Willingness to buy US products in three Southeast European countries: The effects of cognitive, affective and conative components of country-of-origin image*

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to present results from a survey conducted in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, addressing the negative influence of warfare by USA upon consumer behavior in the region. The results show that perceptions generated from USA's general country image influence consumers' intentions to buy American-made products. Furthermore, country "goodwill" and "bad-will" create cognitive and affective ambivalence, which concurrently promote and hamper consumers' willingness to buy foreign products. Facets of USA's general country image create mixed emotions, which influence approach and avoidance behavior towards US imports. USA's country image concurrently impacts product-specific perceptions, ethnocentric tendencies, animosity, and admiration/affinity, influencing the propensity to buy American-made products among consumers in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Keyword: Country image, Product country image, Ethnocentrism, Animosity, Xenophilia
JEL Codes: M31, F19, F52, Z33

1. Introduction

International trade is booming, with consumers worldwide having access to a plethora of foreign-made goods. Rising exports go together with intensified global competition, and this has led to increased interest in the effects of country-of-origin labeling to differentiate foreign goods (e.g., Bilkey/Nes 1982; Hong/Wyer 1989; Maheswaran 1994; Kock et al. 2019; Zolfagharian et al. 2020). Although a renowned country-of-origin image may ease entry of export products into foreign markets, some affective consumer variables, such as animosity, xenophilia, and consumer ethnocentrism, may override the effects of the country's reputation for producing high-quality merchandise (e.g., Shimp/Sharma 1987; Klein et al. 1998; Batra et al. 2000; Lee/Mazodier 2015; Lee et al. 2017; Raskovic et al. 2020). While favorable nationalistic dispositions

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such as feelings of country friendliness or xenophilia (Sturmer/Benbow 2017) may "open doors" to new foreign markets, feelings of animosity, and consumer ethnocentrism may persist as effective barriers to entry (Lee/Mazodier 2015; Leonidou et al. 2019). In some instances, people may base their foreign product appraisals and willingness to buy on the emotional reputation or the goodwill or ill-will connotations stored as associations in the country-of-origin image (Hong/Kang 2006).

The complex psychology of the country-of-origin effect has increased researchers' interest in various aspects of the country-of-origin image. In particular, the structural dimensionality of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral facets of country-of-origin image has raised the most attention (e.g., Riefler/Diamantopoulos 2007; Oberecker/Diamantopoulos 2011; Lee/Mazodier 2015; Costa et al. 2016; Lee et al. 2017). However, scant research focuses directly on the structural relationships among components of country-of-origin image (i.e., Brijs et al. 2011). To address this void, this study explores how the country-of-origin image construct, and its connected components affect willingness to buy American-made products (e.g., Calvin Klein fashion clothing, Marlboro cigarettes, and Mars chocolate) available among citizens in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. We hypothesize that dimensions of the United States' general country image will influence (1) product-specific perceptions, (2) feelings of animosity, (3) feelings of xenophilia, and (4) ethnocentric tendencies among these consumers.

This article contributes to the country-of-origin image literature in multiple ways. First, through a deep and novel integration of multiple literatures on country image, a new framework is developed integrating facets of country image and the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (see Table 1). Second, we apply, for the first time, all the facets of country image into one comprehensive model testing the relative effects on willingness to buy foreign products (see Figure 1). Both direct (Figure 2) and mediated (Figure 3) effects between the facets of country image and willingness to buy foreign products are tested. Drawing on our findings, we show how the relative effects of facets of country image stimulate or obstacle trade between countries.

1.1 Study context

The Yugoslav Wars were a series of separate but related ethnic conflicts, wars of independence, and insurgencies fought in the former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2001, which led to the breakup of the Yugoslav state in 1992. Its constituent republics declared independence, despite unresolved tensions between ethnic minorities in the new countries, fuelling the wars. Most of the wars ended through peace accords, involving full international recognition of new states, but with a massive human cost and economic damage to the region. Often

described as Europe's deadliest conflicts since World War II, the wars were marked by many war crimes. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established by the UN to prosecute these crimes. According to the International Center for Transitional Justice, the Yugoslav Wars resulted in the death of approximately 140,000 people (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_Wars).

The 1995 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing of Bosnia-Herzegovina (named "Operation Deliberate Force", carried out between August 30 and September 20) and the 1999 NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (the Kosovo War; named operation "Allied Force", lasting from March 24 to June 10) provide the significant situational factors in this study. This warfare, together with later actions in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, has given rise to a wave of anti-American feelings among consumers worldwide, so also in the former Yugoslavian countries. Hostile reactions to the country-of-origin stimulus of "Made in the USA" are found regularly (Amine et al. 2005; Delavande/Zafar 2018).

In some instances, people may base their evaluations of a product on the emotional reputation of the country-of-origin, independent of other considerations (Hong/Kang 2006). This is a likely scenario for US imports in the Southeast European (SEE) region. In this region, product assessments are likely overshadowed by feelings of war animosity toward the US, caused predominantly by the Kosovo War but also from other acts of warfare (e.g., Delavande/Zafar 2018).

Negative perceptions of the US co-exist with feelings of admiration, resulting in an ambivalent opinion (Russell et al. 2011). Some research even suggests that American-made products would be preferred to domestic goods because people often view products from the West as having superior quality and higher social status than domestic goods (Batra *et al.* 2000). Moreover, many multi-national brands' strong association with an American lifestyle embrace positive views of the United States (Ger/Belk 1996; Russell et al. 2011). This co-existence of mixed positive and negative emotions portrays the love–hate relationship that many consumers feel toward the United States, thus influencing product appraisals.

2. Country-of-origin research

Country-of-origin can influence consumers' product evaluations and purchase decisions (e.g., Bilkey/Nes 1982; Hong/Wyer 1989; Li/Wyer 1994; Maheswaran 1994). Many studies have investigated antecedents and consequences of the country-of-origin effect from "made-in" labeling. According to Maher and Carter (2011), country-of-origin is an extrinsic cue that affects consumer preferences when choosing between otherwise identical products coming from different countries. Yet more recent studies have shifted focus to examine the factors

leading consumers to prefer or avoid products from certain countries (e.g., Costa et al. 2016) and the antecedents of those preferences and behaviors.

Substantial research has focused on the effects of country-of-origin heuristics and stereotypes on perceived quality, product evaluations, and purchase intentions (Bilkey/Nes 1982; Papadopoulos/Heslop 1993; Verlegh/Steenkamp 1999; Batra et al. 2000; Nijssen/Douglas 2004; Riefler/Diamantopoulos 2007). Research widely accepts that country-of-origin cues activate concepts about a country and work through a quality signaling (halo) process to affect beliefs about product attributes and features (Han 1989; Verlegh/Steenkamp 1999). However, studies show that the country-of-origin effect cannot be explained entirely by quality signaling. The country-of-origin cue has symbolic and emotional meanings to consumers and links products to richer product country imagery with sensory, affective, and ritual connotations. Studies show that emotions often shape how country-of-origin perceptions are stored, activated, and mentally processed (Oberecker et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2017).

2.1 The dimensionality of country-of-origin image

Country-of-origin cues evoke associations that are stored as country-of-origin images in people's minds. Papadopoulos et al. (1990) and Laroche et al. (2005) suggest that country-of-origin image perceptions include (1) beliefs about society, products, or brands (*cognitive*), (2) favorable sentiments attached to home-country objects and goods (*affective*), and (3) ultimate tendencies of purchase behavior (*conative*). This is illustrated in Table 1, which is created by the authors of this paper.

2.2 Cognitive components of country-of-origin image

Research has conceptualized country image at both the country (macro) and product-country (micro) level (Heslop/Papadopoulos 1993; Almousa et al. 2019). The macro-country image refers to the economic or societal stage of the country or the general country image. Martin and Eroglu (1993:193) define general country image as "the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country." They propose three underlying dimensions of country image: economic (i.e., standard of living), political (i.e., capitalist vs. communist system), and technological (i.e., mass-produced vs. handcrafted products).

The micro-country-of-origin image refers to the product-country level. Product-country image captures beliefs about and attitudes toward locally manufactured products (Martin/Eroglu 1993; Shimp et al. 1993; Almousa et al. 2019). Product-country image works through product quality and attribute assessments and

arises from beliefs that there is something special about the technology or manufacturing processes of a country (Baughn/Yaprak 1993).

2.3 Affective components of country-of-origin image

Macro and micro country-of-origin image contain general and specific sentiments often based on stereotyped affective biases. In the manifestation of country stereotypes, beliefs, affect, and behavioral scripts may operate as affective heuristics influencing mental processes automatically and unconsciously (Maheswaran 1994). Maheswaran and Chen (2006) suggest that countries have associated equity that has both performance and emotional components. While positive country emotions can enhance product evaluations (Laroche et al. 2005; Papadopoulos et al. 1990), negative emotions can result in inferior product judgments (Klein et al. 1998). Affective associations are formed by direct experiences, such as during holidays, and by indirect experiences with countries and their citizens through art, education, and mass media (Verlegh/Steenkamp 1999; Kock et al. 2019). Such experiences shape feelings of animosity and xenophilia.

Animosity. History is an important cultural factor that influences country-of-origin image and country stereotypes. Animosity reflects "the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events" (Klein et al. 1998:90). Animosity toward a country can come from many sources—from relatively benign rivalry because of sharing a contiguous border to more serious manifestations stemming from previous military events or recent economic or diplomatic disputes. It accumulates as a core of negative feelings that a person cannot easily forget or forgive (Nes et al. 2012; 2014). Klein et al. (1998) find that animosity can adversely affect the consumption of products from another country, indirectly and regardless of judgments of product quality. Yet some evidence suggests that consumers can separate their feelings toward a country from their purchasing behavior (Russel/Russel 2006). Klein et al. (1998) note that consumers can harbor animosity toward a specific country while believing that the country produces high-quality goods (e.g., Amine et al. 2005; Leonidou et al. 2019).

Xenophilia. Consumer xenophilia originates from the sociological concept of xenocentrism, or the perception that a group other than one's own is the center of everything and that all other groups, including one's own, are scaled and rated in relation to it (Nes et al. 2014; Sturmer/Benbow 2017). Eshleman et al. (1993:109) define xenocentrism as "the belief that what is foreign is best, that our own lifestyle, products or ideas are inferior to those of others." Evidently, the key attribute of xenocentrism is favoritism toward out-groups coupled with negative stereotypical perceptions of one's own group (Balabanis/Diamantopoulos 2016). Recent studies treat xenophilia as an orientation of individuals

characterized by certain personality traits, motives, and cultural values, as well because of social influences of group interest (Sturmer/Benbow 2017).

Xenophilia is related to the construct consumer affinity (Oberecker et al. 2008, Oberecker/Diamantopoulos 2011; Balabanis/Diamantopoulos 2016; Nes et al. 2014), in that it is an affective dimension focusing on the reverse of animosity and consumer ethnocentrism. Xenophile consumers like foreign people, their customs and culture (Ger et al. 1993; Batra et al. 2000; Russel et al. 2011). Xenophilia is a positive consumer bias that points toward products that originate from foreign countries (Baughn/Yaprak 1993). This tendency springs from a person's goodwill toward a particular country or admiration for Western countries in general (Ger et al. 1993; Batra et al. 2000).

2.4 Conative components of country-of-origin image

The conative view expresses country-of-origin as a symbol of social or personal norms directing the desired level of interaction with a country. The conative mechanism may boost behavioral tendencies to buy only domestically made products or to refuse buying from a country of which the consumer disapproves (Papadopoulos et al. 1990; Laroche et al. 2005). It often reflects national pride, which can lead to patriotic behavior. Consumer ethnocentrism refers to "the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness and indeed morality of purchasing foreign made products" (Shimp/Sharma 1987:280). Consumer ethnocentrism implies that consumers prefer domestic goods to foreign alternatives because of feelings of national identity and pride (Verlegh 2007). Furthermore, it expresses social norms that the purchase of imports is wrong because of economic concerns (Verlegh 2007). That is, the purchase of imports is regarded as unpatriotic and detrimental to the domestic economy.

The behavioral component of consumer ethnocentrism often leads to approach behavior toward domestic goods and avoidance behavior toward imports. The avoidance behavior caused by consumer ethnocentrism is somewhat different from that caused by animosity. While animosity entails negative feelings toward a specific country, leading to, for example, boycotting behavior only of that country, consumer ethnocentrism encompasses negative attitudes toward buying imported goods from any foreign country (Verlegh 2007). Another distinguishing characteristic is that consumer ethnocentrism can affect product judgments (Klein 2002). Furthermore, ethnocentric tendencies can occur even when the product quality of domestic products is equal to or sometimes even worse than foreign products (Verlegh 2007). In many ways, compared with ethnocentric consumers, xenophile consumers have reverse behavioral predispositions.

We contend that the dimensionality of country-of-origin image—that is, the relative importance and activation capacity of its cognitive, affective, and conative components—influences product appraisals and willingness to buy foreign

goods. Table 1 provides a taxonomy of the country-image variables along with the structural dimensions of the country-of-origin image construct.

Table 1. Taxonomy of facets of a country image as a knowledge structure

Country image variables	Cognitive *(thoughts)*	Affective *(sentiments)*	Conative *(behavioral intentions)*	Studies
General (macro) country image ■ General country schema including country beliefs and affect ■ Overall perceptions of country competence, warmth, admiration and contempt	Beliefs about country characteristics	General country dis-/liking		Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Maher and Carter, 2011; Brijs *et al.*, 2011; Almousa *et al.*, 2019
Product (micro) country image ■ Product/brand-specific country schema including country beliefs, affect and repeat purchase intentions	Beliefs about product/brand attributes and quality	Product / brand bonding	Approach behavior	Han, 1988; 1989; Papadopoulos *et al.*, 1990; 1993; Shimp *et al.*, 1993; Maheswaran, 1994; Almousa *et al.*, 2019
Animosity ■ Specific country perceptions of negative beliefs and affect caused by warfare, economic, people, religion or political issues ■ Specific/situational vs. national/personal		Feelings of antagonism	Avoidance behavior	Klein *et al.*, 1998; Klein, 2002; Nijssen and Douglas, 2004; Russel and Russel, 2006; Riefler and Diamantopolus, 2007; Nes *et al.*, 2012; 2014; Sànchez *et al.*, 2017; Leonidou *et al.*, 2019
Consumer ethnocentrism ■ Patriotic and nationalistic sentiments ■ In-group vs. out-group countries ■ Negative foreign country status ■ Socialized, normative, behavioral scripts		Negative country out-group sentiments	Avoidance behavior	Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Klein *et al.*, 1998; Batra *et al.*, 2000; Nijssen and Douglas, 2004; Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006; Oberecker and Diamantopolus, 2011; Raskovic *et al.*, 2020

Country image variables	Cognitive *(thoughts)*	Affective *(sentiments)*	Conative *(behavioral intentions)*	Studies
Xenophilia				
■ Sociological concept of Xenocentrism as a result of social influences of in-/out-group interest ■ Admiration of foreignness, western countries, lifestyles and products/brands ■ Positive country status and symbolism ■ Individual orientation characterized with personality traits, motives and cultural values ■ Socialized, normative, behavioral scripts		Positive country out-group sentiments	Approach behavior	Perlmutter, 1954; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Ger *et al.*, 1993; Baughn and Yaprak, 1993; Friedman, 1996; Batra *et al.*, 2000; Leach *et al.*, 2008; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2016; Barbarino and Sturmer, 2016; Sturmer and Benbow, 2017
Consumer affinity				
■ Country sympathy/admiration ■ Country attachment	Beliefs about sympathy and admiration	Positive country sentiments	Approach behavior	Oberecker *et al.*, 2008; Oberecker and Diamantopoulos, 2011; Nes *et al.*, 2014; Kock *et al.*, 2019
Country ambivalence				
■ Ambivalence caused by mixed emotions ■ Coexisting positive & negative views on countries		Mixed country sentiments	Approach-avoidance behavioral conflicts	Russel *et al.*, 2011; Zolfagharian *et al.*, 2020

3. Country-of-origin image and willingness to buy foreign products

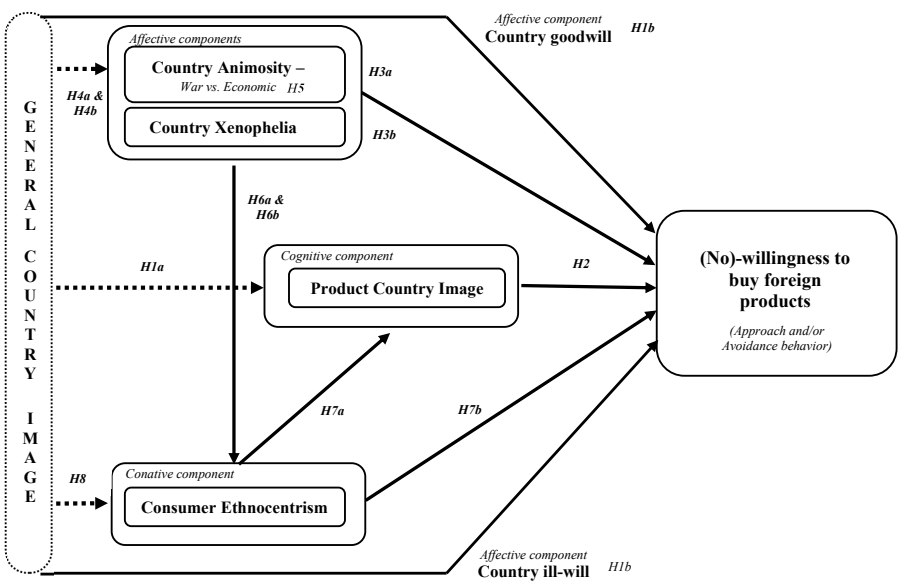
The objective of this article is to confirm empirically the multi-dimensional structure of the country-of-origin image and its cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. In Figure 1, we unify the variables into a conceptual model. Our idea is that general country image can influence the probability of consumers' purchase intentions toward foreign (US) goods simply because of perceptions of specific country issues.

Consistent with the affect transfer theory (Shimp et al. 1991; Lei et al. 2008), transfer of affect, meaning, and associations from a general country image to a foreign product can influence purchase behavior directly. Thus, country-of-origin image may influence willingness to buy a foreign product as a direct spillover or halo effect (e.g., Han 1989). Spillover occurs as either transferred goodwill or ill will influencing approach and avoidance behavior. Positive spillover will increase approach behavior, while negative spillover will increase avoidance behavior. Approach behavior may be driven by general country good-

will and positive country-of-origin image perceptions of an array of national issues. Conversely, avoidance behavior may be driven by general ill will and other negative country-of-origin image perceptions.

An evoked country-of-origin image may also influence foreign product appraisals by mediating the impact of more distinct consumer variables, such as (1) product-country image, (2) war and economic animosity, (3) xenophilia, and (4) consumer ethnocentrism. We apply a revised and extended version of Klein et al.'s (1998) model to illustrate these relationships (see Figure 1). This model includes general country image at a macro perceptual level, which brings together distinct country perceptions and sentiments. As an extension, we hypothesize new relationships between the variables in Klein et al.'s original study and add general country image and xenophilia to the model.

Figure 1. Conceptual model illustrating the tested cognitive, affective, and conative facets of a total country-of-origin image effect on willingness to buy foreign products



4. Research hypotheses

Han (1989) explains the effects of country-of-origin image on product evaluation through halo and summary models. Consumers tend to use halo images to judge quality and to form beliefs when other product cues are unavailable (Lei et al. 2008). However, as consumers become familiar with a country,

they summarize product information in the country-of-origin image and form evaluations directly (Han 1989). Knight and Calantone (2000) propose a "flexible" information-processing model that explicitly accounts for the simultaneous processing of country-of-origin image and product beliefs when attitudes are formed. Therefore, we anticipate that consumers' positive impressions of a product's country-of-origin lead to positive attitudes toward the product itself and increased willingness to buy (Hsieh et al. 2004). By contrast, consumers with a negative country-of-origin image may evaluate the country's products negatively and avoid them (Hong/Wyer 1989).

H1a: General country image of the foreign country has a positive effect on consumers' evaluations of product-country imagebecause of colored product beliefs.

The country-of-origin image may hold a residual affective component representing supplementary country image perceptions to the specific variables tested in Klein and Ettenson's (1998) original animosity model. These residual emotions may hold both positive and negative valence (i.e., goodwill and ill-will), and the dominant residual emotions may mirror perceptions of the country as a visitor destination, its natural beauty, the nation as a cultural bearer, famous country politicians or stereotype sentiments linked to its people. Such sentiments can create country goodwill or ill-will, which directly drive consumers' willingness to buy foreign products. Thus:

H1b: General country image of the foreign country can have a positive effect on both willingness to buy and on no-willingness to buy foreign products because of residual country goodwill or ill-will. Country goodwill drives willingness to buy while country ill-will drives no-willingness to buy foreign products from that country.

H2: Product-country image of the foreign country has a positive (negative) effect on consumers' willingness to buy (no-willingness to buy) foreign products from that country.

Previous studies of animosity toward a particular country have found that high scores on these items indicate reluctance toward buying (e.g., Klein et al. 1998; Klein 2002; Nijssen/Douglas 2004; Leonidou et al. 2019). Animosity is a country-specific construct that directly affects consumers' decisions to purchase products from that country (Klein 2002). Unlike ethnocentric consumers, who are biased against all foreign products, consumers with high animosity direct their disfavor solely at a particular country's products (Riefler/Diamantopoulos 2007; Lee/Mazodier 2015).

Smaller countries are often dependent on larger countries for resources and thus engage in high levels of foreign trade with them (Nijssen/Douglas 2004). As

a result, consumers in these countries may feel threatened by these larger countries. In this situation, we anticipate two types of animosity toward the larger countries. War animosity results from acts of aggression or war-like behavior, and economic animosity results from feelings of economic dominance or aggression (Klein et al. 1998). In turn, these feelings may lead to negative attitudes toward the "aggressor" country and an unwillingness to buy its products.

H3a: War with and economic animosity towards the foreign country has a negative (positive) effect on consumers' willingness to buy (no-willingness to buy) foreign products from that country.

A noteworthy question is whether other emotions toward a country can lessen the impact of animosity on consumers' purchase behavior. Verlegh (2007) shows that consumers deliberately buy products from a specific country to develop a close relationship with that country. Likewise, Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011) find that goodwill emotions positively affect willingness to buy products from a specific referent foreign country. Thus:

H3b: Xenophilia towards the foreign country has a positive (negative) effect on consumers' willingness to buy (no-willingness to buy) foreign products from that country.

Another question is whether other cognitive perceptions of a country can weaken consumers' purchase behavior. Previous research has widely documented spillover effects across nodes within an associative network (e.g., Shimp et al. 1991; Lei et al. 2008). It is therefore likely that favorable country beliefs can interact with feelings of animosity or xenophilia to increase or reduce the negative or positive influences (see theoretical discussion in Kock et al. 2019). For example, favorable perceptions of a country's environmental consciousness, population skillsets, level of westernization, and level of industrialization may (a) weaken the effect of animosity and (b) strengthen the effect of xenophilia and thereby foster consumers' intentions to buy products from that country.

H4a: General country image of the foreign country has a negative effect on the level of war and economic animosity towards that country.

H4b: General country image of the foreign country has a positive effect on the level of xenophilia towards that country.

Another critical issue influencing attitudes toward foreign products is how divergent and asymmetric dimensions of animosity connected with country-of-origin image interact with each other or with xenophilia. War animosity is likely to evoke stronger emotions than political or economic animosity. In situations in which war animosity is particularly salient, this type of animosity may dominate the entire emotional profile of the aggressor's country-of-origin image and thus

affect other facets of that image. Previous research has shown that the magnitude of spillover effects between nodes within a cognitive network is a function of the relative salience of association (Lei et al. 2008). Consequently, when there is asymmetry between emotional associations connected with a country-of-origin image, the strongest emotional dimension (i.e., war animosity) will likely spill over to less salient emotional dimensions (i.e., economic animosity) and magnify the original effect. Thus:

H5: War animosity towards the foreign country has a positive effect on economic animosity towards that country.

A foreign country's war-like behavior may enhance ethnocentric tendencies and strengthen negative attitudes toward objects, people, ideas, and products from the aggressor country. In support of this, Nijssen and Douglas (2004) find that war and economic animosity boosts nationalism and consumer ethnocentrism toward the aggressor country. Contradictory, Xenophile consumers like products that originate from foreign countries (e.g., Baughn/Yaprak 1993; Russel et al. 2011). Therefore, xenophilia has a negative impact on nationalism and consumer ethnocentrism.

H6a: War and economic animosity towards the foreign country has a positive effect on consumer ethnocentrism.

H6b: Xenophilia towards the foreign country has a negative effect on consumer ethnocentrism.

As noted previously, ethnocentrism increases the proclivity to favor one's country and feel disdain for foreign countries (Shimp/Sharma 1987). Shimp and Sharma (1987) demonstrate a strong negative relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and quality evaluations of and buying intentions toward foreign products. Even when domestic alternatives are unavailable, ethnocentric consumers would rather choose products from culturally similar than dissimilar countries (Watson/Wright 2000). Accordingly, studies have confirmed that increase in ethnocentrism measured with the established scale named CETSCALE (see Shimp/Sharma 1987; Raskovic, 2020) are related to negative product evaluations and reluctance to buy (e.g., Klein 2002). Therefore, the literature firmly establishes that ethnocentric consumers are prone to evaluate foreign products negatively (Lee/Mazodier 2015). Thus:

H7a: Consumer ethnocentrism has a negative effect on consumers' evaluations of product-country image

H7b: Consumer ethnocentrism has a negative (positive) effect on consumers' willingness to buy (no-willingness to buy) foreign products.

We propose that a positive general country image interacts with consumers' ethnocentric tendencies to moderate the effect of this individual consumer characteristic (Watson/Wright 2000; Balabanis/Diamantopoulos 2004). We hypothesize that general country perceptions influence product evaluations and purchase intentions indirectly through consumer ethnocentrism because of product-country inference making (Han 1989). Accordingly, general country perceptions might reduce the negative predisposition to buy products caused by consumer ethnocentrism.

H8: A positive general country image of the foreign country has a negative effect on consumer ethnocentrism.

5. Methodology

5.1 Data collection

We developed a survey to examine how SEE consumers differ in their willingness to buy goods from the US. The cognitive factors refer to country perceptions (i.e., general country image and product-country image), and the affective factors refer to country sentiments, such as war and economic animosity and xenophilia. Finally, conative factors capture consumer ethnocentrism.

5.2 Respondents

We collected data in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The study was a cross-sectional consumer survey carried out on student samples and the students came from business schools situated in the major cities of Zagreb, Mostar, Sarajevo, and Belgrade. We chose students because they are homogeneous across countries on factors such as age, education, and media interests. Large urban student samples provide a reasonable basis for comparison among respondents with good access to diverse foreign products.

5.3 Procedure and descriptive statistics

A questionnaire was translated to Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian and then back translated into English. This led to some minor modifications to ensure comprehension. We collected data during October 2018, almost twenty years after the warfare in the region and we expected the data to reflect these warfare occurrences. Respondents were given a brief outline of what the questionnaire was about and instructions on how to respond.

Table II. Means, standard deviations, and results of measurement model

	Mean	SD	N	Indicator reliability	Error variance	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Willingness to buy foreign products (Klein *et al.*, 1998) *							
1. *Avoidance*: I would feel guilty if I bought a product from USA.	1.84	1.63	963	.50	.50	.77	.53
2. *Avoidance*: Whenever possible. I avoid buying products from USA.	2.31	1.86	961	.58	.42		
3. *Avoidance*: I do not like the idea of owing products from USA *Avoidance*).	2.17	1.75	960	.52	.48		
1. *Approach*: If two products were equal in quality. I would pay 10% more for the product from USA.	3.21	1.88	964	.60	.40	.57	.41
2. *Approach*: Whenever available. I would prefer to buy products made in the USA.	2.18	1.77	960	.23	.77		
Animosity (Klein *et al.*, 1998) *							
1. *War*: I dislike Americans.	5.83	1.78	962	.46	.54	.75	.59
2. *War*: I feel angry toward America.	2.49	1.97	963	.66	.34		
3. *War*: I will never forgive Americans for the war.	3.39	2.16	962	.75	.25		
4. *War*: America should pay for what it did to Serbia (Croatia (C)/Bosnia (B)) during the war.	3.87	2.28	964	.50	.50		
1. *Economic*: USA wants to gain economic power over Serbia (C/B).	4.70	2.03	958	.71	.29	.89	.67
2. *Economic*: USA is taking advantage over Serbia (C/B).	4.25	1.98	963	.77	.23		
3. *Economic*: USA has too much economic influence in Serbia (C/B).	4.81	1.84	963	.58	.42		
4. *Economic*: The Americans are doing business unfairly with Serbia (C/B).	4.27	1.84	962	.61	.39		
Consumer ethnocentrism (Klein *et al.*, 1998; Batra *et al.*, 2000) *							
1. Serbian (Croatian/Bosnian) products first, last and foremost.	3.41	2.06	964	.64	.36	.92	.67
2. Purchasing foreign made products is un-Serbian (un-Croatian. un-Bosnian).	2.24	1.71	958	.64	.36		
3. It is not right to purchase foreign products because it puts Serbs (C/B) out of jobs.	3.21	2.02	962	.75	.25		
4. We should purchase products manufactured in Serbia (C/B) instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	3.69	2.17	961	.78	.22		
5. We should by from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.	3.60	2.17	964	.60	.40		
6. Serbian (C/B) consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Serbs (C/B) out of work.	2.32	1.74	964	.62	.38		
Product-country image (Klein *et al.*, 1998; Batra *et al.*, 2000) *							
1. Products made in the USA are carefully produced and have fine workmanship.	4.43	1.60	964	.50	.50	.87	.57
2. Products med in the USA show a very high degree of technological advancement.	5.73	1.32	964	.50	.50		
3. Products made in the USA usually show a very clever use of color and design.	5.03	1.53	963	.50	.50		
4. Products made in the USA are quite reliable and seems to last the desired length of time.	4.77	1.46	964	.77	.23		
5. Products made in the USA are usually good value for money.	4.62	1.46	962	.59	.41		
General country image (Martin and Eroglu, 1993) *							
1. Cleanliness/environmental consciousness dimension	3.71	1.58	963	.23	.77	.59	.29
2. Population skills dimension	6.14	0.88	964	.04	.96		
3. Level of capitalism/industrialization dimension	4.08	1.28	964	.40	.60		
4. Dependable ally dimension	3.46	1.26	964	.50	.50		
Xenophilia (adapted from Leach *et al.*, 2008; Klein *et al.*, 1998) *							
1. I like the USA.	3.42	1.73	964	.60	.40	67	.54
2. I feel friendly towards the USA.	4.18	1.91	961	.65	.35		
3. I prefer American stuffs.	3.23	1.84	964	.41	.59		
4. I admire the lifestyle of people who live in the USA.	3.88	1.92	964	.50	.50		

** All items of each scale have a range of responses of 1–7*

We collected 964 questionnaires across the three countries; the data set comprised 150 citizens in Croatia, 414 citizens in Serbia, and 400 citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We separated the Bosnia-Herzegovina sample into two geographic units by sampling 150 students from the University of Mostar and 250 students from the University of Sarajevo. The average age of the respondents was 22 varying between 19 and 27. We obtained answers from different ethnic groups, such as Muslims (mostly citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina) and Christians/Catholics (mostly citizens in Serbia and Croatia). In total, 23 % of respondents reported being Muslim, 56 % Christian (Orthodox, Catholics, others), and 21 % other religious groups. Regarding gender, 67 % of the respondents were female.

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics. The data was measured on seven-point scales and treated as ordinal data. Distributional aspects measured as skewness and kurtosis did not indicate any serious distributional problems. Only two variables show violating kurtosis values (2.82/6.17). These values could influence the chi-square and the standard errors derived from the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method. However, we solve this problem by using robust maximum likelihood (RML; Jöreskog/Sörbom 1993).

5.4 Measures

Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with a set of statements on their (1) willingness to buy American-made products (approach and avoidance), (2) general country image, (3) product-country image, (4) animosity (war and economic), (5) xenophilia, and (6) consumer ethnocentrism (see Table 2). All the items used were based on established scales from the literature (see Table 2). Finally, we measured demographics such as age, sex, religion, and education as control variables.

We developed an index composed of the 12 general country image items, which we grouped into a 4-dimensional summary construct based on Martin and Eroglu (1993) (see Table 2). This general country image index was used as an observed exogenous variable and included in the SEM modelling.

5.5 Scale validation

To test the measurement model, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. All the factor loadings were significant (t-values $\geq$ 3.56). Moreover, all factor loadings were satisfactorily related to their respective constructs, in support of convergent reliability (see Table 2).

We assessed the scale reliability using the procedure of Bagozzi and Yi (1988). One of the general country image items showed a low score on indicator reliability (R^2 =.04); however, we kept it unchanged because this aggregated

population skills item is important to the theoretical comprehension of the structural model (Bollen/Lennox 1991). Finally, we assessed the composite reliability which should exceed.6 to be satisfactory (Bagozzi/Yi 1988). In general, the reliability measures were satisfactory. The average variance extracted for Factor 7 (.29) was below the minimum threshold of.50, but the composite reliability was near the required.6 minimum threshold. In summary, the confirmatory factor analysis shows that all factors satisfy the criteria of convergent validity.

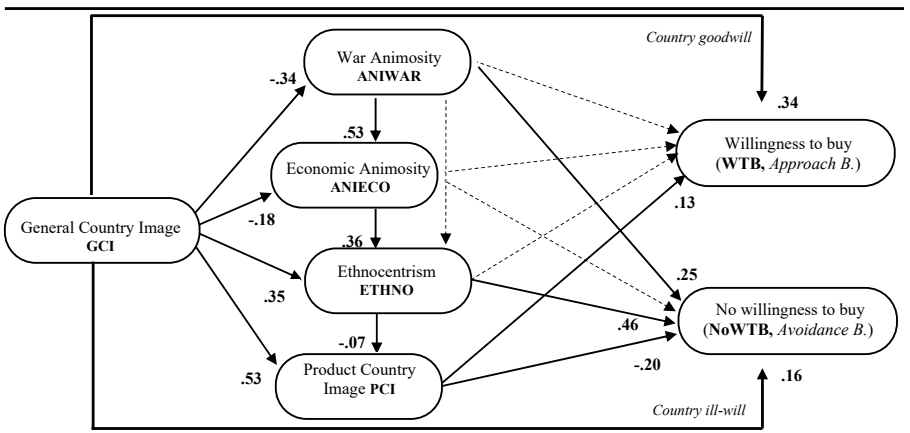
We also conducted a test for construct discriminant validity (Bagozzi/Yi 1988). Each of the shared variance estimates exceeded the square of the corresponding phi coefficients, providing evidence of discriminant validity of all constructs. We ran a specific test of construct discriminant validity on the two factors measuring willingness to buy and the two animosity variables (Bagozzi/Yi 1988). For the willingness-to-buy factors, the analyses show a difference in chi-square value of 63.3. Thus, the two-factor model is better than a one-factor model and the two factors are distinct constructs. In addition, for the animosity factors, the analyses show a difference in chi-square value of 643.31, indicating that the two factors are distinct constructs.

Table 2 reports the parameter estimates and global goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model. The RMSEA is.047 (90 % CI:.044,.050) and SRMR =.061, CFI =.97, GFI =.86, AGFI =.83, CN = 362.97, signaling a good model (Browne/Cudeck 1993).

6. Results

We tested the relationships between the explanatory variables and the (no)-willingness-to-buy evaluations as a comprehensive structural model using Mplus and RML as estimation method (see Figure 2a and Figure 2b).

Figure 2a. SEM results of GCI, animosity & country good-/ill-will on (no)-willingness to buy foreign products



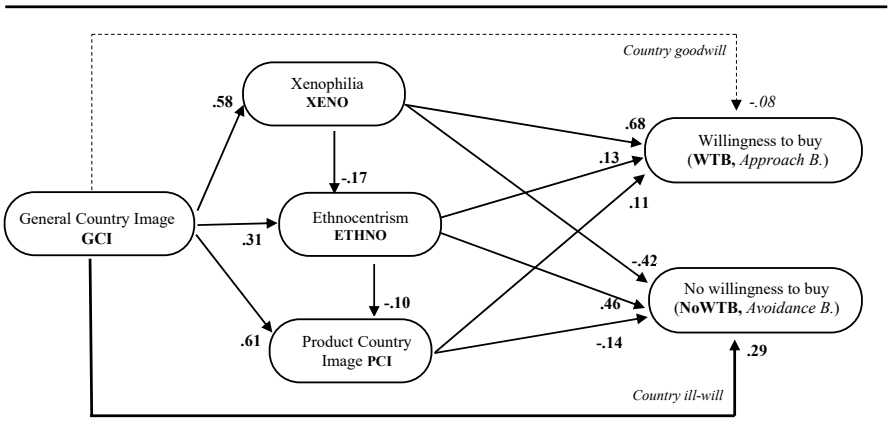
TEST OF COMPLETE STRUCTURAL MODEL Paths	Estimates	t-values		Hypotheses
GCI → PCI	β =.53	*t* = 8.25	H1a	Supported
GCI → NoWTB	β =.16	*t* = 2.32	H1b	Supported
GCI → WTB	β =.34	*t* = 4.11	H1b	Supported
PCI → NoWTB	β = -.20	*t* = -2.27		Supported
PCI → WTB	β =.13	*t* = 2.90	H2	Supported
GCI → ANIWAR	β = -.34	*t* = -8.31	H4a	Supported
GCI → ANIECO	β = -.18	*t* = -3.85	H4a	Supported
ANIWAR → ANIECO	β =.53	*t* = 12.19	H5	Supported
ANIWAR → NoWTB	β =.25	*t* = 4.61	H3a	Supported
ANIWAR → WTB	β =.12*	*t* =1.93*		Not supported
ANIECO → NoWTB	β = -.02*	*t* =-1.04*		Not supported
ANIECO → WTB	β = -.04*	*t* = -.93*		Not supported
GCI → ETHNO	β =.35	*t* = 8.27	H8	Not supported
ANIWAR → ETHNO	β =.04*	*t* = 1.11*	H6a	Not supported
ANIECO → ETHNO	β =.36	*t* = 6.93	H6a	Supported
ETHNO → NoWTB	β =.46	*t* = 9.54	H7b	Supported
ETHNO → WTB	β =.04*	*t* =1.18*		Not supported
ETHNO → PCI	β = -.07	*t* =-1.96	H7a	Supported
Fit statistics: Satorra-Bentler chi-square = 965.33 (df = 331. p <.01), RMSEA =.046, SRMR =.057, CFI =.90, TLI =.89				
TEST OF INDIRECT EFFECTS	**Estimates**	**p-values**		
Total effect (Approach behavior)	β =.390	*p* <.01		
Total indirect effect	β =.077	*p* <.05		

GCI →PCI→WTB	β =.079	*p* <.05	
GCI →ETNO→CI→WTB	β = -.004	*p* >.10	
GCI →ANIECO → ETNO → PCI →WTB	β =.001	*p* >.10	
	β =.001	*p* >.10	
GCI →ANIWAR→ANIECO→ETNO→PCI→WTB	β =.313	*p* <.01	
GCI →WTB+ direct Total effect (Avoidance behavior)	β =.082	*p* >.10	
Total indirect effect	β = -.093	*p* >.10	
GCI →ANIWAR →NoWTB	β = -.082	*p* <.01	H4a/H3aSupported
GCI →ETHNO →NoWTB	β =.154	*p* <.01	
GCI →PCI →NoWTB	β = -.109	*p* <.01	
GCI →ANIWAR →ETNO →NoWTB	β = -.030	*p* <.01	
	β =.005	*p* >.10	
GCI →ETHNO →PCI →NoWTB	β = -.029	*p* <.05	
GCI →ANIWAR →ANIECO →ETHNO →NoWTB	β = -.001	*p* >.10	
	β = -.001	*p* >.10	
GCI →ANIECO →ETHNO →PCI →NoWTB	β =.176	p <.01	
GCI →ANIWAR →ANIECO →ETHNO →PCI→NoWTB			
GCI →NoWTB direct			
Fit statistics: Chi-square = 1373.01 (df = 336. p <.01). RMSEA =.058, SRMR =.057, CFI =.90, TLI =.89			

** For readability purposes, only the significant relationships in the accepted structural model are depicted visually in Figure 2a*

In Figure 2a of the animosity SEM-model, the indices indicate a good fit between the structural model and the sample with incremental fit measurements (CFI =.90, SRMR =.057, and TLI =.89) all near or above the required cutoff points. The RMSEA (.046) score indicated a good global fit. Figure 2b shows the result of the equivalent SEM model, including xenophilia as the significant affective variable as a replacement of war and economic animosity. This figure also indicates an acceptable fit between the structural model and the sample. The fit measurements (RMSEA=.05, CFI =.90, SRMR =.05, and TLI =.88) are above the required cutoff points.

Figure 2b. SEM results of GCI, xenophilia & country good-/ill-will on (no)-willingness to buy foreign products



TEST OF COMPLETE STRUCTURAL MODEL Paths	Estimates	t-values		Hypotheses
GCI → PCI	β =.61	*t* =12.45	H1a	Supported
GCI → NoWtB	β =.29	*t* =3.63	H1b	Supported
GCI → WtB	β = -.08*	*t* =-1.00*		Not supported Supported
PCI → NoWtB	β = -.14	*t* =-2.64	H2	
PCI → WtB	β =.11	*t* =2.43		Supported
GCI → XENO	β =.58	*t* =13.75	H4b	Supported
XENO → NoWtB	β = -.42	*t* =-7.36	H3b	Supported
XENO → WtB	β =.68	*t* =9.81		Supported
GCI → ETHNO	β =.31	*t* =5.53	H8	Not supported
XENO → ETHNO	β = -.17	*t* =-3.30	H6b	Supported
ETHNO → NoWtB	β =.46	*t* =11.88	H7b	Supported
ETHNO → WtB	β =.13	*t* =3.46		Not supported
ETHNO → PCI	β = -.10	*t* =-3.06	H7a	Supported
Fit statistics: Satorra-Bentler chi-square = 786.32 (df = 238. p <.01). RMSEA =.05. SRMR =.05. CFI =.90, TLI =.88				
TEST OF INDIRECT EFFECTS	**Estimates**	**p-values**		
Total effect (Approach behavior)	β =.433	*p* <.01		
Total indirect effect	β =.409	*p* <.01		
GCI →PCI → WtB	β =.044	*p* >.05		
GCI →XENO →WtB	β =.367	*p* <.01		
GCI →ETHNO →PCI →WtB	β = -.002	*p* >.10		H4b/H3b Supported
GCI →XENO →ETHNO →PCI →WtB	β =.001	*p* >.10		
GCI →WtB direct	β =.023	*p* >.10		

Total effect (Avoidance behavior)	β =.060	*p* >.10	
Total indirect effect	β = -.229	*p* <.01	
GCI →ETHNO →NoWtB	β =.137	*p* <.01	
GCI →PCI →NoWtB	β = -.085	*p* <.05	
GCI →XENO →NoWtB	β = -.245	*p* <.01	H4b/H3b Supported
GCI →XENO →ETHNO →NoWtB	β = -.038	*p* <.05	
GCI →ETHNO →PCI →NoWtB	β =.004	*p* >.10	
GCI →XENO →ETHNO →PCI →NoWtB	β = -.001	*p* >.10	
GCI →NoWtB direct	β =.289	*p* <.01	
Fit statistics: Chi-square = 1082.03 (df = 239. p <.01). RMSEA =.06, SRMR =.05, CFI =.90, TLI =.88			

First, we report the overlapping variables in the two SEM models and then we report the idiosyncratic effects and the test of the hypothesis for war and economic animosity (Figure 2b) as well as for xenophelia (Figure 2b). The standardized coefficients of the latent factors show that they affected both *no-willingness to buy (NoWTB/avoidance behavior)* and *willingness to buy (WTB/approach behavior)* with significant and non-significant scores (see Figure 2a and Figure 2b).

As H1a predicted, the path from general country image to evaluations of American-made products (product-country image) was significant and positive (in Figure 2a: *β =.53/*in Figure 2b*: β =.61*). As H1b predicted, the path from general country image (country goodwill) to willingness to buy (WTB) was significant and positive, yet only in the animosity SEM-model (in Figure 2a: *β =.34*/in Figure 2b: *β = -.08ns*). Moreover, as expected the path from general country image (country ill-will) to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) was significant and positive (in Figure 2a: *β =.16*/in Figure 2b: *β =.29*). This finding can be explained by negatively perceived facets of a general country image that increase the likelihood of avoidance behavior. Consumers might not, for instance, always perceive a high level of capitalism/industrialization as a positive country characteristic.

As H2 predicted, the path from product-country image to willingness to buy (WTB) was significant and positive (in Figure 2a: *β =.13*/in Figure 2b: *β =.11);* however, the path from product-country image to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) was significant and negative (in Figure 2a: *β = -.20*/in Figure 2b: *β = -.14)*. Thus, as expected a favorable product-country image boosts consumers' approach behavior and reduces their avoidance behavior.

As H7a predicted, the path from consumer ethnocentrism to evaluations of American-made products (product-country image) was significant and negative (in Figure 2a: *β = -.07*/in Figure 2b: *β = -.10*). This is in accordance with findings from previous research (Klein et al. 1998). As predicted in H7b, the

path from consumer ethnocentrism to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) was significant and positive (In Figure 2a and 2b: β =.46); but the path from consumer ethnocentrism to willingness to buy (WTB) was only significant in the xenophilia SEM-model (Figure 2b: β =.13). Thus, seemingly consumer ethnocentrism increases avoidance behavior but does not reduce approach behavior.

Contrary to what we predicted in H8, the path from general country image to consumer ethnocentrism was significant and positive (in Figure 2a: β =.35/in Figure 2b: β =.31). This indicates that ethnocentric tendencies are strengthened by a strong general country image and that consumers may become more protective. This finding is also surprising, as we believed that the attractiveness of foreign products would be enhanced by consumers' perceptions of a home country as economically developed, environmental responsible, and ethically principled. We proposed that such perceptions would make foreign products seem more socially and morally acceptable, and thus we predicted diminishing ethnocentric tendencies. However, this finding might be explained by increased perceptions of "threat" to the domestic economy because of strong perceptions of competitiveness connected with a rival nation-state. This type of perceived threat of rivalry would boost patriotic dispositions.

In the following we report the hypothesized effects for war and economic animosity and xenophilia representing three explicit affective components of the country-of-origin image effect. As H3a predicted, the path from war animosity to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) was significant and positive (β =.25) while the path from economic animosity to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) was not. Likewise, the path from war and economic animosity to willingness to buy (WTB) was not significant. These findings show that only war animosity fuels boycott behavior toward foreign products.

As H4a predicted, the paths from general country image to war and economic animosity were significant and negative (β = -.34 & β = -.18), indicating that a strong general country image weakens the relative strength of animosity. As we predicted in H5, the path from war animosity to economic animosity was significant and positive (β =.53). This indicates that war animosity intensifies the strength of economic animosity. As we predicted in H6a, the path from economic animosity to consumer ethnocentrism (β =.36) was significant and positive. However, the path from war animosity to consumer ethnocentrism was not significant. This indicates that economic animosity, which represents negative emotions directly linked to trade and industry factors in country relationships, strengthens ethnocentric tendencies. Yet, war animosity seems to work indirectly via economic animosity to increase consumer ethnocentrism.

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, the Xenophilia SEM model (Figure 2b) shows equivalent patterns to Figure 2a for the shared latent factors. As H3b posited, the paths from xenophilia to willingness to buy (WTB) was positive

and significant (*β =.68*) while the path from xenophilia to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) was negative and significant (*β = -.42*).

Thus, Xenophilia is positively related to approach behavior and negatively related to avoidance behavior. Moreover, as posited by H6b Xenophilia significantly reduces the impact of consumer ethnocentrism (*β = -.17*). Figure 2b deviates from Figure 2a in that the direct effect of general country image on willingness to buy (WTB), as predicted by H1b, is not significant in this model *(δ = -.08ns vs. δ =.34*). Instead, the positive indirect effect from general country image is channeled through xenophilia and thereby strongly influencing willingness to buy (WTB). Figure 2b also shows that the direct effect of general country image on no-willingness to buy (NoWTB) is strengthened *(δ =.29 vs. δ =.16*). Thus, in the xenophilia SEM-model (see Figure 2a), general country image has a more powerful direct influence on avoidance behavior than the model including war animosity (Figure 2a). In the latter model, negative general country image connotations are mainly channeled via war animosity on avoidance behavior. Finally, in the xenophilia SEM-model, consumer ethnocentrism partly behaves counter to expectations in H7b *(δ =.13*); it positively influences both no-willingness to buy as well as willingness to buy (WTB). Although this is an unexpected result, Nijssen and Douglas (2004) also find that this relationship is positive rather than negative.

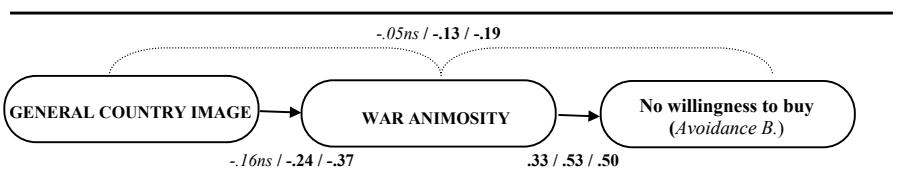
We tested all potential interaction effects in the two models (see Figures 2a and 2b) by running two new SEM models (Mplus with bootstrapping and ML). For both models, we tested the totality of indirect effects, between general country image and (no)-willingness to buy (avoidance and approach behavior) including all possible mediated paths. Figure 2a show the significant mediated paths from general country image via war and economic animosity to willingness to buy. The significant paths from general country image (GCI) to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB/ avoidance behavior) were: 1) GCI → ANIMOSITY WAR → AVOIDANCE; 2) GCI → ETHNOCENTRISM → AVOIDANCE; 3) GCI → PRODUCT-COUNTRY IMAGE → AVOIDANCE; 4) GCI → ANIMOSITY WAR → ETHNOCENTRISM → AVOIDANCE; 5) ANIMOSITY WAR → ANIMOSITY ECONOMIC → ETHNOCENTRISM → AVOIDANCE and the direct path GCI → AVOIDANCE. Yet the total indirect *(δ = -.093/p>.10*) and the total effect *(δ =.082/p>.10*) were not significant as the score valences ruled each other out. The significant paths from general country image (GCI) to willingness to buy (WTB/approach behavior) where: GCI → PRODUCT-COUNTRY IMAGE → APPROACH and the direct path GCI → APPROACH. The total indirect *(δ =.077/p<.05*) and the total effect *(δ =.390/p<.01*) were both significant, but the direct effect explained most of it.

Figure 2b show the significant mediated paths from general country image to willingness to buy via xenophilia. The significant paths from general country

image (GCI) to no-willingness to buy (NoWTB/avoidance behavior) were: 1) GCI → XENOPHILIA → AVOIDANCE; 2) GCI → PRODUCT-COUNTRY IMAGE → AVOIDANCE; 3) GCI → ETHNOCENTRISM → AVOIDANCE; 4) GCI → XENOPHILIA → ETHNOCENTRISM → AVOIDANCE and the direct path GCI → AVOIDANCE. The total indirect effect *(δ = -.229/p<.01)* was significant but not the total effect *(δ =.060 /p>.10)* as the positive and negative scores ruled each other out. The significant paths from general country image to willingness to buy (WTB) were: 1) GCI → XENOPHILIA → APPROACH. The total indirect effect *(δ =.409/p<.01)* and the total effect (*δ =.433/p<.01)* were also significant. Yet the effect from general country image via xenophilia upon willingness to buy (WTB) explained most of the total effect *(δ =.367/ p<.01)*.

The results show that the main mediated path in the animosity model (Figure 2a) is the relationship from general country image channeled by war animosity on no-willingness to buy (NoWTB: *δ = -.082/p<.01*). Moreover, the main mediated path in the xenophilia model (Figure 2b) is the relationship from general country image channeled by xenophilia on no-willingness to buy (NoWTB: *δ* = -.245/p<.01). Because our primary focus is on how general country image boost or reduce the affective power of specific country sentiments on willingness to buy foreign products, we ran new tests on these mediated relationships. Accordingly, we tested the two mediating variables (war animosity and xenophilia) in six separate models attempting to prevent them ruling out each other's positive and negative effects. We also separated the models across the citizens in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to glean deeper insight into the mediating effect of the sentiments across countries. In Figure 3a and Figure 3b the mediated effects of war animosity and xenophilia are described.

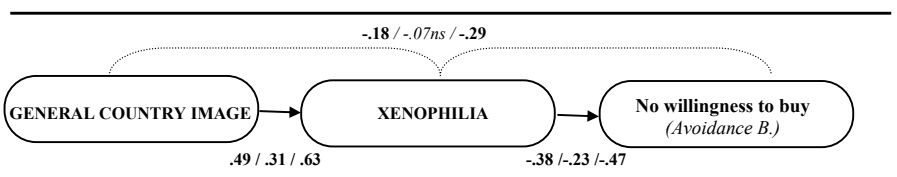
Figure 3a. Results of war animosity as mediated effects across Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina upon no-willingness to buy (avoidance behavior) foreign products



Hypotheses	Paths	Estimates	t-values
Serbia			
H4	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → ANIMOSITY WAR	β = -.16	*t* =-1.24
H3	WAR ANIMOSITY → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE)	β =.33	*t* = 4.16

Med.	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → ANIMOSITY WAR → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE)	β = -.05	*t* =-1.21
Fit statistics: Satorra-Bentler chi-square = 71.06 (df = 42. *p* <.05). RMSEA =.041. SRMR =.068. CFI =.98. GFI =.91. AGFI =.85. CN = 386.72			
Croatia			
H4	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → ANIMOSITY WAR	β = -.24	*t* =-2.29
H3	ANIMOSITY WAR → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE)	β =.53	*t* = 3.90
Med.	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → ANIMOSITY WAR → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE)	β = -.13	*t* =-2.24
Fit statistics: Satorra-Bentler chi-square = 77.33 (df = 42. *p* <.05). RMSEA =.075. SRMR =.10. CFI =.95. GFI =.87. AGFI =.79. CN = 128.58			
Bosnia-Herzegovina			
H4	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → ANIMOSITY WAR	β = -.37	*t* =-4.60
H3	ANIMOSITY WAR → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE)	β =.50	*t* = 6.80
Med.	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → ANIMOSITY WAR → NoWtB(AVOIDANCE)	β = -.19	*t* =-3.99
Fit statistics: Satorra–Bentler chi-square = 109.22 (df = 42. *p* <.05). RMSEA =.063. SRMR =.071. CFI =.96. GFI =.88. AGFI =.82. CN = 241.66			

Figure 3b. Results of xenophilia as mediated effects across Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina upon no-willingness to buy (avoidance behavior) foreign products



Hypotheses	Paths	Estimates	t-values
Serbia			
H4	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → XENOPHILIA	β =.49	*t* = 6.18
H3	XENOPHILIA → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE B.)	β = -.38	*t* =-4.47
Med.	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → XENOPHILIA → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE B.)	β = -.18	*t* =-3.52
Fit statistics: Satorra-Bentler chi-square = 140.63 (df = 42. *p* <.05). RMSEA =.076. SRMR =.073. CFI =.93. GFI =.90. AGFI =.84. CN = 190.26			
Croatia			
H4	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → XENOPHILIA	β =.31	*t* = 2.33
H3	XENOPHILIA → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE B.)	β = -.23	*t* =-1.96
Med.	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → XENOPHILIA → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE B.)	β = -.07	*t* =-1.55
Fit statistics: Satorra-Bentler chi-square = 55.87 (df = 42. *p* <.05). RMSEA =.048. SRMR =.93. CFI =.97. GFI =.90. AGFI =.84. CN = 168.1			

Bosnia-Herzegovina			
H4	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → XENOPHILIA	β =.63	*t* = 6.69
H3	XENOPHILIA → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE B.)	β = -.47	*t* =-5.90
Med.	GENERAL COUNTRY IMAGE → XENOPHILIA → NoWtB (AVOIDANCE B.)	β = -.29	*t* =-4.55
Fit statistics: Satorra–Bentler chi-square = 99.05 (df = 42. *p* <.05). RMSEA =.059. SRMR =.066. CFI =.97. GFI =.93. AGFI =.89. CN = 257.66			

We assessed the relative differences in magnitude across countries of the effects of general country image channeled by war animosity on no-willingness to buy (Figure 3a). For Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the paths from general country image to war animosity were significant and negative (supporting H4a). This indicates that general country image weakens the war animosity in these two countries. For Serbia, however, we did not observe a significant mediated effect on this relationship. The effect of war animosity on no-willingness to buy was significant and positive across countries (supporting H3a). The total effects show that the indirect effects are significant for Croatia (-0.13/t = -2.24) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (-0.19/t = -3.99) but not for Serbia (-0.05/t = -1.21).

These findings indicate that the United States' general country image is not strong enough to reduce the magnitude of negative war animosity among citizens in Serbia and, thus, to offset their no-willingness to buy or avoidance behavior. Yet, for citizens in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, general country image suppresses war animosity and reduces its impact on no-willingness to buy and avoidance behavior. These differences seem sound, as Serbia was the only country directly bombed by the US/NATO coalition during the Kosovo war (1999 NATO operation Allied Force).

Figure 3b depicts the relationships of the three SEM models testing the mediated effects of xenophilia across countries. For all three countries, the paths from general country image to xenophilia were significant and positive (supporting H4b) indicating that general country image boosts the relative strength of xenophilia. As expected, the effect of xenophilia on no-willingness to buy was significant and negative across countries (supporting H3b). Thus, rising xenophilia reduces no-willingness to buy and avoidance behavior. We observed significant mediated effects across countries (Serbia: -0.18/t = -3.85; Croatia: -0.07/t = -1.47; Bosnia-Herzegovina -0.29/t = -4.40). Thus, the US' general country image is sufficiently strong to increase the magnitude of xenophilia among citizens in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which again reduces their avoidance behavior.

7. Discussion

This study advances four research objectives related to how general country image affects country-of-origin effects via product-country image and how it af-

fects approach (Friedman 1996) and avoidance (Klein 2002) behavior generated from established country perceptions.

The first objective centers on the dimensionality of the country-of-origin image construct: how it functions and as a contextual variable upon the effects of other country-of-origin facets. The literature review reveals that country-of-origin image consists of cognitions (beliefs about society, products, or brands), affect (favorable sentiments attached to home-country objects and goods), and conations (tendencies of purchase behavior) and that several country-specific variables operate within this framework (see section 2.1 and Table 1). We show that country-of-origin image corresponds well to the triple-component hierarchy of effects, such that cognitions → affects → conations. Finally, we connect country-of-origin image to related but distinct country dimensions and test how they are related to each other.

We replicate earlier findings showing that macro country-of-origin image (general country image) has a direct goodwill and ill will affect upon willingness to buy foreign goods (e.g., Martin/Eroglu 1993; Maher/Carter 2011). General country image also fuels indirect effects that are powerful enough to intensify both avoidance and approach reactions towards foreign goods.

The second objective relates to how general country image affects country-of-origin effects through product-country image and consumer ethnocentrism on approach (Friedman 1996) and avoidance buying behavior (Klein 2002). General country image fortifies commonly observed country-of-origin effects channeled through product-country image (Papadopoulos et al. 1993; Shimp et al. 1993) and consumer ethnocentrism (Shimp/Sharma 1987; Batra et al. 2000; Lee et al. 2017). More specifically, general country image affects product-country image directly leading to more approach behavior. What is more, general country image intensifies consumer ethnocentrism, which subsequently increases avoidance behavior. Yet when general country image lies behind as a background variable, increased consumer ethnocentrism does not affect product-country image indirectly neither on approach nor avoidance reactions. These findings deviate from what Klein et al. (1998) found, which did not include general country image.

Our third objective pertains to the influence of general country image on approach or avoidance reactions channeled through the country sentiments animosity and xenophilia. Countries in this region have a long history of warfare both internally and externally but have also developed historically significant trade relationships externally. SEE-consumers exhibit animosity toward the United States because of warfare and perceptions of misuse of political and economic power. Similarly, both Klein et al. (1998) and Nijssen/Douglas (2004) found animosity toward Japan and Germany because of warfare 60 years earlier. Yet, SEE-consumers also exhibit status preferences and admiration for Western

and American lifestyles, which is common in former Eastern Bloc countries (Ger et al. 1993). Accordingly, in our model we include animosity and xenophilia as a novel country sentiment and test their relative influences causing a mixed emotions effect. We particularly demonstrate how feelings of xenophilia boosts approach behavior and reduces avoidance behavior while animosity works the opposite way.

The final objective addresses the void of how country-of-origin image relates to approach and avoidance behavior across Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Across counties, we find that general country image reduces the intensity of war animosity and thereby weakens avoidance behavior. This interaction effect is, however, not sufficiently strong to reduce avoidance reactions in Serbia. Xenophilia, on the other hand, when boosted by general country image, leads to strengthen approach reactions in all three countries.

7.1. Theoretical and practical implications

The theoretical structure and dimensionality of country-of-origin image is a complex issue (Laroche et al. 2005). To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to address whether a range of country-of-origin perceptions work as an integrated cognitive network unifying product-country image, animosity, xenophilia, and consumer ethnocentrism, and not simply as the sum of individual stimuli, perceptions, and responses. Our results extend previous country-of-origin image research in that it offers further insights into the meaning and structure of the country-of-origin image construct and explains how animosity and xenophilia are related to each other (Klein et al. 1998; Klein 2000). We explicitly show that country-of-origin image influence other country related sentiments and behavioral dispositions and reveal how such sentiments reduces or advances avoidance behavior.

We observe three aspects regarding country-of-origin image. First, how divergent country components exert parallel effects on approach and avoidance behaviors toward foreign products. Second, how divergent macro country-of-origin image perceptions interact with micro country-of-origin image perceptions to strengthen or weaken each other's influences. The results support that country image is an all-encompassing construct, with many facets and dimensions that may be inconsistent and work in different directions (e.g., Martin/Eroglu 1993; Almousa et al. 2019; Kock et al. 2019).

The practical implications for SEE consumers and businesses are several. Firstly, SEE consumers are positively influenced by the general country image of America and the products made in the US. Thus, SEE consumers are embracing American icons and popular culture. However, some SEE consumers might avoid the purchase of American brands and goods from American firms because of the historical warfare. Thus, consumers could use their bad will (animosity) to

make a statement. Secondly, SEE businesses could use the bad will towards the US to develop products and brands highlighting a patriotic "made in" statement. The practical implications for U.S. businesses are that companies must develop an understanding of how the United States is perceived in international markets. The United States enjoys, to some extent, stature, and high profile abroad (xenophilia). However, American businesses should not ignore the possibility of negative attitudes toward the United States in several regions of the world due to historical war activities (animosity). The United States may have developed animosity in markets that might be interesting for them.

7.2 Limitations and future research

The study has some limitations. Overall, our methodological design was in line with prior studies and follows well-established traditions in the country-of-origin image field of research. Yet, we applied the general country image-scale of Martin and Eroglu's (1993), which has not yet been adequately tested across countries and market settings. Thus, it is likely that we did not account for all possible country perceptions "shaping USA's country image". Still, we managed to successfully demonstrate how the macro country-of-origin image dimensions included affected purchase intentions among SEE consumers. Yet future studies should use more all-embracing measures of general country image.

A strength of the study was the inclusion of general (macro) and distinct (micro) country-of-origin image measures. We included a large sample of respondents from three former Eastern Bloc countries that are scarcely studied before. Moreover, we used robust statistical approaches to test hypotheses. Yet a limitation is our use of non-experimental data to model causality in the observed relationships. Though, we somewhat attenuate this using SEM.

Future research should put efforts to replicate the present paper to other age groups to test the robustness of the hypothesis and the SEM model (see Raskovic et al. 2020). Furthermore, adding different age groups could make it possible to compare consumer behaviour between "war generation" and "post-war generation" of consumers at a certain region. For example, Klein et al. (1998) and Nijssen/Douglas (2004) investigated the post-war generation of the Nanjing massacre in 1937 and the Second World War. Both studies found strong impact of animosity even 60 years after the war-affairs. Surprisingly, Leonidou et al. (2019) did not find any significant effect of age and age groups on consumer animosity among citizens of Ukraine against Russia. Therefore, future research should try to dig deeper into the influence of war and post-war period in terms of consumer behaviour. Beside age, other socio-cultural demographics such as religion, gender, and socio-economic income groups could be studied further in this context. Finally, an interesting approach would be to compare luxury products or status brands with generic products or value-for-money

brands attempting to address how such value-based and self-identity defining consumption is influenced by cognitive, affective, and conative components of country-of-origin image.

8. Conclusions

This study shows that factors other than the quality of foreign products and beliefs about the appropriateness of purchasing imports influence consumers' buying behavior in the international marketplace. We predominantly reveal how animosity and xenophilia matter in international trade. The need to attend to such country sentiments becomes ever-more imperative as consumers increasingly make decisions about global products.

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