect emanating from “socio-economic stereotypes” it is interesting to establish that statistical significance was reached for the DVD survey while the

effect remained insignificant for the beer survey. Thus, instead of operating as a “moderator”, product typology seems to function as a “determinant” of whether socio-economic stereotypes play a significant role during the formation of an evaluative judgement of the product being confronted with. The same counts for the effect generated by the CI’s affective component. However, contrary to the case of socio-economic stereotypes, we can see that the effect exerted by the CI’s affective component reached statistical significance for the beer survey while it remained insignificant for the DVD survey. Thus, again, instead of operating as a moderator, product typology seems to function as a determinant of whether the effect triggered by the CI’s affective component plays a significant role during the formation of an evaluative judgement of a product. Product typology functioned as a moderator only in the case of effects triggered by the CI’s conative component. However, contrary to the what we expected, this effect was weaker for beer than for DVD-players (.30 vs .41). Taken together we can state that hypothesis 5 was not supported by our data. At this stage of our analysis, we have arrived at the third and final sub-model for the DVD survey. It concentrates on CI-effects towards respondents’ purchase intentions towards DVD-players.

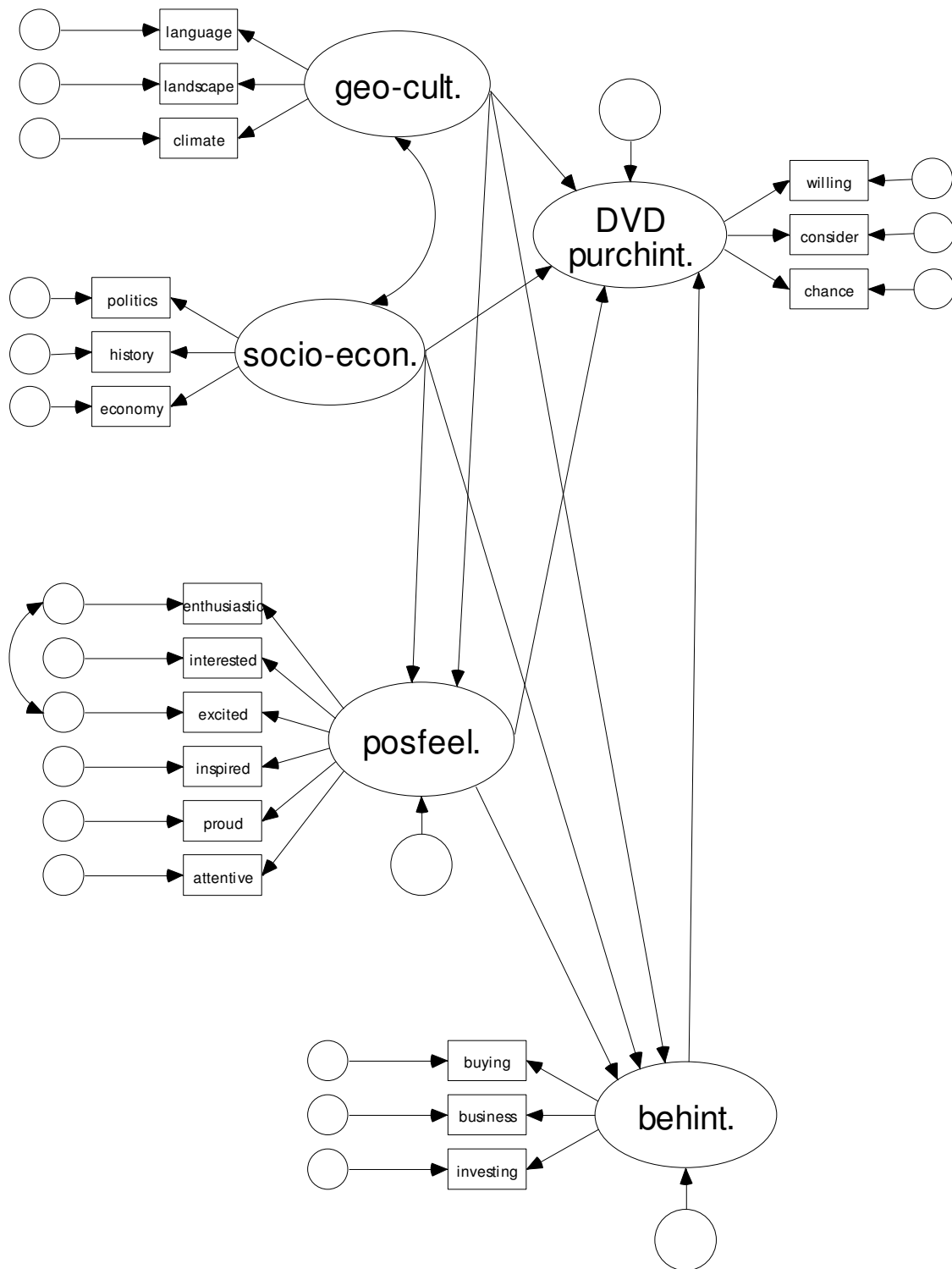
6.4. Structural sub-model for CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions

On the next page Figure 43 visualizes the hypothesized structural model for CI-effect on subjects’ purchase intentions towards DVD-players. First, Table 66 gives the overall goodness-of-fit indicators. These show that the model fitted the data very well.

Table 66: Goodness-of-fit indices for the structural baseline model analyzing CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Baseline model
	Small	659,240 (262)
χ^2 , (df)	>.05	.000
p-value	<3 or <5	2.516
χ^2/df	>.95 or >.90	.94
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Benler’s normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	<.10 or <.08	.035
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)		

Figure 43: Hypothesized structural sub-model analyzing CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions⁶³



⁶³ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

6.4.1. Structural equivalence of sub-model for CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions

In order to test whether the model's causal structure is equivalent across both groups we first estimated a model where structural parameters were constrained to be equal. This model had very satisfactory goodness-of-fit [χ^2 (271) = 680,780; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .035]. The difference in chi-square between this nested model and the unconstrained baseline model indicated the former fitted the data significantly better than the latter [$(680,780 - 659,240) / (271 - 262) = 2,39 < 16,92$ ($\chi^2_{0.95}$, 9df)]. Structural equivalence across both samples could thus be supported. Hypotheses formulated for this model will be verified based on the results obtained for the constrained model.

6.4.2. Verification of hypotheses

Structural parameter estimates for the model picturing CI-effect on respondents' purchase intentions towards DVD-players are presented in Table 67.

Table 67: Parameter estimates for constrained model picturing CI-effect on DVD purchase intentions

PATH	CONSTRAINED MODEL	
	b	t
Geo-cult → DVD purch.int.	.10*	1.96
Socio-econ → DVD purch.int.	.09	1.42
Posfeel → DVD purch.int.	-.03	-0.64
Behint → DVD purch.int.	.47*	10.19
Geo-cult → posfeel	.42*	9.00
Socio-econ → posfeel	.24*	4.84
Geo-cult → behint	-.10	-1.82
Socio-econ → behint	.49*	7.39
Posfeel → behint	.39*	7.84

* $t > 1.96$, b significant at $\alpha = .05$

Based on these results we can state that also for this model, hypotheses on the internal structure of the CI-construct are well supported by our data. Hypothesis 1.1 is confirmed for both “geo-cultural stereotypes” (b = .42; t = 9.00) and “socio-economic stereotypes” (b = .24;

t = 4.84) with a stronger positive effect on the CI's affective component being exerted by the former. Hypothesis 1.2 stating that the affective component has a significant positive impact on the CI's conative component was also supported (b = .39; t = 7.84). Thirdly, hypothesis 1.3 was partially supported with a significant positive effect on the conative component being exerted by "socio-economic stereotypes" (b = .49; t = 7.39). However, the negative effect generated by "geo-cultural stereotypes" (b = -.10; t = -1.82) remained insignificant.

Hypothesis 2 stating that the CI-effect on subjects' purchase intentions towards DVD-players would be supported by a composite mechanism was also confirmed by our data. More in detail, we can see that the CI-effect is to be understood as the simultaneous processing of "geo-cultural stereotypes" (b = .10; t = 1.96) and the CI's conative component (b = .47; t = 10.19). These coefficients indicate how hypothesis 3c could be sustained as well. That is, the effect emanating from the CI's conative component was clearly stronger than the effects triggered by the other constituent components of the CI-construct.

No supportive evidence however could be found for hypothesis 4 stating that variations in size of CI-effects on purchase intentions towards DVD-players would occur in function of country typology (i.e., the country's national culture and its level of similarity with the cultural profile of respondents). We already saw that the model where structural parameters for CI-effects were constrained to be equal across both countries fitted the data significantly better than the unconstrained baseline model. The more formal test of computing the difference in absolute values for the parameter estimates in question also confirmed that no significant moderation in function of country type can be assessed. The results of this additional test are presented in Table 68.

Table 68: Differences in absolute parameter estimates for the effects of CI-components on DVD purchase intentions

	Difference in absolute values
Geo-cultural stereotypes → DVD purchase int.	0.033 (t = 0.68)
Socio-economic stereotypes → DVD purchase int.	0.117 (t = 0.70)
Positive feelings → DVD purchase int.	0.058 (t = 0.66)
Behavioural intentions → DVD purchase int.	0.055 (t = 0.65)

Finally, there was no support for hypothesis 5 where it was posited that the magnitude of CI-effects on respondents' purchase intentions towards DVD-players would be moderated in

function of product typology with stronger effects for hedonic products. With regard to the effect triggered by socio-economic stereotypes, it should be noticed that no conclusions can be drawn because for both the beer and the DVD survey, this effect remained statistically insignificant. As for the effects generated by geo-cultural stereotypes on the one hand and the CI's affective component on the other, it is interesting to establish that product typology did not operate as a moderator but rather as a determinant. We can see for instance that the effect generated the geo-cultural stereotypes was significant for the DVD survey while it remained insignificant for the beer survey. Contrary to these findings, the effect triggered by the CI's affective component was significant for the beer survey while it failed to reach statistical significance for the DVD survey. Only in case of the effect exerted by the CI's conative component did product typology operated as a moderator. Yet, contrary to our expaectations, the effect for the beer survey was weaker than the effect found for the DVD survey (.26 vs .47). Now that we have tested the various sets of hypotheses the following section will present a general overview of the results obtained for our study.

7. General overview of the results

Throughout this section we will retake the results obtained by our empirical study. First,we will present our findings for the beer survey.

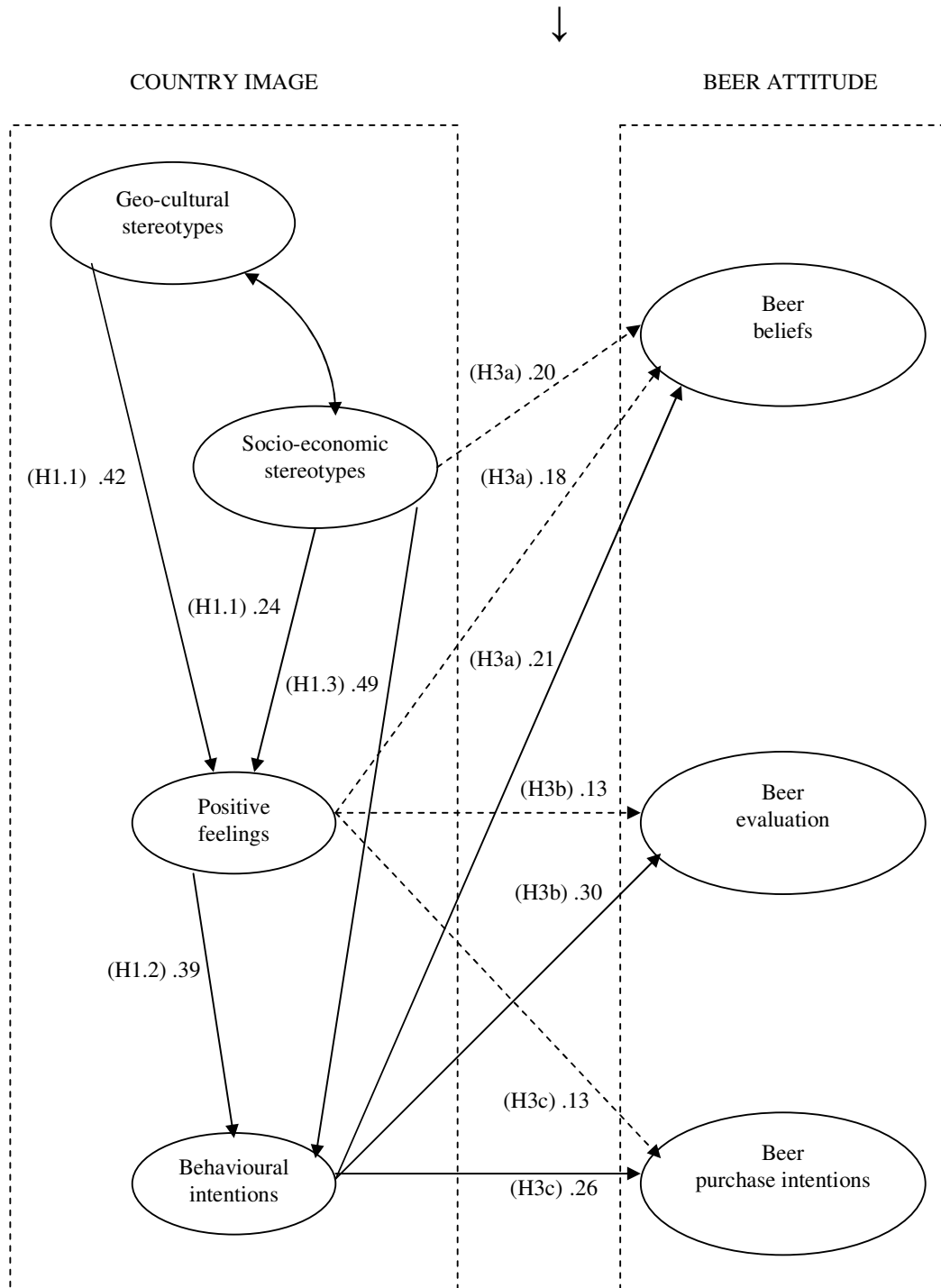
7.1. Results for the BEER survey

Table 69: overview of the results for the BEER survey

BEER SURVEY		
SUB-MODEL 1 CI → product beliefs	SUB-MODEL 2 CI → product evaluation	SUB-MODEL 3 CI → product purchase intentions
H1.1: country cognitions → country affects SUPPORTED	H1.1: country cognitions → country affects SUPPORTED	H1.1: country cognitions → country affects SUPPORTED
H1.2: country affects → country conations SUPPORTED	H1.2: country affects → country conations SUPPORTED	H1.2: country affects → country conations SUPPORTED
H1.3: country cognitions → country conations PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic stereotypes)	H1.3: country cognitions → country conations PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic stereotypes)	H1.3: country cognitions → country conations PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic stereotypes)
H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism SUPPORTED (3 effects)	H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism SUPPORTED (2 effects)	H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism SUPPORTED (2 effects)
H3a: cognitive effect > affective/conative effect NOT SUPPORTED (conative effect = strongest)	H3b: affective effect > cognitive/conative effect NOT SUPPORTED (conative effect = strongest)	H3c: conative effect > cognitive/affective effect SUPPORTED
H4: Country type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED	H4: Country type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED	H4: Country type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED
H5: Product type = moderator PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic effect)	H5: Product type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED	H5: Product type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED

Figure 44: Visual overview of the results obtained for the BEER survey

COUNTRY IMAGE-EFFECT = COMPOSITE MECHANISM (H2)



Primary CI-effects: —————>

Secondary CI-effects: - - - - ->

H4 and H5 are not pictured because they lacked of substantial support

Results obtained for the beer survey demonstrate that the internal structure of a country image is hierarchically organized (cf. hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3). With regard to the functioning of coo-effects, three important conclusions can be drawn. First of all, it should be noticed that country images can be used to achieve different communication purposes (i.e., formation of product-specific beliefs, evaluation and purchase intentions). Secondly, CI-effects are supported by composite mechanisms (cf. hypothesis 2). Put differently, a CI-effect can be further decomposed into several co-occurring sub-effects. Thirdly, a clear distinction can be made between stronger (i.e. primary) sub-effects and weaker (secondary) sub-effects (cf. hypotheses 3a, b and c). Overall, the most important role is reserved for the country image's conative component (three primary effects). In decreasing order it is followed by the country image's affective component (three secondary effects) and socio-economic stereotypes (one secondary effect). Geo-cultural stereotypes are of no significant importance for the formation of attitudinal dispositions towards Spanish/Danish beer. Finally, no substantial evidence could be retrieved for the moderating role of country typology (cf. hypothesis 4) and product typology (cf. hypothesis 5). Throughout the following section, we will give an overview of the results obtained for the DVD survey.

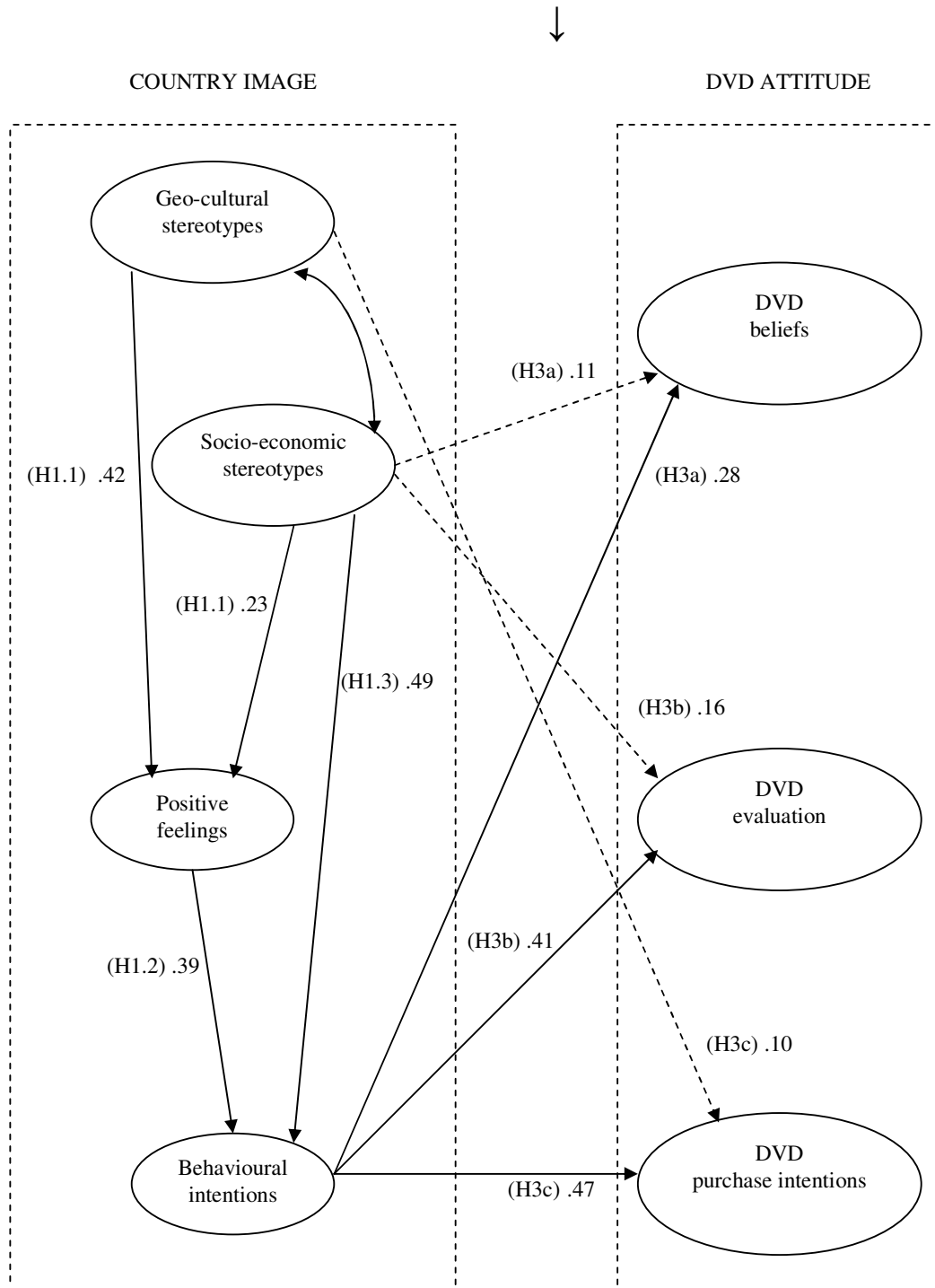
7.2. Results for the DVD survey

Table 70: overview of the results for the DVD survey

DVD SURVEY		
SUB-MODEL 1 CI → product beliefs	SUB-MODEL 2 CI → product evaluation	SUB-MODEL 3 CI → product purchase intentions
H1.1: country cognitions → country affects SUPPORTED	H1.1: country cognitions → country affects SUPPORTED	H1.1: country cognitions → country affects SUPPORTED
H1.2: country affects → country conations SUPPORTED	H1.2: country affects → country conations SUPPORTED	H1.2: country affects → country conations SUPPORTED
H1.3: country cognitions → country conations PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic stereotypes)	H1.3: country cognitions → country conations PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic stereotypes)	H1.3: country cognitions → country conations PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic stereotypes)
H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism SUPPORTED (2 effects)	H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism SUPPORTED (2 effects)	H2: CI-effect = composite mechanism SUPPORTED (2 effects)
H3a: cognitive effect > affective/conative effect NOT SUPPORTED (conative effect = strongest)	H3b: affective effect > cognitive/conative effect NOT SUPPORTED (conative effect = strongest)	H3c: conative effect > cognitive/affective effect SUPPORTED
H4: Country type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED	H4: Country type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED	H4: Country type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED
H5: Product type = moderator PARTIALLY SUPPORTED (only for socio-economic effect)	H5: Product type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED	H5: Product type = moderator NOT SUPPORTED

Figure 45: Visual overview of the results obtained for the DVD survey

COUNTRY IMAGE-EFFECT = COMPOSITE MECHANISM (H2)



Primary CI-effects: —————>

Secondary CI-effects: - - - - ->

H4 and H5 are not pictured because they lacked of substantial support

Taken together, results obtained for the DVD survey show us that the internal structure of a country image as it was hypothesized is well supported (cf. hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3). As for the functioning of CI-effects, comparable conclusions as those drawn for the beer survey can be advanced. To start with, country images are used for the fulfilment of different communication purposes (i.e., formation of product-specific beliefs, evaluation and purchase intentions). An interesting pattern that re-emerges in case of the DVD survey is that CI-effects are supported by composite mechanisms (cf. hypothesis 2). Also, a noticeable distinction can be made between stronger (i.e. primary) sub-effects and weaker (secondary) sub-effects (cf. hypotheses 3a, b and c). Again, the country image's conative component is most influential (three primary effects). In decreasing order it is followed by the country socio-economic stereotypes (two secondary effects) and geo-cultural stereotypes (one secondary effect). Interestingly, the country image's affective component is of no significant importance for the formation of attitudinal dispositions towards Spanish/Danish DVD-players. As already mentioned, no substantial evidence could be retrieved for the moderating role of country typology (cf. hypothesis 4) and product typology (cf. hypothesis 5). Throughout the following chapter we will further discuss these findings.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS

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LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Chapter overview

In this final chapter of our dissertation, we will first discuss the results obtained by our empirical study and come to some general conclusions. In addition, we will highlight the managerial implications as well as the theoretical contributions of our project. Finally, we will outline the limitations of this study and an agenda for future research will be proposed.

2. Discussion and conclusions

Our empirical study addressed several “critical” issues with regard to country images and their functioning as determinants of product attitudes. Throughout this section we will elaborate on the results that have been reported in the previous chapter. More specifically, we will put these in dialogue with the already existing literature on coo-effects. This way we hope to place the findings of our study within a broader context.

2.1. What about the internal structure of country images?

The first set of hypotheses focussed on the internal structure of the country image construct. In function of Morris’s conception of a sign we expected the country image to be a hierarchically structured sequence with its constituent components ordered in such a manner that cognitions would have to be situated at the base of the hierarchy and conations at the top with feelings falling in between. In line with this view, we hypothesized the country image’s constituent parts to be connected by three specific pathways. The first paths (cf. hypothesis 1.1) went from the country image’s two cognitive dimensions (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes

and socio-economic stereotypes) to positive feelings. For both paths, substantial support could be provided by our data. A closer examination of the results however indicates that geo-cultural stereotypes are somewhat more efficient as generators of positive feelings than socio-economic stereotypes. This is probably related to the fact that geo-cultural aspects of a country are rather to be seen as hedonic-oriented image variables or expressive attributes while socio-economic characteristics carry more of a functional or utilitarian connotation with them (e.g., Verlegh 2001). As already mentioned, it is typical for such image variables to be better suited as triggers of affective reactions (e.g., Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Mittal et al. 1990).

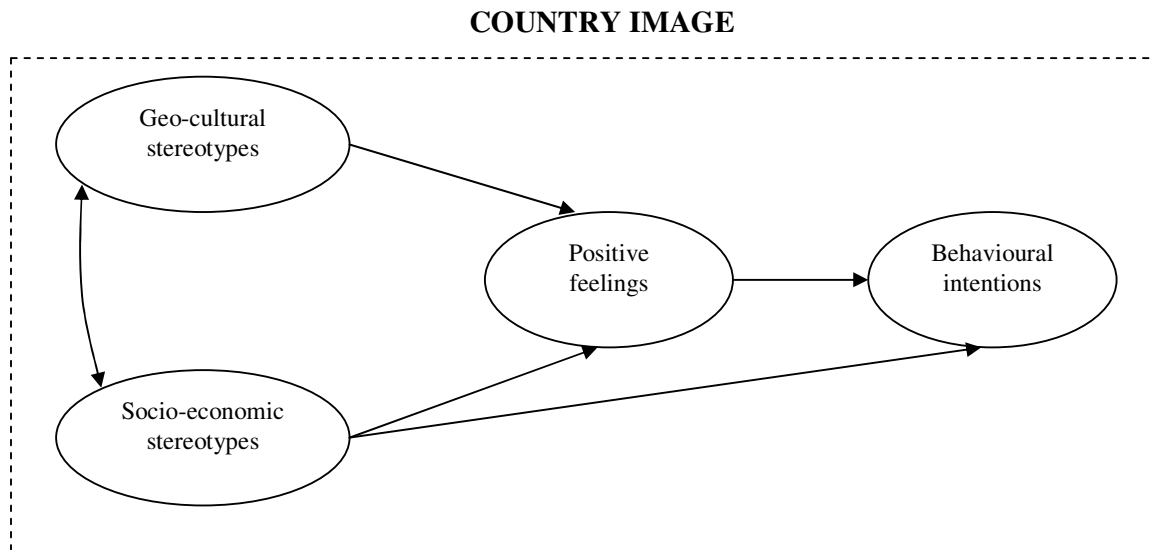
Hypothesis 1.2 in turn, stated that the country image's affective component (i.e., positive feelings) determine students' behavioural intentions towards the product's coo. This assumption was also firmly supported by our study. In other words, positive feelings can be seen as a powerful determinant of an individual's tendency to approach a particular foreign country. In fact these results are perfectly in line with classic theory on the internal structure of attitudes (e.g., Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Peter et al. 1999; Solomon et al. 1999).

Hypothesis 1.3 assumed that besides generating an indirect effect on the country image's conative component (that is, an effect mediated by positive feelings), the cognitive component would also be triggering a direct effect. The results show us that this hypothesis could be sustained for socio-economic stereotypes but in most cases, not for geo-cultural stereotypes. Thus, apparently, socio-economic stereotypes exert both direct and indirect effects on the country image's conative component while the effect emanating from geo-cultural stereotypes becomes significant only if it is mediated by the positive feelings aroused by these stereotypes. In our opinion, the fact that no support in our study could be found for the direct effect from geo-cultural stereotypes to conations is largely due to the items we selected for the measurement of the conative component (i.e., "buying products", "doing business", "investing"). If we take a closer look at these, it becomes clear that there is semantically no relevant connection between stereotypical pictures of a country's language, climate or landscape on the one hand, and an individual's intentions to buy products, to do business or to make an investment on the other. Put differently, such geo-cultural stereotypes are not meaningful as predictors for these specific types of conations. If we would have included other behavioural intentions in our questionnaire (like for instance the willingness to travel to the country), we might have found a significant positive effect from geo-cultural stereotypes to conations. Of course, the situation is somewhat different for socio-economic

stereotypes. For this variable, a powerful direct effect on students' behavioural intentions towards the coo could be established because stereotypical ideas about a foreign country's economy and political climate for example are content-wise highly relevant factors in determining whether to buy products from that country, to business with it or to make an investment.

In sum, as for the internal structure of the country image construct, we can state that the basic conception of a hierarchical order where cognitions (designative signification) → positive feelings (appraisive signification) → behavioural intentions (prescriptive signification), remains intact. A closer examination of the results shows a slight variation in the sequence for geo-cultural stereotypes on the one hand and socio-economic stereotypes on the other in that for the latter, an additional (un-mediated) path going directly to behavioural intentions should be added. The basic structure behind country images is visualized by Figure 46.

Figure 46: Basic conceptual structure behind country images



2.2. What about the significance of country image effects?

Throughout the first chapters of our dissertation, we commented on how numerous co-researchers have openly questioned the relevance of studies on the role of people's image about a country's more general environmental conditions (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992). The

argument traditionally advanced by “sceptici” and “non-believers” is that such country images are only of limited usefulness for people being confronted with foreign-sourced products. Results obtained by our study are diametrically opposed to the assumption that country images play no “significant” role during the processes of attitude formation and change. For both the beer and DVD survey, we could establish that country images exert substantial and statistically significant effects on the formation of product-specific beliefs, evaluation and purchase intentions. Interestingly, and in line with findings reported by Verlegh (2001), our study indicates that country image effects remain statistically significant even in situations where the product’s country-of-origin does not evoke extreme cognitions, feelings or conations.

On the other hand however, results obtained for our structural “overall” models show that country image effects should always be placed within the proper context. More in particular these models demonstrate that, compared to the impact of effects occurring between components of the product attitude construct (i.e., product attribute beliefs → product evaluation and product evaluation → product purchase intentions), the size of country image effects is noticeably weaker. This finding goes perfectly in line with the idea that product intrinsic aspects weight heavier during the processes of attitude formation and decision making than product extrinsic cues (e.g., Gerstner 1985; Jacoby et al. 1971; Jacoby et al. 1977; Olson and Jacoby 1972). Nonetheless, our study clearly suggests that the importance of country images as determinants of product attitudes should not be underestimated. Therefore, we think it would be unwise to disregard such environmental-related aspects from research on coo-effects.

2.3. What about the functioning of country image effects?

The functioning of coo-effects in general and of effects generated by country images more specifically is not well understood yet. Scholars like Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993) have attributed this problem to the lack of a solid theoretical framework. In dealing with the more precise functioning of country image effects, our study has adopted a meaning-centred approach while we believe that attitudes are not just based on the passive reception of incoming information. In line with others, we think people literally “act upon” stimuli presented to them by marketers. This “acting upon” should be understood as a process where people subjectively interpret marketing stimuli like the product’s coo. The outcome of this all is a complex network of so-called “psychological meanings” that is activated by the stimulus

and transferred to the product. In our specific case, this network was referred to as the “country image”.

Contrary to previous efforts within the coo-field, we have not only included this country image concept as a measured variable in our empirical study but in addition, we have tried to capture the country image in its full complexity because we believe this has important consequences for the (theoretical) understanding of how such country images might affect the formation of product attitudes. In asking ourselves “why” and “how” country images influence product attitudes, Morrissean semiotics (and discourse theory more specifically) have proven themselves to be of great value. Taken together, application of the discourse framework to the functioning of country image effects has resulted in four important findings.

2.3.1. Country images have a high communicative efficiency

First of all, our study indicates that country images can be highly efficient in satisfying an individual’s “communicative needs” (i.e., a person’s desire to get informed about a product, to arrive at an evaluative judgement of a product or to determine one’s purchase intentions towards a product). If we take a look at the results obtained for both the beer and DVD survey, we can see that, no matter for which of these specific purposes they are being used, country images always provide statistically significant contributions. A more detailed analysis of the outcome for the beer survey reveals that socio-economic stereotypes as well as the country image’s affective and conative components all significantly helped in satisfying respondents’ need to get informed about beer. The evaluation of beer in turn was substantially affected by the country image’s affective and conative components. Finally, the latter also contributed in determining whether to purchase the product or not. Comparable findings have been reported for the DVD survey. Here we saw that the formation of product-specific beliefs is significantly influenced by both socio-economic stereotypes and the country image’s conative component. These two basic components of the country image also contributed to the formation of an evaluative judgement about DVD-players. Finally, purchase intentions towards DVD-players were substantially determined by geo-cultural stereotypes on the one hand and by the country image’s conative component on the other. Thus, the least we can say is that country images indeed were overall highly accurate while they never failed in significantly contributing to the achievement of the communicative needs experienced by our subjects.

Of more specific interest for the coo-literature in general is the finding that country-specific cognitions indeed can be of so-called “informational value”. As argued throughout the first part of our dissertation, coo-researchers still have divergent opinions on this particular issue. Nevertheless, our study shows that besides turning to their prior knowledge of a country’s production and marketing capacities (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992), people also make use of their (stereotypical) thoughts about a country’s more general environmental conditions when they are forming beliefs about a product’s attributes (e.g., Wang and Lamb 1980, 1983; Verlegh 2001). More in detail, we established that respondents used their internally stored stereotypes about the Spanish/Danish socio-economical situation to infer their beliefs about Spanish/Danish beer and DVD-players.

In asking ourselves why country images are that “adequate” in reaching people’s communicative needs, we inevitably come to the central issue of taking into account a marketing stimulus’ meaning as a factor of capital importance for the formation of product attitudes. Based on semiotic theory (where meaning is at the core of attention), we can say that country images owe this communicative accuracy to the fact that they consist of multiple significations (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes, socio-economic stereotypes, positive feelings and behavioural intentions) which all might potentially contribute to the fulfilment of a specific communicative need. Of course it is reasonable to suggest that a country image’s overall accuracy increases if it disposes of more (than just one) “option” to realize its objective. Put in semiotic terms, we can state that the country image’s “polysemy” (i.e., its capacity of signifying at multiple levels of meaning) is the primary reason behind its adequacy as a tool for marketing communications.

It is important to notice that, contrary to prior research on coo-effects, our study was capable of empirically assessing the country image’s communicative efficiency more precisely because we adopted such a meaning-centred perspective towards country images. Semiotic theory in particular made us aware of the fact that the utility of country images resides in their semantical variety. This semantical richness is reflected in the complexity of the country image’s internal structure. Consequently, if this inner complexity is not taken into account when operationalizing country images (for instance by having the operationalization of country images being limited to only one of their basic components as has been traditionally done), then it is not surprising that much of its potential accuracy remains literally “unobserved”. However, this is exactly what has happened in classic studies on coo-effects. Therefore, the criticism towards research on country images is not always justified while it is often based on incomplete observations of what these country image effects really

are. Inspired by this insight, our study has tried to keep the country image's semantical richness intact by having it operationalized in its full complexity. As can be derived from our results, this indeed leads to other findings than the ones already reported within the literature. As a matter of fact, the results obtained by our study plead in favour of the country image's "rehabilitation" as a determinant of product attitudes.

2.3.2. Country images have a high communicative flexibility

Our study also demonstrates that country images are characterized by what we would like to refer to as a high level of "communicative flexibility". More precisely, this term should be understood as the country image's capacity of significantly contributing to the achievement of several of the communicative purposes that are traditionally distinguished within the literature on marketing communication. Put differently, the (practical) usefulness of country images extends itself to all different kinds of marketing messages (i.e., from informative or valuative messages to incitive messages). Throughout the preceding paragraphs, we already discussed that respondents in our study indeed were "flexible" in their use of country images. That is, they used them to form product-specific beliefs, evaluations and purchase intentions. This counted for both the beer and DVD survey. In line with what we discussed under the previous section, we think that country images owe this flexibility to their so-called "polysemy" (i.e., the fact that they consist of multiple significations) which is reflected by the complexity of their internal composition. Indeed, it seems quite logical that the potential of each of the country image's constituent components taken separately to contribute to the accomplishment of a particular communicative need, increases the country image's overall flexibility. Contrary to coo-studies already published, our study can be seen as a first attempt to provide the literature with empirical proof of the country image's communicative flexibility.

2.3.3. Country image effects are supported by composite mechanisms

Technically speaking, we adopted a "structural" approach towards the (empirical) analysis of country image effects. This allowed us to examine the composition of the deeper lying mechanisms behind country image effects. As discussed at former instances, scholars working within the coo-field have not yet reached unanimity on this particular issue. Therefore, one of our primary objectives was to test whether country image effects are supported by single or composite mechanisms (cf. hypothesis 2). Based on the outcome of our study, we are inclined

to believe that country image effects should be understood as composite mechanisms (i.e., mechanisms that can be decomposed into several paralleling sub-effects). More specifically this seems to count for all three types of effects that are traditionally distinguished within the literature (i.e., cognitive, affective and conative effects). In case of the beer survey, the cognitive effect (defined as the effect that impacts on the “cognitive” component of product attitude) was supported by a mechanism that could be decomposed into three co-occurring sub-effects. The mechanism underlying the affective effect (defined as the effect that impacts on the “affective” component of product attitude) could be decomposed into two sub-effects.

Finally, the conative effect (defined as the effect that impacts on the “conative” component of product attitude) was carried by a mechanism that could also be further subdivided into two sub-effects. Results for the DVD survey were completely in line with those obtained for the beer survey with a slight variation for the composition of the mechanism supporting the cognitive effect (two sub-effects for the DVD survey instead of three). In sum, our study confirms the idea that country image effects do not result from one single underlying process (e.g., Hadjimarcou and Hu 1999; Häubl 1996; Hong and Wyer 1989, 1990; Li and Wyer 1994; Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993; Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999).

2.3.4. Sub-effects can be subdivided into stronger and weaker effects

Since country image effects are supported by composite mechanisms we asked ourselves whether any systematic pattern could be found in the way the various so-called “sub-effects” relate to each other (cf. hypotheses 3a, b and c). This in turn might make the complex notion of “country image effects” somewhat more manageable for marketing practitioners. Based on discourse theory, we organized sub-effects within a framework where a distinction was made between one so-called “primary” (i.e., strongest) sub-effect and other “secondary” (i.e., weaker) sub-effects. Let us have a look at the findings obtained for the beer survey.

Overall (i.e., for the three sub-models taken together), we can state that in case of the beer survey, the sub-effect triggered by the country image’s conative component was the strongest (three primary sub-effects). In decreasing order it was followed by the sub-effect emanating from the country image’s affective component (two secondary sub-effects). In final instance, we had the sub-effect generated by socio-economic stereotypes (one secondary sub-effect). The sub-effect exerted by geo-cultural stereortypes never reached statistical significance. Thus, put in semiotic terms we can say that country images when being

associated with beer operate mainly through what we referred to as the “connotational” levels of meaning (i.e., positive feelings and behavioural intentions) with a less important role being reserved for the “denotational” level of meaning (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes and socio-economic stereotypes). The fact that classic studies on coo-effects have often excluded these “connotational” meanings from research might explain why country images have been found to be of minor importance as determinants of product attitudes. Let us have a more detailed look now at the situation for each of the three sub-models.

The first sub-model (i.e., CI-effect on the formation of beer beliefs) demonstrated that, contrary to our expectations, sub-effects triggered by the country image’s cognitive components (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes and socio-economic stereotypes) were weaker than the sub-effect generated by the country image’s conative component. More in detail, we think the sub-effect caused by the country image’s conative component on subjects’ beliefs about beer should be understood as some kind of biasing process with the individual’s intention to approach (or avoid) Spain/Denmark colouring his beliefs about the quality of Spanish/Danish beer. Indeed, it is reasonable to suggest that, for instance, people willing to work in Spain or to travel to Spain are somehow predisposed to think of Spanish products in a more favourable way. In other words, their “attraction” to the country is transferred to products coming from that country. Remember that this “meaning transfer” mechanism is advanced as the basic principle behind marketing communications (e.g., Fouquier 1988; Hoshino 1987; McCracken 1990; Nöth 1988; Solomon et al. 1999).

In our opinion, the finding that the country image’s cognitive components played no more than a secondary role as determinants of subjects’ product beliefs confirms the idea that people’s (stereotypical) thoughts about a country’s more general environmental conditions are content-wise less relevant for determining a product’s quality than their (stereotypical) beliefs about a country’s product and marketing-oriented aspects (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992). As discussed throughout chapter 2 (cf. part 5, section 4.1) this lack of “content relevance” or “informational value” leads to a decrease in “predictive value”. This in turn results in a lower “propensity to use” such environmental-related cognitions when trying to get informed about a product’s quality attributes. Yet, we wish to stress that, contrary to the opinion of Roth and Romeo (1992), an individual’s beliefs about a country’s more general environmental conditions are not to be labeled as totally useless either. Remember for instance that our study has identified socio-economic stereotypes as significant determinants of respondents’ beliefs about Spanish/Danish beer (e.g., section 2.3.1). Taken together, we think it is best to state that our point of view on the relevance of (stereotypical) cognitions about a country’s more

general environmental conditions as indicators of a product’s quality attributes is less radical than the position taken by coo-scholars like Roth and Romeo (1992). We agree that these might be content-wise less relevant than for instance an individual’s prior knowledge about a country’s products. However, based on the results obtained by our study we oppose ourselves to the fact that they should be simply disregarded.

The hypothesis formulated with regard to the second sub-model (i.e., CI-effect on the formation of beer evaluation) was not supported either. That is, the sub-effect generated by the country image’s affective component was not the strongest. On the contrary, subjects’ evaluation of beer was predominated by the sub-effect exerted by the country image’s conative component. Maybe, the country image’s affective component remained of secondary importance because of the fact that the countries we included in our study (i.e., Spain and Denmark) were only capable of arousing “soft” (i.e., weak) feelings. This is in sharp contrast with results reported by other studies where the focus was on countries that evoked rather extreme emotions among respondents (e.g., Klein 2002; Klein et al. 1998; Sauer et al. 1991). Contrary to our findings for the first two sub-models the hypothesis for the third sub-model (i.e., CI-effect on formation of beer purchase intentions) could be supported by our data. That is, the sub-effect triggered by the country image’s conative component was strongest when respondents were asked to determine whether to purchase Spanish/Danish beer or not. Table 71 gives a final overview of the results obtained for the beer survey.

Table 71: Hierarchy of sub-effects for the BEER survey*

SUB-EFFECTS: RESULTS BEER SURVEY	
SUB-MODEL 1 (CI → beer beliefs)	Conative sub-effect > Socio-economic sub-effect > Affective sub-effect
SUB-MODEL 2 (CI → beer evaluation)	Conative sub-effect > Affective sub-effect
SUB-MODEL 3 (CI → beer purchase intention)	Conative sub-effect > Affective sub-effect
OVERALL	Conative sub-effect > Affective sub-effect > Socio-economic sub-effect

* Geo-cultural sub-effect never reached statistical significance

Results for the DVD survey showed a different pattern for the sub-effects. Overall (i.e., for the three sub-models taken together), the sub-effect triggered by the country image's conative component was the strongest (three primary effects). This was in line with results obtained for the beer survey. However, in decreasing order it was followed by the sub-effects emanating from the country image's cognitive components with two secondary sub-effects for socio-economic stereotypes and one secondary sub-effect for geo-cultural stereotypes. Interestingly, the sub-effect exerted by the country image's affective component never reached statistical significance. Thus, although country images when being associated with DVD-players also operate mainly through the "connotational" level of meaning (i.e., behavioural intentions) the "denotational" level of meaning (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes and socio-economic stereotypes) should not be neglected. Let us briefly analyze the situation for each of the three sub-models taken separately.

In line with the beer survey, the first sub-model (i.e., CI-effect on the formation of DVD beliefs) showed that sub-effects triggered by the country image's cognitive components (i.e., geo-cultural stereotypes and socio-economic stereotypes) were weaker than the sub-effect generated by the country image's conative component. In our opinion, the finding that the country image's cognitive components only played a secondary role as determinants of subjects' product beliefs again confirms that people's (stereotypical) thoughts about a country's more general environmental conditions are content-wise less relevant for determining a product's quality than their (stereotypical) beliefs about a country's product and marketing-oriented aspects (e.g., Roth and Romeo 1992). Notwithstanding, we reiterate that there is no reason to treat them as if they were completely unimportant. Indeed, stereotypical thoughts about a country's environmental conditions significantly contributed to the formation of DVD-specific beliefs, evaluation and purchase intentions. Thus again, we think it is best to be somewhat more balanced in our thinking about the relevance of (stereotypical) cognitions about a country's more general environmental conditions as indicators of a product's quality attributes. Even if these are content-wise less relevant than for instance an individual's prior knowledge about a country's products it would be unwise to exclude them from coo-research.

The hypothesis formulated with regard to the second sub-model (i.e., CI-effect on the formation of DVD evaluation) was not supported either. Interestingly, the sub-effect generated by the country image's affective component did not even reach statistical significance. In line with our findings for the beer survey subjects' evaluation of DVD-players was predominated by the sub-effect exerted by the country image's conative component. As mentioned before,

we think this lack of statistical significance for the country image’s affective component might have been caused by the fact that the countries we included in our study (i.e., Spain and Denmark) only evoked “soft” (i.e., weak) feelings. Finally, the hypothesis for the third sub-model (i.e., CI-effect on formation of DVD purchase intentions) was supported by our data. That is, the sub-effect triggered by the country image’s conative component was strongest when respondents were asked to determine whether to purchase Spanish/Danish DVD-players or not. Table 72 gives a final overview of the results obtained for the DVD survey.

Table 72: Hierarchy of sub-effects for the DVD survey*

SUB-EFFECTS: RESULTS DVD SURVEY	
SUB-MODEL 1 (CI → DVD beliefs)	Conative sub-effect > Socio-economic sub-effect
SUB-MODEL 2 (CI → DVD evaluation)	Conative sub-effect > Socio-economic sub-effect
SUB-MODEL 3 (CI → DVD purchase intention)	Conative sub-effect > Geo-cultural sub-effect
OVERALL	Conative sub-effect > Socio-economic sub-effect > Geo-cultural sub-effect

* Affective sub-effect never reached statistical significance

2.4. What about the role of “country typology”?

The fourth hypothesis we formulated focussed on the role of “country typology” as a potential moderator of country image effects. Overall, we could establish that there was no substantial support for the assumption that country typology functioned as a moderator of country image effects. Regardless of the outcome, we believe it is important to signal that results obtained for this specific hypothesis should be interpreted with care for three particular reasons.

First of all, there is the way in which we (theoretically) defined the notion of “country typology”. More in detail, we explained how countries can be subdivided into different types or categories in function of many criteria. In the selection of our countries-of-origin however, we put the accent on one specific criterion, that is, “national culture” and its degree of similarity with the cultural profile of our Belgian respondents. This way, Spain was selected as the culturally more similar country while Denmark was proposed as the culturally less

similar country. The problem here is that although Denmark and Spain mutually differ on this particular aspect, there are many other country-related dimensions on which both countries are not that different from each other (e.g., Kasper et al. 1999). This in turn might have “blurred” the difference we ascribed to both countries in function of national culture. In other words, positing that both countries are two distinct “country types” only on the basis of their national culture might have been an oversimplification of how both countries really relate to one another.

Secondly, there is our “methodological treatment” of the concept “national culture”. For several decades already, various instruments have been developed in order to measure this construct (e.g., Hofstede 1980; Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner 1997). Due to time restrictions and some other “practical reasons”, we did not empirically assess both countries’ national culture. Instead, we based ourselves on to the scores reported by Hofstede (2000).

Thirdly, it should be noticed that our study only included two countries-of-origin. Of course this number is much too limited in order to draw any generalizable conclusions on the status of country typology as a potential moderator of country image effects.

2.5. What about the role of “product typology”?

The fifth hypothesis focussed on the role of “product typology” as a potential moderator of country image effects. More specifically, we expected country image effects to be stronger for the hedonic product (i.e., beer) and weaker for the utilitarian product (i.e., DVD-players). Taken together, no substantial support could be found for this hypothesis. In fact, this hypothesis could only be tested for the sub-effect generated by socio-economic stereotypes on the formation of product beliefs and for the three sub-effects triggered by the country image’s conative component on the formation of product beliefs, evaluation and purchase intentions. Contrary to our expectations the latter three were stronger for DVD-players than for beer. Thus, the only sub-effect where support for the hypothesis could be found was the sub-effect between socio-economic stereotypes and product beliefs. In line with our remark for “country typology” we have to add here that in order to be capable of drawing more “valid” conclusions on the role of product typology as a moderator of country image effects, more products should be included.

Yet, even if we obtained no substantial support for the moderation hypothesis, we think it should be noticed that our study has resulted in some other interesting findings. First of all, there is a noticeable difference between the beer and DVD survey with regard to the

role of the country image's affective component. The latter generated three significant sub-effects towards beer while its impact on subjects' attitudinal dispositions towards DVD-players never reached statistical significance. Thus apparently, positive feelings aroused by the product's coo play a prominent role for attitude formation towards beer while it is absolutely of no importance during the formation of attitudes towards DVD-players. On the other hand, the overall importance of country-related cognitions was found to be more outspoken for the DVD survey than for the beer survey. This way socio-economic stereotypes generated two significant sub-effects towards DVD-players and only one towards beer. In addition, geo-cultural stereotypes triggered one significant sub-effect towards DVD-players while their sub-effects never reached statistical significance towards beer. As can be noticed these results are perfectly in line with the idea that attitude formation towards hedonic-oriented products is more emotionally driven while attitudes towards utilitarian products are rather based on cognitive processes (e.g., Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Mittal et al. 1990; Verlegh 2001). Based on these findings, it might be more correct to state that instead of functioning as a moderator, product typology operates as a determinant of country-related cognitions and affects.

The only two findings that kind of surprised us were the sub-effect from socio-economic stereotypes towards beliefs about beer and from geo-cultural stereotypes towards DVD-related purchase intentions. With regard to the former we would rather expect respondents' beliefs about beer to be determined by their internally stored geographical stereotypes. For instance, we think it would be logical to state that a country's climate and landscape are more appropriate as indicators of beer-related quality attributes like "taste", "naturalness" or "aroma". The same remark counts for geo-cultural stereotypes determining subjects' purchase intentions towards DVD-players. Here we would expect the role of socio-economic stereotypes to be more pronounced while a country's economic and industrial reputation can be seen as more relevant for our attitudes towards typically utilitarian products like a DVD-player.

3. Managerial implications

So taken together, what are the most important practical implications of our study for marketers? Overall, our basic recommendation is not to ignore the role of people's image

about a country's more general environmental conditions. Our study offers two main arguments in support of the practical relevance of so-called "country images".

First of all, country images execute statistically significant effects on attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products, even in situations where people are being confronted with countries-of-origin that evoke softer cognitions, feelings and conations. Put differently, country images do not have to be extreme before they can be of any importance for the positioning of products on the international market. As demonstrated by our empirical study, an average daily life context of Belgians being confronted with products made in two European countries is already capable of arousing significant coo-effects. Thus, the issue of country images should be taken seriously even for the positioning of products within geographical entities (like Europe) of which the so-called more general environmental conditions are relatively homogeneous.

A second motivation lies in the country image's highly developed communicative accuracy and flexibility. More in detail, the country image's "polysemy" increases its usefulness as a device for the achievement of various communicative purposes. We demonstrated that country images can serve people in their desire to get informed about products (i.e., informative goals), to form an evaluative judgement about them (i.e., valuative goals) or to decide on whether to purchase them or not (i.e., incitive goals). In our opinion, such a communicative flexibility is not always generalizable to other marketing stimuli. Therefore, instead of marginalizing their practical relevance we think it would be more appropriate to reconsider the status of coo-stimuli as valuable assets for the promotion of products made abroad. Throughout the next section, we will propose some practical recommendations for the use of country images.

A first issue that should be taken into account is that country images have been found to be operating mainly at the connotational level of meaning. We saw that the country image's prescriptive significations (i.e., tendencies to approach/avoid the country) are the most influential determinants of subjects' attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products. The role of designative meanings (i.e., geo-cultural + socio-economic stereotypes) on the one hand and that of appraisive significations (i.e., positive feelings towards the country) on the other were only of secondary importance for the formation of people's attitudinal dispositions. Notwithstanding, two reasons prevent us from stating that minor importance should be attributed to designative and appraisive significations.

First of all, country image effects are supported by what we referred to as “composite” mechanisms. This means that even if the country’s image’s conative component is the most powerful determinant of people’s product attitude, it is seldomly the only one. Indeed our study indicated that together with the “primary” (i.e., stronger) sub-effect triggered by the country image’s conative component, the “secondary” (i.e., weaker) sub-effects generated by the cognitive and affective components contribute to the reinforcement of the overall effect emanating from country image taken as a whole. Therefore, it would be unwise to neglect these secondary sub-effects. Secondly, there is a basic principle stemming from semiotic theory stating that prescriptive significations are “logically” grounded in designative and appraisive significations. This explains why the concept of a country image rests on a (conceptually speaking) strict hierarchical structure where designative significations are at the basis and prescriptive significations at the top with appraisive significations falling in between. In their role of logical antecedents these designative and appraisive significations are of crucial importance for the arousal of the country image’s prescriptive significations.

Publicity for products coming from so-called “Less Developed Countries” counts as a perfect illustration of how accentuating a country image’s designative and appraisive significations might increase its efficiency as a means to incite someone to buy. People generally decide to purchase such products based on their tendency to approach (i.e., to financially support) the country where the product has been made. This intention is often based on some specific feature(s) related to that country (like for instance the poverty of its local inhabitants or, in a more positive sense, the suitability of local climate and landscape for the production of exotic articles like fruit and coffee). By stimulating people’s thoughts and feelings about those country-related aspects, they can be more easily persuaded to buy. In our opinion, this can be done most accurately by means of visual stimuli (like photographs, pictures, TV-ads) since these are more “explicit” activators of people’s thoughts about a country’s environmental conditions. These cognitions (i.e., designative significations) in turn might arouse feelings of solidarity (i.e., appraisive significations) resulting in the willingness to help (i.e., prescriptive significations). It is this “approach” intention towards the country that will be transferred to its products. Ultimately this leads to the individual’s intention to buy that country’s products.

Publicity in the touristic sector counts as another good illustration. Visualizing a country’s attractive climate and geography or the richness of its local culture makes people think about the place as if it were an exotic paradise (i.e., designative significations). These thoughts will elicit all kinds of positive feelings like attraction, happiness, interest or

enthusiasm (i.e., appraisive significations) leading to their intention of wanting to go and visit the country (i.e., prescriptive significations). Ultimately, these intentional longings will drive people to book their vacations. Thus, taken together, marketers should realize that the country image's designative and appraisive significations might not only be valuable as generators of additional sub-effects on people's attitudinal dispositions towards products and services. In their role as logical antecedents of prescriptive significations (with these constituting the most influential part of the country image) they might facilitate the latter's arousal.

Another issue of importance for the practical use of coo-cues is a phenomenon referred to in the literature as the so-called "European Identity Syndrome" (e.g., Cinnirella 2003; Schweiger et al. 1995; Verlegh 2001). It stands for the reinforced cohesion between various European countries. Several authors have already argued that this increasing impression of "communality" seriously reduces the impact of antipathetic feelings while reciprocal sympathy is more and more intensified. In our opinion, this is an element that offers some interesting opportunities for the positioning of foreign-made products on the European market. For instance, if consumers can be made aware of a foreign product's "Europeanness" (by associating the product with the well-known European logo), they might become more attracted to it. Yet, simply replacing national origin labels by a supra-national Made-in Europe label probably would not be the best strategy to follow. More in detail, we assume it will be more fruitful for European countries to combine their national labels with such a European label or logo. We base this assumption on the fact that it is still difficult for people to imagine something precise and well defined when being confronted with a supra-national entity like Europe. The vagueness of such a "Europe image" is in sharp contrast with the often well developed images people have about individual countries. Thus, in order to avoid a loss of informational value, we think it would be a better option to link pan-European labels to labels indicating a product's national origin.

Taken together these practical implications, how would we use coo-cues for the positioning of Spanish/Danish beer and DVD-players on the Belgian market? Let's first have a look at the case of beer. To start with, it should be noticed that, besides the primary sub-effect emanating from the country image's conative component, sub-effects triggered by positive feelings towards the coo are of special importance for hedonic products. Secondly, geo-cultural stereotypes are best qualified as stimulators of positive feelings towards a product's coo. Additionally, they are perfectly relevant as quality indicators for food and beverages like beer. Therefore, in the case of beer, we advise marketers to emphasize the activation of people's stereotypical thoughts about the geo-cultural conditions of the country-

of-origin (like the country's landscape or its climate). We believe this can be achieved most accurately by combining two types of visual coo-stimuli with each other. On the one hand, we would provide beer with a clearly noticeable dual logo combining the national and the European flags. On the other hand, we would associate it with pictorial representations (imprinted on the etiquettes or on the packaging) explicitly referring to the coo's geo-cultural environmental conditions. These pictures in combination with the national flag will facilitate the arousal of sufficiently precise and meaningful geo-cultural stereotypes with these in turn eliciting positive feelings and resulting in approach tendencies towards the coo. The European logo on the other hand will cause the occurrence of a sympathy bias that favourably affects people's attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced beer.

For the positioning of Spanish/Danish DVD-players on the Belgian market, we advise marketers to make an alternative use of the coo-cue. DVD-players are typically utilitarian products. Therefore, we recommend that the accent be put on stimulating people's stereotypical thoughts about the coo's socio-economic conditions (like its level of economic development, its reputation as an industrial power or its position in world politics). As indicated by our study, these will not only allow people to form an opinion about the functional quality of DVD-players but in addition, these are to be seen as powerful generators of country-specific connotations. Since the latter have been identified as the most influential determinants of people's attitude towards DVD-players, this should be seen as an extra motivation to stimulate people's thoughts about the coo's socio-economic conditions. In line with our suggestions for beer, we think a combination of visual coo-stimuli would be most adequate in realizing this objective. On the one hand, we would provide DVD-players with a dual logo combining the national and European flags and on the other we would mark the packaging with pictures, photographs or illustrations of the coo's socio-economic conditions with a clear accent on modernity and technological development. The reference to Europe will favourably bias the formation of people's attitudinal dispositions towards Spanish/Danish DVD-players. Our empirical study could establish how also for the case of DVD-players, subjects mostly make use of the country image's connotational meanings with the strongest effect being generated by its prescriptive significations (i.e., the CI's conative component). We will retake the foregoing in Table 73.

Table 73: Strategies for the use of country images in combination with Spanish/Danish beer and DVD-players

SPANISH / DANISH BEER	SPANISH / DANISH DVD-PLAYERS
<p>National label + European label Visual stimuli → Geo-cultural conditions</p>	<p>National label + European label Visual stimuli → Socio-economic conditions</p>

4. Theoretical contributions towards the coo-field

Throughout this section we will briefly discuss the main theoretical contributions of our study towards the coo-field. Overall, we think our dissertation should be seen as a tentative to further fine-tune the theoretical understanding of coo-effects. More insight into the functioning of coo-effects could be gained due to the fact that we followed a “meaning-centred approach” towards this phenomenon. According to this alternative paradigm, research on the selection and processing of marketing stimuli should focus more on consumers’ personal interpretation of these stimuli. More in detail, we discussed how the basic principle behind the meaning-centred approach is that people’s reaction towards marketing stimuli is not to be seen as a passive reception of “cold” information. On the contrary, people are said to “act” upon this incoming information and to transform it into “subjective” meanings. It is the collection of these “psychological” meanings that is transferred to the product and that constitutes the basis of how people will finally react towards it.

However, contrary to this theoretical point of view, the majority of empirical studies within the literature on consumer behaviour still examines the formation of product attitudes without explicitly taking into consideration what marketing stimuli (like price, brand, store reputation, etc.) offered to subjects really mean to them. This also counts for the coo-field where most studies have examined the formation of product attitude without taking into account people’s personal interpretation of coo-cues. Consequently, our knowledge about the functioning of coo-stimuli is rather limited. In other words, we still do not really understand the “how” and “why” about coo-effects.

This is precisely where our study differs from the traditional work on coo-effects. That is, we first closely examined what meanings people associate with a coo-stimulus and we explicitly took these “country images”, into account for a further structural analysis of coo-effects. As a result, besides instructing us about the fact that coo-stimuli affect product attitudes, our study provides the literature with a possible answer on the questions of how and why they do so. Schematically represented, the main difference between classical studies on coo-effects and ours, is that the former would correspond to a pattern where **coo-stimulus** → **attitudinal disposition towards product** while the latter should be represented as follows: **coo-stimulus** → **psychological meaning** → **attitudinal disposition towards product**. Important to notice is that in striving for a meaning-centred approach towards coo-effects, semiotic theory has been of great value. Let us briefly look at the most important theoretical contributions this field has made towards the coo-field.

In first instance, we think semiotics have helped us in anchoring what might be referred to as the “basic” conceptual structure behind country images. Although the more traditional attitude theories have much of their views in common with semiotics (for instance, both fields consider country images as tri-component constructs and both disciplines argue that these three constituent components are hierarchically ordered), we think semiotic theory is more transparent in determining what the basic conceptual structure of country images is like. In our opinion, this is largely due to the fact that attitude theory puts emphasis more on the *chronological* relationship between cognitions, affects and conations while semioticians rather focus on their *logical* connection. Interestingly, from a logical perspective, there is only one single order by means of which these basic components can be correctly related to each other. However, from a time perspective, several alternative hierarchical sequences can be distinguished. The fact that “chronologically” the basic components of country image can vary while “logically” the same connection always remains intact, probably explains why the opinions of attitude psychologists on the basic structure behind attitude constructs (like country images) still widely vary (e.g., Zajonc 1980; Zajonc and Markus 1982; 1985) while those of Peircean semioticians are very much in line with each other. As already mentioned, this theoretical transparency substantially contributes to a better understanding of what the internal structure of country images is like and how such images might be functioning during the formation of people’s attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products.

A second important implication of applying semiotic theory to the empirical study of coo-effects is that the status of people’s images about a country’s more general environmental conditions as a determinant of their attitudinal dispositions towards foreign-sourced products

is seriously rehabilitated. This is because semiotic theories like the discourse framework developed by Morris (1946, 1964) claim the (pragmatic) adequacy of marketing stimuli (like coo) can only be tested in a theoretically valid manner if their semantical spectre is fully taken into account and not limited to one of its different levels of signification. Put somewhat differently, the so-called “polysemical” character of coo-cues must be taken into account. However, the traditional theoretical paradigms on which extant coo-research is based have not respected coo-cues in their semantical richness. For instance, studies based on the so-called “information theoretic paradigm” focussed more specifically on the informational use of coo-cues (i.e., on their use as indicators of product quality). These have mainly emphasized the country image’s designative or lexical significations and simply left out of consideration the appraisive and prescriptive levels of signification. The same remark counts for coo-studies based on the “hedonic or experiential paradigm” only these paid attention more particularly to the valuative use of coo-cues (i.e., on their use as determinants of product evaluation). In doing so they have been inclined to limit the conception of the coo-cue’s meaning to the appraisive level of signification with designative and prescriptive significations not being taken into account. Finally, there is a stream of coo-studies grounded in what has been referred to as the “social identity paradigm”. These studies have turned their attention more specifically to the incitive usage of marketing stimuli (i.e., on their use as determinants of product-specific purchase intentions). Typically, these focussed only on prescriptive significations with designative or appraisive significations being left out of consideration.

It needs no further explanation that these fragmented conceptions of the country image’s meaning have led to situations where academics too rapidly have come to the conclusion that country images are no efficient means to achieve the communicative purposes in function of which they are used. Take for instance the case of coo-studies applying the information theoretic perspective. At numerous occasions, these studies argued that people’s cognitions about a country’s more general environmental conditions (i.e., country image’s designative signification) were not relevant as determinants of their thoughts about the product’s quality. Unfortunately however, these studies have neglected the possibility for such cognitions about a country’s environmental conditions to affect people’s product beliefs through the affective and/or conative reactions (i.e., the country image’s appraisive and prescriptive significations) they might be triggering. This is more precisely one of our study’s most capital findings, namely, that country images owe their communicative adequacy to their polysemical character.

5. Limitations

As all studies, the present study has a number of limitations. To begin with, the study was designed in such a way that effects emanating from the CI-construct were operating within a single-cue setting. As previously discussed, this might have artificially inflated the size of these effects. The same remark counts for the type of product stimulus we opted for. More in detail, we worked with a so-called “intangible product stimulus”. That is, products were referred to in an exclusively verbal way. According to the meta-analyses performed by Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), the use of such verbal descriptions might have resulted in an overestimation of the impact of the effects generated by the CI. In addition, it should be noticed that both these setting-related factors diminished the external validity of our results. The latter wasn’t enhanced either by the fact that we worked with a student sample instead of a random sample of Belgian consumers. Additionally, we worked with a limited number of countries and products.

Another issue is the absence of any substantial effects for the variables labeled “positive feelings” and “negative feelings”. In our opinion, the “weak” scores for these two constructs are partially due to the fact that, although there are several reliable and valid scales for the measurement of feelings and emotions “in general”, there were no scales at our disposition for assessing feelings related to a country. As already stated, it might well be that several items belonging to the PANAS-scales are perfectly suited for the measurement of an individual’s feelings “tout court”, but for our study, where the focus is more specifically on feelings evoked by a foreign country, these might have been less relevant. As we will argue throughout the following section, the development of such a “country-of-origin-specific” feelings scale offers an excellent opportunity for future research.

In addition, the strategy we followed for measuring subjects’ cognitions about the environmental conditions we incorporated in our study is not without certain shortcomings. As explained before, these environmental conditions are in fact to be seen as multi-dimensional constructs. Although we originally tried to retain this multi-dimensional character, we decided to operationalize subjects’ cognitions about these nine environmental conditions at a content-wise more general level. To our belief, this might have made it somewhat more difficult for our respondents to answer some of our questions. For instance, subjects might have asked themselves what to think of more precisely when being confronted with such “proxy” terms like “religion”, “economy” or “cultural identity”.

Finally, as argued by Han et al. (1994) the possibility exists that the use of self-administered questionnaires has enhanced the occurrence of a halo bias. Additionally, the fact that respondents were questioned about their personal feelings and opinions about other countries might have exposed participants' answers to some kind of social desirability bias.

6. Agenda for future research

As signalled in the previous section, our study was designed in such a way that some of the key propositions underlying discourse theory could only be tested for a limited number of countries and products. Future research might attempt to examine the discourse framework working with more and other countries and different kinds of products. Additionally, we believe it might be interesting to investigate its theoretical value within a so-called "multi-cue setting" where the coo-cue is offered to respondents together with additional product-related information. This might allow us to investigate their mutual interactions. In general, we think such a multi-cue setting would further weaken the magnitude of CI-effects. However, since our study has indicated that CI-effects are composite mechanisms, it remains unclear when and which of the sub-effects would be attenuated. For example, it might well be that, in situations where marketing stimuli are offered to subjects with the intention of informing them about the product's quality, such additional product info is judged to be of superior informational value than any internally stored thoughts about the coo's more general environmental conditions. This in turn might be resulting in a substantial decrease of the size of country image effects. Also, it seems reasonable to suggest that, in case marketing stimuli are used for valuative purposes, stimuli charged with all kinds of emotions and symbolic imagery (like the product's brand) might lead to a substantial weakening of the magnitude of country image effects.

Still another appealing issue would be to investigate which aspect of meaning is emphasized by respondents in case we are focussing on the meaning structure of other marketing stimuli (like price, brand, guarantee, store reputation, etc.). For instance, it might be logical to suppose that for image variables like brand or store reputation, people are rather inclined to have their product attitudinal dispositions being determined by connotational meanings while for the informatively more valuable cues, accent is being put on denotational significations.

As already indicated, we believe some very interesting opportunities are still left open with regard to the development of good measurement instruments for the assessment of country-related cognitions, feelings and conations. These will most certainly help us to improve the quality of the data on the one hand and to arrive at a better understanding of country image effects on the other. More in detail, we think that for the development of such scales, qualitative-oriented techniques might be of special interest. The laddering approach for instance might be extremely valuable in revealing the types of affects and conations to which country-specific cognitions are linked. In addition, it would be interesting to examine whether there are other more general environmental conditions determining the formation of people's attitude towards foreign-sourced products. We limited ourselves to nine of such country-related environmental conditions. However, we think several others are waiting to be identified as potential determinants of product attitudes.

Also, we think it would be very interesting to apply the insights stemming from discourse theory on respondents of other nationalities. This way, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that national and cultural differences might bring consumers to interpret marketing stimuli in very divergent ways.

Finally, we think special attention within the field of coo-research should be going to the role of "cultural congruity". As argued by Sirgy (1982, 1985) and Sirgy and Su (2000), consumers are inclined to feel attracted to products or services of which the surrounding image created by marketers corresponds to their (ideal) self-identity. Since culture determines one's (ideal) self-identity to a large extent (e.g., Hofstede 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997) it might be expected that cultural (dis)similarities can have a fundamental impact on people's reaction towards foreign-sourced consumer goods (e.g., Deshpandé et al. 1986; Forehand and Deshpandé 2001; Stayman and Deshpandé 1989). Although our study can be seen as a first attempt to explore the role of cultural congruity, it is not without shortcomings. We already discussed these throughout section 2.4. of the present chapter. In our opinion, future attempts would do best in empirically assessing the cultural profile of source countries instead of basing their selection of these source countries on the scores obtained by the Hofstede survey. Additionally, we think it is best to measure the level of congruency by means of the instruments offered by Sirgy (1982, 1985). Also, we believe it is inevitable that more countries-of-origin should be included before any valid conclusions can be drawn on the precise role of cultural congruity.

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APPENDICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix 2.1.: Discrepancies between theoretical and empirical approaches: a critical literature review

Appendix 2.2.: Exploratory in-depth interviews: image profiles obtained for the eight countries included in our study

Appendix 5.1.: Questionnaire for SPAIN and SPANISH products

Appendix 5.2.: Questionnaire for DENMARK and DANISH products

Appendix 6.1.: Hypothesized structural overall model analyzing CI-effects on beer attitude + values for goodness-of-fit

Appendix 6.2.: Hypothesized structural overall model analyzing CI-effects on DVD attitude + values for goodness-of-fit

APPENDIX 2.1.

Discrepancies between theoretical and empirical approaches: a critical literature review

1. Outline

This appendix is dedicated to a literature study where the general focus of attention was on the question of knowing whether any discrepancies can be found between theoretical and empirical constructs (e.g., Chapter 2, part 2, section 4). It will be structured as follows: first we will discuss the overall procedure and the more specific objectives of this study. Afterwards, the results for each stage of the analysis will be presented and discussed in a more detailed way. Finally, a general overview of the corpus and the results per study will be offered.

2. Overall procedure and objectives of the study

The claim that empirical studies have applied a rather narrow conceptual perspective on “country image” and “product attitude” is based on the results of a large-scale literature review. More in detail, the study was performed in four stages. First, we composed a sufficiently representative corpus of publications on coo-effects. Overall, 213 studies were selected for our review. Together with a general overview of the results, these studies will be presented in Table 4 (e.g., section 7). In second instance, we focussed on the following three questions:

1. How often has each of the three basic constituent components of “country image” and “product attitude” been included into the empirical analysis of coo-effects?
2. How did empirical studies on coo-effects operationalize the three basic constituent components of “country image” and “product attitude”?
3. How many empirical studies on coo-effects have focussed on the role of subjects’ inner norms and values as a determinant of product attitude?

The results obtained for these questions will be presented in Table 1 (e.g., section 4). Additionally, we will elaborate somewhat further on the different strategies followed for the operationalization of the basic constituent components of “country image” and “product attitude” (cf. question 2). Throughout the third stage of our review, we went one step further in our analysis and focussed on the following question:

4. To which extent have empirical studies on coo-effects taken into consideration the three-dimensional character of “country image” and “product attitude”?

Put somewhat differently, the main objective for this part of the analysis was to find out to what extent empirical studies on coo-effects have respected theory in its claim that “country image” and “product attitude” are tri-component constructs. The results for this question can be consulted in Table 2 (e.g., section 5). Finally the fourth stage integrates insights stemming from the previous stages of analysis in that it combines the different operationalizations for “country image” and “product attitude” encountered within the literature. By bringing these together in a matrix, we get a clear picture of the theoretical representativity of empirical studies in their treatment of both constructs. This matrix will be represented by means of Table 3 (e.g., section 6).

3. STAGE 1: composition of the corpus

As mentioned earlier, our first efforts were directed towards the composition of a sufficiently representative body of literature. We looked for journal articles, congress and working papers, doctoral dissertations, manuals and handbooks. This resulted in a corpus of 213 studies on coo-effects. Special care was taken of the fact that these references would chronologically cover the whole field. The majority of studies selected for our review consist of articles that have been published between 1965 and 2004 in international journals and manuals which count as standard works within the field. As can be seen in Table 4 (e.g., section 7), 43 publications could be ranged in the column labeled “coo-conceptual”. In these studies the accent was more on the “country image” construct itself than on the empirical assessment of coo-effects. Studies that concentrated on the latter appear in the column that carries the label “coo-empirical”.

4. STAGE 2: frequencies and operationalizations for basic constituent components of “country image”, “norms and values” and “product attitude”

As can be seen below, the left column of Table 1 contains information concerning the “country image” construct. In the middle we have a category of studies where the focus is on “norms and values”. Finally, the right column is dedicated to the concept of “product attitude”.

Table 1: Frequencies and operationalizations for basic constituent components of “country image”, “norms and values” and “product attitude” within empirical studies on coo

COUNTRY IMAGE					NORMS & VALUES		PRODUCT ATTITUDE									
COUNTRY Cognitive					COUNTRY Affective		COUNTRY Conative		PRODUCT Beliefs		PRODUCT Evaluation		PRODUCT Purch.Int.			
148					19		1		34		97		73		60	
GP	GC	P	C	P-C	S	E			single	multi	single	multi	single	multi		
122	4	6	7	9	13	6			5	92	42	31	39	21		

GP = Generalized attitude towards the country as **P**roducer

GC = Generalized attitude towards the **C**ountry

P = **P**roduct facet

C = **C**ountry facet

P-C = **P**roduct-**C**ountry facet

S = Symbolic connotations

E = **E**motional connotations

Single = single-item scale

Multi = multiple-item scale

4.1. Results for COUNTRY IMAGE

4.1.1. Frequencies for basic constituent components of COUNTRY IMAGE

Based on the results presented in Table 1 we can see a manifest predominance of the cognitive component. Spread over the corpus, the country image's cognitive component was included 148 times, while the functioning of the affective component was only investigated at 19 different instances. The situation is even worse for the country image's conative component. Only one single study (e.g., Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993) could be retrieved where the influence of this particular country image component on product attitudes has been studied.

4.1.2. Operationalizations for basic constituent components of COUNTRY IMAGE

4.1.2.1. Cognitive component

As can be seen, the country image's cognitive component has been operationalized in 5 different manners within the literature we examined. In first instance there is a very extensive category (122 cases) containing studies where the country image's cognitive component has been operationalized as a "Generalized attitude towards the country as Producer" (G.P.). This generalized attitude should be seen as some kind of proxy standing for or summarizing more specifically the rich set of "cognitions" consumers might associate with the coo-cue. As discussed throughout previous sections, these country-related cognitions are numerous and on average, they can be subdivided into two cognitive "facets" or "dimensions". These would be more particularly, the product-oriented facet (regrouping thoughts about the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses) and the (more general) country environmental facet (containing beliefs about the country's socio-political climate, history, religion, geography, cultural identity, etc.). Studies we have qualified as pertaining to the "G.P.-category" thus are to be seen as cases where the country image's cognitive component is in fact represented by a proxy that summarizes more particularly the whole of cognitions that belong to the "product facet" of the country image's cognitive component.

The traditional operationalization procedure followed by these studies is to pre-test respondents' perception of several countries as producers of products in general or of the specific product category under study. More in detail, subjects are asked to distinguish a certain number of countries in function of their perceived "favourability" as producers. Based

on the outcome of this pilot test, scholars subdivide the plethora of country perceptions into different categories. Most frequently, they work with two or three categories. These are usually labeled “More Developed Countries” (MDCs), “Newly Industrializing Countries” (NICs) and “Less Developed Countries” (LDCs). During the experiment then, these countries are treated as experimentally manipulated conditions in a subject-within or a subject-between design and often enter subsequent regression analyses as dummy-like variables (e.g., Erickson et al. 1984; Johansson et al. 1985).

The same type of proxy-like operationalization has been applied by the second category of studies (4 cases). Under this category we ranged the studies which operationalized the country image’s cognitive component as a “Generalized attitude towards the Country” (G.C.). The difference with regard to the first category lies in the fact that this time, the proxy does not summarize the individual’s cognitions belonging to the product facet. Instead, it stands for the whole of cognitions that fall under the “country environmental facet”. During analysis these are also treated as dummy-like variables.

The following two categories differ from the first two in that they do not operationalize the country image’s component as a summary-cue like proxy, which is treated as a dummy variable. On the contrary, these studies are characterized by the fact that they operationalize the country image’s cognitive component by means of one or more items that have to be scored by respondents. Consequently, as a concept, the country image’s cognitive component enters subsequent data-analysis as a “measured” variable that stands for a more detailed, that is, for a content-wise more valid representation of the underlying construct. The first of these two categories carries the label “Product facet” (P) and contains 6 cases where the country image’s cognitive component has been operationalized as a measured single or multi-item construct, standing more specifically for cognitions related to the cognitive component’s “product facet”. The second category falling within the typology of studies where the country image’s cognitive component has been measured by means of a single or multi-item scale, contains 7 cases and is labeled “Country facet” (C) while its conception has been limited more specifically to cognitions related to the “country environmental facet” of the country image’s cognitive component.

Finally, there is a fifth category containing 9 cases and carrying the label “Product-Country facet” (P-C). These studies are characterized by the fact that they operationalize the country image’s cognitive component as a measured multi-item construct that conceptually contains cognitions related to both the “product facet” and the “country environmental” facet of the country image’s cognitive component. Several studies within this category even

operationalized the cognitive component as a little structural equation network where each of the dimensions identified within the cognitive component was represented as a multi-item scaled latent variable (e.g., Häubl 1996; Lee and Bae 1999; Lee et al. 1992; Li et al. 1997; Knight and Calantone 2000; Yaprak and Parameswaran 1986).

It goes without saying that, at the purely conceptual level, this last category counts as the most complete one. However, it appears that most studies on coo-effects have opted for the strategy of operationalizing the country image's cognitive component as a proxy-like dummy variable. More in detail, we have 126 studies of this kind against 22 cases only where the country image's cognitive component has been operationalized as a measured single or multiple item variable. The problem we see attached to this predominating approach is that it seriously undermines the theoretical value or implications of the empirical data provided. In fact, the utility of studies operationalizing the country image's cognitive component as a dummy-like proxy remains restricted to the mere assessment of coo-effects. Put differently, they allow us to establish their existence and in addition they can provide us with information on their size and on factors that might moderate or mediate them. Thus, in function of an exploratory perspective on coo-effects, this approach might be useful.

However, after several decades of coo-research, the field should have largely passed this stage and should be moving on towards the development of designs where the focus is more on theoretical insights about the precise nature and functioning of country images and their potential effects on the formation of product attitudes (e.g., Bilkey and Nes 1982; Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993). A very interesting topic that has remained rather unexplored up until today for instance, is the question of knowing which of the aspects that have been traditionally related to the country image's cognitive component functions as potential antecedents of coo-effects. As Nagashima (1970, 1977) saw it, consumers' attitudes towards foreign-sourced products are based on variables like the source country's representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history and traditions. Yet, reducing the concept of a country image at the operational level to the status of a dummy-like proxy does not allow us to empirically verify which of the variables advanced by Nagashima indeed operates as a potential triggering-cue of a coo-effect. The same criticism is formulated by Verlegh when he states that several coo-researchers "[...] represent country of origin by dummy variables that do not capture the degree or character of between-country differences. Although they attribute the influence of country of origin on product beliefs to consumers' perceptions of the features of the origin countries, they do not present empirical evidence for this relationship." (Verlegh 2001: 57). It is this particular deficiency that made

Wee et al. argue that the precise functioning of a country image “[...] needs to be studied more through a detailed operationalization of its underlying variables.” (Wee et al. 1993: 335). Having analyzed the different manners in which the country image’s cognitive component has been treated at the operational level within the literature, we will continue with the country image’s affective component.

4.1.2.2. Affective component

Contrary to the country image’s cognitive component, researchers have most frequently operationalized the affective component by means of multi-item scales. More in detail, two types of affects have been identified in our core literature. Within both categories, positive (or favourable) as well as negative (or unfavourable) affects can be encountered. In first instance, there are 13 studies where the focus was on so-called “Symbolic connotations” (S). The concept of “symbolic connotations” corresponds most intimately to what Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) have referred to as “expressive attributes” (these are related to expressions of social status, self-esteem, etc.) and “image attributes” (these have to do with group affiliation and the like). Under this category of affectively-oriented connotations, we also range expressions of style and luxury (e.g., Batra et al. 2000; Chao and Rajendran 1993; Marcoux et al. 1997), excellence (e.g., Ahmed et al. 1993), hedonism (e.g., Leclerc et al. 1994; Thakor and Pacheco 1997), and various types of risk or safety feelings (e.g., Chakraborty et al. 1996; Hampton 1977; Johansson et al. 1994; Tse 1999).

The problem we have with studies that fall under this category is that, in fact, they operationalized symbolic connotations by means of scales measuring personality traits instead of tapping any country-specific symbolism. Put differently, respondents do not report on whether they think the coo-cue itself is symbolically connotated. For instance, if we take a closer look at studies where the focus was on “status”, subjects in most cases were asked whether and to what extent they considered themselves to be concerned about or sensitive to status. The next step consists traditionally in assessing whether this “status concern” affects the use of coo-cues. If it appears then that the more status concerned respondents give proof of stronger coo-effects, the conclusion is drawn that the coo-cue bears a connotation of “high or low status”. However, being highly concerned about status does not automatically imply that the coo-cue itself connotes high or low status. It just means that the coo-cue’s status level will be an important criterion for the individual in evaluating the product. Yet, the question to know whether a coo-cue stands for high or low status will be related in first instance to the coo-cue itself. Studying the potential influence of an individual’s degree of status concern on

the use of coo-cues is relevant, yet, we think it would be very interesting for marketers and advertisers to focus on the coo-cue instead of the respondent and to uncover whether a coo-cue itself is connotated with status. It would even be more instructive to get an idea of which aspect(s) related to the product's coo might be giving this cue such a status connotation. However, in order to do so, we should not be asking respondents to indicate their status concern. Instead, we should ask them if they associate status symbolism with a particular coo and which country-specific aspect(s) (e.g., history, economy, culture, role in world politics, etc.) more precisely generate(s) this status connotation.

The second category of studies where the focus was on the country image's affective component contains 6 cases. More in detail, these concentrated on what we will refer to as "Emotional connotations" (E). This concept of "emotional connotations" should be understood as what traditional affect typologies refer to as "feelings". According to the affect-taxonomy developed by Derbaix and Pham (1998), feelings are characterized by the fact that they can be linked most often to a specific stimulus. In addition, they seem to be related quite intimately to antecedents of a cognitive nature and their intensity as well as their duration is said to be of a fairly weak to average size. Examples of feelings given by the authors are "pride" and "jealousy". In studying the role of the country image's affective component, Verlegh (2001) also worked with this concept of "feelings". Within the literature, we identified positive emotional connotations going from feelings of pleasantness, peacefulness, trust and likeability (e.g., Häubl 1996; Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993; Verlegh 2001) to negative and also more intensive feelings like animosity, threat, distrust, irritation and hostility (e.g., Klein 2002; Klein et al. 1998; Sullivan Mort and Han s.d.; Verlegh 2001).

Contrary to the criticism we formulated regarding the ways in which "symbolic" connotations have traditionally been operationalized, we think that "emotional" connotations have been treated as generated by the country. This link with the coo-cue itself has been most explicitly drawn by Klein (2002) and Klein et al. (1998) in their studies on the role and functioning of so-called "animosity". If we have a closer look at the conceptual models they have developed, we can see how this animosity construct is clearly linked to environmental aspects of the product's coo. More in detail, we can see how the authors assume feelings of animosity are related to country-specific characteristics like a nation's military history or its international political and economic policy. In other words, animosity can be seen as an authentic country-specific emotional connotation. That is, it should be considered as an integral part of the country image itself and, in addition, we have a clear vision on which country-specific aspects more precisely trigger this particular feeling. A similar example is the study

performed by Sullivan Mort and Han (s.d.). They related the emotional connotation of “threat” to the consumer’s perception of the product’s coo itself. Here more particularly, threat seems to be linked with the country-specific aspects like daily living conditions, cleanliness, level of economic and industrial development, safety conditions and political climate. Thus, apparently, emotional connotations on the average have indeed been operationalized and treated in accordance with the claim they are to be considered as a constituent (affective) component of the country image itself. Having commented on the various ways in which the country image’s affective component has been operationalized within the literature, we will turn now to the next constituent component, that is the conative one.

4.1.2.3. Conative component

With regard to the country image’s conative component, our comments will be rather brief since there is almost nothing written about its internal structure or the ways in which it should be treated at the empirical level. To our knowledge there is only one large-scale empirical study where the impact of conations, treated as a separately measured variable, on product attitudes has been examined (e.g., Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993). As already stated, the country image’s conative component should be seen as a whole of behavioural intentions towards the country. Of course, these can be manifold, going from more leisure directed activities like traveling and shopping to more professional behaviours like investing or doing business (e.g., Kotler et al. 1993). Due to the fact that the literature on coo is scarce about insights on how to conceive this construct of “behavioural intentions”, we turned again to the field where the role of store environment on shopping experience is studied. One of the basic premises within this particular domain is that store atmospherics can influence our behavioural intentions towards the shopping environment. In line with Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Brengman (2002) argues that behavioural responses towards any kind of environment can be captured into two basic categories labeled as “approaching” and “avoiding”. As she continues, “[a]pproach or convergence means that an individual reacts positively to the environment, whereas avoidance is characterized by an aversion to the environment.” (Brengman 2002: 50). With regard to the operationalization of approach-avoidance behaviour she demonstrates how, although opinions concerning this issue sometimes diverge, on the average, it is measured as a generic single uni-dimensional bipolar construct. This bipolarity is reflected in placing items standing for specific behavioural intentions on Likert or semantic differential scales. In case of Likert-scales for instance, agreement with a positively worded item would stand for approach, while disagreement can be considered as an expression of avoidance.

4.2. Results for NORMS and VALUES

4.2.1. Frequencies for NORMS and VALUES

In the middle of Table 1, we have a column labeled “Norms and values”. As can be seen, the impact of a person’s inner norms and value system on the formation of product attitudes has been examined at 34 instances.

4.2.1. Operationalizations for NORMS and VALUES

Within the literature different types of social or personal value constructs have been studied. These range from the more socio-economic oriented values like “ethnocentrism” (e.g., Shimp and Sharma 1987) and “patriotism” (e.g., Han 1988) to the socio-psychological values like “national identification” (e.g., Verlegh 2001), “conservatism” (e.g., Anderson and Cunningham 1972), “dogmatism” (e.g., Anderson and Cunningham 1972), “open-mindedness” (e.g., Hisrich et al. 1981), “internationalism/worldmindedness” (e.g., Balabanis et al. 2001; Rawwas et al. 1996), “relativism” (e.g., Swaidan et al. 2004), “social desirability” (e.g., Keillor et al. 2001) and “idealism” (e.g., Swaidan et al. 2004). On average, these have been measured by means of multi-item scales.

4.3. Results for PRODUCT ATTITUDE

4.3.1. Frequencies for basic constituent components of PRODUCT ATTITUDE

If we have a closer look at Table 1, we can see how in line with our findings for country images, the pattern of “cognitive prevalence” within empirical settings returns, although the differences are less pronounced for the product attitude construct. Co-researchers focussed 97 times on product belief formation, 73 times on the respondents’ evaluative judgement about products and, in slightly further decreasing order, 60 times on purchase intentions. Thus, overall, it appears that for both “country image” and “product attitude”, the cognitive component can be considered as the most frequently studied entity followed by the affective and conative components.

4.3.2. Operationalizations for basic constituent components of PRODUCT ATTITUDE

4.3.2.1. Cognitive component

We already mentioned that the product attitude’s cognitive component stands for the consumer’s beliefs or thoughts about a product’s quality. As can be seen in Table 1, this notion

of “product quality” has been measured at five instances as a single-item overall construct. Most studies however (92 cases) have assessed quality attribute perceptions by means of multi-item scales. This is probably related to the fact that product quality theory considers this construct to be supported by a rather complex, multidimensional structure (e.g., Steenkamp 1989). These multidimensional conceptions of product quality seem to vary to a considerable extent within the literature. One of the first propositions towards a multidimensional conception of product quality has been advanced by Nagashima (1970, 1977). More in detail, he factor-analyzed a set of 20 items borrowed from a 24-item set that was originally developed by Reiersen (1967) and found the following five dimensions: (1) price and value, (2) service and engineering, (3) advertising and reputation, (4) design and style and (5) consumers’ profile. Left aside some variations on the basic factorial structure, this conception has been adopted by numerous other scholars working within the field (e.g., Damanpour 1993; Heslop and Papadopoulos 1993; Kochunny et al. 1993; Kraft and Chung 1992; Mittal and Tsiros 1995; Mohamad et al. 2000; Papadopoulos et al. 1990; Papadopoulos et al. 1990; Roth and Romeo; White 1979). Another popular scale for the assessment of product quality has been proposed by Darling and Kraft (1977). They developed an instrument where so-called “marketing mix elements” received a more prominent place next to the traditionally measured intrinsic product quality attributes. This scale was subsequently used in a series of follow-up studies performed by the authors (e.g., Darling 1987; Darling and Arnold 1988; Darling and van Wood 1990).

In a paper published by Chao (1993), a first initiative was undertaken towards a more pronounced distinction between the more “utilitarian” or “technical” aspect of a product’s overall quality on the one hand, and the “aesthetic” or “design” related quality-dimension on the other. More particularly, the author developed a 7-item scale with 3 items (i.e., innovativeness, exclusivity and style) measuring the product’s “design quality” and 4 items (i.e., reliability, durability, workmanship and quality) tapping what he labeled as “product quality”. The idea that empirical measurement of a product’s overall quality should reflect this distinction between a utilitarian dimension and an aesthetic or a hedonic dimension, was followed authors like Brodowsky (1998), Li et al. (2000) and Verlegh (2001). Further fine-tuning was done by Insch and McBride (1998) and Li and Dant (1998). The latter tackled the problem by proposing Garvin’s taxonomy (e.g., Garvin 1984) as a potential framework for conceptualizing a product’s quality. More in detail, they propose the following eight dimensions: (1) performance, (2) serviceability, (3) reliability, (4) durability, (5) aesthetics, (6) conformance, (7) features and (8) image. In our opinion, this is the most complete conception of product quality that has been proposed so far within the literature on coo-effects.

4.3.2.2. Affective component

As indicated by Table 1, the consumer's product evaluation has been measured more often by means of a single item (42 cases) than by multi-item scales (31 cases). In our opinion, an important notice with regard to the product attitude's affective component is that we make a clear distinction between the overall construct of an "attitude" on the one hand, and the "affective component" of this overall construct on the other. This has not always been the case within the literature on coo-effects. As we already mentioned, we consider the affective component as an "evaluative judgement", that is, as an expression of preference. In line with what we discussed with regard to the concept of product quality perception, Affect Theory seems to suggest that an evaluative judgement about a product is supported by a multidimensional structure. More precisely, Holbrook (1986) and Batra (1986) state that a clear distinction should be made between the so-called "hedonic" or "emotional" and the "utilitarian" or "cognitive" component of our preferential dispositions towards products. Although several coo-researchers have worked with multi-item scales when assessing product-specific evaluative judgements, only a few exceptions could be identified within the literature where the cognitive and affective component were treated as distinct dimensions (e.g., Han 1990; Loeffler 2002).

4.3.2.3. Conative component

We already mentioned that the product attitude's conative component has to do with the consumer's purchase intentions towards the product. As demonstrated by Table 1, this particular component has been measured by means of a single item at 39 occasions. Multi-item scales have been used somewhat less frequently (21 cases). Besides the use of the more traditional survey questionnaire setting, purchase intentions have also been assessed by having respondents choose a product (e.g. Almonte et al. 1995; Cordell 1992; Damanpour 1993; Liefeld et al. 1996; Zhang 1996, 1997) or by means of rank-ordering tasks (e.g., Badri et al. 1995; Elliott and Cameron 1994; Lantz and Loeb 1998; Levin et al. 1993). To our knowledge, there are only two cases where the results obtained were based on concrete behaviour itself (e.g., Hulland et al. 1996; Quester et al. 1996).

5. STAGE 3: Frequencies for combinations of basic constituent components of “country image” and “product attitude”

As already explained this stage of our analysis should be seen as a closer examination of knowing whether and to what extent the empirical studies have taken into account the interrelated character that has been theoretically ascribed to the constituent components of country images and product attitudes. More in detail, our intention is to establish how complete empirical studies have been in their treatment of the concepts as they have been theoretically developed. The left column of Table 2 focusses on the concept of “country image”. As can be seen, it is quite interesting to establish that most studies on coo-effects so far have worked with very limited conceptions of country images. As we explained previously, country images are theoretically posited to be consisting of three interrelated components. Yet, Table 2 shows us that the majority of empirical studies we examined (139 cases) narrowed the concept down to its cognitive component only. At 10 occasions, a similar fractioned conception of country images could be found only this time, the focus was on the affective component. 8 studies might be situated at an “intermediate” level, including a cognitive and an affective component within the country image concept. Yet, although more complete, they still remain partial in their approach towards the country image construct. As already indicated only one empirical study fully covered the theoretical concept for country image.

Table 2: Frequencies for combinations of basic constituent components of “country image” and “product attitude” within empirical studies

COUNTRY IMAGE	PRODUCT ATTITUDE
COGNITIONS	BELIEFS
139	49
AFFECTS	EVALUATION
10	23
CONATIONS	PURCHASE INTENTION
0	15
COGNITIONS + AFFECTS	BELIEFS + EVALUATION
8	19
COGNITIONS + CONATIONS	BELIEFS + PURCHASE INTENTION
0	13
AFFECTS + CONATIONS	EVALUATION + PURCHASE INTENTION
0	17
COGNITIONS + AFFECTS + CONATIONS	BELIEFS + EVALUATION + PURCHASE INTENTION
1	13

When turning to the product attitude concept, we can see that the situation is less problematic. In total we have 87 studies where conceptions of product attitude have been limited to one component only. More in detail, 49 cases focussed on the cognitive component, 23 on the affective and 15 on the conative component. At the intermediary level we have 19 studies where the cognitive and affective components have been included, 13 cases where cognitive and conative component were investigated and 17 where the product attitude's affective and conative component were under study. Finally, we encountered 13 studies where each of the product attitude's constituent components was incorporated. Thus, on average, we can say that empirical studies on coo-effects have worked most often with incomplete conceptions of country image and product attitude. Consequently, one might question the theoretical representativity of results that have already been reported in the literature. That is, in fact, their value is limited to teaching us how "fragments" of country images function. This fragmentary impression will become even stronger if we have a look at the outcome for the final stage of our analysis.

6. STAGE 4: Combination of different empirical operationalizations for "country image" and "product attitude"

Table 3 shows the combination of the various ways in which studies on coo-effects have empirically operationalized the concepts of "country image" and "product attitude". It is striking to see how the large majority of studies have worked with fragmentary concepts and how the focus was most frequently put on the cognitive component of both constructs. As we already stated in the previous section, the fact that most empirical studies worked with partial concepts seriously questions the value we might attach to results obtained so far. Theoretically, country images and product attitudes, as well as the effects exerted by the former are considered to be much more complex than their treatment within empirical settings. Consequently, we might ask ourselves whether findings reported in the literature are sufficiently representative of how coo-effects really function.

Table 3: Combination of different operationalizations for “country image” and “product attitude” within empirical studies

	COO cognitions	COO Affects	COO Conations	COO Cog+aff	COO cog+con	COO aff+con	COO cog+aff+con
Product beliefs	44	4	0	0	0	0	1
Product evaluation	20	0	0	2	0	0	0
Product purch.int.	11	0	0	2	0	0	0
Product bel+eval	17	1	0	1	0	0	0
Product bel+purch.int.	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Product eval+purch.int.	15	0	0	2	0	0	0
Product bel+eval+purch.int.	10	1	0	1	0	0	0

7. General overview of the results

For a general overview of the results, we refer to Table 4. More in detail, it presents the outcome for each study taken separately.

Table 4: General overview of studies selected for our review + results of the analysis

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
1965	Schooler		X	C					Single	
1967	Reiersen		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1969	Schooler, Sunoo		X	G.P.					Single	
1970	Nagashima		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1971	Schooler		X	G.P.					Single	
1972	Anderson, Cunningham		X		S		N	Multiple		
1972	Goodnow, Hansz	X		C						
1973	Gaedeke		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1974	Lillis, Narayana		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1974	Etzel, Walker		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1976	Watson, Dunn	X		C						
1977	Darling, Kraft		X	G.P.				Multiple		Multiple
1977	Hampton		X	G.C.					Perceived risk	
1977	Nagashima		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1978	Bannister, Saunders		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1979	White		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1980	Wang, Lamb		X	C						Single
1981	Hisrich et al.		X	G.C.			N			Single
1982	Cattin et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1983	Wang , Lamb		X	C						Single
1984	Erickson et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple	Single	
1985	Hallén, Johansson	X		C						
1985	Johansson et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple	Single	
1985	Johansson, Thorelli		X	G.P.				Multiple	Single	
1986	Johansson, Nebenzahl		X	G.P.				Multiple	Single	
1986	Wall, Heslop		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
1986	Yavas, Alpay		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1986	Yaprak, Parameswaran		X	P-C						Multiple

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
1987	Brown et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1987	Darling		X	G.P.				Multiple		Multiple
1987	Shimp, Sharma		X				N	Multiple	single/multiple	single/multiple
1987	Schooler et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1987	Tan, Farley		X	G.P.			N	Multiple		Single
1988	Darling, Arnold		X	G.P.				Multiple		Single
1988	Han		X				N	Multiple		Multiple
1988	Han, Terpstra		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1988	Ettenson et al.		X	G.P.						Single
1988	Thorelli, Lim, Ye		X	G.P.				Single	Single	Single
1988	Hooley et al.	X	X	P/G.P.				Multiple		
1989	Eroglu, Machleit		X	P				Ability	to detect	quality
1989	Han		X	P				Multiple	Single	
1989	Morello, Boerema	X		P-C	E					
1989	Obermiller, Spangenberg	X		P-C	E		N			
1989	Johansson	X		P-C	E		N			
1989	Hong, Wyer		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
1989	Wall et al.	X		P-C						
1989	Hong, Toner		X	G.P.					Single	
1990	Darling, Van Wood		X	G.P.				Multiple		Multiple
1990	Han		X	P					Multiple	Single
1990	Hong, Wyer		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
1990	Papadopoulos et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1990	Papadopoulos et al.	X	X	C/GP	E	X		Multiple		
1990	Samiee, Mayo	X		C						
1991	Sauer et al.	X	X	P-C/GP	E		N	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
1991	Tseng, Yu	X		P-C						
1991	McLain, Sternquist		X				N	[Recall]		
1991	Wall et al.		X	G.P.						
1991	Hastak, Hong		X	G.P.				Single	Single	

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
1992	Cordell		X	G.P.					Single	Choice
1992	Hong, Yi		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
1992	Howard, Block		X	P				Multiple	Single	
1992	Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu	X		C	E	X				
1992	Kraft, Chung		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1992	Tse, Gorn		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
1992	Lee, Kim, Miller		X	P-C	S		N		Partial utility	
1992	Pisharodi, Parameswaran	X		P-C						
1992	Roth, Romeo		X	G.P.				Multiple		Multiple
1993	Steenkamp		X				N			Multiple
1993	Ettenson		X	G.P.						Single
1993	Heslop, Papadopoulos		X	C	E	X		Multiple		
1993	Alden		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1993	Ahmed, d' Astous		X	G.P.						Single
1993	Akaah, Yaprak		X	G.P.					Single	
1993	Chao		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1993	Chao, Rajendran		X		S					
1993	Cordell		X	G.P.					Single	
1993	Strutton, Pelton		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1993	Shimp et al.	X		P						
1993	Martin, Eroglu	X		C						
1993a	Tse, Lee		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	Single
1993b	Tse, Lee		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	Single
1993	Kochunny et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1993	Levin et al.		X	P-C			N			Rank-order
1993	Smith		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1993	Graby	X		P-C						
1993	Morello	X		P-C	E					
1993	Crawford, Lumpkin		X	C						Single
1993	Damanpour		X	G.P.				Multiple		Choice

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
1993	Nes, Bilkey		X	G.C.					Single	
1993	Ahmed et al.		X	G.P.	S		N			Single
1993a	Brunner et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1993b	Brunner et al.		X	C						Single
1993	Kotler et al.	X		C						
1994a	Leclerc et al.		X		S			Multiple	Single	
1994b	Leclerc et al.		X		S			Multiple	Single	Single
1994c	Leclerc et al.		X		S			Multiple		
1994	Rogers et al.		X	G.P.			N	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
1994	Lim et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
1994	Parameswaran, Pisharodi	X		P-C						
1994a	Maheswaran		X	G.P.					Multiple	
1994b	Maheswaran		X	G.P.					Multiple	
1994c	Maheswaran		X	G.P.					Multiple	
1994	Ahmed et al.		X	G.P.					Single	Single
1994	Elliott, Cameron		X	G.P.					Single	Rank-order
1994	Johansson et al.		X	P-C	S		N		Multiple	Single
1994	Lin, Sternquist		X	G.P.					Single	
1994	Samiee	X		P-C			N			
1994	Usunier		X		S			Multiple		
1994	Li et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
1994	Okechuku		X	G.P.					Rank-order	
1994	Zinkhan, Preshaw	X		P	S		N			
1994	Li, Wyer		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
1995	Almonte et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		Choice
1995	Jaffe, Martinez		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1995	Andaleeb		X	G.C.				Multiple		
1995	Ahmed, d'Astous		X	G.P.					Single	Single
1995	Chao, Gupta		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1995	Cheung, Denton	X	X	C/G.P.	E	X		Multiple		

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
1995	Strutton et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1995	Luthans et al.	X		C						
1995	Mittal, Tsiros		X	G.P.				Multiple		Single
1995	Good, Huddleston		X	G.P.			N		Single	
1995	Neelankavil et al.	X		C						
1995	Maronick		X	G.P.			N	Open end		
1995	Badri et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		Rank-order
1996	Niss	X		P-C	S-E		N			
1996	Liefeld et al.		X	G.P.				Single	Single	Choice
1996	Zhang		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	Choice
1996	Ahmed, d'Astous		X	G.P.					Single	Single
1996	Hulland et al.		X	G.P.						[behaviour]
1996	Qeester et al.		X	G.P.						[behaviour]
1996	Rawwas et al.		X	G.P.			N		Single	
1996	Häubli		X	P↔C	E			Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
1996	Lantz, Loeb		X				N		Rank-order	
1996	Moon	X		C	E		N			
1996	Thakor, Kohli	X		P	S		N			
1996	Chakraborty et al.		X	G.P.	S		N		Multiple	Multiple
1997	Askegaard, Ger	X		P-C	S-E		N			
1997	Li, Dant		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1997	Bailey, Gutierrez de Pinerez		X				N			Single
1997	Marcoux et al.		X	G.P.	S		N		Single	
1997	Li, Fu, Murray		X	P↔C						
1997	Zhang		X	G.P.				Multiple		Choice
1997	Ahmed et al.		X	G.P.					Single	Single
1997	Bruning		X				N		Single	
1997	Siu, Chan		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1997	Thakor, Pacheco		X		S			Single		
1997	Kim, Chung	X		P			N			

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
1997	Schaefer		X	G.P.					Multiple	
1997	Shagafi, Puig		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1998	Manrai et al.		X	P-C					Single	
1998	Askegaard, Ger	X		P-C	S-E		N			
1998	Iacobucci	X		C	S					
1998	Brodowsky		X	G.P.			N	Multiple		Multiple
1998	Chao		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1998	Insch, McBride		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1998	Lantz, Loeb		X				N	Multiple		Rank-order
1998	Klein et al.		X		E		N	Multiple		Multiple
1999	Verlegh, Steenkamp	X		P-C	S-E		N			
1999	Ger et al.	X		P-C	S-E	X	N			
1999	Agbonifoh, Elimimian		X	G.P.				Multiple		
1999	Ahmed, d'Astous		X	G.P.					Single	Single
1999	D'Astous, Ahmed		X	P					Single	Single
1999	Hulland		X	G.P.					Single	Multiple
1999	Hadjimarcou, Hu		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
1999	O'Donohoe	X		P-C	S-E		N			
1999	Lee, Bae		X	P↔C					Multiple	
1999	Tse		X		S					
2000	Teas, Agarwal		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2000	Batra et al.		X	P	S		N		Multiple	
2000	Li et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2000a	Gürhan-Canli, Maheswaran		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
2000b	Gürhan-Canli, Maheswaran		X	G.P.				Multiple	Multiple	
2000	Gürhan-Canli, Maheswaran		X	G.P.			N		Multiple	Single
2000	Phau, Prendergast	X		C	S		N			
2000	Mohamad et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple	Single	Single
2000	O'Shaughnessy, O'Shaughnessy	X		P-C	S-E	X	N			
2000	Kaynak et al.		X	G.P.					Single	

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	COO conceptual	COO Empirical	COO cognitive	COO affective	COO conative	COO Norms	Product beliefs	Product evaluation	Product purch.int.
2000	Knight, Calantone		X	P-C				Multiple		Multiple
2001	Pecotich, Rosenthal		X	G.P.					Single	Single
2001	Keillor et al.		X				N			
2001	Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2001a	Verlegh	X		C	E		N			
2001b	Verlegh		X	G.P.			N			Multiple
2001c	Verlegh		X	C	E		N	Multiple	Multiple	
2001d	Verlegh		X	G.P.						Multiple
2001	Steffenhagen et al.	X		P						
2001	Balabanis et al.		X				N			
2002	Amine, Shin		X	G.P.					Single	Single
2002	Baker, Ballington	X		P-C	S-E		N			
2002	Kleppe et al.	X		P-C	S-E		N			
2002	Beverland, Lindgreen	X		C						
2002	O'Cass, Lim		X	G.P.			N		Single	Single
2002	Loeffler		X	G.P.					Multiple	
2002	Ahmed et al.		X	G.P.				Single	Single	Single
2002	Klein		X		E		N	Multiple		Single
2003a	Thakor, Lavack		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2003b	Thakor, Lavack		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2003	Balestrini et al.	X		P-C	S-E					
2003	Au, Sha		X	G.P.					Multiple	Single
2003	Orth, Firbasová		X	G.P.			N		Partial utility	
2003	Ahmed, d'Astous		X	G.P.					Single	Single
2003a	Jo et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2003b	Jo et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		
2004	Ahmed, d'Astous		X	G.P.					Single	Single
2004	Ahmed et al.		X	G.P.				Multiple		Single
2004	Swaidan et al.		X				N			
2004	Brodowsky et al.		X	G.P.			N	Multiple		Single
sd	Sullivan Mort, Han		X	C	E					Single

APPENDIX 2.2.

Exploratory in-depth interviews: image profiles obtained for the eight countries included in our study

1. Outline

This appendix first presents the procedure followed while interviewing our respondents. In second instance, the detailed image profiles obtained for the eight countries we used as the point of departure for our exploratory interviews will be presented.

2. Procedure

In order to gain more insight into the PCI-concept, we conducted a series of 19 semi-structured in-depth interviews. These took place in March and April 2003 but were preceded by two test-sessions with the purpose of training ourselves in some standard questioning techniques and procedures. The interviewing was done only after the literature had been reviewed in order to be better capable of interpreting the outcome and because of the fact that a list of back-up questions could be prepared allowing us to gain more insight on some specific issues that were not yet sufficiently clear. Our decision to opt for a student sample is related to the fact that other data sets gathered for quantitative analysis were obtained by means of students as well. More in detail, we selected (Belgian) participants from the second grade (age between 19 and 24) because these already have been familiarized with interviewing procedures. The interviews themselves took about one hour each and were organized at a moment that was most convenient to the students.

In general, each session passed through four stages. In first instance, we intended to make participants feel comfortable enough by offering them something to drink and by having a brief informal conversation. In second instance, we informed subjects about the purpose of our interviews. More particularly, we told them that our main objective was to explore what kind of images people link to a particular country. Once being sufficiently informed, the unstructured part of the interview started. More in detail, we asked our participants to comment freely on everything that came up to their minds when hearing the name of a specific country which was retrieved from a country-set selected in advance. Only if necessary, subjects were interrupted and asked for further clarifications. From the moment where participants gave the impression of having no more spontaneous elements to offer, we took over with a short list of back-up questions. These questions were focussed more

specifically on the nine country environmental conditions we discussed previously and served to obtain more elaborate information on what interviewees had to say about them. For instance, if no particular comments on the country's history had been spontaneously mentioned by respondents throughout the first stage of the interview, we confronted them with the question of knowing whether they had anything particular to say about the country's historical past. In line with the first stage of the interview, we did not interrupt subjects until they indicated themselves that no further elements occurred to them. Each of the nine environmental conditions retrieved from the literature was systematically treated in a comparable manner.

During the whole procedure, special attention was given to the assessment of the deeper lying components of PCI. As already discussed before, beliefs are relatively easy to detect since they can be "verbalized" by respondents. In fact, no real problems were encountered neither with regard to the identification of participants' behavioural intentions towards the countries under study because these were also spontaneously reported. However, uncovering interviewees' affective reactions towards the countries they were questioned about required somewhat more efforts. More in detail, we turned to two specific techniques in order to detect whether country aspects mentioned carried any affective connotations. In first instance, we used a simplified version of the laddering technique (e.g., Durgee 1985) where participants were asked at certain instances to explain why a particular country-related aspect came to their mind. As put by Hulshof this type of question "[...] does not inquire for the content, but for the affective side." (Hulshof 1987: 34 – translation is ours) In line with this idea, we could establish how in some cases, this procedure indeed made subjects say that they mentioned an item because they attached a specific feeling to it. For example, at two different occasions, respondents commenting on their images about the USA spontaneously mentioned that "Americans do not speak many foreign languages". When asked why they were thinking of this particular item, they told us that, in their eyes, this lack of interest in foreign languages was a reflection of Americans' feelings of superiority and supremacy and that this in turn "offended" them somehow. In other words, they saw this as a lack of respect and felt insulted or underestimated. Represented in a more simplified manner: insufficient knowledge of foreign languages → lack of respect towards others → offence.

A second manner in which we were able to uncover participants' affective reactions was to observe their non-verbal behaviour with special attention going to their facial expressions and the use of their voice. The fact that these can be considered as useful indicators of one's inner estates has already been stated at several instances. For example, as

argued by Hulshof, “[w]hat we observe, is everything behind words that can be heard, smelled, felt and seen, like the pitch, the volume, the articulation, the body language, the smell and the look in one’s eyes. Whether we like it or not, humans always express something, such as enthusiasm, aversion, shyness, drive or frenetic excitement. We do not always overtly say what we mean, but without words we express a lot. That what someone expresses may reveal what he actually thinks about a particular topic.” (Hulshof 1987: 34 – translation is ours).

Information offered by participants was transcribed during the interviewing. This was done in such a manner that for each interviewee some kind of item set per country was developed. The decision to transcribe during the interviews was based on the fact that adequate notes on any eventual affective connotations could be taken. If we would have followed the more traditional tape-recording procedure, we might have risked losing a lot of information on these affective reactions since a tape does not record affective reactions that have been expressed in a non-verbal way. Once all the interviews had been conducted, we verified to what extent the items mentioned by respondents for each country taken separately could be allocated in the PCI conceptual framework we were able to develop based on insights stemming from the literature. This framework is pictured as Table 2.

Table 2: overall PCI conceptual framework based on the literature

PRODUCT – COUNTRY IMAGE					
COGNITIONS		FEELINGS		CONATIONS	
DIMENSIONS		POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	APPROACH	AVOIDANCE
Cultural identity					
Political climate	dictatorship	----->	injustice	----->	would not go on vacation
History					
Language					
Landscape					
Climate					
Economy and Industry					
People’s character	friendly	----->	liking	----->	would do business
Religion					
Products	good reputation	----->	pride	----->	would buy

In line with insights stemming from the literature, this framework should be seen as a hierarchy where the cognitive component constitutes the basis. It contains two facets. In first

instance, there is the country facet, containing nine different country dimensions ranging from cultural identity, political climate, language, landscape, climate and economy/industry to the people's character, and religion. In second instance, there is the product facet containing all cognitions having to do with the country's products. The PCI's affective component should be seen as the second level within the hierarchy. In other words, it rests on the cognitive component and contains respondents' positive and negative feelings. At the top of the hierarchy, we have the conative component, regrouping participants' approach or avoidance tendencies.

The examples we presented in Table 2 represent this hierarchical structure of the PCI construct. For instance, it might be that respondents think of a particular country's political regime in terms of a dictatorship (during our interviews, this was the case for Chile). This might trigger unfavourable feelings like injustice, resulting in the behavioural intention of avoiding the country. This avoidance might be expressed for example, through participants' tendency of not taking into consideration the country as a vacation destination even if the country itself has several tourist advantages like a good climate or a nice landscape. The second example has to do with the personal character of a country's inhabitants and shows how believing that people of a certain country are friendly might generate feelings of likeability leading to the eventual willingness to do business with them. A comparable scenario could occur for a particular country's products. For example, in case a country's products are thought of as enjoying a good reputation, feelings of pride might be triggered which might lead in turn to a willingness to purchase products from that country.

With regard to the selection of countries for our interviews, we opted for a set of eight geo-political entities among which four (moderately) familiar ones (i.e., the Netherlands, France, the USA and Japan) and four less familiar ones (i.e., India, Kenya, Chile and the Bahamas). As can be seen, these countries were selected also because of the fact that they are very different from each other. Table 3 presents how many of the 19 respondents per country we interviewed.

Table 3: number of interviewees per country

FAMILIAR COUNTRIES	
The Netherlands	17/19
France	17/19
The USA	18/19
Japan	9/19
UNFAMILIAR COUNTRIES	
India	11/19
Chile	10/19
Kenya	10/19
Bahamas	10/19

3. Findings

3.1. The Netherlands

The images interviewees associated with the Netherlands are characterized by the fact that they are extensively large and subtle. More in detail, it was interesting to establish that some of the traditionally mentioned stereotypical views about Dutchmen were reproduced, although it was clearly indicated by respondents these did not always correspond to reality and that therefore these clichés could not always be taken seriously. In other words, classic stereotypes were confirmed only to some extent. As already discussed, this will probably be related to the fact that it is a neighbouring country which makes that respondents have a lot of personal experiences they can turn to. Additionally, they dispose of several valuable outside sources of information which increases the familiarity with the country and its people. Several Dutch TV-channels for instance distribute their programs in the Flemish speaking part of Belgium. Throughout the interviews it appeared that these enjoy much popularity among adolescents and consequently they often function as a primary source of information. This appeared to be the case more specifically when subjects were commenting on the “personal character” of Dutch people. In other words, their image of how the average Dutchman is like was often based on the way in which people behave during TV-programs and on the topics that are treated. The fact that PCIs can be heavily influenced by media

hypes came apparent in that the whole controversy around the murder committed on the politician “Pim Fortuyn” was mentioned at several instances during the interviews.

Most items mentioned by respondents could be ranged under the cognitive dimensions of “landscape”, “people’s personal character”, and “products and services”. Based on the thoughts mentioned for “cultural identity”, we might say in terms of the four-dimensional culture-model developed by Hofstede (1980) that our respondents believe Dutchmen to be characterized by an average tendency to avoid uncertainty on the one hand and by lower levels of power distance within society on the other. The first dimension manifests itself in what respondents referred to as Dutchmen’s inclination to strictly organize and regulate their undertakings. The most recurrent examples by means of which subjects tried to motivate this assumption were the intensively executed speed controls on the high ways and the strict application of traffic laws. According to some of our respondents lower levels of power distance manifested themselves through the informal character of official meetings and the personal teaching style of Dutch staff. As for the Netherlands’ political climate, three items were most frequently cited: (1) the political controversy around the assassination of Pim Fortuyn, (2) the popularity of the royal monarchy and (3) the government’s open-minded social- and migration policy. Although the latter clearly carried a positive connotation, the former two elements triggered rather unfavourable affective reactions. When further questioned about why this appeared to be the case, it became clear that respondents felt rather uneasy with what they referred to as the “conservative character” of the monarchy and the “public success of the populist style and xenophobic-oriented ideology” embodied by Pim Fortuyn’s political party. The historical aspect of subjects’ images about the Netherlands seemed to be an affectively rather neutral dimension. On average, items mentioned had to do with the political- and economic splendour of the 17th century which was a time where the Netherlands counted as a powerful colonial empire. Another recurrently mentioned historical event was the large-scale inundation of the country in 1953. With regard to comments made on language-related aspects, the most eye-catching remark is that strong affective connotations were linked to (1) the Dutch pronunciation, (2) the presence of some typically Dutch words and expressions and (3) the so-called “imperfect” knowledge of foreign languages and more specifically of French. Especially pronunciation and poor knowledge of foreign language seemed to be negatively connotated. The natural landscape however appears to enjoy an overtly positive reputation. More specifically the rural character ascribed to it seemed to attract our respondents. This attraction could be derived from the explicit mentioning of positive feelings and of behavioural

intentions indicating approaching tendencies (like for instance their willingness of going on a holiday or spending vacation time over there). The country's cold, windy and unstable weather conditions however were less appreciated by our interviewees. As for the development of local economy and industry, it must be said that the Netherlands as a country enjoy a very favourable reputation. Our respondents associated feelings of high prestige and status to the modern economic and industrial infrastructure. The port of Rotterdam and the "Deltawerken" can be seen as the exponents par excellence of this highly estimated technological know-how. Additionally, Dutchmen are seen as highly educated, well trained and hard working labour forces. An extremely detailed and more nuanced image could be assessed when turning to respondents' idea of Dutchmen's personal character. On average, the positively connotated characteristics ascribed to them are that they would be "open-minded", "extrovert", "friendly", "honest", "trendy", "social" and "assertive". Among the most recurrent negatively evaluated characteristics were "chauvinism", "brutality", "avarice" and "noisiness". This mix of affectively connotated personality characteristics made some respondents give expression of positive behavioural intentions towards Dutchmen, while others seemed to be rather inclined to "avoid" them. As for the country's culture, the most interesting finding was that our subjects rather seemed to associate Dutch culture with the notions of "avant-garde", "progressiveness" than with "classicism" or "tradition". This image of "cultural modernity" seemed to be appreciated by our respondents. Yet, a noticeable negative connotation was linked more specifically to the Dutch eating culture. Religion was a country dimension where almost no spontaneous comments were given by our subjects. However, when asked whether they thought of anything in particular, some of our respondents said that in their opinion, Dutchmen are tolerant in this respect and they were clearly appreciated for this particular aspect. Finally, an explicitly positive overall impression could be detected as well for Dutch products and services. The most popular items mentioned were (1) agricultural products like "cheese", "flowers", "fish", "vegetables" and "milk", (2) large chain stores like "Bijenkorf", "Vroom en Dreesman" and "Hema", (3) beer with brands like "Heineken" and "Amstel" and finally (4) "Philips" which counted as an example of high standard technological products. In general, respondents found products made in the Netherlands to be characterized by (1) good quality, (2) cheap prices and (3) a large variety. Several participants said that, in case of being confronted with them, they would be willing to purchase. In sum, we might state that overall, the PCI respondents associate with the Netherlands combines some favourable and unfavourable elements. Subjects seemed to appreciate the country's natural landscape, religious tolerance, modern culture, highly

developed economy and industry as well as its most popular products and some personality characteristics of its inhabitants. Less well perceived were some linguistic features, its rather northern climate, and some personality-related properties ascribed to its people.

3.2. France

In line with the PCI associated with the Netherlands, it seems that our interviewees dispose of a rather extended PCI about France where a mix can be found of favourably as well as unfavourably perceived aspects. Overall, the French cultural identity seems to enjoy a favourable reputation. Respondents told us how they see the French as typically mediterranean- or southern people. When asked for further explanations, subjects indicated this notion should be understood in line with the well known image of “la douce France”. That is, the French are hedonists, taking their time in “enjoying” life. However, at several instances, it was stated that a clear distinction should be made between the North and the South on the one hand, and between cities on the one hand and the country side on the other. In other words, there seems to be no single and clear-cut overall generalizable “Frenchness” when focussing on the topic of cultural identity. Rather, it seems to vary in function of country internal or regional differences. More in detail, it seems that the Southern and rural parts of France are associated with a hedonist image while people living in the Northern and urban regions of the country are linked with a much more competitive and materialistic-oriented culture where “time is money”. The latter appeared to be charged with a much more pejorative connotation than the former. Yet, as already stated, it should be noticed that the hedonist reputation seems to be most prominent among our respondents. When turning to subjects’ image about France’s political climate, it seems that a comparable “mixed” pattern can be found. On the one hand, we encountered some aspects of France’s political policy to be positively connotated (e.g., continuous search for diplomatic solutions in world politics, reputation of being one of the so-called superpowers) while others are not really appreciated (e.g., program for testing nuclear weapons in the Pacific, strategic abuse of political supremacy within the European Union). As for the country’s historical past, most of the items mentioned have to do with the époque of Louis XIV, the French Revolution and World War II. In general, French history is evokes feelings of respect and admiration although France’s past tendencies towards “imperialism” are not always favourably received by some of our respondents. Thus apparently, impressions of “grandeur” and “decadence” seem to go hand in hand here. Paradoxically connotated items were mentioned also with regard to some language-related aspects. French language itself seems to enjoy a very favourable image due

to its stylish and elegant pronunciation on the one hand and to its prestigious reputation of being a “world language” on the other. However, the fact that French are believed to adopt a rather protective attitude towards the integration of other languages makes some respondents feel a bit affronted. A very positive overall connotation is associated with France’s landscape and climate. Both contribute to the image of France as an ideal vacation site. The fact that they would be very willing to spend some time in the country was expressed by almost every respondent. Apparently, there was not much to say about the country’s economic and industrial development. Items mentioned here mostly referred to the tourist infrastructure on the one hand and to the well developed public transportation network (e.g., TGV, RER) on the other. With regard to the personal character of the French people, it must be said that our participants did not really give proof a favourable impression. On average, French are considered to be “extremely chauvinistic”, “stubborn”, “unsocial”, “coquette” and “unfriendly”. However, several respondents recognized their “sense for style and etiquette”. This notion of having a well developed feeling for style was overtly reflected when interviewees were questioned about the country’s products. Besides the traditional items like “croissants”, “wine” and “cheese”, respondents mentioned luxury products like “perfume”, “jewellery”, “haute couture”, “Champagne”, “oysters” and “caviar”. These were all highly appreciated and in almost every case, subjects expressed favourable purchase intentions. Another very popular product category which was recurrently associated with France was that of automobiles with brands like Renault, Peugeot and Citroën. Also enjoying a favourable reputation was the aviation industry (mentioned six times) with items like Mirage, Airbus and Concorde. Another positively perceived product category frequently associated with France was that of “natural water”. Thus, the sectors focussed on (1) automobile design and construction, (2) high-tech transportation, (3) luxury and hedonism and (4) exclusive agricultural products all seemed to enjoy a highly respected reputation. The same can be said about respondents’ image of French culture. Besides the traditionally cited national symbols like the Eiffel tower, Versailles, Mont St-Michel, the Champs-Élysées, Mont Martre and the Tour de France, respondents mentioned various famous artists, scientists and philosophers and openly stated that the country has an almost unique cultural tradition that could be seen as one of the many tourist attraction poles. No specific comments were given on the way in which the French deal with their religious life. Thus, overall we can state that France as a country as well as a producer of some specific product categories enjoys a strong reputation among our respondents. The only unfavourable aspect within the PCI associated with France seems to be the personal character ascribed to its people.

3.3. The U.S.A.

Based on our interviewees' thoughts about the cultural identity of people living in the U.S., it can be stated that overall, American society is believed to be characterized by a high degree of individualism, large power distances and a performance-oriented focus where materialistic objectives are highly valued. One of our respondents said that when thinking of American society, the idea of "the American dream" where one is constantly encouraged to go "from zero to hero" spontaneously came to his mind. Most respondents could not really appreciate what they referred to as a society where the personal ego is at the centre of attention and where the cult of "progress" is omnipresent, pushing people to a constant transgression of boundaries and a desire for endless self-development (e.g., "the sky is the limit"). Among others, the following items were mentioned by our subjects when commenting on the country's political climate: "unwillingness to ratify the Kyoto treaty", "lack of a solid national health care and social security system", "corruption and political scandals", "aggressive policy in world politics", "abuse of their so-called international supremacy", "war against Iraq", "conservatism", "imperialism" and "protectionism". It needs no further explanation that these were all carrying a negative connotation. This political antipathy even made one respondent state that he would never like to live in the USA. Although in a less intensive way, this criticism towards the USA was also manifested by respondents while commenting on the country's historical past. Besides mentioning some well-known historical events like the War for Independence, the Civil War and some more recent events like the Cuba Crisis and the War in Vietnam, six participants said that they believed the USA in fact had no real "proper" history. We found this to be interesting and asked them why they explicitly mentioned this particular item. The reactions clearly suggested that, in their opinion, this could be seen as a reason to question the feelings of national pride and superiority expressed by Americans towards the rest of the world. As they further explained, Americans should not forget that in fact, their historical roots are to be situated in Europe and that therefore, they should not look down on other nations and most certainly not on European countries. Put differently, history offered them an opportunity to question the feelings of national pride Americans are traditionally believed to express. From this perspective, history can be seen as functioning as some kind of a vector for respondents' feelings of discontent with the attitude towards the international community ascribed to the USA. However, it should be mentioned that several participants expressed feelings of gratitude towards the USA, based on the support they offered to Europe during and after World War II. Additional, unfavourable affective connotations could be detected when subjects commented on their belief that

Americans show almost no interest in foreign languages. Comparable to what we discussed with regard to the French, this sociolinguistic chauvinism is seen somehow as a form of disrespect towards other cultures. Somewhat more positively perceived were the landscape and climate dimension of the USA's PCI. More in detail, subjects seemed to appreciate the geographical variety of the country with special attention for the large National Parks, the Rocky Mountains and the sunny beaches of Florida and California. Several participants expressed a certain willingness to spend some vacation time in the USA although some criticism was formulated towards the large scale environmental pollution. This criticism was repeated when respondents were talking about the economic and industrial development of the USA. On the one hand, American industry and economy seems to enjoy a favourable reputation of high status. This prestige seems to be associated more in detail to (1) the presence of some well-known multinationals among which the most frequently mentioned were Coca-Cola, Pepsi, McDonalds, General Motors, Ford, Levi's, Ralph Lauren, Nike and Microsoft and (2) the presence of high-tech know-how symbolized by Silicon Valley, NASA, the highly sophisticated and huge "sky scrapers", several Nobel Prize winners and famous universities like Harvard and Yale. However, in sharp contrast with this prestigious reputation were (1) American heavy industry's pernicious impact on natural environment, (2) the idea of unlimited commercial exploitation and aggressive economic imperialism evoked by the omnipresence of American multinationals and (3) the image of over-consumption and mass production which makes some respondents state that, in their opinion, American products are not always reliable. On average, the personal character ascribed to Americans is not very positive either. The only positively evaluated items were their highly developed technological background and their so-called personal drive and energy which made subjects perceive them as constantly motivated and hard working people. Yet, for the rest, it appeared that respondents were not quite positive about Americans. Among the most recurrent items were "chauvinistic", "selfish", "egocentric", "competitive", "materialistic", "stressed", "patriotic" and "no sense of style". As for the culture dimension of PCI, respondents seem to associate American culture mostly with the Hollywood movie-industry and modern pop music. Other items frequently mentioned were "Disney World", "Las Vegas", "Beverly Hills", "Michael Jordan", "baseball", "American football", "Jerry Springer", "Baywatch", "fast food", "cowboys", "Twin Towers", "Statue of liberty", "White House" and "Pentagon". When asked how respondents thought Americans cope with religion, they expressed themselves in rather pejorative terms like "intolerance", "religious fanaticism" and "large variety of different sects". With regard to American products and services, we already

discussed how the USA enjoys a favourable reputation as a producer of high tech appliances, candy and soft drinks. Additionally, they seem to be valued for their automobile sector, pharmaceutical goods and clothing industry. On average, products made in the USA are believed to be well marketed which is reflected in the fact that for the USA, respondents were able to mention significantly more brands (19 to be more precise) compared to the other countries they were questioned about (7 for the Netherlands, 12 for France, 5 for Japan and 0 for the other countries). However, as already indicated, subjects are sometimes inclined to question the reliability of American-made products. In sum, The PCI our interviewees associated with the USA most certainly gave not the most positive impression. On the contrary, this specific PCI appeared to be the most pejorative one we have assessed. In a simplified way, we might say that although respondents recognize the USA has several intrinsic advantages (attractive climate and geography, well performing economy and industry, exports enjoying a favourable reputation, highly developed technological expertise, strong political- and military position on the international scene, etc.), they seem to have a clear problem with the way Americans exploit, present, and deal with these advantages vis-à-vis the international community. More particularly, the way in which they position themselves as an omnipotent superpower seems to trigger strong feelings of antipathy. We think that the recent developments in Iraq undoubtedly will have contributed to a further increase of unpopularity among the Belgian adolescents we interviewed.

3.4. Japan

Several respondents told us how in their opinion, Japanese are culturally different in that they live within a much more collectivistic-oriented society. This collectivistic dimension of cultural identity would be reflected through the importance they attribute to the maintenance of strong family ties and by the explicit distinction that is made between so-called “ingroups” and “outgroups”. A second typical feature of Japanese cultural identity would be its inclination towards so-called “masculinity” with a distinction between the social roles of males (focused rather on materialistic performance and receiving most authority within the family) and females (occupied rather with the quality of life). This image of Japanese cultural identity seemed to generate mixed feelings. On the one hand, the respect for family and traditions evoked feelings of respect among our respondents, while the performance-oriented aspect as well as the tendency to treat other countries as “outgroups” was not always positively received. Subjects also seemed to have problems with the Japanese political policy which has been qualified as “imperialistic” and “protectionist” by some of them. In addition,

the political dimension of the image respondents associate with Japan gives rise to the occurrence of an interesting case of cognitive inference. As we already discussed, consumers sometimes base their image of an unfamiliar country on the images they have of a related and better-known country. At three different occasions, we had interviewees stating that they rather deplored the birth control regime installed by the government. However, this principle of birth control is not applied in Japan, but in the People's Republic of China. Thus, probably because they were unfamiliar with the political climate in Japan, these subjects "supposed" that the situation in this country would approximately be the same as in another, more familiar country within the South-East Asian region (in this case China). This is a striking case of how the formation of country images might sometimes lead to abusive thoughts such as these resulting in turn in potentially very unfavourable consequences for the country in question. When turning to the historical past of Japan, two particular periods were mentioned. On the one hand we have the respected classic era of the emperors while on the other, we encounter the less appreciated role of Japan during World War II. More specifically, it seems that the attack on Pearl Harbour is not yet forgotten. The event still triggers powerful affective reactions, even among our Belgian respondents. Yet, it should be noticed that besides tendencies towards accusation, the image of Japan also generates feelings of compassion or sympathy for what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With regard to the country's landscape, a conclusion in line with our observations for the previous countries could be drawn. That is, subjects saw a noticeable contrast between the nice and quite rural country-side on the one hand and the densely populated urban centres on the other with a clear preference attached to the former. Apparently, this "ruralness" offers an interesting opportunity for countries or regions to profile themselves in a favourable way. Japan seems to enjoy the reputation of being a widely acknowledged economic- and industrial power. When we asked subjects to tell us what comes to mind when they think of the Japanese industry and economy, items mentioned went from "rapidly growing economic expansion", "famous multinationals" and "industrial superpower" to "modern infrastructure", "high tech specialists", "good welfare", "strong position of the YEN" and "high employment". On average, Japanese people also seem to enjoy a favourable reputation. Participants found the Japanese to be "friendly", "hard working", "precise", "polite", "intelligent", "eager to learn", "humble" and "enthusiastic". Fewer comments were given on the Japanese culture, language and religion, probably because subjects were not very familiar with these aspects of the country. As for culture and religion, items mentioned stressed the intimate relationship Japanese maintain with nature and the importance they attribute to

internal and spiritual development, with an accent put on the crucial role of ancestral traditions. When concentrating on the image interviewees associate with Japanese products and services, it is clearly noticeable how respondents associated the country most frequently with four types of products, that is, (1) automobiles, (2) motorcycles, (3) electronic appliances as well as high-tech gadgets and (4) some agricultural products typically associated with South East Asia like rice, tea, silk, and spices. Willingness to buy such products made in Japan was overtly expressed at several instances. Thus, overall, Japan seems to be associated with a favourable PCI.

3.5. India

As already stated, India can be ranged under the less familiar countries we presented to our respondents. This lower degree of familiarity translated itself into less extensive and more stereotypic statements about the country and its products. The fact that it was more difficult for subjects to elaborate on these less well-known countries became manifest through the fact that in most cases, their comments were no more than simple enumerations of items that came to their minds while in case of the more familiar countries, they were really “talking” to us, that is, expressing themselves in fluent and well-constructed full sentences. Put differently, commenting on these unfamiliar countries was experienced by our interviewees as a somewhat more problematic effort. Some respondents even explicitly told us so. On average, we can state that Indian cultural identity was perceived in a rather unfavourably connotated way. That is, participants gave us the impression that they were not really fond of the strict separation between men and women they associated with Indian society. More in detail, several respondents deplored what they referred to as “the weaker position of women within society due to a lack of basic civil rights and minimal economic participation”. In addition, a number of interviewees gave expression of their rather uncomfortable feelings towards a culture where a clear distinction was believed to be maintained between various social classes. At four different instances, subjects told us they thought of Indian politics in terms of a dictatorial regime characterized among other things by a very limited freedom of speech. Subjects spoke of Indian landscape in terms of sharp contrast with on the one hand, the overall positively valuated perception of India as a natural landscape with rich fauna and flora and on the other, the less appreciated densely populated urbanized areas which were sometimes even described in terms of “filthy”, “polluted” and “impoverished”. Respondents seemed to associate India with the status of an authentic Third World country when commenting on its economic and industrial development. This can be illustrated best by

some of the items mentioned by our respondents: “primitive infrastructure”, “no modern buildings”, “low-scale industrial activity”, “focus on agriculture”, “cottage industry”, “child labour”, “exploitation by Western multinationals”, “poverty”, etc. This image of being a producer of handcrafted and agricultural products also came to the fore when interviewees were asked which products they typically associated with India. These ranged from “textures”, “natural colour paint”, “reed-made baskets”, and “hand-made tapestry”, to “rice”, “sugar”, “spices” “chocolate”, “tobacco”, “coffee”, “tea” and “exotic fruit”. Interestingly, this rather unfavourable socio-economic image of India was largely compensated by the way in which our respondents thought of the Indians’ personal character. In general, Indians were seen as “polite”, “nice”, “friendly”, “grateful”, “obedient”, “hard working”, “helpful”, “happy” and “sympathetic”. As for Indian culture respondents came no further than just summing up some kitsch items like “Taj Mahal”, “holy cows”, “fakirs”, “turbans”, and “body painting”. Finally, with regard to the religious climate, participants seemed to respect the importance Indians attribute to their ancient traditions, however, several subjects gave notice of how they felt uneasy with what they referred to as the Indians’ tendency towards “religious fanaticism”.

3.6. Kenya

In general, a PCI comparable to that of India could be assessed for Kenya. That is, much less detailed, much more superficial with an unfavourable overall impression of the country’s socio-political climate and economic development standing in sharp contrast with a positive image of Kenya’s geography (“large plains”, “wild life”, “nature”) climate (“sunny”, “warm”) and people (“happy”, “polite”, “obedient”, “pure”, “unspoiled”, “relaxed”, “hospitable”). The latter explain why most respondents saw Kenya as the ideal tourist destination. The terms “tourism”, “safari” and “vacation” for instance were mentioned in almost every case. Yet, overall, Kenya was clearly presented by subjects as an exemplar case of a highly underdeveloped African Third World country, governed by a “corrupt” and “dictatorial” military regime that “cooperates with an enriched cast of Western immigrants while exploiting its own native people”. When thinking of products that might be coming from Kenya, subjects mentioned handcrafted goods and agricultural products like “exotic fruit”, “coffee”, “ivory” and “wooden-made curiosa”.

3.7. Chile

Apparently, our interviewees even had more problems in forming an image about a Latin American country like Chile compared to an African country like Kenya. This is probably related to the fact that the South American sub-continent is only rarely spoken of in the media. On the average, we might say that the PCI subjects associated with Chile was clearly based to a large extent on inferences made from other countries (like Cuba, Mexico and Brazil) with which they were somewhat more familiar. In general, Chile was thought of as a Third World nation with an underdeveloped industrial activity and a weakly performing economy where the focus is on production of agricultural goods like “exotic fruit”, “spices”, “coffee”, “cotton”, “wooden furniture” and “wine”. Overall Chileans themselves were believed to be “friendly”, “hospitable”, “relaxed”, “calm”, hard working” and “sympathetic”.

3.8. Bahamas

As could be expected, the Bahamas were described almost exclusively in terms of a “tropical vacation paradise” with an outspoken positively valued connotation and a clear expression of favourable behavioural intentions towards the country. Respondents mentioned items like “sunny beaches”, “cocktails”, “vacation”, “palm trees”, “exotic fishes”, “hotels and restaurants” and “cigars”. No other useful comments were further made. As a final round-up, the following section, will retake the most important findings concerning the internal structure of Product-Country Images obtained by our interviews as well as by our review of the literature.

(12) Mijn beeld van het Spaanse landschap is

Positief negatief

(13) Hoe belangrijk vind je het Spaanse klimaat als je Spanje en Spanjaarden moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(14) Mijn beeld van het Spaanse klimaat is

Positief negatief

(15) Hoe belangrijk vind je de Spaanse economie als je Spanje en Spanjaarden moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(16) Mijn beeld van de Spaanse economie is

Positief negatief

(17) Hoe belangrijk vind je de Spaanse religie als je Spanje en Spanjaarden moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(18) Mijn beeld van de Spaanse religie is

Positief negatief

(19) Hoe belangrijk vind je het karakter van Spanjaarden als je Spanje en Spanjaarden moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(20) Mijn beeld van het karakter van Spanjaarden is

Positief negatief

Sectie 3: Jouw gevoelens ten aanzien van Spanje en Spanjaarden.

(21) In welke mate roepen Spanje en Spanjaarden een enthousiast gevoel bij je op?

Heel enthousiast helemaal niet enthousiast

(22) In welke mate wekken Spanje en Spanjaarden je interesse op?

Wekken veel interesse op wekken helemaal geen interesse op

(23) In welke mate roepen Spanje en Spanjaarden een vrolijk gevoel bij je op?

Heel vrolijk helemaal niet vrolijk

(24) In welke mate roepen Spanje en Spanjaarden een gevoel van vastberadenheid bij je op?

Heel vastberaden helemaal niet vastberaden

(25) In welke mate inspireren Spanje en Spanjaarden je?

Inspireren heel veel inspireren in het geheel niet

(26) In welke mate ben je alert ten aanzien van Spanje en Spanjaarden?

Heel alert helemaal niet alert

(27) In welke mate roepen Spanje en Spanjaarden een actief gevoel bij je op?

Heel actief helemaal niet actief

(28) In welke mate roepen Spanje en Spanjaarden een gevoel van macht bij je op?

Geven een gevoel van heel veel macht geven een gevoel van totaal geen macht

(29) In welke mate roepen Spanje en Spanjaarden een trots gevoel bij je op?

Heel trots helemaal niet trots

(30) In welke mate trekken Spanje en Spanjaarden je aandacht?

Trekken heel sterk de aandacht trekken helemaal niet de aandacht

- (50) Spaanse DVD-spelers zijn duurzaam.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord
- (51) Spaanse DVD-spelers zijn betrouwbaar.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord
- (52) Spaanse DVD-spelers leveren goede prestaties.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord
- (53) Spaanse DVD-spelers zijn gemakkelijk te bedienen.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord

Sectie 6: Jouw oordeel over twee Spaanse producten: bier en DVD-spelers.

- (54) Wat vind je van de kwaliteit van Spaans bier?
 Heel goed helemaal niet goed
- (55) Zou Spaans bier je bevallen?
 Bevalt me helemaal bevalt me helemaal niet
- (56) Zou je Spaans bier aantrekkelijk vinden?
 Heel aantrekkelijk helemaal niet aantrekkelijk
- (57) Wat vind je van de kwaliteit van Spaanse DVD-spelers?
 Heel goed helemaal niet goed
- (58) Zouden Spaanse DVD-spelers je bevallen?
 Bevalt me helemaal bevalt me helemaal niet
- (59) Zou je Spaanse DVD-spelers aantrekkelijk vinden?
 Heel aantrekkelijk helemaal niet aantrekkelijk

Sectie 7: Jouw aankoopintentie ten aanzien van twee Spaanse producten: bier en DVD-spelers.

- (60) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst bier wilt kopen. Zou je bereid zijn Spaans bier te kopen?
 Helemaal bereid helemaal niet bereid
- (61) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst bier wilt kopen. Zou je eventueel overwegen om Spaans bier te kopen?
 Zeker overwegen zeker niet overwegen
- (62) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst bier wilt kopen. Denk je dat de kans groot is dat je Spaans bier zal kopen?
 Kans is heel groot kans is helemaal niet groot
- (63) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst een DVD-speler wilt kopen. Zou je bereid zijn een Spaanse DVD-speler te kopen?
 Helemaal bereid helemaal niet bereid
- (64) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst een DVD-speler wilt kopen. Zou je eventueel overwegen om een Spaanse DVD-speler te kopen?
 Zeker overwegen zeker niet overwegen
- (65) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst een DVD-speler wilt kopen. Denk je dat de kans groot is dat je een Spaanse DVD-speler zal kopen?
 Kans is heel groot kans is helemaal niet groot

Bedankt voor je deelname!

(12) Mijn beeld van het Deense landschap is

Positief negatief

(13) Hoe belangrijk vind je het Deense klimaat als je Denemarken en Denen moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(14) Mijn beeld van het Deense klimaat is

Positief negatief

(15) Hoe belangrijk vind je de Deense economie als je Denemarken en Denen moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(16) Mijn beeld van de Deense economie is

Positief negatief

(17) Hoe belangrijk vind je de Deense religie als je Denemarken en Denen moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(18) Mijn beeld van de Deense religie is

Positief negatief

(19) Hoe belangrijk vind je het karakter van Denen als je Denemarken en Denen moet beoordelen?

Heel erg belangrijk helemaal niet belangrijk

(20) Mijn beeld van het karakter van Denen is

Positief negatief

Sectie 3: Jouw gevoelens ten aanzien van Denemarken en Denen.

(21) In welke mate roepen Denemarken en Denen een enthousiast gevoel bij je op?

Heel enthousiast helemaal niet enthousiast

(22) In welke mate wekken Denemarken en Denen je interesse op?

Wekken veel interesse op wekken helemaal geen interesse op

(23) In welke mate roepen Denemarken en Denen een vrolijk gevoel bij je op?

Heel vrolijk helemaal niet vrolijk

(24) In welke mate roepen Denemarken en Denen een gevoel van vastberadenheid bij je op?

Heel vastberaden helemaal niet vastberaden

(25) In welke mate inspireren Denemarken en Denen je?

Inspireren heel veel inspireren in het geheel niet

(26) In welke mate ben je alert ten aanzien van Denemarken en Denen?

Heel alert helemaal niet alert

(27) In welke mate roepen Denemarken en Denen een actief gevoel bij je op?

Heel actief helemaal niet actief

(28) In welke mate roepen Denemarken en Denen een gevoel van macht bij je op?

Geven een gevoel van heel veel macht geven een gevoel van totaal geen macht

(29) In welke mate roepen Denemarken en Denen een trots gevoel bij je op?

Heel trots helemaal niet trots

(30) In welke mate trekken Denemarken en Denen je aandacht?

Trekken heel sterk de aandacht trekken helemaal niet de aandacht

- (50) Deense DVD-spelers zijn duurzaam.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord
- (51) Deense DVD-spelers zijn betrouwbaar.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord
- (52) Deense DVD-spelers leveren goede prestaties.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord
- (53) Deense DVD-spelers zijn gemakkelijk te bedienen.
 Helemaal akkoord helemaal niet akkoord

Sectie 6: Jouw oordeel over twee Deense producten: bier en DVD-spelers.

- (54) Wat vind je van de kwaliteit van Deens bier?
 Heel goed helemaal niet goed
- (55) Zou Deens bier je bevallen?
 Bevalt me helemaal bevalt me helemaal niet
- (56) Zou je Deens bier aantrekkelijk vinden?
 Heel aantrekkelijk helemaal niet aantrekkelijk
- (57) Wat vind je van de kwaliteit van Deense DVD-spelers?
 Heel goed helemaal niet goed
- (58) Zouden Deense DVD-spelers je bevallen?
 Bevalt me helemaal bevalt me helemaal niet
- (59) Zou je Deense DVD-spelers aantrekkelijk vinden?
 Heel aantrekkelijk helemaal niet aantrekkelijk

Sectie 7: Jouw aankoopintentie ten aanzien van twee Deense producten: bier en DVD-spelers.

- (60) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst bier wilt kopen. Zou je bereid zijn Deens bier te kopen?
 Helemaal bereid helemaal niet bereid
- (61) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst bier wilt kopen. Zou je eventueel overwegen om Deens bier te kopen?
 Zeker overwegen zeker niet overwegen
- (62) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst bier wilt kopen. Denk je dat de kans groot is dat je Deens bier zal kopen?
 Kans is heel groot kans is helemaal niet groot
- (63) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst een DVD-speler wilt kopen. Zou je bereid zijn een Deense DVD-speler te kopen?
 Helemaal bereid helemaal niet bereid
- (64) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst een DVD-speler wilt kopen. Zou je eventueel overwegen om een Deense DVD-speler te kopen?
 Zeker overwegen zeker niet overwegen
- (65) Stel dat je in de nabije toekomst een DVD-speler wilt kopen. Denk je dat de kans groot is dat je een Deense DVD-speler zal kopen?
 Kans is heel groot kans is helemaal niet groot

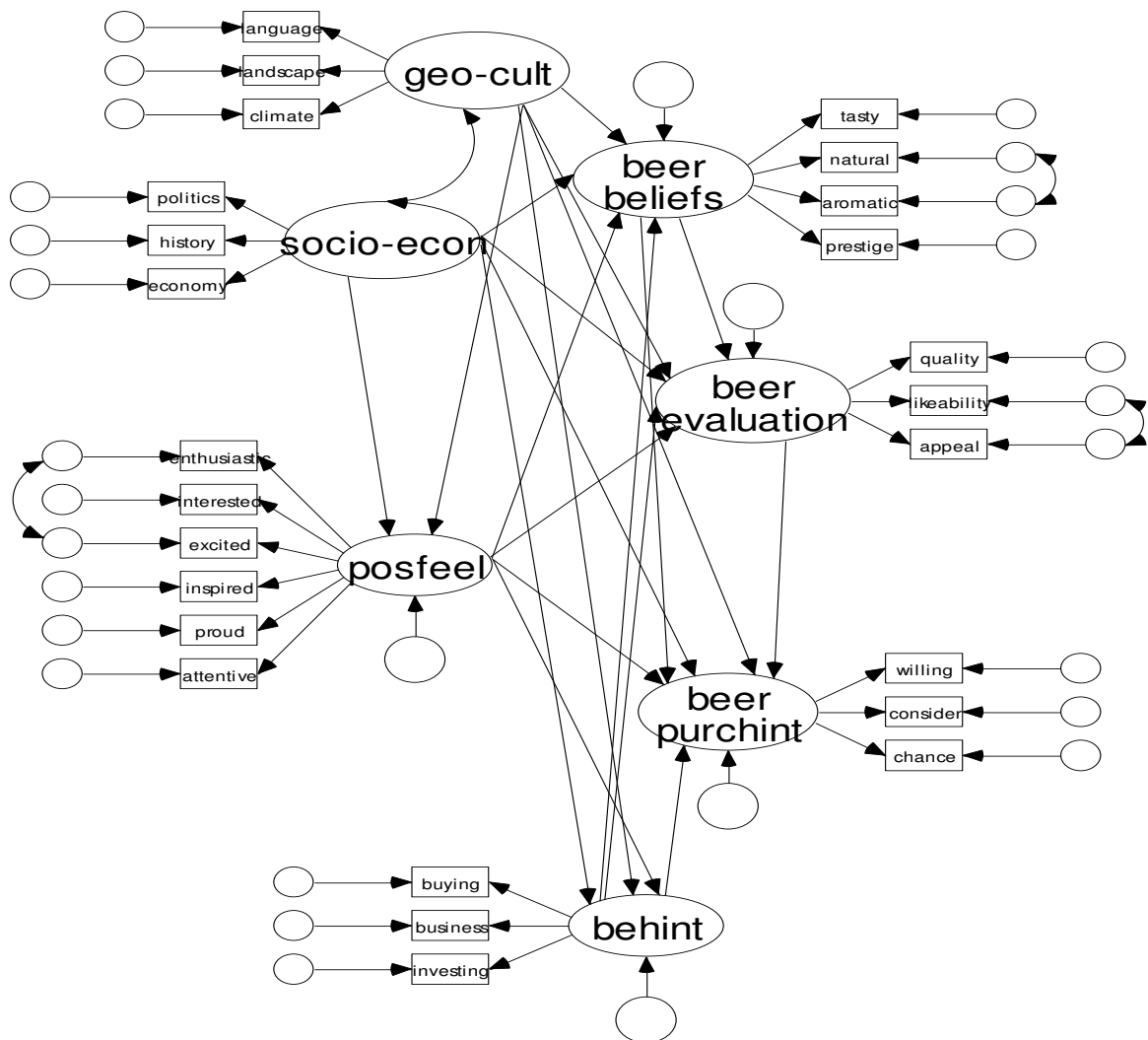
Bedankt voor je deelname!

APPENDIX 6.1.

Hypothesized structural overall model analyzing CI-effects on beer attitude⁶⁴

+

Values for goodness-of-fit indicators



⁶⁴ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

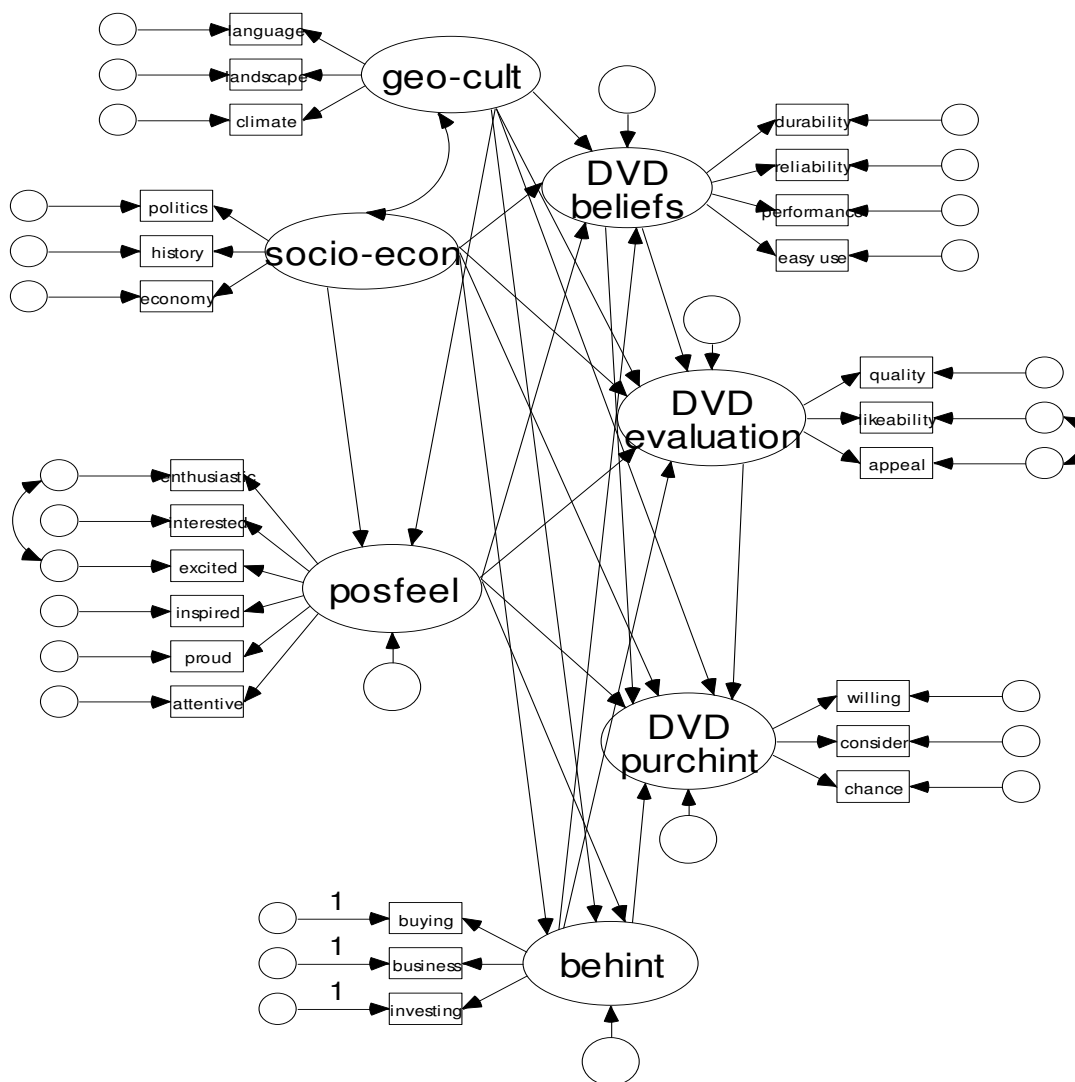
Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Constrained model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	1271.898 (543)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.342
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.95
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.033

APPENDIX 6.2.

Hypothesized structural overall model analyzing CI-effects on DVD attitude⁶⁵

+

Values for goodness-of-fit indicators



⁶⁵ Note that the parameter for the covariance between the errors associated with “enthusiastic” and “excited” is freely estimated for the Spanish sample while it is constrained to zero for the Danish sample.

Goodness-of-fit indices	Acceptable values	Constrained model
χ^2 , (df)	Small	1192,212 (544)
p-value	>.05	.000
χ^2/df	<3 or <5	2.192
Tucker and Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI)	>.95 or >.90	.96
Benler's normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>.95 or >.90	.96
Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA)	<.10 or <.08	.031

SAMENVATTING

Zoals gesteld in het eerste hoofdstuk is de hoofddoelstelling van dit proefschrift bij te dragen tot een beter begrip van zogenoemde “land-van-herkomst effecten”. Dat consumenten in de vorming van hun houding ten overstaan van producten uit het buitenland al dan niet bewust beïnvloed worden door het land van herkomst, is reeds uitvoerig aangetoond door tal van empirische studies. Hoofdstuk twee toont echter aan dat de betrokken vakliteratuur er niet altijd in slaagt een duidelijke theoretische achtergrond te schetsen bij dit specifieke fenomeen. In eerste instantie is er het gebrek aan transparantie in de manier waarop traditionele studies het concept “land van herkomst” invullen en gebruiken. Daardoor is het moeilijk te achterhalen hoe we dit construct precies moeten interpreteren en welke van diens onderliggende componenten het land-van-herkomst effect genereren. In tweede instantie stellen we via een uitgebreide literatuurstudie vast dat het merendeel van de reeds gepubliceerde studies zich kenmerkt door “fragmentarische” analyses waarbij telkens slechts een deel van het gehele land-van-herkomst mechanisme wordt ontleed. Dit verklaart de dringende behoefte aan een beter geïntegreerd theoretisch kader dat zou toestaan land-van-herkomst effecten in hun volledigheid te bestuderen en zo de reeds bestaande bevindingen verder met elkaar in verband te brengen. Tenslotte is er dan nog de vraag of factoren zoals land- en product typologie land-van-herkomst effecten kunnen modereren. Dit alles is uiteraard van kapitaal belang voor een zo doeltreffend mogelijk gebruik van land-van-herkomst gerelateerde stimuli (zoals bijvoorbeeld “Made-in” labels).

Na een meer gedetailleerde toelichting van deze tekortkomingen binnen de literatuur concentreert hoofdstuk twee zich op het definiëren van de twee basisconcepten voor ons onderzoek, i.e., “land-van-herkomst imago” en “product attitude”. Voor een beter inzicht in het eerste concept baseerden we ons op een interdisciplinaire literatuurstudie enerzijds en de resultaten van een reeks verkennende diepte-interviews anderzijds. Beide kanalen suggereerden duidelijk dat land-van-herkomst imago’s over het algemeen zijn opgebouwd uit drie met elkaar in verbinding staande componenten. Aan de basis ligt meestal een cognitieve dimensie die bestaat uit het geheel van land-van-herkomst gerelateerde kennis, gedachten en ideeën waarover een individu beschikt. In functie van de inhoud wordt deze cognitieve component vaak opgesplitst in twee delen of facetten. Zo is er enerzijds het “product facet” dat alle cognities bevat die iets te maken hebben met product- en/of marketing georiënteerde kenmerken van een bepaald land. Daarnaast hebben we dan het “land facet” dat alle intern

gestockeerde cognities groepeerd die betrekking hebben op zogenoemde “meer algemene omgevingsfactoren”. Ondanks het feit dat talrijke bronnen binnen de marketingliteratuur aantonen dat deze relevant zijn voor de positionering van producten op de internationale markt, worden ze vaak gemarginaliseerd binnen het land-van-herkomst domein. Onze studie heeft zich daarom meer in het bijzonder toegelegd op de rol van de volgende negen land-specifieke omgevingsfactoren: (1) culturele identiteit, (2) politiek klimaat, (3) taal, (4), geschiedenis, (5) natuurlijk klimaat, (6), geografie, (7) economische ontwikkeling, (8) religie en (9) karakter van de inwoners. Verder onderscheiden we een affectieve component die begrepen dient te worden als het geheel van alle positieve en/of negatieve gevoelens die bij een persoon worden geactiveerd wanneer hij wordt geconfronteerd met een product uit een bepaald land. Tenslotte is er dan nog de conatieve component die is samengesteld uit “gedragsintenties” ten overstaan van een specifiek land. Een dergelijke gedragsintentie is in feite de neiging om iets (of iemand) te benaderen of te vermijden.

Een gelijkaardige tri-component structuur wordt door consument-psychologen toegekend aan het “product attitude” concept. Belangrijker voor onze studie is echter de vraag te weten hoe dergelijke product attitudes gevormd worden en (meer in het bijzonder) welke de rol van marketing stimuli (als “land-van-herkomst”) hierin is. Verscheidene vakspecialisten zijn de mening toegedaan dat consumenten dergelijke stimuli niet zomaar passief opnemen maar dat ze deze actief “interpreteren”. Met andere woorden, ze koppelen er zelf een persoonlijke betekenis aan vast. Volgens de vertegenwoordigers van het zogenoemde “betekenisgecentreerd” paradigma is het deze persoonlijke betekenis die voor een groot stuk mee bepaalt welke de uiteindelijke houding ten overstaan van het product zal zijn. Op basis van deze inzichten kunnen we stellen dat het gegeven “betekenis” van cruciaal belang is voor een beter begrip van de manier waarop land-van-herkomst effecten functioneren. Echter, alvorens dieper in te gaan op het concept “betekenis” geeft hoofdstuk twee een overzicht van wat de literatuur ons leert over dergelijke effecten.

Belangrijk met betrekking tot land-van-herkomst effecten is dat ze ondersteund kunnen worden door drie verschillende soorten (psychologische) mechanismen. In eerste instantie hebben we de “cognitieve” mechanismen, zo genoemd omdat ze optreden in gevallen waar land-van-herkomst de vorming van onze product-specifieke cognities beïnvloedt. Vervolgens onderscheidt men het “affectieve” mechanisme dat zich manifesteert wanneer land-van-herkomst onze productevaluatie mee bepaalt. Tenslotte spreekt men van het “conatieve” mechanisme wanneer land-van-herkomst functioneert als een determinant van onze koopintenties. Blijft echter de vraag hoe deze mechanismen juist functioneren, hoe ze

met elkaar in verband moeten worden gebracht en, vooral, hoe we hun oorsprong moeten begrijpen. Aangezien het “betekenisgecentreerd” paradigma zowel voor het ontstaan als het functioneren van land-van-herkomst effecten een fundamenteel belang toeschrijft aan de betekenis die consumenten koppelen aan land-van-herkomst stimuli, hebben we in de laatste sectie van het tweede hoofdstuk een beroep gedaan op de semiotiek (en meer in het bijzonder op de “discourse theory” van C.W. Morris). Deze stap leek ons logisch want semiotiek staat bekend als het domein dat zich specifiek toelegt op alle aspecten (vorming, structuur, gebruik, etc.) van tekens en betekenis.

Eerst en vooral zijn we de toepasbaarheid van de “discourse theory” op het onderzoeksthema (i.e., land-van-herkomst effecten) nagegaan. Grondig onderzoek toont aan dat er een aantal interessante parallellen bestaan tussen ons basisconcept (i.e., “land-van-herkomst imago”) zoals dat gedefinieerd wordt in de consumentenpsychologie enerzijds en in de “discourse theory” anderzijds. Zo zien beide disciplines een landimago als een concept dat gebaseerd is op een driedelige structuur. In tegenstelling echter tot de traditionele paradigma’s binnen de consumentenpsychologie, leren semiotici ons verder ook nog hoe deze drie basiscomponenten zich tot elkaar verhouden en hoe ze worden gebruikt. Dit verklaart waarom semiotische theorieën (zoals de “discourse theory”) uiterst geschikt zijn voor verder land-van-herkomst onderzoek.

Samengevat kunnen we stellen dat voor C.W. Morris, de term “landimago” overeenkomt met de “betekenis” die wij toekennen aan een land-van-herkomst stimulus. Deze betekenis ziet hij als een driedelig gestructureerd concept. Anders gezegd kan één en dezelfde stimulus (bvb een “Made-in” label) tegelijkertijd drie verschillende betekenisniveau’s oproepen (i.e., “designative”, “appraisive” en “prescriptive”). Deze drie betekenisniveau’s komen overeen met de drie basiscomponenten van het landimago, zoals die gedefinieerd worden in de consumentenpsychologie (i.e., “cognities”, “affecten” en “conaties”). Volgens Morris zijn deze drie betekenisniveau’s logisch gezien steeds hiërarchisch geordend op zulke wijze dat “designation” (= cognities) → “appraisal” (= affecten) → “prescription” (= conaties). Wat het betekenisgebruik betreft, stelt Morris dat een individu meerdere van deze betekenisniveau’s tegelijkertijd kan gebruiken om zo zijn uiteindelijke houding ten overstaan van een product te bepalen. Het is echter wel zo dat het belang dat wordt gehecht aan de verschillende betekenisniveau’s onderling varieert in functie van de doeltreffendheid waarmee deze betekenisniveau’s iemands betekenisgebruik kunnen bevredigen. Zo stelt Morris bijvoorbeeld dat “designations” (= cognities) doeltreffender zijn in het bevredigen van informatieve gebruiksbehoeften die consumenten ervaren wanneer zij met een bepaald

product worden geconfronteerd, terwijl “appraisals” (= affecten) dan weer adequater zouden zijn in het realiseren van iemands nood aan een evaluatief oordeel over een bepaald product. “Prescriptions” (= conaties) zouden dan weer beter geschikt zijn voor het bepalen of men al dan niet het produkt zou aankopen. Verder haalt Morris wel aan dat, ondanks het feit dat ieder betekenisniveau zijn hoogste doeltreffendheid bereikt ten overstaan van één welbepaald gebruiksdoeleinde, dit niet automatisch betekent dat deze betekenisniveau’s niet voor andere doeleinden dan hun “primaire” gebruikt kunnen worden. Echter, in het geval dat een bepaald betekenisniveau daadwerkelijk wordt gebruikt voor een “secundair” gebruiksdoeleinde, is het wel te verwachten dat het belang van dat betekenisniveau zal afnemen. Onze toepassing van “discourse theory” op het thema van land-van-herkomst effecten resulteert dus in een zeer uitgebreid en flexibel kader dat toelaat (1) deze effecten in hun volledigheid te analyseren, (2) uitspraak te doen over welke componenten van het land imago dergelijke effecten opwekken en (3) te achterhalen hoe deze effecten zich verhouden tot elkaar.

Nadat het derde hoofdstuk concrete vorm heeft gegeven aan ons theoretisch model en een reeks hypothesen zijn geformuleerd, gaan hoofdstukken vier en vijf over tot het definitieve opzet van de empirische studie. Deze laatste is uitgevoerd binnen een klassiek cross-sectional survey design waarbij data verzameld werd door middel van een standaard vraaglijst (63 items). In totaal werden 1225 Belgische studenten bevraagd over hun imago met betrekking tot Spanje en Denemarken. Bovendien werd er gepolst naar hun houding ten overstaan van Spaans/Deens bier (hedonisch product) en Spaanse/Deense DVD-spelers (utilitair product). Hoofdstuk zeven beschrijft de data-analyse en de resultaten. De hypothesen werden getest via “structural equation modeling” (AMOS 5.0).

Tenslotte formuleren we in hoofdstuk acht de belangrijkste conclusies van onze studie. Een eerste belangrijke bevinding is dat de conceptuele structuur die Morris toeschrijft aan het semiotisch construct “betekenis” duidelijk terugkomt in de onderliggende structuur van de landimago’s waarvoor we data verzameld hebben. Zowel voor het Spaanse als het Deense landimago bleek dat cognities (= geo-culturele stereotypen en socio-economische stereotypen) → affecten (= positieve gevoelens) → conaties (= gedragsintenties). Bovendien was er een sterk direct verband socio-economische stereotypen → gedragsintenties. Een tweede belangrijke vaststelling is dat de in de literatuur vaak als minder belangrijk bestempelde omgevingsfactoren blijkbaar toch van substantieel belang zijn voor de vorming van onze houding ten overstaan van producten uit het buitenland. Meer in detail toont onze studie aan dat alle dimensies van de houding van Belgische studenten ten overstaan van zowel Spaans/Deens bier als Spaanse/Deense DVD-spelers significant beïnvloed worden door het

beeld dat deze studenten hebben van een aantal Spaanse en Deense omgevingsfactoren. De relevantie van dergelijke omgevingsfactoren zou vooral te danken zijn aan het feit dat ze gekenmerkt worden door een hoge graad aan “communicatieve efficiëntie en flexibiliteit”. Dit betekent concreet dat ze erin slagen om meerdere communicatieve behoeften (i.e., zich willen informeren over een product, een product willen evalueren of willen bepalen of men een product al dan niet zou kopen) op een doeltreffende manier te bevredigen. Het zou bijgevolg niet verstandig zijn dergelijke omgevingsfactoren aan de kant te schuiven. In derde instantie stellen we vast dat “discourse theory” ons een kader verleent dat effectief wat meer inzicht verschaft in de manier waarop land-van-herkomst effecten functioneren. Twee zaken zijn hier op te merken. Ten eerste is het zo dat een land-van-herkomst effect een “samengesteld” proces is. Met andere woorden, een dergelijk effect steunt op een complex mechanisme van meerdere sub-effecten die simultaan optreden. Het is dus meestal zo dat een bepaalde communicatieve gebruiksbehoefte bij de consument door verschillende componenten van het landimago tegelijkertijd (en dus niet door slechts één specifieke component) wordt bevredigd. In tweede instantie merken we met betrekking tot deze sub-effecten op dat ze onderling variëren op vlak van de belangrijkheid of “impact” die ze hebben naar de uiteindelijke product attitude toe. Opvallend hier is dat de conatieve component van het landimago zowel voor bier als DVD-spelers systematisch het sterkste sub-effect genereert en dus geldt als de belangrijkste determinant van de uiteindelijke product attitude. Verder is het interessant om vast te stellen dat het sub-effect veroorzaakt door de affectieve dimensie van het landimago significant is voor bier, maar niet voor DVD-spelers. Andersom leren de resultaten ons dat de sub-effecten geactiveerd door de cognitieve dimensies van het landimago steeds statistische significantie bereiken bij DVD-spelers, terwijl dit eerder uitzonderlijk is bij bier. Dit zou eventueel verklaard kunnen worden vanuit de theorie die stelt dat affectieve factoren belangrijker zijn voor de bepaling van onze houding ten overstaan van hedonische producten terwijl de vorming van onze attitude ten overstaan van utilitaire producten eerder cognitief gestuurd is. Verder onderzoek hieromtrent is zeker gewenst. Tenslotte dan nog de bevinding dat het land-van-herkomst type in onze studie geen modererende invloed had op de omvang van het land-van-herkomst effect. Ook hier echter ligt nog een uiterst interessant thema voor toekomstig onderzoek.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Kris Brijs (Turnhout – Belgium, 1977) obtained his highschool ASO-diploma (Latin-Modern Languages) at the Sint-Victor Instituut in Turnhout in 1995. He went to the University of Antwerp to study Roman languages and literature and received his M.Sc. degree in 1999. He took a particular interest in literature theory throughout the final stage of his studies. More specifically he focussed on the analysis of Hispano-American texts. In 1998 he spent several months at the Universidad de Valladolid (Spain) as part of the Socrates exchange program. This gave him the opportunity to write a M.Sc. thesis entitled: “Gabriel García Márquez: Literatura y periodismo en ‘Relato de un naufrago’”. In addition, he completed his Teacher Training Program for Secondary Education in 1999. In that year he started as a lecturer on Business French at the Hasselt University (Belgium). From 2000 till 2001 he attended to several international training programs on Intercultural Business Communication. Through his affiliation with the Faculty of Applied Economics, he was brought to the fields of Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Communication. His doctoral dissertation research dealt with country-of-origin effects. In order to analyze this phenomenon he combined his formation in literature theory and text semiotics with insights stemming from the international business literature. His work has been presented at several international conferences (MDAI, EMAC) and proceedings are forthcoming.

