

**Barbara Jenes**

**THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES  
IN MEASURING COUNTRY IMAGE**

**DIMENSIONS AND MEASUREMENT MODEL OF  
COUNTRY IMAGE AND COUNTRY BRAND**

Department of Marketing Research  
and Consumer Behaviour

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Corvinus University of Budapest  
Doctoral School of Business Administration

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*Ph.D. Dissertation*

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# CONTENTS

<b>I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. The theory of country image – A literature review of hungarian and international literature on country image</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. A general presentation of the concept of country image	1
1.2. Defining country image	4
1.2.1. Categorizing the definitions of country image	4
1.2.2. Partitioning the definitions of country image	8
1.2.2.1. Perception-based definitions of country image	9
1.2.2.2. Country image definitions based on beliefs (faith)	9
1.2.2.3. Country image definitions based on opinions and insights (mental images)	10
1.2.2.4. Association-based definitions of country image	10
1.2.2.5. Country image definitions based on stereotypes, schemes	11
1.2.2.6. Attitude-based country image definitions	12
1.2.3. Separating the concept of country image from other relating concepts	13
1.2.3.1. National identity	13
1.2.3.2. National stereotypes	14
1.3. Summary and critical analysis of country image literature	15
<b>2. Country as a brand theory: A literature review of hungarian and international literature on countries as brands</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1. Building country image through marketing	18
2.1.1. Academic approach to place marketing	20
2.1.2. Approaches to country marketing in the literature	23
2.2. Branding approaches in country image literature – Place branding	24
2.2.1. The approaches on “country branding” and “nation branding”	27
2.3. Country image as a country brand – Branding approaches in the literature of country image	30
2.4. Country image as Competitive Identity – A brief overview	34
2.5. A summarizing and critical review of branding approaches related to country image theory	35
<b>3. The dimensions and the multidimensional nature of country image and country brand</b>	<b>39</b>
3.1. Dimensions of country image	39
3.2. The evaluation of country image structure	45
3.2.1. The structure of country image dimensions	45
3.2.2. Factors influencing the perception of country image	47
3.2.3. The effect of country image on behavior	49
3.3. The dimensions of country brand (nation brand)	50
3.3.1. Gudjonsson’s nation’s brand portfolio	51

3.3.2. Place brand dimensions by Hanna and Rowley	52
3. 4. Further dimensions of country (nation) brand perception	53
3. 5. A critical analysis of the literature on the dimensions of country image and country brands	55
<b>4. Theory of Country Equity – Measuring country image and country brand, methodological considerations</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1. The measurability of country image: measurement procedures, marketing approaches	58
4. 2. Known country image studies and scales	61
4. 3. Country brand equity measurement approaches – The concept of 'country equity'	63
4.3.1. Measuring place brand	63
4.3.2. The concept of Country Equity	64
4.3.3. Consumer-oriented brand equity in place brand theories	68
4.3.4. Measuring country equity	73
4. 4. Methodological considerations: summary and critical analysis	76
<b>5. The theory of destination evaluation – Country image in the context of destinations</b>	<b>80</b>
5. 1. Destination image	81
5. 2. The relationship between country image and destination image	84
5. 3. The effect of country image on destination evaluation	85
5. 4. Critical analysis of destination approaches to country image	88
<b>II. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>6. The methodology of empirical research</b>	<b>91</b>
6.1. The research concept – Background to the empirical research	91
6.1.1. Presenting the constructs of the theoretical explanatory model	94
6.2. Research questions	95
6.3. Process of the empirical research	96
6.3.1. Research phases	98
6.3.2. The initial theoretical model	99
<b>7. First quantitative research phase</b>	<b>101</b>
7.1. Exploratory study – Unveiling the dimensions of country image and the related casual relationships; test of country image scales	101
7.2. Methodology of the first quantitative research phase	102
7.3. Main results of the Hungarian study	102
7.3.1. Sample proprieties	103
7.3.2. Open-ended questions	103
7.3.3. Testing the Papadopoulos-scale	104
7.3.4. Test of the Gallup country image scale	108

7.3.5.	The Country Image Dimensions Model – Methodology and results of the structural analysis	112
7.4.	Main results of the English-language study	114
7.4.1.	Sample proprieties	114
7.4.2.	Open-ended questions	115
7.4.3.	Testing the Papadopoulos-scale	116
7.4.4.	Test of the Gallup country image scale	119
7.5.	Conclusions and limitations of the first quantitative research phase	122
7.5.1.	Scale evaluation	122
7.5.2.	Unveiling the potential moderating factors	124
7.5.3.	General evaluation of the structural model	125
7.6.	Including the results of the first quantitative research phase into the model	126
<b>8.</b>	<b>Second qualitative and quantitative phases</b>	<b>128</b>
8.1.	Exploratory study – Examining country brand and country equity concepts and test of the country brand scale	128
8.2.	The qualitative part of the second research phase	129
8.2.1.	Focus groups: methodology and sample attributes	129
8.2.2.	Results of the focus groups	131
8.2.2.1.	Exploring and studying the dimensions of country image	131
8.2.2.2.	Mapping of associations, perceptions	134
8.2.2.3.	Exploring general vs. situation-specific factors	135
8.2.2.4.	Mapping the behavioral output, factors affecting decisions	136
8.2.2.5.	Destination choice, product purchase, choice of place of residence	136
8.2.2.6.	Testing the country brand construct and unveiling its dimensions	136
8.2.3.	Conclusions of the focus-group interviews	137
8.3.	Quantitative part of the second research phase	139
8.3.1.	Methodology of scale test and sample proprieties	139
8.3.2.	Results of the scale test	142
8.3.3.	Results of the pilot questionnaire	147
8.3.3.	Conclusions and limitations of the scale test and pilot questionnaire	150
8.4.	Conclusions and limitations of the second research phase	151
8.4.1.	Applying the conclusions of the second research phase in the final doctoral research model	151
<b>9.</b>	<b>The third qualitative and quantitative research phase</b>	<b>153</b>
9.1.	Exploratory research – expert interviews	153
9.1.1.	Subjects and course of the interviews	153
9.1.2.	Results of the interviews	154
9.1.3.	Conclusions of the interviews	159
9.2.	Preparation of the confirmatory research phase, developing the final research model	160

9.2.1.	Narrowing of the theoretical framework; delimitation of the research model	160
9.2.2.	The doctoral research model	163
9.2.3.	Hypotheses of doctoral research	164
9.2.3.1.	Hypotheses: country image dimensions and their measurement	164
9.2.3.2.	Hypotheses: value and measurement of country image / country equity	168
9.2.3.3.	Hypotheses: Effects of country image and country equity on behavior	171
9.2.4.	Attributes of the model variables	173
9.3.	Confirmatory research: the test of Country Equity Model (CEM)	176
9.3.1.	Questionnaire of the research	176
9.3.2.	Sample	177
9.3.3.	Query methodology	178
9.3.4.	Data analysis and evaluation of the results	178
9.3.5.	Analysis of the structural model	179
9.3.5.1.	Tests of reliability	180
9.3.5.2.	Tests of validity	181
9.3.6.	Tests of validity and reliability of the structural model	182
9.3.7.	Results of the test of structural model	185
9.3.8.	Results of the hypothesis and model tests	187
9.3.9.	Further results related to the hypotheses	192
9.3.10.	Test of the country equity construct	197
9.3.11.	Summary of the results	198
9.3.12.	Further results of the study	200
9.4.	Conclusion of the third quantitative research phase	201
<b>III.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	204
<b>10.</b>	<b>Results of the doctoral dissertation, conclusions</b>	204
10.1.	Results and conclusions of the research phases	206
10.1.1.	Conclusions on the main research question	207
10.1.2.	Conclusions on the sub-questions	210
10.2.	Theoretical and practical significance of the doctoral research	214
10.2.1.	Theoretical significance	214
10.2.2.	Methodological significance	216
10.2.3.	Practical significance	216
10.3.	Limitations of the research and of the results	217
10.4.	Future research directions	218

<b>APPENDIX</b>	221
APPENDIX 1/A. – The first quantitative research phase (Hungarian questionnaire)	221
APPENDIX 1/B. – The first quantitative research phase (English language questionnaire)	224
APPENDIX 2/A. – The second research phase – discussion guide for focus group interviews (Hungarian)	227
APPENDIX 2/B. – The second research phase, focus group interviews’ participants	228
APPENDIX 3. – The second research phase, questionnaire for the scale test	229
Appendix 4. – Guide for expert interviews of third research phase	232
Appendix 5. – Final research phase – questionnaire	233
<b>REFERENCES</b>	238
<b>Publications related to the topic of the dissertation</b>	267

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1.</b>	Overall country image definitions in the literature	5
<b>Table 2.</b>	Product-country-image definitions	7
<b>Table 3.</b>	Country-related product image definitions	8
<b>Table 4.</b>	The fields of country and nation branding	27
<b>Table 5.</b>	Differences between corporate brand and place brand	32
<b>Table 6.</b>	A comparison of country as a brand and product brands	32
<b>Table 7.</b>	Conceptualization of country image	40
<b>Table 8.</b>	Dimension of country image	41
<b>Table 9.</b>	Used approaches and measurement methodology in country image studies	60
<b>Table 10.</b>	Use of alternative survey types within country image analyses	61
<b>Table 11.</b>	Known country image scales and their sources	62
<b>Table 12.</b>	Key literature dealing with country equity	67
<b>Table 13.</b>	Selected definitions of destination image	82
<b>Table 14.</b>	Phases of the empirical research	97
<b>Table 15.</b>	Free associations related to Hungary	104
<b>Table 16.</b>	The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among Hungarian respondents, measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale	105
<b>Table 17.</b>	Factors unveiled in the Hungarian sample, based on the Papadopoulos scale	107
<b>Table 18.</b>	The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among Hungarian respondents, measured on a 4-point scale	109
<b>Table 19.</b>	Factors unveiled in the Hungarian sample, based on the Gallup scale	111
<b>Table 20.</b>	Country of origin of respondents to the English-language questionnaire	115
<b>Table 21.</b>	Free associations of foreign respondents related to Hungary	115
<b>Table 22.</b>	The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among foreign respondents, measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale	116
<b>Table 23.</b>	Factors unveiled in the English-language sample, based on the Papadopoulos scale	118
<b>Table 24.</b>	The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among foreign respondents, measured on a 4-point scale	119
<b>Table 25.</b>	Factors unveiled in the English-language sample, based on the Gallup scale	121
<b>Table 26.</b>	Test of reliability of the used scales (Cronbach's alpha indicators)	122
<b>Table 27.</b>	Country image dimensions unveiled using open-ended questions	123
<b>Table 28.</b>	Latent variables unveiled by the exploratory factor analysis	123
<b>Table 29.</b>	Moderating effects unveiled during the research	124
<b>Table 30.</b>	Main proprieties of the focus groups	131
<b>Table 31.</b>	Characteristics and sources of the Pappu-Quester (2010) scale variables	139

<b>Table 32.</b>	Characteristics and sources of the variables used during the test of scales	141
<b>Table 33.</b>	Factors unveiled for Germany using the Pappu-Quester-scale	143
<b>Table 34.</b>	Factors unveiled for China using the Pappu-Quester-scale	145
<b>Table 35.</b>	Cronbach's alpha scores of the scale test	146
<b>Table 36.</b>	Results of the scale test	147
<b>Table 37.</b>	Presence of a demographic effect in the evaluation of countries	150
<b>Table 38.</b>	Characteristics and sources of the variables used in the questionnaire of the third research phase	176
<b>Table 39.</b>	Results of the confirmatory factor analysis and the tests of reliability and validity	184
<b>Table 40.</b>	Indicators of fit of the model	185
<b>Table 41.</b>	Method(s) used for hypothesis testing	187
<b>Table 42.</b>	Varying factor loadings between country image and its dimensions according to the SEM model	188
<b>Table 43.</b>	Correlation between indicators in the formative country image model	189
<b>Table 44.</b>	Total, direct and indirect effects between variables in both samples	191
<b>Table 45.</b>	Factor analysis of the dimensions of country image – German sample (N=600)	193
<b>Table 46.</b>	Factor analysis of the dimensions of country image – control sample (N=600) )	194
<b>Table 47.</b>	Summary of the result of hypothesis test	199
<b>Table 48.</b>	Results of the Pappu-Quester scale (N=600) (on a 7-point Likert scale)	200
<b>Table 49.</b>	Results of the Nadeau et.al. scale (N=600) (on a 7-point Likert scale)	201
<b>Table 50.</b>	Results of the test of hypotheses	203
<b>Table 51.</b>	Research questions and the related research phases	205
<b>Table 52.</b>	Results and conclusions of the dissertation's research phases	206

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b>	A model of strategic place marketing	22
<b>Figure 2.</b>	Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagone	34
<b>Figure 3.</b>	The evolution in time of country image theory	37
<b>Figure 4.</b>	The evolution of country image theory with regards to its conceptual framework and the impact of related fields of study	37
<b>Figure 5.</b>	Dimensions of country image according to the literature	44
<b>Figure 6.</b>	Nation Branding Influential Map by Gudjonsson	52
<b>Figure 7.</b>	Place brand dimensions by Hanna and Rowley	53
<b>Figure 8.</b>	The 'Place Brand Experience' Model	54
<b>Figure 9.</b>	Country image, country equity and product-country image	66
<b>Figure 10.</b>	A model for country equity	66
<b>Figure 11.</b>	Model for country image dimensions – Theoretical explanatory model	93
<b>Figure 12.</b>	Multidimensionality of country image –Initial theoretical model	100
<b>Figure 13.</b>	Areas addressed by the first quantitative research phase	101
<b>Figure 14.</b>	Structural model of the Hungarian country image dimensions	113
<b>Figure 15.</b>	The enhanced theoretical model after the first quantitative research phase	127
<b>Figure 16.</b>	Areas studied in the second research phase	129
<b>Figure 17.</b>	The items of the Pappu – Quester (2010) country equity construct	140
<b>Figure 18.</b>	Results of the confirmatory factor analysis for Germany and China	146
<b>Figure 19.</b>	The revised model according to the second research phase	152
<b>Figure 20.</b>	The revised model according to the findings of all exploratory research phases	160
<b>Figure 21.</b>	Delimiting the parts of the theoretical model as a base for the final empirical research	161
<b>Figure 22.</b>	Areas to be studied in the doctoral research (A narrowed theoretical framework)	162
<b>Figure 23.</b>	Final research (measurement) model and measurement scales	163
<b>Figure 24.</b>	The model by Nadeau et.al. (2008)	174
<b>Figure 25.</b>	Confirmatory factor analysis of the variables and indicators (Germany)	183
<b>Figure 26.</b>	Confirmatory factor analysis of the variables and indicators (Croatia)	183
<b>Figure 27.</b>	Structural research model (German sample)	186
<b>Figure 28.</b>	Structural research model (Croatian sample)	186
<b>Figure 29.</b>	Final country equity factor structure and standardized factor loadings, based on the confirmatory factor analyses (German and Croatian [control] samples)	198



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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and relevance of the research

The notion of country image is among today's most important and focal marketing topics. Country image, according to the most common view in the literature, includes the evaluation by people of the culture, economy, political life, production, population, etc. of a country. According to a possible definition, country image is "the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places" (Kotler et.al., 1993, p. 141.). In practice, this country image can be as much spontaneously formed as it can be consciously malleable. Several examples of conscious image building can be traced back to many years, that continuously shaped both the internal and external images of the related countries.

A scientific approach to country image originates from the 1960's with the study of people's choice and purchase of foreign products and that of the related influencing factors, with the so-called *country-of-origin effects*. At the same time, several other sources focus on *overall country image*. Most publications in the topic can be related to the field of marketing, even though not all of them can be found in the specific literature thereof. Thus, studies on the differences between the evaluation of countries can be found in the respective literature of the fields of *international relations* (e.g. van Ham, 2002a; Plavsak, 2002, 2003), *sociology, social psychology* (e.g. Peabody, 1985; Phalet – Poppe, 1997; Hopkins – Murdoch, 1999; Csepeli – Örkény – Székelyi, 2001; Georgescu – Botescu, 2004), *political philosophy, politology* (e.g. Todorow, 1993; Wendt, 1994; Brysk – Parsons – Sandholtz, 2002), *cultural studies* (e.g. Bittner 2004; Heidrich, 2001; Hofstede, 2003), *social evolution theory* (e.g. Dessewffy, 2006; Hankiss, 1996, 2006) or *cultural history* (e.g. Berger – Pozsgai, 1993; Hankiss, 1999; Olins, 2002a; Pethő, 2003).

Most recent publications on country image in the marketing literature address *country image, as a brand equity* and are written along a *country branding approach*, novel to the field. The literature, following the results of the most recent works, considers a nation's image as something that can be positioned or evaluated – just like products or brands. The possibility of evaluation of a country's name as a brand name as well as the well-foundedness of this approach, however are subject to scientific debate and discord, and at the time, constitute the subject of numerous topical research projects.

The main purpose of the present doctoral thesis is *to unveil and analyze the dimensions and other influencing factors of country image and to address the practical, scientific and methodological issues related to the measurement of country image and country equity. An indirect objective of the dissertation is to set up a country equity model (CEM) that combines the dimensions of country image and country equity, and addresses the dimensions and relationships related to evaluation of countries (with*

*special regard to the destination context) in a complex manner, based on the literature and the results of the research conducted within the framework of the present dissertation.*

*Our goal with the empirical research is to analyze in the framework of a complex model all the relationships and hypotheses unveiled in our literature review and refined during preceding exploratory research phases. Beyond unveiling the dimensions of country image and influencing factors of country equity, our aim is to characterize brand equity value into categories along a consumer-oriented approach and to identify the effect of country image and brand equity on destination evaluation.*

The main research question of the dissertation is as follows:

What factors influence the rating and measuring of country image and country brand, with special regard to the field of destination evaluation?

Sub-questions related to the main research question:

- i. What are the relevant components of country image in the evaluation of a country?
- ii. How can these components be organized and ranked based on their effect on the evaluation of a country?
- iii. How can the notion of brand equity (country equity) be interpreted in relation to a country and what value does it carry for stakeholders?
- iv. What measurable effects does the image-building activity of a country have in the target audience's behavior? What are the fields where country image has a quantifiable effect?
- v. By what means can the image-building activity of a country and the effects thereof can be measured and quantified?
- vi. How can the value of country image be quantified and what are its constituting elements?

### **Scientific and practical significance of the dissertation**

The research field of general country image had been at its peak in the 1990's, even though it remains one of the most researched topics in the area. Researchers of the field today focus on *matters of measurability and the quantifiable effects of country image building* rather than on the methods of country image building as was the case formerly. They are therefore interested in *unveiling the dimensions that affect the image and evaluation of a country* and to address the importance and effect of these on the formation of views and opinion about a country.

The literature agrees on the fact that in today's globalized world, a conscious image building can be one of the most effective tools in the competition between countries to

foster a strong, positive internal and external country image (see e.g. Kotler et.al., 1993; Friedman, 1999; van Ham, 2002a; Anholt, 2002; Plavsak, 2003; deVicente, 2004; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006). A successful image can be obtained in various ways and the quality of the resulting country image is fit for being measured and tested using scales. The aim of our research is to unveil all those factors relevant in the evaluation of a country through the modification of which one can reach a desired state of their country image. Beyond this *practical significance*, the present *work's scientific contribution* must not be ignored either. The brand equity approach account among the most recent advances in the field, and it is, for that matter, still relatively underdeveloped and is not, in some cases, devoid of contradictions. The relevance of a research topic in this field is therefore utterly justified as it can contribute to lifting a number of the aforementioned contradictions and to addressing a number of scientific issues and questions related to the field and therefore to developing the field as a whole.

The scientific importance of the present work lies in the fact that it combines traditional measurement methods with novel techniques (i.e. structural equation modeling and path analysis). That not only has *methodological implications*, but also contributes to *theory building*. The structural equation modeling methodology is first justified by the complex nature of the research context, and second by a will to reach a maximum of validity for our theoretical model. The present research is aimed to contribute to the literature in more complex country image studies by unveiling in a complex causal model the relationship between the dimensions of country image, country brand attributes and country equity.

### **Structure of the dissertation**

The research topic encompasses and provides a joint study of three fields: country image, country equity and destination evaluation. The dissertation is built upon three pillars: a theoretical overview (chapters 1 to 5), the empirical research (chapters 6 to 9) and the conclusions of the doctoral study (chapter 10). Chapters 1 to 3 reflect upon the literature and particularly on the dimensions of country image and country brands. Chapter 4 markedly deals with country equity theory and the methodological considerations related to measuring country image and country brands, while chapter 5 gives an introduction to the approaches on destination evaluation. The three main stages of the doctoral research are included in chapters 6 to 9 that are built up in a sequential logic to form the empirical core of the dissertation. Chapter 10 gives an overview of the most importance conclusions of the dissertation, it establishes its limitations and lays down further research directions in the research area.

According to the above, *a clear conceptual delimitation of the notion of country image and its differentiation from country-of-origin effects* introduce our theoretical review. In this first part, we equally give an overview of the related fields of science and establish

potential points of connection with them, in order to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the research topic.

In our second chapter we introduce *the notion of “country brand”* and undertake an analysis of its relevance and *raison d’être*. A historical outline of the field is presented and the literature of place / country marketing, place / country branding is equally reviewed.

Chapter 3 presents the main approaches related to country branding and *the dimensions of country brands*. First, the area related to the factors affecting country image is reviewed, then the so-called consumer-focused brand equity attributes are presented and lastly, further approaches related to the relevant affecting factors are exhibited.

Chapter 4 deals with *the possibilities of definition, measurement and other methodological considerations related to the value of country image* – i.e. country equity. The most notorious research results and measurement techniques are also cited as a part of this chapter.

In Chapter 5 we present the possibilities to link country image theory to the field of destination management, with special attention to the area of destination evaluation.

Following our review and critical analysis of the related literature, Chapter 6 gives an *overview of the dissertation’s research concept*. Our initial theoretical model is presented as well as our research process. These latter are used to give an outline on the exact context for our research while our literature review and the results of our exploratory studies are used to determine our final research questions. This chapter equally includes a presentation of the assumed relationships between certain constructs in our *explanatory model*.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 are a sequentially built presentation of our 3 subsequent research phases, all of which comprised of both qualitative and quantitative parts. In Chapter 9 a distinguished attention is given to the presentation of our hypotheses and to the analysis of the results of our doctoral research and model testing.

Chapter 10 revisits the results of the doctoral research, as well as its practical and theoretical implications. It reviews the limitations of the dissertation and provides further research topics.

### **Remarks on the structure of the dissertation**

At the end of each chapter, where relevant, *a critical analysis* of the preceding topic is presented *and the pool of definitions of notions that are accepted and to be used in the remainder of the dissertation* is delineated. Starting from Chapter 2, in each chapter we give a separate analysis (but at the same time along a parallel logic) of first the connection of the topic with country image and in the subsequent sub-chapters, its connection with country brands.

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**Remarks on the pool of literature reviewed**

Even though many authors discuss the notions of *public diplomacy* (e.g. Szondi, 2007, 2008) and *destination image, destination marketing or destination branding* in connection with country image (see e.g. the tourism-based approaches, e.g. Echtner – Richie, 2003; Mossberg – Kleppe, 2005; Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007; Tasci – Gartner, 2009; Tasci – Kozak, 2009; Marzano – Scott, 2009), the present dissertation will disregard these fields because of their specificity, lower relevance for the present topic and space limitations. In the author's view, diplomacy and destination management both go beyond the scope of the present dissertation.

Likewise, only the relevant parts for the present dissertation of the areas of *branding* and *brand equity* will be mentioned, even though further sources for a deeper understanding of the given area are always cited using footnotes. Once again, the reason for this simplification is that the two fields have an extensive body of knowledge which goes beyond the framework of the present dissertation. At the same time, every relevant and essential part thereof will be (among certain limits) mentioned, presented and – in an aim for a holistic view on the topic – interpreted.

*International (English-language) literature* is overrepresented in the dissertation compared to Hungarian sources. This is caused by the fact that beyond a few exceptions (e.g. the works by Piskóti et al., Malota, Hofmeister Tóth, Totth, Töröcsik, Papp-Váry), few relevant works have been published in Hungarian in the fields of country image or country marketing, and those published mainly focus on the field of country-of-origin image. At the same time, the author of the present dissertation seeks to *include all relevant works from Hungary* and to specifically highlight the specialties and results thereof.

It is equally important to note that *the dissertation is heavily theoretically focused*, and provides a processing, adaptation and bringing into new light of former scientific results. At the same time, an important attribute of the relevant literature – being a relatively young field of science is in question – is that it contains several empirically untested statements and approaches. In order to overcome a potentially hazardous use of dubious sources, only *peer-reviewed literature* (journals and other publications) and *peer-recognized and acclaimed books on the topic* are reviewed.

The significance of the thesis is that by answering its research questions, the related field of science would be significantly improved, and by covering a yet unstudied area it might contribute to provide ground for further research subjects and research questions.

**Remarks on the word use within the dissertation**

The area of the dissertation holds a number of difficulties related to its uses and practices in terms of terminology. First, the delimitation of the taxonomy, related to the concepts of “nation” vs. “country” vs. “state” (e.g. in a sociological, political, legal, etc. sense). This issue will hereafter be recalled several times, as even though in most cases these terms can be used as synonyms, substantive deviations do exist and give, in some cases, ground to misunderstandings. Therefore, unless expressly noted otherwise, *the terms “nation” and “country” are handled as synonyms* throughout the dissertation.

Similarly, the term “*identity*” can be a source for misunderstanding, bearing a double meaning of (1) two identical entities and that of (2) the image of something. This can cause difficulties during the analysis of the country branding approaches in identifying whether “country identity” refers to a country’s image, similarly to a corporate identity or rather to a national identity, i.e. uniqueness. When relevant, the related taxonomical issues will be noted and addressed in the dissertation.

## **I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **1. THE THEORY OF COUNTRY IMAGE – A LITERATURE REVIEW OF HUNGARIAN AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON COUNTRY IMAGE**

Country image is at the core of the present dissertation for which it is worthwhile to give an overview of the literature thereof. It must be noted that country image does not have one common ground as a field of research (see e.g. Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009; Giraldi et.al., 2011). Apart from the conceptual disagreement on the concept of country image, the subject is often studied along with country-of-origin effect, and it can be stated that further concepts are also often mixed up within country image studies.

In the following we present the known definitions of country image and the conceptual differences among them. After that we delimit those concepts which are judged suitable and relevant to be part of the framework of the present study.

#### **1.1. A general presentation of the concept of country image**

Studies on the evaluation of countries can be traced back to as far as the 1930's (see e.g. Katz – Braly, 1933; Klingberg, 1941) although the field of study came into the foreground only later, in the 1960's with the apparition of the concept of country-of-origin image. Studies estimate the total number of works on the topic to 1000 of which at least 400 were published in referred academic journals (Usunier, 2006). The majority of these publications relate to the study of country-of-origin image and *only a small proportion addresses the general image of a given country* (see e.g.: Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Anholt, 2002; Srikatanyoo – Gnoth, 2002; Paswan – Kulkarni – Ganesh, 2003; Malota, 2004).

This fact is supported by Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002, p. 297.) who in their analysis found that while country-of-origin is the most studied field within international consumer behavior research, “the number of studies who have in fact included country image measures is extremely small”. Tan and Farley (1987, p. 540.) equally state that „ a product's ‘country of origin’, or its product-country image (PCI), and its potential effects the ‘most-researched’ issue in international buyer behaviour.”

Papadopoulos (2004, p. 38) underlines that “research on PCIs has been going on for about 40 years” and several literature reviews and meta-analyses have seen the day.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In our dissertation we endeavor to consciously differentiate the terms country image and country-of-origin image, therefore we only address issues of country-of-origin image which we judge relevant for the present study. At the same time, a number of thorough studies are already available on the latter: see e.g. the works by Baughn – Yaprak, 1993; Liefeld, 1993; Papadopoulos, 1993; Peterson – Jolibert, 1993; Al-Sulaiti – Baker, 1998; Verlegh – Steenkamp, 1999.

This also has an effect on the evolution of the related concepts. *The definitions of country image are often mixed up with the concept of country-of-origin image due to the properties of the respective studies.*

At the same time it can be seen from the literature since the 2000's the fields of country image and country-of-origin image have been gradually distanced from each other and the concept of country image has been increasingly developing since then. The majority of the literature is from the 1990's which can be considered a golden age of country image research. The 2000's can be characterized by a relative fallback within the study of the field, while a new wave of dynamics can be observed nowadays (see e.g. Brijs et.al., 2011).

The literature agrees on the basic fact that *each country has an image* (based on Ashworth - Voogd, 1997; O'Shaughnessy - O'Shaughnessy, 2000; Gilmore, 2002; Papadopoulos - Heslop, 2002; Jaffe - Nebenzahl, 2006) although the approaches and definitions thereof are not standardized. In any case country image can be characterized as a *multidimensional* construct (based on Cattin - Jolibert - Lohnes, 1982; Jaffe - Nebenzahl, 1984; Han - Terpstra, 1988; Roth - Romeo, 1992; Smith, 1993). *The concept of country image is not static*, it is subject to constant evolution (Kotler - Gertner, 2002; Papadopoulos - Heslop, 2002; Kleppe - Iversen - Stensaker, 2002; Jaffe - Nebenzahl, 2006).

Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) highlight that all countries have an image but, like product and corporate image, this is not under total control of market actors. According to the authors, country image is based, among others, on stereotypes and preconceptions, although (just like a brand) it also envelopes factual and emotional elements. It affects behavior in the case of every target market, although the effects of image are always case-specific. At the same time image only changes slowly and several exogenous events can also influence it.

According to the literature the categorization of general image concepts are also valid for the context of country image. Therefore (based on Sándor, 2003) country image can also appear *spontaneously* as well as in a *directed way* (see e.g. Kotler et.al. 1993; Anholt, 2002; Jaffe - Nebenzahl, 2006). Considering the direction of country image, it can be characterized as either *internal* (i.e. self-image) or *external* (i.e. mirror image) (based on Sándor, 2003; see also: Jeszenszky, 1986; Szeles, 1998; Barát, 1997; Kozma, 2000). Country image can also be categorized according to its time horizon, with the existence of *prior* (i.e. *current*) and *future* (i.e. *wish*) image (see e.g. Eitel - Spiekermann, 2007).

According to Szeles (1998, p. 96.) country image is "an internal and external framework of the opinions and beliefs on a people, nation and country and the simultaneously objective and subjective psychological contents of heterogeneous and generalized value

judgment thereof'. In this context, internal image can be defined as all that the inhabitants of a country think about themselves (self-image) and exterior image as all that foreigners think about a given country (mirror image). This approach can play a determining role in the design of a measurement tool of country image with regards to determining the directions of the research and the choice of the methodology to follow.

Country image has two antagonistic definitions which in consequence are subject to academic debate (Szeles, 1998).

- i) According to the first approach, the concept of country image has to be used as an “*umbrella term*” for the array of actual products, brands and institutions related to the given country. (Country image therefore is a summary of the views and value judgments about a country, influenced by every activity and appearance related to the given country). The views and value judgments on a country are heterogeneous (see also Therkelsen – Halkier, 2004; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006)
- ii) According to the other point of view, a country itself is a *complex, multi-level product* and can be subdivided into several constituting items. (According to this second view country image is a generic product image, although with more complex attributes than other products).

## **1.2. Defining country image**

As can be seen from the general presentation, country image is an interdisciplinary field of study which by definition is complex and conceptually diversified. In the following we present the most important country image definitions categorized into three groups according to their conceptual field.

### **1.2.1. Categorizing the definitions of country image**

If we analyze the definitions of country image by different authors we can perceive a certain mixture of different country image concepts. Studies on country image operate on three relatively distinct conceptual grounds: (1) *product image* (PI) (2) *country image* (CI) and (3) *country of origin image* (COO or CoI). The three constructs (or image types) are closely related to each other, substantially overlap and (directly or indirectly) influence each other (based on Malota, 2001; Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Therefore adopting the aforementioned three country image concepts one can differentiate three main *types* of country image definitions according to their content: (1) *overall country image definitions*, (2) *product-country-image definitions* and (3) *definitions of product image related to countries*.

Research on country image has differentiated from product CI research since the 1980's. This new approach considers that country image has a considerable influence on products' country image (Papadopoulos et.al. 1988; Han, 1990; Heslop et.al. 2004; Elliott et.al., 2011).

The first category of country image definitions is that of *overall country image definitions*. To define country image, these consider the factors leading to the formation of country image, that is, they view the evaluation of a nation as the overall effect of a country's economic and political development, cultural and historical heritage and other factors (see also Bannister – Saunders, 1978; Desborde, 1990; Allred et.al., 1999).

The different definitions are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:**

Overall country image definitions in the literature

AUTHOR	DEFINITION
Bannister – Saunders (1978, p. 562)	Country image is an overall image that is constituted by variables like peculiar products, economic and political development, historical events and relationships, traditions, level of industrialization and of technological development.
Desborde (1990, p. 44.)	Country of origin image is an overall image of a country in consumers' minds. It reflects a country's culture, political system and its level of economic and technological development.
Martin – Eroglu (1993, p. 193.)	Country image is the set of normative inferred and informational beliefs of individuals on a country.
Kotler et.al. (1993, p. 141.)	Country image is the sum of people's beliefs, ideas and impressions about a certain country.
Szeles (1998, p. 96.)	Country image is an internal and external framework of the opinions and beliefs on a people, nation and country and the simultaneously objective and subjective psychological contents of heterogeneous and generalized value judgment thereof.
Allred et.al. (1999, p. 36.)	Perceptions and impressions that institutions and consumers have of a country. This prior impression is based upon the economic state of the country, its political structure, culture, its potential conflicts with other countries, its labor market conditions and other environmental factors.
Verlegh – Steenkamp (1999, p. 525.)	A mental interpretation of a country's inhabitants, products, culture and national symbols.
Avraham – Ketter (2006, p. 116.)	Country image is constituted of several elements, among others of the country's location, political structure, economic situation, the stability of its government, etc. Even though this image seems dynamic, it is based upon stereotypes.
Brijs et.al. (2011, p. 1260.)	Country image represents all that a consumer attaches to a country and its inhabitants (and not to its products).

Source: own elaboration, 2012

The second and third groups of definitions are actually a subdivision of *country-of-origin effect* (COO) (also referred to as *made-in effect*) into two distinct categories, according to whether the *country* or the *product* is in the focal point of the study. There is no common ground in the literature for this division and there are no common notations for the concepts involved either. Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993) in their study note that the use of the “product-country-image” construct is more appropriate as it has a wider scope and therefore renders a more precise meaning to the notion than the “country-of-origin” or the “made-in” references (Papadopoulos – Heslop, 1993, p. 8.).

Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006, pp. 28-31.) use the following notations for these: MC= Made-in Country, OC= Country of Origin, OCI= Origin-Country Image, CIE= Country Image Effect.

The literature uses a wide array of notations: Country of Origin Effect= COO, COE, COOE, CoOE; Country of Origin Image= COI, COOI, CoOI, CoI; although this latter may also stand for Country Image (see e.g. Knight – Calantone, 2000; Malota, 2004; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006; Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009). The inconsistent use of the notations might lead to a great deal of misunderstanding and might cause difficulties on the conceptual level for the researchers of the field.

The second group therefore in the literature is that of *product-country-image* (PCI) definitions. These include, beyond the country's proper image, the image of the country's typical products. All this leads to an approach according to which country image and product image are to be considered as two different although related concepts. Country image influences the image of a product originating from that country. There is evidence in the literature on the existing relationship between consumer preference towards a given product and consumers' perceptions of CI (see also: Papadopoulos – Heslop – Berács, 1990; Roth – Romeo, 1993; Kim, 1995; Balabanis et.al., 1996, 1997, 2001; Berács – Gyulavári, 1999; Berács – Malota, 2000; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2003, Malota; 2004; Pappu et.al., 2007; Giraldi et.al., 2011). In this approach a special attention is paid to the effect of CI rather than to the formation of the product image evaluation.

Table 2 shows the related definitions.

**Table 2:**  
Product-country-image definitions

AUTHOR	DEFINITION
Papadopoulos – Heslop (1993, p. 8.)	The image of countries, in the respect that they provide the place of origin for a product can become an exogenous factor of products' overall image.
Balabanis et.al. (1996, p. 1398.)	Country-of-origin image is the marketing concept that encompasses consumer attitudes towards different nations.
Li et.al. (1997, p. 116.)	The image of consumers on different countries and the products thereof:
Knight - Calantone (2000, p. 127.)	Country-of-origin image reflects the consumer perceptions on the quality of products made in a given country and the nature of the inhabitants of the given country.
Nebenzahl et.al. (2003, p. 388.)	Consumer perceptions on attributes of products originating from a given country; social desire to possess a product made in the given country.
Papadopoluos – Heslop (2003, p. 404.)	Product-country-image, i.e. the image that can be related to given places which consumers and sellers associate a product to.
Jaffe - Nebenzahl (2006, p. 30.)	Overall image of a country that one evaluates in relation to brands and products.

Source: own elaboration, 2012

The third category of definitions solely focuses on *the image of products* originating from a given country (product image, PI). A first definition was given by Nagashima (1970). Although in his definition the author refers to the concept of “country” when defining the attributes of image, he actually only describes the image of given products originating from that country. In this case the aforementioned image concept can rather be referred to as a product image instead of a country image (see also: Han, 1989; Roth – Romeo, 1992; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Strutton et.al., 1995; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2003) Papadopoulos and Heslop (2003, p. 425.) highlight that „the vast majority of extant CoO studies focuses on product images”.

Table 3 shows the main product image-focused definitions.

**Table 3:**

Country-related product image definitions

AUTHOR	DEFINITION
Nagashima (1970, p. 68.)	The meaning of image: ideas, emotional background and associations related to a concept. In this sense, “made-in” image is an array of images, evaluations and stereotypes that businessmen and consumers render to a country’s products.
Narayana (1981, p. 32.)	It is the complex image that is composed of the associations related to the added value to consumers of a product being made in a given country.
Bilkey – Nes (1982, p. 89.)	Overall consumer perceptions about the quality of products made in a given country. Country-of-origin image has an unquestionable influence on the evaluation of product quality.
Han (1990, p. 24.)	General consumer perceptions about the quality of products originating from a given country.
Roth – Romeo (1992, p. 480.)	The overall perception about products originating from a given country, based on the anterior perceptions about a country’s strengths and weaknesses in productivity and marketing.
Bilkey (1993, p. xix.)	Consumer opinion on the relative quality of products and services made in a given country.
Strutton, et.al. (1995, p. 79.)	“Made-in” image is a complex concept constituted by the evaluation, stereotypes and associations about products made in a country within an individual’s scope of interest.
Pickton – Broderick (2001, p. 123.)	Country-of-origin image is the combination of impressions, beliefs and ideas in the mind of people about the products of a given country.
Malota (2003, p. 66.)	Country-of-origin image is a part of the complex product image construct that encompasses the effect of the product originating from a given country.

Forrás: saját szerkesztés, 2011

### 1.2.2. Partitioning the definitions of country image

There seems to be no agreement in the literature on which of the aforementioned groups lead to the most precise interpretation of country image. According to Kotler and Gertner (2002, p. 251.), „most country images are in fact stereotypes, extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate. They might be dated, based on exceptions rather than on patterns, on impressions rather than on facts, but are nonetheless pervasive”.

Several further definitions refer to stereotypes, beliefs, perceptions, insights schemes, associations or attitudes. In the following we proceed to the conceptual analysis and partition of the different definitions of country image.

### **1.2.2.1. Perception-based definitions of country image**

Perception is the complex process during which individuals select, order and interpret sensory stimuli in order to make up a coherent, meaningful picture of the world (see e.g. Hofmeister – Töröcsik, 1996; Solomon et.al., 2006). The recognition, categorization and adding of sense to stimuli from the environment is hardly an objective process, it is equally a function of the individuals' prior experiences, culture and learning (Helmholtz, 1866 in: Gregory, 1997; Helmholtz, 1878).

A number of authors publishing in the field of country image define country image using the *perception* construct (see e.g. Bilkey – Nes, 1982; Han, 1990; Roth – Romeo, 1992; Allred et.al., 1999, Nebenzahl et.al., 2003). Other authors, e.g. Moeller (1997 in: Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009) or Brijs (2006) take perception into consideration as an exogenous stimulus in the evaluation of the country-of-origin effect. The majority of authors agree on the fact that perception theory alone is insufficient to fully cover the area of country image. Using it only brings about a theoretical approach on the evaluation of country image but it leaves the content of country image (i.e. what attributes [e.g. feelings or pieces of information] does the process of perception order into a whole picture) out of scope. This gap is at the origin of the existence of a number of different country image approaches.

### **1.2.2.2. Country image definitions based on beliefs (faith)**

According to the most widely accepted view within the literature, a belief is an unfounded misconception or opinion. Vernacular often identifies it with religious conceptions that do not belong to the doctrine of officially recognized churches or religions conventions. Beliefs have a strong relationship with attitudes, stereotypes and a number of authors identify them as a component of attitudes (see e.g. Zanna – Rempel, 1988; Esses et.al., 1993; Bar – Tal, 1997).

Country image theory includes a few sources that define country image by using the concept of *beliefs* (see e.g. Kotler et.al., 1993; Martin-Eroglu, 1993). Most authors note though that the image of a country in consumers' mind is also (like in attitude theory) determined, beyond cognitive attributes, by emotional and behavioral elements. Thus, beliefs alone are unable to address the entire scope of the country image concept, they only make out a part of the conceptual approaches. The inclusion of opinions and insights into country image enables us to further refine the concept.

### **1.2.2.3. Country image definitions based on opinions and insights (mental images)**

Insight (as a psychological concept) expresses the effect of external stimuli on peoples senses (Fiske – Neuberg, 1990). Insights enable the formation (following the process of perception) of opinions (about object, people, events, etc.) (Bartlett, 1932; Higgins et.al., 1977). We usually refer to knowledge and personal manifestations as opinions when the foundedness thereof is weak or unknown (based on Pallas Nagylexikon, 2002). All these proprieties are in accordance with the approaches like that of beliefs and stereotypes already presented (and to be presented later). Thus, as with many things, people might have opinions on country image that are not adequately founded or that contain substantial simplifications.

In the literature on country image many works define the concept through those of *opinion* and *insight* (see e.g. Desborde, 1990; Kotler et.al., 1993; Szeles, 1998; Allred et.al., 1999). The same limitation appears here though as before, i.e. that the concept of country image is wider than the field covered by these two concepts. Even though opinions and insights seem the most appropriate components for conceptualizing country image they omit several fields that could contribute to further refine the interpretation (e.g. a number of emotional factors).

### **1.2.2.4. Association-based definitions of country image**

Learning theories devote special attention to the role of associations (see e.g. Katona, 1963; Hill, 1970). Associations can be considered as the activity of linking ideas, of establishing mental connections. During this process (as a result of preceding learning and regular repetition) factors having appeared at the same time and space or factors having some similar or opposite attributes mutually evoke one another (see e.g. Hofmeister-Töröcsik, 1996; Lappints, 2002).

Many authors publishing in the field of country image define country image as an *association* or *association of ideas* (see e.g. Nagashima, 1970; Narayana, 1981; Strutton et.al., 1995; Ittersum et al., 2003). Nevertheless, the scope of these once again does not cover all the ground that is unveiled by country image studies and omit, among others, affirmation as a factor emphasizing the formation of associations. A further ground for research in the area are the concepts of stereotypes and schemes, which can further refine the conceptual approach on CI theory.

### 1.2.2.5. Country image definitions based on stereotypes, schemes

Stereotypes are a cognitive structure of more or less consistent mental schemes on the world in people's heads, which is a combination of people's own experience and the knowledge, beliefs and expectations about a group of individuals (see e.g. Lippmann, 1922; Hamilton, 1981; Hamilton – Troler, 1986). Other researchers interpret stereotypes on a collective level, that is, in their opinion, stereotypes are set of collective, unfounded beliefs on individual attributes of members of a community (see e.g. Katz – Braly, 1933; Reiersen, 1966; Brigham, 1971; Gardner, 1972; Hunyady, 1996).

This field also sees the amalgamation of several other concepts into the interpretation of stereotypes, e.g. those of perceptions, beliefs or attitudes (see e.g. Brigham, 1971; Dovidio – Gaertner, 1986; Smith – Bond, 1994; Hofmeister – Töröcsik, 1996; Malota, 2003). Almost all authors agree that stereotypes are (often rough) simplifications, schemes of a group of people that are brought to life following a very limited contact with these (see e.g. Bartlett, 1932; Fiske et. al. 1980; Hofmeister – Töröcsik, 1996).

Literature on country image has several examples of the usage of *stereotypes*. The following authors, among others, use the concept of stereotypes to define that of country image: Hooley et.al. (1988), Ger (1991), Strutton et.al. (1995), Askegaard and Ger (1998), Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), Avraham and Ketter (2006) and Hernandez (1996, in: Malota, 2001) also refers to country image as a stereotyped image. According to Móricz (1999) the relationship between stereotypes and image is opaque, as the two concepts are close to each other and are used as synonyms in psychology. In the author's opinion, image (because of its inherently subjective nature) is farther from reality than stereotypes.

According to Elliott and Cameron (1994) stereotypes towards nations can be both negative, positive and neutral and can influence individuals' decisions and evaluation of products (Papadopoulos – Heslop – Berács, 1990; Elliott – Cameron, 1994).

Other authors also contest the perception, that country image would be exclusively constituted of stereotypes and estimate that (factual) information (free of generalization) on and emotional attachment to a given country are equally crucial when studying the image thereof in consumers' minds. Maheswaran (1994) for example states that stereotypes are rather guesses while image is constituted through perception. According to Malota (2003) image is rather a portrait while stereotypes are generalizations and guesses.

However several authors highlight (as mentioned beforehand) that concepts included into a study often (partially or completely) overlap. Thus is the case of stereotypes: a number of authors consider perceptions and beliefs as part of stereotypes, others include

stereotypes as a component of attitudes (see e.g. Fiske et.al., 1980; Esses et.al., 1993; Hofmeister – Töröcsik, 1996).

According to Reiersen (1996) and O’Shaughnessy – O’Shaughnessy (2000) attitudes towards nations can be traced back to stereotypes and these „stereotypes play a role in the overall image of a nation.” (O’Shaughnessy – O’Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 57.). In others’ view, stereotypes are the cognitive component of attitudes: a negative stereotype determines a prejudiced attitude. This is reinforced by the negative feeling, as the affective component of attitude (Duckitt, 1992; in: Malota, 2003). Hofmeister and Töröcsik (1996) highlight that attitudes can easily lead to generalizations as the attitude of an individual towards an object or a person can transform into a stereotype on related groups of objects or people. Therefore a limited experience can lead to a general, simplified opinion. The process is thus bidirectional, i.e. stereotypes affect attitudes and attitudes also affect stereotypes.

This equally explains why country image definitions often include attitude components.

### **1.2.2.6. Attitude-based country image definitions**

Attitude has a long and various list of definitions within the literature and there are several schools of attitude definitions. According to Allport (1954; in: Fishbein- Ajzen, 1980) attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness that exerts a directive or dynamic effect on individuals reactions towards objects and situations to which it is related. According to Móricz (1992; in: Hofmeister – Töröcsik, 1996), authors agree that attitudes can be defined as approaches, feelings, judgments towards objects or a group of people with variable intensity that can be both positive or negative. Hofmeister and Töröcsik (1996) also highlight that attitudes are learnt and relatively permanent and that they can have an effect on individuals’ information processing. Most authors agree on the fact that attitudes have three main components, namely (1) cognitive, (2) conative and (3) affective (based on Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein – Ajzen, 1975).

In studies on country image several authors highlight that *attitude-based approaches* among the conceptual approaches of country image can be regarded as the least limited in scope (based on Heslop – Papadopoulos, 1993; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994; Laroche et.al., 2005; Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009; Brijs et.al., 2011). This type of definition allows researchers to fully comprehend the concept of individuals’ image towards different countries.

All three components can be found in different country image definitions. For example, according to Kaynak and Cavusgil (1983) the cognitive element of country image is composed of assumed (even stereotypical) attributes of other peoples, while the affective component determines whether the individual is fond (or not) of the given people, country which in turn influences their actions.

Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009), and Brijs et.al. (2011) consider that the attitude-based approach enables the possibility to measure country image.

According to Brijs et.al. (2011) only as many as two articles (Haubl [1996] and Heslop et.al. [2004]) focused on the study of the relationship between the three components of attitudes. According to these pieces of research, the cognitive factor influences the affective component which in turn has an effect on the conative component – similarly to the generic process well-recognized in consumer behavior approaches. According to the authors however, this very area can be considered under-researched, especially when considering theories based upon other sequences (e.g. conative – cognitive – affective).

As a consequence one can elaborate that, unlike other approaches, this former definition covers the entirety of country image concepts. However, because of the presence of a behavioral component (since the existence of a country image in the mind of people is a somewhat static state and often exists without any call to action), several authors contest this point of view.

### **1.2.3. Separating the concept of country image from other relating concepts**

Beyond the aforementioned concepts one can find several other normative concepts in the literature of country image. A frequent approach is to define country image through the notions of *national identity* and *national stereotypes*. The following chapter presents a critical and conceptual discussion on the relevance and usability of these for the framework of the present study.

#### **1.2.3.1. National identity**

Literature on country image often refers to the concept of *national identity*. In his definition of country image, Graby (1993) mentions that In Graby's (1993) wording, the 'identity prism' of the country (like the concept of corporate identity) consists of *physical* (geography, natural sources, demography), *cultural* (history, culture), *personal* (name, flag, celebrities), *relational* (with governments, international organizations) and *controlled* (conscious formation of country image) elements. (Here we must note that the concept of identity [because of the uses and misuses of the term within the literature] is a somewhat problematic field of country image studies. Indeed identity can refer a sense of self [a sense which can add to the conceptualization of country image] as well as to an image [which in turn can be employed as a determining element of country-as-a-brand studies]. The present dissertation focuses on the former meaning of the concept)

National identity can be described as a complex array of opinions, conceptions, perceptions, attitudes and behavioral patterns acquired through a process of socialization by the members of the given nation (based on Kolakowski, 1995; Hall, 1996; Wodak et.al., 2003). National identity is in fact a nations' self-consciousness, the totality of the nations' characteristics and habits (Bourdieu, 1990; Kuzmics, 1993 alapján; mind in: Wodak et.al., 2003). According to De Vicente (2004, p. 4.) „ country identity is what a country believes it is.”

In accordance with this, the literature often identifies the “internal country image” with the concept of national identity. National identity is also expressed in the way the inhabitants of a country see themselves. Numerous works in the literature address the issue of internal image (see also: Jeszenszky, 1986; Szeles, 1996; Barát, 1997; Piskóti et.al., 1997; Kozma, 2000; Georgescu – Botescu, 2004; Anholt, 2007).

In his doctoral thesis, Papp-Váry (2002, in: Papp-Váry, 2007) illustrates the role of national identity through a diagram. According to the author, the inhabitants of a given country possess a far more complex image of their own country than foreigners (and even more than foreigners, who have never actually visited the country) (see also Olins, 2004). According to Papp-Váry, this internal image is actually equivalent to national identity.

Moreover, Georgescu and Botescu (2004) state that national identity, beyond contributing to shaping a nation's image, is actually the core of a country as a brand. The authors pinpoint that national identity (like the concept of national image) is a multidimensional construct, with historical, cultural, etc. factors. Similarly, de Vicente (2004, p. 4) states that „ country identity is what a country believes it is. A strong country brand should be rooted in reality and connect with people, both within and outside the country.”

Considering the multidisciplinary nature of country image, literature agrees that it is not unfounded to rely the concept of national identity to that of country image, even though it does not cover the whole context of the latter and therefore cannot be a substitute by full right of country image.

### **1.2.3.2. National stereotypes**

As seen in the previous chapters, literature often uses the concept of stereotypes in relation with that of country image. Beyond the approaches seen above, several authors do not consider stereotypes *as one element of country image*, but consider a *country's image as one national or country stereotype* (see e.g. Bannister – Saunders, 1978; Papadopoulos – Heslop – Berács, 1990; Papadopoulos, 1993; Hernandez, 1996; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Kotler – Gertner, 2004; Deffner – Metaxas, 2005).

Stereotypes pertain to the *external evaluation* of a given country based on the principle that people form a simplified mental image on other nations out of a limited quantity of information (based on Olins, 2004 and Anholt, 2007).

Literature agrees on the fact that national stereotypes are not equivalent to country image, nor to its whole external segment. Stereotypes are but a part of a given nations (external) evaluation. According to Kaynak and Cavusgil (1983), the cognitive element of country image is composed of presumed (even stereotyped) attributes of other peoples and the affective part influences whether the individual appreciates the given people or not, which in turn has an effect on their actions. Malota (2003) states that image is a wider category in the sense that it can bear a part that is shaped by stereotypes, a part which one can refer to as a stereotyped image. Stereotypes are also present in the country image conceptualization by Papp-Váry (2007) as part of the external image of countries.

### 1.3. Summary and critical analysis of country image literature

Literature agrees on the fact that **country image is a multidimensional construct** and its field of study an **interdisciplinary** approach. Beyond this, considering the conceptual studies, one can state that the construct is more or less mixed up with several other related concepts.

In the following we present a partition and critical analysis of concepts that will serve as a basis for our further research.

In the understanding of the author of the present dissertation, **country image is a set of all knowledge, opinions and simplifications that people think of a country and which affect their behavior.** This encompasses an **attitudinal approach** that expands to cognitive elements, affections and the subsequent behavioral effects.

According to its direction we distinguish (and study separately) **internal and external image.** External image, in our understanding, encompasses all that people think of another country while internal image is that people carry on their own country. The relating concepts in this approach have a distinct effect for each type of image, with *stereotypes, beliefs, opinions, associations* influencing external image while *cognitive elements* rather influencing internal image.

Above all this, we believe that a country's image, according to its time horizon, is based upon *existing* (current) elements and the *future* (i.e. wish) image concepts are only valid when studying processes that lead to the constitution of a country image.

The author believes that it is problematic that the concepts of country image and product image be mixed up. Although it is a fact that product purchases represent the

easiest way to measure country image, the author argues that the evaluation of a country is not only visible through its effect on purchase decision. We agree with the approaches of literature that *country image exists independently of any conscious intention and other factors* and its effect also spreads more over the simple product choice (e.g. destination choice, choice of place of residence, intention of investment, etc.). **Therefore in our understanding, country image is a standalone construct, independent of product image and in the following we identify it as a separate image type, along “pure” country image concepts.**

We disagree with the approaches that, in a simplified manner, *clearly identify country image as national identity and/or national stereotypes*. During the conceptual foundation of the present thesis we presented that country image can indeed often be related to stereotypes, perceptions and beliefs. These often evolve from a number of critical attributes, e.g. the kindness, snobbery, etc. of the inhabitants of a country. However, after a thorough analysis of the literature, we believe that these attributes might lead to stereotypes and stereotypes can in turn affect the evaluation of a country. The relationship is thus more complex and cannot be treated in an oversimplified manner. We refer to the concept of identity in the context of national singularity, self-esteem and thus rather relate it to the concept of internal image. Because of this latter, we deem that the simplified identification of this concept with country image is an erroneous approach.

## 2. COUNTRY AS A BRAND THEORY: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF HUNGARIAN AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON COUNTRIES AS BRANDS

A main question for the present dissertation is how one can measure, quantify a *country's image developing process* and the effects thereof. In order to determine this, one ought to be acquainted with the different possibilities for shaping a country's image as well as with the stakeholders and areas involved.

The central construct of the dissertation, i.e. that of country as a brand, is a new approach to the related field of research. In order to be able to fully comprehend the construct it is necessary to present the theoretical background and the dimensions of the concept in the literature.

According to the majority of the literature (as presented beforehand), *all countries have an image, this image however is not static and changes with time and can be influenced either directly or indirectly* (based on Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Papadopoulos, 2004; Fan, 2006). Until the 1990's, the research on country image had mainly been a research on consumer evaluation of products related to countries (country-of-origin effect, country-of-origin image), The past two decades have seen a growing number of studies on the overall evaluations of countries per se<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore it can be stated that more and more sources study the possibilities for shaping and directing country image as such. While in the past mainstream research had disapproved *publications on the marketing and branding of countries or nations* (based on Olins, 2000a,b, 2004; Anholt, 2002), today it has evolved to an internationally recognized field of research (Kotler et. al., 1999; Papadopoulos, 2004). This also invokes that the shaping and the effect of country image have become measurable. The *apparition of measurement tools* throws a new light upon the literature on country image (see e.g.: Ashworth – Voogd, 1990; Papadopoulos, 2004; Zenker 2011).

At the same time country image as a concept might get new labels (e.g. place image, country as brand, etc.) according to the type of image building process it was subject to. With the apparition of the concept of *country as a brand*, the concept of country image might be applied in a new, broader and more complex scope.

The study of the intentions to shape country image (relating to the 'wish' image notion of country image) is therefore a relevant area, with regards to the apparition of the aforementioned *efforts to quantify it and design appropriate measurement tools*, the studies on *the factors and dimensions that affect the obtained image* and the introduction of and the growing literature on the concept of country brand (nation brand).

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<sup>2</sup> Although, as seen beforehand, literature agrees on the fact that the field of country image is still under-researched and under-developed as compared with that of country-of-origin image.

We must add that even though a thorough literature review would require it, we excluded from the presentation the approaches and results of several related fields of study (e.g. that of destination management or diplomacy). This omission is justified by the limited space available and the limited relevance for the main topic of the dissertation. We should though point out that there are numerous studies in the literature on the study of the relationship between country image and destination image (see e.g. Echtner – Richie, 2003; Papadopoulos, 2004; Mossberg – Kleppe, 2005; Tasci – Kozak, 2006; Park – Petrick, 2006; Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007; Nadeau – Heslop – O’Reilly – Luk, 2008; Marzano – Scott, 2009; Tasci – Gartner, 2009) and between country branding and diplomatic efforts (see e.g. Papadopoulos, 2004; Gudjonsson, 2005; Szondi, 2008).

In the following chapter we present, without striving for completeness, the relevant elements for our following study. Our main aim with the following chapter is (1) *to put this field of research into context with the purpose to justify the usage and study of the country brand concept in the following research*, and (2) *to present the growing dynamics and evolution of the field of study*. In this chapter we often refer to the meta-analyses in the field and give directions for further research.

We open this presentation of the research field and of its literature with the study of the approaches on marketing places and towns. After that we introduce and analyze the strategic approach on *branding context*, with a special attention to its different sub-fields. The aim of the latter is to define the concept of country as a brand through presenting the logical foundations of the field of study.

### **2.1. Building country image through marketing**

As seen previously, along with the concept of country image one has to evoke those of *place marketing and country marketing*.

Authors agree on the fact that place marketing, country marketing was introduced by Kotler and Levy’s (1969) article entitled „Broadening the Concept of Marketing” by extending the marketing concept of “product” (see also Ashworth – Voogd, 1990; Holbrook, 1996; Barke, 1999). In their view, a *place or a country can also be products* and therefore their respective images can be shaped and managed through marketing strategies.

However, several authors (e.g. Hankinson, 2004; Hanna-Rowley, 2008) highlight that the actual dynamics of the field of research were introduced by Hunt’s (1975) work on *the role of image* in developing tourism.

Many authors point out that the marketing (promotion) of towns, countries, places is hardly a novelty and examples can be found from decades preceding the first studies in the field (and even from the Antiquity) (see e.g. Gold – Ward, 1994; Ward, 1998; Langer, 2001; Piskóti et.al., 2002; Papadopoulos, 2004; Kavartzis, 2005; Boo et.al., 2009; Zenker, 2011) although these activities were never referred to as “marketing” or “branding” as such (Papadopoulos, 2004). This also implies that the initiatives to market places had appeared long before in practice though the place of the area as a separate field of study is still a matter of debate in academia (except for several early examples, e.g. Burgess, 1975; Anderson, 1983), even though “the marketing of places is one of the major growth markets in marketing communication”. (Langer, 2001, p. 1.)

Likewise, Piskóti – Dankó – Schupler (2002, p. 17.) state that “Regional and town marketing as sub-categories of marketing geographical areas are relatively new although dynamically evolving fields of marketing science [...] At the same time many people are still indisposed to if not frightened of the growing application of marketing tools in their town’s life.”

On the other hand, Papadopoulos (2004, p. 38.) argues that place marketing / place promotion has become academically accepted and there have been examples in practice as well as in the literature for the past twenty years. The author highlights that the nature, the effects and the relationship with other fields of the activity of governments and trade organizations have been the subject to numerous studies in the last decades (see also: McDougall – Rawlings, 1979; Ettenson et.al., 1988; Fischer – Byron, 1997; Cameron – Elliott, 1998; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2001; Gilmore, 2002; Villanueva-Papadopoulos, 2003).

Kotler et al. (1999) point out that fierce competition for resources, for business relocation, for foreign investment, for visitors, even residents is evident in today’s world, and a more focused, integrated and strategic oriented implementation of place marketing was evident largely in the last some decades. (see also: Ashworth – Voogd, 1990; Matson, 1994; Williams, 1994; Anholt, 2002; Kavartzis, 2005).

Gertner (2011, p. 112.) in his meta-analysis of the literature on place marketing and place branding identified 259 related publications. 211 of these publications, dating between 1990 and 2009 were analyzed. The author states that today the field of research has become widespread and recognized; researchers of the field have managed to identify and characterize the related concepts. At the same time further study is necessary to conceptually and theoretically consolidate the area. An important element of this might be the defining of *country brand*, *nation brand* which until now has only been attempted by one or two authors. At the same time measurement tools are also to be improved and models designed and tested. Therefore the field of research, according to the author, ought to *move from a positive towards a normative approach*.

### 2.1.1. Academic approach to place marketing

Although the international literature commonly uses the terms “*place marketing*” or “country marketing”, Hungarian authors often make a distinction between “*country marketing*”, “*region marketing*”, “*destination marketing*”, “*city marketing*” or “*marketing efforts by municipalities and towns*” – with the main difference lying in the scope (i.e. geographical type and extent) of the place marketing activity involved, which suggests that in each of these categories the target markets, the available assets, strategies and actual tools will differ (see e.g. Kozma, 1995; Piskóti et.al., 1997, 2002; Pickton – Broderick, 2001; Kotler- Gertner, 2002; Anholt, 2002; Kandikó, 2003; Jaffe-Nebenzahl, 2006). In the international literature, one encounters a somewhat narrower scope of the studied *geographical categories* (e.g. there are examples on the study of “country marketing” while none of “nation marketing” can be found), but these also differ from each other on the adopted geographical scope of study.

Several authors consider “place marketing” and “*place promotion*” as synonyms (see Ashworth – Voogd, 1997). The following definition by Gold – Ward (1994. p. 1.) is a good example of the mix-up of the related constructs: place promotion is “the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience”.

Other authors argue that “place promotion” is a *preceding term and state* of “place marketing” that includes uncoordinated and unsystematic marketing activities (Kavaratzis, 2005, p. 330.). Short et al. (2000, p. 318.) in their definition that summarizes several notions related to place promotion, state that “place promotion involves the re-evaluation and re-presentation of place to create and market a new image for localities to enhance their competitive position in attracting or retaining resources”. Ashworth and Voogd (1990) point out that the promotion of towns and other places can be considered a natural consequence of globalization and the subsequent evolution of consumers as well as that of marketing approaches (see e.g. Harvey, 1989; Goodwin, 1993; Hubbard – Hall, 1998; Hannigan, 2003).

Hubbard and Hall (1998) categorize *place promotion tools* as follows:

- i. Advertising and promotion,
- ii. Wide-range physical development,
- iii. Community arts and civil architecture
- iv. Events,
- v. Cultural revival,
- vi. Community-individual co-operation.

According to other authors, *place marketing includes a more strategic approach* and goes beyond mere promotion tools. A number of authors thus consider that these are

corporate marketing practices that infiltrate the practice of place marketing (Kotler et.al., 1999; Kavartzis, 2004, Andersson-Ekman, 2009).

According to Papadopoulos (2004, p. 41-42.) “some multifaceted developments on place marketing were noted early on by, among others, the first articles and books that attempted to capture the full scope of image-related market effects and/or of possible place marketing activities from 1990. These were followed by more recent elaborations.” (see also: Papadopoulos – Heslop, 1993; Kotler et.al., 1993; Gold – Ward, 1994)

According to Kotler et.al. (1999), place marketing serves as a tool for building a positive image of a place, but the original image of the place also influences the marketing of the given place. The authors state that places must try to manage their images strategically by SIM. (SIM: Strategic Image Management) (Kotler et.al., 1999, p. 161.).

According to Avraham and Ketter (2006) place marketing pursues to improve the image and perception of certain places.

On the other hand place marketing aspires to maximize the social and economical functionality of a society. (Ashworth – Voogd 1990)

According to Zenker (2011), place marketing always includes an economic and a social aspect.

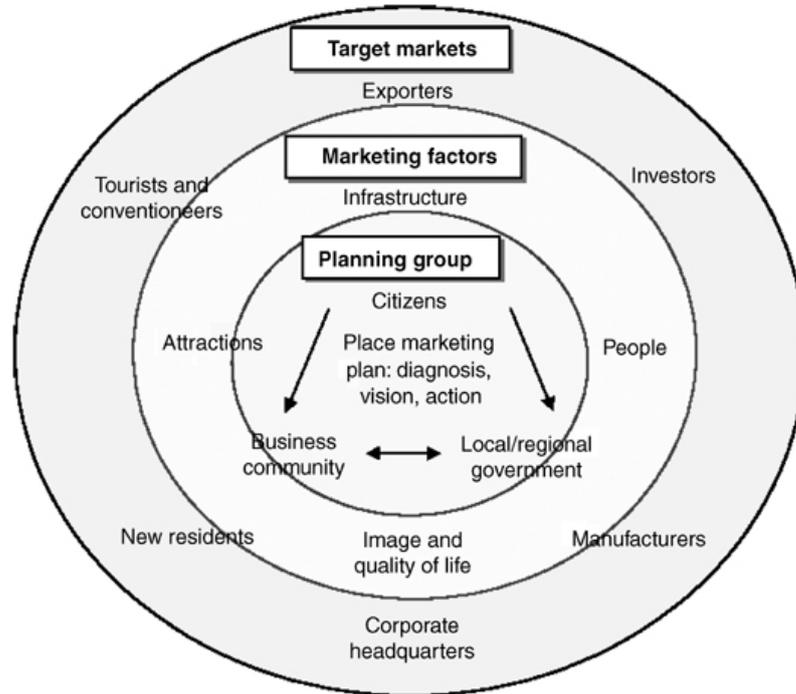
According to Kotler – Haider – Rein (1993, p.18.) place marketing includes the following *four activities*:

- i. designing the right mix of community tangible offerings and services
- ii. developing appealing benefits for potential and current users/buyers
- iii. delivering the place’s experience in both efficient and effective ways
- iv. communicating the place’s image to create awareness of the place’s distinctive advantage

Figure 1 shows the model of strategic place marketing tools and factors.

**Figure 1.**

A model of strategic place marketing



Source: Kotler et.al., 1993. p. 19

According to Dreyer (2000, in: Langer, 2001, p. 8.) “general place marketing is based on traditional marketing tools including internal and external (SWOT-) analysis of suppliers, competitors, consumers and other stakeholders, segmentation and targeting, planning process, product development, pricing, distribution and promotion / communication.” Piskóti et al. (2002) share this view when they refer to a “overall marketing concept”, i.e. to a complex view to adopt.

The special case of place marketing involves that every stakeholder that has a connection whatsoever to the given place becomes the target group thereof.

Literature usually makes the distinction between *five consumer segments* (based on Kotler et.al., 1993; Papadopoulos, 1993, 2004; Piskóti et.al., 2002; Papp-Váry, 2007):

- i. inhabitants,
- ii. local entrepreneurs,
- iii. investors,
- iv. tourists, visitors,
- v. public administration, political parties, national and international NGO's.

Targeting consumer segments involves the use of group-specific tools and a *diversified marketing activity*. This also implicates that each group ought to be targeted through different messages. Place marketing is equally special with regards to its extent and contents (Langer, 2001). According to Kotler et.al. (1999, pp. 51-66.), one can choose

among four broad strategies: i) image marketing (focus on overly positive image); ii) attraction marketing (focus on natural attractions and sights); iii) infrastructure marketing (focus on infrastructural advantages); iv) people marketing (focus on famous residents and institutions).

### **2.1.2. Approaches to country marketing in the literature**

Within the literature of place marketing, several works are dedicated to the topic of *country marketing*. Country marketing can be considered a specific type of place marketing with regards to its range as it specifically focuses on the marketing tools used during the image building process of countries.

We must note that theory has rapidly surpassed the areas of place marketing and country marketing and their more specific area related to branding are those that arouse more animated academic discourse. Beyond that, the term “nation marketing” have never been adapted within the literature, in the studies related to this very topic, authors rather use the term “country marketing” or in a wider sense, that of “place marketing”.

According to the most general definition, country marketing is the process of creating a positive image and reputation for a country or a nation (based on Olins, 2000a; Mahle, 1995). This endeavor has nothing new in it (Anderson, 1983; Christensen – Cheney, 2000), geographical entities have resorted for decades, centuries to large scale events, mass media, diplomacy and cultural institutions to forge a positive image (based on Langer, 2001).

According to Dreyer (2000) similarly to traditional tourism marketing, country marketing (an in a wider scope, marketing) employ conventional marketing tools like internal or external SWOT analyses, segmentation and targeting, planning processes, product development, pricing, distribution planning and communication. According to the general view, country marketing is no other than *a traditional place marketing activity executed on the level of a country*. This implies that the processes and tools of place marketing presented beforehand are equally valid for country marketing.

According to Piskóti et.al. (2002, p. 28.) the sub-categories of country marketing are as follows: (1) regional marketing, (2) county marketing, (3) district marketing, (4) local/municipality marketing.

In another categorization, Langer (2001) refers to a “supranational” level of place-related marketing communications. On this level the marketing communications are executed in order to create a positive common image and reputation of a larger geographical and/or cultural entity (e.g. EU).

## **2.2. Branding approaches in country image literature – Place branding**

Parallel to country and place marketing several further approaches also make their apparition within the literature. Building on the aforementioned “*country as a complex product, brand*” approach, the end of the 1990’s and the beginning of the 2000’s had seen the emergence of *country branding / place branding*. This approach stems from the literature of branding and provides a new, managerial approach for bulding country image (see e.g.: Curtis, 1997; Anholt 2002; Frank, 1999; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2001; Kotler – Gertner, 2002; Hauben et.al., 2002; Rainisto, 2003; Trueman et.al., 2004)

Kavaratzis (2004, in Kavaratzis, 2005. p. 332.) and Langer (2005, p. 17.) consider *place branding as a practical manifestation of place marketing*, while other authors (among others: van Ham, 2001; Gilmore, 2002; Anholt, 2002) refer to it as *a new stage in the development of marketing*. Most authors consider place branding not only a necessity but also a phenomenon which is heightened by globalization.

Authors generally agree on the fact that branding is an effective tool for differentiation and this differentiation is necessary in a competitive market environment (Kotler, 1996; Kapferer, 1997; Keller, 2003; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2005; Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007a,b; Boo – Busser – Baloglu, 2009) Boo – Busser – Baloglu (2009) state that the extension of branding theory from products to services had already appeared as well in the academic literature as in practice, and thus was the case with tourism and destination management as well. This is confirmed by the following definition by deChernatony and McDonald, 2001.) who state that brand can be each recognizable product, service, person or place, by which the consumers’ needs can meet values offering of it.

In the literature one can find studies on several other dimensions and approaches of country branding. These can be categorized as follows (based on Hanna – Rowley, 2008):

- i. the use of branding concepts in relation with different geographical entities (Trueman et.al., 2004) (e.g. corporate identity methodology, study of the dissonance of appearance)
- ii. remarks on place branding and repositioning (Gilmore, 2002)
- iii. comparing image building with image reconstruction (Curtis, 2001; Hall, 2004)
- iv. comparing unique identity with the use of branding tools (Cai, 2002)
- v. the importance of affective elements in relation to consumers’ reactions (Gilmore, 2002; Hall, 2004)
- vi. study of collaborative destination branding in connection with destination characteristics and industry structure (Wang – Fesenmaier, 2006)
- vii. study on the stakeholders of place branding (Morgan, 2004)

- viii. case studies on successful place branding activities (Rainisto, 2003; Gnoth, 2004)
- ix. study of the relationship between culture and branding (in relation to cultural differences) (Morgan, 2003; Hankinson, 2005)
- x. evaluation of consecutive images to be found in place brands (Cai, 2002)

In the present dissertation does not address the preceding points in consequence of the limited space available and their limited relevance for the very subject of the study. However, the emergence of specialization in the field of study is a proof that the field is evolving and has begun to gain common theoretical framework while the interests of researchers of the topic is becoming more and more targeted.

The '*place branding*' concept was first used by Kotler et al. (1993). The stakeholders of place branding are towns, countries or tourist destinations. The concept also encompasses the competition that is in place for tourists, visitors and/or investors. Within '*place branding*' approaches, 'place' refers to a nation, a region or a state, a place with cultural connections, cities with big population, market with special attributes, or relations among people. (Kotler et.al., 2002.)

Place branding bears several known concepts, among others, *nation branding*, *country branding*, *city branding*, *destination branding*, *place-of-origin branding*, etc. According to Hanna - Rowley (2007) "place" can encompass the following concepts: *location*, *country*, *nation*, *city and region*. The diverse and not uniform use of the concept has already been pointed out by Lodge (2004, 2006). The author equally proposed the development of a common glossary for place branding.

According to Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) "place branding" (or destination branding, place promotion) is a relatively recent *umbrella approach* of country branding, region branding and town branding.

The field is considered alongside a *macro perspective* within the literature where the main goal is to promote and build the image of places. Yet other publications analyze how a number of business-focused activities (e.g. cultural events, sports events, tourism) determine the field as a result of the multidimensional state of places (see e.g. Hankinson, 2003).

According to Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) one can discern at least three different types of place branding which although are often mixed up by authors differ in the identity of their producer and in their contents. According to the authors, the first group is the *use of geographical nomenclature*, the second is the *co-branding of product and place* while the third, *branding as place management*. Geographical nomenclature is merely for naming a product, it does not add any additional attribute to the product. While co-branding, additional attributes are associated to the product beyond a

geographical nomenclature. Branding as place management is expected to provide a unique and recognizable identity to a place and to subsequently manage that identity to further other desirable processes. The authors argue that this goes beyond mere place promotion or place management (i.e. place image building) and therefore can bring about a more elaborate approach of the concept of place branding.

According to Kavartzis (2005, p. 332.) “[t]he subject of place branding is indeed a complex subject and those trends represent the various aspects that bring about this complexity”. Other authors (e.g. Langer, 2001; Fan, 2006) also state that while the use of the branding concept is widely and accepted for places like towns or cities, the same for countries or nations is subject to academic debate.

Papadopoulos (2004, p. 37.) states that place marketing “depends heavily on the images of places, [...] and both are interested in how place images can be used in marketing the places themselves and/or the products that are associated with them.”

According to Eitel and Spiekermann (2007, p. 1.) “Place Branding does not merely stick on new labels, but [...] it sets social processes in motion, which can nuance, strengthen or correct foreign perceptions”.

According to Allen (2007, p. 62.) one can conceptualize place branding as “a complex amalgam of strategic and tactical initiatives involving the management of multiple layers of stakeholder groups and multiple channels of communication” that are able to stimulate prospective consumers’ predispositions and intentions to purchase. The author argues that a place brand is similar in its conceptual framework to a traditional product brand with an added geographical context.

According to Avraham and Kettner (2006) the strategic approach to place branding can be related to public relations. Moreover the evolution of image is an extensive, continual and interactive process and handling it entails more than a quick change of slogan or logo.

According to Andersson and Ekman (2009) place marketing is similar to a firm’s marketing practice. In this sense it might be useful to consider resorting to brand ambassadors.

A recent, though frequently cited definition states that place branding is “the coordinated use of marketing tools supported by a shared customer-oriented philosophy, for creating [...] value for the city’s customers and the city’s community at large” (Braun, 2008 in: Zenker, 2011, p. 41).

Recently, Anholt (2007) disputed the conceptual definition of place branding. According to the author, the concept of place branding has more to do with a political background and international relations than with marketing processes. In his understanding, the use of the term “brand” is erroneous as in this case “place branding” is not conducted through communications channels, it rather evolves through political events and changes. Because of this, the author suggest the use of the term “*competitive identity*” to describe the process.

Even though several authors consider the aforementioned fields as separate fields of study, the author of the present dissertation argues that the geographical extent of the study does not justify a separate framework and therefore the different fields presented beforehand are but sub-categories of place branding with the geographical entity serving as categorizing variable. In the following we present the specific areas of place branding according to their geographical extent.

### 2.2.1. The approaches on “country branding” and “nation branding”

According to O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000) authors of the field generally accept that it is appropriate *to examine nations as brands*. They acknowledge that the image of nations is an important factor in the purchase decision. At the same time they contest that a nation (as a brand) cannot be treated as a proper product because, in their view, the image of nations is more closely related to the social and sociological concept of a nation.

Reflecting to the vivid academic debate on the topic, Fan (2006, p. 18.) highlights that one has to distinguish between *country branding* and *nation branding*. A lively debate aroused between Olins and Girard on whether it is possible to rebrand the country of France (based on Olins, 2002a). According to Fan, this debate was caused by a different understanding of the related field of study. Girard, in a cultural and historical perspective, regarded France as a *nation* while Olins, in a marketing approach, referred to rebranding France as a *country*. Similarly to the previous recommendations, Widler (2007) analyzes the conceptual framework of branding and brings attention to several theoretical contradictions within the literature, i.e. to the fact that the concept of a “nation” has a two-fold interpretations: on one hand, it can be interpreted as a *country* (in a cultural, geopolitical approach) and on the other as a *group of people* (in a social approach). In her opinion, mixing up the two approaches may lead to contradictions and ambiguities in the field.

Based on the above, Fan (2006) classifies the different branding approaches as follows:

**Table 4.**

The fields of country and nation branding

FIELD	WHAT IS BEING BRANDED
COO effect	A part of the product brand
	A quality mark to promote exports
Country	Destination: place marketing
Nation	People, culture: nation branding
State	Regime: political marketing
Region	A term used in the 1980s to refer to the newly industrialized countries

Source: Fan, 2006, p. 6.

In the followings, according to several authors of literature, firstly the domain of nation branding, then the field of country branding is being separately interpreted. There is no common view within the literature on the definition of '*nation branding*'. According to Kotler et.al. (2002), some authors associate the term with country-of-origin effect or consider it as a synonym for place marketing. Fan (2006, p. 3.) defines nation branding as applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image.". According to Anholt (2002) nation branding is an extensive branding strategy that reinforces the connections between the given country and the rest of the world in a clearly defined set of goals.

Similarly, according to De Vicente (2004) nation branding refers to the use of marketing strategies in order to promote a country, its products and image. "This consist of developing an image based on a country's positive core values and communicating it both internally and externally." (Domeisen, 2003, in: Jaffe- Nebenzahl, 2006, p. 138.)

According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001, in: Fan, 2006, p. 3.) "the aim is to create a clear, simple, differentiating idea built around emotional qualities which can be symbolised both verbally and visually and understood by diverse audiences in a variety of situations. To work effectively, nation branding must embrace political, cultural, business and sport activities" In Gudjonsson's (2005, p. 286.) view, "[t]here are three main goals achieved by using the tools of branding. The first goal is to protect businesses and brands from undesirable and negative effects of government, politics or other related domestic or international actions; the second is to support businesses and their brands in global competition. A third goal is to build prosperity and raise standards of living within the nation".

Based on Fan's (2006) literature review, authors have different concepts of nation branding: (1) It can be used by an institution to increase its export activity as a mere *country-of-origin effect*. (2) It can be interpreted as *place marketing* during which a country promotes itself. (3) It can be interpreted as *regional marketing* in which case it refers to the marketing processes of a given geographical region. In the author's opinion, nation branding ought not to be related to product branding and product-country-image as it refers to the nation itself. O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000) consider nation branding as an *umbrella branding*, the goal of which is to differentiate a country's products from those of international competition.

According to Olins (1999) politicians ought to become their own nation's brand managers for nation branding to be successful.

Beyond Fan's (2006) review, several other sources imply the inconsistency at the level of nation branding's concept and its mixing up with that of country branding and other notions (see e.g.. Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Gudjonsson, 2005). At the same time the taxonomical diversity is a sign of the direction and the dynamics of this field of research. In the following we proceed to the presentation of country branding concepts.

According to various (and even contradictory) sources *country branding* envelopes several fields and tools with the intention of creating a strong image with the synergistic use thereof. Most authors consider a good country brand a competitive advantage (see also: Deffner – Liouris, 2005; Kotler - Gertner, 2002; Warren, 2002).

Country branding covers the fields of tourist attractions, events, infrastructure, price, quality, safety, beauty and tourism development through both the development of the business environment and educational background. Tourism is part of country branding in every part of the world and country branding itself often resorts to the marketing toolbox of tourism.

Country branding goes well beyond logo and slogan design and consists of a *coherent, thorough process* that utilizes, among others, the tools of positioning and communications in order to fulfill its goals (see e.g.: Lindsay, 2000; Gardella, 2002; Kotler- Gertner, 2002; Olins, 2004; Piskóti, 2004; Anholt, 2005).

Gudjonsson (2005, pp. 283-298.) further refines the conceptualization of the field when stating that “*nation branding* occurs when a government or a private company uses its power to persuade whoever has the ability to change a nation’s image. Nation branding uses the tools of branding to alter, confirm or change the behaviour, attitudes, identity or image of a nation in a positive way”.

Plavsak (2002), DeVicente (2004) and Anholt (2005) refers to branded countries as ‘*soft power*’. Szeles (2001) on the other hand identifies country branding with the existing set of symbols and with a process of identity building.

Authors seem to agree on the fact that the primary goal of country branding is economic in nature (based on Kotler et. al., 2002; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; van Ham, 2002a; Olins, 2004; Papadopoulos, 2004; Anholt, 2005; Papp-Váry, 2007; Allen, 2007).

The goals are as follows:

- i. Tourism development, attracting tourists into the country
- ii. Incenting investments into the country
- iii. Export development and expansion
- iv. Protecting the local marketing against international competition

The target audiences and stakeholders of country branding (based on Gilmore, 2002, p. 288.) are the following:

- i. present and future inhabitants
- ii. domestic and foreign investors
- iii. qualified workforce
- iv. students
- v. pensioners
- vi. domestic and foreign tourists
- vii. media and opinion leaders
- viii. travel agencies, air, airlines, transport companies

- ix. services sector
- x. foreign governments and investors
- xi. export companies/consumers

Beyond that, the majority of authors agree on the fact that country branding in order to be effective, ought to be in accordance with national identity, i.e. when the inhabitants of the given country are able to identify themselves with and are willing to participate in improving it (see e.g. Bennett, 1999; Hankiss, 1999; Baker, 2002; Kotler – Gertner, 2002; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Anholt, 2005; Kleppe – Mossberg, 2005)

### **2.3. Country image as a country brand – Branding approaches in the literature of country image**

As a result of country marketing and country branding, according to the latest academic approaches, country image can be considered a *country brand image* (nation brand or a special case of place brand). Various authors prefer the term “country brand” instead of “country image” (based on Olins, 2004, Anholt, 2005). Following their reasoning, the former notion (1) implies a voluntary image building process, (2) can be more easily connected to equity measurement and (3) it better expresses a long-term strategic approach.

*The foundedness of studying countries (places) as brands is further confirmed by Kotler et.al., 1997; Hankinson, 2001; Trueman et.al., 2001; Kotler – Gertner, 2002; Kavartzis, 2004; Kavartzis – Ashworth, 2005; Gudjonsson; 2005; Fan, 2006; Boo et.al., 2009; Zenker, 2011; Gertner, 2011.*

One can state that the notion of country as a brand is accepted and recognized within the research community. However *no accurate definition of the concept has been brought forward yet* (Gertner, 2011).

Zenker and Braun in their 2010 article endeavor to bridge this gap by establishing the notion of “place brand” which is suitable to designate the brand of towns, regions or countries at will. In their understanding, ‘ a network of associations in the consumers ’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place ’ s stakeholders and the overall place design ’ (Zenker – Braun, 2010, p. 3).

According to Hankinson (2003) most authors consider place brand as entities or images in relation with places, which, in the author’s opinion hinders the evolution of the field of place branding. He states that, following the classic literature on brand management, a brand can act as (1) a communicator, (2) a perceptual image, (3) a value enhancer or (4) a relationship (Hankinson, 2003, p. 109.). In the author’s opinion, the adaptation of

these roles into place marketing approaches would contribute to developing the field, both in theory and in practice.

As for differentiating the image concept, there are three different core concepts within the body of literature on the field: (1) *product brand*, (2) *corporate brand* and (3) *country as brand*. Coming from their inherent connection within country of origin image and the prevailing approach of countries as complex products, the two concepts that are most often studied jointly are those of product brand and country brand (nation brand), although one can find examples in the literature on the comparison of place brands with corporate brands.

According to Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002, p. 308.) “a country is a ‘corporation’ that produces many products, not a unitary ‘product’. As such, it needs a corporate positioning strategy based on its core competencies”.

Conversely, De Vicente (2004, p. 34.) asserts that it is more useful “to think of ‘country as a corporate brand’, more like a holding company which manages a group of interrelated sub-brands”.

Allen (2003, in: Allen, 2007, p. 61) defines corporate brand as “brand as applied to products & services within a corporate organizational framework. Place Brand is defined as brand as applied to products and services within a political/geographic framework. While the principles of corporate branding may apply in the place branding arena, the implementation of a place brand may differ in important respects.”

In his opinion, it is worthwhile to consider places as products for the research area. Still, the factors influencing places as brands differ fundamentally from each other. These factors are as follows: (1) the difficulty to delimit the entity at stake for place branding (town, region or country); (2) the difficulty to enumerate all stakeholders (inhabitants, shop owners, employees); (3) the difficulty to retain brand consistency in time and with changing conditions of competition; (4) the degree and effect of government involvement.

According to the above criteria, the differences between corporate brands and place brands are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

Differences between corporate brand and place brand

CORPORATE BRAND	PLACE BRAND
Single component product/service	Multiple component product/service
Cohesive stakeholder relationships	Fragmented stakeholder relationships
Lower organizational complexity	Higher organizational complexity
Functional	Experiential/hedonic
Individual orientation	Collective orientation
Sub-brand coherence	Sub-brand inequality & rivalry
Private enterprise	Public/private partnerships
Lack of overt government role	Overt government role
Product attributes consistent	Product attributes subject to seasonality
Flexibility of product offering	Inflexibility of product offering

Source: Allen, 2003 in: Allen, 2007, p. 61.

There equally are several works on the parallel with products. Florek et.al. (2006) state that places are not mere locations but complex, i.e. “mega products”.

According to Fan (2006) traditional brands and country brands are much alike but there are also notable differences (see Table 6). In his understanding, countries cannot be considered as conventional products are therefore ought to be managed in a special way.

**Table 6.**

A comparison of country as a brand and product brands

	NATION BRAND	PRODUCT BRAND
<b>Offer</b>	Nothing on offer	A product or service on offer
<b>Attributes</b>	Difficult to define	Well defined
<b>Benefits</b>	Purely emotional	Functional and emotional
<b>Image</b>	Complicated, various, vague	Simple, clear
<b>Associations</b>	Secondary, numerous and diverse	Primary and secondary, relatively fewer and more specific
<b>Purpose</b>	To promote national image	To help sales and develop relationships
<b>Ownership</b>	Unclear, multiple stakeholders	Sole owner
<b>Audience</b>	Diverse, hard to define	Targeted segment

Source: Fan, 2006, p. 7.

According to Fan (2006, p. 8-9.) the major differences lie in the following: (1) country brand is emotional rather than functional, (2) a country does not have a sole owner of the brand, (3) the name of a country cannot be altered, (4) a country may possess more

than one “nation brand”, (5) country brand is not owned by the country itself rather it is managed by one or more institutions, and (6) as there is no official owner of the country brand it can hardly be protected from misuse on the market.

According to Papp-Váry (2007, p. 67.) several other differences between country brands and product brands equally have to be taken into account. “Country brand, just like a product brand, has a brand name, a logo and other tools which enable its recognition. Beyond this, however, the source of a country brand name is idiosyncratic and identifying the ownership of the brand is equally problematic. Moreover, it is also inconceivable that one transfer or acquire the usage rights of a country brand.”. Hence the evaluation of brand equity for a country brand becomes problematic. This entanglement lies at the core of the debate between authors on well-foundedness and academic legitimacy of country brand theory.

The literature on place marketing also examines in connection with nations as brands the following aspects (based on: Hanna – Rowley, 2008):

- i. the comparison of branding approaches of products, services, destinations and towns (see e.g. Cai, 2002; Gnoth, 2002; Kavartzis – Ashworth, 2005; Parkerson – Saunders, 2005)
- ii. comparing corporate brands and towns as brands (Trueman et.al., 2004; Kavartzis, 2004; Kavartzis – Ashworth, 2005)
- iii. study of the similarities with corporate “umbrella branding” (Papadopoulos-Heslop, 2002; Gnoth, 2002; Rainisto, 2003)

By way of the limited space and relevance of the topics, we will not further examine these sub-topics. At the same time, the relevant results of several of these studies have already been mentioned beforehand.

According to Kotler et.al. (1997, p. 5.) „less focus has been on other factors that influence nation brands or the nations’ brand portfolio.” Gudjonsson (2005, p. 287.) also highlights that “the reason for this is probably that some of the elements cannot be seen as brands, such as people or culture, but are clearly very influential features in nation brands’ performance in global markets.

## 2.4. Country image as Competitive Identity – A brief overview

The past years have seen country image theory and practice overcome the approaches of country branding and country marketing. Along with the vivid academic debate on country branding theories has appeared a new managerial approach that rejects a brand-based approach and brings in a new focal point to the field of research, that of *identity*.

The latest theory often referred to by the literature is the Anholt's (2000) Nation Brand Hexagone (see Figure 2), despite the fact that the author has only a few academically refereed publications and rather represents a practical, managerial approach. However we consider it worthwhile to give a brief presentation of the approach.

In Anholt's concept, country image as a brand image consists of the following factors: (1) to what extent the export products of the country are known, (2) how do foreigners perceive a country's government, (3) how do they perceive the level of investments and immigration into the country, (4) the country's cultural heritage, (5) the mentality of its people, (6) the country's tourism. country image can therefore be analyzed as along these six factors: products, government, culture and heritage, people, tourism and investment in human capital and migration. The received index value will show what people think of a given country. Anholt suggests that tourism is one of the most important elements of country image as tourism is often the most visible and most often exhibited aspect of a country, and the image elements employed during tourism promotions directly affect a country's overall image. The study also points out that, independently of the other dimensions involved, personal experience remains the most influential factor in shaping a country's image.

**Figure 2.**

Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagone



Source: Anholt, 2000, p. 13.

Anholt (2007, p. 25.) proposes that the competitive identity of countries can be communicated to the world through six main channels. These are the following: (1) tourism, (2) export brands, (3) government policies, (4) foreign investment development, (5) cultural activity and the export thereof, (6) behavior of its people (as well in foreign countries as with foreigners within the home country). In his understanding, artifacts like a well-designed logo or webpage, or an overall graphic expression hardly have any effect on a country's image in people's mind. According to the author, a country can only manage to change its image in case its inhabitants and its organizations change their behavior (or their beliefs). Therefore he argues that this type of communication cannot be referred to as "branding". For this reason he proposes the use of the term "competitive identity" instead.

Competitive identity is a possible answer to the academic debate on country branding (i.e. can we consider a nation/country/state as a brand and are related branding approaches suitable in this perspective). Further research is needed to confirm this approach.

## **2.5. A summarizing and critical review of branding approaches related to country image theory**

Country marketing and country branding can still not be considered a thoroughly researched and standardized field within marketing science. As one can see from the literature review of the previous chapter, researchers' opinions on the subject collide on various grounds (even though few articles published following the finalization of the present dissertation lead to believe that there has been an improvement in several :areas)

- i. The main discussion today is not about whether one can consider a country as a brand (and its image as a brand image).
- ii. There is no debate on whether the field should be recognized academically or whether it is still merely a practical, managerial approach. The first two points seem today determined by the growing number of refereed publications and **the approach of countries as a brands has established itself as a recognized field of research.** (see Zenker, 2011)
- iii. Regardless of the advances of the first two points, there are still too few publications within refereed journals on the subject and the majority of these are country case studies.
- iv. The taxonomical framework of the field is equally problematic (e.g. delimiting nation vs. country vs. state). **There is no common glossary, word use within the area of research.**
- v. The theoretical foundation of the research methodology to be used within the field (measurement tools, targeting) is still in progress. Literature still focuses on delimiting the relevant approaches.

- vi. There is a **growing display of intent to measurement** (e.g. using methodology acquired from related fields of study).
- vii. **A growing emphasis is put on the study of the factors and dimensions of country brand equity and the possibilities of adaptation of consumer brand equity theory.**

Even with the above problems, we argue that of the study of the related fields is well-founded and worthwhile. Indeed, the development of the field of research stems in large part from the widened approaches of country image. **Therefore including the most important milestones into our research framework might add to a study which would be more comprehensive and more fitting to the international research trends in the field.** Altogether, this would bring about **the main novelty and added value of the present study.**

Other relating topics (that we will not study in detail in the present dissertation) in the literature include<sup>3</sup>:

- i. studies on the fields of country marketing/country branding (export-promotion, tourism, agriculture, international politics) (Papadopoulos, 1993, 2004; Kotler et.al., 1993; Gold – Ward, 1994; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2001)
- ii. the actors of country marketing/country branding (local and national governments, commercial organizations, trade organizations, etc.) (Kotler et.al., 1993; Papadopoulos, 2004; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006)
- iii. methods and tools of country marketing/country branding (e.g. [1] systematics methods: tourism and export-promotion; [2] inertia effects within agriculture; [3] political toolbox: diplomacy, international-, foreign policy, international cooperations) (Kotler et.al., 1993; Papadopoulos, 2004; Anholt, 2007; Szondi, 2008)
- iv. The relationship between country marketing/country branding and other fields of science (e.g. sociology, psychology, international relations, political science) (see e.g.. Tajfel, 1981 and Stangor – Lange, 1994 both in: Papadopoulos, 2004)

One can observe that unlike in other fields of science, in the field of country image, *practice is ahead of theory* and this latter gradually reaches (though sometimes surpasses) practical approaches (e.g. the growing display of intent to measurement).

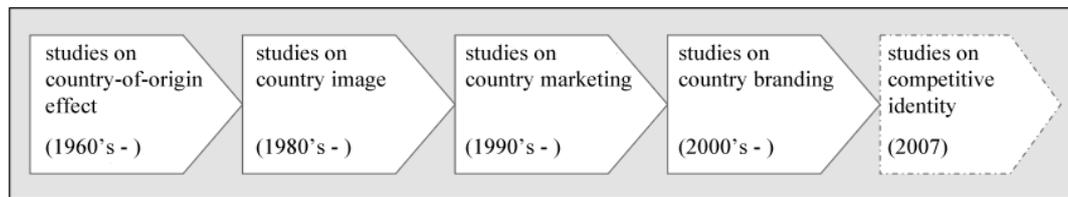
The following figures illustrate the evolution of the research topic and the relationship between the country image and other related fields.

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<sup>3</sup> For each sub-topic, see the related references for thorough analyses. For a summary of publications in the field of country branding, see Hanna - Rowley, 2008.

**Figure 3.**

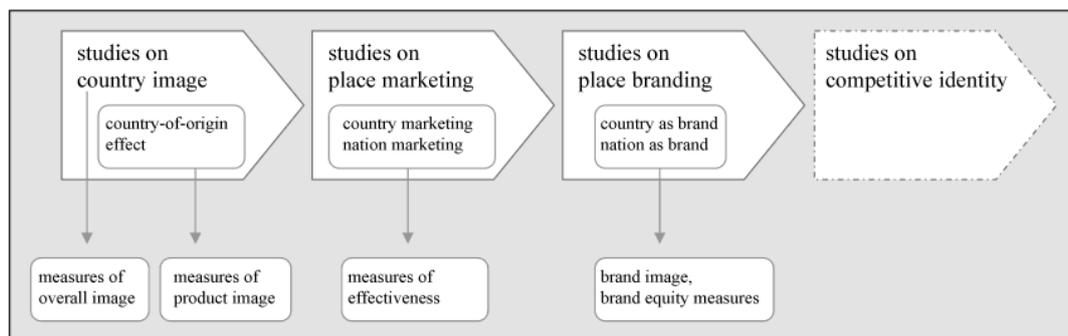
The evolution in time of country image theory



Source: own elaboration, 2009

**Figure 4.**

The evolution of country image theory with regards to its conceptual framework and the impact of related fields of study



Source: own elaboration, 2009

The field clearly seems to evolve towards the study of branding solutions and towards a more accentuated quantitative measurement methodology<sup>4</sup>. “Countries as brands” account for the relevant approach for our main study.

**In our understanding a country branding is the theoretical approach of a geographic entity, a country as a brand and the application of this in practice.**

For the present dissertation, by the lack of a single, universal definition, we define **“country brand” as the array of symbols that serve as differentiating elements for a country and that add value for consumers through associations, awareness, loyalty and image.**

We argue (based on the aforementioned issues related to brand ownership, name variability, etc.) that country brands show more similarities to corporate brands and appears only in its designation as an actual brand. However in our view, country image shows idiosyncratic attributes both with the brand-focused and identity-focused approaches although it is more closely related to the identity-focused approach.

<sup>4</sup> On the evolution of this field of study, see also: Kavartzis – Ashworth, 2005.

We therefore disagree with the application of *a merely brand-focused approach*, which can be considered as over-simplified. However we believe that the term “country brand” is more telling on the focus of the study, as (1) the notion indirectly implies an intentional image building activity, (2) it can be more directly related to equity measurement and to tests of effectiveness and (3) it better expresses a long-term strategic approach. Hence, on a practical side, country branding might be a valid approach of the field while it remains problematic in a theoretical context for the reasons mentioned above. Considering that country branding accounts for a new direction within country image theory, *it is still worthwhile to conduct studies in the field as it can constitute an added value for the present dissertation*. Taking into account the present state of the literature in the field of science it can be stated that **the concept of country brand has been accepted more and more widely**. Authors in the field have even started to use the notions of “country image” and “country brand” as synonyms, for they coincide in several dimensions and are similar in conceptualization.

Our opinion on the usability of identity-focused approaches is based on the following points: (1) In our view, image is more a portrait in people’s minds and therefore is a subjective concept while identity is an external picture, an objective construct, (2) identity (just like image) exists on its own and can directly be influenced, (3) it therefore contains both internal and external, i.e. identity and image features. This complex approach gives to the identity-focused approach its *raison d’être* and enables its use within country image theory. However (as mentioned beforehand), the use of the term “identity” is problematic and might be at the basis of conceptual misinterpretation.

Therefore, given this conceptual lacuna and the broader acceptance of branding approaches, in the following **we will have recourse to the brand-focused approach and will endeavor to identify and interpret the factors of brands and brand equity related to countries**.

### **3. THE DIMENSIONS AND THE MULIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF COUNTRY IMAGE AND COUNTRY BRAND**

A main aim of the present thesis is *to define and determine the dimensions of country image and country as a brand*, and to study the *interaction effects* of country image and country as a brand.

According to the literature of country image, country image is widely acknowledged to be a *multidimensional construct*, a multidimensional image (Nagashima, 1970, 1977; Johansson – Moïnpour, 1977; White, 1979; Narayana, 1981; Cattin et.al. 1982; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984, 1988, 2006; Johansson – Nebenzahl, 1986; Han – Terpstra, 1988; Han, 1989; Roth – Romeo, 1992; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Smith, 1993; Parameswaran - Pisharodi, 1994).

Opinions vary though on the quantity and content of these dimensions.

In the following chapter we present the most notable country image and country brand dimensions found in the literature and delineate them with respect to their relevance for the main study of the thesis.

Following that, in order to support the subsequent research model of the dissertation we proceed *to a review of the pre-existent models and researched mechanisms*, among others of the underlying factors of the perception of country image and the influence of country image and country brand on consumer behavior.

#### **3.1. Dimensions of country image**

Several dimensions of country image were already referred to in our literature review of the definitions of country image.

According to Nagashima (1970, p. 68.) country image “is created by such variables as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, and traditions.”

Wish – Deutsch – Biener (1970) state that the image of a country can be studied along its geographical attributes as well as economic, political and cultural dimensions.

Kotler et al. (1993) assert that country image is determined by geographical properties, history, arts, music, citizens and the set of images and beliefs one has about a given country.

Martin and Eroglu (1993) define country image as a combination of a country’s economic and technological development, its political system, the attributes of its inhabitants, its natural resources, etc. In their test of scale, they discern three distinct dimensions (1) political, (2) economic and (3) technological dimensions (Martin – Eroglu, 1993, p. 198.).

According to Kaynak et.al. (2000) the concept of country image covers everything that derives from general environmental factors that is beyond the control of the companies of the given country.

Denig (2004) states that the dimensions of country image are the following: culture, history, language and values.

Brijs et.al. (2011, p. 1260.) assert that “country-image represents everything a person associates with the country itself and its inhabitants (not its products) [...] referring to nine aspects: (1) cultural identity, (2) political climate, (3) language, (4) history, (5) climate, (6) landscape, (7) economic and technological development, (8) religion, and (9) people.”

The above sources confirm the existing disagreement on both number and the structure of the dimensions involved. However, the above sources all include both *tangible* and *intangible dimensions* (Fan, 2006). According to other authors, one can distinguish between *image forming dimensions* (e.g. tourist attractions, or peculiar services) and *actual image elements* (e.g. the entirety, identity of a town).

Lala, Allred and Chakraborty (2009) propose an overall study of the literature (based on Han, 1989) and state that three different conceptualizations exist for country image: (1) studies on *country characteristics*, (2) those on *product characteristics* and (3) those on *both product and country characteristics* (Table 7).

**Table 7.**  
Conceptualization of country image

SOURCES STUDYING COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS (HALO APPROACH)	SOURCES STUDYING PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS (SUMMARY CONSTRUCT)	SOURCES STUDYING PRODUCT AND COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS (HALO AND SUMMARY CONSTRUCT)
Martin - Eroglu, 1993	Nagashima, 1970, 1977	Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987
Haubl, 1996	Cattin – Jolibert – Lohnes, 1982	Heslop – Papadopoulos, 1993
	Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984	Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994
	Han – Terpstra, 1988	Lee – Ganesh, 1999
	Roth – Romeo, 1992	Knight – Calantone, 2000
	Agarwal – Sikri, 1996	Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 2002
		Pereira – Hsu – Kundu, 2005

Source: Lala-Allred-Chakraborty, 2009, p. 52.

The above table illustrates well that country image concepts often come up during the study of country-of-origin effects and appear most often merged into studies on the dimensions of products' perception. Table 8 summarizes the dimensions unveiled by the most influential studies on the subject. As can be seen from the table, most country image dimensions stem from studies on country-of-origin image, therefore the majority

of the following dimensions is rather a dimension of *product image* (in rare cases, related to a country) than a dimension of *country image*. The lines in grey correspond to those studies that unveiled dimensions that can be considered as purely a country dimension.

**Table 8.**  
Dimension of country image

AUTHOR	DIMENSION
Nagashima (1970, 1977)	representative products, economic and political background, history, and traditions also: price and value, service, advertising, reputation, design and style
Wish – Deutsch – Biener (1970)	geographical attributes, economic and political background, culture
White (1979)	price, technology, innovation, quality, design, service, reliability, advertising, durability, brand recognition
Wang – Lamb (1980, 1983)	effect of external environment, economic, political, cultural environment
Narayana (1981)	recognition, prestige, production, innovation, popularity, price, functionality
Cattin – Jolibert – Lohnes (1982)	culture, organization, personality, society, economy, prices, reliability, design, technology
Jaffe – Nebenzahl (1984)	product-technology, price-value
Johansson – Nebenzahl (1986)	economy, status
Parameswaran – Yaprak (1987)	attitudes towards a country, towards people, the nature of people, workforce, economy, political relations, product and brand trust
Han – Terpstra (1988)	technological development, prestige, services, workforce, economy
Papadopoulos – Heslop – Berács (1990)	industrial development, affective attachment, industry orientation
Desborde (1990)	cultural and political distance, resemblance, economic development, technological and product superiority
Ger (1991)	perceptions on resemblance, thoughts of and attitudes towards a country
Weber – Grundhofer (1991)	political environment, external appearance, culture, people, economy
Pisharodi – Parameswaran (1992)	overall country image and general product attributes, special product attributes
Roth – Romeo (1992)	innovativeness, design, prestige, layout
Martin – Eroglu (1993)	political, economic, technological environment
Kotler et. al. (1993)	geographical attributes, history, arts, music, citizens, opinions
Graby (1993)	physical (geography, natural resources, demography), cultural (history, culture), identity (name, flag, celebrities), relational (governments, international organizations) and controlled (intentional image shaping)

### 3. DIMENSIONS OF COUNTRY IMAGE AND COUNTRY BRAND

Heslop – Papadopoulos (1993)	country-people dimensions: beliefs, influence, relationships) also: product, price-value, market presence, response
Chao – Rajendran (1993)	„Live-in” dimensions: people, culture/society, economic policy/political environment, economic environment also: product dimensions
Parameswaran – Pisharodi (1994, 2002)	attitudes towards countries, attitudes towards products, purchase intention (cognitive, affective, conative elements)
Agarwal – Sikri (1996)	technology, prestige, price
Haubl (1996)	affective country evaluation, cognitive country evaluation also: evaluation of the country’s car industry
Lebrenz (1996)	knowledge about a country, affective dimensions, cognitive dimensions
Lee – Ganesh, 1999	overall country image, overall image of a country’s inhabitants, overall country and population image
Allred et.al. (1999)	environment, workforce, economy, conflicts, policy, workforce skills, work culture
Papadopoulos – Heslop – IKON Group (2000)	three country constructs: national level of economic development, perception of people, relationship with the country four product constructs: general evaluation of products, price, market presence, consumer satisfaction
Knight – Calantone, 2000	attitudes towards and beliefs of the country, attitudes and beliefs of people (i.e. flexible model)
Berács – Malota (2000)	cognitive evaluation, affective evaluation, country knowledge (experience), relationships
Verlegh (2001)	natural attributes, climate, competence, creativity, positive emotions, negative emotions
Kotler – Gertner (2002)	geography, history, statements, arts and music, famous citizens, other dimensions
Knight – Spreng – Yaprak (2003)	people, negative product offerings, positive product offerings, advertising, distribution, price, political environment, culture, technological development
Ittersum – Candel – Muelenberg (2003)	attitudes towards the region, human factor, quality, product preference, naturalness, health dimension (beer industry)
Hsieh et.al. (2004)	culture, economic environment, media penetration also: product image attributes, corporate image attributes
Denig (2004)	culture, history, language, values
Heslop et. al. (2004)	country attributes, human attributes, country competence, human competence, country evaluation
Mittelstaedt et.al. (2004)	general differences, economy, policy, culture, technology, language, history, geography
Pereira – Hsu – Kundu (2005)	similar political views, economically similar, culturally similar also: product attributes

### 3. DIMENSIONS OF COUNTRY IMAGE AND COUNTRY BRAND

Brijs (2006)	cognitive country image elements, geographical-cultural elements, social-economic elements, positive feelings, conative component
d' Astous – Boujbel (2007)	identity dimensions: agreeableness, wickedness, snobbism, assiduousness, conformity, unobtrusiveness (as a destination)
Pappu – Quester – Cooksey (2007)	macro-country-image dimensions: economic, political, technological also: micro-country-image dimensions: innovation, prestige, design
Yang et.al. (2008)	affective, physical, financial, managerial, cultural, global, political dimensions
Lala – Allred – Chakraborty (2009)	economic conditions, conflicts, political structure, vocational training, work culture, environment, labor
Giraldi et.al. (2011) (Nebenzahl et.al, 2003 alapján)	“Quality and Satisfaction Seekers”, “Economic Value Seekers”, “Underdogs” (respondent profiles on image dimension)
Brijs etal. (2011, p. 1260.)	cultural identity, political climate, language, history, climate, landscape, economic and technological development, religion, people

Source: own elaboration, 2012

The highlighted sources were content analyzed<sup>5</sup>. Results show that several dimensions appear as consistent elements within the various studies. These are the following:

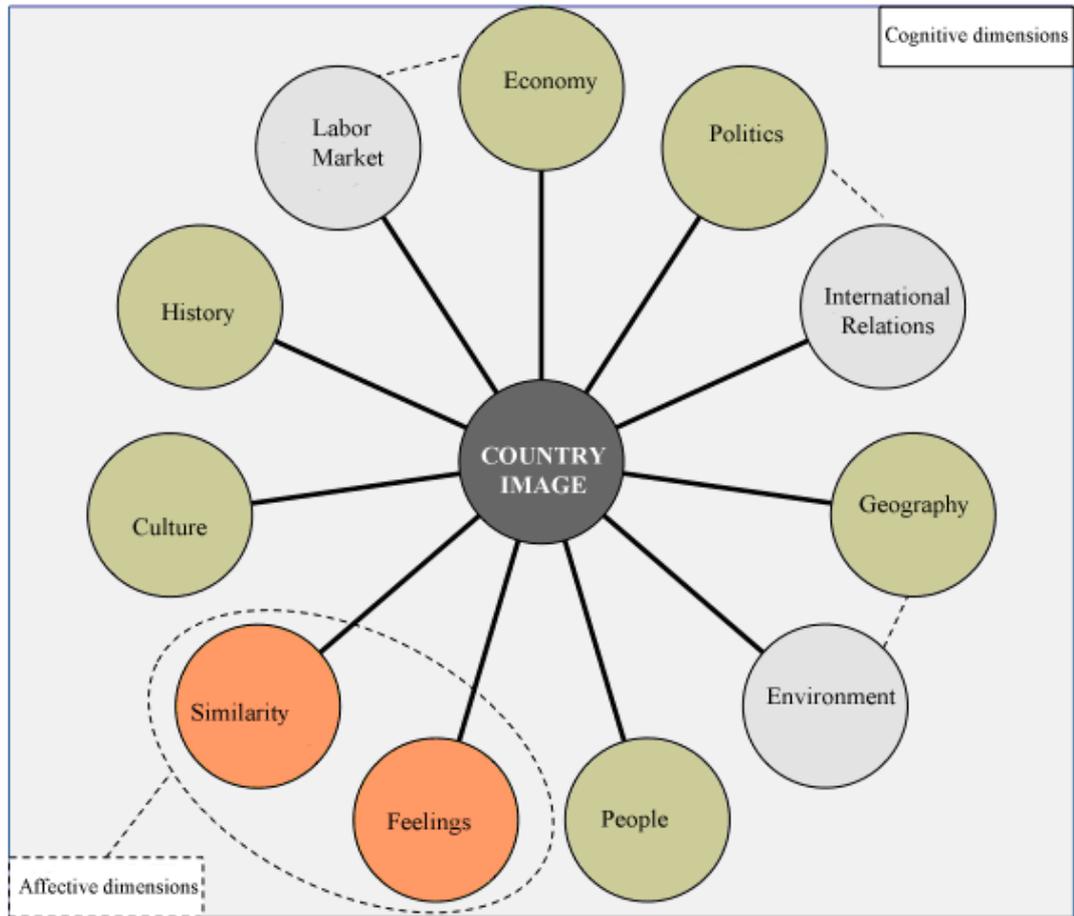
1. Level of economic development, economic structure
2. Labor market, skill level of workforce
3. Political environment, structure
4. International relations (role within international politics, conflicts)
5. Cultural attributes
6. Historical attributes (traditions)
7. Geographical attributes (natural beauty, climate)
8. Environment (cleanness, protection of the environment)
9. People
10. Feelings, emotions (positive or negative)
11. Similarities, resemblance

The relationships between the above dimensions are presented in Figure 5.

<sup>5</sup> Content analysis was carried out using open, axial then selective coding, based on the literature. For methodological background, see e.g.: Glaser-Strauss, 1967; Strauss-Corbin, 1990; Babbie, 2001; Marshall, 2002; Feischmidt, 2005, 2006.

**Figure 5.**

Dimensions of country image according to the literature



Source: own elaboration, 2009

According to the literature, the *main elements* of country image are the following (see Figure 4., in grey): (1) economy, (2) politics, (3) history, (4) culture, (5) geography, (6) people, (7) similarity, (8) feelings.

One can consider the following as sub-dimensions (in light grey): (1) labor market, (2) international relations, conflicts (in relationship with political structure), (3) environment (in relationship with geographical attributes).

The first six elements (economy, politics, history, culture, geographical attributes, people) can be classified, based on the general attitude-based approach as cognitive dimensions.

One can categorize as affective the following dimensions: (1) feelings, (2) resemblance, similarities to the country.

The study of the dimensions and its comparison with attitude-focused approaches offers a field for further study (see Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009).

### 3.2. The evaluation of country image structure

Most country image studies consider the image in the minds of people as the consequence of numerous other factors which factors build up a *hierarchical structure* that subsequently leads to that image (Nejad-Winsler, 2000; Elliot et.al., 2011). This in turn leads to several different definitions within the literature regarding the effect of country image on other fields (e.g. on the product-country-image concept or on destination image concepts).

According to the literature, there are 3 different structural levels of the evaluation of country image: (1) general understanding of country image and its factors and dimensions; (2) influencing factors of country image; (3) the effect of country image on consumer behaviour.

According to the literature, there is not only a hierarchical structure of elements, or dimensions of country image but there are different eliminated levels of meaning as well. *One can state that beyond the dimensions of country image there exist influencing factors and also attributes having impact on consumers' behaviour.*

According to the above mentioned one can eliminate three different levels of understanding: (1) the general meaning of country image (the image of a country and its dimensions) (2) influencing factors of country image (but not elements of it) and (3) impacts on consumer behaviour.

#### 3.2.1. The structure of country image dimensions

According to Papadopoulos (1993) and Pappu, Quester and Cooksey (2007) country image can be defined on both a *micro* and *macro* level. The macro level stands for countries' overall evaluation whereas the micro level corresponds to the product-image level i.e. to the country-of-origin effect.

According to Heslop et.al. (2004) one can distinguish between "*competences*" and "*characteristics*" when evaluating a country or its inhabitants.

*Country characteristics* on one hand, refer, among others, to the role of the given country within international politics (Lee-Ganesh, 1999; Knight-Calantone, 2000; Heslop et.al. 2004;); to the similarities between the given country and the home country (Lee-Ganesh 1999), the state and quality of the protection of the environment (Heslop et.al., 2004); the existence and state of individual rights (Heslop et.al., 2004); the quality of life (Heslop et.al., 2004); political stability (Heslop et.al., 2004; Orbaiz-Papadopoulos, 2003) or standards of living (Orbaiz-Papadopoulos, 2003; Parameswaran-Pisharodi, 2002; Nadeau et.al., 2008).

*Country competences*, on the other hand, include factors related to the production and evaluation of products originating from a country, as well as factors enabling an overall evaluation of the given country. The components of country competences are the following: technological development (Lee-Ganesh, 1999; Knight-Calantone 2000; Orbaiz-Papadopoulos, 2003; Heslop et.al., 2004; Laroche et.al., 2005; Nadeau et.al.,

2008); economic stability (Heslop et.al., 2004), level of economic development (Lee-Ganesh, 1999) and welfare (Orbaiz-Papadopoulos, 2003; Heslop et.al., 2004; Laroche et.al., 2005; Nadeau et.al., 2008).

Recent studies often make an articulated distinction between the image of the given *country* and that of its *inhabitants*.

The studies on the *evaluation of a country* can refer to the separate study on the dimensions of country image, to the study of the country along the aforementioned characteristics and to the study of relationships with products (i.e. country-of-origin effect, product-country-image studies).

The studies on the *evaluation of a country's inhabitants* can include analyses on the evaluation of friendliness (Lee-Ganesh, 1999; Knight-Calantone 2000; Parameswaran-Pisharodi, 2002; Heslop et.al., 2004; Nadeau et.al., 2008), honesty (Heslop et.al., 2004), trustworthiness (Heslop et.al., 2004), creativity (Lee – Ganesh, 1999; Knight-Calantone 2000; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 2002; Nadeau et.al., 2008), education (Lee-Ganesh, 1999; Knight – Calantone 2000; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 2002; Orbaiz-Papadopoulos, 2003; Heslop et.al., 2004; Laroche et.al., 2005; Nadeau et.al., 2008) or work ethics (Lee-Ganesh, 1999; Knight-Calantone 2000; Parameswaran-Pisharodi, 2002; Heslop et.al., 2004; Laroche et.al., 2005; Nadeau et.al., 2008) of a people.

Nadeau et.al. (2008) combine the separate study of a country as such and its people with the study of competences and characteristics. In their article, the authors' design includes four different constructs: (1) country character, (2) country competence, (3) people character and (4) people competence.

Gartner (1993), Häubl (1996), Orbaiz and Papadopoulos (2003), Nadeau et.al. (2008) and Elliot et.al. (2011) also distinguish between *affective* and *cognitive* country image. These two constructs are in a hierarchical relationship with each other in the evaluation process of a country. Similarly, according to Baloglu – McCleary (1999), and Beerli – Martin (2004a, 2004b) places' images generally tend to have a separate affective and cognitive level of evaluation.

In Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) approach, the evaluation of a country is possible through a framework of *three continuums of interpretation*: (1) attribute vs. holistic, (2) functional vs. psychological and (3) common vs. unique. Through the measurement along these continuums several individual characteristics of a country's evaluation might stand out (e.g. climate, friendliness, accommodation, etc.) while a more general image might equally emerge (e.g. the overall evaluation of a country or of a people).

As shown beforehand, one can clearly distinguish a number of dimensions of country image that are strongly enrooted while having to evaluate a country, as well as other influencing factors that refine, along the personality of the respondent, their image of the given country. Beyond these influencing factors can be impacts on behavior by the

image of a country as well. One can state that this three dimensional eliminating of theories can be somehow mixed up therefore it is worthwhile to distinguish them clearly.

### **3.2.2. Factors influencing the perception of country image**

The perception and evaluation of country image and its effect on consumer behavior depends, beyond those presented above, on several dimensions. Authors in the field equally study the attributes of the target audience, their knowledge and experience and whether they personally have already travelled to or lived in the given country. The perception of country image is therefore also influenced by *individual attributes* as well as the *attributes of the target country*.

The image of a country may vary in function of the considered target audience (i.e. of the group of people that need to evaluate a given country) and in function of the factors and dimensions the given audiences consider when evaluating the country (see e.g. Kotler et.al., 1993; Agarwal – Sikri, 1996; Ger – Askegaard – Christensen, 1999; Kotler – Gertner, 2002; Hankinson, 2003; Fan, 2006).

Kar and Litvin (2000), and Papp-Váry (2005) also outline the determining role of the evaluator's gender. Beyond the effect of gender, Malota (2001) considers the effects of the individual's self-confidence and their level of income. According to Hsieh et.al.(2004) along with the effect of gender, one also has to study respondents' age, income and marital status.

According to Gudjonsson (2005, p. 285.) individuals' "views vary between individuals depending on race, education, status, gender, geography, etc." Moreover, Fan (2006, p. 11.) states that the following individual factors equally affect the evaluation of a nation: (1) personal experience (e.g. visiting the country); (2) education or knowledge; (3) prior use or ownership of a product made in that country; (4) the depiction of the country through media channels; (5) stereotypes.

According to Giraldi et.al. (2011) country image affects the information on country of origin while the country of origin in turn affects the evaluation of a product and consumer behavior. This latter is influenced by the following: consumers' level of education, gender, age, fluency in the language of the county, degree of involvement and familiarity with the brand and culture.

Urbonavicius et.al. (2011. p. 214.) stress that "[p]ersonal experience with a country influences one's perception about a country as well as its products." The authors also distinguish between conative and cognitive dimensions. Conative factors are determined by individuals' psychic closeness to the country while cognitive factors include the intellectual understanding of the characteristics of a country. The notion of "psychic distance" is often used synonymously with "cultural distance" (see e.g. Swift, 1999, in: Urbonavicius et.al., 2011). According to the authors, personal experience of a country

influences the perceived psychic distance that in turn can affect country image and product image of products made in the given country.

According to Urbonavicius et.al. (2011) personal experience and psychic distance influence a country's evaluation. Personal experience can stem from (1) physical presence within the country, (2) using product that are originated from the country and (3) the transmitting mechanisms of mass media (Bar-Tal, 1997; Urbonavicius et.al., 2011)

Yuksel (2004) equally considers personal experience as a determining factor of country image.

Several authors, mainly in connection with country-of-origin image studies, highlight that *country knowledge* and more precisely, *experience* can influence the evaluation of a country and indirectly the products thereof (see e.g. Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Kleppe – Iversen – Stensaker, 2002, Fan, 2006). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) categorize these effects as *descriptive, inferential or informational*. The descriptive nature of country image is influenced by direct, personal experiences while the informational element relies on external sources (e.g. opinion leaders, mass media, friends). Inferential beliefs are derived through a process of perceiving the connectedness of a past event with a current stimulus (see e.g. Johansson et.al., 1985; Cordell, 1992; Brunner et.al., 1993; Maheswaran, 1994; Berács et.al., 2000; Malota, 2001).

Along with experiences, *information on a country* can therefore equally influence its evaluation (Martin – Eroglu, 1993).

Other authors distinguish between “professional” and “laic” consumers as for the quantity and *depth of their knowledge about a country* (see e.g. Nagashima 1970, 1977; Cattin et.al., 1982; Erickson et.al., 1984; Johansson et.al., 1985; Chasin et.al., 1988; Yu – Chen, 1993; Maheswaran, 1994; Gilmore, 2002).

Along with awareness and knowledge, individuals' interest in the given country might also influence its evaluation (Kleppe and Mossberg, 2004). According to Kotler et.al. (1997, p. 362.) „consumers form their preference based on their personal background, experience, and national stereotypes about different nations' quality, reliability, and service”. Kotler and Gertner (2002) also highlight the role of individual motivation.

Yang et.al. (2008) study the relationship between individuals' experience and knowledge. In the authors' opinion, the reputation of a country can be examined in terms of its diplomacy, country image, country-of-origin image and country branding. They establish that the evaluation of a country has (1) affective, (2) physical, (3) financial, (4) managerial, (5) cultural, (6) global and (7) political aspects. In this context the relationship between personal experience and the evaluation of the country can be influenced by the familiarity with a country and the individuals level of knowledge.

As mentioned beforehand, country characteristics along with personal characteristics can equally influence country image:

According to Bennett (1999) the *geographical proximity* of the individual to the destination country (i.e. the country of origin of the evaluator) also has an influence on the evaluation of a country.

Marshall (2007) highlights that the *size of the country* equally affects its image.

Other country attributes might also play the role of influence factor when evaluating country image, e.g. the *cultural, social and political characteristics* of the country (Kleppe – Iversen – Stensaker, 2002; Fan, 2006).

Mittelstaedt et.al. (2004) also consider the role of perceived similarities and differences as relevant country attributes.

According to Hsieh (2004) the state of a country's economy might influence its image as well.

### **3.2.3. The effect of country image on behavior**

In a different approach than those presented beforehand, Han (1989) in his article presents two models on the evaluation of certain products by consumers according to whether the products of the country they are originated from are known to them or not. Even though this publication is often cited within the field of country-of-origin image, it also had a major influence on country image literature by including the two approaches on *country image's effect mechanisms*.

i) The "*halo effect*" of country image operates when no prior information is available on a product. In this case consumers rely on their general knowledge of a country to discover and comprehend the product. That is, they rely on country image as a source of information before purchasing a product. In this case, the country of origin has a direct effect on product beliefs along the following mechanism:

country image → product beliefs → product attitude

ii) country image's "*summary effects*" act as heuristics to simplify decisions. Its mechanisms is similar to brand image, that is, if a consumer already knows about products from the foreign country, country image serves as a summary of the consumer's knowledge about the product. This has a direct effect on their attitudes along the following mechanism:

product beliefs (information) → country image → product attitude

In connection with Han's work, Li et al. (1995) formulate the following criticism: literature does not take into account *the intermediary effect of country image*. In their view, country of origin has only an indirect effect on the evaluation of products and of their quality, but it first activates country image. The authors assert that consumers develop their opinion about a country based on their prior experience. This experience is recalled when having to evaluate a given product (or its quality).

*Three mechanisms* of country image effects are highlighted within the literature: (1) cognitive, (2) affective and (3) normative (Johansson, 1989; Sauer et.al., 1991; Verlegh-Steenkamp, 1999; Brijs et.al., 2011). country image in these cases is a carrier of information in the product purchase process.

The *cognitive* evaluation can occur (1) along a halo effect (Erickson et.al., 1984; Johansson et.al. 1985), (2) a heuristic effect (Manrai et.al., 1998) or (3) through a cognitive elaboration (Hong-Wyer, 1989, 1990). During the *affective* stage a transfer of evaluation takes place, that is, the consumer evaluates a product originating from a given country relying on non-rational factors (e.g. feelings, symbols, etc.) (Brijs et.al., 2011). *Normative* effects are based on social identity, i.e. the consumer evaluates a product according to how that product's country of origin relates to their own norms and values (Brijs et.al., 2011). According to Brijs et.al. (2011) these effects work simultaneously (and in connection with each other) rather than separately (Li-Wyer, 1994).

#### **3.3. The dimensions of country brand (nation brand)**

Recent studies on country branding (nation branding), similarly to the multidimensional approaches of country image, include an effort to determine the dimension thereof. Country brands can be studied along similar dimensions than country image.

According to Fan (2006, p. 7.), “[a] nation brand offers no tangible product or service; instead, it represents and encompasses a wide variety of factors and associations.” The dimensions referred to by the author are the following:

- i. place – geography, tourist attractions;
- ii. natural resources, local products;
- iii. people – race, ethnic groups;
- iv. history;
- v. culture;
- vi. language;
- vii. political and economic systems;
- viii. social institutions;
- ix. infrastructure;
- x. famous persons (the face);
- xi. picture or image.

According to De Vicente (2004, p. 2.) there is a “need for countries to brand themselves on four different dimensions (public diplomacy, tourism, exports, foreign direct investment) and in an integrated manner”.

According to Anholt (2000, p. 13.) the dimensions of a nation brand are as follows: (1) tourism, (2) export, (3) politics, (4) investments and immigration into the country, (5) culture and heritage, (6) people.

The following sub-chapters present several conceptually more complex approaches.

### **3.3.1. Gudjonsson's nation's brand portfolio**

Gudjonsson (2005, p. 287.) in his study completes the traditional country image dimensions with further factors. The article is based upon Porter's (1998) often cited study on the competitive advantages of nations. Porter (1998, p. 71) states that the competitiveness of a country is a function of four factors:

- i. Factor conditions (production, infrastructure, human resources, competition within the industry)
- ii. Demand conditions (home market demand to the products and services of the given industry)
- iii. Related and supporting industries (existence or non-existence of related or supporting domestic industries)
- iv. Firm strategy, structure and rivalry (creation, development and management settings of domestic firms, nature of domestic competition)

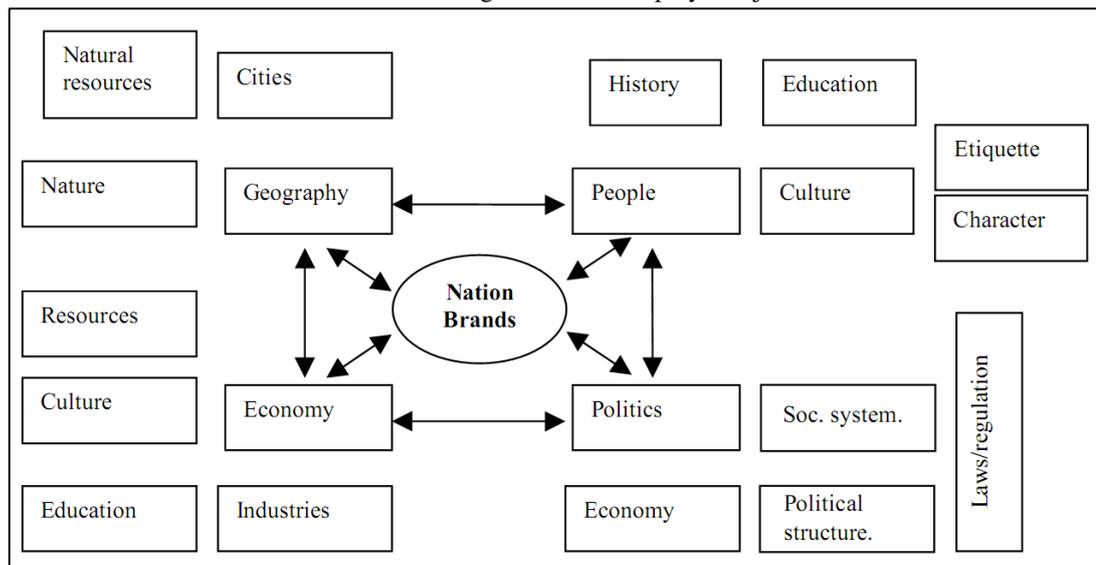
Gudjonsson, based on a firm literature background, completes the above list of economic factors by further (among others) political, cultural and geographical (and indirectly, communication) aspects.

The "nation brand portfolio" can be divided into four main categories: (1) people and culture, (2) politics, structure, government and policies, (3) economy, industries, companies and brands, and (4) geographical attributes (Gudjonsson, 2005, p. 288). In the author's opinion, all of these categories affect and add to the perceptions of other nations of a given country. Therefore they can also indirectly, by building country image, affect the perceptions of brands originating from the country.

Figure 6 shows the Nation Branding Influential Map designed by Gudjonsson.

**Figure 6.:**

Nation Branding Influential Map by Gudjonsson



Source: Gudjonsson, 2005, p. 289.

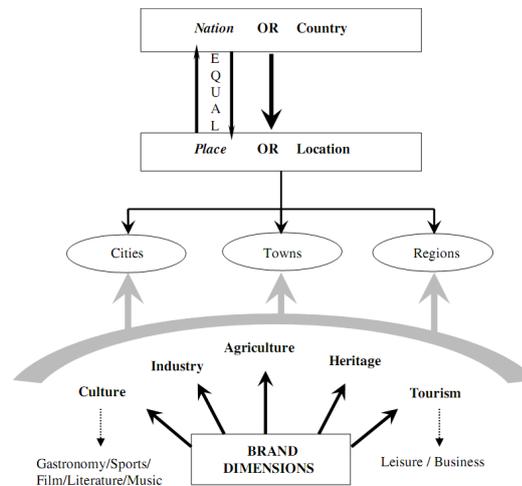
One can formulate as a criticism to the above model that the relationships between the dimensions are not sufficiently clarified. The map alone can be confusing in determining which factors are connected and how they affect the evaluation of country image. Furthermore, the author also fails to give a thorough description of the relationship between the four main categories.

### 3.3.2. Place brand dimensions by Hanna and Rowley

Hanna and Rowley (2008) conceptualize the dimensions of nation as a brand as a notion related to place branding. Their study (a content analytical literature review) gives an overview of the fields and geographical areas related to place branding. As a result they distinguish between the following four country brand dimensions: (1) culture, (2) industry, (3) agriculture, (4) heritage, (5) tourism. The relationships are shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7.**

Place brand dimensions by Hanna and Rowley



Source: Hanna – Rowley, 2008, p. 65.

One can formulate as a criticism to the above model – similarly to Gudjonsson’s model – that the relationships between the dimensions are not sufficiently clarified. One can hardly deduce from the figure how the identified dimensions affect country image evaluation. At the same time the model gives a fair overview of the different levels (national vs. regional) of approaches used within the studies in the field.

### 3.4. Further dimensions of country (nation) brand perception

As seen in the case of country image, the evaluation of a country is influenced by many other dimensions than those already unveiled. A similar mechanism can be observed in the case of country (nation) brand concepts.

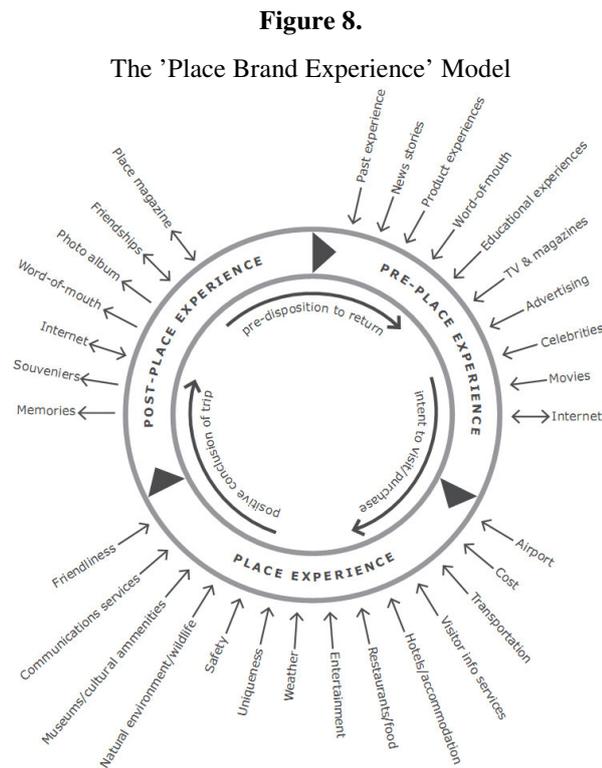
Kotler et al (1997) and Gudjonsson (2005) point out that the perception of nation brands equally depends on consumers’ personal background, experience and stereotypes about a given nation’s brand and about the services and reliability thereof.

In addition, Anholt (2000) incorporated into his Nation Brand Hexagone the *potential investor approach* and also that of personal experience which may have implications for the assessment of a country brand.

In Allen’s (2007) interpretation the role of stakeholders equally arises. In his approach stakeholders might include the following groups: (1) event organizers, (2) transport companies, (3) hotel owners, (4) government organizations, (5) population, (6) media, (7) specialized service providers outside of the tourism industry, (8) everyone that might come into contact with a visitor. In addition, Allen highlights the role of personal experience as a particularly determining factor. The author posits that the experience related to a place brand develops well before actually travelling to the given country,

through a “pre-place experience”. This is followed by the actual experience (i.e. “place experience”) which is in turn ensued by subsequent memories and “post-place experience”. Each step strengthens the following one. Gilmore (2002) among others studies this self-reinforcing process referring to it as a “dynamic cycle”. According to the latter approach, physical experiences make up the concept of “place experience. Moreover, the expectations towards a place can be categorized into two main groups: past experience (memories and loyalty) and communication (acquired through word-of-mouth and brand communications).

Figure 8 illustrates the related relationships.



Source: Allen, 2003, in: Allen, 2007, p. 63.

In another approach, Eitel és Spiekermann (2007, p. 2.) posit that “[t]he existing associations [...] consolidate themselves into the brand core, which bundles them together and maps out the central characteristics”. This goes beyond a mere process of brand and logo design and equally comprises a set of social processes. The design of a place brand starts with the creation of an internal image (realized self-image) and an external image (realized self-perception) and it is followed by a goal (i.e. wish) image. In this sense, one can address a place brand along two dimension pairs: (1) present vs. past and (2) planning vs. effect. That is, the evaluation of a place brand is greatly influenced by the inhabitants’ self-image as well as by the external image of the country.

### 3. 5. A critical analysis of the literature on the dimensions of country image and country brands

As attested by the literature, country image can be treated as a *multidimensional image construct*. At the same time, authors are not unanimous on the nature and number of the dimensions thereof and are often mixed with product dimensions.

According to our content analysis of the literature, **the main dimensions of country image are as follows: (1) economy, (2) politics, (3) geography, (4) history, (5) culture, (6) people.** Additional dimensions might be linked to these dimensions, e.g. the feeling of similarity, attitudes towards people, etc.

One can draw up a similar dimensional map in the case of country brands, where the most often cited dimensions are: (1) tourism, (2) culture, heritage, (3) economy, industry, (4) politics, (5) investment, (6) people.

In addition one can often meet product dimensions in the different interpretations. We however do not agree with the approaches in the literature that treat *product image attributes* (e.g. design, quality, price) as dimensions of country image. In our opinion, the perception of products, services can not be traced back in every case to the evaluation of a given country. On the other hand, treating these elements (e.g. price, design) as country image dimensions might lead to conceptual difficulties and contradictions. Therefore, **a simplified identification of product dimensions as country image dimensions in our opinion is not a viable approach to the subject.**

At the same time even the well-known and tested *dimensions are often mixed conceptually within the literature*. Many authors confuse the *antecedents of country image* (influencing factors) with the *consequences* thereof (impact factors). In addition, here too, one can observe that country image-related concepts are mixed up: the concepts of stereotypes, attitudes and associations often come up within different interpretations.

In our opinion, one can distinctly identify a *set of dimensions* (see the 11 dimensions cited beforehand) that are idiosyncratic (i.e. are genuine determining factors and not antecedents nor consequences) and can be characterized into the three groups appearing in attitude theory (i.e. affective, cognitive, conative) (for a logical framework).

According to the literature we can eliminate 3 different domains of country image: i) general level of country image (elements and dimensions of it) ii) influencing factors of country image iii) impact of country image on consumers' behaviour. **All of these areas are examined relations in our doctoral research.**

Based on the analysis beforehand, one can distinguish six main categories (among the eleven identified) that define clearly the components and influencing factors of a country's image (see e.g. Chapter 3.1.)

The literature review shows that *country brand dimensions are almost identical to country image dimensions*. **This leads to believe that country image can be considered a country brand image, without compromising content validity.** In this respect the lack of elements adapted from brand theory (e.g. in the case of country brand dimensions) can be considered a conceptual flaw of this field of study. In our opinion the specificity of brand-focused approaches does not emerge in the studied approaches that consider country image as a country brand, specifically because of the hardly differing set of dimensions under consideration. Therefore (at least at its current state of development) the two approaches need not to be differentiated. At the same time we believe that the current dynamics of the field of research point to the conclusion that the flaw will shortly be addressed.

It has equally been seen that the evaluation of a country is influenced by several other dimensions than those presented beforehand. **Additional factors other than country dimensions (country characteristics) also influence the perception of country image and that of a country brand** (e.g. country size, distance from target country). **Individual characteristics** (education, gender, self-confidence) **equally have a determining role.** We do not agree with the approach, however, that these elements only surface during the evaluation of products (see for instance the results of country-of-origin effect studies presented beforehand). We believe that these factors may also impact on the overall evaluation of a country – this is confirmed by our literature review. The study of these relationships is a further relevant approach to the subject and we therefore deem it relevant to include the various factors into our theoretical model. Furthermore, given that the literature is not consistent in the use of various terms and acronyms, we fall into line with several authors in the field in advancing the necessity to develop a *common glossary* for this area of research.

#### **4. THEORY OF COUNTRY EQUITY – MEASURING COUNTRY IMAGE AND COUNTRY BRAND, METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A following important methodological issue is to study the available measurement tools for country image and country brands.

Country image, according to the latest approaches, can be measured in several ways. The most obvious solution is to measure it to borrow indicators from the *tourism* industry (number of nights spent, inbound tourism, etc.) These tools allow us to monitor the evaluation of a country and the effectiveness and profitability of targeted country image (touristic image) building actions and campaigns. This method, however, is bounded by presenting one-sided results by ignoring other important country image dimensions other than tourism (e.g. economy, culture). This method is deemed acceptable for measuring country (destination) image mainly by authors and practitioners in the fields of destination image, destination marketing and destination management.

Another common method used in practice is that of *financial* evaluation. In this case, the country's performance and its evaluation is measured by relevant economic and financial indicators (e.g. GDP growth, investment trends, financial risk analysis of the country, various country reports, etc.). This method of evaluation, however, ignores additional, relevant, factors such as the evaluation of a country's culture or that of its tourism, etc.

One of the most commonly used economic approach (and most closely related to assessing country image) is the *evaluation based on FDI* (foreign direct investments). Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) highlight that FDI-based research often ignores or undervalues "soft powers" such as the destination country's image, while these clearly affect investors' country choices. However, it is still possible to elaborate relevant financial analyses based on the level of FDI.

Another more and more frequently used method is that of *accounting* evaluation. This approach, based on brand equity measures (related to the advent of country brand theory) assesses the evaluation of a country as a brand. Its most basic principle stems from the so-called „royalty relief" approach. This latter gives a quantitative evaluation of a brand's goodwill in case it were "sold or leased" (i.e. of the genuine value of a brand, without the equity stemming from the related respective tangible assets). To a certain degree this approach converges to a genuine fair value evaluation methodology, even though its approach remains somewhat abstract and subject to professional debate. (In accounting, brand equity evaluation is a topical subject of debate – several

recommendations exist for dealing with the problem [for further information on the topic, see Juhász, 2004])

Finally, a fairly common practice within *academic research* (considering the nature of the subject) remains a marketing-focused approach.

In the field of marketing the use of *country image scales* in the most common practice to measure country image. Several scales are available in the literature (e.g. the scales by Nagashima, 1970; Martin-Eroglu, 1993; Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Gallup, 2000 etc.). Although all of these scales possess a fair amount of drawbacks (coming from their lack of sophistication) they bear undisputable advantages, such as a comprehensive range of measured dimensions, a possibility to draw an overall country image, etc. Due to these advantages, the latter approach will be adopted for the research of the present dissertation.

Another, increasingly popular approach can be related to country branding. The evaluation of *country brand equity* is still a subject of debate. However, it can be stated that there is a growing interest in country equity measurement which can be considered a potential future direction for the related field of research. Based on the above and on the fact that determining country equity lies in the focal point of the present thesis, the country equity approach will also be presented in the following chapters.

In our presentation of the methodological considerations, we first present the literature and practice of *country image measures*. Following this we give an overview of the relevant *place brand evaluation methods*, followed by a presentation of the so-called *brand equity measurement methodology*. During this chapter we will adopt a theory of science approach although we will also present a number of practical implications for the subject. The chapter is concluded by a critical analysis of the concepts.

### **4.1. The measurability of country image: measurement procedures, marketing approaches**

According to the literature, the study of national stereotypes, and country perceptions can be dated back to the 1930s, while the research on country-of-origin effects gained ground in the 1960s.

Usunier (2006) in his literature review identified more than 1000 publications that are somehow related to the topic. However - as described earlier - the focus has shifted in recent decades from the measurement of country-of-origin effects to the study and evaluation of country image as a *complex construct*. According to Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) the traditional country-of-origin effect studies merely allowed researchers to assess whether consumers prefer given products according to their country of origin compared to products from other countries. In their view, more recent

studies allow them to address the causality effects of these situations, i.e. to measure a country's image, leaving aside other factors.

Despite the fact that there seems to be a general agreement in the literature about the importance and usefulness of measuring country image, there seems to be no common ground on the *conceptualization* and *operationalization* thereof (Laroche et al., 2005). The differences in opinion are based on three factors: (1) conceptual differences, (2) structural approaches and (3) differences in sample sizes (Lala - Allred - Chakraborty, 2009).

On the *conceptual level*, a main difference between researchers is whether they consider country image as a "halo" or a "summary" construct (see Han, 1989). Country image can appear within measurement methodology as follows: (1) a dummy variable, (2) as a holistic network (see Niss, 1996; Askegaard-Ger, 1997), (3) a set of opinions and beliefs, (4) as an attitude construct and (5) as a three-component attitude construct (Brijs et.al, 2011).

*Structural differences* lie in the quantity and structure of dimensions involved, while the *differences in the sample size* are due to methodological differences in the different studies.

In the following we present the various analytical methods used in country image literature. The used methodologies show a wide variety, as can be seen in Table 9. For space constraint reasons, we summarize the methodologies in a table, and refer to their key aspects during the following presentation of the presentation of our own research design.

**Table 9.**

Used approaches and measurement methodology in country image studies

APPROACH/MEASUREMENT METHODOLOGY	AUTHOR(S)
Literature review (scale development)	Wang – Lamb, 1980, 1983; Papadopoulos, 1986; Yaprak et al., 1986; Moeller, 1997; Allred et al., 1999; Verlegh, 2001; Brijs, 2006; Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2007
Use of existing scales	Papadopoulos, 1986; Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Heslop – Papadopoulos, 1993; Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987; Pisharodi – Parameswaran, 1992; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994; Haubl, 1996; Li et al., 1997; Lee – Ganesh, 1999; Knight – Calantone, 2000; Papadopoulos et al., 2000; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 2002; Knight et al., 2003; Nebenzahl et al., 2003; Heslop et al., 2004; Laroche et al., 2005; Pereira et al., 2005; d’Astous – Boujbel, 2007; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2007
Qualitative study – focus group interviews	Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Li et al., 1997; Allred et al., 1999; Verlegh, 2001; Ittersum et al., 2003; Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2007
Qualitative study – expert interviews/deduction	Desborde, 1990; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Li et al., 1997; Ittersum et al., 2003; Lala- Allred – Chakraborty, 2007
Qualitative study – content analysis	Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Kleppe-Mossberg, 2005; Hanna – Rowley, 2008 (country branding)
Qualitative study – in-depth interviews	Ittersum et al., 2003; Puaschunder et al., 2004 (in: Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009)
Other, exploratory methods – tests, interviews, image associations	Schweiger, 1988, 1990, 1992; Schewiger – Kurz, 1997; Weber – Grundhöfer, 1991; Kühn, 1993; (all of the above in: Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009); Chao – Rajendran, 1993; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Verlegh, 2001; Mittelstaedt et al., 2004; Brijs, 2006; d’Astous – Boujbel, 2007;

Souce: own elaboration, 2012

It is obvious from the above that the most commonly used methodology in the literature is the use of existing (and relevant) scales to measure country image, although interviews and focus groups are equally wide-spread. Concerning country branding, Eitel and Spiekermann (2007, p. 3.) also highlight the importance of methodologies deriving from practical approaches (e.g. controlling systems [tests of efficiency] or image tests). In their opinion, the tests of awareness (spontaneous and aided) and evoked set analyses are equally valid measurement tools.

Several questions arise for which scales to use and how to use them. Most country image analyses (similarly to traditional image analyses) use (7 or 11-point) semantic differential scales or (5, 6, 7 or 9-point) Likert scales (Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984;

Nebenzahl – Jaffe – Usunier, 2000). There are also differences in *the ordering and formatting of the scales*: (1) in the first type, the parameters to be examined appear clearly assigned to the given country (Q1 format), while (2) in the second type, one can evaluate more than one country for each attribute (Q2 format) (see Table 10). While comparing the two formats, Jaffe and Nebenzahl (1984) find that the first questionnaire type (more close to the traditional semantic differential scale format) usually performs better in measuring country image.

**Table 10.**

Use of alternative survey types within country image analyses

Q1 FORMAT	Q2 FORMAT
Bon – Ollivier, 1979	Bannister – Saunders, 1978
Chasin – Jaffe, 1979	Nagashima, 1970, 1977
Darling – Kraft, 1977	Niffenberger – White – Marmet, 1980
Halfhill, 1980	Rierson, 1966, 1967

Source: Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984, p. 463.

The following methods are available to *explore the construct of country image*: computing averages (e.g. Nagashima, 1970, 1977), factor analysis (e.g. Cattin et al. 1982; Han – Terpstra, 1988; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984; Johansson – Nebenzahl, 1986; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 2002; Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2009) or meta analysis (e.g. Hunter – Schmidt – Jackson 1982; Hunter – Schmidt, 1990).

## 4. 2. Known country image studies and scales

In the following we present the most significant *country image studies*, with special regards to the employed *scales* and *measurement methodology*. During their presentation we endeavor to indicate the origin and all known subsequent uses for each scale.

The literature review shows that only a total of 30 studies assess *the measurement of country image as such*. Moreover, 40 further studies also deal with product image (Roth-Diamantopoulos, 2009). As seen earlier, during the conceptual delimitation of country image definitions, most country image studies are at the same *time country-of-origin studies*, i.e. their measurement models include both product-specific and country-specific dimensions (for a literature review on country-of-origin studies, see Verlegh – Steenkamp, 1999; Nebenzahl – Jaffe – Usunier, 2000; Roth - Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Many studies resort to using existing scales without bringing any significant modifications to them (e.g. Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987; Knight – Calantone, 2000) Still others use existing scales but get different results (e.g. Lee – Ganesh, 1999; Pereira et al. 2005) (Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009)

#### 4. THEORY OF COUNTRY EQUITY

Table 11 gives an overview of the known country image scales., and as it shows, *most country image or country-of-origin studies use existing and already tested measurement methods*. It should also be noted that there are only a few commonly used scales: there are only 4 or 5 widely cited and used original scales. This fact will play an important role in our own research design: in our opinion, there *are too few properly validated measurement methods within the field of research*. The same question is addressed by several authors in the literature (see e.g. Shimp et al., 1993; Pappu et al., 2007; Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009; Samiee, 2009) and it is subject to one of the current debates in the area.

**Table 11.**  
Known country image scales and their sources

AUTHOR(S) (+SUBSEQUENT USE)	SUBJECT OF STUDY (COUNTRY, PRODUCT)	SCALE OF ORIGIN
Papadopoulos, 1986 (Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Heslop – Papadopoulos, 1993)	country and product	Nagashima, 1970, 1977; Darling – Kraft, 1977; Kelman, 1965
Yaprak - Parameswaran., 1986 (Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987; Knight – Calantone, 2000)	country and product	literature review
Pisharodi – Parameswaran, 1992 (Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994, 2002)	country and product	Yaprak – Parameswaran, 1986; Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987
Martin – Eroglu, 1993 (Li et al., 1997)	country	own design
Haubl, 1996	country and product	Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987; McGee – Spiro, 1991; Pisharodi – Parameswaran, 1992; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1993
Lee – Ganesh, 1999	country and product	Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987
Papadopoulos et al., 2000	country and product	Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Heslop – Papadopoulos, 1993
Verlegh, 2001	country and product	own design
Laroche et al., 2005	country and product	Nagashima, 1977; Papadopoulos, 1986; Li et al. 1997; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2000)
Pereira et al., 2005	country and product	Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994
d’Astous – Boujbel, 2007	country and product	own design
Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2007	country and product	Nagashima, 1970, 1977; Martin – Eroglu, 1993
Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2007	country	literature review

Source: own elaboration, based on Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009

### 4.3. Country brand equity measurement approaches – The concept of 'country equity'

A focal point of the present dissertation's research concept is *the incorporation of country brand approaches into country image measurement tools*. Below, we give an introduction to the related and relevant elements of brand equity theory. Later we present the different possibilities to adapt brand equity theory to the field of place branding. To end this chapter, we present the rising concept of *country equity*.

#### 4.3.1. Measuring place brand

Although there are examples of town promotion from as early as the 1850s (Ward, 1998), place marketing can still be considered a new field within academic research (Kotler et al., 1993, Zenker – Martin, 2011) Early sources mainly deal with promotional aspects of given places, towns. According to the literature, Ashworth and Voogd (1990) seem to be the first authors to endeavor bringing a strategic approach to the area. In the following years, the research focus gradually shifted from place marketing to place branding, especially during the early 2000s (see e.g. Kavartzis, 2008; Zenker-Martin, 2011). However, the literature often denounces the lack of general agreement among researchers, and even of *recommendations on a standard definition of place brand and on a standard measurement methodology* (Jacobsen, 2009; Zenker-Martin, 2011) According to Zenker (2011) academic research ought to bridge this gap by setting up at least a theoretical and conceptual framework.

Pike (2005) acknowledges that destinations, places bear far more dimensions than consumer goods or other services. As a result, their measurement and evaluation are equally more complex. Cai (2002) and Boo et al. (2009) share this point of view by highlighting that the complexity of destinations pose a challenge for branding activities. At the same time they deem that the literature equally lacks of guidelines as for the evaluation of branding activities (see e.g. Blain – Levy – Ritchie, 2005). However they propose a consumer-oriented approach in the case of destination brands. According to Zenker and Martin (2011) it is necessary to measure the *effectiveness of place marketing activities*. This latter, however, have not gone beyond the mere measure of tourist nights and media appearances so far. At the same time the authors believe that an another flaw of the practical applications of country branding is that they ignore the characteristics of the various target groups as well as the complexity of places as products. To make up for this problem, they propose a complex methodology, that includes a both consumer and brand focus (dual value creation) and expresses brand equity in the eyes of the population and that in connection with the brand itself.

Thus, the literature often deplores the lack of consensus on the measurement methodology for place brands. Most place brands are aimed to define the identity of a

place and its attributes. Related studies most often use *case studies* and *secondary data* for analysis (Lee – Jaim, 2009; Vanolo, 2008; Zenker, 2011) This approach, however, only provides descriptive results without exploring place brands' dimensions and the *casual relationships* between them.

However, according to the literature the perceived attributes of places by consumers could have a strong influence on their behavior. The descriptive attributes often ignore the cognitive mapping by consumers of the attributes i.e. in what ways consumers perceive the expressions, appearance of a given place (see e.g. Zenker et al., 2009; Zenker, 2011).

Only a negligible part of our sources use more than one method in order to provide a complex and comprehensive study. The majority of works on the subject use *qualitative techniques* to study associations related to place brands and *quantitative methods* (questionnaires) to study the different attributes and dimensions of place brands.

According to Zenker (2011, p. 43.), in order to overcome the aforementioned problems, the measure of place brands ought to integrate the three following approaches: (1) brand associations of consumers about the given place (using qualitative methods), (2) uncovering brand attributes (based on Aaker [1997], using quantitative methods, e.g. standardized questionnaires), (3) putting all previous results into context, comparing with other brands (mixed methods, projective techniques).

According to the approach developed by Sinclair (2004) the complex evaluation methodology of nation brands might include the following components: (1) financial evaluation (taking into account a country's GDP and other financial indicators), (2) the brand's contribution to profits, (3) category expected life, (4) brand knowledge structure.

Most of the authors agree on that the common use of qualitative and quantitative methods as *complex, mixed research methods* are the most appropriate for country brand evaluations. (Sinclair, 2004; Zenker, 2011)

#### **4.3.2. The concept of Country Equity**

There is a consensus in the literature that brand equity theory can be extended to other concepts, e.g. to countries. In order to overcome the flaws demonstrated in the previous chapters, the *concept of country equity* has been developed. Country equity theory is based on *brand equity theory* and takes into account the growing importance of country branding approaches.

According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006, p. 66.) „Johansson and Nebenzahl (1986) made the first attempt to monetize the country image effect by measuring the relative consumer-based value of the images of different countries.” In addition, they also believe that „country image leads directly to country equity.” (p. 63.), similarly to the brand equity approach.

However, according to Kleppe, Iversen and Stensaker (2002, p. 2.) “[t]he term ‘country equity’ was introduced by Shimp et al. to describe ‘that portion of consumer affect toward a brand or product that is derived purely from the product’s associations with a particular country’. These associations, also termed ‘country-related intangible assets’ by Kim and Chung, could be technical advancement, prestige, workmanship, innovativeness, design, economy and service.”

As seen previously, the conceptualization of country image as a country brand is spreading in acceptance within academic circles. At the same time *there are few (though a constantly growing number of) examples of a joint study of brand equity and country image* (Roth – Diamantopoulos – Montesinos, 2008). Moreover, most of these study country equity in connection with the perception of products, i.e., similarly to countr-of-origin effects, they consider country equity as an added value to the overall value of products (see e.g. Shimp – Samiee – Madden, 1993; Shocker – Srivastava – Ruekert, 1994; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2006, 2007). In this approach, “country equity” is the added value of a country’s name to a product or brand originated from the country (based on Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2006, 2007). Kotler and Gertner (2002, p. 249.) define country equity as the emotional value resulting from consumers’ association of a brand with a country.

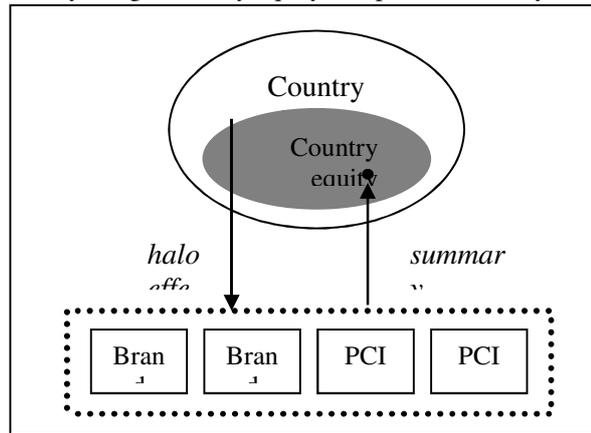
According to Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) a country, similarly to a firm, produces many products and possesses therefore several country equities respective to each product category and each market. In the authors’ interpretation, country brands can constitute of a multi-level country brand structure. In this structure brand equity has a separate country and product level (see e.g. Douglas – Craig – Nijssen, 2001), though all levels and applications ought to preserve the essence of country brand (see e.g. deChernaton – Halliburton – Bernath, 1995; Papadopoulos, 2004; Pappu – Quester, 2010).

Parallel with the development of the research area, the context of research became broader. According to Papadopoulos and Heslop (2003, p. 427.) country equity is “a set of country assets and liabilities linked to a country”. Developing the idea, Papadopoulos (2004) states that these assets and liabilities can be both perceived and real.

Kleppe, Iversen and Stensaker (2002, p. 63.) state that country equity can be considered a part of country image, along the relationship depicted in Figure 9. The model equally includes the study of Han’s (1989) “halo” and “summary” effects in relation with their effects to products’ and brands’ evaluation.

**Figure 9.**

Country image, country equity and product-country image

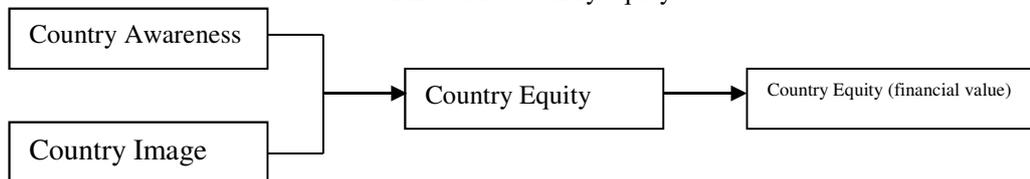


Source: Kleppe et al., 2002, p. 3.

According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006, p. 63.) szerint country equity is made up of the following dimensions: country awareness and country image (itself originating from country-of-origin effects and country associations) (Figure 10). In their understanding, country equity is not part of country image, rather its effect which originates from consumers' evaluation (especially of products).

**Figure 10.**

A model for country equity



Source: Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006, pp. 63-66.

According to the aforementioned approaches, the concept of country equity is no less than consumers' evaluation of a given country along country image and other dimensions. It means, that there is only a few attempt in the literature to evaluate the real value of a country brand. (Pappu – Quester, 2010)

Table 12 gives an overview of additional definitions of country equity found in the literature.

**Table 12.**  
Key literature dealing with country equity

AUTHOR(S)	DEFINITION	LEVEL OF CONCEPTUALIZATION	FIELD OF STUDY
Shimp – Samiee – Madden (1993, p. 328.)	“Country equity serves to disentangle the equity contained in a brand [...] from that contained in the country with which the brand is associated”	consumer	country-of-origin effects (COO)
Kim (1995)	n.a.	consumer	COO and brand equity
Thakor – Katsanis (1997)	n.a. (product category-specific concept)	consumer	COO and brand equity
Pappu – Quester (2001, p. 2.)	“The value endowed by the name of the country on to a product”	consumer	COO and place branding
Iversen – Hem (2001, p. 141.)	“Commercial value that a country possess due to positive or negative product related associations and affect in a given target market”	consumer	COO
Kotler – Gertner (2002)	n.a.	country	place branding
Papadopoulos – Heslop (2002, p. 295.)	“The value that may be embedded in perceptions by various target markets about the country, and the ways in which these perceptions may be used to advance its interest and those of its constituents”	country	COO and place branding
Papadopoulos – Heslop (2003, p. 427.)	“A set of country assets and liabilities linked to a country, its name and symbols, that add to or subtract from the value provided by the country’s outputs to its various internal and external publics”	country	COO and place branding
Papadopoulos (2004, p. 43.)	“The real and/or perceived assets and liabilities that are associated with a place (country) and distinguish it from others”	country	place branding
Viosca – Bergiel – Balsmeier (2005)	n.a.	country	place branding
Jaffe – Nebenzahl (2006)	n.a.	consumer	COO and place branding
Pappu – Quester – Cooksey (2007, p. 728.)	“Brands from the same country share images or associations, which is referred to as country equity”	consumer	COO and brand equity

Source: based on Roth – Diamantopoulos – Montesinos, 2008, p. 582.

Researchers in the field generally agree on the fact that country equity is the value consumers associate to when hearing the country’s name. However few sources attempt to measure the exact value thereof (Pappu – Quester, 2010). Most authors consider country equity as a country brand dimension appearing within product or brand equity (see e.g. Shimp et al., 1993; Pappu – Quester, 2001; Kleppe et al., 2002). Others

consider it as a country brand equity (a separate construct) that also affects product evaluation (see e.g. Thakor – Katsanis, 1997; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Maheswaran – Chen, 2006; Roth et.al., 2008).

The extension of classical brand equity theory to countries was first attempted by Shimp, Samiee and Madden (1993), soon followed by several other authors (among others: Pappu – Quester, 2001, 2010; Yoo – Donthu, 2001; Papadopoulos – Heslop, 2002; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2005). However Roth et al. (2008) were the first to empirically verify theory.

There are many examples of brand equity dimensions surfacing in country equity approaches. Several dimensions of classical brand equity theory (e.g. brand personality, brand loyalty) were very soon adapted to country equity theory (leading to the respective concepts of *country personality* [d'Astous – Boujbel, 2007] and *country loyalty* [Paswan – Kulkarni – Ganesh, 2003]). Papadopoulos (1993), and Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001) also note that consumers hold associations related to countries (*country associations*). Pappu and Quester (2001, p. 2.) highlight, among others, the dimensions of country equity, which are as follows: (1) country awareness, (2) country associations, (3) country loyalty, (4) perceived quality. Similarly to brand equity attributes, these dimensions can be identified and measured. In their subsequent work, they develop these above dimensions as follows: brand equity encompasses five distinct dimensions, namely: (1) country awareness, (2) macro country image, (3) micro country image, (4) perceived quality, (5) country loyalty (Pappu-Quester, 2010). As the dimensions clearly show (e.g. the presence of a micro country image or a perceived quality dimension), this approach assesses the effect of country equity on the evaluation of products originated from a particular country, based on the approaches by Aaker (1991) Keller (1993) applied to countries (Yoo – Donthu, 2001; Pappu – Quester, 2010).

#### **4.3.3. Consumer-oriented brand equity in place brand theories**

As seen previously, several authors deal with the conceptualization of country equity as the equity of a country brand, using the consumer-oriented brand equity theory.

According to the recent theories *the country equity equals with the equity of country equity, as an individual construct*, based on the so-called consumer –oriented approach of brand equity.

A *consumer-oriented approach* is commonplace in the place, country and destination branding literature. To measure brand equity, this approach integrates the models on one hand by Aaker (1996) and on the other by Keller (1993). Yoo and Donthu's (2001) concept is equally of common usage. In the following we give an overview of the above-mentioned consumer-oriented brand equity approaches and their adaptations to the literature of place branding.

It is generally accepted in the field that the measurement of country equity can be most effectively carried out along the dimension of classical brand equity, adapted to countries. To support this, researchers have recourse to the *associative network memory model*, which views semantic memory and mental images of consumers as consisting of a set of nodes and links (Anderson, 1990, 1993, in: Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 277.). The associative network memory model stems from the field of cognitive psychology and was already used by Keller (1993) to develop the original brand equity model. According to Anderson (1996, in: Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 277.) *consumers' memories store information hierarchically in a node-link structure*, where, in some cases, to a given piece of information given associations would be joined. Accordingly, information about a country will lead to associations which will be stored in a hierarchical order in consumers' minds, i.e. in a network. Each of these associations can have direction and strength and can therefore affect each other in several ways (e.g. having a bi-directional, back and forth effect between pieces of information and associations).

The associative memory model serves as an adequate base in understanding and defining the dimensions of country equity.

In the followings the theory of consumer-based brand equity and its adaptation in place branding theories are interpreted.

The interest towards brand equity (originally based on financial approaches) can be traced back to the 1990s (Barwise, 1993). According to Keller (2003) that along the growing importance of brand equity approaches, marketing strategy also came to the center of interest by giving a focus to both managers and researchers. A number of approaches to brand equity exist in the field of brand management (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993, 2003; Lassar – Mittal – Sharma, 1995; Yoo – Donthu, 2001). In addition, an intense debate is in progress on defining the concept and measurement tools of brand equity (Yoo – Donthu, 2001). However, the literature generally considers utility as the base unit when a consumer comes to compare a brand with its competitors (deChernatony – McDonald, 2003).

According to the classical approach, brand equity is intended to express the *economic value of brands* (Aaker, 1991, 1996a; Keller, 1993). *The value of a brand for a consumer* is essentially based on four factors (Dish, 1996, p. 306.): (1) long-term, reliable supply, (2) risk-free repurchase, (3) fast purchasing, (4) importance of trust in the manufacturer. All in all, *for its owner*, brand equity represents the possibility of comparative advantage (Totth, 1996).

According to Kotler (1996, p. 660.) „the basic function of brand is to deliver the messages of best quality guarantee of a product and to provide a set of congruence of product attributes, benefits, and services”.

Researchers find that a positive brand equity brings about, among others, a positive future profit and cash flow and has an effect on consumers' willingness to pay a

premium, on their decision making and therefore on the brand owners market success (Yoo – Donthu, 2001).

In Aaker's (1991) view, brand equity is synonymous with *value* to the consumer. This value stems from the brand facilitating the processing of information and their decision making. It also ensure them a certain security and certainty in their purchasing. Finally, it results in consumer satisfaction.

According to Keller (1993) brand equity enables greater revenue opportunities for the firm. At the same time it reduces consumers' need for information search. It also contributes to the efficiency of marketing communications and brand extensions.

In Yoo – Donthu's (2001) interpretation (referring to the general view in the field of consumer behavior) brand equity can be seen as the difference in the consumer response when facing an unbranded product or a traditional brand (marketing incentives and product attributes being equal).

According to Ford (2005), brand equity is the way a consumer evaluates a brand.

Bauer and Berács (2006, p. 170.) state that „brand equity is the set of brand attributes that enable a surplus of value for both the consumers and owners of a brand”. In the authors' opinion brand equity is a multidimensional construct and it can be attributed with a financial value.

According to Aaker (1996b, p. 9.) *brand equity* is composed of the following elements: (1) brand loyalty, (2) brand awareness, (3) perceived quality, (4) brand associations, (5) benefits related to brand ownership<sup>6</sup>

Keller's (1993, p. 7.) model contains two elements: (1) brand awareness and (2) image. Summarizing the classical models of brand equity, the literature generally accepts four distinct dimensions, often completed by several authors, with a fifth component. These are (in the followings we summarize both of the general brand equity, then the place branding approaches of each elements)

### **1) Awareness**

According to Aaker (1996b) brand awareness shows in what ways and to what extent a brand is present in the heads of its target audience (consumers) in a given continuum. In his definition, he states that brand awareness represents the consumer's ability to *recall* or *recognize* a given brand in a given product category. In his interpretation, brand awareness can be compared to a three-level pyramid where the top level corresponds to the top-of-mind awareness, where a given brand outstrips every other brand in a consumer's head. Most place brand studies concentrate on this latter level (Boo et al., 2009).

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<sup>6</sup> For space constraint reasons, we cannot present brand equity theory in its entirety. At the same time, several literature reviews and meta analyses are available on the subject (see e.g. Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

Brand awareness is equally a sub-dimension in Keller's (1993) brand equity approach and it is present as a main attribute in deCharnatony and McDonald's (2001) work. In addition, Keller (1993) specifies that brand awareness includes the concepts of brand recall (spontaneous) and recognition (aided).

Several authors state that brand awareness accounts for the most determining factor of consumer decision-making (see e.g. Webster, 2000; Boo et al., 2009). Brand awareness is equally an important antecedent to the perceived value of brands (Webster, 2000).

Place and destination marketing research studies awareness in connection with consumer decision-making (Woodside – Lysonsky, 1988; Goodall, 1993). Studies on consumer behavior find that awareness is no other than the first and necessary step of a purchase and repurchase decision. In addition, Baloglu (2001) asserts a positive relationship between awareness and image.

## **2) Image (associations)**

Image is the sum of different consumer perceptions (which may be related to previous personal experience or emotions) related to brands (Keller, 1993, 2003). In addition image is an important dimension of brand equity (Lassar et al. 1995; Keller, 1993, 2003; Cai, 2002).

Aaker's (1991) model refers to image as "associations". In the authors' interpretation, brand association is "anything linked in memory to a brand" and brand image is "a set of associations, usually in some meaningful way" (Aaker, 1991, p. 109.).

Authors generally accept that there is a positive relationship between image and perceived value (Tsai, 2005; Boo et al., 2009), and that image equally affects consumer loyalty (Cretu – Brodie, 2007, in: Boo et al., 2009).

The field of place and destination marketing (as well as several place marketing approaches) accepts image as an integral part of brand equity (Konecnik – Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009). In addition, image can also often be considered as part of brand personality (Boo et al., 2009)

However it can be stated that the positions on the measurement of brand equity and image are often mixed up. Image is generally accepted as a multidimensional construct. There is no common ground however as to its measurement (Boo. et al., 2009).

## **3) Perceived quality**

Perceived quality is one of the key dimensions of brand equity approaches (see e.g. Lassar et al., 1995; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). It is worth noting that the literature refers to brand quality and perceived quality as synonymous concepts (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1996). According to Aaker (1991, p. 85.) perceived quality is a "customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives". Similarly, Zeithaml (1988, p. 3.) defines perceived quality as a "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority".

In Yoo and Donthu's (2001, p. 3.) definition, perceived quality is "based on consumers' or users' [...] subjective evaluations of product quality". Keller (2003) identifies seven dimensions (performance, features, conformation quality, reliability, durability, serviceability, style and design) that define perceived quality. These dimension can mostly be employed in the case of products. In destination and place marketing studies, these dimensions are mostly employed in connection with country-of-origin effects and the evaluation of products and related (touristic) services (Boo et al., 2009).

Perceived quality is generally viewed as a direct antecedent of perceived value in the literature (see e.g.: Low – Lamb, 2000; Boo et al., 2009). The same relationship has been verified in the field of destination marketing (see e.g. Murphy et al., 2000; Konecnik – Gartner, 2007).

According to Boo et.al. (2009) the concept of customer-based brand equity and its measurement have emerged in tourism and hospitality settings and in discussing destination brands, elements including environment and service infrastructure should be considered in measuring destination brand performance.

#### **4) Loyalty**

Aaker (1991, p. 39) defines brand loyalty as "the attachment that a customer has to a brand". In the authors' model on brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996b) loyalty accounts for a key element. According to Lassar et al. (1995) perceived value induces consumer safety and certainty which then manifests itself in consumer loyalty and their willingness to pay a premium for the product. In Oliver's (1997) view, brand loyalty is the propensity of a consumer to consider a brand as their first choice in a purchase situation. Keller's (2003) model equally considers loyalty as a key factor for brand equity.

Loyalty is generally defined as an attitude or behavior in the literature, even though its conceptualization is not exempt of flaws (Boo. etal. 2009).

It can also be concluded that loyalty equally accounts for an important dimension for the fields of place and destination marketing and it is often included as a dimension (see e.g. Oppermann, 2000; Bloglu, 2001, 2002, Konecnik-Gartner, 2007; Boo et.al, 2009).

#### **v) Perceived value**

There is no widely accepted definition for perceived value (Parasuraman, 1997). The most wide-spread approach originates perceived value from price (Tsai, 2005).

According to Lassar et al. (1995) consumer brand choice is the effect of the perceived balance between a product's price and its utility. Studies show that perceived value is a multidimensional construct (Hall et al., 2001). In Aaker's (1995) famous model it is related to the perceived price to value ratio.

Literature equally shows that perceived value has a positive effect on prospective consumer behavior, among others, on repurchase intentions (Tsai, 2005) and loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988; Boo et.al, 2009).

According to the literature one can state that perceived value is less examined in place marketing studies, it is more relevant in destination image theories.

As a conclusion, one can summarize the essence of the above dimensions as follows (based on Bauer-Berács, 2006):

- i. *brand loyalty*: when in a given period of time, a consumer while rotating the purchase of different brands of a same product category, one same brand accounts for a decisive part of the purchases
- ii. *brand awareness*: degree to which consumers are aware of the existence of a brand
- iii. *perceived quality*: objective quality as perceived by consumers
- iv. *brand associations*: consumers' emotions and ideas related to a brand
- v. *brand advantages*: advantages related to brand ownership

In Keller's view (2003, p. 477.) brand equity is a multidimensional concept, that is so complex, that it requires various measurement methods. According to Pappu et al. (2005) the measurement of brand equity is still a challenging topic for researchers as there is no consensus in the field. (see e.g. Yoo – Donthu, 2001; de Chernatony – McDonald, 2003)

In addition, Law and Lamb (2000) state that even though brand equity can be considered a multidimensional construct, most dimensions are almost identical in each work on the topic.

#### **4.3.4. Measuring country equity**

Although the area of *country equity measurement* received an increased attention during the last decade, few empirical results and methodological approaches have contributed to developing the area (Pappu – Quester, 2010), despite the fact that, similarly to classical brand equity theory, the *necessity to control, measure the methods and effectiveness of branding activities is obvious* (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Pappu – Quester, 2010). The term "country equity" gained recognition with the introduction of the concept of country brand, as most scholars define *country equity as the value of a country brand* (Roth et al., 2008). Authors agree that country equity is a *multidimensional construct* best studied along a *consumer-focused approach* (Yoo – Donthu, 2001; Pappu – Quester, 2010).

Country equity measures have been scarce and as of today, they are limited to a *practical application* and therefore still subject to academic debate (based on Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006). Accordingly, brand equity measures can mostly be related to the

field of accounting, as the evaluation of brand equity (as an intangible asset) is commonplace (although not entirely unequivocal) in this area. Similarly to classical brand equity measurement and management, the concept of “country equity” has several advantages: among others, it can contribute to raise the efficiency of the positioning and communications of a country. Another advantage is the fact that the more positive is country equity, consumers the more consumers are inclined to be loyal, brand extensions are inclined to be more effective and a country can gain in bargaining power (Aaker, 1991; Pappu – Quester, 2010).

On the *theoretical* side one can also come across a *marketing-focused approach*, based on the concept of *consumer-focused brand equity* (see above). General approaches of branding distinguish between several factors: e.g. associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, awareness (based on Bennett, 1995; Aaker, 1996a,b; Keller, 1998).

Country equity therefore is a construct that is based on an association-based evaluation by consumers, even though there is no generally accepted view as to the dimensions it is composed of.

There is no consensus, however, on the relationship between country image and brand equity approaches. Classical brand equity approaches by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), that are often used to validate country equity theory, consider image as a part of brand equity. While, according to the above, some authors consider country image as a building block, a dimension of country brand (e.g. Roth et al., 2008; Pappu – Quester, 2010), others study country image as an influencing factor of brand equity, or consider country equity as a building block of country image (Kleppe et al., 2002).

The above mentioned associative memory model (Anderson, 1990, 1993, in: Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 277.) serves as an adequate base in understanding and defining the dimensions of country equity.

Pappu-Quester (2001) define the factors of country equity as follows: (1) country awareness, (2) country associations, (3) country loyalty and (4) perceived quality. According to Roth et al. (2008) country equity is composed of (1) country awareness and associations, (2) perceived quality of country brand, and (3) country loyalty. Conversely, Pappu et al. (2005), and Pappu and Quester (2006) suggest that association and awareness are two distinct concepts and therefore should appear as two separate dimensions of country equity. Pappu and Quester (2010) developing on their prior position, (in addition to the four dimensions already mentioned: country awareness, country associations, perceived quality, country loyalty) propose the introduction of a fifth dimension, namely country image.

Below, we give a summary of the general conceptual contents of the above dimensions according to the literature.

**1) Country awareness**

Similarly to Aaker's (1991) brand awareness dimension, "[c]ountry awareness does not involve merely knowing of the country, but requires from consumers the ability to recall the name of the country when the product category is mentioned" (Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 280.). Several authors, however, believe that this relationship may be bidirectional, that is, recalling a country name can entail product category associations as well.

**2) Country image, country associations**

Building on Keller's (1993) concept of brand association, country association refers to the mental images which consumers hold in their minds about a country and which act in the making of certain decisions. Country associations can be interpreted on a country and a product level. Stemming from country-of-origin image theory, the product level refers to the fact that associations about products related to the country of origin equally affect country image. For that reason, several authors refer to the concept as country-of-origin associations (e.g. Kleppe et al., 2002). Similarly to the micro and macro levels of country image, a number of authors distinguish between micro and macro country associations (Han – Terpstra, 1988; Pappu et al., 2007; Pappu – Quester, 2010).

**3) Perceived quality**

In Aaker's (1991) interpretation, perceived quality is not identical to real quality, it rather reflects a mental image in the mind of the consumer about quality. Zeithaml (1988) adapts this view to countries, stating that perceived quality reflects the quality realized by consumers of a product originated from a particular country. Therefore this approach is not a metaphorical "perceived quality dimension" of country brand, rather a product-level effect stemming from the country-of-origin effect. (Pappu – Quester, 2010)

**4) Country loyalty**

According to Paswan et al. (2003) country loyalty (similarly to classical brands) is the manifestation of consumers' commitment to countries. According to the literature, loyalty can be interpreted as an association as well as a behavior (Aaker, 1991; Oliver, 1997, in: Pappu-Quester, 2010, p. 280.). and Donthu (2001, p.3.) state that "[country] loyalty refers to the tendency to be loyal to a focal [country], which is demonstrated by the intention to buy the brand [originated from the given country] as a primary choice". Pappu and Quester (2010) in the model equally consider purchase intention and primary choice as crucial points in determining country loyalty.

According to the literature, it can be stated that only a few valid scales can be used for country equity measurements. The following country equity scales are available in the literature for the measure of the above dimensions: Yoo-Donthu (2001), Washburn-Plank (2002), Pappu et al. (2005)

#### 4.4. Methodological considerations: summary and critical analysis

The measurement methods unveiled during our literature review have a wide scope of interpretation on how to assess the quality and value of country image. The most practical approaches (touristic and economic approaches) allow a narrowly focused, specialized evaluation of country image and therefore cannot be considered as entirely valid (especially in terms of content validity) methods.

The *marketing approach*, deemed relevant for the present study, give ground to assess country image and country brand concepts in a holistic way. It can therefore be said that the related measurement methods allow, under certain conditions, for a thorough and comprehensive assessment of country image/country brand dimensions.

At the same time, the literature reviews of the previous chapters clearly showed that **there are no common methodological grounds among researchers as for the most suitable measurement methodology of country image** and therefore it can be noted that the related methodology is very diverse and complex.

The most commonly used methodology in the literature is that of *measurement scales*. Jaffe and Nebenzahl (1984) in their study on the alternative questionnaire formats in connection with country image scales state that *the choice of the most appropriate measurement scales can be crucial*. This view has been confirmed by numerous, thorough studies from different fields of the marketing science (see e.g. Albaum – Best – Hawkins, 1977; Churchill, 1979; Menezes – Elbert, 1979; all in: Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984, p. 463.) The authors also draw attention to the fact that very few works address the *validity and reliability issues* of the measures.

**Most country image analyses use semantic differential scales or Likert scales.** In our opinion, considering the nature of the present topic, these scales are suitable and widely accepted measurement tools. At the same time, several other methods are known to explore the country image construct that contribute to refine and expand research results. The known scales from the literature equally have the benefit of containing consistent items (for often being developed from one another). This creates the possibility, under certain conditions, *to compare and match and jointly apply the obtained results*.

It is a trait of the field of theory *that researchers develop and test new scales and measurements by combining of existing scale items and measurement tools*. According to the above mentioned it is appropriate to apply this method in our doctoral research by adopting existing measurement scales and fitting them into a new model. At the same time, by the development of measurements this can lead to developing of the field of theory

Above all, however (taking into account Jaffe and Nebenzahl's [1984] still valid remarks), we believe that the systematic lack of the tests of validity and reliability

within the literature can be considered a serious criticism towards the field of research. Very few works address and publish the validity and reliability issues of the measures. In numerous cases, these issues were addressed by a subsequent user or the given scale. The lack of validity may stem from the following factors:

- i. While comparing research results, one has to take into account the conformity of the used scale formats. In case the used scales are not identical, results cannot be compared.
- ii. Several measures and scales have only been tested on one sample / country, which reduces its validity. In addition, one has to note that samples from the USA prevail in the field, and cross-national studies are absent (Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009).
- iii. The comparison of research results is also not valid in case used samples are different in nature (e.g. a sample of student vs. a sample of households).
- iv. Content validity issues, in case a scale was originally developed to assess the country-of-origin effect i.e. the effect of country image on product evaluation rather than unveiling the dimensions and quality of country image itself.

The above might raise the questions whether (1) the measurement methods used so far in the field were adequate, (2) can country image, as a general construct be studied independently of product evaluation (i.e. not as a country-of-origin effect), as a general influencing factor that has a far wider working mechanism (than merely in connection with product evaluation), and (3) it is necessary to introduce a new validated measurement scale, which is validated and independent of product image evaluation.

**The reliability and validity issues will be under test at every stages of our doctoral research, and in some cases the items go through under pre-test and development process.**

Kleppe and Mossberg (2005) highlight that the „Handbook of Marketing Scales” (eds: Bearden – Netemeyer, 2000) contains as few as *two scales which are suitable for assessing country image* (i.e. those by Martin-Eroglu, 1993; and Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994). At the same time as many as 1000 publications related to the country-of-origin effect were identified, but only around 40 address the measurement of country image and only as few as 10 scales are more widely used within the different studies. According to this we believe that *the development of a general measurement scale might be justified* and in no way does it make the field over-researched<sup>7</sup>. We base our assumption on the fact that along the development of the field, country marketing and country branding approaches came to the front bringing about the growing need for a *standalone measurement tool for country evaluation and country image*. Previous scales (considering that these were principally aimed to assess and quantify product evaluation and country-of-origin effects) cannot fully fulfill this requirement.

<sup>7</sup> A scientific debate is underway on the necessity of developing a new scale (see the discussion between Diamantopoulos [2009] and Samiee [2009])

It is a visible aim in the literature to develop approaches that are, as much as possible, multi-faceted and multi-method (Zenker, 2011). The planned methodology of doctoral research equally reflects the above efforts. **The dissertation will use a hybrid, multi-method research design, which is built on consecutive and subsequent quantitative and qualitative, online and offline phases of data collection.** All phases are aimed to support the subsequent research phase while all phase is to complete the results of the preceding phase in order to gather a deeper and more complex understanding of the topic.

However one might also consider *to include the new approaches* (branding, brand equity) into scale development. **Brand equity theory and the related methodology is available from the related fields of marketing science. The adaptation thereof, in our opinion, is a pertinent approach which would contribute to developing the research area.** In addition, several *brand equity factors* known from the literature (and their contribution to consumers and brand owners) can equally be relevant to consider within a “country equity” approach. Recent works in the literature already include a similar approach. *Country equity and its dimensions is a new field of theory and one also can state that it has only a few validated measures related to the topic.* Therefore the field’s international trends justified the adaptation of **the study of country equity** into the present doctoral dissertation, as the literature equally seems to lean towards the measurement of country brands and country equity.

**The testing of the country equity construct and the study and validation of its components mark can be an important added value of the present work in theory building.** Our developed model can be suitable to specifically measure country image and country brands, without any allusion to country-of-origin effects.

In present doctoral dissertation *country equity means the equity of a country brand*, according to the well known consumer-oriented brand equity approaches. The model does not adopt the product level examination and only handles the factors on a macro level of attributes. The validated dimensions of the country equity construct in the dissertation are as follows: country image country awareness, country associations, country loyalty. Given that previous studies of country image and country equity have not studied in a complex manner the relationships between these dimensions, our results account for an important indication as to the future potential use of these. **For this measurement purpose there is a need for developing, improving and adopting the measurement scale and model of both the existing country equity and consumer-based brand equity theories.**

According to the systematic review of the literature we can state that the third area of study in the present dissertation, **destination evaluation**, stemming from the field of destination management is a relevant anchor point to the subject in both a scientific and

a practical point of view and can be properly connected to the concept of country equity.

The main aim of doctoral research is to develop **a joint study of the aforementioned three fields** (country image, country equity and destination evaluation) by the recognition of the lack of the related theoretical background and an aim to explore this unstudied area. The ultimate goal of the present doctoral dissertation is to design a model suitable to be used in a wide context that is able to empirically test the theoretically validated elements from the literature. **The doctoral research therefore acts as a first elaboration and test of a Country Equity Model (CEM) in the context of destinations.**

## **5. THE THEORY OF DESTINATION EVALUATION – COUNTRY IMAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF DESTINATIONS**

A main aim of the present thesis is, beyond *studying the evaluation of countries* and their inhabitants and *defining country equity*, to *unveil the effects thereof on consumer behavior*. There is a consensus in the literature that image affects individual decisions in many ways. It has an influence, among others, on consumers' product choice and destination evaluation behavior, as well as on their investment decisions or residence choice. In the following we present the working mechanism and influencing factors of *destination evaluation*.

The systematic study of the related literature revealed on more grounds that the joint study of country image, country branding and destination image and destination management is as of today an *almost entirely unresearched and missing area within the field of research* which, apart from a few examples, it is restricted to the study of the relationship between destination image and destination choice. *The joint study of the above fields with the destination-focused modeling of country image and country branding is therefore a novelty and added value of the present dissertation to theory building*. The joint study of the working mechanisms between country image, destination choice and destination evaluation is all the more relevant that a strategic approach has prevailed in both areas. Connecting the two areas might enable the design of an elaborate evaluation and measurement methodology and further research.

Destination choice and evaluation are relevant areas in both theory building and practice given that beyond the field of product evaluation (c.f. country-of-origin effects) these are well-researched areas with keen scientific interest. In addition, the practical interest of the subject is equally undisputable, as gaining a positive country evaluation accounts for an important tool for positioning and differentiation in the field of tourism management in many countries.

The chapter, after a general presentation of the topic, first gives an overview of the concept of *destination image* as a core concept, with special regards to the further possibilities in developing the subject. Following this, we present *the relationship between country image and destination image*, followed by an overview of the focal subject for the present dissertation, i.e. the working mechanisms and further relationships of *destination choice and evaluation*.

## 5.1. Destination image

Even though *destination image* is not part of the core focus of the present dissertation, a brief overview of the subject is necessary in order to provide context for the following parts<sup>8</sup>. The concepts of destination image and country image are often used jointly within the literature. This usage can be tolerated and/or justified as the respective fields of study largely overlap.

The concept of destination image – often used in connection with place image – is often used by practitioners in the field of destination management.

It must be noted that country image is itself a destination image in the sense that in the stakeholders' point of view, a country can be a destination. The image of this destination is managed by specialized organizations and professionals or is shaped indirectly and which consumers evaluate in various manners. The literature contains several definitions which use the concepts of country image and destination image as synonymous. Conversely, other sources put an emphasis on differentiation the two notions.

*We must highlight the fact that country image is an overall image of a country in each person's mind while destination image is the image of a geographical location in this latter it is evaluated as a (touristic) destination.* The concept of destination refers to locations visited by tourist that are either (1) towns (Dadgostar – Isotalo, 1995; Opermann, 1996), (2) regions (Ahmed, 1991; Fackeye – Crompton, 1991) or (3) countries (Chon, 1991; Echtner – Ritchie, 1993; Nadeau et.al., 2008)

Researchers seem to generally agree on the fact that “*destination image has a strong influence on consumer behavior*” (Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007, p. 194.). Therefore it is necessary for researchers in the field to address the subject, for, among others, the interpretation, planning and development of the process or for positioning destinations.

According to an early definition, destination image is “[a]n attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination” (Crompton, 1979, p. 18.). According to Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) destination image is the sum of mental pictures, impressions in consumers' mind related to touristic destinations. Baloglu and McCleary (1999, p. 870.) define destination image as “an attitudinal construct consisting of an individual's mental

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<sup>8</sup> For space constraint reasons and the partial relevance of the subject for the present dissertation, we will not give a comprehensive review of destination image literature. More thorough analyses can be found within the cited sources. For a comprehensive review of publications in the subject of destination image, see Pike, 2002; Gallarza et.al., 2002; Echtner – Ritchie, 2003; Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007, (and in Hungarian: Sulyok, 2006). For destination branding see Cai, 2002; Pike, 2005; Konecnik – Gartner, 2007; Boo et.al., 2009.

representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about an object or destination”

Touristic image, according to Sulyok’s (2006, p. 55.) summarizing work, is “a constantly evolving complex and multidimensional (both in its processes and components) image that evolves in space and time. It is the sum of beliefs, ideas, impressions related to a destination”.

As can be seen from the latter examples, the definitions in the field are more or less similar to those of country image – further similar definitions are reported in Table 13. Beyond the similarities of the definitions, destination image (similarly to country image) is composed of a number of dimensions and therefore is a multidimensional construct (see e.g. Gallarza – Gil – Calderón, 2002; Pike, 2002; Nadeau et.al., 2008; Elliot et.al., 2011)

**Table 13.**  
Selected definitions of destination image<sup>9</sup>

AUTHOR(S)	DEFINITION
Hunt (1971, 1975)	„Perceptions held by potential visitors about an area”
Crompton (1977)	„Organized representations of a destination in a cognitive system”
Crompton (1979)	“An attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination”
Phelps (1986)	“Perceptions and impressions of a place”
Gartner – Hunt (1987)	“Impressions that a person [...] holds about a state in which they do not reside”
Calantone et.al. (1989)	“Perceptions of potential tourist destinations”
Fakeye – Crompton (1991)	“The mental construct developed by a potential tourist on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions”
Baloglu – McCleary (1999)	“An attitudinal construct consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about an object or destination”
Tapachai – Waryszak (2000)	“Perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists with respect to the expected benefit or consumption values including functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional benefits of a destination.”
Berli – Martin (2004)	“The perceived image will be formed through the image projected by the destination and the individual’s own needs, motivations, prior knowledge, preferences, and other personal characteristics. In this way, individuals build their own mental picture of the place, which in turn produces their own, personal perceived images”

<sup>9</sup> In our literature review we encountered significantly more definitions from the field of destination image than from those of country image and country-of-origin image. For this reason only the most often cited definitions deemed most determining were included into the above table. For more definitions, see the sources referred to beforehand.

Mossberg – Kleppe (2005)	“Destination image can be seen as an umbrella concept for different geographical units, which can be organised in a vertical framework. (...) can also be seen as an umbrella construct for different products and services.”
Sulyok (2006)	“A constantly evolving complex and multidimensional (both in its processes and components) image that evolves in space and time. It is the sum of beliefs, ideas, impressions related to a destination”

Source: own elaboration, 2012

The literature also shows similarities to country image in the defined *components* of destination image, i.e. (1) cognitive, (2) affective, (3) conative (see e.g. Chon, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Foster – Jones, 2000, in: Nadeau. et.al., 2008; Cai, 2002; Kim – Yoon, 2003; Elliott et.al., 2011).

Baloglu – McCleary (1999) and Beerli – Martin (2004a,b) equally categorize the dimensions along these three groups. In the author’s interpretation, personal (psychic and socio-demographic) and incentive (source of information, experience) factors affect the final evaluation and image of destinations, itself constructed of cognitive, affective and conative parts.

The *cognitive* aspect includes opinions about a given destination, the *affective* component reflects an overall evaluation of a destination while the *conative* component reflects behavior and decision-making factors.

The summarizing study by Gallarza, Gil and Calderón (2002) shows that destination image has several further sub-dimensions, that appear in one or more study on the topic. The *cognitive* elements are as follows: opinions, knowledge about the environment, which include natural attractions, climate and the opinions about man-made structures (Echtner – Ritchie, 1993; Nadeau et.al., 2008), culture (Baloglu – McCleary, 1999); contemporary society (Tapachai – Waryszak, 2000) and friendliness (Trauer – Ryan, 2005; Nadeau et.al., 2008). The *affective* component includes sub-dimensions that add up to an overall evaluation of a destination: the destination’s interesting, exciting or relaxing nature (Baloglu – McCleary, 1999); satisfaction (Chon, 1990); service quality (Echtner – Ritchie, 1993), or an overall evaluation (Reilly, 1990). The *conative* component integrates the so-called behavioral elements: the decision to visit the destination (Chon, 1990; Foster – Jones, 2000), or recommend it to others (Chon, 1991).

*Destination image affects consumer perception, satisfaction, decision and choice* (see e.g. Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978; Pearce, 1982; Woodside – Lysonski, 1989; Echtner – Ritchie, 1991; Chon, 1992; Milman – Pizam, 1995; Baloglu – McCleary, 1999; Chi – Qu, 2007; Tasci – Gartner, 2007). Several authors examined the aspects related to consumer behavior both *before, during and after the given travel occurred*. They note that destination evaluation has a significant influence on consumer choice in all three cases (see e.g. Ross, 1993b; Schroeder, 1996; Chen – Hsu, 2000; Tasci – Gertner, 2007)

Moreover, destination image is also characterized by two types of information flow and therefore two target audiences: (1) the destination itself, and (2) the consumer (Tasci – Gartner, 2007) This mainly has a decisive role within touristic destination management.

## **5.2. The relationship between country image and destination image**

According to the literature, tourism heavily depends on the impressions and beliefs people have in their minds, i.e. on image. The 1970s have seen the apparition of theory stating that *the image of a given place affects travelling behavior* (Hunt, 1975), and until now, more than 200 refereed works have been published in the subject (Elliot et.al., 2011, p. 521. ).

However most authors also recognize that the majority of these works have a mostly theoretical approach on the subject (Beerli – Martin, 2004a) and few efforts for methodological operationalization have been made in the area (Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007).

One can state that more numerous are those studies that address the relationships between product-country-image, country-of-origin effects, tourism and destination image than those dealing with the relationships between the *overall image of countries* and their *touristic image* (Elliot et.al., 2011). The study of country-of-origin effects is equally more researched and advanced in this field of research than general country image approaches. However, a few authors equally address the relationships between country image and destination image, e.g. Holmefjord (2000, in: Elliot et.al., 2011), Kleppe és Mossberg (2001), or Mossberg és Kleppe (2005). These study the potential tourism vs. product image and country image vs. touristic image relationships, although in a purely theoretical manner, without any empirical evidence. There is even less empirical evidence of the blending of the two aforementioned fields, among them: Zhou et.al. (2001), Nadeau et.al. (2008), and Elliot et.al. (2011). These studies confirm the earlier statement, that *the overall evaluation and image of a country has a significant effect on its touristic evaluation and on tourism-related consumer behavior* (see e.g. Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978; Baloglu – McCleary, 1999; Tapachai – Waryszak, 2000; Pike – Ryan, 2004; Nadeau et.al., 2008; Elliot et.al. 2011)

This relationship can materialize in several ways: according to a pool of authors, the *evaluation of countries is affected by consumer behavior* (Baloglu – McCleary 1999; Beerli – Martin 2004a, 2004b), while, according to other approaches, *country image is an independent variable that affects individuals' behavior* (Murphy – Pritchard – Smith, 2000; Bigné – Sanchez – Sanchez, 2001; Nadeau et.al., 2008). Pearce (1982) and Woodside – Lysonski (1989) emphasize, that this effect emerged mainly on the field of destination evaluation. Again, other authors ignore the conative factors in their respective studies (Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil, 2007).

The joint study of country image and touristic image can be based on the approach followed by Nejad and Winsler (2000) who define image as a hierarchically built mental representation. Following this reasoning, Elliot et al. (2011, p. 523.) state that this can effect that “a country’s overall image [...] might influence its image as a destination”. According to Barich and Kotler (1991, p. 95.) image is the “sum of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions that a person or group has of an object. The object may be a company, product, brand, place, or person. The impressions may be true or false, real or imagined. Right or wrong, images guide and shape behavior”.

Nadeau et al. (2008, p. 102.) state that “country context is important to the image of the destination and touristic outcome” as it is partly on it that people base their judgments, therefore “[c]ompetencies about the country appear to directly impact the assessment or beliefs about the destination’s ability to deliver on its promotional promises, especially in the built environment aspects of the touristic experience”.

As can be seen from the above, the 2000s have seen the *gradual transformation of the field*. While beforehand the fields of country image and product-country-image and touristic destination image developed independently leading to a distinct and idiosyncratic literature and pool of authors, the marked connection led to the growing demand in recent years to merge the two fields of research (Mossberg – Kleppe, 2005; Nadeau. et.al., 2008).

Recent research on the topic shows that the *attitude-based approach might offer a common ground in the joint study of the two research fields* (Nadeau et.al., 2008). White (2004) points out that attitudes are a fair representation of places for research aiming to understand their effect on destination choice.

A potential direction for the field might therefore be *the shifting focus from the study of the country image vs. destination image relationships to a strategic approach with the structural analysis and modeling of country image vs. destination evaluation and choice*.

### **5.3. The effect of country image on destination evaluation**

The previous literature review shows that place image has a strong influence on consumer behavior (Elliot et.al., 2011), and more precisely, among others, on *destination evaluation* and *destination choice* (Pearce, 1982; Woodside – Lysonski 1989). However, few works study this relationship in a complex model or using structural equation analysis.

Researchers agree that it is necessary as much for academic research in the field as for practice to assess the complex mechanisms of destination choice (Grouch, 1994). *The growing number of related publications clearly indicates an increased interest in the field of destination evaluation and destination image* (see e.g. Echtner – Ritchie, 1993;

Cai, 2002; Hankinson, 2004, 2005; Beerli – Martin, 2004a,b; Konecnik – Gartner, 2007; Beerli – Meneses – Gil, 2007; Tasci et.al., 2007; Boo et.al., 2009). Tasci – Gartner – Cavusgil (2007) also highlight that this interest can be traced back to the past 30 years although the most notable publications were born in the 1990s that can be considered the theoretical core of the field of destination image (see e.g. Echtner – Ritchie, 1991)

In a *theoretical point of view*, Kotler and Gertner (2002) state that image is a decisive factor in information processing, leading to the creation of knowledge structures and can indirectly influence decision making. As a result, most authors in the field of touristic decision-making consider country image and a dimension for *information processing*, which might affect destination choice (Nadeau et.al., 2008).

In a *practical point of view*, Ross (1993a), Weber (1997), Kozak (2001), Yuksel (2001), and Weaver, Weber and McCleary (2007), among others, studied the *importance of destination evaluation*, while a number of other authors were interested in the effect thereof on the intention to return and loyalty. Destination image, according to certain points of view within the literature, is a key component of destination loyalty (Hosany et.al., 2006)

In addition, the *decision mechanism of destination choice* as well as its dimensions were researched, among others, by Goodall (1988), Gartner (1989), or Echtner – Ritchie (1991). According to Weaver, Weber and McCleary (2007) the practical implication of the subject is its contribution to elaborating a more efficient marketing activity in the tourism industry once professionals comprehend the complex process of destination evaluation. Several authors go as far as stating that the positive evaluation of destinations might have on the overall touristic success of the given destination (see e.g. Hunt, 1975; Crompton, 1979; Dadgostar – Isatolo, 1992), while according to others, it has an effect, by stimulating the demand, on touristic consumer behavior and decision making (Tasci – Gartner, 2007).

After a thorough analysis of the *related theoretical approaches*, one can state on one hand that *destination evaluations precede travel decisions* and on the other that the former can vary *following the travel decision*, during the travel itself and following the journey. Accordingly, one can distinguish between a pre-travel (pre-consumption) evaluation and a post-travel evaluation – with a direct or indirect effect on destination evaluation and destination choice. Most studies deal with *post-travel evaluation* and handle the influencing factors of the evaluation and the decision making mechanism separately. In addition, one can state that, similarly to overall country evaluation, destination evaluation is affected by individual factors as well as by the *characteristics and attributes of the given destination*.

According to the most widely accepted approach in the literature and based on the general models of consumer decision making, consumer decision making related to a touristic product or service can be conceptualized as a *funnel-like process* with the following stages: (1) recognition of the need for a decision, (2) formulation of goals, (3)

generation of a set of alternatives to choose from, (4) search for information about the properties of the alternatives under consideration, (5) choice among the alternatives, (6) acting upon the decision, (7) evaluation (preparation for the next decision) (Sirakaya – Woodside, 2005, p. 815.) Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) further state that touristic decisions are ill-defined choice situations because of the intangible and experiential nature of the outcome and therefore can be considered to be complex and risky decisions. According to Weaver, Weber and McCleary (2007) *touristic destinations are complex products*, destination evaluation is most influenced by previous travel experience and travel attributes. According to the authors, destination evaluation can be studied along the following aspects: (1) satisfaction, (2) service quality, (3) perceived value, (4) willingness to return. Boo et.al. (2009, p. 220.) equally state that “tourists perceive a destination as a product”. Similarly to destination image, consumers tend to evaluate the aforementioned attributes and destination products along both *affective* and *cognitive* dimensions (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu – McCleary, 1999; Beerli – Martin, 2004a,b; Hosany et.al., 2007; Boo et.al., 2009; Qu – Kim – Im, 2011). In connection with post-travel and travel evaluation, Tribe and Snaith (1998) state that destination evaluation is the result of a complex process and might be influenced by factors like the first experience at arrival or the quality of the various tourist service providers. Other authors deem other factors important that influence destination evaluation, e.g. the information available to individuals, or the role of organizations participating in shaping the image of a destination (see e.g. Gartner, 1993; Alhemoud – Armstrong, 1996; Tasci – Gartner, 2007). Individual information is made up of past personal experience, advertising and other market information (e.g. about related services available) (see e.g. Alhemoud – Armstrong, 1996). In addition, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) note that the *visitors* and *non-visitors* of a destination bear a different set of knowledge about the destination and therefore their evaluation of the destination will differ. Sirgy and Su (2000, p. 341.) believe that the following environmental factors affect destination evaluation: (1) atmosphere, (2) service quality, (3) price, (4) location and (5) promotion. Crompton (1979) in his study points out that the distance of destinations equally affects the evaluation thereof. In addition, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) state that travel time also affects destination image.

Destination evaluation therefore depends both on *touristic attributes* and *destination features* (Tasci et.al., 2007b; Konecnik – Gartner, 2007; Boo et.al., 2009).

In connection with post-travel evaluation, Chi and Qu (2007) state that destination evaluation has a direct influence on consumer satisfaction while this satisfaction in turn has a positive effect on *consumers' destination loyalty*. The literature agrees that past travel experience has a positive effect on the willingness to return (see e.g. Perdue, 1985; Juaneda, 1996). According to Um and Crompton (1990) consumers who do not have a past personal experience of a country, generally know less about the given country. Woodside and Lysonski (1989), and Crompton (1992) state that past experience and familiarity with the destination might account for the acceptance or

denial to return to a destination in case of a set of decisions. Oppermann (1995) refers to consumers' cumulative travel experience, that not only shapes travelers' motivations but also their destination evaluation. According to Kotler, Bowen and Makens (1996) image affects perceived quality which in turn affects consumer satisfaction.

Other authors mention that past destination experience affect the evaluation thereof and might alter destination image (Chon, 1991; Echtner-Ritchie, 1991). According to Gallarza et.al. (2002) destination evaluation equally affects consumers' selection process. Moreover, destination evaluation affects travel decisions related to reaching the given destination as well as their willingness to return (Tasci – Gartner, 2007).

A number of authors study the effect of various *demographic attributes* on destination evaluation. Ross (1993a) shows that gender and education have a significant effect on the overall evaluation of a destination as well as on consumer satisfaction. Qu and Li (1997) equally find that gender has a significant effect on destination evaluation. According to Beerli – Meneses – Gil (2007) consumers' self-image and destination image are connected and self-image influences destination choice (see e.g. Moore – Cushman – Simmons, 1995; Waitt, 1996; Beerli – Meneses – Gil, 2007). Sirgy and Su (2000) confirm this. In their view, destination choice and travel decisions are influenced by consumers' self-image and the identicalness or compatibility thereof with their destination image might equally affect these decisions.

### 5.4. Critical analysis of destination approaches to country image

The destination approaches to country image are almost entirely based on the assumption that **country image can affect individual behavior** and, indirectly, destination evaluation and travel habits.

The overview on the related theoretical approaches shows that country image has a significant effect (beyond those mentioned beforehand) in two further areas: *destination evaluation* and *destination choice*. The related relationships, however, are **under-researched in the literature**. At the same time the past few years have seen a growing academic attention in the field, and several authors have formulated recommendations and calls for research in the area (see e.g. Mossberg – Kleppe, 2005; Nadeau et.al., 2008). *The merging of the two fields* of research is supported by the fact that their recent evolution has seen the introduction of a strategic approach. **The application of a strategic approach implies that a joint modeling and a measurement-based research would contribute to further theory building.**

Another reason could be that the effect of *destination image* on destination evaluation and destination choice has already been studied by a number of authors and their respective works might be employed for further extending theory. Given the fact *that destination image and country image are overlapping concepts* on more than one

ground, **a relevant substitution of one with the other within studies might unveil new dimensions adding to the theoretical foundation of modeling.** Considering that country image is a more wide concept in the literature than that of destination image, *the introduction of country image concept to analyses previously involving destination image might extend the scope of the known relationships.*

At the same time, *the field of country image is mostly theoretically sound and lacks of empirical testing* and unveiling further relationships, which can be considered a limitation to the above. It should also be noted that most research to date has omitted modeling and structural analysis methodology which would enable the joint study of several dimensions. Conversely, *structural modeling* accounts for a commonly used practice in certain areas of destination management. The current dynamics of the field can therefore be defined by the spreading use in recent publications of complex analytical methods and *the merging of existing and previously validated models of the different sub-areas in order to unveil new relationships and new structural models.*

According to the literature, the *development of theory* can be enhanced by the application of *mixed method measurements* and the common examination of different models and areas of theory. **It can be said that the merging of models and the inclusion of variables with indicators into new models is an accepted procedure** (see e.g. Pappu – Quester, 2007; Nadeau et.al., 2008; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2010; Elliot et.al. 2011). Therefore **merging the relationships of country image and destination evaluation into a common model can be deemed a relevant practice promising of new results.**

After reviewing the theoretical approaches of destination evaluation and destination choice one can affirm that the relationships involve in both cases the fields of image, *loyalty* and *attitude*, as well as the presence of cognitive, affective and conative dimensions. Attitude-based approaches already exist in the literature, stating that information and experience belong to the cognitive, impressions about destinations to the affective, and loyalty or willingness to return to the conative components of country image. **Therefore it is a logical conclusion that a new step of theory building would be to employ and include attitude-based approaches as well as brand equity theory. As consumers perceive a destination as a product, a brand and brand equity approach would equally account for a relevant extension to the theoretical background of the field.**

According to the review of literature there no exist study examining country brand or country equity in destination context therefore the doctoral research can improve the theory of field by merging the country equity theory and the topic of destination evaluation in one common Country Equity Model (CEM).

At this level of developmnet the theory argues loyalty, awareness, associations as the elements of brand equity. On the other hand there is no evidence on studying the

connections and casual relationships among the factors of brand equity. Similarly to country image theory, one can eliminate country characteristics and individual attributes influencing destination image therefore the merging of the two fields of theory can be a relevant aspect and appropriate application of modelling.

It can be stated to be a lack of the field that most studies in the field address post-travel evaluation relating it directly to loyalty and willingness to return. A more consistent approach would be *to first study country image and the effect thereof*, i.e. the effect of country image as an overall image on pre-travel destination evaluation and destination choice. *This latter area is under-researched and its application in the present thesis accounts for a scientific novelty.* Moreover, *time dimensions studies on destination evaluation are often mixed up*, i.e. pre-travel, travel and post-travel image and evaluation are not handled consistently.

**It is important to note that the studied time dimensions must coincide**, otherwise further dimensions are to be incorporated into the model taking into account all the factors that would affect, along the different time scale, the studied relationships. In other words, it is more worthwhile to study post-travel image and destination evaluation together on one hand, and pre-travel image and its effect on destination choice on the other. The relevant practical implications of the above for the present doctoral research will be addressed in the following chapters.

## II. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

### 6. THE METHODOLOGY OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In the following chapter we present the interactions between *theory building* and *methodology*, that is, we present our research concept (research questions, hypotheses) and methodological issues in a consequential manner.

First, we give a *brief overview of the research context*: the study's main premises and the main conclusions of the theoretical background. This is followed by the description of our *initial theoretical model*, a presentation of *the formulated research problem and research questions* and an *overview of the exploratory research phases*, with their respective goals, methodology and results.

Then, based on the above, we present our *modified research model* with the related potential operationalization and research *hypotheses*.

Finally, we give an over of the subsequent research phases and present the process and results of our *final empirical research*. Based on the above we conclude with a discussion of the hypotheses.

#### 6.1. The research concept – Background to the empirical research

Based on our literature review, it can be concluded that country image is a conceptually complex, multidimensional construct. As can be seen from the various conceptual articles, numerous approaches exist which illustrate the multidisciplinary nature of the research field. However this equally makes it difficult to define and measure country image.

It is problematic to determine which concept to consider prevailing when defining country image, and which dimensions to adopt and measure. It is not clear along which dimensions a country's image ought to be measured: should it be considered an identity, an image or rather an attitude? Another important issue is to determine the dimensions that play a role in determining a country's image: the state of the economy, the political scene or touristic appeal – or all of these factors, in a complex manner.

The latest efforts clearly attempt to assess country image all the more that the practice of strategic country image building is in development and has an academically legitimate field of science. This also raises *the necessity for suitable measurement methods and a well-designed measurement model*. This new direction, however, combines branding techniques with the theory on image building. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate *brand equity measures and methodology*. Another issue is to determine whether the above approach is scientifically solid and whether it is relevant to be used as a component of the image measurement toolbox.

The literature offers recommendations as to which principles to follow during *measurement* and *modeling*.

Most publications study a country's image in relation to its effect on products. This, however, raises further issues. As seen beforehand, country image exists independently of deliberate image building activities and affects not only product choice but, among others, destination choice and investment decisions as well.

*Stakeholders'* differing criteria which equally affect the evaluation of a country's image. The question arises therefore whether it is possible to design a comprehensive research model that can demonstrate the dimensions and effect mechanisms enabling the quality assessment of an overall country image (not limited to product choice)

In the following we endeavor to successfully *incorporate branding approaches into a relevant country-image-equity model* as well as the different roles of stakeholders (consumers and brand owners) while keeping a conceptually relevant framework for the dimensions already unveiled in the past.

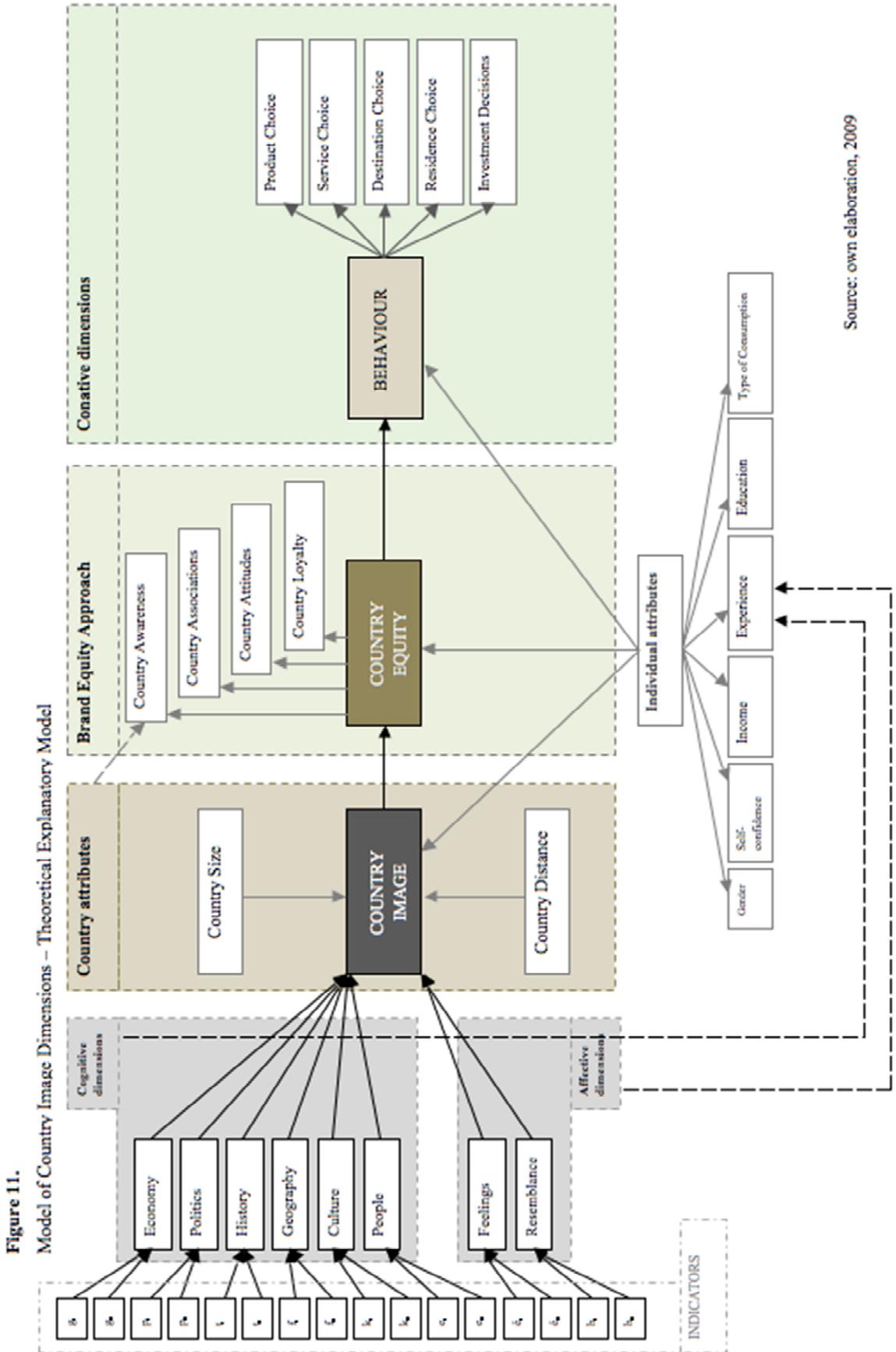
There exists no existing, *empirically validated model for country equity*. *The design of a conceptual framework therefore contributes to theory building as well.*

*As a starting point we resorted to a complex theoretical model containing the different relationships unveiled in our literature review in order to contextualize the relevant mechanisms referred to in the literature and therefore to be researched.*

The systematic review of the related literature allowed us to unveil the possible contact points between each area. Figure 11 gives an overview of the relationships based on our theoretical research, separating the most decisive fields and the dimensions thereof. In the following chapter we give a detailed presentation of these.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> We must note that the below model gives a somewhat complex interpretation to the subject. At the same time, it serves as a theoretical rather than a measurement model and it is destined to give a framework for the unveiled relationships. At the same time we believe that all related dimensions (and dimension groups) of the construct can be measured. However it is unlikely that the same structure will come up during structural modeling. In view of the special characteristics of structural analysis, the model will adopt a pyramidal i.e. an ever narrowing shape, and the relationships between dimensions are likely to be organized in a different logical structure. This however does not affect the content of the described relationship and still allows for an adequate measurement.



### 6.1.1. Presenting the constructs of the theoretical explanatory model

The dimensions and the relationships thereof with the present thesis's central concept (*country image*) can be seen on the left side. Some of the *dimensions* unveiled in the literature review can be identified as cognitive components while other pertain to the affective dimensions. One related assumption is (based on several works in the literature) that a casual linkage exists between the attributes which can be uncovered, and the relative effects can be quantified using path coefficient. Each dimension can be measured by indicators stemming from the relevant scale items.

*Country attributes* and *individual attributes* make up a further dimension of the theoretical explanatory model. Country evaluation is influenced by the size and distance of the destination country. This relationship is discussed in several references in the literature although few studies give an empirical validation. In addition, the relative effect of individual attributes can also be studied. Gender, education, personal experience, etc. are reported by the literature as relevant dimension as well, and several publications report significant relationships.

In addition, some known and potential interactions between attributes are also included in the model.

*Country brand theory* and the manifestation of brand equity theory in country image studies is another main focal topic of the present dissertation. The next element within the model's structure includes all the elements that allow the measurement of *country equity*. Country awareness, country associations, country attitudes and country loyalty are relevant and measurable dimensions of the field.

A further extension of the model is provided by the taking into account of *the effect of country image on individual behavior* and the study of the size thereof. The conative dimension is a suitable starting point for a further attitude-based approach. However in the present stage of research, we will not thoroughly study the relationships between affective, cognitive and conative elements, the model rather serves as an indication to their presence.

The structural analysis requires the existence of a so-called output variable, which, in the current context, would be one of the conative factors. Beyond the effect on product choice shown by studies on country-of-origin effect further consequences of country evaluation appear in the model as well: the effect on destination choice, residence choice or on investment decisions.

Given the previously described context, the over-researched or conversely, under-researched states of each field and the potential practical implications, *a relevant and novel approach would be to unveil the behavioral effects related to destinations.*

In the following we present the main research problem that arose during our research process with the related research questions. Following this, we give an overview of our exploratory research phases, their subsequence, results and implications on the final empirical research.

## 6.2. Research questions

The main research question of the present dissertation is the following:

What factors influence the rating and measuring of country image and country brand, with special regard to the field of destination evaluation?

Sub-questions related to the main research question:

- i. What are the relevant components of country image in the evaluation of a country?
- ii. How can these components be organized and ranked based on their effect on the evaluation of a country?
- iii. How can brand equity be interpreted in relation to a country and what value does it carry for stakeholders?
- iv. What measurable effects does the image-building activity of a country have in the target audience's behavior? What additional fields can be subject to the effect thereof?
- v. By what means can the image-building activity of a country and the effects thereof can be measured and quantified?
- vi. How the value of country image can be quantified?

*The goal of our empirical research is to explore, within a complex model all the relationships and assumptions discovered in the literature that were further refined by the preliminary exploratory research phases.*

*Beyond unveiling the dimensions of country image and the influencing factors of country equity, we aim to divide the equity of a country into factors of the consumer-oriented approach as well as to identify the effects of country equity on destination choice.*

*The main aim of the doctoral dissertation is to develop and test an extended Country Equity Model (CEM) which incorporates country image, elements of (country) brand equity and the effects of them on destination evaluation in one common, complex model.*

The results related to the above questions might significantly contribute to extend the research field by laying the foundational stone on a so far unresearched area and offering a ground for new research and further research questions, which is the principal scientific contribution of the present research.

### 6.3. Process of the empirical research

As presented beforehand, in the chapters dealing with the measurement and research methodology of place brands, most empirical studies on places as brands are short of complex study methodology. Zenker (2011) points out in his literature review that complex and multi-faceted, i.e. *mixed methods are required in the research on places as brands*. In addition, in the chapter on the measurement possibilities of country image, he noted that the combined or subsequent use of various methods is a well-established and frequently used solution within the field of research. Thanks to this process, one is able (among others) to reach a better founded response and a better overall assessment to their research questions.

*Mixed method* (multi-method) research design is not new within social sciences. Literature on research methodology in social sciences agrees on the fact that the design of a study is determined above all by its goals and the research questions involved (Crotty, 1998; Malhotra, 2002; Babbie, 2003).

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006, p. 12) consider that a study is based on a mixed-method study when it includes both qualitative and quantitative methods for data acquisition and analysis in either parallel or sequential phases.

The combined use of different research methodologies in the research process holds a number of advantages. It can help in better responding to the research questions and in drawing conclusions. One is able to draw better and stronger conclusions in case the chosen methods for the research complete and reinforce each other through overcoming potential weaknesses and limitations of each individual method (Tashakkori – Teddlie, 2003).

Considering the prospects and directions and the underdeveloped state of the subject, *the use of a mixed-method research design in the present dissertation turned out to be justified and instrumental*. Moreover the mixed-method research design enabled the better understanding of each research question and the better determining, in every stage, of an appropriate subsequent research phase. Therefore each research phase is presented as complementary to one another, instead of being handled as separate research entities.

A number of authors dealt with the application possibilities and validity issues of mixed method research, as well as with the typology and classification possibilities thereof. Thus, several possible research procedures were identified (see e.g. Cresswell et.al., 2003; Tashakkori – Teddlie, 2003; Teddlie – Tashakkori, 2006; Leech – Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Denzin, 2009)

The principles of classification gathered from the literature distinguish between (1) “pure” mixed methods (containing both qualitative and quantitative methods), (2) consecutive data collection methods, (3) quantitative-dominant mixed methods

research. One can equally note that data collection in each phase equally serves the foundation of the subsequent research phase.

The mixed-method research has been carried out as follows. In a first phase we proceeded to exploratory quantitative studies followed by another exploratory phase, this time, qualitative. This qualitative phase enabled us to better comprehend the results of the preceding phase and to prepare a subsequent quantitative phase. The second quantitative research phase served as a direct theoretical and empirical preparation of and pre-study for the final model. This phase was once again followed by a supporting qualitative phase. The sequential built-up of the research process which thus included both qualitative and quantitative phases (carried out gradually) led to prepare and support the final stage of our research, i.e. the test of the research model.

Table 14 gives an overview of our empirical consecutive mixed method research process. We will review each phase in detail in the following sub.chapters.

**Table 14.**  
Phases of the empirical research

PHASE	MODE	GOAL OF STUDY	METHODOLOGY	DATE	SAMPLE
1.	Qualitative	Preparing the model, unveiling dimensions of country image	Content analysis	Feb. 2008.	Analysis of 35 studies
1.	Quantitative	Testing dimensional model of country image	Self-administered questionnaire (in Hungarian)	March 2008.	n=399 (CUB, Hungarian students)
1.	Quantitative	Testing dimensional model of country image	Self-administered questionnaire (in English)	March 2009.	n=106 (CUB, foreign students)
2.	Qualitative	Study of country brand and interaction effects	3 focus group interviews	Sep.– Oct. 2009.	n=5, 5, and 6 (CUB students)
2.	Quantitative	Test of scale	Online query	Oct. 2010. – Jan. 2011.	n=390 (CUB students)
3.	Qualitative	Expert validation of results and assumptions	Semi-structured expert in-depth interviews	Sep.-Dec. 2011.	n=8 (researchers in fields of country image and country brand)
3.	Quantitative	Test of hypotheses and of model (country equity, destination evaluation)	Online query (representative for pop. aged 18-69)	Dec. 2011.	n=600

Source: own elaboration, 2012

### 6.3.1. Research phases

In the following we present each research phase, with special attention to the goal, methodology and sample characteristics of each phase.

Following academic best practice, a thorough and *systematic literature review* served as the foundation for the doctoral research. This literature review corresponds equally to the first research phase as such, during which 35 relevant studies on country image dimensions were *content analyzed* (see chapter 3.1). The objective of this phase was to study the country image dimensions found in the literature, the relationships between them, with a special attention to studying and delimiting all attitude-based approaches. Content analysis was carried out in February 2008 using an open, axial then selective coding methodology based on the literature. Results showed 11 dimensions that appear as consistent elements within the various studies. These can be categorized into main and sub-dimensions, and as affective and cognitive, along an attitude-based approach.

The results of this research phase were used to prepare the new phase which took place in March 2008. During this first exploratory quantitative research phase we proceeded to *the test of known international measurement scales and analyzed the dimension of country image and relationships thereof with other attributes*. The research sample was composed of Hungarian, full-time students of the Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB) (N=339). As a second part of this research phase, in March 2009 the same questionnaire was used in English on a sample of CUB's foreign students (N=105). The goal of this second study was to compare the results of the two culturally different samples in order to extract and test the most important relationships.

The first quantitative stage was followed by a qualitative phase. The aim of this was to elaborate on the understanding of the results gathered in the first phase and to further refine the preliminary hypotheses and supposed system of relationships. In this phase we proceeded to a focus group study (3 focus groups of respectively 5, 5 and 6 Hungarian, full-time students of CUB) in September-October 2009. During this stage, *the relevant constructs were selected from the dimensions of the original model, several relationships were more closely observed and the overall effect mechanism refined*. In addition, we proceeded to *the development of additional scale items*.

After translating and back-translating the relevant scales from the literature and adapting them, taking into account, among others, the results from our qualitative research phase, we proceeded to a pre-test of the questionnaire and of the research model. The online questionnaire was filled out by a sample of Hungarian, full-time students of CUB between October 2010 and January 2011. This second quantitative research phase was aimed to contribute to *improving scale items* and to *studying the potential dimensions of country brand and the concept of country equity*.

After this phase and following a validation of its results we proceeded, between September and December 2011, to a series of expert interviews with the aim of *refining the hypotheses and expert validating methodology*. We carried out semi-structured expert in-depth interviews with eight expert researchers in the fields of country image and country brands.

The *final test of the research model* was carried out in December 2011 on a sample of the Hungarian population aged 18-69 representative to the five standard demographic variables of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) (N=600).

### **6.3.2. The initial theoretical model**

Our initial theoretical model, as an overall approach to country image, includes the related *fundamental dimensions and their interactions*.

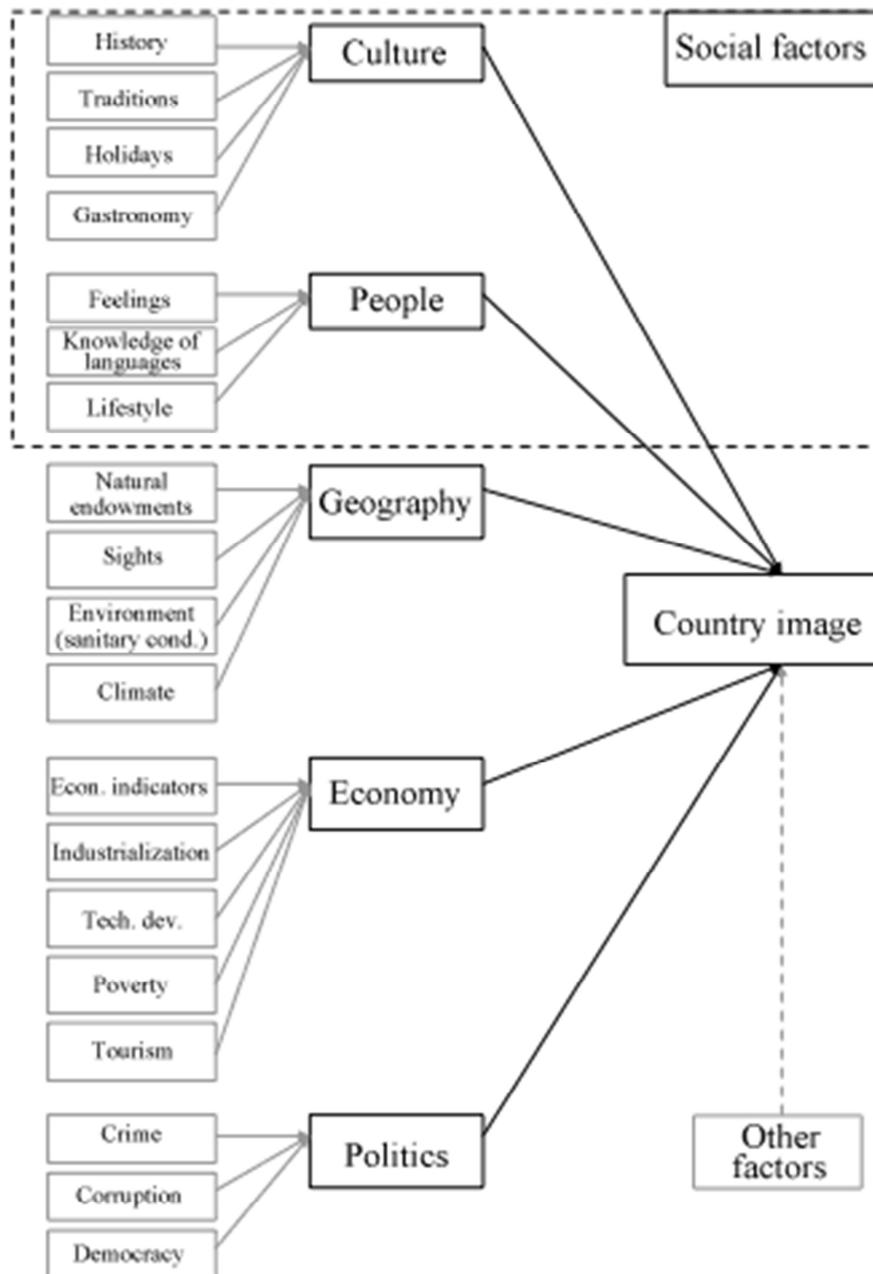
A first set of field research was conducted as early as 2002 (as part of the author's entry to the Hungarian Students' Research Conference [TDK, Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia]) and 2004 (as part of the author's MA thesis). The Hungarian-language questionnaire was filled out by 183 students of the Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration (former name of the Corvinus University of Budapest). Moreover, as a research assistant the author of the present dissertation had the opportunity to participate in a study for the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) conducted by the Marketing Department of the the Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration (head of research Dr. József Berács). The research was conducted in English among foreign university students studying in Hungary between December 2003 and March 2004. The aim of the research was to evaluate the opinions and attitudes of foreign students about Hungary, Hungarian products and their respective receiving institutions. The study was conducted on a research sample of 457 students of the Budapest University of Technology, Semmelweis Medical University and the Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration, using the Papadopoulos scale (the result were published in Jenes, 2005)

As a result of the above, a model framework had already been in place at the beginning of the present research process, which summarized the then-researched concepts and relationships of country image. The framework, elaborated in 2005, includes the dimensions available in the literature and based on the author's research so far. It is conceptually close to the *image-focused approaches*, and does not yet consider the relationships to other factors (e.g. product evaluation). The model was designed following a basic principle according to which a country's image in people's mind does

exist (as an identity, idea or stereotype) even when not confronted to the choice of a given product and having to evaluate the identity of the related nation.

The initial model includes the dimensions known from the literature with the related indicators. The main dimensions are as follows: (1) culture, (2) people, (3) geography, (4) economy, (5) politics. Culture and people constitute a common dimension that can be referred to as social factors. The model equally includes the representation of other dimensions' effect.

**Figure 12.**  
Multidimensionality of country image –Initial theoretical model



Source: own elaboration, 2005

## 7. FIRST QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PHASE

### 7.1. Exploratory study – Unveiling the dimensions of country image and the related casual relationships; test of country image scales

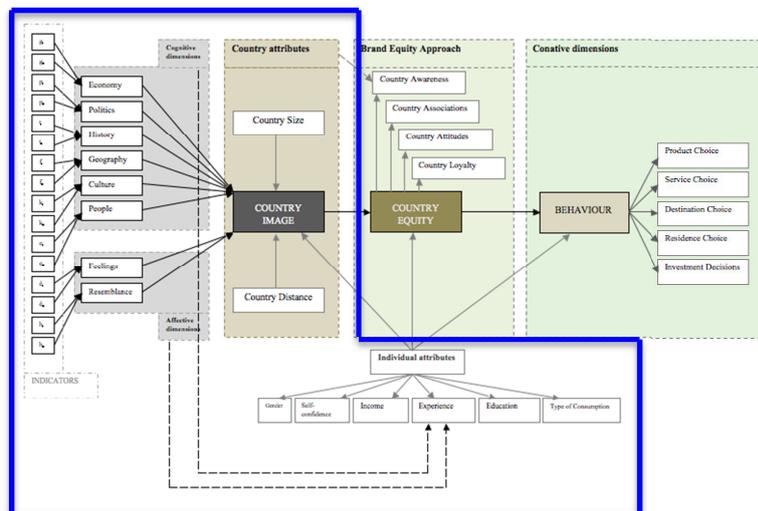
The first quantitative phase served as a first *exploratory research* phase. Its objective was (1) to unveil the dimensions of and differences between internal and external image, (2) to proceed to a first test of international and Hungarian scales, in terms of reliability and validity, (3) to unveil latent dimensions of country image using structural equation modeling and path analysis, (4) to fine-tune the research hypotheses and methodology to be used in the final research and (5) to improve the pre-established models and to design a relevant research model based on the results of this research phase.

A first self-administered query took place in March 2008 among 399 Hungarian, full-time students of CUB (results were published in Jenes – Malota – Simon, 2008; Jenes – Simon, 2009). The study was repeated in March 2009 among 106 foreign students of CUB (in English).

The exploratory study slightly modifies the initial theoretical model and brings about a number of results that are worthwhile to be incorporated into the final research model, into other methodological considerations and into the research hypotheses.

**Figure 13.**

Areas addressed by the first quantitative research phase



Source: own elaboration, 2012

## **7.2. Methodology of the first quantitative research phase**

The same, self-administered, paper-based questionnaire was used during the two phase of the first quantitative research phase, with the difference of one being in Hungarian language while the other in English (Exhibit X). Using a questionnaire ensured that we obtain results suitable for reflecting on the proprieties of a large population for, according to the literature, this method is adequate for measuring the attitudes and orientation of a larger population (Babbie, 2003; Gyulavári et.al. 2012).

The structure of the questionnaire was as follows: similar to international studies, the first set of questions dealt with country image in general, employing open-ended questions. Positive and negative views (spontaneous associations) on both the country and its people were collected. The second set of questions tested an internationally well-known and frequently applied scale – Papadopoulos et al. (1990, 1993) – which was also employed in a number of Hungarian country image related surveys. The third set of questions was also aimed at country image in general, using a country image scale developed by the Hungarian Gallup Institute. Demographic information was covered in the fourth set of questions.

As the Papadopoulos scale is an internationally validated measurement tool and it was also tested in Hungary several times beforehand (see e. g. Berács – Gyulavári, 1999 and Malota, 2004), there was no need for conducting a new test for ensuring the reliability and validity of the scales. The Gallup scale was equally already tested in several countries in English several times – the use of original scales provided the validity and reliability for the research.

After the initial questionnaire design we proceeded to a pilot test of the questionnaire among 15 university students, using a self-administered paper-based questionnaire. After dealing with the arisen problems in filling the questionnaire, it proved to be suitable for data collection.

Statistical analysis of the data was performed using SPSS 14.0 suite and SmartPLS 2.0 structural equation modeling methodology and software.

## **7.3. Main results of the Hungarian study**

The following research cannot be generalized as the research sample was not representative. Therefore, the results can only serve *to unveil processes and relationships and illustration purposes*.

At the same time the pre-testing of hypotheses and preliminary scale analysis and development on *easily accessible, non-random samples* (e.g. student samples) *are generally accepted in the literature* (see e.g. Osgood et.al., 1957; Malhotra, 1981; Zaichkowsky, 1985; mind in: Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Brijs et al, 2011).

According to the above, we will omit mentioning numerical findings related to actual country image and will only report whether the relevant approaches, considerations and relationships already known from the literature surfaced in the study.

### **7.3.1. Sample proprieties**

The Hungarian questionnaire was filled out by 399 third-year students of CUB studying Marketing. The mean age in the sample was 21.3 years, the youngest respondent being aged 20, the oldest 26, with a mode of 21 years. Gender distribution was as follows: 42.9 percent male and 57.1 percent female. 86.5 percent of respondents had not lived abroad for a longer period of time (i.e. for 3 months or more), while 13.5 percent did so.

In order to examine the relationships found in the literature, respondents could evaluate the financial status of their respective families on a 5-point scale, i.e. whether, in their opinion, their family revenue is well below average, below average, average, above average or well above average. 13.3 percent of respondents reported being in financial categories above average, 41.9 percent around the average and 44.8 percent above.

Declared self-confidence was equally measured on a 5-point scale: well below average, below average, average, above average and well above average. 23.8 percent of respondents declared having a below-average self-confidence, 31.8 percent an average and 44.4 percent above-average

### **7.3.2. Open-ended questions**

The open-ended questions of the first set attempted to survey people's views on Hungary and Hungarians. Open-ended questions are equally an often employed methodology within country image studies (based on Dohrenwend, 1965 in: Nebenzahl – Jaffe – Usunier, 2000; Papadopoulos et.al., 1993; Piskóti et.al., 1997; Berács – Malota, 2000; Nebenzahl – Jaffe – Usunier, 2000) to unveil consumers' spontaneous associations with countries.

As it was seen beforehand in the literature review, the associative network memory model by Anderson (1990, 1993) states that images and associations of a country relate to each other and create a network in people's mind. According to this, a question about the associations connected to a country can reveal other elements of reputation, and also the dimensions of country image.

The first question aimed at exploring respondents' first thoughts on Hungary. Even though only one answer was expected from respondents, they most often filled in two or three. The question was aimed at mapping free associations and emerging country image dimensions. Table 15. shows the frequency of first mentions in the case of each category of descriptives.

**Table 15.**  
Free associations related to Hungary

DESCRIPTIVES	FREQ.	DISTR. (%)
Homeland, home	201	51
Natural endowments	50	12,7
Budapest	20	5,1
Gastronomy, Hungaricums	17	4,3
Society-related feelings	15	3,8
Ibolya Oláh: Magyarország (song)	15	3,8
Country symbols	14	3,6
Political condition	12	3,0
Sights	12	3,0
Economy	6	1,5
Celebrities	4	1,0
Sports	2	0,5
Corruption, Crime	2	0,5
Public sanitation	2	0,5
Science, education	1	0,3
Other	21	5,3
Total	394	100

Source: own elaboration, 2009

The majority of respondents (n=394) (51%) associate Hungary with concepts like *home* in the first place. Responses related to *natural endowments* were also very popular (e.g. “country with a lot of beautiful sights”, “beautiful natural environment“). Budapest, gastronomy, Hungaricums and society-related feelings were also relatively frequent. The above validates well the theoretical concept of internal image and provides a good example of the apparition of dimension that differ from those suggested by the literature. Also can be seen that a part of the revealed dimensions (e.g. culture, politics, people) by the content analysis (see chapter 3.1.) is explored by the question, but other, *new special elements* (e.g. education, celebrities) and with different importance thereof can eliminated as well. On the other hand we can examine answers on people and country separately, and we can distinguish positive and negative statements at the same time.

### 7.3.3. Testing the Papadopoulos-scale

The following scale is widely used internationally to evaluate countries and their peoples. The original scale was employed in numerous international researches, originates from Nagashima’s (1970, 1977) scale and also has some similarities with the well known Martin – Eroglu (1993) scale. The original model (Papadopoulos et.al. [1990], and later Papadopoulos – Heslop [1993]) includes more questions, as it also serves as a tool for evaluating foreign countries and the relationships between countries. Therefore we only included the relevant parts and questions of the latter scale concerning internal image into our study (9 statements). At the same time our goal with

this study remained the *test of the scale*, the *study of the relationships with the various demographic variables* as well as to *explore the related dimensions*.

Table 16 shows the averages in the sample for each scale item (measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale).

**Table 16.**  
The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among Hungarian respondents,  
measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale

SCALE ITEM	AVG (STDEV) (N=399)
Politically stable country	2.51 (1.43)
Outstanding role within international politics	2.03 (1.30)
Trustworthy people	3.49 (1.28)
Rich country	2.72 (1.18)
Technologically advanced country	3.97 (1.28)
Very diligent and hard-working people	3.83 (1.40)
Highly skilled people	4.46 (1.33)
Very lovable people in general	4.25 (1.20)
An ideal country	3.73 (1.38)

Source: own elaboration, 2009

The above table shows that as few as two of the nine statements (“highly skilled people” and “very lovable people in general”) received a positive evaluation (i.e. above the mean score).

Moreover, we proceeded to an analysis of the *demographic differences* using an *analysis of variance*. “The analysis of variance belongs to the confirmatory methods, by which one can evaluate the effect of one (or more) independent variable(s) on one (or more) dependent variable(s)” (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, p. 164.). The use of ANOVA was justified by both the sample size and the level of measurement. The method requires a normal distribution of the dependent variables and homogeneity of variance. (Malhotra – Simon (km), 2008) The present data does not fulfill the requirements of normality, although in most cases the homogeneity of variance stands, wherefore we will not reject the results of the measure as our F-test result is fairly robust, and, according to the literature, “not meeting one or the other condition does not have a significant influence on the probability of a type I or type II error and therefore does not impair the validity of a conclusion.” (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, p. 167.).

The results are as follows (p=0,05):

Men evaluate the country significantly better than women (3.56 vs. 3.23). This supports the hypothesis stemming from the literature that *gender does have an influence on the evaluation of a country*.

We found no significant difference between the scores of those having already lived abroad for a longer period of time and those that haven't. This result *does not seem to*

*support the hypothesis based on the literature that time spent abroad/in the given country influences the evaluation of a country.*

Statistically significant differences were shown in several questions related to participants' *income situation*. Students participating in the research were asked to mark, on a 5-point scale the perceived level of income of their families (far below average, somewhat below average, average, somewhat above average, far above average). Students having responded "somewhat above average" and "far above average" had a significantly better evaluation of the country's economic situation (2.86 and 3.2 respectively) than those with a lower perceived level of income (2.54, 2.56 and 2.57 respectively).

In addition, the better financial situation a respondent declared to be, the less they felt that Hungarians were diligent and hard-working people. While respondents in the worst financial situation gave an average of 4.86 to this variable, those with the highest level of income a 3.52 average. The averages for this question gradually decrease with the growing level of perceived financial situation (4.86 – 4.2 – 3.83 – 3.76 – 3.52).

*Declared income therefore, in accordance with the literature, does have, in a given context, an influence on the evaluation of a country.*

The *level of self-confidence* was measured on a 5-point scale (far below average, somewhat below average, average, somewhat above average, far above average). The responses to this question resulted in a significant relationship with the "diligent and hard-working people" variable. Respondents with above average self-confidence (far and somewhat above categories) agree less with the statement (3.6 and 3.61 respectively) than those with a below average self-confidence (4.05 and 4.15). *This result only partially supports the hypothesis taken from the literature*, and it means, that self-confidence only among certain circumstances has an effect on the evaluation of a country and this relationship needs further tests in the final doctoral research.

In the following, the *reliability, internal consistency* were addressed and the *existence of latent factors* was studied using exploratory factor analysis<sup>11</sup>.

Factor analysis is a method for exploring underlying structure, which is "particularly suitable for unveiling connections between variables and unveiling principal components with a population having numerous homogeneous attributes" (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, p. 247.) Principal component analysis and VARIMAX rotation were chosen for the present study and correlations between the studied variables were studied using Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO test).

Principal component analysis was justified because it contributes to reduce the number of variables with a minimal loss of information. VARIMAX rotation was used for it enables a "more stable rotation and a better separation of factors compared to other methods, which supports the understanding of the underlying content in each factor"

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<sup>11</sup> For the scale test we had no preliminary known factor structure, therefore we were not able to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis.

(Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, p. 267.) The “eigenvalue greater than 1” criterion was chosen for factor formation, that is, there were no a priori criteria available as for the number of factors to reach. The KMO (Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin criterion) test is one of the most important measures for determining whether the variables are suitable for a factor analysis. The adequacy value of KMO recommended by the literature is 0.7.

The sample reached a moderately adequate result for KMO (0.68) and the total variance explained by the factors is 54,8%, which is equally only moderately adequate (with a recommended value of 60% or more).

MSA (measure of sampling adequacy) values in the anti-image matrix show how the given variable fits the factor structure. The related adequacy value recommended by the literature is 0.5, below which one ought to exclude the given variable from the analysis. MSA values within the sample were between 0.59 and 0.83, therefore all variables were included into the analysis.

As shown in Table 17. results support a 3-factor solution.

The first factor can be dubbed “*description of people*” (total variance explained: 25.6%). It is interesting to note that the “ideal country” variable equally belongs to this factor describing the people of a country instead of belonging to the factor defining the country itself. This would imply that for respondents, a country is ideal if people living in the given country are likeable, trustworthy, diligent and highly qualified and not when the country itself is rich or politically stable or technologically advanced.

The second factor was dubbed “*description of the country*” (total variance explained: 24%). This factor itself can be divided into two sub-factors. On one hand (“*general reputation of the country*”), the variables related to political stability and the economy of a country (variance explained: 18%) and on the other (“*success of country*”), technological development and role in international politics (with a negative sign) (variance explained: 13%). This could indicate that according to respondents, a country’s minor role in international politics can stem from its relatively low level of technological development.

**Table 17.**

Factors unveiled in the Hungarian sample, based on the Papadopoulos scale

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3
Very lovable people in general	-.761		
Trustworthy people	.710		
An ideal country	.628		
Very diligent and hard-working people	-.577		
Rich country		.784	
Politically stable country		.783	
Technologically advanced country			.670
Outstanding role within international politics			.641
Highly skilled people			.563

Source: own elaboration, 2009

To test the reliability of the scale and its usability in the final research phase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed. The related adequacy value recommended by the literature is 0.6 (Malhotra, 2002) 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978; Hair et.al., 2010). The scale's Cronbach's alpha index was 0.61 within the sample, and it can therefore be considered moderately reliable.

The reliabilities of each individual factor were:

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 1: 0.613

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 2: 0.535

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 3: 0.123

According to the above results, reliability in the case of the first two factors is merely moderate while in the case of the last factor, it is unacceptable. The results also reflect the necessity of development of the scales or creating new scale items.

#### **7.3.4. Test of the Gallup country image scale**

The next tested scale was used by the Hungarian Gallup Institute in 2000 during the "Country Image 2000 – or what does the Hungarian nation think" study. The scale was later used in several other Hungarian studies. The scale measures the evaluation of a given country (internal image) with a 24-item 4-point scale ("strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", "strongly agree"). The choice of this scale was justified by the efforts of comparability between the dimensions and relationships of internal and external image (the results were published in Jenes – Malota – Simon, 2008) and also by *the future usage of items in the structural modeling process*.

Table 18 presents the evaluation by respondents of each item related to Hungary.

**Table 18.**

The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among Hungarian respondents, measured on a 4-point scale

ITEM	N	AVG (STDEV) N=399
Successful country	398	1.91 (.531)
Talented country	398	2.97 (.677)
Country of decent and honest people	399	2.10 (.663)
Educated, civilized country	397	2.63 (.586)
The country of social justice	397	1.90 (.611)
The country of personal freedom	398	2.82 (.630)
A country with a bright past and great history	399	3.21 (.674)
A country that suffered a lot	397	3.48 (.646)
Law-abiding country	399	2.40 (.649)
The country of entrepreneur people	398	2.66 (.712)
Grumpy, pessimistic country	398	3.16 (.685)
Diligent country	399	2.41 (.635)
The country of solidary people caring for each other	398	1.99 (.627)
The country of great sports performances	398	3.16 (.677)
The country of great scientific achievements	398	3.20 (.709)
A country with an important culture	398	3.09 (.645)
The country of notable economic performances	399	1.80 (.592)
Decmocratic country	399	2.82 (.605)
An orderly, clean country	399	2.10 (.601)
A country with many natural endowments	399	3.47 (.579)
Happy, cheerful country	398	2.14 (.649)
A developed country	399	2.36 (.610)
Rapidly developing country	399	2.01 (.580)
Country with a bright future	398	2.34 (.733)

Source: own elaboration, 2009

Table 22 shows that respondents rather agree wit the following statements (in grey in the table): “a country with a bright past and great history”, “a country that suffered a lot”, “grumpy, pessimistic country”, “the country of great sports performances”, “the country of great scientific achievements”, “a country with an important culture” and “a country with many natural endowments”. *These statements entirely confirm the results of the previously presented open-ended questions.* The remaining statements were judged “not typical” or “entirely not typical” for Hungary by the respondents.

Similarly to the test of the Papadopoulos scale, we proceeded to a study of the *relationships related to demographic attributes* using analysis of variance.

In certain contexts, the country once again is evaluated in a more positive way by men than women. These are the following: “successful country” (1.98 vs. 1.86), “orderly, clean country” (2.17 vs. 2.05), “happy, cheerful country” (2.22 vs. 2.08), “country with a bright future” (2.43 vs. 2.27). This difference might stem from women being more sensitive in nature and having a stronger demand for order and security. The influence of gender on the evaluation of country image was again verified.

No significant relationship could be shown for any of the statements between the responses of those *having lived abroad for a longer period of time* and those that hadn't.

We found a significant relationship between *income situation* and an item in three cases. Respondents' agreeing with the statement "the country of personal freedom" gradually rises with their declared income situation (2.71 – 2.78 – 2.78 – 2.80 – 3.15 respectively) while their agreeing with "a country with many natural endowments" gradually drops (2.57 – 2.09 – 2.02 – 2.14 – 2.27). People with the lowest level of income agree most with the statement "an orderly, clean country". The level of agreement first gradually decreases along with improving financial situations then conversely, starts to rise again (3.57 – 3.67 – 3.45 – 3.46 – 3.27). This result might be explained by the growing freedom of choice and possibility to succeed with the growing welfare. *This equally confirms that declared income can have an influence on the evaluation of a country.*

Self-confidence was once again measured on a 5-point scale and four significant relationships have been found. In the case of three items, the level of agreement rises parallelly with self-confidence: "successful country" (1.52 – 1.95 – 1.95 – 1.88 – 2.05), "a country with an important culture" (3.04 – 3.07 – 3.01 – 3.08 – 3.37), "orderly, clean country" (1.76 – 2.03 – 2.15 – 2.09 – 2.27), while it fluctuates along the level of self-esteem for one variable: "country of decent and honest people" (2.10 – 2.09 – 2.25 – 2.00 – 1.90). *This confirms the hypothesis according to which declared self-esteem influences the evaluation of a country.*

After studying data suitability, and in consistence with our previous analyses, we proceeded to structural analyses. In the exploratory factor analysis phase, we used a principal component method with VARIMAX rotation and a KMO-test to measure the correlation of included variables. The "eigenvalue greater than 1" criterion was chosen for factor formation.

During a first factor analysis, 7 factors were generated with a KMO score of 0.801 and a total variance explained of 56% (24 variables). In the anti-image matrix all MSA values were greater than 0.5, even though individual factor scores did not in every case reach the adequacy value of 0.5. For this reason, after excluding two variables that showed invalid or outlier values, a 6-factor solution was reached with a total variance explained of 53.6% (KMO: 0.787; 22 variables). After excluding three further variables, a 5-factor solution was retained, with a KMO score of 0.799 and a total explained variance of 52.7% (19 variables). The KMO value can be considered adequate while the total variance explained (being below 60 percent) low.

Factor distribution is shown in Table 19.

**Table 19.**

Factors unveiled in the Hungarian sample, based on the Gallup scale

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5
Country of good economic achievements	,771				
Successful country	,666				
An orderly, clean country	,625				
Rapidly developing country	,582				
Country with great scientific achievements		,756			
Country with great sport performances		,742			
Country with an important culture		,592			
Rich in nice landscapes		,557			
Talented country		,538			
The country of personal freedom			,772		
Democratic country			,728		
Law-abiding country			,625		
The country of social justice			,548		
Grumpy, pessimistic country				-,722	
The country of solidary people caring for each other				,680	
Happy, cheerful country				,649	
Country of decent and honest people				,573	
A country that suffered a lot					,762
A country with a bright past and great history					,716

Source: own elaboration, 2009

The first factor, “describing success” includes variables related to economic performance, development and success. It is interesting to note that the “orderly, clean country” variable is included in this factor as well. The factor accounts for 21% of the total variance.

The second factor dubbed “describing performance” contains the variables related to achievements in sciences and sports (variance explained: 12%).

The third factor, “describing democracy” includes variables related to personal freedom, democratic country, legal order, social justice. The factor accounts for 9% of the total variance.

The fourth factor, dubbed “describing human relations and feelings” includes scale variables related to pessimism, solidarity, honesty and cheerfulness and sadness. The factor accounts for 6.4% of the total variance.

In the following, we proceeded to the examining of the reliability of the scale: the scale’s Cronbach’s alpha index was 0.791 and it can therefore be considered reliable.

The reliabilities of each individual factor were:

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 1: 0.647

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 2: 0.645

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 3: 0.682

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 4: 0.654

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 5: 0.640

According to the above results, the reliability for the factors unveiled is moderate, and the results also reflect the necessity of the development of scales.

### **7.3.5. The Country Image Dimensions Model – Methodology and Results of the structural analysis**

A Papadopoulos (1990, 1993)-skála, valamint a Gallup (2000)-skála eredményeinek The factors revealed during a first exploratory tests of the Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) scale and the Gallup (2000) country image scale were put to a further analysis in order *to examine whether the factors could be considered as latent variables for a dimensional model of country image.*

The 11-item Papadopoulos scale turned out to be inadequate for further structural analysis. Indeed, the factors (as a result of the limited number of variables and the low explanatory power of the unveiled relationships) were not suitable for being included into a common dimensional model. Therefore the following study was conducted using the 24-item country image scale. The five factors revealed by the exploratory factor analysis were further analyzed using SmartPLS software.

Recently, SmartPLS has become a more and more widely used analysis method for *testing relationships between certain latent variables and for measuring the strengths of those relationships* (Chin – Newsted, 1999). The usual conditions for distributions are not required for this method to be applied, and the same procedure is suitable for analyzing complex models on small samples, as well. The recommended sample size is ten times the maximal number of indicators related to the latent variables in question (Barclay et. al., 1995). According to these criteria, *the sample proved out to be suitable for the purposes of this kind of analysis.*

The choice of Smart PLS can be justified by its advantages, among many others the ability of handling small sample size and executing formative constructs as well. (Henseler, 2009)

Based on the principles of Jarvis – MacKenzie – Podsakoff (2003) concerning Type III models and using both the results of the factor analysis and the assumptions were formulated on the basis of relationships already published in relevant literature, the model to be tested was the following (see Figure 14):

Az általam tesztelni kívánt modell a faktorelemzés eredményeit, valamint a szakirodalomból is ismert összefüggések alapján felállított feltételezéseimet is felhasználva, Jarvis – MacKenzie – Podsakoff (2003) 3. típusú modellezési elvét követve a következőképpen alakult (ld. 14. sz. ábra):

Country image, as a latent variable, and its dimensions and the indicators thereof make up a so-called *formative* model, that is the direction of the relationship points from the indicators towards the latent variable (Diamantopolous – Winklhofer, 2001). The

multicollinearity of manifest variables was tested by the VIF-method. The dimensions' contribution to the score of country image is measured by the path coefficients, the majority of which can be considered rather strong (evaluation of path coefficients:  $>0.33$ : strong effect,  $\sim 0.2$ : moderate effect; also see: Wilson et. al., 2007).

Significance was measured using the so-called *bootstrapping* procedure. Bootstrapping is the practice of estimating properties of an estimator (such as its variance) by measuring those properties when sampling from an approximating distribution. When observations can be assumed to be from an independent and identically distributed population, we can use bootstrapping by constructing a number of resamples of the observed dataset (and of equal size to the observed dataset), each of which is obtained by random sampling with replacement from the original dataset. (Henseler, 2009)

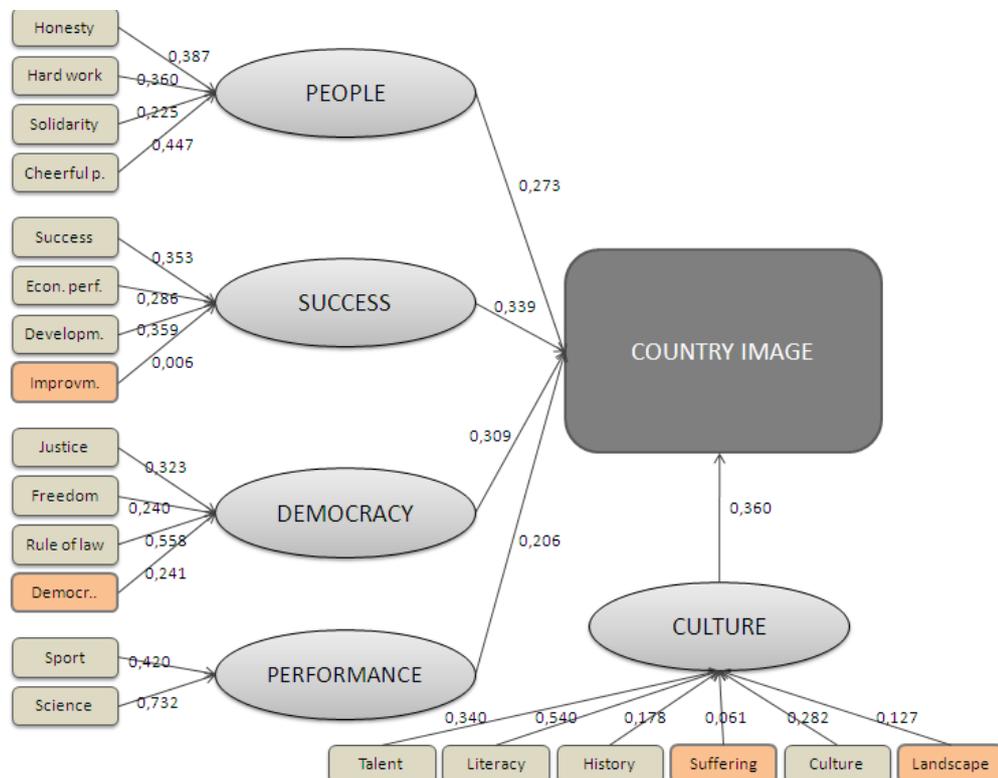
Four of the indicators (see the model: development, „democraticness”, suffering, nice landscapes) demonstrated a less than significant impact.

The dimensions of the model based on the results are:

- i. people
- ii. success
- iii. democracy
- iv. performance
- v. culture.

**Figure 14.**

Structural model of the Hungarian country image dimensions



Source: own elaboration, 2009

Thus the dimension „People’s characteristics” is affected by the perceived righteousness and diligence of people, social cohesion, the degree of solidarity and how cheerful people appear to be, while the dimension’s effect on the latent variable is 0.273.

The dimension „Country’s success” is influenced by the degree of success, economic performance and the country’s degree of development. The measure of the dimension’s impact on the latent variable is 0.339.

The elements of the dimension „Country’s democraticness” are related to social justice, human freedom and the rule of law; the dimension has an effect on the latent variable of 0.309.

The dimension „Country’s performance” is related to sport and scientific achievements; the measure of its influence on the latent variable is 0.206.

The dimension „Culture” is affected by the talent and the literacy of people, historical background and people’s perceptions of the country’s culture. The dimension’s effect on the latent variable is 0.360.

*Analyzing and concluding on the above results one can affirm, that the above dimensions and relationships support the prior assumptions and findings based on our literature review. As it can be seen, country image and its dimensions are in a causal relationship with each other, and the dimensions have different impact on the whole construct. On the other hand one can reveal, that not all the known dimensions can be revealed in the results, and also declare that the country image and the dimensions of it can be evaluated by structural research methods as a formative construct.*

### **7.4. Main results of the English-language study**

#### **7.4.1. Sample proprieties**

The English-language questionnaire was filled out by foreign student of CUB (participating in either CEMS or Erasmus exchange programs). The mean age in the sample was 21.7 years (N=106), and 40.6 percent of respondents were male and 59.4 percent female.

Countries of origin of respondents are shown in Table 20.

**Table 20.**

Country of origin of respondents to the English-language questionnaire

COUNTRY	FREQ.	%
USA	17	16
China	16	15,1
Mexico	15	14,2
Belgium	9	8,5
Germany	8	7,5
Netherlands	6	5,7
Vietnam	5	4,7
France	4	3,8
Sweden	3	2,8
Austria	3	2,8
Greece	3	2,8
Other	17	16
TOTAL	106	100

Source: own elaboration, 2010

#### 7.4.2. Open-ended questions

In the first part of the questionnaire, a set of open-ended questions attempted to survey respondents' views on Hungary and Hungarians.

The first question aimed at exploring respondents' *first thoughts on Hungary*. Even though only one answer was expected from respondents, they most often filled in two or three. The question was aimed at mapping free associations and emerging country image dimensions. Table 21. shows the frequency of first mentions in the case of each category of descriptives.

**Table 21.**

Free associations of foreign respondents related to Hungary

ASSOCIATIONS	FREQ.	%
Nice landscapes, nice country	31	29,2
Budapest, capital	14	13,2
Economic situation	11	10,4
Eastern Europe	11	10,4
Gastronomy, Hungaricums	6	5,7
Feelings	6	5,7
Culture	6	5,7
Friendly people, beautiful women	3	2,8
Unfriendly people	3	2,8
Other	15	14,1
SUM	394	100

Source: own elaboration, 2010

One third of respondents (31%; N=106) when asked to think of Hungary, the thought of beauty, and of a beautiful country comes first in their minds. Budapest also received a

significant amount of mentions (13.2%), as well as the economic state of the country, gastronomy, Hungaricums, and Hungary's belonging to Eastern Europe.

This confirms the concept of external image known from the literature. The above table also shows considerable differences with those dimensions thereof mentioned in the literature (see Chapter 3.1.) Among the associations one can explore factors in relation with touristic type evaluation. On the other hand, free associations related to the country equally include expressions of feelings, emotions, and observations related to people.

### 7.4.3. Testing the Papadopoulos-scale

As well as in the Hungarian questionnaire, the image-related parts of the aforementioned Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) scale were used for the present international query. At the same time our goal with this study remained the test of the scale, the study of the *relationships with the various demographic variables* as well as to *explore the related dimensions*.

Table 22 shows the averages in the sample for each scale item (measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale).

**Table 22.**  
The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among foreign respondents,  
measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale

SKÁLA-TÉTELEK	AVG (STDEV) N=106
Rich country	4,83 (1,38)
Politically stable country	4,77 (1,69)
Admirable role in the world of politics	4,69 (1,64)
Technologically advanced country	4,46 (1,34)
Ideal country	4,45 (1,45)
Aligned with my own country	4,43 (1,52)
Hard working people	4,22 (1,37)
Likeable people	4,04 (1,48)
Highly educated people	3,93 (1,39)
I know a lot about the country	3,91 (1,36)
People have a refined taste for the beautiful things in life	3,89 (1,41)
Trustworthy people	3,78 (1,54)
I would welcome more investments from the country	3,66 (1,52)
My country should have closer ties with the country	3,54 (1,60)
I would welcome more imports from the country	3,42 (1,45)

Source: own elaboration, 2010

The above table shows that the evaluation of the country is positive for approximately half of the statements (8 out of 15). Even at a first glance, it is conspicuous that this image is far more positive than in the preceding study (where only 2 statements were evaluated positively). This reinforces the point of view according to which *it is worthwhile to treat internal and external image separately when studying a country's image*.

Moreover, we conducted an analysis of variance to explore potential *demographic* differences.<sup>12</sup> The results are as follows ( $p=0.05$ ):

There are no significant differences in the evaluation of a country along the respondent's *gender*. This contradicts both the earlier findings and assumption based on the literature that the perception of a country is affected by gender.

*Level of income* turned out to be a significant moderator in the case of one question. Students participating in the research were asked to mark, on a 5-point scale the perceived level of income of their families (far below average, somewhat below average, average, somewhat above average, far above average). Unlike the Hungarian survey, respondents here had to evaluate their income situation along both the domestic and Hungarian average level of income. In the Hungarian context, no significant effect was found, however, the domestic income situation turned out to have a significant effect on whether the respondent believed Hungary was a rich country.

Results show that those with an above or far above average level of income evaluated Hungary as a poorer country (5.13 and 4.33 respectively) than those with an average or above average income (4.6 – 2.56 – 2.5).

*The declared level of income – in accordance with the literature – can, in some contexts, influence the evaluation of countries, even though this influence cannot be established in most cases and needs further tests in the final doctoral research.*

The level of *self-confidence* was measured on a 5-point scale (far below average, somewhat below average, average, somewhat above average, far above average).

In this case, two significant relationships were found. In the case of “trustworthy people”, those with an above or far above average declared level of self-confidence agreed significantly less with the statement (3.0 – 4.38) than those with a below average self-confidence (4.3 – 4.58). In the case of “technologically developed country” above and far above average self-confidence led to a more negative view (4.46 – 3.79) than below average self-confidence (4.59 – 5.00).

*This result only partially, only in some contexts confirms our assumption based on the literature.*

In the following, the *reliability, internal consistency* were addressed and the *existence of latent factors* was studied using exploratory factor analysis. As it was seen beforehand, the validity and reliability of applied scales haven't been realized adequately, so there was a need for repeating the test on a new sample again.

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<sup>12</sup> The method requires a normal distribution of the dependent variables and homogeneity of variance. As beforehand, the present data does not fulfill the requirements of normality either, although in most cases the homogeneity of variance stands, wherefore we will not reject the results of the measure as our F-test result is fairly robust, and, according to the literature, “not meeting one or the other condition does not have a significant influence on the probability of a type I or type II error and therefore does not impair the validity of a conclusion.” (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, p. 167.)

## 7. THE FIRST QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PHASE

As it was similarly conducted before, principal component analysis and VARIMAX rotation were chosen for the present study and correlations between the studied variables were studied using KMO test. The “eigenvalue greater than 1” criterion was chosen for factor formation.

MSA values in the anti-image matrix were between 0.52 and 0.789 (save one item [0.404], that we subsequently excluded from the analysis). KMO was acceptable (0.708) and the total variance explained by factors was 62.4%.

Results support a 4-factor solution (Table 23).<sup>13</sup>

The first factor “description of the country” (total variance explained: 28%) mainly contains statements related to performance and international notoriety.

The second factor, “description of people” has a total variance explained of 12%. It is interesting to note that the “ideal country” variable equally belongs to this factor describing the people of a country instead of belonging to the factor defining the country itself. This would imply that for respondents, a country is ideal if people living in the given country are likeable, trustworthy, diligent and highly qualified and not when the country itself is rich or politically stable or technologically advanced.

The third factor “relationship with the country” (total variance explained: 9.6%) includes statements concerning the country’s receptiveness of imports and foreign investments.

The last factor was dubbed “similarity with the country” as it also contains the statements “similar to my homeland” and “close relations”. This factor has a total variance explained of 8%.

**Table 23.**  
Factors unveiled in the English-language sample, based on the Papadopoulos scale

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4
Rich country	,847			
Politically stable country	,759			
Admirable role in the world of politics	,684			
Technologically advanced country	,654			
Trustworthy people		- ,748		
Likeable people		- ,674		
Hard working people		- ,568		
Highly educated people		,533		
Ideal country		* ,486		
I would welcome more imports from the country			,774	
I would welcome more investments from the country			,761	
Aligned with my own country				,789
People have a refined taste for the beautiful things in life				,505
My country should have closer ties with the country				* ,493

Source: own elaboration, 2010

<sup>13</sup> Although values marked with a „\*” did not reach the minimal 0.5 factor loading, as they are very close to it and considering the potential loss of information if excluded, we considered it worthwhile to keep them within the analysis.

Based on the arrangement and content of the above factors one can state that the statements sharply outline the different topics of country evaluation, the evaluation of a country's inhabitants and the perceived similarity with a country, *that equally are accepted and emphasized fields of study within the literature of country image* (see Chapter 3.1.)

To test the reliability of the scale and its usability in the final research phase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed. ). The scale's Cronbach's alpha index was 0.516, and therefore turned out to be unreliable in the case of our sample of foreign students.

*In conclusion, it can be stated that the second enquiry, in English, did confirm in many points the results of the first, Hungarian-language test of the Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) scale. In some cases, however, it indicates the necessity for further inclusion of elements, relationships and further testing.*

#### 7.4.4. Test of the Gallup country image scale

The following test of the so-called Gallup (2000) scale was conducted in a way identical to the preceding Hungarian query. The scale measures the evaluation of a given country (internal image) with a 24-item 4-point scale ("strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", "strongly agree"). Table 24 presents the evaluation by respondents of each item related to Hungary.

**Table 24.**  
The evaluation of Hungary and its inhabitants among foreign respondents,  
measured on a 4-point scale

ITEM	N	AVG (STDEV)
Successful country	105	2,10 (0,63)
Talented country	106	2,63 (0,71)
Country of decent and honest people	104	2,56 (0,72)
Civilized country	105	2,63 (0,68)
The country of social justice	105	2,37 (0,69)
The country of personal freedom	103	2,89 (0,70)
A country with a bright past and great history	104	3,04 (0,83)
A country that suffered a lot	100	3,12 (0,71)
Law-abiding country	103	2,33 (0,67)
The country of open-minded people	102	2,30 (0,56)
Grumpy, pessimistic country	102	2,84 (0,86)
Diligent country	103	2,44 (0,79)
The country of solidary people caring for each other	104	2,56 (0,71)
Country with great sport performances	104	2,27 (0,75)
Country with great scientific achievements	103	2,54 (0,72)
Country with an important culture	104	3,19 (0,67)
Country of good economic achievements	104	2,07 (0,66)
Democratic country	104	2,70 (0,65)

## 7. THE FIRST QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PHASE

An orderly, clean country	105	2,47 (0,86)
Rich in nice landscapes	103	3,22 (0,76)
Happy, cheerful country	103	2,35 (0,80)
Developed country	105	2,41 (0,60)
Rapidly developing country	105	2,32 (0,67)
The country with bright future	105	2,61 (0,70)

Source: own elaboration, 2010

Table 24 shows that respondents rather agree with the following statements (in grey in the table): “a country with a bright past and great history”, “a country that suffered a lot”, “a country with an important culture”, “a country with many natural endowments”. *These statements entirely confirm the results of the previously presented open-ended questions.* The remaining statements were judged “not typical” or “entirely not typical” for Hungary by the respondents. One can also observe that foreign respondents estimated far fewer statements as being characteristic of Hungary than Hungarian respondents.

Once again, we proceeded to a study of the relationships related to *demographic attributes* using analysis of variance the results of which are as follows:

Male respondents gave a significantly more positive evaluation to the following items: “Rapidly developing country” (2.53 – 2.18); “Orderly, clean country” (2.7 – 2.3). The influence of gender on the evaluation of country image was again verified.

No significant differences were found in relation to respondents’ *level of income* when compared to their domestic average. On the contrary, when comparing it to the Hungarian average, a significant relationship was found with two statements.

Respondents’ agreement with the statement “the country of social justice” decreases with their growing perceived level of income (3.0 – 2.8 – 2.45 – 2.37 – 1.81).

Their agreement with “country of solidary people” fluctuates with the declared level of income (4.0 – 2.5 – 2.45 – 2.63 – 2.63). *These results confirm that, under certain conditions, declared income does have an influence on the evaluation of a country.*

*Self-confidence* was once again measured on a 5-point scale<sup>14</sup> and three significant relationships have been found. In the case of two statements, agreement with the statement grows (almost constantly) parallel with self-esteem: “Democratic country” (2.08 – 2.73 – 2.83 – 2.91); “Country with a bright future” (2.33 – 2.49 – 2.76 – 3.09). In one case it fluctuates with the declared level of self-esteem: “Depressed, pessimistic country” (2.75 – 2.92 – 2.55 – 3.36). *This confirms the hypothesis according to which declared self-esteem influences the evaluation of a country.*

After studying data suitability, we proceeded to structural analyses.

<sup>14</sup> No respondent declared being in the lowest category of self-esteem. This item therefore only provides 4 answers.

During a first factor analysis, 9 factors were generated with a KMO score of 0.566 and a total variance explained of 67.4% (24 variables). After excluding two variables (those with MSA values lower than 0.5), a 6-factor solution was reached with a total variance explained of 62.3% (KMO: 0.666; 17 variables). After excluding two further variables (those with factor loadings inferior to 0.5), a 5-factor solution was retained, with a KMO score of 0.676 and a total explained variance of 62.1% (15 variables). After excluding two further variables, we reached a 4-factor solution (KMO: 0.695; 13 variables, variance explained: 57.9%). (see table 25)

The first factor, dubbed “describing people” includes variables related to sincerity, honesty, talent, diligence and hard work (total variance explained: 24.75%).

The second factor, “describing the country” includes variables related to education, promising future, success and development level (total variance explained: 14.4%).

The third factor, “describing democracy” includes variables related to personal freedom and social justice. The factor accounts for 10% of the total variance.

The last factor dubbed “describing performance” contains the variables related to economic performance, solidarity and sports achievements (variance explained: 8.7%).

**Table 25.**

Factors unveiled in the English-language sample, based on the Gallup scale

ITEM	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4
Country of decent and honest people	,775			
Diligent country	,760			
Talented country	,682			
Civilized country		,716		
The country with a bright future		,618		
Sucesful country		,541		
Developed country		,502		
The country of personal freedom			,840	
The country of social justice			,724	
Country with great sport performances				,727
The country of solidary people caring for each other				,654
Country of good economic achievements				,549

Source: own elaboration, 2010

The total variance explained by the factors is 52.6%. *Each factor can be put in parallel with the country image dimensions known from the literature: among others, the separate evaluation of people and the country equally appears in this case.*

In the following, we proceeded to the examining of the reliability of the scale: the scale’s Cronbach's alpha index was 0.699 and it can therefore be considered only just reliable.

The reliabilities of each individual factor were:

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 1: 0.537

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 2: 0.619

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 3: 0.632

Cronbach-alpha coefficient of Factor 4: 0.453

According to the above results, the reliability for the factors unveiled is moderate and for the 4<sup>th</sup> factor is unacceptable. The results also reflect the necessity of the development of scales.

## 7.5. Conclusions and limitations of the first quantitative research phase

The tests of scales and the subsequent structural analyses provided a number of interesting and informative results that contributed to further refining our earlier hypotheses. At the same time, this piece of research also has several limitations which are to be presented in the following section.

### 7.5.1. Scale evaluation

Based on the fact that our results confirm the main findings in the *literature*, the used scales can be considered to be *reliable and stable* (for comparison with previous research, see e.g. Malota, 2001). However several properties have to be considered as limitations of the given measurement tools.

To test the reliability and usability of the scale in the final research, we used a test of internal consistency based on Chronbach's alpha indicator (the recommended minimal value of the indicator is either 0.6 [Malhotra, 2002] or 0.7 [Nunally, 1978; Hair et.al., 2010]).

The test of the scales led to the following results (Table 26):

**Table 26.**  
Test of reliability of the used scales (Cronbach's alpha indicators)

Scale	Hungarian sample (N=399)	Foreign sample (N=106)
Papadopoulos-scale	0.61	0.516
Gallup-scale	0.791	0.699

Source: own elaboration, 2011

Results show that the scales are not completely reliable in the two samples and **their use would therefore compromise the validity of the final study**. It means that in order to ensure good results of research **there is necessity for developing the existing scales and models for the final doctoral research**.

The first limitation is that of a certain lack of validity: neither the Papadopoulos, nor the Gallup scales were able to measure the complete range of dimensions generally available in the literature. This might lead to diminishing content validity.

In addition it can be stated that the Papadopoulos scale contains too few items to be able to provide ground for further structural analysis. Scales generally accepted as suitable for structural analysis contain 20 to 30 items (see e.g. Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2007).

Our goal with open-ended question was to unveil respondents' free associations. (see Table 27) The categorization of these elements led to *identifying to main building blocks, dimensions of country image*. Results verify that the dimensions identified in the literature are relevant and identifiable (and spontaneously present among the answers by respondents) and therefore **their use and inclusion within a scale can be justified for the final study.**

**Table 27.**

Country image dimensions unveiled using open-ended questions

Hungarian sample (N=399)	Foreign sample (N=106)
Natural endowments	Natural endowments; natural beauty
Feelings, emotions	Capital city
Culture	Economy
Economy	Geographical attributes
Politics	Culture
Public safety	People
	Feelings, emotions

Source: own elaboration, 2011

We proceeded to a validation of international scales in order to *include and render dimensions and indicators to latent variables in our planned structural model from a suitable scale*. Known and tested scales do not, however, study all the dimensions that occur with free associations and that may be mentioned in the literature on the subject. Table 28 gives a summary of the latent factors unveiled during our research.

**Table 28**

Latent variables unveiled by the exploratory factor analysis

Scale	Hungarian sample (N=399)	Foreign sample (N=106)
Papadopoulos-scale	Description of people Description of the country Describing success	Description of the country Description of people Relationships with the country Similarity with the country
Gallup-scale	Success Performance Democracy Human relations History	Description of people Description of the country Democracy Performance

Source: own elaboration, 2011

As it was seen beforehand, both the Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) and the Gallup (2000) have limitations according to validity approaches. *For this might lead to compromising overall content validity, their usability within the structural model is questionable.*

According to the above mentioned one can state, that the mental picture of consumers built up by individual dimensions and nodes of dimensions at the same time. It means, that dimensions can connect to each other building and influencing the reputation of an object together. It can bring a new perspective to the future development of researches.

**As a conclusion we can declare that the scales need to be developed and commonly applied in the final research according to their lack of proper validity and reliability.**

Another important limitation of the research stems from the *sample characteristics*. In particular, the scales were tested on a highly homogeneous sample of students and therefore they remain to be tested, after further refinements, on a representative sample. Demographic disparities showed significant differences even in the case of the student sample – a *representative national sample* would likely prove the related hypotheses.

An additional constraint is given by the purely *Hungarian sample* in the first case: the special nature of the topic would require to use international comparison to design an internationally valued measurement model and scale. This leads to additional content limitations and this is equally a line for further research.

The *sample of international students* in the second research can also account for a limitation as the country image scale was originally designed to evaluate the internal image of countries (even though, the original Gallup study equally included foreigners as respondents). Therefore the results obtained can only be interpreted under certain limitations.

The aim of using *corresponding scales on both samples* was to ensure the possibility of relevant comparison and generalization of results.

### 7.5.2. Unveiling the potential moderating factors

There is ample mention in the literature as to the effect of certain demographic variables on the evaluation of countries. The study of these potential *moderating factors* was equally carried out during the second quantitative research. The results are shown below, in Table 29.

**Table 29.**  
Moderating effects unveiled during the research

Scale	Variable	Moderating effect (Hungarian sample, N=399)	Moderating effect (Foreign sample, N=106)
Papadopoulos-scale	Gender	yes	yes
	Have lived abroad	no	-
	Income situation	yes	partly
	Self-confidence	yes	yes
Gallup-scale	Gender	yes	yes
	Have lived abroad	no	-
	Income situation	yes	partly
	Self-confidence	yes	yes

Source: own elaboration, 2011

Results show that *gender* and *self-confidence* in every case, and *income* situation partly, in given contexts do influence the evaluation of countries. According to the results, the fact whether a respondent had already lived abroad for a longer period of time does not significantly affect country image.

**As a result, it might be worthwhile to test the effect of gender, self-confidence and income situation in the doctoral research.**

### 7.5.3. General evaluation of the structural model

The structural pre-test of data equally brought useful results in many aspects. *Concerning its reliability and validity, the model proved out to be appropriate*, and its contents demonstrate close similarities to the approaches already known from literature. Significance was measured using the bootstrapping procedure, while the multicollinearity of manifest variables was tested by the VIF-method.

A typical characteristic of so-called *formative models* is that non-significant elements must not be removed from the model, not even after having tested the significance of the indicators. The reason is that their abandonment might threaten the balance of the entire model (Diamantopolous – Winklhofer, 2001). Thus it can be only noted that even though the aforementioned indicators seemed to fit the model during the primary analysis, they turned out to be inappropriate during the final, general testing of the model.

The model – besides its limited appropriateness – also demonstrated a number of weaknesses. The first and most important weakness originates in the characteristics of the scale employed in data collection. The so-called „Gallup-scale” (Country image scale developed by Gallup Institute), has primarily been used in internal country image surveys before, and as a consequence it lacks several items and topics which might be of importance to general country image surveys (and especially external country image surveys). Such an item or dimension might be e.g. „tourism”, considered to be a determining factor of country image in literature. Similarly, factors related to investments and political atmosphere might be important. **The need for the inclusion of these factors in the analysis and for the development of a scale appropriate for general image measurement might provide a solid foundation for future research lines.**

The *sensitivity of the model* (i.e. that poorly fitting items cannot be omitted from the model) coming from its formative nature can be considered as a further weakness. This greatly makes it difficult to interpret the structure and does compromise, to some extent, its validity as well. *This weakness can be eliminated in the future by a pre-test of the final model and by including suitable variables.* In addition, the reflective testing (i.e. designing the model with variables enabling the measurement of reflective relationships

and that are only partly based on formative relationships) of formative structures is a common position adopted by the literature.

All this, however, led to a number of several useful conclusions, which were the following:

- i. the number and contents of scale items affect the existence and effect of underlying dimensions, **for this the appropriate choice and the development of scale is crucial**
- ii. dimensions in most cases fit the model, their effect, however, is not always significant, which implies that **a comprehensive model can be formulated from the wider array of available dimensions which would be perfectly adaptable to different countries, while the various dimensions would vary in weight and relevance among the influencing factors,**
- iii. dimensions do not arrange into the previously hypothesized structure and some factors are assigned to a different latent variable – **to test these connections the structural modeling methods can be appropriate in the doctoral research.**

### 7.6. Including the results of the first quantitative research phase into the model

The exploratory research in some cases modified our prior assumptions and drew our attention to a number of new relationships.

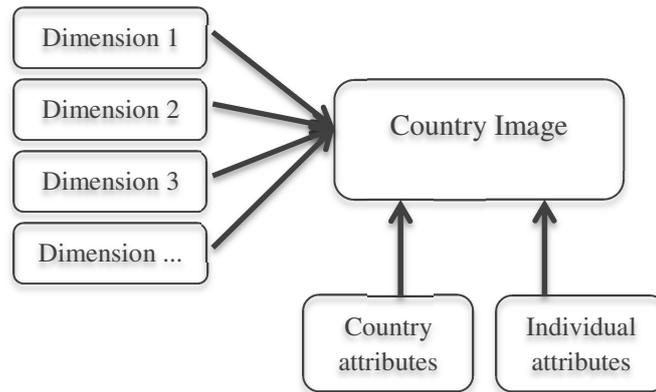
- i. We gained a new vision as for the **dimensions of country image**. Country image – according to our prior assumption – was made up of a given number and structure of dimensions. Our research however shows that these factors do not equally and unilaterally affect the evaluation of a nation, while their structural ordering is equally incidental and in no way constant.
- ii. Research equally showed that beyond dimensions **other factors** (e.g. gender, self-confidence, socioeconomic status) **also do have a statistically significant influence** of people's evaluation of a country. These factors can be divided into 2 groups: *individual attributes* and *country attributes*. Of these, individual attributes were examined more in detail. The study of country-specific factors can further be tested using a procedure during which a respondent has to evaluate two countries simultaneously. This enables the researcher to infer on the effects of perceived distance and perceived size of countries. This is a widely accepted approach in the literature for studying such relationships
- iii. The *validity* and *reliability* of country image scales has a considerable influence on the possibility of exploring the underlying dimensions and measuring country image equity. In the doctoral research different validated scales have to be combined, and commonly applied for ensuring the reliability and validity of the constructs and measurements.

- iv. **A so-called formative model is suitable for exploring the relationship between country image and its components and their impact on each other.** This model also provides an opportunity to form a so-called “country equity” attribute and to the related relationships to be studied.

Based on the above and the review of the latest literature on the topic the initial theoretical model underwent a considerable modification procedure. The resulting enhanced model is shown below.

**Figure 15.**

The enhanced theoretical model after the first quantitative research phase



Source: own elaboration, 2011

## **8. SECOND QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE PHASES**

### **8.1. Exploratory study – Examining country brand and country equity concepts and test of the country brand scale**

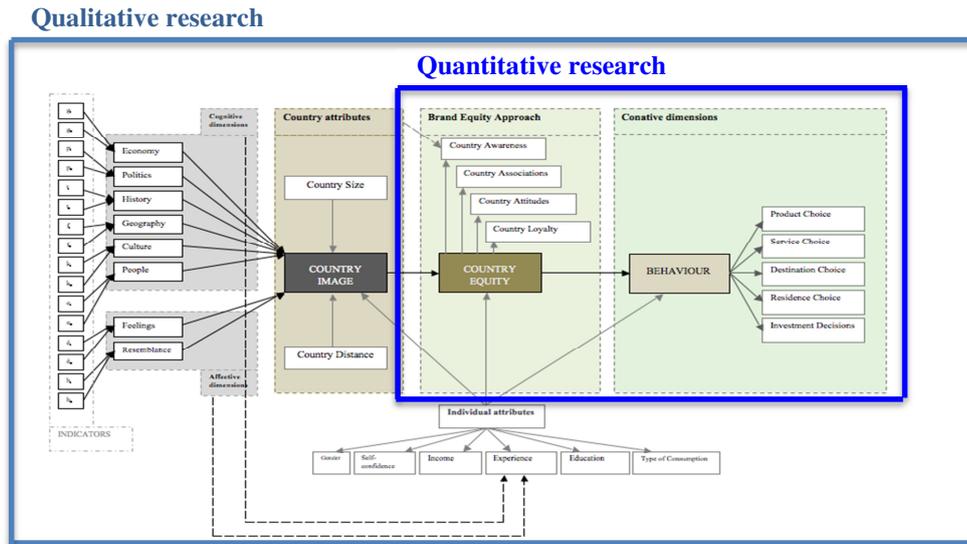
Following the first exploratory research phase which focused on the dimensions and influencing factors of country image and before the final research phase we included an intermediary qualitative then another quantitative phase. These were aimed to better understand the related mechanisms of action and to include a study focused mainly on the concept of country brand, based on the prior literature review (among others, on the country equity models by Pappu – Quester – Cooksey 2006, 2007 and Roth – Diamatopoulos – Montesinos, 2008). The study of the *conative element of the attitude-based approach* seemed particularly important in our research process, for instance, to identify a potential output variable, that is, to understand the behavioral influence of country image.

We based our designing and conducting the qualitative research phases on Patton's (1990) approach, according to which qualitative research methodology allows for a flexible research design and for a gathering of in-depth personal views, insights. A further advantage of qualitative methods is offering a holistic perspective, that is, they contribute to the understanding of a complex phenomenon as a whole, treating it as a complex system. This latter is particularly valuable in a mixed-method research design. (Zenker, 2011)

The quantitative phase following the qualitative one was introduced into our global research design *to quantitatively test the concept of brand equity, reveal its structure and to select, adapt and test a suitable measurement scale*. In connection with the concept of brand equity, this research phase equally examined the dimensions of country brand equity and the relationship thereof along which they can be studied. The main aim of this phase was to explore the elements of a potential Country Equity Model (CEM).

This second research phase brought up several results to be included in the final research model and affected the choice and implementation of the final research methodology as well as the hypotheses. The areas involved in this research phases are shown in Figure 16.

**Figure 16.**  
Areas studied in the second research phase



Source: own elaboration, 2012

## 8.2. The qualitative part of the second research phase

### 8.2.1. Focus groups: methodology and sample attributes

There are many examples of focus group studies among papers on country image (see previous chapters). Many of these are about *better understanding consumer behavior related to countries, destinations and products thereof* and about *unveiling the relationship between country evaluation and the related decision making*. This is justified by the general view in the literature that the advantage of focus groups is to make participants encourage other participants to express themselves through the manifestation of their own views. At the same time, several points of view can be displayed and conflicted during a discussion. A better understanding on the topic can be reached and the dynamics of the discussion can be initiated by the personal experience or feelings of a participant, encouraging others to share their own experience or point of view (Babbie, 2003; Malhotra – Simon, 2008; Gyulavári et.al., 2012).

In the present case, the focus group interviews were aimed *to study the potentially unrevealed dimensions and influencing factors of country image*. At the same time, we endeavored *to consider and include consumer evaluation methods of given countries revealed during the discussions*. Another, *indirect goal was to test and further refine our prior assumptions and subsequent research hypotheses*.

During the interviews we made an attempt to address the issue of evaluation situations a consumer might face and therefore to markedly put an emphasis (following the attitude-based approach) on studying the conative elements of the unveiled relationships.

The topics explored were as follows (for the filter questionnaire and a detailed discussion guide, see Appendix 2):

- i. *Studying the dimensions of country image:* In what manners is a country evaluated: mainly through stereotypes, along information taught in school, or maybe following the latest news or information coming from friends? That is: what a country image is constituted of, what is the evaluation of a country constituted of: knowledge, feelings, etc.? How can one group these elements? Are there any decisive factors?
- ii. *Mapping associations, perceptions:* What other factors influence the evaluation of a given country? E.g.: how far it is, how important is its role in international politics, how big it is, etc.
- iii. *Unveiling overall vs situation-specific factors:* When, in what kinds of situations one has to evaluate a given country?
- iv. *Mapping behavioral output, factors influencing decisions:* How does the weighting of evaluation criteria change along different decision situations? To what extent does this influence the behavior, how much influence does this have on decisions?
- v. *The aspects of destination choice, product purchase, choice of place of residence:* To what extent does a country's image provide value for consumers? How does this value manifest itself in travel destination choice, product purchases, investment decisions, etc.?
- vi. *Testing the construct of country brand, unveiling its dimensions:* Can a country be considered a brand? Are country awareness, country loyalty, country associations, etc. part of a relevant approach? Does a country brand provide value for consumers?

Participants were full-time, Hungarian students of CUB (see Appendix 2 for the main properties of the focus groups).

Having a sample of students in an exploratory study of country image is not an unusual procedure (see e.g. Osgood et.al., 1975; Malhotra, 1981; Martin – Eroglu, 1993). The student interviews seemed to be practical both in terms of the purpose and topic of the research, therefore we recruited three groups of students to participate in focus group interviews.

The three focus group interviews were conducted in September and October 2009 within the CUB, in the meeting room of the Institute of Marketing and Media. Participants were divided into three groups of different composition along their responses to the filter questionnaire. The first group included those that *had been abroad in the past year although had never lived abroad for an extended period of time* (more than 3 months). The second group included those that *neither had been abroad the preceding year nor ever lived abroad*. The last group included those respondents who *had already lived abroad for an extended period of time*. Because of the exploratory nature of the research, no further demographic filter was used for the present study.

The interviews were moderated by the author of the present dissertation, and notes were taken to complete the recorded interviews. Interviews lasted between 65 and 80 minutes.

The main proprieties of the focus groups are summarized in Table 30 below.

**Table 30.**  
Main proprieties of the focus groups

No.	Date	Location	Sample size	Participants	Filter 1 (has been abroad)	Filter 2 (has lived abroad)
1	Sep. 28. 2009	CUB, room E311	5	4 female, 1 male	yes	no
2	Oct. 05. 2009	CUB, room E311	6	4 female, 2 male	no	no
3	Oct. 05. 2009	CUB, room E311	5	3 female, 2 male	yes	yes

Source: own elaboration, 2012

### 8.2.2. Results of the focus groups

The interviews are presented along the main blocs of questions and theoretical phases addressed. Other potentially surfaced topics are equally presented in a structured manner. The potentially differing opinions on a question within the different groups are emphasized. Those topics where there was no significant difference between the groups are presented as a summary. A citation is always followed by the participant's first name and the number of the focus group interview they participated in (i.e. 1 – has been abroad / has not lived abroad; 2 – has neither been nor lived abroad; 3 – has lived abroad)

#### 8.2.2.1. Exploring and studying the dimensions of country image

The discussions on the influencing factors, dimensions of country image led to different results in the different groups, even though there are a few common points.

*The political state of the country, its culture* (and mostly gastronomy), *its climate*, and *economic conditions* all turned out to be influencing factors when evaluating a country. That is, the dimensions from the literature and the previous exploratory studies are once again confirmed to be building blocks of the evaluation of a country. Climate and public safety seem to have an influence during destination choice, while the overall political/economic situation of a country seem to play a significant role during the evaluation of news from the media.

*“ I love eating good food when abroad.” (Edina,1)*

*“When I passed 6 months abroad on an Erasmus program, it did matter how much the sun shines there.”(Éva,3)*

*“Wherever I travel, I'd rather not visit in the rain.” (Ildikó,1)*

*“After some time I started to think something else about that country, because I kept hearing from the media that their economy is going bankrupt” (Péter,2)*

All three discussions pointed out that *a several dimensions largely influence the evaluation of countries*. The weight and relevance thereof is, however, different and differences between groups emerge.

“I don’t care about the economy of a country. I only go there for the sunshine.” (Áron,3)  
 “Usually I only look up the weather forecast or the climate prior to going there.” (Tímea,1)  
 “When travelling, it is always a plus if the country has an interesting culture – to have many things to see.” (Péter,2)  
 “When applying for my Erasmus, I did not care for the history of the country, the level of the education I’d receive there was more important.” (Éva,3)

In all three groups the *evaluation of people*, of the inhabitants of the country turned out to be a crucial factor. This can also be put in parallel with literature stating that the evaluation of people and countries are two aspects of the topic that can be separately evaluated.

“I’d never move to a country where people are not nice.” (Sára,2)  
 “My problem with France was that people are not nice to foreigners.” (Tímea,1)  
 “It was important during my stay there that people were accommodating... I even got some friends there.” (Éva,3)  
 “It does count for everyone how they are received at a place... people are indeed an important element.” (Peti,1)  
 “I might have liked the country, but if people are not nice, I won’t go back there.” (Áron,3)

We must point out that those *having lived abroad* did not believe that the general factors affecting the evaluation of a country were that important. This group, however, deemed the standards of living, the level of education, climate and distance from the home country more important.

“I did choose it because it’s closer, you have to travel less to get there. If I only went there once, this wouldn’t have counted.” (Karcsi,3)  
 “To tell the truth, the cost of my semester abroad, the standards of living of the country were indeed decisive factors within our family.” (Áron,3)  
 “I deliberately chose another English-speaking country because I didn’t want to spend half a year in a cold country.” (Éva,3)

*Stereotypes* for most countries are strongly present when forming opinions about a country, this, however, does not seem to influence considerably the overall evaluation of the country, neither the choice to travel there. We already found references to stereotypes when designing our theoretical model.

“Yes, French people are just as much snobs as people say. But you just have to watch Paris – I so much longed to go there.” (Éva,3)  
 “People said that Arabs like blondes and that I take care in the streets (...) We had a nice time and I’d be happy to go back, just as my girlfriends.” (Kati,1)

*“Italians are a loud people, that’s true. (...) No, it never came to my mind not to go there because of this.” (Edina,1)*

*“French people are extremely snobbish, everyone tells you that – they don’t answer you if you talk to them in English. But I really like the country, and their culture... and a bit even that they are snobs.” (Bogi,3)*

In all cases, prior *knowledge* and *experience* played an important role when evaluating a country, but an emotional factor was present in many cases in the formation of their image. This is another sign of the possible validity of the attitude-focused aspect.

*“I knew what the rules in the Arabic countries were, I read a lot about them – and because of that, I enjoyed my stay there.” (Kati,1)*

*“I knew it might be dangerous, but I was so eager to go – I’m in love with that place.” (Edina,1)*

*“For example, we learned that punctuality was important (...)I tried to comply with this. Otherwise, it’s true that’s a punctual country, I like that.” (Peti,1)*

*“Excuse me, but I don’t like French people – neither the country. But I’d still probably go to Paris.” (Péter,2)*

The interviews progressively revealed that even though participants had an overall country image in their minds, which was made up of and shaped by a variety of factors, these hardly have an important role in their everyday life. In most cases these appear during *destination choice* or the *purchase of a product*. Therefore, all participants, almost without exception, and in all three groups, mentioned examples related to these to cases and followed this scheme in their reasoning. Country image, therefore, seems indeed (in accordance with the literature) to have conative (i.e. output) attribute.

*“It is true, that if I were rich, I’d only buy German cars, they are trustworthy. (...) Germany also has a good economy.” (Péter,2)*

*“That’s the same with Japanese IT stuff, I hardly hear any negative things about them. (...) I’d love to travel to Japan. I don’t know much about it, but they have good products.” (Dani,2)*

*“After all, it does not matter what I think of the US – I’d still be happy to go there, even to live or to work.” (Karcsi,3)*

*“But this doesn’t matter after all. I mean, I don’t care what the French are like. If I need to buy a French product, that’s something else... some things come to my mind, but they don’t really count, I guess.” (Csilla,2)*

The conversations show that overall country image and country image during destination choice are evaluated in different ways by participants.

*“Wait, that’s a thing that Romanians are thieves, and that they do their laundry on the side of the road, still Transylvania is a beautiful place, and we love to travel there every summer.” (Peti,1)*

*“I’m very interested in Egypt, I read a lot about it, because I like to read about the pharaohs. But I don’t go there because I’m afraid of the possible infections. That’s more important.” (Ági,2)*

*“The USA is a great and rich country, it also has a large political influence, but that doesn’t count when travelling there, rather all the things you need to see – it’s interesting because it’s multicultural, the food is good, and everything’s just in place there.” (Bogi,3)*

### 8.2.2.2. Mapping of associations, perceptions

Associations of countries are very pronounced, they often melt with *stereotypes*, and are also closely linked to knowledge, learned material from school.

This is a good example of the interwoven concepts in the theoretical background.

*“People somehow learn all this in school, for example, the Turkish-Hungarian relations, and here you are thinking differently about Turkey.” (Sára,2)*

*“In today’s world everyone knows many things about countries, and today you can travel cheap, you can go to many places and can gather experiences.” (Kati,1)*

*“I don’t even know whether I first knew that French people were snobs, or that I experienced it the first time I was there, with my first taxi and its driver.” (Éva,3)*

*“If they say ‘French’, I think elegant, sophisticated. The same for France.” (Csilla,2)*

The second category that emerges markedly during perception and opinion sharing is that of *emotions*. Emotions are as much related to the overall country image as to destination choice, even though there is a difference among emotions: overall country image are shaped (often for historical reasons) by general feelings, beliefs, stereotypes, while in the case of destination choice, own experience with the destination, a personal and emotional connection to it, or friends’ recommendations stand out. The importance of emotions is another sign of the validity of the attitude-based aspect.

*“For some reason, we somewhat like Polish people – because, see, the Polish-Hungarian Friendship, but actually, I don’t know anything more about them. (...) Polish country image is positive.” (Sára,2)*

*“Germans will always remain somewhat negative in our eyes. But there’s no problem with Germany. I enjoyed being in Berlin, it was nice. Oh, and my friends also kept telling me to go there.” (Peti,1)*

*“It’s always good to go back to Greece. I really like it, people are nice, the sun is shining, (...) Generally, Greece is different: people are lazy and corrupt.” (Tímea,1)*

*“I had been there before, and it’s always as good. But it is interesting that I have a fairly different view of the country itself – and not always positive.” (Ildikó,1)*

There seemed to be a slighter difference between those having lived abroad and those that haven’t in the case of perceptions and associations, and this supports the earlier assumption, based on the literature. *Those having lived abroad*, evaluated a country’s image along different factors, and these factors had different weights. These groups were less strict and coherent in their opinions, and these factors reappeared when examining the influence thereof on their decisions. In this group, the most decisive factor turned out to be knowledge, and second, personal experience. In addition (though

this was not the subject of the research), these people also evaluated their own country more positively than those not having lived abroad.

*“People that have already been abroad know that a country is very much different from what they imagined beforehand.” (Erika,3)*

*“The things you know before help you and give you a feeling of security. Although everything’s so new. And in the end, nothing is as you’ve imagined. Well, it is, but is a lot more complex.” (Éva,3)*

*“Everyone says that Americans are superficial and dumb. I’ve been there, but I never had time to get to know them, so I wouldn’t give an opinion here.” (Karcsi,3)*

*“Since I’ve lived abroad, I also see Hungary from a different perspective.” (Bogi,3)*

*“I wouldn’t formulate a prior opinion, I’d rather try it out. For example, the fact that someone didn’t like it, or the media say something, I’d still like to travel there.” (Áron,3)*

*“Even one trip is enough to change everything you think of your own country. I, for example, have seen such a poverty, now I don’t complain about anything. It was good to come back home, Hungary is good.” (Éva,3)*

### 8.2.2.3. Exploring general vs. situation-specific factors

As mentioned briefly before, the evaluation of a country comes into scope mainly during destination choice. Country image might also have a role during the interpretation of pieces of news from the media, choice of residence, or the choice of the future place of education.

*“Newer pieces of news tend to influence my opinion, let’s say some war or political news.” (Peti,1)*

*“If I were to go to work abroad and I had to live there, I’d like to go to a place with a positive image. If it’s negative, I’d rather not even accept the job.” (Kata,2)*

*“The important is that I have a positive image of the country, I base my decision on this. I chose the school accordingly.” (Bogi,3)*

*“Australia is appealing to everyone, many people go settle there. If I’m right, its country image is one of the best.” (Csilla,2)*

Another area surfaced during the focus groups where country image might have an effect: the evaluation of people coming from a different culture or country. In this case, the effect is mainly that of a reinforcement: respondents seem to use the country image in their heads to legitimize or interpret unknown elements. This reinforces the assumed possibility of contextual evaluation of the effect mechanisms of country image, in accordance with the literature.

*“For example, if I met some French people, I won’t be surprised about their behavior. I knew in advance what the French are like.” (Kata,2)*

*“I met a Swiss person who was reclusive. Somehow, in my mind Switzerland is also a pretty isolated country.” (Kati,1)*

*“People in Italy can live. My Italian friends are like this, I learned a lot from them.” (Dani,2)*

#### 8.2.2.4. Mapping the behavioral output, factors affecting decisions

The interviews indicate that country image also plays a decisive role in several *decision making situations*, even though this influence is not always conscious. The factors shaping country image (as it has already been demonstrated) have a different impact on decisions, depending on the situation.

“Now that we speak of it, it’s true, I chose that shoe the other time because it was Italian.” (Sára,2)

“When choosing the university, it was important what language they speak there and how far it is located, and finally, whether I fancy that country. Yes, it was decided in the end because of the country image.” (Erika,3)

“France has a positive image, because it’s romantic. (...) I also like the French-type cafés, because they make me think of the country.” (Tímea,1)

#### 8.2.2.5. Destination choice, product purchase, choice of place of residence

Decision-making situations where country image could play a role included in the literature were addressed in detail during the conversations. A special emphasis was put on *destination choice, product choice and the choice of the place of residence*.

Responses show that country image bears a value to respondents for it helps them processing information and making decisions.

“Of course it helped me decide. If I knew nothing of the country, I’d have gone to read about it. But I already had a picture in my head before.” (Bogi,3)

“We can say that this is a value for the consumer, yes, because of image you are surer in your decision.” (Edina,1)

“When I think about it, I had presumptions on which I based my decision. For example, I think a German car is already better than a Japanese one. This is because my image of the country – but not just because of it.” (Karcsi,3)

“It’s like when rebuying a product or a brand: if you enjoyed yourself in a country, you go back, don’t you? Even if you hear some things about it in the meantime, say some bad news, you still evaluate it differently.” (Kati,1)

#### 8.2.2.6. Testing the country brand construct and unveiling its dimensions

At the end of each focus group discussion, respondents were asked about country brand approaches. All but one person agreed that country branding is a relevant methodology and countries can be treated as brands. Most participants compared a country brand to a corporate brand. They agreed on the fact that one can develop a loyalty towards a country and they equally deemed relevant the concepts of country associations and country awareness.

This area brought up a marked difference between the groups, with those having lived abroad being able to identify more with the idea that a country could be a brand, than the other two focus groups.

All three groups agreed on the fact that if a country's evaluation is positive then country brand could provide an added value to consumers. In case of a negative country image, the relationship is more complex.

Examples of the reactions from the third group:

*"Yes, I agree, after all it's like branding. When we were out there, it turned out pretty fast which country is sexy and which one is not. As if they bore a brand." (Éva,3)*

*"When presenting myself,, I said that I was Hungarian, and there were people for whom this was a positive thing, mostly those coming from smaller places, and there were those for whom this was a negative thing. This was the same when I offered them something typically Hungarian, (...) I think this was exactly like a brand." (Bogi,3)*

*"I couldn't tell if the Hungary brand is positive or negative. It's rather negative, because they believe that we are an underdeveloped country." (Karcsi,3)*

Those not having lived abroad could less identify with country branding and found the concept more vague:

*"Like Nike? I say to something that it's Hungarian? Like the name? And I brand with that? A product or the country itself? I don't get it." (Kati,1)*

*"O.K., I understand country loyalty. But for example, Aaker has several other dimensions. We can all apply them to this? (...) If yes, then it surely can be a brand." (Ági,2)*

*"I think it's a bit far-fetched. For example how do you make a logo or a brand mark? (...) Oh, right, you have the one with the heart shape... Well, it's a brand than." (Csilla,2)*

*"In practice, sure. They brand everything these days. And there will be theory for it in no long. But at first, it seems a little strange. But after all, why not." (Dani,2)*

However, as can be seen from the above quotes, participants had no problem conceptualizing the dimensions of country brands separately.

### 8.2.3. Conclusions of the focus-group interviews

As a conclusion to the focus group interviews, we can conclude **that nearly all prior assumptions from the literature were supported concerning the dimensions of country image and the relationships between them.** Thanks to the filter questions used before the focus groups, markedly different opinions were brought up in some cases.

The interviews clearly showed that the known and **identifiable country image dimensions seem to have a primordial effect on country evaluation**, even though the weighting and relevance of these can change along the different evaluation situation.

In addition, the factors that were revealed in the focus groups can be categorized, in accordance with the literature, as *affective* or *cognitive* dimensions.

This also means that in view of the behavioral output, the *attitude-based approach seems a relevant one*.

We could also see that *feelings* and *emotions* play a decisive role in the evaluation of certain events or countries, again in accordance with the literature. Prior *knowledge* seems also to influence country evaluation and it was also shown to be an important factor of posterior evaluation.

The *behavioral impact* proved to be true in several areas. Beyond product choice, its effect on destination evaluation was equally shown to be substantial. Destination choice can cover both travel and educational purposes – the aforementioned effects were shown to take place in both cases.

Country *associations* were shown to be largely constituted by stereotypes and prior experience. This also supports the findings of prior studies. In addition, their role in the decisions seem also to be apparent.

### **The study of country equity and country branding showed diversified results.**

Those respondents having already lived abroad were more likely to accept and interpret the concept while those not having lived abroad did have reservations as for the relevance of the approach. *However in all three groups the individual dimensions of country brands* (i.e. country awareness, country loyalty, etc.) *were deemed acceptable*. This result can serve as a positive feedback on the subsequent applicability of the concept.

According to our respondents, **destination choice and destination evaluation as an output factor are a field that affects country evaluation**, although this effect (in its direction and weight) did change with each focus group and discussed situation. However, we can conclude that *country size and distance can equally be influencing factors of destination decisions*.

The effect of individual characteristics on the above dimensions is another researched area in the literature. Even though our filter questions when selecting focus group participants did not include all the demographic variables mentioned in the literature (e.g. declared level of self-confidence, level of income), the filter criterion used in the present study (experience of living abroad) did seem to significantly influence the responses. That is, it indirectly influenced the evaluation of countries and that of the related areas within this study.

**Overall, we can say that a number of constructs included in our previously established theoretical model proved to be identifiable and practical elements of consumer manifestations on country image.** This can further reinforce the validity of their integration into the final research model.

### 8.3. Quantitative part of the second research phase

#### 8.3.1. Methodology of scale test and sample proprieties

Pappu, Quester and Cooksey's study on the country-level (macro country image) and product-level (micro country image) appearance of country image, and the connections between the two was published in 2007. The following publication in 2010 by Pappu and Quester, as an improvement of the latter, was on the topic of country equity. In this study, the authors – recognizing a gap in the literature – dealt with *designing and testing a scale for country equity*. In their understanding, country image is an element of country equity, and the goal is “to adapt the concept of consumer-based brand equity to develop a measure for the equity associated with a country” (Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 282.). In their approach, *country equity is a five-dimension construct*, composed of the following elements: (1) country awareness, (2) macro country image, (3) micro country image, (4) perceived quality and (5) country loyalty (Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 276.). To design the scale, the authors adapted into their measurement tool a number of scales from previous works, that already had been tested and validated.

Table 31 shows the characteristics of the scale.

**Table 31.**  
Characteristics and sources of the Pappu-Quester (2010) scale variables

Variable	Source	No. of items, scale type
Country awareness	Nagashima (1970, 1977) Aaker (1991) Yoo – Donthu (2001) Pappu – Quester (2006)	4 item, 7-point Likert
Macro country image	Martin – Eroglu (1993)	11 item, 7-point Likert /originally 7-point semantic differential/
Micro country image	Nagashima (1970, 1977) Aaker (1991) Roth – Romeo (1992) Pappu et.al. (2007)	11 item, 7-point Likert /originally 7-point semantic differential/
Perceived quality	Aaker (1991)	5 item, 7-point Likert
Country loyalty	Aaker (1991) Yoo – Donthu (2001)	4 item, 7-point Likert

Source: Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 282.

To measure country awareness, four items stem from brand equity approaches (Aaker, 1991; Pappu – Quester, 2006; Yoo – Donthu, 2001) and the area of country-of-origin image (Nagashima, 1970, 1977).

The 11-item macro country image construct is an adaptation of a scale originally developed by Martin and Eroglu (1993).

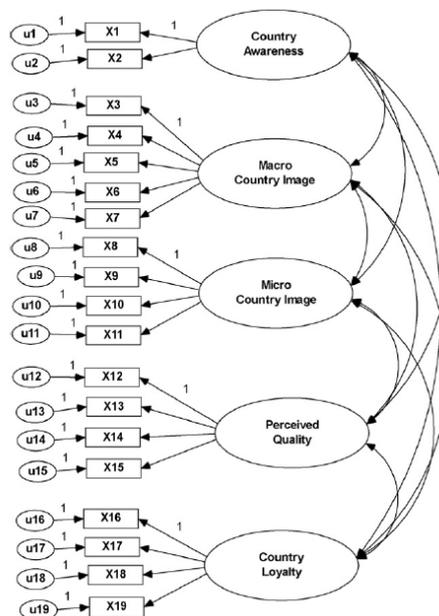
Micro country image is measured by 11 items, an adaptation of item by the following authors: Roth – Romeo, 1992; Nagashima, 1970, 1977; Pappu et.al., 2007; Aaker, 1991. The 5 items of perceived quality correspond to the corresponding items in Aaker's (1991) scale.

The four items of country loyalty are derived from Aaker- (1991) and Yoo – Donthu (2001).

In their design of the country equity scale, all original scales were adapted as 7-point Likert-scales. The scale altogether has 35 items. It was tested by the authors on an Australian sample of 714 shopping mall visitors. The query included two different product categories (television, automobile) and three countries (Japan, South Korea, USA).

As mentioned beforehand, considering the lack of benchmarks in the literature, the development of a new scale is an important milestone in the field of research. However, *the scale has not yet been tested on a Hungarian sample*. It was assumed advisable to first proceed to this step prior to the use of the scale as such in our final research. On the other hand, the relations between the items are not clear – the authors haven't published the construct structure yet – therefore there was a need for a first test of them. (see Figure 17)

**Figure 17.**  
The items of the Pappu – Quester (2010) country equity construct



Source: Pappu – Quester (2010. p. 284.)

The *scale test* was conducted between Oct. 2010 and Jan. 2011 using a self-administered, Hungarian-language query on an arbitrary sample involving full-time students of CUB (N=390).<sup>15</sup> (the questionnaire is available in Appendix 3)

The original scale was validated in a process of translation and back-translation. *Content validity* was provided by testing the original items and supplementing them and completing them with new items according to the literature. *The specificity of the topic and the ultimate research goal required the inclusion of a further variable into the model*, which would allow measuring country brand's overall value. The variable was

<sup>15</sup> Results published in Jenes, 2011.

measured by 4 items (general loyalty towards the country, popularity of the country brand, its quality and perceived risk). The new variable was designed using *the results of the preceding research phases* followed by a *pilot query* of 15 students of CUB in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of BA studies using a self-administered questionnaire and their feedbacking on their responding experience. The questionnaire proved to be appropriate to be filled out by a larger sample.

Taking into account on one hand the limitations of the query and the research objectives (the study of country-of-origin effects not being at the focal point of the study) on the other, the scale was simplified by excluding its elements on the automobile vs. television product categories and replaced by a *general evaluation of products*. Considering the particularities of Hungarian respondents, and based on prior studies, the countries included in the study (Japan, South Korea, USA) were adapted to include the more relevant Germany and China. The scales were extended to 11 points to be able to map respondents' differences of opinion more in detail and therefore offering an even larger validity to the study. The choice of the aforementioned two countries was justified by the "country size" criterion and the evaluation of the "attributes of the touristic destination country", following the possible moderating effects unveiled in the previous research phases, leading to include two countries that are known to respondents, even though relatively different from each other. According to literature the common examination of 2 or more countries is an appropriate methodology for country image researches. (Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2009)

Table 32. shows the final composition of the questionnaire.

**Table 32.**  
Characteristics and sources of the variables used during the test of scales

Variable	Source	No. of items, scale type
Country awareness	Pappu – Quester (2010)	3 item, 11-point Likert
Macro country image	Pappu – Quester (2010)	11 item, 11-point Likert
Micro country image	Pappu – Quester (2010) /modified for general product evaluation/	11 item, 11-point Likert
Perceived quality	Pappu – Quester (2010) /modified for general product evaluation/	5 item, 11-point Likert
Country loyalty	Pappu – Quester (2010) /modified for general product evaluation/	4 item, 11-point Likert
Country equity	own elaboration (2010)	4 item, 11-point Likert

Source: own elaboration, 2011

We excluded from the *country awareness* variable the product focused items (see above). *Macro country image* was included without modification, as it provides a measure for overall country image and its dimensions.

While all the related items of the original scales were kept, the product-specific items of *micro country image*, perceived quality and country loyalty were adapted to represent a general evaluation of products.

We excluded from the *perceived quality* variable the product focused items (see above). We also excluded from the *country loyalty* variable the product focused items (see above). All of these element were adapted on a general product level.

Another, complex variable related to country equity was equally added to the questionnaire. This variable is justified by the specificity of the research and the results of the prior phases, according to which it was considered relevant to include a *consumer-oriented brand equity approach* of country image theory (see our summary on the results of the focus group interviews). Four items measure the variable (country loyalty, popularity of country brand, its perceived quality and perceived risk).

The demographic panel of questions was adapted from the literature and, based on our prior results and the literature, further moderating elements were included (e.g. the study of the perceived level of income and self-confidence, beyond the basic variables of gender or age). Participants were asked to estimate whether they were in an income category well below, below, at, above or well above average. The perceived level of self-confidence was equally measured on the same 5-point scale.

According to the above, the distribution by gender of the sample was: 60.5% female and 39.5% male, with an average age of 21.5 (most common value: 21). The average level of the perceived standard of living (on a scale of 1 to 5) was 3.92 and the average level of perceived self-confidence 3.29.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS 18.0 and Amos 18.0 software.

### 8.3.2. Results of the scale test

To test the reliability of the final scale of 38 items we used *a test of internal consistency* based on Chronbach's alpha indicator (the recommended minimal value of the indicator is either 0.6 [Malhotra, 2002] or 0.7 [Nunally, 1978; Hair et.al., 2010]).

For both Germany and China, the value thereof was 0.919, which is a sign of a very strong internal consistency.

In the following we proceeded to the study of the presence of *possible latent factors* and a structural pre-test of the results using an exploratory factor analysis.

During the factor analyses (according to the methodology used in our previous research phases and to assure a valid comparability of the results) we used a principal component analysis with VARIMAX rotation. The correlations between the variables was tested with the measure of the model's KMO score. The "eigenvalue greater than 1" criterion was chosen for factor formation,

Two separate factor analyses were conducted for Germany and for China.

The first analysis (Germany) returned a five-factor solution with a 0.925 KMO value and an explained variance of 59.2% (38 variables).

After excluding three variables not complying with the different statistical requirements, a five-factor solution was confirmed with an explained variance of 61.2% (35 variables) and a KMO score of 0.922.

Following the factor analysis, the reliability of the scale was once again tested: the Cronbach's alpha score was 0.912 (35 variables) which is still sign of a very strong internal consistency. Table 33 shows the compositions of the factors.

The 1<sup>st</sup> factor was dubbed "Perceived quality" and it is composed of items measuring the evaluation of products originating from the given country. The 2<sup>nd</sup> factor, "Country loyalty" includes the items from its original sources, as well as the newly included country equity items. The 3<sup>rd</sup> factor "Macro country image" regroups statements related to the overall evaluation of the country. The 4<sup>th</sup> factor, "Country awareness" includes scale variables related to the knowledge of a country. The 5<sup>th</sup> factor, sticking out of the line, was dubbed "Other attributes"

**Table 33.**  
Factors unveiled for Germany using the Pappu-Quester-scale

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5
Products made in Germany are reliable.	.844				
Products made in Germany are of very good quality.	.806				
Products made in Germany are of very consistent quality.	.795				
Products made in Germany are durable.	.788				
I trust Germany as a producer.	.730				
Products made in Germany have excellent features.	.707				
Products made in Germany are upmarket.	.681				
Products made in Germany are technically advanced.	.676				
Products made in Germany offer value for money	.637				
Germany is a producer of high quality products.	.507				
If Germany were a brand name, it would offer good quality.	.504				
If Germany were a brand name, it would be my favourite.		.852			
If Germany were a brand name, I would be loyal to it.		.839			
I consider myself loyal to buying products from Germany.		.813			
Germany as a producer would be my first choice.		.735			
If Germany were a brand name, I would pay more for it.		.726			
Germany as a producer would be my preferred choice.		.672			
Germany has high level of technological research.			.701		
Germany is a democratic country.			.689		
Germany has a free-market system.			.683		
Germany has a civilian non-military government.			.658		
Germany has a highly developed economy.			.656		
Germany has a welfare system.			.521		
Germany has a high level of industrialization.			.509		
I can recognize brand names from Germany.				.808	
Some characteristics of Germany come to mind quickly.				.796	
I have heard of Germany.				.762	
I will not buy products made in other countries, if I can buy the same product made in Germany.					.692
Labor costs are high in Germany.					.518

Source: own elaboration, 2011

The 1<sup>st</sup> factor was dubbed “Perceived quality” and it is composed of items measuring the evaluation of products originating from the given country. The 2<sup>nd</sup> factor, “Country loyalty” includes the items from its original sources, as well as the newly included country equity items. The 3<sup>rd</sup> factor “Macro country image” regroups statements related to the overall evaluation of the country. The 4<sup>th</sup> factor, “Country awareness” includes scale variables related to the knowledge of a country. The 5<sup>th</sup> factor, sticking out of the line, was dubbed “Other attributes”

A 7-factor solution was reached for the data concerning China, with a KMO score of 0.934 and a total variance explained of 64% (38 variables).

After excluding two outlier variables, a 6-factor solution was reached (36 variables; KMO: 0.935; total variance explained: 62.6%).

Following the factor analysis, the reliability of the scale was once again tested: the Cronbach’s alpha score was 0.92 (36 variables) which is still sign of a very strong internal consistency. Table 34 shows the compositions of the factors.

The 1<sup>st</sup> factor was dubbed “Micro country image” with items on the evaluation of products originating from the given country. The 2<sup>nd</sup> factor, “Country loyalty” once again includes its original items and the new, country equity items. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, “Macro country image” includes statements on the general evaluation of the country. The 4<sup>th</sup> factor is actually an extension of “Macro country image”, that can be dubbed “Performace”, with items on the country’s economic performance. The 5<sup>th</sup> factor once again sticks out of line (“Other attributes”). The 6<sup>th</sup> factor, “Country awareness” includes scale variables related to the knowledge of the country.

**Table 34.**  
Factors unveiled for China using the Pappu-Quester-scale

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5	factor 6
Products made in China are of very good quality.	.833					
Products made in China are reliable.	.818					
Products made in China have quality workmanship.	.814					
Products made in China are dependable.	.808					
Products made in China are durable.	.807					
Products made in China are upmarket.	.801					
Products made in China have excellent features.	.763					
I trust China as a producer.	.758					
Products made in China are of very consistent quality.	.746					
Products made in China are high status	.722					
Products made in China expensive.	.663					
China is a producer of high quality products.	.661					
I would be proud to own products made in China.	.654					
If China were a brand name, it would offer good quality.	.590					
Products made in China are technically advanced.	.556					
Products made in China are innovative.	.520					
If China were a brand name, it would be my favourite.		.850				
If China were a brand name, I would be loyal to it.		.843				
China as a producer would be my first choice.		.778				
If China were a brand name, I would pay more for it.		.690				
I consider myself loyal to buying products from China.		.653				
China is a democratic country.			.741			
China has a welfare system.			.699			
China has a free-market system.			.650			
China offers its people high standard of living.			.648			
China has a civilian non-military government.			.603			
Labor costs are high in China.			.595			
People of China are highly literate.			.591			
China has a highly developed economy.				.757		
China has high level of technological research.				.714		
China has a high level of industrialization.				.674		
Products made in China offer value for money					.738	
I like China.					.642	
I can recognize brand names from China.						.818
Some characteristics of China come to mind quickly.						.722

Source: own elaboration, 2011

The presence of the original factor structure and the factor structure revealed during the exploratory factor analysis were tested with a *confirmatory factor analysis*, using Amos 18.0 software. During our confirmatory factor analysis, all indicators of fit were acceptable with all indicators included. At the same time, according to the modification indices a certain number of changes were to be made to the model. Moreover, based on factor loadings, the following changed ought to be made for a potentially better fit of the model:

For Germany, the standardized factor loading of one variable did not reach the critical value of 0.4 (Churchill, 1979) (country loyalty; factor loading: -.13).

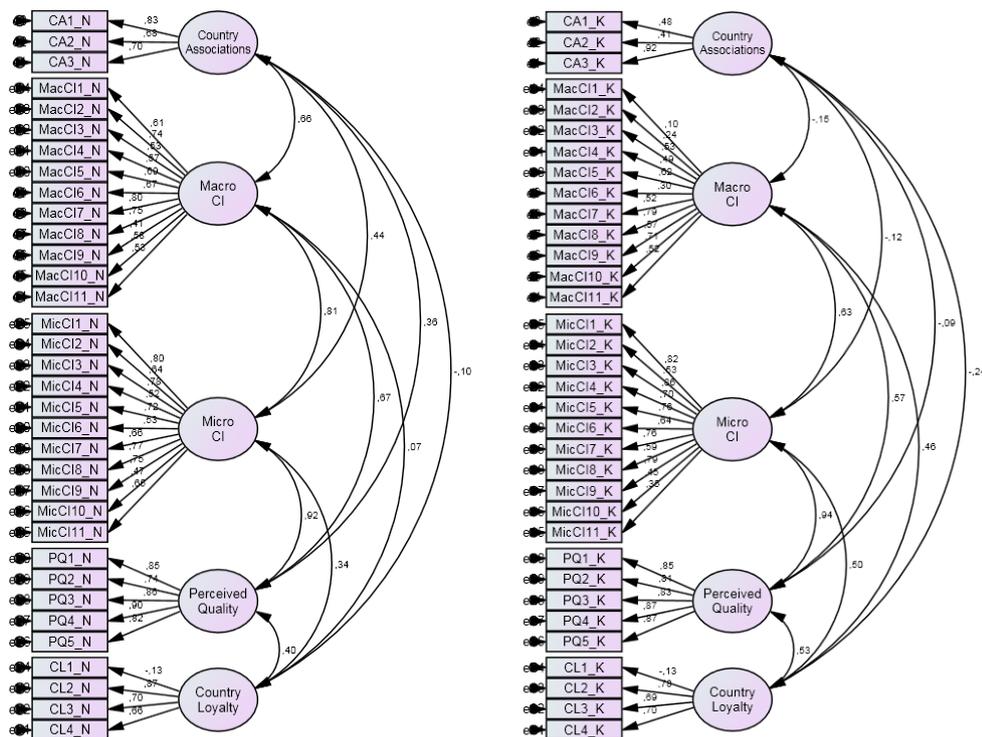
For China, the standardized factor loading of four variables did not reach the critical value of 0.4 (Churchill, 1979) (macro country image’s first [factor loading: .1], second [.24], sixth [.3] and country loyalty’s first [-.13] indicators).

According to the above results, the data provided for China led to a less stable factor structure and therefore the relevance of this country’s evaluation poses a number of additional questions.

Figure 18. shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis.

**Figure 18.**

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis for Germany and China



Source: own elaboration, 2012

The reliabilities of the tested variables are shown in Table 35.

**Table 35.**

Cronbach’s alpha scores of the scale test

Country	Original scale	Final scale
Germany	0.919 /38 items/	0.912 /35 items/
China	0.919 /38 items/	0.92 /36 items/

Source: own elaboration, 2011

### 8.3.3. Results of the pilot questionnaire

Given that the main goal of this research phase was to test *the usability of the questionnaire*, no further and deeper analysis is presented hereby of the pilot query and the results presented here only focus on issues of adaptability. At the same time, in the following chapter a number of *fundamental results* of the scale are equally to be presented.

Table 36 gives a summary of the scale test's results. Averages for each item show that there is a considerable difference between the evaluation of the two countries. It can also be seen that *the parallel evaluation of two countries by respondents is an adequate tool for comparing countries*.

The standard deviation values also draw attention to the fact that respondents tend to respond in extremes for each country, which reflects on the difficulty in a questionnaire for the respondent to use an 11-point scale.

It can generally be deduced however that Germany bears a better evaluation by our respondents than China.

**Table 36.**  
Results of the scale test

Item	Germany		China		N
	Avg.	Stdev.	Avg.	Stdev.	
I have heard of Country X.	10.77	1.103	10.76	1.012	387
I can recognize brand names from Country X.	10.38	1.565	7.82	3.478	390
Some characteristics of Country X come to mind quickly.	10.22	1.422	9.82	1.792	390
Country X has a high level of industrialization.	9.80	1.449	9.19	1.886	390
Country X has a highly developed economy.	10.14	1.206	8.76	2.108	390
People of Country X are highly literate.	8.94	1.752	6.17	2.347	390
Country X has a free-market system.	9.49	1.669	5.85	2.711	390
Country X is a democratic country.	9.90	1.438	3.51	2.687	390
Country X has high level of technological research.	9.61	1.497	8.46	2.415	390
Country X is a producer of high quality products.	9.92	1.322	5.04	2.44	390
Country X offers its people high standard of living.	9.63	1.444	4.04	2.208	387
Labor costs are high in country X.	8.53	1.871	4.08	2.363	390
Country X has a welfare system.	9.21	1.814	4.37	2.37	390
Country X has a civilian non-military government.	9.73	1.833	4.33	2.753	390
Products made in Country X have quality workmanship.	9.56	1.441	4.76	2.328	390
Products made in Country X are innovative.	8.85	1.708	7.01	2.725	390
Products made in Country X are reliable.	9.66	1.350	4.82	2.281	390
I would be proud to own products made in Country X.	8.05	2.525	4.04	2.383	390
Products made in Country X are high status	9.19	1.685	3.72	2.308	390
Products made in Country X expensive.	8.79	1.712	3.79	2.186	390
Products made in Country X are upmarket.	8.72	1.667	4.15	2.145	387
Products made in Country X are technically advanced	9.27	1.403	6.88	2.483	390
I trust Country X as a producer.	9.43	1.635	4.83	2.38	390
I like Country X.	8.32	2.460	5.81	2.673	390
Products made in Country X offer value for money.	8.20	1.753	6.73	2.417	390
Products made in Country X are of very good quality.	9.15	1.446	4.86	2.158	390
Products made in Country X have excellent features.	8.40	1.611	5.02	2.095	390
Products made in Country X are of very consistent quality.	8.82	1.523	4.23	2.144	390
Products made in Country X are dependable.	8.96	1.475	4.53	2.152	390

Source: own elaboration, 2011

Student's t-test was used to test the relevance of the comparison of these two countries. *Student's t-test was elaborated to compare two statistical populations.* A Paired-Sample t-test can be considered a special type of Student's t-test, during which only one statistical population is tested along a same attribute (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007). The t-test does not require the knowledge of the population's standard deviation, but it requires a normal distribution of the population. Also, it can only be used for small sample sizes ( $n < 30$ ) (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, pp. 165-166.). In this case, the greater sample size does not meet this latter condition. At the same time, the use of the test can be justified by its propriety to avoid comparing each average for each item as one can perform the test for several items at once.

According to the results, all pairs of items are significantly different from each other (at a 5% confidence level), i.e. in the two samples, the averages of the random variables are significantly different from each other.

This result equally confirms that *the choice of the two countries and the parallel evaluation thereof (following the recommendations of the literature) are relevant and provide valid results.*

In addition to the test of items, the *moderating effect* were equally studied. Similarly to the previous research phases, an analysis of variance was conducted to unveil (at a 5% confidence level) the relationships between the demographic variables and the macro *country image* and *country equity* variables.

The first relationship that we addressed was the study of *gender* on country image and on country equity.

In the case of Germany, gender was found to have no significant effect to any item of macro country image. In the case of country equity, two items proved to be influenced by the respondent's gender ("If Germany were a brand name, it would be my favorite brand" [male: 4.90 vs. female: 4.14], "If Germany were a brand name, I would be loyal to that brand" [male: 5.89 vs. female: 4.84]), with male respondents giving significantly more positive answers.

In the case of China, several items of macro country image were found significantly influenced by gender ("China has a strongly developed economy" [male: 8.47 vs. female: 8.94], "The inhabitants of China are literate people" [male: 5.58 vs. female: 6.53], "China has a free market" [male: 5.17 vs. female: 6.25], "China is a democratic country" [male: 2.99 vs. female: 3.81], "China has high labor costs" [male: 3.62 vs. female: 4.33]). Results show that female respondents tended to give a higher mark in the case of China, than male respondents. In the case of the country equity variable, male respondents gave significantly more positive answers to one item ("If China were a brand name, it would be my favorite brand" [male: 2.51 vs. female: 2.05])

The second relationship to be observed was the effect of *income* on country image and country equity.

In accordance with the methodology used in our previous research phases, students were asked to evaluate the financial status of their families on a 5-point scale, i.e. whether, in their opinion, their family revenue is well below average, below average, average, above average or well above average.

For Germany, three items of macro country image were found to be significantly related to this condition (“German products are of high quality” [10.50 – 8.91 – 9.75 – 9.93 – 10.23]; “Germany provides a high standard of living for its inhabitants” [11.00 – 8.73 – 9.44 – 9.65 – 9.90]; “Germany has a welfare system” [9.50 – 9.00 – 8.76 – 9.22 – 9.65]). These results show that with a growing income status, the evaluation of the country becomes significantly more positive.

In the case of country equity, no significant relationship was found.

For China, once again, several items of macro country image were found to be significantly affected by respondents’ income situation (“China is a democratic country” [5.00 – 5.00 – 4.01 – 3.55 – 2.58]; “China provides a high standard of living for its inhabitants” [1.50 – 5.09 – 4.30 – 4.07 – 3.53]; “China has high labor costs” [1.50 – 4.64 – 4.92 – 3.88 – 3.52]). According to these results, one can state that with a growing level of income, respondents are less and less likely to agree with the related statements, i.e. they have a more and more negative evaluation of the country.

In the case of country equity, no significant relationship was found.

The third relationship that we addressed was the study of *perceived self-confidence* on country image and on country equity.

Perceived self-confidence was equally measured on a 5-point scale: well below average, below average, average, above average and well above average.

We found no significant relationship of self-confidence with neither macro country image nor country equity for either Germany or China. Therefore there seems to be no manifest effect of self-confidence on the evaluation of countries.

The fourth relationship to be observed was the effect whether the respondent *has lived abroad for a longer period of time* (based on the recommendations by the literature, three months were indicated) on country image and country equity.

We found no significant relationship of this criterion with neither macro country image nor country equity for Germany

In the case of China, while there was again no significant effect on macro country image, two items of country equity turned out to be significantly related to the respondent’s experience abroad (“If China were a brand name, it would be my favorite brand” [lived abroad: 2.83; have not lived abroad: 2.37]; “If China were a brand name, I would be keen to pay more for a product with this brand” [lived abroad: 3.21; have not lived abroad: 2.67]). In accordance with these results one can say that those that have lived abroad for a longer period of time do evaluate China’s country equity in a significantly more positive way than those that haven’t.

Results are summarized in Table 37.

Table 37.

Presence of a demographic effect in the evaluation of countries

Demographic variable	Germany		China	
	CI	CE	CI	CE
Gender	no	yes	yes	yes
Income	yes	no	yes	no
Self-confidence	no	no	no	no
Lived abroad	no	no	no	no

Source: own elaboration, 2011

One can conclude from the above research the following: *the evaluation of country image is primarily and significantly affected by gender and the level of income, while country equity is significantly affected by gender.* The further analysis of these factors in the present doctoral research is therefore advisable.

#### 8.3.4. Conclusions and limitations of the scale test and pilot questionnaire

The main goal of the pilot query and data collection was *to test our questionnaire and the related scales and to unveil the possibilities for analysis of the gathered data.* Data analysis so far shows that the **scale is reliable** and the above study contributed to choose the most reliable scale for each variable. The pilot query shows that the scale items (following a thorough process of translation and verification) are easily understood by respondents and *shows high Cronbach's alpha values and a relatively low number of missing values.*

*The country equity scale and list of items does not, however cover the entirety of the previously unveiled dimensions of country image and therefore, in the final research phase another suitable scale will have to be introduced for the results to reflect all the preferences of respondents* and therefore to meet the requirements for content validity recommended by the literature. On the other hand, there is a need for further development of scales as *at this stage the items are not perfectly appropriate for measuring country image as a brand image and also country brand equity.*

One can equally conclude that *the 11-point Likert scales did not live up to our expectations to provide an added value* as for a more in-depth analysis of participants' responses. At the same time, based on feedback by respondents, these scales made it somewhat difficult for respondents to provide consistent answers. **Therefore in the final research phase, we will include seven-point Likert scales, more appropriate for the given sample and equally preferred in scientific research.**

*The parallel evaluation of countries* by respondents shows that significant comparisons between countries can be made. This also supports the view from the literature that sharp differences in the evaluation of countries can be revealed with suitable scales. At the same time, results show that in case of several items, respondents have little or no

information on the countries in question and therefore **the selection of the countries to study is crucial for the doctoral research and requires a prior validation.**

#### **8.4. Conclusions and limitations of the second research phase**

The results of this research phase's qualitative part show **that several conceptual areas of our initial theoretical model provide a relevant approach to the subject** as is the attitude-based approach of the area, which covers the cognitive, affective and conative dimensions

The qualitative phase equally showed that respondents find the so-called *consumer-focused brand equity a relevant extension to the area* and therefore this will be adaptable to the further stages of the present doctoral research.

The quantitative results show that **the Pappu – Quester (2010) scale can be considered both valid and reliable on a Hungarian sample** and its use would likely return relevant and adequate results in a research conducted in Hungary. The measurement tool is suitable for measuring the country image and country equity constructs and adequately covers the respective areas. The factor structure unveiled by the factor analysis does resemble that of the original scale test – this is equally confirmed by the confirmatory factor analysis.

Among the moderating effects, *gender* and *income* proved primarily to have significant effects on country image. **This justifies the inclusion of these elements into our hypotheses and our final research model.**

The previous research however bears a number of limitations, of which a majority will be eliminated through repeating the research. One limitation is that the scale was not queried in its original form. Considering the specialty of a Hungarian sample and the specificity of the present research, the scale underwent a number of modifications (e.g. simplifications, inclusion of new items). However, these modifications were justified by either our prior results or the recommendations by the literature, and were also subsequently validated.

##### **8.4.1. Applying the conclusions of the second research phase in the final doctoral research model**

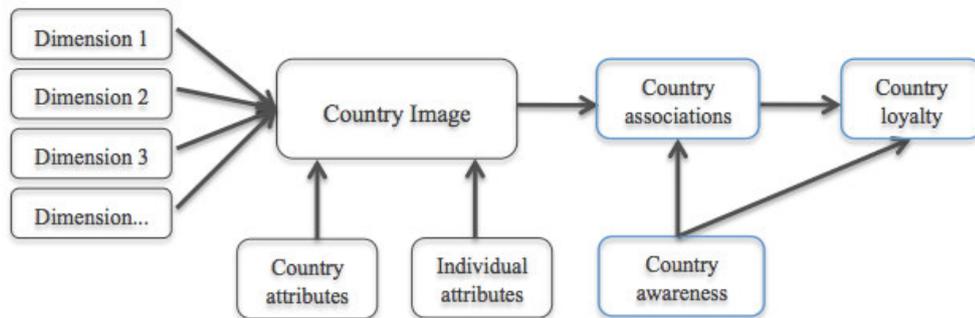
The most important conclusion stemming from our second research phase is that moderating factors more likely affect country image than country equity. Based on this finding, the revised model is shown in the below figure.

The main conclusion according to the second phase of research is that *the elements of country equity are the country associations, country awareness, country loyalty and country image*. On the other hand the question still exists whether country image is an *element* or an *antecedent* of the construct of country equity. For this purpose the final

research can provide answers. Also arises a question according to the relationship of the country equity dimensions. In our understanding and also according to the review of literature country image has an influence on country associations, country awareness has an impact on country associations and country loyalty and the country associations are in connection with country loyalty. In this meaning *the country image is an element of the construct of country equity* and it can be justified by confirmatory factor analysis in the final doctoral research. The detailed findings of literature relating to the relationships among the country equity dimensions can be found in Chapter 9.2.3. among the hypotheses of the doctoral research.

**Figure 19.**

The revised model according to the second research phase



Source: own elaboration, 2011

## 9. THE THIRD QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PHASE

### 9.1. Exploratory research – expert interviews

In the qualitative part of the third research phase we proceeded to *expert in-depth interviews*. The goal of this phase was to *elaborate on the dimensions and influencing factors of country image and country brand as well as to review our measurement and methodological issues*. All the interviewed experts are in some manner involved in the process of building or measuring country image and can therefore through their opinions shape and influence our prior assumptions and hypotheses to be tested in the final research.

They were also conducted in order to integrate into our research the view, experience and opinion of experts with a firm scientific, theoretical background as well as a wide knowledge on the current state of the market as the present dissertation, beyond its *theoretical significance*, has a *relevant practical aspect* in the topic of country image building, country branding and measuring country equity.

Expert interviews, as a qualitative data collection method, contributed to a better understanding of the above, as a preparation for the quantitative query on a representative sample.

#### 9.1.1. Subjects and course of the interviews

The following experts were interviewed:

László ACZÉL (CEO, Young&Rubicam) – member of The Board of Country Image (Országmárka Tanács), research on Hungary's country image

Péter BÍRÓ (BP International Business Promotion) – consultant, instructor, several publications in measuring brand equity

Róbert BRAUN (CEO, Braun&Partners) – Brand Israel Project, consultant

Emőke HALASSY (Director of Research, Hungarian Tourism Plc.) – research projects in the field of touristic image

Ákos KOZÁK (GfK Hungária, CEO) – researcher, several publications on measuring country image

Erzsébet MALOTA (Corvinus University of Budapest) – instructor, researcher, several publications on country image and country-of-origin image

Árpád PAPP-VÁRY (director, Institute of Marketing, Budapest College of Communication) – instructor, researcher, several publications on country branding, member of The Board of Country Image

The interviews were conducted in the Fall of 2011. The interviews took place in almost every case in the interviewees working environment and lasted between 50 and 60

minutes, following a pre-existent interview guideline (see Appendix 4). The interviews were semi-structured, leaving ground for a free transmission of additional and valuable information from the interviewees. The interviews began with a general presentation of the interviewer (the author of the present dissertation) and that of the research subject and the goals of the interview. Following that we proceeded to the questions contained in the interview guideline. All interviewees (except for Mr. Aczél, who was only interviewed on methodological matters) were sent, prior to the interview, the above list of questions – and were therefore prepared to the main questions of the interviews which considerably shortened the duration of the interviews while keeping its information richness. After expressly agreeing to it, the interviews were tape-recorded, and all interviewees agreed for their interview transcripts to be used for the sake of the present dissertation.

During the analysis of the interview data, we endeavored to analyze the interviewees' reflections to the results so far in order to validate them and equally to gather an aggregated overview of experts, in terms of methodology, theory and practice.

### **9.1.2. Results of the interviews**

The expert interviews included several areas of the literature and the relationship between them. In the following we summarize the main results and put an emphasis on elements of opinion that were accentuated during the interviews.

Interviewees agree on the fact that *the unveiled dimensions of country image are all relevant and essential elements of the evaluation of a country*. They also agree on the fact that *the weight of these vary along the country and depend also on the target groups' attributes*.

The most important elements experts mentioned were culture, people (and personal experience), places of interest and politics.

Mr. Braun equally attributed a major role to diplomacy while Mr. Papp-Váry insisted on the distinguished role of brands made in the given country and that the importance of each dimension differs in the case of every country.

Ms. Malota underlined the importance of cultural differences and the marked presence of stereotypes.

According to Mr. Kozák, the evaluation of people, i.e. “how comfortable I feel myself in their presence”, as well as climate and the impression of security are equally crucial factors in the evaluation of a country. Ms. Halassy agreed with this latter opinion and beyond security and infrastructure, she stressed that all six elements of Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon do play an important role in the shaping of a country's image. She affirmed that sights, the environment, hospitality and security play an accentuated role in tourism. According to her, “the evaluation of the economy, though, plays a lesser role”.

When discussing the dimensions of country image, Mr. Kozák made a *methodological remark*, stating that “a conjoint analysis might be recommended and helpful for designing the so-called archetype of country image and its factors”.

Beyond the dimensions of country image, other *moderating factors* were also mentioned. Interviewees agree on the fact that country image is determined on one hand by country size and its distance from the country of origin, and on the other by the different target group elements mentioned beforehand.

Mr. Bíró emphasized that “rank and relativity factors play an important role in determining the evaluation of a country”. In his view, country size is a crucial factor, “not only because we know more of the country, but also because it’s more impressive”. Moreover, he stressed the further role of self-confidence and noted that a person’s world view might have been an important factor decades ago, but now it has a less important role”.

Ms. Halassy detailed the mechanisms of action of all the above for the tourism industry. According to her, distance and historical-cultural links to the country of origin are the most important factors, while people’s personality and world view are equally important when evaluating a country. Moreover, “awareness and prior experience also affect the touristic success of a country”. She equally highlighted the possibility, within a study, to handle tourists and investors separately. In accordance with this, Mr. Kozák equally put an emphasis on the separate targets groups and the role of people’s awareness of the given places. Mr. Braun called for a segmentation based on the identity of stakeholders. Mr. Papp-Váry underlined the existence (in a number of cases) of an inverse relationship between the target country’s distance and people’s knowledge thereof, i.e. “we might not know anything about a distant country, but it can be exotic”.

Ms. Malota confirmed that one ought to differentiate between target groups along their level of foreign experience.

During the interviews *the influencing factors of country image were discussed in a complex way* and the effect mechanisms of the shaping of a country’s image as well as the overall evaluation of country image were mentioned. All participants agree that country image is constantly evolving, a number of factors continuously shape it and the effects of these factors differ in time and space. Image can be divided into several layers and different manifestations can be identified, e.g. touristical image, investor image, cultural image, etc.

In relation to the overall evaluation, Mr. Kozák highlighted that “there is not one country image, but there also exist a so-called ‘abstract country image’, a separate ‘nation character’, a separate ‘culture image’ and the image of a nation and of people.”

Ms. Halassy called the attention on the fact that touristic image may differ from overall country image, stating that “tourism is a carrier of country image, they act back and forth, the relationship is strong between touristic image and country image.”

Mr. Braun considers the role of perceptions crucial for overall country image, “that manifests itself in expected and realized consumer action”.

Ms. Malota emphasized that “in academic literature, overall country image and product image approaches often melt with each other.”

During the interviews the relevance, *components and influencing factors of the concept of country brand were equally discussed. All participants confirmed the legitimacy of this approach and its novelty and interest in the development of the field of science.* In addition, the practical usefulness and utility of the topic was addressed. Interviewees all agreed that a deliberate country image building activity is mainly relevant to practice, even though this indirectly affects the academic approach on the topic.

According to Mr. Bíró, “managers can build a brand from image, which, in case of countries, needs to be constant. What is particularly important is that one has to build a brand personality.”.

Ms. Halassy stated that country brands can most easily be built using specific offers, “although image building is a slow process in tourism, and one must take good care, as touristic image, brand is very fragile”.

Mr. Braun highlighted that “country brand theories are not trivial at first, because they depend on how consumption is defined in case of a country brand”. In his understanding, the concept of reputation can be opposed to that of brand theories. He highlighted that beyond Aaker’s consumer-focused approach, one also ought to consider resorting to identity-based brand equity theory.

In Mr. Papp-Váry’s view, “country image and country brand do not are not two clearly distinct concepts, and in the case of products, the most evident relationship can be noticed when we say a country’s name and what people associate it to”.

Mr. Aczél highlighter that one always ought to consider the dynamics of change when studying country brands.

*Measurement and methodological issues were equally discussed and theoretically validated.* All interviewees agree that country image needs a continuous, long-term and systematic measurement. One also has to take into account all the factors that can affect the output of this measurement. All interviewees estimated that the quantitative approach was acceptable and the most recommended in several points of view, although each of them mentioned different further fitting methodologies that they would recommend. It can also be said that most experts interviewed had a different interpretation as to the subjects of the measurement.

Mr. Bíró would recommend placing the emphasis on the accurate expression of brand equity using a relevant ranking and taking into account the weighing of the different influencing factors of country image. He also drew the attention to the importance of pricing, where “a positive image or country brand might serve as an added value”, and to the importance of touristic indicators.

Mr. Kozák, in a practical approach, highlighted in relation to measurement, that “these is no such thing as a long-term image”. Image does constantly change and therefore a longitudinal study is needed – although one has to consider the fact that “a more intensive appearance or piece of news in the media can temporarily overwrite a nation character that has existed for a longer period of time”. In his view, the appearance of the new approach brings about a methodological renewal, and therefore advises for “putting qualitative-dominant approaches into the foreground” instead of quantitative approaches. In his interpretation, simplified quantitative measures are needed, but conducted in a “semi-quantitative, semi-qualitative manner, that make international comparison possible”. According to him, “one ought to open up towards anthropology and ethnography in the future”, in order to unveil genuine decision-making situations.

Ms. Halassy equally stressed the importance of a systematic data collection and described the tourism-based measurement approaches used in practice. These were the following: focus groups, in international studies, while mapping knowledge and image, “including domestic studies preceding a tourism thematic year”. In addition, a so-called controlling system is in place as part of which measurement takes into account the number of guest nights, as well as the performance of study tours and private lettings. Questionnaire interviews often include both open and closed-ended questions to reveal associations and attitudes. In addition, “beyond general question, demographic profiles are also established”.

Mr. Braun highlighted that he does not believe “in explicit, cognitive methodology based on opinion research”. In his view, opinion research is not a suitable method as results often include expected attitudes and post-rationalization. In addition, according to him, it does not support qualitative research either, as it seems to reveal similar problems. He suggests that “the use of implicit research methodology might be suitable, e.g. mental mapping, that unveils respondents’ unconscious processes”.

Mr. Papp-Váry added that Anholt’s hexagon is a valid approach in terms of measurement, even though it can be used principally on regional and continental levels, and one equally has “to be aware of its limitations”. He also pointed out that one can best measure the effect (and therefore that of evolving country image) on targeted campaigns.

Mr. Aczél provided answers in mainly methodological issues and in *the topic of the measurement possibilities of country brand*. As CEO of Young and Rubicam Hungary, he stated that there has only been one country brand survey in Hungary so far, which followed the methodology of Brandasset Valuator (hereafter referred to as: BAV)<sup>16</sup>. BAV considers four elements as pillars of country brands: (1) uniqueness (how differentiated the brand is), (2) relevance (how suitable it is to fulfill consumers’ needs), (3) recognition (how appreciated the brand is by the consumer – image equally belongs in this category), (4) awareness (the experience of users about the brand).

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<sup>16</sup> For more information about the methodology, see <http://www.yrbav.com/>

The main focus of the research was the study of Hungary, as a nation brand – with a special emphasis on the state of development of the brand (current state) and its vitality (growth potential). Country image was measured in a quantitative way, along 47 statements with a particular emphasis on perceptions and their hierarchy. These included, among others, the distance between the country of origin and the destination country or the mapping of user experience.

Mr. Aczél confirmed that a *complex quantitative measurement would be a suitable tool for the sake of the present research in a methodological point of view* and that the consumer-based evaluation of country brand would be a novel and relevant addition to the area. He equally noted that there are numerous measurement possibilities for country equity and that each institution dealing with brand equity has its own measurement methodology. He suggested, for the present doctoral study, the use of a methodology that would fit other methods used during prior academic research. He also noted that destination choice is a useful and relevant output variable for the present study, considering its practical implications and that the two areas have not been studied jointly so far.

*All interviewees confirmed the relevance for the field of research of destination evaluation and expressly recommended the study of the area as the output variable for the present research.* They equally agreed that another strongly present area is the study of the effect on product choice, i.e. the study of country-of-origin effects – even though it can be considered an overstudied area.

Ms. Halassy highlighted that beyond the overall evaluation, the study of the role of satisfaction and recommendation are also have a pronounced role within their studies on tourism. The measurability and importance of recommendation was also highlighted by Mr. Kozák. He also recommended using projection techniques for the study of destination evaluation.

Mr. Papp- Váry confirmed that country image has a strong influence on destination choice which is most manifest if a consumer is willing to travel into a country, and therefore “it is worthwhile to include destination choice and willingness to visit a country into the measurement. (...) There are also cases where we have impressions on a country even though we have never been to it – here, it is clearly the image of the country that plays an essential role”.

*In conclusion, it can be said that all interviewees estimated that the present study was relevant, likely to fit the international development structure of the research area that included novelty. They all equally stated that our research model was a suitable tool for unveiling the relationships present in the area.*

### 9.1.3. Conclusions of the interviews

Overall, the interviewees' suggestions and insights influenced, but also **confirmed and validated in many cases the relationships and effect mechanisms unveiled beforehand within the topic, as well as the related assumptions.** The interviews' main conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- i) There is a circle of country image dimensions that can shape a country's image in a relevant way – it is worthwhile to study the force of the influence thereof.
- ii) In addition, country size and distance from the country of origin is a relevant approach to the topic. This can have a practical implication during targeting.
- iii) The concept of country brand is relevant and reflects a strategic and practice. Its measurement accounts for a novelty in academic research.
- iv) Country brand dimensions can be measured in a quantitative way.
- v) Destination evaluation is a suitable and relevant output for practice of the topic. Based on a strategic approach of both, joining the study of destination evaluation with country branding is a relevant extension of the research field.

Based on the interviews the following main guidelines can be ascertained:

**The three main statements based on the literature**, i.e. (1) there exist constituting dimensions to country image, (2) there exist factors that influence perception and (3) overall, image has a noticeable impact on behavior were expert validated, and can be referred to as **relevant and distinct approaches of the field.** Integrating these into a research model might bring about a novel context to the area.

In a practical consideration, **the apparition of country branding accounts for a novelty in the field.** Its joining with touristic destination management might bring about a genuine practical utility and added value.

**The measurement of country branding (considering the diverse and wide array of available methodologies) ought to be aligned with already used, tested and validated methodologies already within the stream of international research in the area.**

**Joining the two areas of country branding and destination evaluation can be justified and supported** by the fact that a strategic approach seems to prevail in both fields of country brand building and destination management and therefore the joint study of the two areas is all the more logical and justified.

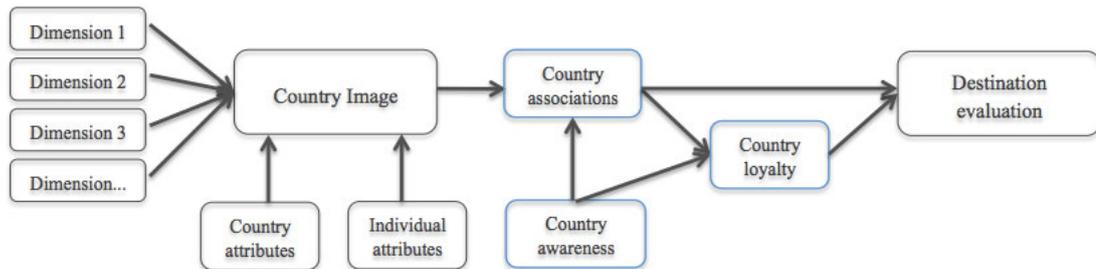
In addition, while **including the output variable (destination evaluation) into the model, one ought to adapt and apply a scale that includes both the relationships relevant in a touristic approach and the factors thereof.**

**In conclusion, the interviewees confirmed and validated our research topic choice both in terms of practical relevance and utility.**

Summarizing the findings of exploratory research phases, the following model could be revised. (see Figure 20.)

**Figure 20.**

The revised model according to the findings of all exploratory research phases



Source: own elaboration, 2011

## **9.2. Preparation of the confirmatory research phase, developing the final research model**

### **9.2.1. Narrowing of the theoretical framework; delimitation of the research model**

The previous qualitative and quantitative research phases provided a number of results that delimit the final research of the present dissertation, its theoretical framework and the relationships it is intended to study. In the following we give a narrowed summary of our research so far in order to present a foundation to the third quantitative research phase.

**The main conclusions of the research so far and therefore the starting points of the final empirical research are as follows:**

There exists a consistent set of dimensions for country image that enables its measurement for various countries. The determining of this however varies depending on the modeling procedure used in the various research so far and neither the used dimensions are comprehensive.

The dimensions of country image build up a formative model with the country image variable. Each dimension weighs differently depending on the country being studied.

Only a part of the dimensions of country image is based on cognitive dimensions. Another part is related to emotional aspects.

The evaluation of the population of a given country equally has an effect on the related country image. According to certain authors, the effect is bidirectional.

It means that the image of people has an influence on country image, and also there is an influence, a so-called image transfer on people's reputation by country image. Therefore country image and people's image can be evaluated separately in researches of the field.

Along with country image, country brand can equally be measured, similarly to the classic brand equity construct.

The evaluation of country image affects brand equity: the more a country has a favorable image, the higher its country equity is rated. According to certain approaches country image is a constituent part of country equity.

The other elements of the brand equity construct are: country loyalty, country awareness, country associations that both relate to and influence each other.

Country image and country equity influence individual behavior: they affect product choice, destination evaluation, investment decisions, etc.

The variables and dimensions of country image, country brand and the output variable (destination evaluation) together form a reflective model.

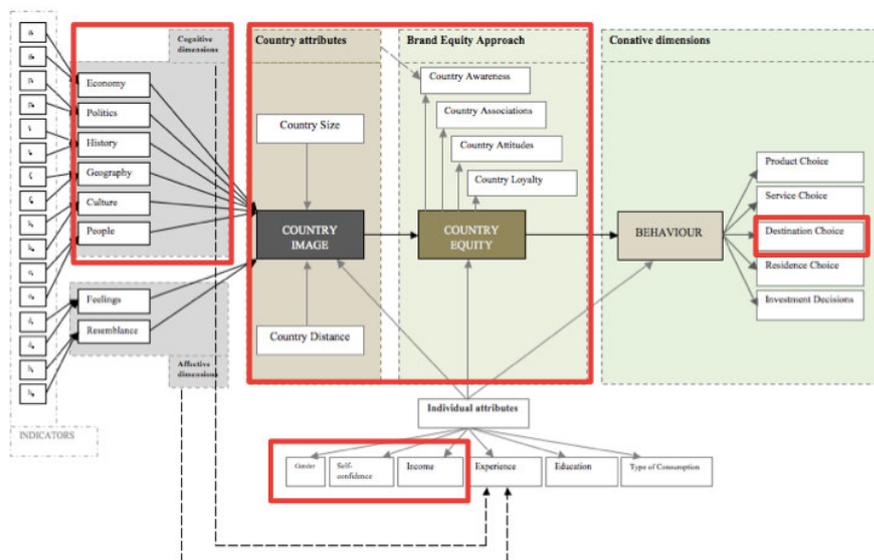
Country image can be influenced by individual factors as well (e.g. gender, income or self-confidence).

Country image can be influenced by country attributes as well (e.g. country size, its perceived distance).

The theoretical model presented beforehand reflects a theoretical framework of the research. However, for the actual research a number of further delimitations and further narrowing are required. Thus, in the following figure, those elements of the theoretical model are highlighted that delimit the scope of the final research model. (see Figure 21.)

**Figure 21.**

Delimiting the parts of the theoretical model as a base for the final empirical research



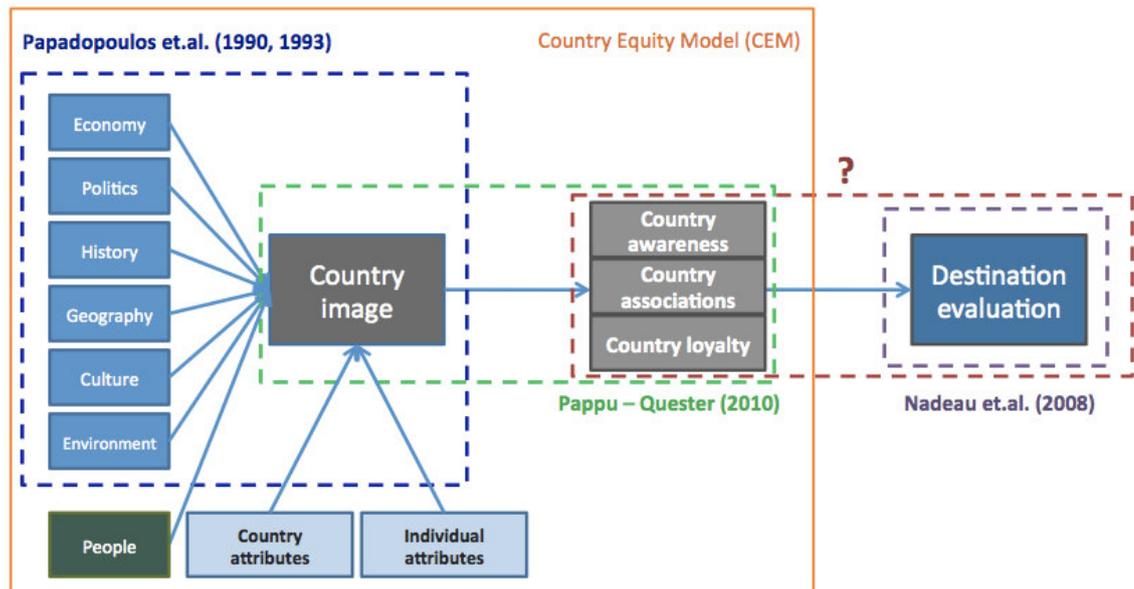
Source: own elaboration, 2011

The *scientific objectives* of the empirical research is to unveil and analyze the dimensions of country image and country brand, develop the concept of country brand and to study measurement and methodological considerations as well as to provide a study integrated to the international mainstream of research in the area. The indirect aim of the doctoral research is *to develop a Country Equity Model (CEM)*, which can examine the theory of country image, country equity aspects and the destination context in one common model, exploring the relationships among the factors.

The *scientific and practical significance of the study* is provided by the fact during our research we proceed to the development of the theoretical background by unveiling dimensions and affecting factors and relate and jointly study various theoretical models. *A methodological advance of the present dissertation* is provided by a combination of the measurement methods by path analysis and structural analysis methods. Another advancement provided by linking touristic destination approaches with country evaluation.

Figure 22 presents a framework for the joint study of the three related fields.

**Figure 22.**  
Areas to be studied in the doctoral research  
(A narrowed theoretical framework)



Source: own elaboration, 2011

To study the relationships depicted in the model, one can formulate a final research model and hypotheses to be presented in the following chapter.

### 9.2.2. The doctoral research model

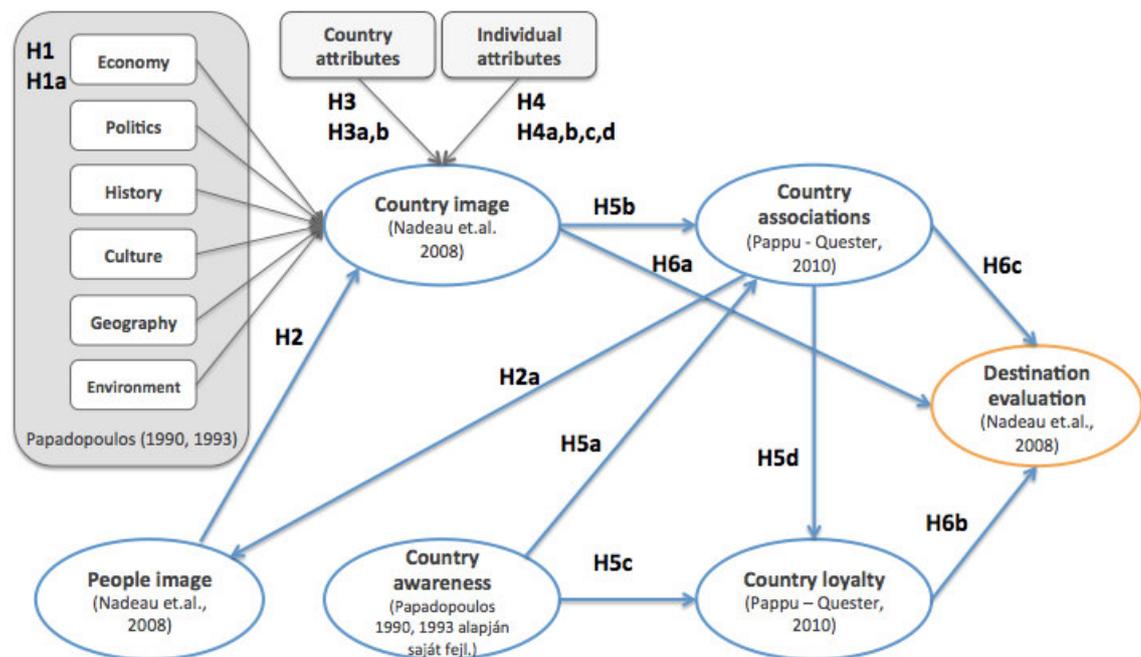
The problem examined by the present dissertation is the *determination of the dimensions of country image together with the definition of country brand in the context of destination evaluation*. The literature of country image spans over decades, however no model has yet been designed to incorporate a consumer-focused approach of country equity (Country Equity Model, CEM) and the study thereof on consumer behavior.

The main aim – based on the study of the relationships between the variables of the research model, their direction and strength – is to determine which factors determine country image, country equity and the effects of these on destination evaluation.

The following figure illustrates the relationships between the research hypotheses and the research model.

Figure 23.

Final research (measurement) model and measurement scales



Source: own elaboration, 2011

In the following we give a more detailed presentation of the related hypotheses. The hypotheses are tested during the test of the research model as well as during various additional, complementary analyses studying the relationships between individual variables. *The mechanism of action and the entirety of the relationships described in the model are studied in the test of the model as a whole.*

During the design of the final research model and of the hypotheses – beyond the models of country image and country equity, presented in the theoretical chapters of the present dissertation – destination evaluation and the influencing factors thereof were equally taken into account, with the related research and measurement methodology. In

the process of designing the final research model we resorted to a mixed-emthods research design in multiple subsequent phases and therefore all phases of the pilot study contributed to the design of the final empirical research.

Factors influencing the relationship were also included into the analysis with a goal to design a generally applicable model for country equity (Country Equity Model, CEM) – of which the present doctoral study is a first test.

### **9.2.3. Hypotheses of doctoral research**

#### **9.2.3.1. Hypotheses: country image dimensions and their measurement**

Hypotheses H1 to H4 belong to the joint study of country image dimensions and its influencing factors. *The test of hypotheses is aimed to reveal in what ways and to what extent the elements of country image influence the evaluation of countries and in what ways other potential, specific influencing factors can influence this latter.*

#### **H1 The role and weight of each dimension of country image varies according to the given country.**

Based on our literature review and the results of the preceding research phases, one can assume that *there exists a consistent pool of dimensions and sub-dimensions of country image that is assumed to shape the image of a country in a formative way*, i.e. through a casual relationship from the indicators in the direction of the variables. Moreover, one can assume that the dimensions of country image characteristically (but not exclusively) determine the evaluation of a country, i.e. contrarily to what can be found in the literature, not all country image dimensions appear in a measurable way in the formation of a given country's image.

There is no general agreement in the literature on the pool of determining dimensions of the country image construct. There seems to be, however, an agreement on the fact that *country image is a multidimensional construct* (Johansson – Moinpour, 1977; White, 1979; Narayana, 1981; Cattin et.al. 1982; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984, 1988, 2006; Johansson – Nebenzahl, 1986; Han-Terpstra, 1988; Han, 1989; Smith, 1991; Roth-Romeo, 1992; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994). Opinions differ in both the number and composition of the dimensions and this is equally supported by the results of previous research phases.

In the case of formative models, a general criterion is that indicators cover the entirety of the contract's context in order for the model to be stable. In the case of the present study, a full content validity is guaranteed by a *comprehensive literature review and the confirmatory results of the preceding research phases*. Based on the literature review, six main dimensions (and a total of 11 dimensions) seem to stand out. These are as follows: (1) state and structure of the economy; (2) labor market, worker skills; (3)

political situation/structure; (4) international relations (international roles, conflicts); (5) cultural attributes; (6) historical attributes (traditions); (7) geographical factors (natural endowments, climate); (8) environment (sanitation, protection of the environment); (9) people; (10) feelings (positive/negative), (11) similarity, relatedness. The possible role and respective weight of these dimensions will be addressed in the present study.

*Dimension weight* is an under-research area in the literature, the field of country-of-origin effects provides the most examples where this issue is addressed. However some authors do address the issue and point out that the weight of each dimension might vary along the studied country. Our pilot studies equally confirm this view and therefore justify a further study of the question whether the coefficients of each country image dimension vary depending on the factors.

Our exploratory research confirmed our assumption that *structural modeling* is an adequate tool for studying the direction of the contribution of dimensions to the construct as a whole, and whether their effect is negative or positive. There is no known example in the literature of a similar, comprehensive study which includes all dimension – this fact equally justifies to formulate and subsequently test a related hypothesis.

### **H1a     There exists a formative casual relationship between country image and its dimensions.**

A few references to *the casual relationship between country image and its dimensions* can be found in the literature even though only a few known sources explicitly assessed and measured these relationships and the extent of the influence of each dimension. Our exploratory study revealed that *casual modeling* (by the design of a formative construct) is adequate to study the structure of the related factors.

Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) recommend the use of formative modeling (referring to the models found in the literature which are mostly formative) while other researchers resorted to reflective models (e.g. Lala – Allred – Chakraborty, 2009) Edwards (2001) states that the choices concerning the specifications of the model ought to be adjusted to the goals of the given study. Choosing between formative vs. reflective modeling is therefore a relevant issue and requires further investigation. The present dissertation is in line with one of the directions the literature suggests, namely that it tests the relationship between country image and its dimensions in a formative way.

### **H2     The evaluation of the inhabitants of a given country has a positive influence on the evaluation of the country.**

A few articles in the literature study *the relationship between the evaluation of countries and that of their citizens*. Both descriptive and structural studies of the question handle people image as *a separate variable, different from the dimensions of country image*. People image is evaluated along several dimensions (e.g. friendliness, reliability, skill,

etc.). Most studies in the area equally find that the evaluation of people impacts the evaluation of the given country (e.g. Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Papadopoulos et.al., 1990, 1993; Anholt, 2003), while other studies state that it is country image that influences people image.

The study of the ability of people image and the relationship with people on the evaluation of countries (and especially its affective factors) is an topical research problem and a subject for many ongoing research projects (see e.g. Nadeau – Heslop, 2008; Elliot et.al., 2011)

The results of both our qualitative and quantitative exploratory research phases show that *the separate study of the evaluation of people is a relevant approach to the research area*, wherefore people image and country image are in a manifest interaction. Including the separate study of the area into the model increases the validity of this latter.

## **H2a Country associations have a positive effect on the evaluation (image) of people.**

According to the literature, country image has a significant effect on product evaluation (see e.g. Nagashima, 1970, 1977; Han, 1989; Papadopoulos et.al., 1990, 1993; Giraldi et.al., 2011). Li et al.(1995) and Han (1989) hypothesize that consumers formulate their opinion about a country based on previous experience. This experience is stored in their long-term memory and the information is then recalled when evaluating a given product (or its quality). This is supported by Anderson's (1996) associative network memory model, according to which images stored in consumers' memories can be recalled in a node-link structure, with related elements mutually activating each other. In Brijs et.al.'s (2011) words, a so-called transfer of images takes place between the country and the object concerned.

According to the above, one can hypothesize that this transfer of images not only stands for the evaluation of products but equally for that of individuals and can therefore be assessed and investigated. The result of the exploratory qualitative research phase equally support this assumption: according to our results, not only people's image affect that of a country, but the relationship seems true vice versa, i.e. that a pool of information about a country has an effect on the evaluation of its inhabitants. By adapting the associative network memory model, one can therefore assume that country associations also affect the evaluation of people. This relationship has not yet been formally tested by any previous study and can thus be identified as a so far unresearched gap in the literature. The above hypothesis concerning the relationship might therefore contribute to clarifying the positions adopted in the literature.

**H3 Country image is influenced, beyond the uncovered dimensions, by additional factors, peculiar to the given country.**

Country image – beyond its dimensions – is influenced by *additional factors*. One can distinguish between two main groups of these influencing factors: *personal characteristics and country attributes*. As seen in the literature review, a few studies examined the effect of influencing factors other than country image and country brand dimensions, e.g. that of country competences, country size, perceived similarity and distance (see e.g. Bennett, 1999; Kleppe et.al., 2002; Marshalls, 2007; Nadeau – Heslop, 2008). However one can affirm that these factors have not been handled and tested within one common model so far.

**H3a Country size has a positive effect on country image.****H3b The relative distance of the destination country from the home country has a negative effect of the country image of the former.**

Country size, but also its international political, economic and military power can impact its evaluation and therefore its image. In addition, its distance can also affect the amount of available information about the country for the evaluator and – indirectly – the quality of the opinion of these people about the country. According to Bennett (1999) the geographic proximity of the individual to the destination country i.e. the country-of-origin of the evaluator can influence the evaluation of the country. Marshalls (2007) equally points out that country size impacts its image.

In addition, Mittelstaedt et.al. (2004) study the role of perceived similarity or difference in relation to the destination country.

The above hypotheses are aimed to test these assumed relationships.

**H4 Country image is influenced, beyond the uncovered dimensions, by additional individual factors.**

Raters' characteristics can equally affect the evaluation of country image. Several studies show that gender, self-evaluation and personal experience all have an influence on the evaluation of a country's image. These factors have not been handled. Egy ország imázsa más és más lehet annak kapcsán, hogy kiket tekinthetünk *célcsoportként*, vagyis kik az ország imázsának *megítélői*, illetve ezek a személyek milyen tényezőket, szempontokat vesznek figyelembe egy ország értékelése kapcsán. (ld. erről még: Kotler et.al., 1993; Agarwal – Sikri, 1996; Ger – Askegaard – Christensen, 1999; Kotler – Gertner, 2002; Hankinson, 2003; Fan, 2006)

Kar and Litvin (2000) outline the determining role of the evaluator's gender, Papp-Váry (2005) also emphasizes the role of having lived abroad for a long period of time.

Beyond the effect of gender, Malota (2001) considers the effects of the individual's self-confidence and their level of income.

According to Hsieh et.al.(2004) along with the effect of gender, one also has to study respondents' age, income and marital status.

According to their results, men seem to have significantly more positive views on a country, than women. (Malota, 2001), our research revealed the relation in an opposite way. People with high perceived self-confidence seem to have significantly more positive views on a country, while those with higher income can have less positive views on the certain country (Malota, 2011)

These factors have not been handled and tested within *one common model* so far. The influence of individual factors (personal characteristics) is equally confirmed by the results of our pilot studies and therefore justify the formulation of the following hypotheses:

- H4a Gender influences the evaluation of a country: female have more positive views on country image.**
- H4b Declared income positively influences the evaluation of a country (country image).**
- H4c Declared self-esteem positively influences the evaluation of a country (country image)**
- H4d Individuals' having lived abroad positively influences the evaluation of a country. (country image)**

Beyond the results of our pilot studies, the above sub-hypotheses are validated by the results presented in Malota (2003), Hsieh et.al. (2004), Gudjonsson (2005). The topic is further examined in the literature, even though the approaches followed in these works relate more to the area of country-of-origin effects (e.g. Nagashima 1970, 1977; Cattin et.al., 1982; Erickson et.al., 1984; Johansson et.al., 1985; Chasin et.al., 1988; Yu – Chen, 1993; Maheswaran, 1994; Gilmore, 2002; Papp-Váry, 2007).

Considering that most studies are related to country-of-origin effect studies, the specific, *country image approach* of the present study makes it even more justified to address these elements. Moreover, once again, these factors have not been handled and tested within one common model so far, adding up to the relevance of the study of the area.

#### **9.2.3.2. Hypotheses: value and measurement of country image / country equity**

As country image progresses as field of science, measurability is becoming a growing subject of concern. Many approaches to quantify the evaluation of countries are known from the literature (see the chapter on country image and country brand measurability). According to the latest approaches, a country name bears for consumers a same type of value than a brand name does (Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006) and the value of country image, country brand – similarly to classic brand equity – is measurable. In addition, *a consumer-oriented brand equity concept has become generally accepted in the*

*literature*, the theoretical basis of which is given by the *associative network memory model* by Anderson (1990, 1993).

*Country equity theory* is becoming an increasingly studied area with a growing corpus of literature. At the same time its application as a theory remains low – it is typically featured in country-of-origin image – and indirectly – product image studies (see e.g. Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2006, 2007; Roth – Diamantopoulos – Montesinos, 2008).

However we argue that similarly to brand equity, a “country equity” can be expressed and it is a suitable approach to quantify the value of country image in a way similar to brand equity. According to this, the hypothesis can validate this concept of country equity.

**H5 Measurable factors of country equity are: country associations, country image, country awareness, country loyalty.**

Several authors resort to adapting elements from brand equity theory to the area of country image. This equally implies that – similarly to brand equity factors – one can formulate value-bearing elements, like associations, country attitudes, country awareness, country loyalty (see e.g. Yoo – Donthu, 2001; Lin – Kao, 2004; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 2006; Pappu – Quester – Cooksey, 2007; Pappu – Quester, 2010).

In the validated construct by Pappu and Quester (2010), the elements of country brand are: country associations, macro country image, micro country image, country loyalty and country awareness. Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) in their respective works reveal further factors. Introducing some of these dimensions into the theory of country equity and more expressly partitioning interrelated constructs (e.g. image vs. associations) might be justified.

In addition, it can equally be said that the elements of country equity – similarly to those of brand equity – can be mutually interrelated. The discipline has not yet addressed this issue.

Given that the field of country equity can still be considered as immature, all formulated and tested hypotheses in the area contribute to the development of the theory thereof. The aforementioned factors have not been handled and tested within one common model so far.

**H5a Country awareness positively influences country associations.**

**H5b Country image positively influences country associations.**

**H5c Country awareness positively influences country loyalty.**

**H5d Country associations positively influence country loyalty.**

According to the literature, one can stipulate that the elements of country equity mutually influence each other. According to Anderson’s (1996, in: Pappu – Quester,

2010, p. 277.) associative network memory model, *consumers' memories store information hierarchically in a node-link structure*, where, in some cases, to a given piece of information given associations would be joined. Accordingly, information about a country will lead to associations which will be stored in a hierarchical order in consumers' minds, i.e. in a network. Each of these associations can have direction and strength and can therefore affect each other in several ways (e.g. having a bi-directional, back and forth effect between pieces of information and associations).

Therefore – based on the associative network memory model – one can assume that country awareness impacts country image, image impacts associations and in turn, associations impact destination evaluation. In addition, country loyalty also has an impact on destination evaluation.

All the above statements are equally mentioned within the literature, even though these are, in most cases, not studied together, within one construct that would allow a joint study of the related relationships.

Pappu and Quester (2010) declare that the country awareness and country associations are separate dimensions of country equity construct. Roth, Diamantopoulos and Montesinos (2008) emphasize that country image has an impact on country equity common elements of which are country awareness/country associations. As a consequence of the findings we can state that both country image and country awareness can influence country associations. It means that the free association (what comes into their mind hearing the word of Country X) that a consumer has relating to a certain country are based on the reputation and the awareness of that country in their mind.

Keller (1993) specifies that brand awareness includes the concepts of brand recall (spontaneous) and recognition (aided).

Several authors state that brand awareness accounts for the most determining factor of consumer decision-making (see e.g. Webster, 2000; Boo et al., 2009). Brand awareness is equally an important antecedent to the perceived value of brands (Webster, 2000).

The field of place and destination marketing (as well as several place marketing approaches) accepts image as an integral part of brand equity (Konecnik – Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009). Authors generally accept that there is a positive relationship between image and perceived value (Tsai, 2005; Boo et al., 2009), and that image equally affects consumer loyalty (Cretu – Brodie, 2007, in: Boo et al., 2009).

As the image can have an influence on associations and loyalty as well, it can be assumed that the same occurs relating to countries, therefore country associations have impact on country loyalty. It can be justified by the associative network memory model of Anderson (1990, 1990) and one can state that according to findings associations can have a central role in equity constructs.

It can also be said that some authors consider country image to be a moderating factor of country equity, while others (e.g. Pappu – Quester, 2010) as a dimension of country equity. Therefore the question whether country image is an independent variable or a part of country equity is still subject to debate. Kleppe, Iversen and Stensaker (2002, p.

63.) state that country equity can be considered a part of country image, on the other hand According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006, p. 63.) szerint country equity is made up of the following dimensions: country awareness and country image (itself originating from country-of-origin effects and country associations). In their understanding, country equity is *not part* of country image, *rather its effect* which originates from consumers' evaluation. The hypothesis is equally aimed to test this relationship between country image and country equity.

### **9.2.3.3. Hypotheses: Effects of country image and country equity on behavior**

The relationship according to which country evaluation affects consumer behavior has been proved many times in the literature – even though more in connection with country-of-origin effects and product choice (see e.g. Hooley et.al, 1988; Heslop et.al., 1998; Berács – Gyulavári, 1999; Berács – Malota, 2000; Malota, 2003; Jaffe-Nebenzahl, 2006) and less in connection with country image. According to the common literature of country image and destination evaluation, *the overall evaluation and image of a country has a significant effect on its touristic evaluation and on tourism-related consumer behavior. behavior* (see e.g. Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978; Baloglu – McCleary, 1999; Tapachai – Waryszak, 2000; Pike – Ryan, 2004; Nadeau et.al., 2008; Elliot et.al. 2011)

It is not clear, however, whether *the value of country image affects further behavioral factors* or whether this effect manifests itself directly or indirectly in the context of a given choice. At the same time, there seems to be no study in the literature that would jointly examine the fields of country equity and destination evaluation.

The extension of these relationships beyond product choice appears in several approaches. The increasing influence of country image and country brand can be considered an effect of globalization. At the same time these fields increasingly become a center of attention along the development of the field of science. The formulation of the hypotheses is equally justified by the growing importance and the broadening of country branding approaches.

### **H6 Elements of country equity have a positive influence on destination evaluation.**

Our literature review showed that country image can have a relevant effect to the area of destination management in two main fields: first, in connection with *destination evaluation* and second, with that of *destination choice*. However, it can be noted that these areas so far have only been studied at a theoretical level and only a few studies provided empirical evidence to test them. For this reason, a part of these relationships and mechanisms of action are not yet tested or are still unexplored. (Roth – Diamantopoulos – Montesinos, 2008)

**H6a Country image has a positive influence on destination evaluation.**

In a *theoretical perspective*, Kotler and Gertner (2002) state that *image is a key element to information processing* as it leads to a knowledge structure and can equally play an indirect role in decision making. As a result, most authors studying tourist decision making consider image as a factor of information processing that might influence destination evaluation (Nadeau et.al., 2008).

In *practice*, Ross (1993a), Weber (1997), Kozak (2001), Yuksel (2001), and Weaver, Weber and McCleary (2007) among others studied the importance of destination evaluation, and numerous other authors the effects thereof for example on the desire to return or on loyalty.

Based on the above, one can formulate the assumption that country image positively impacts destination evaluation, and beyond country image, certain elements of country equity equally impact the relationship.

**H6b Country loyalty has a positive influence on destination evaluation.**

Aaker (1991, p. 39) defines brand loyalty as “the attachment that a customer has to a brand”. In his model, loyalty is considered a key factor in the concept of brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996b).

According to Paswan et.al. (2003), country loyalty is a manifestation of the loyalty of consumers to a country, with an effect mechanism similar to traditional brands. According to the literature, loyalty can on one hand be considered as an association or on the other, as a behavior (Aaker, 1991; Oliver, 1997, in: Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 280.).

One can equally conclude that loyalty equally has a distinguished role in the fields of place marketing and destination marketing and it is a commonly studied element in these fields (see e.g. Oppermann, 2000; Baloglu, 2001, 2002; Konecnik – Gartner, 2007; Boo et.al., 2009) in connection with destination evaluation and destination choice.

According to the literature, loyalty is, in general, an attitude or behavior, even though, according to the different studies, the concept and its operationalization still lack of clarity (Boo. et.al., 2009).

According to this, it can be relevant to explore the connection between country loyalty and the evaluation of a destination.

**H6c Country associations positively affect destination evaluation.**

Kotler and Gertner (2002) state that *image is a key element to information processing* as it leads to a knowledge structure and can equally play an indirect role in decision making. As a result, most authors studying tourist decision making consider image as a factor of information processing that might influence destination evaluation (Nadeau

et.al., 2008). Several authors state that country image is the sum of associations relating to a certain country. Aaker's (1991) model refers to image as "associations". In the authors' interpretation, brand association is "anything linked in memory to a brand" and brand image is "a set of associations, usually in some meaningful way" (Aaker, 1991, p. 109.).

The present dissertation treats country image and country associations as two separate concepts (see the related H5 hypothesis). Therefore the assumption that beyond country image, country associations equally affect destination evaluation might be a reasonable theoretical extension. Hence one can hypothesize that the general image of people about a country affects the spontaneous associations that emerge, and that these associations (similarly to country image) affect destination evaluation. There is no thorough analysis of this area in the literature, the result of the test of this hypothesis might however be a logical conclusion and improvement of theory related to the field of study.

#### **9.2.4. Attributes of the model variables**

The following chapter presents the attributes and sources of the variables to be included in our research model.

As seen in our literature review, *the present research area is hardly characterized by a usage of proven and tested structural models*. Apart from a few examples, there is still room for improvement as for the area's methodological foundations. Moreover, *the current dynamics of the research field can be characterized by the joint study and inclusion into common models of various variables and of their indicators*. Following this latter principle, *the present research model combines in a model the dimensions of country image, country equity and destination evaluation, thus creating a concept that is unique and combines the contexts of the three research areas in a hitherto unprecedented way*.

Measurement of the *dimensions of country image* was carried out using the variables of the Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) scale presented beforehand. Additional scale items were equally developed. 5 main country image dimensions were included into the model with 1 further sub-dimension that were tested in the same time with the test of the research model.

The application of the 'environment' sub-dimension is justified by the speciality of the research topic (destination context) and also the destination evaluation model has some items on environmental topics. It is important to note that in the present model country image and people image are separate, individual elements of the construct.

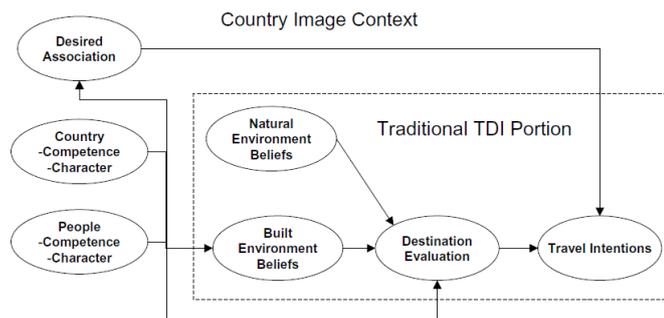
The variables and dimensions of *country equity* based on Pappu and Quester's (2010) model, equally presented beforehand. Variables developed and tested during our scale test were equally included. It is important to emphasize that the results of the Pappu – Quester (2010) scale test have been applied in an overall image level of meaning (not relating to product evaluations and attributes) and therefore the 'image' element refers to

a general country image, not to a product-country image domain. In the present model country equity is the equity of the country brand and country image is an element and not an antecedent of the country equity construct.

The destination rating variable was not tested in the preceding research phases. It was therefore adopted from a model that first linked destination rating theory with the area of country image, and therefore served as a relevant approach for the present research. Nadeau et al. (2008) led by the recognition that destination evaluation was not independent from the general evaluation of countries examined the two areas in a complex model. (see Figure 24) The benefit of the application of this model is the possibility of referring those factors that were explored by open-ended question and expert interviews beforehand (e.g. pollution, public safety). The items of the scale designed by the authors heavily rely on the scales by Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) and Martin-Eroglu (1993), already tested in the present dissertation and therefore it will not be necessary to validate them once again in the present research phase.

**Figure 24.**

The model by Nadeau et.al. (2008)



Source: Nadeau et.al., 2008, p. 92.

According to the above, the variables used in the model are as follows:

*Country image* within country equity models is described as “the total of all descriptive, inferential, and informational beliefs about a particular country”.(Martin – Eroglu, 1993, p. 193.) Pappu and Quester (2010) in their model use the same approach.

“Publications generally embrace [country image’s] multidimensional nature [...]. The cognitive, affective/evaluative, and conative phases of attitude formation are represented through the beliefs about a country and its products (cognitive), the feelings towards it and its products (affective), and behavioral intentions to purchase its products [...] (conative)” (Nadeau et.al., 2008, p. 87.). Studies on country image found a direct relationship between country evaluation and the evaluation of its inhabitants several times. Therefore Nadeau et.al. (2008) in their study examine country character and people character as two separate entities.

“[P]eople-beliefs may be best represented using two groups: character and competency beliefs” (Nadeau et.al., 2008, p. 88.)

According to Pappu and Quester (2010, p. 278.), “country awareness, country associations, perceived quality and country loyalty are the four dimensions of country equity”. In our research the perceived quality item has been eliminated according to its product-level focus as the research model was developed on general level of attributes.

*Country awareness* not only means that consumers are merely aware of a country, but their “ability to recognize or recall that the country is a producer of certain product category” (Pappu – Quester, 2010, p. 280.)

In connection with *country loyalty*, Paswan et al. (2003) state that similarly to brand loyalty, one can formulate a loyalty towards countries. In their study, Pappu and Quester (2010, p. 280.) based on the definition by Yoo and Donthu (2001, p. 3.) define country loyalty as “the tendency to be loyal to a focal country as demonstrated by the intention to buy products from the country as a primary choice”. In our research we transformed the item to a general meaning of country brand loyalty, instead of loyalty in connection with products. developed item in the scale, based on the original one by Pappu – Quester, 2010)

According to Keller (1993), a relevant approach to *country associations* is the general view that consumers’ brand associations contribute to a brand’s equity. In their adaptation of this view, Pappu and Quester (2010, p. 280.) state that “country equity benefits from consumers’ country-of-origin related associations” and define “country-of-origin associations’ as descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one holds in memory about a particular country” In our understanding the country associations are in connection with countries instead of products or brand (developed item in the scale, based on the original one by Pappu – Quester, 2010)

In connection with *destination evaluation*, Nadeau et.al. (2008, p. 86.) state that “the image of a place influences touristic decisions” (see also: Hunt, 1975; Baloglu – McCleary, 1999; Tapachai – Waryszak, 2000). In their view, destination evaluation comprises destination attributes as well as evaluations of personal experience or satisfaction. (Nadeau et.al., 2008)

*Moderating effects* include individual and country-specific elements.

*Individual elements* include the attributes tested in the previous chapters, like income situation, gender or self-confidence.

*The country-related elements* include country size and its perceived distance

We assumed positive relations among the items of the model, with one exception of perceived distance of country.

### 9.3. Confirmatory research: the test of Country Equity Model (CEM)

#### 9.3.1. Questionnaire of the research

The questionnaire structure featured the well-known blocks from the literature during the quantitative part of the third research phase.

1<sup>st</sup> block: open-ended questions on the evaluation of countries and their inhabitants, exploring spontaneous associations on countries and their inhabitants

2<sup>nd</sup> block: measurement scales to study the dimensions of country image; country equity and influencing factors and unveil further relationships between them. The theoretical model included both unidimensional and multidimensional constructs and therefore it became necessary to use various scales (Papadopoulos, 1990,1993; Nadeau et.al., 2008; Pappu-Quester, 2010) in the questionnaire. Moreover, the exploration and identification of the dimensions was not possible with only one scale, therefore emerged the necessity for the scales' joint use.

3<sup>rd</sup> block: moderating effects' scales, indicators; for the study to study further influencing (individual and country) factors.

4<sup>th</sup> block: respondents' demographic attributes.

Table 38 shows the characteristics and sources of the variables used in the questionnaire of the third research phase.

**Table 38.**

Characteristics and sources of the variables used in the questionnaire of the third research phase

Variable	Source	No. of items, scale type
<b>Country image</b>	Nadeau et.al. (2008) / originally: Papadopoluos (1990, 1993) and Martin – Eroglu (1993)/	10 items, 7-point Likert
<b>People image</b>	Nadeau et.al. (2008) /originally: Papadopoluos (1990, 1993) and Martin – Eroglu (1993)/	10 items, 7-point Likert
<b>Country awareness</b>	Own scale / based on Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) and Pappu – Quester (2010)/	6 items, 7-point Likert
<b>Country associations</b>	Pappu – Quester (2010)	3 items, 7-point Likert
<b>Country loyalty</b>	Pappu – Quester (2010)	4 items, 7-point Likert
<b>Destination evaluation</b>	Nadeau et.al. (2008)	6 items, 7-point Likert
<b>Country image dimensions</b>	Own scale /based on Papadopoulos (1990, 1993) and Martin – Eroglu (1993)/	6+5 items, 7-point Likert

Source: own elaboration, 2011

According to the recommendations of literature it is appropriate to test and validate a model on sub-samples of a research sample or in parallel on two or more different samples. (Diamantopoulos, 2010) Based on our observations in the earlier stages of our research on responding behavior, the *questionnaire included an identical pool of questions for two countries*: beyond Germany, that had been proved to be adequately measurable, the control group responses were about Croatia. (We use the name of “control sample” for the second sample, during the further analysis)

Our final country choice was preceded by an expert validation. Germany already proved to be a country with adequate attributes to be measured in the present research. A preliminary task was to find another country –, for the parallel evaluation by respondents –, that shows marked differences in terms of touristic attributes and holds out a promise to high response rates as well. Based on KSH’s (Hungarian Central Statistical Office) Annual Travelling Habits Report, Croatia was chosen (Croatia belonged in 2010 to the 10 most visited countries by Hungarian tourists). The choice was expert validated by Ms. Emőke Halassy, Director of Research at Magyar Turizmus Zrt. (Hungarian Tourism PLC.).

The questionnaire was subject to a pilot test in order to reveal potential problems preventing the filling out of the questionnaire or of comprehension. The pilot query was conducted in October-November 2011. among third-year students of the Corvinus University of Budapest. (Appendix 5 includes the final questionnaire)

### **9.3.2. Sample**

The research model was tested on the 18-69 year old Hungarian internet-user population who declared going abroad at least once a year and self-declared having effectively been abroad in the previous year.

Sampling was carried out using a quota sampling method using a distribution list. The study is representative to the population along five design weight criteria (age, gender, income, place of residence, education). The sample size was 600. Data collection was carried out by NRC between December 9 and 19. 2011. For sampling matters, NRC had recourse to its own online access panel containing more than 140,000 members recruited either online or offline.

For methodological considerations (i.e. differences in sample sizes might considerably distort the robustness of the statistical tests used during the comparison of results), the control group size matched the test size.

In addition, it can be stated that the sample size of 600 respondents fulfills the sample size requirements for the use of a structural modeling method (Klarmann, 2011).

49,1 percent of respondents are male, 50,9 percent are female in the sample. The mean age is 42,3 years, (16,2 percent – under age 29; 28 percent – age 30-39; 24,1 percent – age 40-49; 31,7 percent – above age 50).

24,4 percent of respondents are from Budapest, 52,8 percent are from towns in the country-side, 22,8 percent are from villages.

According to education: 30,3 percent of respondents took elementary level, 37,2 percent graduated at secondary level and 32,5 percent have Ba/Ma/PhD level.

In order to examine the relationships found in the literature, respondents could evaluate the financial status of their respective families and the level of their self-confidence on a 5-point scale, i.e. whether, in their opinion, their family revenue is well below average, below average, average, above average or well above average, evaluating to the mean of 2,92 by income and 3,11 by self-confidence. 55,7 percent of respondents speak at least one foreign language, 44,3 percent of them can't speak any of languages.

Respondents travel abroad orderly 2,26 times per a year, 49 percent of the sample do it 1-2 times a year, 34,5 percent of respondents don't travel at all.

78,7 percent of respondents have never been living abroad for a longer period of time (at least 3 months), while 21,3 percent of them did so. 58,2 percent of the latter have been living abroad one times in their life, 16,4 percent of them did so twice in their life. (mean: 2,59, mean of period of time: 34,49 months).

### **9.3.3. Query methodology**

There are a number of recommendations in the recent literature on the applicability and adequacy of online queries. In the present case, an online query can be justified by the specificity of the topic (and its international character), the necessity of sample availability while time and cost factors had equally to be taken into account.

Moreover, the simultaneous evaluation of the countries was made necessary by the nature of the study, i.e. for the evaluation not to be related to a specific country (which would distort content validity) but for it to be general, without any country specificity. However this criterion was only possible using a computer-aided query – of which only an online query was conceivable considering the given constraints.

Another advantage of online surveys is the possibility to make given fields of the questionnaire necessary to be answered and therefore avoid the possibility of missing values, which often tends to complicate structural analysis.

### **9.3.4. Data analysis and evaluation of the results**

Data collection, input and data purification were followed by the statistical analysis of the questionnaire, using SPSS 18.0 software. The main purpose of data analysis was to analyze the relationships of the theoretical model. For this latter an algorithm providing causal analytic possibilities was required. A structural analysis methodology was used in AMOS 18.0 software

Most authors recommend the use of PLS for exploratory model testing studies such as the present one. An advantage of PLS is that it does not require a large sample size and thus provides good results in studies with relatively limited sample sizes (Klarmann,

2011). A flaw of PLS however is the fact that one is unable to generate a model fit value with it, which would give an evaluation of the overall goodness and fit of the model. In contrast, Amos is an excellent solution for confirmatory analyses and characterization studies of well-known and tested models, even though it has more considerable requirements in terms of sample size (Klarman, 2011). Weighing the above mentioned flaws and advantages and considering the fact that our model contains both already confirmed and not yet validated constructs, we opted for the use of Amos software, for its attribute to provide indexes for the testing of the goodness of fit and usability of the model. Moreover, the final sample size (N=600) plays equally in favor of using Amos software. The final analysis was preceded by an expert validation, methodological issues concerning the final research model were consulted with Prof. Marting Klarman (University of Passau, Germany).

During the analysis, models were first tested separately (on both base and control groups), followed by a parallel comparison of the results.

Before formulating the conclusions, we proceeded to validity and reliability analyses (where the specific indicators depend on the used algorithm). Given that the reliability and validity criteria were fulfilled, the obtained results may be generalized.

### **9.3.5. Analysis of the structural model**

The doctoral research was based on test of a structural model. According to Gefen et.al. (2000, p. 6.) „structural equation modelling (SEM) has become de rigueur in validating instruments and testing linkages between constructs”.

The literature distinguishes two types of structural equation modeling (SEM): methods based on covariance (e.g. LISREL) on one hand, and methods based on variance, on the other (e.g. Partial Least Squares, PLS, that was employed in the earlier stages of the research). Path analysis is equally a determining element of SEM methods. In addition, according to the direction of a relationship (i.e. the orientation of a casual relationship between indicators, variables and latent variables) one can distinguish between formative and reflective models. In the case of reflective models, the casual relationship derives from the latent variable towards the different indicators (measured variables), i.e. the measured variables reflect the changes that occur at the level of the latent variable (Henseler et al., 2009).

The present doctoral research presents and analyzes a model where variables form a reflective model, while country image dimensions append to the structure as a formative construct. In case of the formative construct, a correlation of the indicators is not required, even though they ought to cover the entirety of the relevant aspects of the construct (Diamantopoulos – Winklhofer, 2001) in order for the measurement error to manifest itself at the level of the construct as a whole and that the variance not be explained by the indicators but by elements exogenous to the construct

(Diamantopoulos, 2001)

Formative models can append to a reflective construct in two basic ways in structural analyses based on covariance: (1) based on the so-called MIMIC-model, or (2) based on the MacCallum – Browne (1993) – model (Klarmann, 2011, pp. 117-118.). In the present study, formative constructs are linked through the MIMIC-model, i.e. as a formative dimension to each reflective latent variable.

Hereinafter we proceed to a presentation of the results of reflective model used in our doctoral research. The main aim of the research was to test a primarily theoretical model, i.e. to test a new model (Country Equity Model, CEM) and unveil new relationships while using latent variables and measurement scales adapted from the literature and previous studies.

According to the literature, it is necessary to equally address reliability and validity for reflective measurement models, while in the case of formative models, there do not exist any generally applicable indicators.

#### **9.3.5.1. Tests of reliability**

Reliability is generally assessed through an analysis of *internal consistency* for which Cronbach's alpha index is a widely accepted indicator. The indicator offers reliability estimates as the average value of the correlation coefficients computed from all possible two-way split of each scale item (Cronbach, 1951; Sajtos – Mitev, 2008). This shows to what extent the items forming the scale are consistent with the construct they supposed to measure. At the same time, Cronbach's alpha sensitively shows higher values at larger number of scale items (Malhotra, 2006). A further weakness of the indicator is to often under- or overestimate the degree of consistency of the latent variable (Graham, 2006). For this reason, the literature – in order to eliminate the weaknesses – recommends the use of the CR (composite reliability) indicator (see e.g. Graham, 2006; Hair et.al., 2010) CR is the calculated value of the standardized factor loadings of the indicators related to each latent variable and of the measurement error (Nyiró, 2011).

CR takes into account the different weights of indicators in the model. At the same time, its interpretation is similar to that of Chronbach's alpha index, i.e. it is acceptable above a 0.7 score (though a several sources put this threshold value at 0.6 [see e.g. Malhotra, 2006]. In the present doctoral research, a 0.7 value is considered adequate, following Hair et.al. (2010).

According to literature, in the case of structural models, a separate analysis of reliability for each indicator is also required. In this case, the value of the factor loading between the latent variable and the manifest variables, indicators should be at least 0.7 (Henseler et.al., 2009). In addition, there exists a minimum factor weight (0.4). In case this criterion value is not met, the given indicator ought to be excluded from the model (Klarmann, 2011). At the same time, Henseler et.al. (2009) draw attention to the fact that the exclusion of indicators from a model might also throw off the models' entire

balance and therefore only recommends it when the measured variable has a low reliability and CR value significantly improves after the removal. (see e.g. Klarmann, 2011)

### **9.3.5.2. Tests of validity**

Beyond reliability, one also has to test the validity of the designed scale. Validity can be of three sorts: content validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity. In the case of a SEM methodology, it is necessary to address convergent and discriminant validity (Henseler et.al., 2009; Klarmann, 2011), However, a test of content validity will also be presented in the following subsections.

Content validity is a subjective but systematic evaluation reflecting how much the content of scale items is able to represent the measurement object. (Malhotra, 2008). For this reason, content validity greatly relies on the researcher's competence and is therefore also often referred to as expert validity. In the present study, all the preliminary research phases and the content analysis of the literature were intended to cover all segments of the topic the inclusion of which to the model is essential.

In addition the expert validation, the scale test and the pilot query, and the subsequent modifications and model development all were aimed to increase the scale's content validity.

Convergent validity is the extent of positive correlation among the measurement results of the scale on the topic and other types of measurement results of the given topic. (Malhotra, 2008) This is partly represented by Chronbach's alpha index, and in case of SEM models, the AVE (average variance extracted) index. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend a threshold value of 0.5 as a minimum convergent validity, which shows whether the latent variable is adequate to explain half of the indicators' variance. Discriminant validity signifies that provides a proof that the scale is not correlating with other latent variables from which it would be different (Malhotra, 2008) Given that the measure of discriminant validity is a complementary approach to convergent validity, in the case of SEM models it is recommended to use, beyond the Fornell – Larcker index. The crossloadings criterium is "if an indicator has a higher correlation with another latent variable than with its respective latent variable, the appropriateness of the model should be reconsidered" (Henseler et al., 2009, p. 300). Although the Fornell– Larcker criterion assesses discriminant validity on the construct level, the cross-loadings allow this kind of evaluation on the indicator level.

Among the above indexes, the first four (Cronbach's alpha, CR, factor loading, AVE) are the most common in the case of SEM studies(Hair et.al., 2010). However we will address all aforementioned criteria in the present doctoral study.

### 9.3.6. Tests of validity and reliability of the structural model

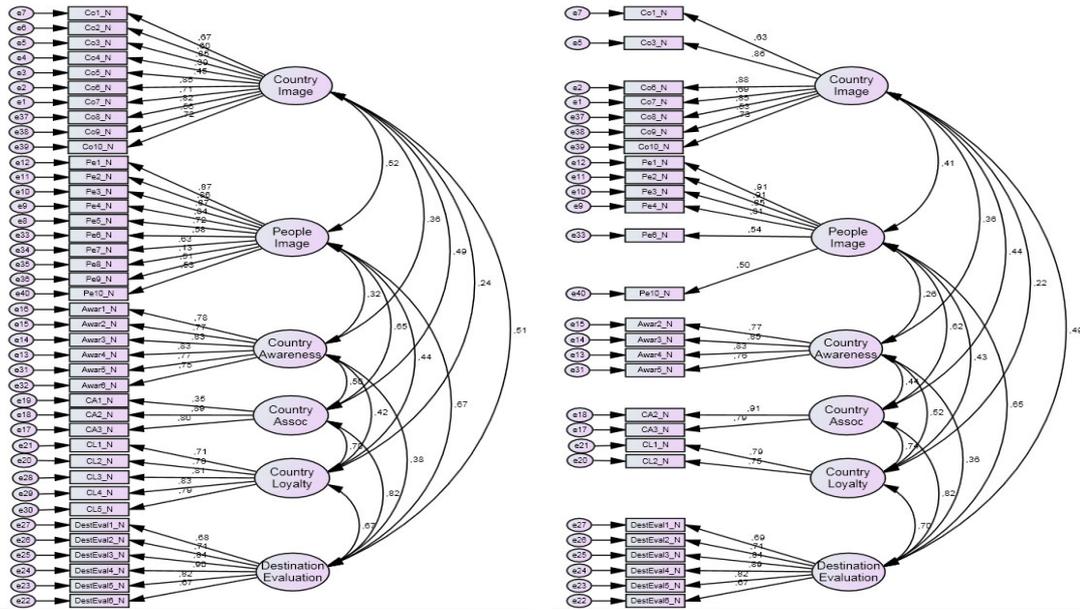
In order to test the model and its reliability and validity, a confirmatory factor analysis was first conducted in AMOS 18.0 software. Indicators with factor loadings under 0.5 (following the recommendations from the literature) were excluded from the model in order to gain higher validity.

The consistent exclusion of these variables was made more difficult by the fact that a *control group was present*, i.e. beyond the original model built up from data concerning Germany, another model on Croatia was equally studied. In order for the results to be comparable thereafter, the *aim was to design an identical model for the two groups*. While the exclusion of the same pool of indicators was necessary for those under the 0.5 threshold index value in both models, a different set of indicators above 0.5 seemed justified to be excluded for the two models. This, however, would have led to differing models and limited comparability. For this reason, all indicators with factor loadings exceeding 0.5 were kept in the models leading to models with a similar composition, even though with somewhat differing factor loadings. According to Klarmann's (2011) approach, the above procedure does not impair the models' validity as during the assessment of the models, a minimum factor loading value of 0.4 is in order. If this value is not met, the indicator ought to be excluded from the model while above this value it can be kept in the model. At the same time, Henseler et.al. (2009) note that by excluding indicators, the balance of the models is affected. Therefore, they recommend doing so in case the CR index is considerably improved. In light of these considerations, models with an identical structure were kept, although in some cases containing indicators with factor loadings that do not reach the 0.7 threshold value recommended by Henseler et.al. (2009).

Figures 25-26 shows the initial and final confirmatory factor analyses of the variables and their indicators. 27 indicators of 6 latent variables are present in the model. Appendix X. gives a detailed overview of the latent variables and indicators that were removed from the model and the correlation matrixes of the indicators which show that latent factors with a larger number of indicators have an adequate discriminant validity as indicators pertaining to the same latent variable do correlate more with each other than with the indicator of any other latent variable.

Figure 25.

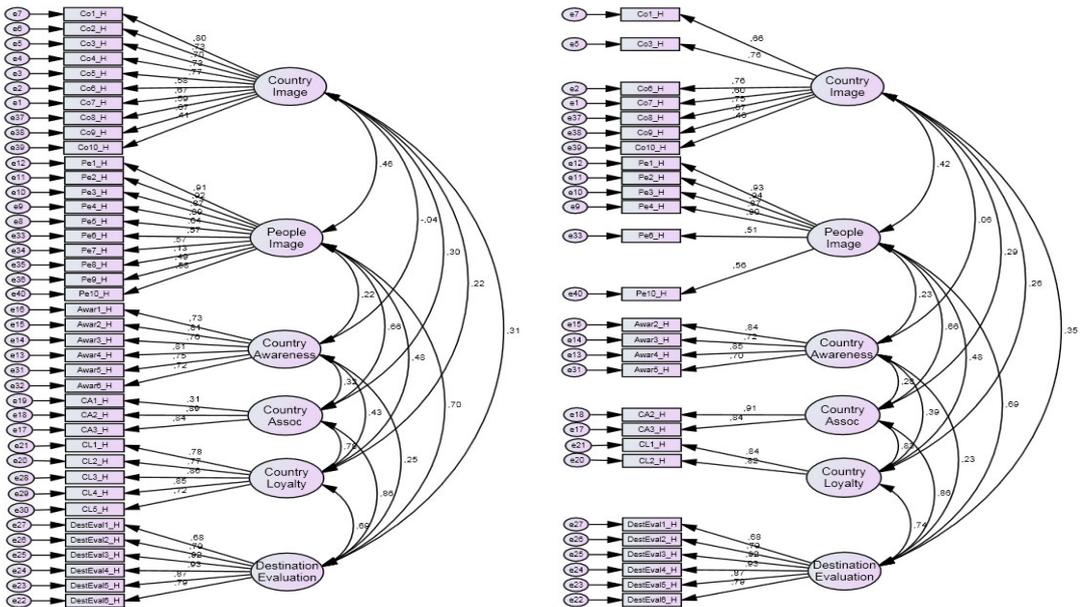
Confirmatory factor analysis of the variables and indicators (Germany)



Source: own elaboration, 2011

Figure 26.

Confirmatory factor analysis of the variables and indicators (Croatia)



Source: own elaboration, 2011

The different indicators of fit of the confirmatory factor model for the German sample are as follows: CMIN=810.471; df=309;  $p < 0.000$ ; CMIN/df=2.623; GFI=0.861; TLI=0.971; CFI=0.930; PCFI=0.819; NFI=0.899; RMSEA=0.060; PCLOSE=0.000; HOELTER0.5=178; HOELTER0.1=188. For the control sample (Croatian sample): CMIN=871.897; df=309;  $p < 0.000$ ; CMIN/df=2.822; GFI=0.880; TLI=0.937; CFI=0.946; PCFI=0.817; NFI=0.915; RMSEA=0.061; PCLOSE=0.001; HOELTER0.5=186; HOELTER0.1=197.

Table 39. shows the results of the reliability and validity tests.

**Table 39.**  
Results of the confirmatory factor analysis and the tests of reliability and validity

Variable/indicator	GERMANY				CROATIA			
	Factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha	Factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha
	>0,5 (min. 0,4)	>0,7	>0,5	>0,7	>0,5 (min. 0,4)	>0,7	>0,5	>0,7
<b>Country image</b>		<b>0,99</b>	<b>0,94</b>	<b>0,882</b>		<b>0,95</b>	<b>0,74</b>	<b>0,843</b>
Co1	0,63				0,66			
Co3	0,87				0,76			
Co6	0,88				0,78			
Co7	0,69				0,80			
Co8	0,85				0,75			
Co9	0,53				0,57			
Co10	0,73				0,48			
<b>People image</b>		<b>0,98</b>	<b>0,91</b>	<b>0,902</b>		<b>0,98</b>	<b>0,90</b>	<b>0,899</b>
Pe1	0,91				0,93			
Pe2	0,91				0,94			
Pe3	0,85				0,87			
Pe4	0,81				0,90			
Pe6	0,54				0,51			
Pe10	0,50				0,58			
<b>Country assoc.</b>		<b>0,96</b>	<b>0,93</b>	<b>0,831</b>		<b>0,97</b>	<b>0,94</b>	<b>0,862</b>
CA2	0,91				0,91			
CA3	0,79				0,84			
<b>Country awareness</b>		<b>0,98</b>	<b>0,92</b>	<b>0,884</b>		<b>0,96</b>	<b>0,88</b>	<b>0,865</b>
Awar2	0,77				0,84			
Awar3	0,90				0,72			
Awar4	0,83				0,85			
Awar5	0,77				0,70			
<b>Country loyalty</b>		<b>0,89</b>	<b>0,81</b>	<b>0,764</b>		<b>0,93</b>	<b>0,87</b>	<b>0,808</b>
CL1	0,80				0,84			
CL2	0,75				0,82			
<b>Dest. eval.</b>		<b>0,98</b>	<b>0,92</b>	<b>0,904</b>		<b>0,99</b>	<b>0,94</b>	<b>0,928</b>
DestEval1	0,69				0,88			
DestEval2	0,71				0,79			
DestEval3	0,84				0,82			
DestEval4	0,89				0,93			
DestEval5	0,82				0,87			
DestEval6	0,68				0,79			

Source: own elaboration, 2011

After data analysis, one can affirm that all indicators fit the given requirements. Factor loadings exceed 0.7 in all cases, and both CR and AVE indicators of each latent variable fulfil their respective threshold values. In case of each variable and indicators, all four determining indicators meet the required values. All measured variables comply with the crossloading criterion and the expected Fornell-Larcker criterion is met. At the same

time, as – according to the crossloadings – the correlation of each indicator is in every case superior towards their own latent variable, and all variables meet every further criteria, all variables and indicators were accepted.

### 9.3.7. Results of the test of structural model

The literature recommends the joint study of several indicators of fit beyond the chi-square test and the degrees of freedom to establish the goodness of structural models: (1) an absolute index of fit (GFI, RMSEA or SRMR), (2) an incremental index of fit (CFI, TLI), (3) a goodness of fit index (CFI, TLI, GFI) and (4) a badness of fit index (RMSEA, SRMR). (Klarmann, 2011) There is, however, not one, general index that clearly distinguishes a bad model from a good model. At the same time, one has to consider that model attributes greatly affect its goodness of fit (e.g. sample size, the model's complexity [number of indicators, variables]) (Klarmann, 2011). Various sources note that a threshold value of 0.95 is not reasonable for complex models and greater sample sizes (see e.g. Hair et al., 2010; Klarmann, 2011). There are special threshold values for models with sample sizes exceeding 250 and working with 12 to 30 measurement variables as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). The present research model is using 27 variables with a sample size of 600, thus Hair et al.'s (2010) recommendations will be taken into account when establishing the goodness of fit of the model.

After a normality test, we accepted the wide-spread assumption in social sciences, that in case of an adequately large sample (in our case,  $N=600$ ), data is sufficiently robust and a normal distribution thereof can be assumed. According to Diamantopoulos (2010) in the case of big sample sizes it is appropriate to ensure quasi normality. Moreover, because of the specificity of the query, no missing data was found in the database.

The indicators of fit of the model are presented in the following table.

**Table 40.**  
Indicators of fit of the model

MUTATÓ	NÉMETORSZÁG	HORVÁTORSZÁG
<b>CMIN/df</b> ( $\leq 3$ )	2,466	2,497
<b>NFI</b> ( $\geq 0,90$ )	0,910	0,905
<b>CFI</b> ( $\geq 0,90$ )	0,919	0,913
<b>RMSEA</b> ( $\leq 0,06$ )	0,059	0,060

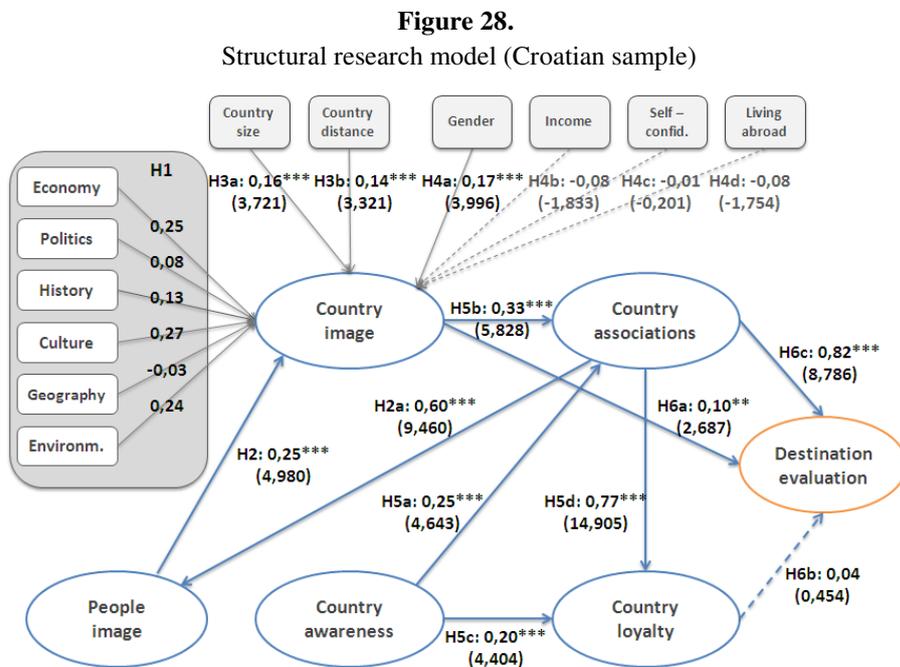
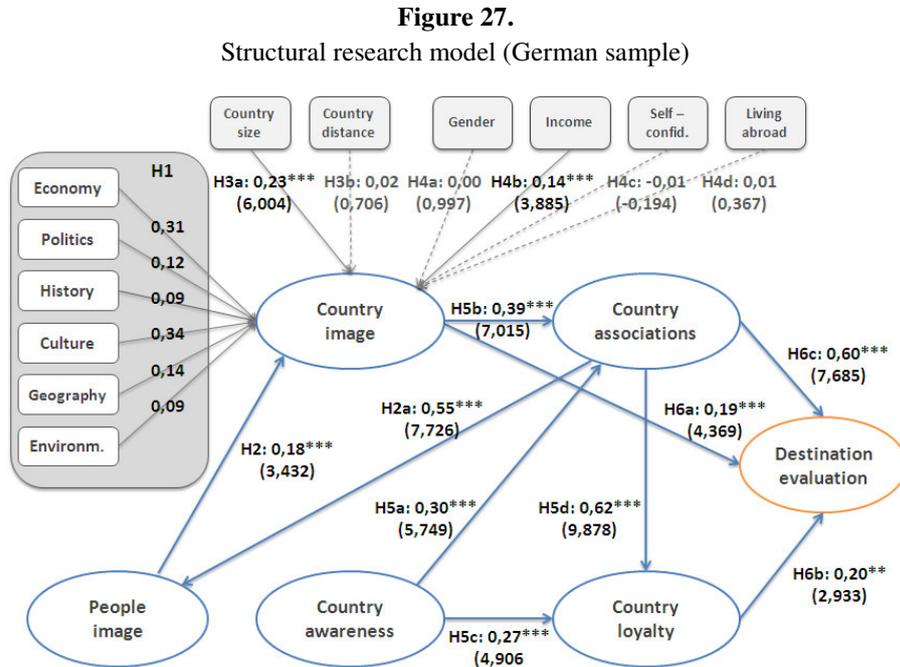
Source: own elaboration, 2012 /based on Klarmann, 2011 /

Based on the analyses, one can affirm that the indicators and variables meet all prior expectations. Factor loadings in each case are higher than 0.5. All latent variables meet

the expected requirement according to the CR and AVE indexes. The four fundamental indicators of the general fit of the model are equally adequate.

In summary, it can be stated that the goodness of fit of the model is adequate and therefore the model is accepted.

Figures 27-28. give a detailed overview of the structural model for both samples, including the standardized regression coefficients, the levels of significance, and t-values.



Source: own elaboration, 2012

Bold lines are indicating significant pathes ( $p < 0.05$ ), the dashed line is indicating the insignificant path  
 \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ , t values in parantheses

### 9.3.8. Results of the hypothesis and model tests

The hypotheses presented beforehand were tested, beyond the test of the research model, with various statistical methods. Table 41 gives an overview of the methods used during the tests of hypotheses.

**Table 41.**  
Method(s) used for hypothesis testing

	<b>HYPOTHESIS</b>	<b>METHOD(S) USED FOR HYPOTHESIS TESTING</b>
<b>H1</b>	The role and weight of each dimension of country image varies according to the given country.	SEM modeling, exploratory factor analysis
<b>H1a</b>	There exists a formative casual relationship between country image and its dimensions.	SEM model (MIMIC model) covariance analysis (ANCOVA)
<b>H2</b>	The evaluation of the inhabitants of a given country has a positive influence on the evaluation of the country.	SEM model
<b>H2a</b>	Country associations have a positive effect on the evaluation (image) of people.	SEM model
<b>H3</b>	Country image is influenced, beyond the uncovered dimensions, by additional factors, peculiar to the given country.	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H3a</b>	Country size has a positive effect on country image.	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H3b</b>	The relative distance of the destination country from the home country has a negative effect of the country image of the former.	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H4</b>	Country image is influenced, beyond the uncovered dimensions, by additional individual factors.	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H4a</b>	Gender influences the evaluation of a country: female have more positive views on country image.	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H4b</b>	Declared income positively influences the evaluation of a country (country image).	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H4c</b>	Declared self-esteem positively influences the evaluation of a country (country image)	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H4d</b>	Individuals' having lived abroad positively influences the evaluation of a country. (country image)	SEM model ANOVA
<b>H5</b>	Measurable factors of country equity are: country associations, country image, country awareness, country loyalty.	SEM model, confirmatory factor analysis
<b>H5a</b>	Country awareness positively influences country associations.	SEM model
<b>H5b</b>	Country image positively influences country associations.	SEM model
<b>H5c</b>	Country awareness positively influences country loyalty.	SEM model
<b>H5d</b>	Country associations positively influence country loyalty.	SEM model
<b>H6</b>	Elements of country equity have a positive influence on destination evaluation.	SEM model
<b>H6a</b>	Country image has a positive influence on destination evaluation.	SEM model
<b>H6b</b>	Country loyalty has a positive influence on destination evaluation	SEM model
<b>H6c</b>	Country associations positively affect destination evaluation.	SEM model

Source: own elaboration, 2012

Figures 21-22. present the results of the SEM analysis. According to this latter, all hypotheses were accepted along statistically significant relationships, except the hypotheses related to the distance of the destination country (H3b) among country attributes, and to the level of self-confidence (H4c) and prior foreign experience (H4d) among personal attributes.

One can equally state that another 2 hypotheses related to personal attributes (H4a, H4b) were only partly confirmed, as the 2 samples returned opposite results. For these sub-hypotheses therefore, further analysis is required.

*The joining of country image, country equity and destination evaluation models turned out to be a relevant approach and was proven. The test of the model on the control group returned almost perfectly matching results further reinforcing the validity of the research model.*

In light of the results, we can state that the role and weight of *the dimensions of country image in the evaluation thereof varies with the studied country* (H1). Moreover, the indicators make up a formative construct in relation with the variables of country image (H1a) and therefore our SEM model (MIMIC model) confirmed both hypotheses.

During the preliminary test of the model, we proceeded to a reflective integration of the indicators. This however weakened both the fit and identification of the model. Further dimensions from the literature were also included and pre-tested, these, however, did not significantly fit into the construct. At the end, only the main dimensions mentioned beforehand were included in the final structural model. During the test of this latter, the dimensions' varying level of influence was proved.

The different factor loadings are presented in the following table.

**Table 42.**

Varying factor loadings between country image and its dimensions according to the SEM model

<b>DIMENSION</b>	<b>GERMANY</b>	<b>CROATIA</b>
<b>Economy</b>	0,31	0,25
<b>Politics</b>	0,12	0,08
<b>Environment</b>	0,09	0,13
<b>Geography</b>	0,34	0,27
<b>History</b>	0,14	-0,03
<b>Culture</b>	0,09	0,24

Source: own elaboration, 2012

The listed indicators and the latent variables of country image assemble into a formative model where the indicators equally correlate with each other. All but two pairs of dimensions are significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level.

The strengths of the relationship between each dimension are included in Table 43.

**Table 43.**

Correlation between indicators in the formative country image model

			German sample	Croatian sample
Economy	↔	Politics	0,655	0,533
Politics	↔	Environment	0,434	0,561
Geography	↔	Environment	0,282	0,203
Geography	↔	History	0,506	0,136
History	↔	Culture	0,669	0,614
Geography	↔	Culture	0,540	0,262
Culture	↔	Environment	0,247	0,192
Politics	↔	Culture	0,344	0,232
Economy	↔	Culture	0,361	0,162
History	↔	Environment	0,237	0,204
Politics	↔	History	0,382	0,225
Economy	↔	History	0,392	0,171
Politics	↔	Geography	0,430	0,237
Economy	↔	Geography	0,465	0,195
Economy	↔	Environment	0,440	0,374

Source: own elaboration, 2012

Data shows that, during the evaluation of a country, the *economic and politic dimension have a strong correlation with each other, as well as the historical and cultural dimensions*. The correlations between the remaining dimensions are country-specific. The strength of correlations illustrates well the complex effect of dimensions on the latent variables of country image.

A number of authors perceive the evaluation of people as one dimension of country evaluation (and therefore that of country image) while others suggest a separate study of the two notions, with special attention to the effect of the interaction between the evaluation of people and of countries. In the present structural model, both approaches were pre-tested. According to the results, one can state that treating *the evaluation of people as a separate entity resulted in higher stability and better fit indexes in the model*.

Moreover, one can state that the evaluation of countries is positively affected by the evaluation of its inhabitants (H2: 0.18,  $t=3.432$ ; control sample: 0.25,  $t=4.980$ ). Moreover, country associations also positively affect the evaluation of people (people image). (H2a: 0.55,  $t=7.726$ ; control sample: 0.60,  $t=9.460$ )

The results of the SEM model only partly confirmed the hypothesis according to which other, *country-specific dimensions* can equally affect country image (H3).

Country size had a significant positive effect on country evaluation (H3a: 0.23,  $t=6.004$ ; control sample: 0.16,  $t=3.721$  ).

The distance of the target country has a significant negative effect on country evaluation, although in a varying degree (H3b: 0.02,  $t=0.706$  control sample: 0,14,  $t=3,321$ ).

It can be declared that country image is also affected by other, specific *individual attributes*, beyond those unveiled, however the relationships only partly confirm the related hypotheses (H4).

The structural model partly confirmed the hypothesis according to which gender has an effect on country evaluation (H4a: 0.00,  $t=0.997$ ; control sample: 0.17,  $t=3.996$ ), that is, the two samples return different results.

Results are also contradictory with regards to the supposed effect of individuals' level of income: the base sample showed a significant relationship (H4b: 0.14,  $t= 3.885$ ), while in the control sample, the relationship was negative (H4b: -0.08,  $t=-1.833$ ).

The level of self-confidence turned out to have no effect on country evaluation in neither sample (H4c: -0.01,  $t=-0.194$  ; control sample -0.01,  $t=-0.201$ )

At the same time, the hypothesis according to which a potential experience from having lived abroad could have a positive influence on country evaluation could not be unequivocally confirmed (H4d: 0.01  $t=0.367$ ; control sample: -0.08,  $t=-1.754$ ).

*Hypotheses related to country equity* were mostly confirmed, each element had a good fit in the model. Therefore, based on the fit of the model and its validity, it can be stated that the measurable elements of country equity are country association, country image, country awareness and country loyalty (H5).

It was also confirmed that country awareness has a positive effect on country associations (H5a: 0.30.  $t=5.749$ ; control sample: 0.25.  $t=4.643$ ).

Country image also positively affects country associations (H5b: 0.39.  $t=7.015$ ; control sample: 0.33,  $t=5.828$ ).

Country awareness equally has a positive effect on country loyalty (H5c: 0.27.  $t=4.906$ ; control sample: 0.20.  $t=4.404$ ).

Country associations equally have a significant positive effect on country loyalty (H5d: 0.62.  $t= 9.878$ ; control sample: 0.77.  $t= 14.905$ )

The model equally tested whether the elements of country equity (with special regards to country image) have a demonstrable effect on destination evaluation. Results show that *the dimensions of country equity positively affect destination evaluation* (H6).

It can be concluded that country image has a significant positive effect on destination evaluation (H6a: 0.19.  $t= 4.369$ ; control sample: 0.10  $t= 2.687$ ).

Country associations equally have a positive effect on destination evaluation (H6b: 0.60.  $t= 7.685$ . control sample: 0.82  $t= 8.786$ ).

In addition, country loyalty, often treated in the literature as a behavioral output, turned out to have a positive effect on destination evaluation. However, this relationship was

not confirmed to the same extent in the two samples (H6c: 0.20.  $t=2.933$ ; control sample: a weak and non-significant effect: 0.04.  $t=0.454$ ).

The direct and indirect effects between variables related to the model as a whole are presented in Table 44..

To determine the indirect effects, we used bootstrapping and a Sobel test (based on Klarmann, 2011). According to the literature, this procedure is a valid test of statistical validity of the direct and indirect effect for sample sizes over 500.

**Table 44.**

Total, direct and indirect effects between variables in both samples

Dependent variable	Independent variable	GERMANY			CROATIA		
		total effect	direct effect	indirect effect	total effect	direct effect	indirect effect
Country image	People image	<b>0.180</b>	<b>0.180</b>		<b>0.248</b>	<b>0.250</b>	-0.002
	Country associations	-0.004		-0.004	-0.059		-0.059
	Country awareness	-0.001		-0.001	-0.015		-0.015
People image	Country associations	<b>0.549</b>	<b>0.550</b>	-0.001	<b>0.586</b>	<b>0.604</b>	-0.018
	Country image	<b>0.279</b>		<b>0.279</b>	<b>0.297</b>		<b>0.297</b>
	Country awareness	<b>0.191</b>		<b>0.191</b>	<b>0.172</b>		<b>0.172</b>
Country associations	Country image	<b>0.389</b>	<b>0.390</b>	-0.001	<b>0.316</b>	<b>0.327</b>	-0.011
	Country awareness	<b>0.295</b>	<b>0.295</b>		<b>0.241</b>	<b>0.247</b>	-0.006
	People image	-0.003		-0.003	-0.035		-0.035
Country loyalty	Country awareness	<b>0.454</b>	<b>0.273</b>	<b>0.181</b>	<b>0.387</b>	<b>0.201</b>	<b>0.185</b>
	Country associations	<b>0.623</b>	<b>0.624</b>	-0.001	<b>0.751</b>	<b>0.770</b>	-0.019
	Country image	<b>0.264</b>		<b>0.264</b>	<b>0.320</b>		<b>0.320</b>
Destination evaluation	People image	-0.002		-0.002	-0.027		-0.027
	Country image	<b>0.472</b>	<b>0.182</b>	<b>0.291</b>	<b>0.461</b>	<b>0.099</b>	<b>0.362</b>
	Country associations	<b>0.747</b>	<b>0.603</b>	0.144	<b>0.809</b>	<b>0.817</b>	-0.009
	Country loyalty	<b>0.198</b>	<b>0.198</b>		0.040	0.040	
	Country awareness	<b>0.272</b>		<b>0.272</b>	<b>0.214</b>		<b>0.214</b>
	People image	-0.003		-0.003	-0.034		-0.034

values in bold are significant at the  $p < 0,01$  level

Source: own elaboration, 2012

Results show that a determining and significant indirect effect is in place between country image and people image ( $R^2=0.279$ , control sample:  $R^2=0.297$ ), and between country awareness and people image ( $R^2=0.191$ , control sample:  $R^2=0.172$ ). This confirms the view in the literature according to which country image also has an effect on people image and the amount of information an individual possesses of a given country (country awareness) determines their evaluation of the country's inhabitants. Therefore one can state that the effect of *the country awareness and the country image variables on people image is mediated by the country associations variable*.

It can also be concluded that country awareness affects country loyalty both directly and indirectly ( $R^2=0.181$ , control sample:  $R^2=0.185$  with indirect effect), that is, the amount of knowledge a person possesses of a country does determine to what they associate to in connection with the county and these associations, in turn, determine their loyalty

towards the given country. In this relationship, therefore, *the country associations variable acts as a mediator*. In the same way (through country associations) does country image influence country loyalty ( $R^2=0.264$ , control sample:  $R^2=0.320$ ).

Moreover, destination evaluation is indirectly affected by several dimensions. Beyond its direct effect, country image, through country associations as a mediating variable, has an indirect effect on destination evaluation ( $R^2=0,291$ , control sample:  $R^2=0.362$  with indirect effect)

Country awareness affects destination evaluation indirectly through the country loyalty variable ( $R^2=0,272$ , control sample:  $R^2=0,214$ ).

*Based on the above results one can state that the unveiled relationships confirm the validity of the associative network memory model in this field of research and support, at the same time, the previous results of the literature.*

### **9.3.9. Further results related to the hypotheses**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted in connection with hypothesis H1 in order to unveil the dimensions of country image. A similar approach was used than during the exploratory research phases (principal component analysis, VARIMAX rotation, study of the KMO value to determine the correlation of the variables included in the analysis). The procedures were justified by the aim to reach more stable factors through the reduction of the quantity of variables with a minimal loss of information.

Both the Pappu – Quester (2010) – scale (11 items), the items in the Nadeau et.al. (2008) – scale related to country image (10 items) as well as the own scale items (based on (Papadopoulos 1990, 1993) (12 items) were included in the analysis.

The Pappu – Quester scale alone generated 1 factor (KMO: 0.906; total variance explained: 51.74%), the Nadeau et.al. scale 2 factors (KMO: 0.881; total variance explained: 65.43%) on the German sample.

A 7-factor solution was reached with a KMO value of 0.932 and a total variance explained of 68.4% (33 items). After excluding 3 outlier variables a 6-factor solution was reached (30 items, KMO: 0.927, total variance explained: 67,4%) (Table 45).

**Table 45.**  
Factor analysis of the dimensions of country image – German sample (N=600)

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5	factor 6
Standard of living (high)	,800					
Welfare system (good)	,792					
Quality of life (good)	,783					
Wealth	,765					
Technology level (high)	,755					
Developed transportation	,689					
High quality products	,678					
Democratic country	,660					
High level of technological research	,632					
Culturally interesting	,611					
Role in world politics (great)	,609					
History (rich)	,599					
Economical stability		,720				
Developed economy		,675				
Free market system		,662				
Politically stable		,646				
Conflicts with other countries (few)		,589				
Industriousness (high)		,565				
Climate (good)			,824			
Geographical location (good)			,723			
Favourable touristic destination			,700			
Attractive natural environment			,666			
Level of corruption (low)				,839		
Level of bureaucracy (low)				,822		
Environment/pollution controls (high)				,580		
Rights and freedom				,553		
Level of pollution (low)					,677	
High labor costs					,567	
Intelligent people						,707
Friendly people						,691

Source: own elaboration, 2012

According to the above, the first factor was dubbed “Level of development, quality of life”, with a total variance explained of 40%. The second factor was named “Economy, politics”, with a variance explained of 8.8%. The third factor, “Geography and nature” has a variance explained of 6.6% while the fourth, “Democracy”, of 4.6%, and the last 2 factors, “Environment” and “People” respectively 3.7% and 3.6%.

In the following, the reliability of the scale was examined. The sample’s Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is 0.931, therefore it can be considered strongly reliable and adequate. However this result has to be treated with caution as it is known that Cronbach’s alpha is very sensitive to the number of scale items.

The validity for each factor was as follows:

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 1: 0.939

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 2: 0.860

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 3: 0.775

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of factor 4: 0.778

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of factor 5: 0.422

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of factor 6: 0.802

Results show that factor no. 5 is not a stable element of the model, neither in content, nor regarding its Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

The analysis was carried out, using the same parameters for the control sample (Croatia). 7 factors were generated with a total variance explained of 63.9% and a KMO value of 0.915 (33 items). After excluding 5 variables (28 items), a model with a variance explained of 64.1% and with a KMO value of 0.903 was reached.

The factor structure is shown in Table 46.

**Table 46**  
Factor analysis of the dimensions of country image – control sample (N=600)

Item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5	factor 6
Level of corruption (low)	,781					
Workers skill level (high)	,764					
Level of bureaucracy (low)	,763					
Rights and freedom	,736					
Availability of skilled workers	,693					
Environment/pollution controls (high)	,614					
Technology level (high)	,601					
Geographical location (good)		,843				
Climate (good)		,778				
Favourable touristic destination		,727				
Attractive natural environment		,724				
Quality of life (good)			,785			
Wealth			,750			
Standard of living (high)			,725			
Economical stability				,727		
Politically stable				,665		
Developed economy				,586		
Free market system				,576		
Conflicts with other countries (few)				,567		
High level of technological research					,673	
Level of pollution (low)					,626	
Developed transportation					,612	
High labor costs					,605	
High quality products					,528	
Friendly people						,681
History (rich)						,655
Intelligent people						,627
Culturally interesting						,607

Source: own elaboration, 2012

The first factor was dubbed "Democracy" with a total variance explained of 33.9%, the second "Geography, nature", with 10.8%. The third factor "Quality of life" explains

6.2% of the total variance, the fourth, “Economy, politics”, 5.1%, the fifth, “Level of development”, 4.2% and the sixth, dubbed “People, history, culture”, 3.8%.

In the following, the reliability of the scale was examined. The sample’s Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is 0.931, therefore it can be considered strongly reliable and adequate. However this result has to be treated with caution as it is known that Cronbach’s alpha is very sensitive to the number of scale items.

The validity for each factor was as follows:

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 1: 0.896

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 2: 0.829

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 3: 0.846

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 4: 0.779

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 5: 0.786

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of factor 6: 0.772

According to the above results, one can state that factor validity is adequate which raises the possibility for them to be used as variables in future studies.

Comparing the results of the two samples, one can state that – along a high validity score – the scale resulted in a factor structure with only small differences but identical in content. One can observe that “economy” and “politics”, “history” and culture” and “geography”, “climate” and “natural endowments” are related and are included in common factors in both samples, which fact also foreshadows the potential interactions between these variables.

*In conclusion, one can state that hypothesis H1 and the results unveiled in our SEM model were confirmed and strengthened by the results of the factor analysis.*

In the following we present an ANOVA study of the *demographic differences* (i.e. of the influencing factors) related to hypotheses H2, H3 and H4 and their subhypotheses. “The analysis of variance pertains to the explanatory models. It is an analytical method that examines the effect of one (or more) independent variable(s) on one or more dependent variable(s)” (Sajtos – Mitev, 2007, p. 164.). The use of ANOVA was justified by the variables’ measurement level and sample size. Even though the measurement level of a number of variables enabled a higher-level analytical method, this would have compromised the possibility to apply a consistent data comparison within the results.

The method calls for a normal distribution of the dependent variables and variance homogeneity. Assuming a normal distribution resulting from a large sample, we will proceed to formulating our conclusions (similarly to the general methodology followed by social sciences) based on F-tests. Homogeneity of variance will be determined using Levene’s test.

According to hypothesis H3a, country size affects its evaluation. Country size was measured in the questionnaire using the “Big country” statement to be evaluated by respondents. ANOVA performed on the German sample shows that variance is homogenous and apart from one statement (“The level of bureaucracy is low”), all relationships are significant: the larger the perceived size of the country, the higher the responses given, i.e. the more favorable its evaluation. Results confirm the accepted hypothesis.

The analysis was repeated on the control sample (Croatia) with the same results: apart from the same statement, the relationship is significant for each item. Hence *results confirm hypothesis H3a for both samples*.

H3b related to the perceived distance of a country (from the respondents home country). Perceived distance was measured in the questionnaire by the statement “The country is far from my home”.

According to the results of ANOVA conducted on the German sample, one can state that once again, variance is homogenous and apart from one statement (“The control on pollution is high”), all relationships are significant. Hence *results confirm hypothesis H3b*.

On the Croatian (control) sample, however, a significant relationship was found only in 4 cases. This result therefore does not support accepting hypothesis H3b. However, considering the fact that Croatia was specifically chosen as a control group for its difference from Germany, its distance and difference in touristic attributes might influence our results, that is, in the case of the above hypothesis, Croatia accounted for a “close” country. Nonetheless, *results suggest to reject hypothesis H3b*.

Hypothesis H4a poses that gender equally influences the evaluation of a country.

ANOVA on the German sample shows only one significant relationship and the *results therefore do not support the acceptance of hypothesis H4a*.

The control analysis on the Croatian sample, however, returned significant relationships in all but one case (“Inhabitants of the country live in welfare”). In this case therefore gender did influence respondents’ evaluation of the country, with women giving significantly more positive responses. This result, contrarily to the previous one, does *play in favor of accepting hypothesis H4a*.

Hypothesis H4b related to the influence of respondents’ level of income in their evaluation of a country. ANOVA on the German sample shows that the relationship turned out to be significant in the case of only 4 statements and the results therefore *do not support the acceptance of hypothesis H4b*.

The analysis of the control group returned significant relationships in all but 3 cases (“The quality of life is high”, “Inhabitants of the country live in welfare”, “The control on pollution is high”). The higher level of income respondents self declared, the higher they concurred with the statements and thus the more favorable their evaluation of

country image was. These results on the other hand *are in favor of accepting the hypothesis*.

According to hypothesis H4c, declared self confidence affects the evaluation of a country. ANOVA on the German sample returned significant relationships in all but 3 cases (“The level of bureaucracy is low”, “The level of corruption is low”, “The control on pollution is high”), which *supports the acceptance of the hypothesis*.

ANOVA on the Croatian sample, however, only returned 2 significant relationships and therefore *results did not support hypothesis H4c*.

Hypothesis H4d states that if the respondent has lived abroad for a longer period of time (at least 3 months), this would affect their evaluation of countries. The analysis on the first sample showed only one significant relationship and therefore *did not support hypothesis H4d*.

Analysis on the control sample returned 5 significant relationships and 5 relationships were not significant. Those who had lived abroad, did evaluate country image significantly more positively. Accordingly, the *results suggest that hypothesis H4d should be rejected*.

### **9.3.10. Test of the country equity construct**

Following the above analyses we proceeded to a finalization of the country equity construct by a confirmatory factor analysis, using Amos 18.0 software. During the confirmatory factor analysis, all indicators showed an adequate fit but the analysis of the modification indexes led to 2 modifications in order to reach an even higher fit and stability of the model. Accordingly, a relationship was allowed between two error terms (among the indicators of country image, between “has a high standard of living” and “the inhabitants of the country live in welfare”, and among the indicators of people image, between “the inhabitants of the country are nice” and “the inhabitants of the country are friendly”). This intermediary step considerably enhanced the fit of the model and led to a balanced factor structure. Results were validated on the control sample and similar results were reached. (see Figure 29.)

The main indicators of fit of the final confirmatory factor analysis are as follows:

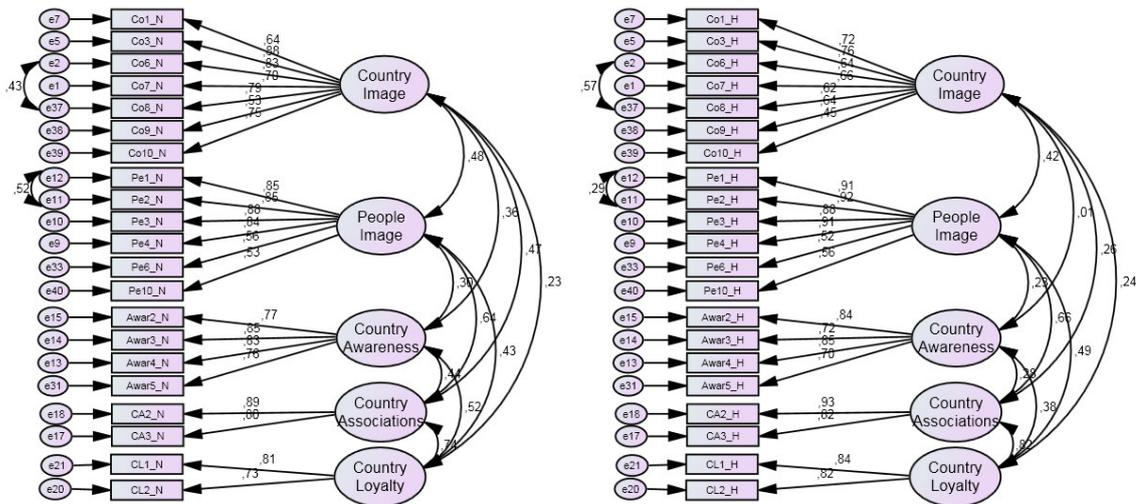
German sample: Chi-square=412.32; df=177; GFI=0.911; NFI=0.925; TLI=0.947; IFI=0.956; CFI=0.955; RMSEA=0.57; HOELTER0.05=208; HOELTER0.01=223.

Croatian (control) sample: Chi-square=507.91; df=177; GFI=0.897; NFI=0.907; TLI=0.925; IFI=0.938; CFI=0.937; RMSEA=0.60; HOELTER0.05=172; HOELTER0.01=184.

*Based on these results, it can be concluded that the model has an adequate fit and the construct is stable. The integration of country image, country associations, country awareness and country loyalty is therefore an adequate approach to modeling country equity, and the concepts combined form a stable structure.*

**Figure 29.**

Final country equity factor structure and standardized factor loadings, based on the confirmatory factor analyses (German and Croatian [control] samples)



Source: own elaboration, 2012

**9.3.11. Summary of the results**

The results of the various research approaches used during the hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 47. *Considering the results, we can state that the multi-method and multi-stage validation process brought about mostly consistent results.* In a few cases (e.g. in the cases of sub-hypotheses H3a, H4a,b,c), however, results turned out to be inconsistent and therefore another, more thorough theoretical post-study was required to eventually accept or deny these hypotheses. Following this last process, all hypotheses were accepted or rejected with the most possible certainty.

In the case of hypothesis H3b. the SEM model suggested on both samples that the hypothesis should be rejected, while the ANOVA study on the base sample indicated that the hypothesis should be accepted. Regarding the nature of the various methodologies used and that of the validation process, at the end, hypothesis H3b was rejected. At the same time, we must note that this was not due to the lack of the supposed relationship but to the opposite direction thereof within the results, compared to what was hypothesized prior to the study. This fact involves that the relationship itself was proved, even though a further validation is still needed, on a greater sample and involving more countries.

In the case of hypothesis H4a, both the SEM and ANOVA studies conducted on the base sample suggest that the hypothesis should be rejected while those conducted on the control sample suggest accepting it. In this case, we proceeded, once again, to a theoretical post-analysis and expert validation, which led to eventually rejecting the hypothesis within the present dissertation. At the same time, we must note that a with a different sample and a study including further relationships, this hypothesis might serve as a basis for further research topics.

For hypothesis H4b, once again, both a SEM and ANOVA analyses were conducted. Here, the results for the base sample verify while those on the control sample refute the hypothesis. During the post-study, we were led to reject the hypothesis, but a further validation and extension of the subject might be considered in the future.

Hypothesis H4c was only verified by the SEM modeling conducted on the base sample, while the ANOVA on the same sample and both studies on the control sample led to reject it. Considering the above, the hypothesis was eventually rejected but, once again, a further validation and extension of the subject might be considered in the future.

In the case of hypothesis H6c, the SEM model on the base sample verifies the hypothesis, while it shows no significant relationship in case of the control sample. Considering the recommendations from the literature, the hypothesis was accepted, with the comment that the results need further validation with an analysis involving the study of at least one other country.

**Table 47.**  
Summary of the result of hypothesis test

	Used method	Result (German sample)	Result (Croatian sample)
<b>H1</b>	SEM	accepted	accepted
	exploratory factor analysis	accepted	accepted
<b>H1a</b>	SEM / MIMIC model/	accepted	accepted
	ANCOVA	accepted	accepted
	confirmatory factor analysis	accepted	accepted
<b>H2</b>	SEM	accepted	accepted
<b>H2a</b>	SEM	accepted	accepted
<b>H3</b>	SEM	accepted	accepted
	ANOVA	accepted	accepted
<b>H3a</b>	SEM	accepted	accepted
	ANOVA	accepted	accepted
<b>H3b</b>	SEM	<i>rejected</i>	<i>rejected</i>
	ANOVA	accepted	<i>rejected</i>
<b>H4</b>	SEM	<i>rejected</i>	<i>rejected</i>
	ANOVA	<i>rejected</i>	<i>rejected</i>
<b>H4a</b>	SEM	<i>rejected</i>	accepted
	ANOVA	<i>rejected</i>	accepted
<b>H4b</b>	SEM	accepted	<i>rejected</i>
	ANOVA	accepted	<i>rejected</i>
<b>H4c</b>	SEM	<i>rejected</i>	<i>rejected</i>
	ANOVA	accepted	<i>rejected</i>
<b>H4d</b>	SEM	<i>rejected</i>	<i>rejected</i>
	ANOVA	<i>rejected</i>	<i>rejected</i>
<b>H5</b>	SEM	accepted	accepted
	confirmatory factor analysis	accepted	accepted
<b>H5a</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H5b</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H5c</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H5d</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H6</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H6a</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H6b</b>	SEM model	accepted	accepted
<b>H6c</b>	SEM model	accepted	partly accepted

Source: own elaboration, 2012

### 9.3.12. Further results of the study

In this chapter we present the further results of our query with special attention to the parts of the Pappu-Quester (2010) and Nadeau et al. (2008) scales related to country image, country brands and country equity.

As stated beforehand, a somewhat modified version of the Pappu-Quester (2010) scale was included into the final questionnaire. The modifications mostly involved widening the scope of the study (a general country-level approach instead of a product-specific evaluation) and developing the scale (inclusion of new items). The block of questions on the product equity based context of country equity developed previously was equally analyzed.

Based on the above, the following variables were analyzed: country awareness (country-level approach), macro country image, country loyalty (country-level approach) and overall country equity. Results are summarized in Table 48 below.

**Table 48.**  
Results of the Pappu-Quester scale (N=600)  
(on a 7-point Likert scale)

Variable	Scale item	Avg. (stdev.) German sample	Avg. (stdev.) control sample
<b>Country awareness</b>	I can recognize brand names from the country	6.08 (1.2)	4.03 (2.1)
	Some characteristics of the country come to mind quickly	4.58 (1.5)	4.07 (1.5)
<b>Macro country image</b>	The country has a high level of industrialization	6.37 (0.9)	4.60 (1.5)
	The country has a highly developed economy.	6.42 (0.9)	4.66 (1.3)
	People of the country are highly literate.	5.57 (1.4)	5.10 (1.4)
	The country has a free-market system.	6.19 (1.2)	5.24 (1.4)
	The country is a democratic country.	6.21 (1.0)	5.37 (1.4)
	The country has high level of technological research.	6.35 (1.0)	5.03 (2.2)
	Products made in the country are of very good quality.	6.27 (0.9)	5.01 (1.8)
	The country offers its people high standard of living.	6.25 (0.9)	4.43 (1.4)
	Labor costs are high in the country.	6.16 (1.4)	5.77 (2.0)
	The country has a welfare system.	6.27 (1.0)	4.58 (1.5)
	The country has a civilian non-military government.	6.42 (1.0)	5.84 (1.4)
<b>Country loyalty</b>	I consider myself loyal to the country.	4.38 (2.1)	4.58 (2.0)
	The country as a destination would be my first choice.	3.63 (1.8)	4.39 (1.8)
<b>General country equity</b>	If the country were a brand name, it would be my favourite.	4.30 (1.9)	3.98 (1.8)
	If the country were a brand name, I would be loyal to it.	4.62 (1.9)	4.26 (1.9)
	If the country were a brand name, I would pay more for it.	4.32 (2.0)	3.93 (1.8)
	I like the country.	5.15 (1.6)	5.48 (1.5)

Source:own elaboration, 2012

The Nadeau et. al. (2008) scale included items on both country image and people image (the original scale was further categorized into distinguishing competences and characteristics that altogether determine the image). Table 49 below shows the results for general country image and people image.

**Table 49.**  
Results of the Nadeau et.al. scale (N=600)  
(on a 7-point Likert scale)

Variable	Scale item	Avg. (stdev.) German sample	Avg. (stdev.) control sample
<b>Country image</b>	Workers skill level	6.11 (1.2)	5.38 (2.1)
	Availability of skilled workers	6.05 (1.3)	5.71 (1.9)
	Technology level	6.37 (0.8)	4.75 (2.1)
	Level of bureaucracy	5.92 (1.8)	5.52 (2.3)
	Level of corruption	6.08 (1.6)	5.25 (2.4)
	Quality of life	6.26 (0.9)	4.55 (1.7)
	Rights and freedom	6.36 (1.0)	5.64 (1.7)
	Wealth	6.14 (0.9)	4.55 (1.7)
	Environment/pollution controls	6.00 (1.4)	5.21 (2.1)
	Role in world politics	6.26 (1.0)	3.73 (2.2)
<b>People image</b>	Likeability	5.45 (1.6)	5.44 (1.5)
	Friendliness	5.45 (1.5)	5.49 (1.5)
	Helpful	5.67 (1.4)	5.48 (1.5)
	Courteous	5.64 (1.4)	5.40 (1.5)
	Trustworthiness	5.91 (1.3)	5.47 (1.7)
	Honest	5.78 (1.7)	5.56 (1.8)
	Work ethic	5.89 (1.3)	5.46 (1.6)
	Individualism	5.58 (1.9)	5.52 (2.0)
	Education level	5.81 (1.3)	5.16 (1.9)
	Language skills	5.80 (1.4)	5.12 (1.7)

Source:own elaboration, 2012

#### 9.4. Conclusion of the third quantitative research phase

The present research phase involved the testing of the final research model and of the research hypotheses. At the same time, the results obtained in this phase were already supported by a multi-method and multi-stage validation process and thus by the results and context of the previous research phases.

This final research phase shows a good fit of the structural model, and with an explanatory power of 80%, it was accepted. According to the results, we can state that country image, country equity and destination evaluation handled together form a relevant and justified research context. Table 50. shows a summary of the hypothesis testing. According to it, all but one of the hypotheses (with five sub-hypotheses) showed significant relationships and were therefore accepted.

*The constituting factors of the country equity model (CEM) are: country image, country associations, country loyalty and country awareness.* To test the significant relationships between the factors a Sobel test and a bootstrapping methodology were used.

During the separate study of the direct and indirect effects, a significant, determining indirect effect was found between the people image and country image, the people image and country awareness and the country image and country loyalty variables. Among these, the most important indirect effect was observed between the country image and people image and between the country awareness, country image and destination evaluation variables. That is, the effect of country awareness and country image on destination evaluation is mediated by the country associations variable. Moreover, country image equally has a significant indirect effect on people evaluation through country associations. These conclusions have a substantial role both in developing theory and practice.

The SEM model equally shows a number of other significant relationships that were not hypothesized beforehand. The study of these might define a number of potential future directions for research and extension of the field.

Among the attributes affecting the structural relationships, a number of both individual and country attributes had a significant role on a certain part of the constructs (even though with a limited interpretability). In this manner, taking into account these attributes might also serve as a relevant extension to the research area. Moreover, the effect on image of the dimensions of country image can indeed be shown within the model and one can conclude that relationships equally exist among the dimensions of the formative construct.

The existing relationships between variables, influencing factors and other constructs verify the adaptation of the associative memory network model into this area as they prove that the various dimensions do build up a structure of relationships by activating each other. As shown by the above analyses, most variables have their indirect effect via country associations as a mediating variable on the various variables of the country equity model (CEM).

Summarizing the results, one can state that the research was a success and managed to explore and model the relationships between the included variables as well as further determining mechanisms. The research model gives an interpretation and context to the destination-based approach of country equity while linking the fields of overall country image and the destination-based evaluation of countries. The research incorporates the latest research directions, a measurement approach of country branding and the concept of country equity.

All hypotheses related to the assumed relationships within the model were accepted and all but some hypotheses related to the influencing factors were accepted. The results of the hypothesis testing, whether a hypothesis or sub-hypothesis was accepted or rejected, are summarized in Table 50.

**Table 50.**  
Results of the test of hypotheses

	<b>HYPOTHESIS</b>	<b>ACCEPTED?</b>
<b>H1</b>	The role and weight of each dimension of country image varies according to the given country.	YES
<b>H1a</b>	There exists a formative casual relationship between country image and its dimensions.	YES
<b>H2</b>	The evaluation of the inhabitants of a given country has a positive influence on the evaluation of the country.	YES
<b>H2a</b>	Country associations have a positive effect on the evaluation (image) of people.	YES
<b>H3</b>	Country image is influenced, beyond the uncovered dimensions, by additional factors, peculiar to the given country.	YES
<b>H3a</b>	Country size has a positive effect on country image.	YES
<b>H3b</b>	The relative distance of the destination country from the home country has a negative effect of the country image of the former.	NO
<b>H4</b>	Country image is influenced, beyond the uncovered dimensions, by additional individual factors.	NO
<b>H4a</b>	Gender influences the evaluation of a country: female have more positive views on country image.	NO
<b>H4b</b>	Declared income positively influences the evaluation of a country (country image).	NO
<b>H4c</b>	Declared self-esteem positively influences the evaluation of a country (country image)	NO
<b>H4d</b>	Individuals' having lived abroad positively influences the evaluation of a country. (country image)	NO
<b>H5</b>	Measurable factors of country equity are: country associations, country image, country awareness, country loyalty.	YES
<b>H5a</b>	Country awareness positively influences country associations.	YES
<b>H5b</b>	Country image positively influences country associations.	YES
<b>H5c</b>	Country awareness positively influences country loyalty.	YES
<b>H5d</b>	Country associations positively influence country loyalty.	YES
<b>H6</b>	Elements of country equity have a positive influence on destination evaluation.	YES
<b>H6a</b>	Country image has a positive influence on destination evaluation.	YES
<b>H6b</b>	Country loyalty has a positive influence on destination evaluation	YES
<b>H6c</b>	Country associations positively affect destination evaluation.	YES

Source: own elaboration, 2012

### III. CONCLUSIONS

#### 10. RESULTS OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION, CONCLUSIONS

The dissertation's starting point was **the study of the dimensions and measurability of country image**. The study's context was provided by the growing scientific background of the fields of country marketing and country branding. The field's international trends justified the adaptation of **the study of country equity** into the present doctoral dissertation, as the literature equally seems to lean towards the measurement of country brands and country equity. The third area of study in the present dissertation, **destination evaluation**, stems from the field of destination management which is a relevant anchor point to the subject in both a scientific and a practical point of view.

Overall, each main focal point is justified by the results of the first and second research phases while the final structure of the dissertation as a whole was expert validated during the in-depth expert interviews of the third research phase.

It is necessary, in the study of the context of country image, to understand its *influencing factors* and the related methodological considerations in connection with their measurement, that is, to map all the attributes that affect individual behavior in the context of the evaluation of countries. Moreover, in the study of country equity theory, one needs to be acquainted with the consumer-focused approaches of brand equity and the considerations related to the adaptation of the associative network memory model to the subject.

**The strong, theory-oriented core of the dissertation is followed by a multi-method testing process and a subsequent, thorough and multi-faceted analysis and concluding remarks.**

The doctoral research was led to **a joint study of the aforementioned three fields** by the recognition of the lack of the related theoretical background and an aim to explore this unstudied area. The ultimate goal of the present doctoral dissertation was to design a model suitable to be used in a wide context that is able to empirically test the theoretically validated elements from the literature. **The doctoral research therefore acts as a first elaboration and test of a Country Equity Model (CEM) in the context of destinations.**

The model links together factors that encompass all the relevant elements related to the field of country marketing in order to contribute to both theory development and to practical applications. This was, the model includes the *six main dimensions of country image*, the *four dimensions of country equity* (i.e. country image, country awareness, country associations, country loyalty) and examines one potential contextual output of the above dimensions, the *mechanism of destination evaluation*. This joint study of the above elements is complex in both a theoretical and a methodological consideration,

even though it follows a visible aim in the literature to develop approaches that are, as much as possible, multi-faceted and multi-method (Zenker, 2011).

The used methodology equally reflects the above efforts. **The dissertation uses a hybrid, multi-method research design, which is built on consecutive and subsequent quantitative and qualitative, online and offline phases of data collection.** All phases are aimed to support the subsequent research phase while all phase is to complete the results of the preceding phase in order to gather a deeper and more complex understanding of the topic. *Data collection ranges over a three-year period of time*, during which our research questions and sub-questions were answered and/or refined either or both during a quantitative or/and a qualitative research phase.

Our research questions and the related research phases are shown in the following table:

**Table 51**  
Research questions and the related research phases

Research question	Related research phase(s)
What factors influence the rating and measuring of country image and country brand, with special regard to the field of destination evaluation?	1st, 2nd, 3rd qualitative and quantitative phases; in particular: 3rd quantitative phase 1
What are the relevant components of country image in the evaluation of a country?	1st, 2nd, 3rd qualitative and quantitative phases
How can these components be organized and ranked based on their effect on the evaluation of a country?	1st qualitative and quantitative phases, 2nd qualitative phase
How can the notion of brand equity (country equity) be interpreted in relation to a country and what value does it carry for stakeholders?	2nd qualitative and quantitative phases, 3rd qualitative phase
What measurable effects does the image-building activity of a country have in the target audience's behavior? What are the fields where country image has a quantifiable effect?	2nd qualitative and quantitative phases, 3rd qualitative and quantitative phases
By what means can the image-building activity of a country and the effects thereof can be measured and quantified?	2nd quantitative phase, 3rd qualitative and quantitative phases
How can the value of country image be quantified and what are its constituting elements?	3rd qualitative and quantitative phases

Source: own elaboration, 2012

**A further methodological strength of the research is provided by the fact that the model was tested on two separate samples of 600 respondents each.** The database for the base sample includes the opinions of Hungarian respondents about Germany. The control sample (conducted for reasons of a subsequent validation and comparability of the results) includes the opinions of the same subjects on Croatia. **The methodology, thus fitting the recommendations from the literature, provides a double validation to the results making the subsequent conclusions even more strong, valid and reliable.**

### 10.1. Results and conclusions of the research phases

The multi-method research process was quantitative-dominant and was composed of three qualitative and four quantitative stages. Following our literature review, during which the gaps and niches in the theoretical background were revealed, we designed a research process with three main subsequent stages. These consecutive and subsequent stages were aimed to contribute to better understand the research problem, to identify each topic to be analyzed within the research model and to examine the further influencing factors to be included in the model.

Table 52 gives a summary of the most important results and conclusions of each research phase.

**Table 52**  
Results and conclusions of the dissertation's research phases

Research phase	Main conclusions
<b>1st Qualitative research phase</b> Unveiling the dimensions of country image <i>Content analysis of the literature</i>	country image is a concept that can be interpreted independently of product dimensions 6 main dimensions identified (out of 11) relationships between dimensions interpreted
<b>1st Quantitative research phase</b> Study of the dimensions and model of country image <i>Hungarian (N=399) and English-language (N=106) questionnaire survey</i>	reliability and content validity of existing scales is insufficient and need therefore to be improved the concept of country image can be thoroughly explored through a joint use of multiple scales beyond the dimensions of country image the study of other influencing factors is justified influencing factors: individual and country-specific attributes the country image and its dimensions can be analyzed in a formative structural model
<b>2nd Qualitative research phase</b> Study of the concept and effect mechanism of country brands <i>Focus group interviews</i>	interviews basically confirmed the results of the literature review the dimensions of country image do affect the evaluation of countries cognitive and affective factors can be distinguished with country image country brand is a relevant concept for consumers country image does affect destination evaluation
<b>2nd Quantitative research phase</b> Test of country brand scale <i>Questionnaire survey</i>	the Pappu – Qvester (2010) scale is suitable for measuring country equity but requires further development several items need to be made more general or specific to the topic (development of the concept of country equity) the dimensions of country equity: country image, country associations, country loyalty, country awareness relationships between the elements of country equity are not known, further studies are needed to explore them
<b>3rd Qualitative research phase</b> Validation of the doctoral study <i>Expert interviews</i>	the doctoral research was expert validated, the interviews confirmed the relationships unveiled beforehand the theoretical and practical significance as well as the novelty of the subject was confirmed
<b>3rd Quantitative research phase</b> Test of the Country Equity Model (CEM) <i>Questionnaire survey</i>	test and validation of the country equity model (CEM) on two samples the dimensions of country equity: country image, country awareness, country associations, country loyalty country equity does affect destination evaluation

Source: own elaboration, 2012

### 10.1.1. Conclusions on the main research question

In the following we will give an overview of *the dissertation's final research phase*, (i.e. our research model's test) and compare and contrast these results with the relationships unveiled during our literature review.

*To answer our main research question* (What factors influence the rating and measuring of country image and country brand, with special regard to the field of destination evaluation?), our research did confirm that the dimensions of country equity do have a determining effect on destination evaluation. Moreover, individual and country-specific elements can be identified as further influencing factors. Therefore the extension of the research model with these elements is justified. The hypothesized structure was validated on several occasions: first, the multi-method research process and the various methodologies used within confirmed it in multiple steps and second, the query on a large sample during the final test of the model equally validated it. **Results confirm that the country equity model (CEM) provides a useful theoretical framework for the study and interpretation of country image and destination evaluation.**

*Results equally confirm the well-foundedness of the joint study of country image and its dimensions with country equity and its dimensions and destination evaluation models.* Given that the literature have not yet produced a mature theoretical model of country equity, and that only few works (see e.g. Nadeau et.al., 2008; Pappu – Quester, 2010) have started integrating (parts of) the fields of country equity and destination evaluation, **the improvement and linking of certain parts of the model and the joint study, testing and validation within one complex model of these fields is an important result of the present doctoral dissertation.**

In accordance with the literature (Roth – Romeo, 1992; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994), **our research confirmed the multidimensional nature of country image** and identified its relevant dimensions: economy, politics, history, culture, geography and environment. These factors fit significantly into the model, even though the strength of their effect varies along the country in question. Our results equally prove that these elements influence the country image construct in a *formative way*, that is, supposing an effect from the direction of the indicators towards the variable. This corresponds to the recommendations by the literature (Roth – Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Our exploratory study, as well as our final study confirmed on several occasions the premise that a *structural modeling procedure* is suitable to explore the direction of the contribution of each dimension to the model as a whole, and whether this effect is negative or positive. The literature has not yet produced such complex and comprehensive studies in the field, which equally increases the importance of the present research. **Results show that the formative structure building is indeed a relevant approach to the topic and the variable and its indicators do fit the model**

**which increases the study's content validity as a whole, in accordance with the literature.**

Among the influencing factors of country image, a special attention was brought to *people image*. The literature, on several occasions, highlights the importance of encounters with a country's inhabitants on the general evaluation of countries (Anholt, 2000). Moreover, the evaluation of people accounts, in several works (Parameswaran – Yaprak, 1987; Heslop – Papadopoulos, 1993) as a dimension of country image, while other authors consider it as a separate item and evaluate its effect in parallel with the evaluation of the given country (Lee – Ganesh, 1999; Knight – Calantone, 2000). From a methodological perspective, our literature review shows that a number of internationally validated measurement scales contain separate blocs of questions for the evaluation of people and for that of countries, which equally confirms a need to separately evaluate the two concepts. In our doctoral research, having tested both approaches and taking into consideration the potential gains of stability and fit of each approach, people image was included into the model as a separate entity. **Altogether, results show that the evaluation of people has a positive effect on the general evaluation of a country.**

**Following a literature review, the further influencing factors of country image were regrouped into two categories: individual and country-specific factors.**

Results of previous works in the subject confirm that the area is still underresearched, as these elements have never yet been tested, nor studied in one complex model. Moreover, all renown studies concerning these influencing factors were published in connection with country-of-origin effects (see e.g. Nagashima 1970, 1977; Cattin et.al., 1982; Erickson et.al., 1984; Johansson et.al., 1985; Chasin et.al., 1988; Yu – Chen, 1993; Maheswaran, 1994; Gilmore, 2002). Therefore **the country image specific study of these elements contributes to theory development in the field and accounts for a strength of the research.**

Following a systematic analysis of these influencing factors, one can state that *country size has a significant positive effect and the distance from the destination country a significant negative effect on country image*. These results add to the practical utility of the research.

Among the individual factors taken into consideration, *gender turned out to have a significant effect on the evaluation of countries*, with women being more prone to give a more positive evaluation of a country than men. *Respondents' income situation equally showed a significant positive effect on the evaluation of country image*: Results show that *respondents' declared level of self-confidence and a previous, prolonged stay abroad do not significantly influence countries' evaluation*. These results equally add to the practical utility of our research.

**In conclusion, it can be said that there is no evidence in the literature of the study of the effect of country image's influencing factors even though they might have an effect on the evaluation of countries, independently of the behavioral output.**

**Therefore our results account for an important achievement in the field as they confirm the important role of the influencing factors (individual and country attributes) within the analysis of a complex situation of evaluation.**

**The testing of the country equity construct and the study and validation of its components mark an important added value of the present work in theory building.** The inclusion of the variables used by Pappu – Quester (2010) into the model corresponds to the international trends in the field of scale development. *The authors' construct is present in our model in an adapted form where it is suitable to specifically measure country image and country brands, without any allusion to country-of-origin effects.* Moreover, following the traditional brand equity theories, a new item (country associations) was included into the complex model, which, again, is in accordance with the consumer-centered brand equity approach.

The approach according to which *country image is an element and not an antecedent of country equity* was further tested before being accepted. Thus, each dimension of country equity was included as a separate variable in our model. This step was justified on one hand by a number of indications from the literature and on the other by an aim to provide a maximum of stability and fit to our model.

**The validated dimensions of the country equity construct are as follows: country image, country awareness, country associations, country loyalty. Given that previous studies of country image and country equity have not studied in a complex manner the relationships between these dimensions, our results account for an important indication as to the future potential use of these.**

Our results show that the dimensions of country equity are strongly linked to each other and influence each other both in a direct and indirect manner.

*Country image has a significant positive effect on country associations*, that is, the more favorable the evaluation of a country is, the more attributes can a respondent recall in connection with the country. Country image equally affects destination evaluation: contrarily to our prior assumptions, this effect manifests itself indirectly rather than directly, that is, country image positively affect country associations that in turn positively affect destination evaluation. Thus, the more someone knows about a country and the more positive this knowledge is, the more positive their evaluation of the given country will be.

*Another significant relationship was the effect of country awareness on country image.* According to our results, the more a respondent knows about a country, the more positive their image will be. This relationship ought to be tested on countries with negative overall country image in the future.

*Country awareness equally showed a significant positive effect on country associations:* the more a respondent knew about the country, the more information, and the more favorable information they can recall of the country from among both their spontaneous and aided associations.

*Country awareness equally has a positive effect on country loyalty:* the more a respondent knew about a country the more loyal they turned out to be to it.

Country loyalty (which, in certain models in the literature, acts itself as a behavioral output) had a significant positive effect on destination evaluation, that is, the more someone claims to be loyal to a country, the more positive their evaluation of the given country will be.

**Altogether, the research model included six different variables, all of them turned out to have a substantial role. Most hypotheses related to the basic principles or the country equity model were accepted. It was confirmed, in line with the international literature, that country image organically belongs to the concept of country equity. This equally has a practical consequence for the field of destination management.** Altogether, three models (and fields of science) were accorded in our research model. Each of these was adapted, developed and tested one by one and the three areas were equally put under a joint examination in relation with destination evaluation in the form of a structural model, which was proved to be a relevant extension of and a strategic approach to the area.

In conclusion, one can answer the dissertation's main question (*What factors influence the rating and measuring of country image and country brand, with special regard to the field of destination evaluation?*) as follows: **the country equity model (CEM) is a relevant approach to the evaluation of a country brand and the dimensions of this model all have a significant effect on country equity and destination evaluation.** Country associations, country loyalty, country awareness and country image are relevant factors to map the value of a country brand and the effect thereof on destination management. Beyond the dimensions of country equity, further individual and country attributes affect the relationship that provide a further extension of theory and a potential for a more complex evaluation.

### 10.1.2. Conclusions on the sub-questions

To answer the first sub-question (*What are the relevant components of country image in the evaluation of a country?*) we proceeded to a meta-analysis of the literature and used the results of our exploratory and first subsequent research phases. Country image is a multidimensional construct, as reported by the literature (Johansson – Moinpour, 1977; White, 1979; Narayana, 1981; Cattin et.al. 1982; Jaffe – Nebenzahl, 1984, 1988, 2006; Johansson – Nebenzahl, 1986; Han-Terpstra, 1988; Han, 1989; Smith, 1991; Roth – Romeo, 1992; Martin – Eroglu, 1993; Parameswaran – Pisharodi, 1994), even though the number of identified dimensions varies across the articles. Moreover, according to a certain number of authors, country image and its dimensions can be regrouped into a formative model. A direct consequence of a formative model is that the dimensions need to cover all information relevant to the context of the main construct. In order to

fulfill this criterion and unveil all relevant dimensions of country image, a thorough literature review was conducted with special attention to studies on the dimensions of country image. Based on this analysis, one can distinguish six main categories (among the eleven identified) that define clearly the components and influencing factors of a country's image. The dimensions can be identified as follows: (1) state and structure of the economy, (2) labor market, professional skills, (3) political state and structure, (4) international relations (role in international politics and in international conflicts), (5) cultural attributes, (6) cultural heritage (traditions), (7) geographical attributes (climate, natural endowments), (8) environment (public sanitation, protection of the environment), (9) people, (10) feelings (positive or negative), (11) similarity, kinship. These dimensions were analyzed both in the quantitative and qualitative phases of our preliminary studies, and all of them turned out to be relevant to the topic. The final research model therefore included all 11 dimensions. At the same time, following the pre-tests of the model, 6 of them showed a suitable fit within the model's structure. Based on our results, one can therefore state that country image is constituted and shaped by economic, political, geographical, cultural, environmental and historical dimensions.

Moreover, the further dimensions found in the literature were equally studied. Factors that affect a country's evaluation and were not identified as dimensions were categorized into two groups, those of individual and country attributes. These factors were equally analyzed throughout our research process. Our results show that both individual and country attributes (e.g. a respondent's gender or income situation or country size or the distance from the destination country) have a significant effect on country evaluation.

The second sub-question (*How can these components be organized and ranked based on their effect on the evaluation of a country?*) was answered using our meta-analysis of the literature and the results of our preliminary studies. As shown beforehand, one can clearly distinguish a number of dimensions of country image that are strongly enrooted while having to evaluate a country, as well as other influencing factors that refine, along the personality of the respondent, their image of the given country. These influencing factors can be, among others, a respondent's gender, income situation, or the distance of the evaluated country from the evaluator's home country.

A further ranking between the dimensions can also be made, it is, however a function of each evaluated country. As shown beforehand, there exists a consistent pool of country image dimensions (see the 6 [+5] dimensions listed above) that are present in nearly all studies in the subject. These dimensions therefore do determine the evaluation of a country, although with a weight that is peculiar to each evaluated country. While in case of a country, the geographical and cultural dimensions will count the more, in other cases, political or economic factors will play a more important role in the evaluation. The dimensions therefore have a relative weight among each other which equally determines their relative role.

The third sub-question (*How can the notion of brand equity (country equity) be interpreted in relation to a country and what value does it carry for stakeholders?*) can be answered using the results of our literature review and the subsequent research phase. Country branding appears as a novel approach in the literature, a direct consequence of which is the apparition the concept of country equity (just like in the case of traditional brand equity). The apparition of the concept of country equity in the field is marked by the integration of the consumer-focused brand equity approach into the area of country image. Thus, a country brand (similarly to a traditional brand) has a measurable value, which value in turn holds a number of attributes (country associations, country loyalty, country awareness, country image). All these attributes have an express value in several considerations.

According to the traditional approach to country brands, one can consider the citizens of a country as the owners of the country brand while the country's government as its "management board". In this view, positive country associations and a favorable country image, as well as a high level of country loyalty and awareness all provide a surplus of value in the sense that the country brand can be more easily and efficiently positioned and managed on the market. In the light of the above, a surplus of value can equally be extracted from the related activities: a successful country brand will provide an increased income from tourism through an augmented competitiveness. In the same way, consumers also benefit from the situation: following the traditional brand equity approach, brand equity is useful for consumers as it provides safety, lower risk and a lower need for information.

Nearly all phases of the doctoral research contribute to answering the fourth sub-question (*What measurable effects does the image-building activity of a country have in the target audience's behavior? What are the fields where country image has a quantifiable effect?*). Our literature review shows that a strong and positive image affects individual behavior. Country image building activities (currently identified by the literature as "country branding") equally affects individual behavior. As seen in the literature review, this behavior can manifest itself in a loyalty developing over time and a conscious choice of the given country in a given context. This, however, is contested by a number of authors, who rather consider country loyalty as a part of country equity itself. At the same time, among the behavioral effects, many authors put their main focus on the consequences of country equity, i.e. on destination evaluation and destination choice, product purchase, and decisions related to settling and investing in a country. However, it can be stated that both country image and country equity have a significant effect on individuals' behavior, which was proven, in the context of destination evaluation, by the results of our research and structural model.

The fifth sub-question (*By what means can the image-building activity of a country and the effects thereof can be measured and quantified?*) can be answered using partly our literature research and partly the results of the subsequent research phase. A separate

chapter of the present doctoral thesis dealt with the measurability of country image where relevant measurement procedures and research methods were equally discussed. In summary, one can state that country image can be evaluated along several aspects (e.g. tourism, accounting, marketing, etc.). Among the marketing approaches, qualitative and quantitative research methods are the most used. Current trends seem to go in the direction of structural analytical methods, which are deduction-based and provide the possibility to study causal relationships. This was equally the main methodology used throughout the present study. Structural analyses contribute to understanding complex mechanisms' driving forces, the elements of complex relationships and the links between them. Moreover, country image has a number of noticeable effects in many areas. Beyond the behavioral effects discussed previously, country image equally affects certain elements of country equity. This phenomenon is explained by the literature through the associative network memory model, which states that consumers' memories store information hierarchically in a node-link structure leading to a complex web of associations and pieces of information. This implies that when a memory is activated in a consumer, it is possible to activate all related elements. This phenomenon equally manifests itself among the elements of the concept of country equity: with the activation of country image, country associations, country awareness and country loyalty equally come to the front. Thus, the results of our structural study show that country awareness has a positive effect on country image, country image has a positive effect on country associations, and it also indirectly affects country loyalty and destination evaluation. Therefore, country image through an associative structure can, both in direct and indirect ways, affect the elements of country equity, leading to the formation of a complex system with them

The last sub-question, that was, as a matter of fact, the initial question of the present dissertation (*How can the value of country image be quantified and what are its constituting elements?*) can be answered through our analysis of the literature, even though the preliminary and final research phases did further refine it. According to the latest trends in the literature, the marketing value of country image manifests itself in the form of country equity approaches. These approaches, however, address country image in a country-of-origin context as they are closely related to the area of country-of-origin image of products. Country image, according to this approach, is incorporated into product image through an image transfer. In contrast, some researchers in the field believe that country image can be interpreted, addressed and evaluated on its own, without a context of product evaluation. The present doctoral dissertation shares this latter view, and argues in favor of the fact that countries have an image on their own, that manifests itself also independently of product evaluations (e.g. in other, decision-making situations). As a result, the concept of country equity is equally detached, in this dissertation, from its country-of-origin effect context, and is addressed along a more general, consumer-based brand equity approach. Therefore, in our understanding (if we accept the view of the literature about the existence of a country brand on its own), the

value of a country brand can be expressed, similarly to a traditional brand value. This equally implies that (following the current international research trends in the area), the value of country image can be expressed along the concept of country (brand) equity. This view, equally present in the literature, was confirmed again during our qualitative (focus group interviews and expert in-depth interviews) research phases.

### **10.2. Theoretical and practical significance of the doctoral research**

#### **10.2.1. Theoretical significance**

The dissertation and the related research achieves multiple added value as it fits the newest directions of research, contributes to academic research in the field and to theory building.

*An unconcealed aim of the dissertation was to connect to the most topical international research efforts, to unveil, provide a synthesis of and to develop, in accordance with the international trends the country branding and country marketing approaches. As a consequence, the dissertation has a strong theoretical focus and **provides a first systematic Hungarian-language study of the field**; therefore, in addition to connecting to the international literature, the present work might equally contribute to the development of the field on a national level.*

Another theoretical significance of the dissertation is **the development of the concept of country image by unveiling, aggregating and analyzing the dimensions and influencing factors thereof**. This can represent an added value, both in the international and the Hungarian literature, in the sense that no work is known to have been published that goes beyond a literature review and provides an empirical test and structural modeling of the area.

The development and foundation of **an extended approach to the concept of brand equity** marks another significant theoretical contribution. Previous analyses on country equity mostly considered the concept in a country-of-origin context by expressing the value of a country brand through products' brand equity. The present dissertation gets ahead of this approach and argues that country brands have a *raison d'être* beyond being a part of product brand equity, on their own, and that the value of a country as a brand can be expressed the same way a consumer brand's value can be. By the adaptation of the so-called consumer brand equity theory, the approach equally gains a meaning through the methodological possibility to unveil its composing elements. *In our understanding, a country equity is the value that can be expressed in the consumer-focused brand equity approach of country brands and that consumers consider as valuable in the case of countries. The elements of country equity are country image, country associations, country awareness and country loyalty.*

**The development of the concept of country equity is in line with the latest trends in the international literature and therefore the dissertation contributes to its development.** This is also confirmed by that fact that a number of works were published, in 2011, in the niche topics of the joint study of country image and destination management (Elliott et.al., 2011) or country branding and country equity (Zenker, 2011). Moreover, given the necessity for the development of the related measurement scales – our results equally bear methodological contributions to the literature.

**The results of the doctoral dissertation contributed to extend the assessment model of the country image and country equity concepts with the context of destination evaluation.** A destination management-focused approach equally holds an important practical relevance (see next sub-chapter).

A joint study of country image and country equity in the context of destination evaluation was justified by a strategic approach to the respective fields of study. It can be observed from the literature that strategic approaches are taking over as a major context of study both in the fields of country image and the study of its efficiency and that of destination management and the study of its efficiency. One manifestation of this phenomenon is the growing use of efficiency measurement and structural models in both fields. The joint study is therefore a relevant approach as it is a relevant extension of the area, even though only a few works have been studying country image in a destination context (see e.g. Nadeau et.al., 2008) so far, and there is no known work on country branding in a destination approach, either. **The inclusion of destination evaluation into the approaches of country image and country branding is therefore a relevant and novel approach thus further contributing to theory development and to tracing the directions to follow in the area.**

The present work – to the author's best knowledge – is the first of its kind in the joint study of the fields country image, country branding, country equity and destination evaluation. This theoretical contribution, by its specificity, equally holds an important practical relevance.

**The results of the doctoral research make a great first step into developing a country equity model (CEM),** as the relationships between country equity and country image have a suitable explanatory power within the model. As the dimensions of country equity affect the relationships and therefore destination evaluation both directly and indirectly, one can state that during the general study of the evaluation of countries the analysis of these aspects might contribute to understanding the implications of the phenomenon to destination management.

In relation to the additional factors unveiled during the model's design, further studies and tests can be conceptualized (see sub-chapter on future research directions).

### 10.2.2. Methodological significance

**The hybrid methodological approach followed during the doctoral research allowed a more complex and multi-faceted analysis of the subject, which makes it one of its methodological strengths.** This procedure is equally in line with the recommendations from the literature (Zenker, 2011) as there is a growing need for results based on a systematic approach and analysis. *However, few academic works so far have been produced, in the field of country image and country branding, using a multi-method approach* for such research projects characteristically require a longer period of research and analysis and therefore financial resources, as opposed to, for example, simple quantitative queries based on one methodology. One can equally state that *it is rare for works on both country image and country brands to be expert validated.* This latter phase was included in the research process of the present dissertation which contributes to increasing the model's overall validity.

**Another methodological added value provided by the present dissertation is the methodological and substantive adaptation to the field of country equity of the consumer-focused brand equity items.** Previous country equity models only address the context of product evaluation (country-of-origin effect) and they equally fail to include all relevant consumer brand equity approaches into their country equity models. To solve the latter issues, the country equity scale was generalized in the present doctoral work, that is, it is no longer product-specific and is fit to be used to measure country equity on a country-level. Moreover, items were developed and designed (e.g. country associations and country awareness) to increase the model's content validity. All of the improved or new items were tested during our empirical research phases and turned out to fit, reliable and valid to be included into the scale. The doctoral research therefore has a methodological added value in terms of scale development and model design, as much in the Hungarian as in the international research context.

**The structural analysis equally accounts for a methodological significance in the field of country image and country branding.** As stated in previous chapters, causal studies with structural analytical methods have been relatively rare in the fields of country image and country branding, compared to those of destination image and destination choice. Our analytical work therefore can be considered among the first milestones to methodologically contribute to an area in need of development.

### 10.2.3. Practical significance

**The multi-method research design, the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches largely contributed to unveil the mechanisms of action of the evaluation of countries as well as the effect thereof on destination evaluation.**

Our results confirmed that *the evaluation of people has a positive influence on the general evaluation of a country*. This information can be used in practice, both in terms of education and communication. Education would imply preparing all stakeholders in a country's tourism economy that tourists' impressions all add up to the country's image and therefore to their future loyalty to the country, which in turn affects their potential willingness to return. In communications, this result would imply using a country's "human face" when communicating the destination which indirectly could lead to a more favorable general perception of the country and therefore to a better evaluation of it as a destination.

Moreover, our results show *that country loyalty is a major factor within country equity* that affects destination evaluation and thus has an indirect effect on the country's popularity as a touristic destination. Taking into account and managing this fact could contribute to the success of a country when appearing as a touristic destination.

Another practical result provided by the doctoral research is to having unveiled *the central role of country associations*. Our results lead to conclude that destination evaluation and country loyalty can be improved by reinforcing the evaluators' spontaneous associations about the country. The practical outcome of the latter result can manifest itself in the management of a country's competitiveness and touristic popularity, and it also indirectly affects the evaluation of investments to and products from the country.

### **10.3. Limitations of the research and of the results**

In line with the literature (Malhotra – Simon, 2008), the adequacy of the results can be established in terms of validity, reliability and generalizability. **The results of validity and reliability tests can be found at the end of each report on the results of a research phase. Altogether, it can be stated that each phase, and the study as a whole, can be considered as suitable along these criteria.**

*Generalizability accounts for a limitation of the present doctoral research as it only explored the mechanism of country evaluation in the 18-69 age group, while certain exploratory phases were conducted only on a convenience sample of university students.* Even though the exploratory methodology was not been aimed to produce generalizable results, a wider sample might have provided additional influencing factors (that might not be present within the given age group).

*Another limitation of the present study is to focus the framework of study to only one area, that of destination evaluation.* In order to achieve the design of a truly general country equity model (CEM), it needs to be tested in other areas, too (e.g. product

evaluation, investment decisions). The design of a general country equity scale might equally be worthwhile, as the scale used in our study was specifically adapted from the field of product evaluation for the sake of the present research. It would therefore be worthwhile to adapt the original scale in a way for it to be truly general and not to be specific to a given area of study. At the same time, one can assume that the measurement items present in our scale might likely provide a valid measurement even if the destination evaluation context were omitted, given that our adaptation of the scale hardly affected this particular area.

In a methodological point of view, the question arises to what extent *the introduction of more suitable scales would result in a more accurate measurement*. The query in the present research was conducted by combining three scales – this accounts for a methodological limitation of the solution. At the same time, it is worthwhile considering the inclusion and combination of further research methods into the process (e.g. those of observational studies or a conjoint analysis, which came up as possible methods to complete the subject during our expert interviews).

Moreover, *the quantity and applicability of scale items for structural analysis poses questions*. As mentioned beforehand, the use of scales with multiple items is required for the study of latent variables and causal models. In the present study, it is worth reviewing in the case of which variables the number of measurement scales and indicators should and could be expanded. At the same time it must be noted that all studied latent variable was measured by at least two measurement variables in the present study, as to comply with the required minimum in the literature. The model's explanatory power is high ( $R^2=0.79$ ), although there might be certain dimensions that were omitted from the model. These might be a subject for further analysis.

### **10.4. Future research directions**

Both the theoretical and methodological aspects of the topic provide a ground for further research.

Our theoretical review sheds light on the fact that *the area of country image is most in need of theoretical development* and needs to catch up with the solutions that are increasingly in place in practice by studying and generalizing these practices into a solid theoretical base for the area. As in other areas in the field of marketing, market-induced corrections might be at the origin of a long-awaited progress for the area. At the same times, researchers in the area equally show an increasing demand for clarifying and delineating the related concepts and constructs in the field (e.g. of country branding).

Taking into account the theoretical background of the area, one can state that both the literature review of the present dissertation and its exploratory research phases justified, on several occasions, the *existence of an attitude-based approach*. Incorporating the concept of attitude into the framework of analysis might therefore be a potential extension to the field of research.

Beyond the attitude-based approach, it is also worth studying which other elements can be incorporated as focal points to further studies. After a thorough analysis of the literature, one can remark that in a number of models, *country image is at the focus of study* while in other cases (as in the present one), associations are at the core of the study. The relationships between these two elements, and the potential substitutability of the two concepts might equally be worth studying in future works.

Another attribute that surfaced during the doctoral research is *the necessity to distinguish the physical vs. emotional distance of the evaluator from the evaluated country*. A few sources have already addressed the problem, although it can be stated that an express and thorough study on the two concepts has not yet been conducted.

The “perceived quality” dimension equally appears several times as an element of consumer brand equity. For its specificity, this dimension was more or less ignored, even though the author believes that it is possible to develop a concept, through conceptual abstraction, that makes the construct interpretable equally in connection with country brands.

Among the areas with an increased research interest, *place branding* showed, multiple times during our research process, a great amount of unexplored sub-areas. After a systematic analysis of the literature, one can state that few works incorporate touristic destination management and place branding into one, and therefore this also might be a relevant further research topic.

The doctoral research unveiled many *new connections and relationships between attributes* (e.g. the effect of associations on loyalty) that have not yet been tested in the literature. A more special interest on these attributes would once again lead to a deeper understanding of the area. Further analyses allowing the forecasting of a number of mechanisms of action using the unveiled relationships would also lead to a deeper understanding and a real practical benefit for the area, especially in a highly practical area as destination evaluation.

In a theoretical perspective, *one can state that for the Pappu – Quester (2010) scale (also adapted by the present dissertation) to be an internationally validated, studies on further samples are required. The same stands for the country equity model of the present dissertation: in order for it to be internationally validated, it needs to be tested on other focal countries and potentially larger samples.*

A restructuration of the model is equally possible. Previously, in Roth – Diamantopoulos – Montesinos (2008) the country equity variable was expressed through a second order factor structure that was formed when analyzing country equity and the other related dimensions. This solution is equally visible in the present study, as

country image, country associations, country loyalty and country awareness form the country equity variable as a second order factor, the effect of which can be interpreted in a complex way in case of other second order factor variables (e.g. destination evaluation).

Even though the country equity scale showed an adequate level of reliability and a significant explanatory power in the model, the numerous scale items and the methodological considerations based on the results of our exploratory research phases suggest that *the design of a new country equity scale that would allow for a better measurement in the topic would not be unnecessary.*

**APPENDIX 1/A. – The first quantitative research phase (Hungarian questionnaire)**

**FELMÉRÉS:  
Magyarország és a magyarok imázsa**

A Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem Marketingkutatás és Fogyasztói Magatartás Tanszéke felmérést készít a magyar fiatalok országimázssal kapcsolatos véleményéről, attitűdjeiről. A felmérésben való részvétel anonim és önkéntes. A válaszait csak összesítve, statisztikai módszerekkel dolgozzuk fel, az egyedi információk azonosítható formában nem kerülnek nyilvánosságra.

Amennyiben bármilyen kérdése merülne fel a kutatással kapcsolatban, az alábbi telefonszámon kaphat bővebb felvilágosítást: 06-1-482-5254

**I. Magyarország és a magyarok megítélése**

1.1. Mi jut *először* eszébe, ha azt hallja, „Magyarország”?

.....  
.....

1.2. Milyen *pozitív* gondolatok, tulajdonságok jutnak eszébe, ha Magyarországra mint országra gondol?

.....  
.....

1.3. Milyen *pozitív* gondolatok, tulajdonságok jutnak eszébe, ha a magyar emberekre gondol?

.....  
.....  
.....

1.4. Milyen *negatív* gondolatok, tulajdonságok jutnak eszébe, ha Magyarországra mint országra gondol?

.....  
.....

1.5. Milyen *negatív* gondolatok, tulajdonságok jutnak eszébe, ha a magyar emberekre gondol?

.....  
.....

1.6. Az alábbiakban néhány tulajdonságot lát, melyek kisebb-nagyobb mértékben jellemzők lehetnek Magyarországra. Kérem, jelölje meg egy X jellel, hogy Ön szerint az adott tulajdonság mennyire jellemző országunkra.

	-- egyáltalán nem jellemző	- nem jellemző	+ jellemző	++ nagyon jellemző
1. Sikeres ország				
2. Tehetséges ország				
3. Tisztességes, becsületes emberek országa				
4. Művelt, civilizált ország				
5. A társadalmi igazságosság országa				
6. Az emberi szabadság országa				
7. Fényes múltú, nagy történelmű ország				
8. Sokat szenvedett ország				
9. A jogrend országa				
10. Vállalkozó szellemű emberek országa				
11. Rosszkedvű, pesszimista ország				
12. Szorgalmas ország				
13. Egymással törődő, szolidáris emberek országa				
14. Nagy sportteljesítmények országa				
15. Nagy tudományos teljesítmények országa				
16. Nagy kultúrájú ország				
17. Jó gazdasági teljesítmények országa				
18. Demokratikus ország				
19. Rendes, tiszta ország				
20. Szép tájakban gazdag ország				
21. Jókedvű, derűs ország				
22. Fejlett ország				
23. Gyorsan fejlődő ország				
24. Nagy jövő előtt álló ország				

1.7. Az alábbiakban egy 7-fokozatú skálát lát, melynek két végpontján egymással ellentétes értelmű tulajdonságok helyezkednek el. Kérem, egy X jellel jelölje be, hogy az Ön Magyarországról alkotott véleménye melyik végponthoz esik közelebb.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Politikailag stabil ország :\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: Politikailag instabil ország

Jelentős szerep a világpolitikában :\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: Jelentéktelen szerep a világpolitikában

Kifinomult érzék az élet szép dolgai iránt :\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_: Nem kifinomult érzék az élet szép dolgai iránt



**APPENDIX 1/B. – The first quantitative research phase (English language questionnaire)**

**Questionnaire  
Views of Foreign Students on Hungary and the Hungarians**

**I. Hungary and the Hungarians (A1a1)**

**1.1.** What is your image of Hungary? What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'Hungary'? (please write it down in a few sentences)

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**1.2.** What kind of especially good experiences have you had in Hungary  
**1.2.a.** with regards to the country?

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**1.2.b.** with regards to the people of Hungary?

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**1.3.** What kind of especially bad experiences have you had in Hungary  
**1.3.a.** with regards to the country?

---



---

**1.3.b.** with regards to the people of Hungary?

---



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**II. Views on Hungary and the Hungarians**

**2.1.** On the following page you will find a set of 7 point scales which have descriptive statements on their left and right sides. To answer each scale, simply put an 'X' in the middle of the space that is closest to your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I know very little about Hungary	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							I know a lot about Hungary
Politically stable country	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							Politically unstable country
Admirable role in the world of politics	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							Not admirable role in the world of politics
Not trustworthy people	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							Trustworthy people
Rich country	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							Poor country
Technologically advanced country	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							Not technologically advanced country
Hungarians have a refined taste for the beautiful things in life	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							Hungarians do not have a refined taste for the beautiful things in life
My home should have closer	: _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ : _ :							My country should not have

ties with Hungary		closer ties with Hungary
Hungarians are highly educated people	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	Hungarians are not highly educated people
Hungarian people are not very hard working	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	Hungarian people are very hard working
Hungary is aligned with my home country	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	Hungary is not aligned with my home country
Hungarians not very likeable people overall	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	Hungarians are very likeable people overall
Hungary is an ideal country	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	Hungary is not an ideal country
I would welcome more investment to my home country from Hungary	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	I would not welcome more investment to my country from Hungary
I would welcome more imports in my country from Hungary	:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:	I would not welcome more imports in my country from Hungary

**2.2.** On the following page you will find a set of 4 point scales which have descriptive words on their left sides. To answer each scale, simply put an 'X' in the middle of the space that is closest to your opinion.

Hungary is a....	-- Not at all typical	- Not typical	+ Typical	++ Very typical
1. Successful country				
2. Country with a lot of talent				
3. Country of fair and honest people				
4. Educated, civilized country				
5. Country of social justice				
6. Country of human freedom				
7. Country with a glorious and rich history				
8. Much-suffered country				
9. Country of law and order				
10. Country of entrepreneurs				
11. Depressed, pessimistic country				
12. Hard-working country				
13. Country with solidarity				
14. Country with great sports achievements				
15. Country with great scientific achievements				
16. Country with great culture				
17. Country with great economic achievements				
18. Democratic country				
19. Decent, clean country				
20. Country rich in beautiful landscapes				
21. Cheerful country				
22. Developed country				
23. Fast-developing country				
24. Country with a bright future				

**III. Background information**

**3.1.** Your age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old

**3.2.** Which country are you coming from? \_\_\_\_\_

To answer this next section of questions, you only need to put a check-mark 'X' in the appropriate boxes.

**3.3.** Gender

- male
- female

**3.4.** How do you evaluate your *financial situation* compared to other foreign students **here**?

- Much worse than the average
- A little worse than the average
- Average
- A little better than the average
- Much better than the average

**3.5.** How do you evaluate your *financial situation* compared to other students **in your country**?

- Much worse than the average
- A little worse than the average
- Average
- A little better than the average
- Much better than the average

**3.6.** How do you evaluate your *self-confidence* compared to other foreign students here?

- Much worse than the average
- A little worse than the average
- Average
- A little better than the average
- Much better than the average

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

## APPENDIX 2/A. – The second research phase – discussion guide for focus group interviews (Hungarian)

### Focus group interview guide

#### Hungarian students' views on country image

1. Introduction, details of research topic *10min*
2. Warming up *10min*
3. Studying the dimensions of country image *15 min*  
*In what manners is a country evaluated: mainly through stereotypes, along information taught in school, or maybe following the latest news or information coming from friends? That is: what a country image is constituted of, what is the evaluation of a country constituted of: knowledge, feelings, etc.? How can one group these elements? Are there any decisive factors?*
4. Mapping associations, perceptions *10 min*  
*What other factors influence the evaluation of a given country? E.g.: how far it is, how important is its role in international politics, how big it is, etc.*
5. Unveiling overall vs situation-specific factors *10 min*  
*When, in what kinds of situations one has to evaluate a given country?*
6. Mapping behavioral output, factors influencing decisions *15 min*  
*How does the weighting of evaluation criteria change along different decision situations? To what extent does this influence the behavior, how much influence does this have on decisions?*
7. The aspects of destination choice, product purchase, choice of place of residence *15 min*  
*To what extent does a country's image provide value for consumers? How does this value manifest itself in travel destination choice, product purchases, investment decisions, etc.?*
8. Testing the construct of country brand, unveiling its dimensions *10 min*  
*Can a country be considered a brand? Are country awareness, country loyalty, country associations, etc. part of a relevant approach? Does a country brand provide value for consumers?*
9. Closing *10min*

**APPENDIX 2/B. – The second research phase, focus group interviews’ participants**

Date	Location	Persons	Participants	Filter 1 (traveling abroad)	Filter 2 (living abroad)
2010. 09. 28.	BCE Fővám tér 311. sz	5	4 women, 1 man Edina, Ildikó, Tímea, Kati, Peti	igen	nem
2010. 10. 05.	BCE Fővám tér 311. sz	6	4 women, 2 men Sára, Kata, Ági, Csilla, Péter, Dani	nem	nem
2010. 10. 05.	BCE Fővám tér 311. sz	5	3 women, 2 men Erika, Éva, Bogi, Áron, Karcsi	igen	igen

## APPENDIX 3. – The second research phase, questionnaire for the scale test

### Fogyasztói Magatartás alapszak - Kérdőív

Kedves Hallgatók!  
Köszönjük a Fogyasztói Magatartás és Marketingkutatás Tanszék kérdőívénél.  
**A kérdőív kitöltésével a tanszékünkön folyó tudományos kutatásokat támogatják.**

A Fogyasztói Magatartás alapszakos és a Fogyasztáselemélet és Vásárlói Magatartás mesterszakos kurzus hallgatói a kérdőív kitöltéséért az elérhető pontszámokon felül plusz 5 pontban részesülnek. A kérdőív kitöltése átlagosan 40 percet vesz igénybe, csak a teljes mértékben kitöltött kérdőívek esetén érvényes a plusz pont.

A kérdőív 2010. december 17-ig tölthető ki. A szemeszter befejeztével, azaz a vizsgaidőszakban a kérdőívek kitöltésére már nincs lehetőség.

Dátumátellátot kérem!

#### Országimázs, országmárka

**24 [k19]Mennyire ért egyet az alábbi állításokkal? Kérem, értékeljen egy 11-fokú skála segítségével, ahol 1 - egyáltalán nem értek egyet, 11 - teljes mértékben egyetértek \***

Kérem, jelöljön meg egy megfelelő választ minden felsorolt elem számára:

	1 Egyáltalán nem értek egyet	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyetért
Már hallottam Németországról.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Már hallottam Kínáról.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fel tudok idézni márkanéveket Németországból.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fel tudok idézni márkanéveket Kínából.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Könnyen fel tudok idézni különböző jellemzőket Németországról.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Könnyen fel tudok idézni különböző jellemzőket Kínáról.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**25 [k20]Mennyire ért egyet az alábbi állításokkal? Kérem, értékeljen egy 11-fokú skála segítségével, ahol 1 - egyáltalán nem értek egyet, 11 - teljes mértékben egyetértek \***

Kérem, jelöljön meg egy megfelelő választ minden felsorolt elem számára:

	1 Egyáltalán nem értek egyet	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyetért
Németország erősen iparosított ország.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína erősen iparosított ország.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország erősen fejlett gazdasággal rendelkezik.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína erősen fejlett gazdasággal rendelkezik.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország állampolgárai olvasott emberek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 Egyáltalán nem értek egyet	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyetért
Kína állampolgárai olvasott emberek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország szabad piaccal rendelkezik.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína szabad piaccal rendelkezik.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország demokratikus ország.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína demokratikus ország.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország magas színvonalú technológiai kutatásokat folytat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína magas színvonalú technológiai kutatásokat folytat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország termékei magas minőségűek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína termékei magas minőségűek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország magas éleltszínvonalat biztosít állampolgárai számára.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína magas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**26 [k21]Mennyire ért egyet az alábbi állításokkal? Kérem, értékeljen egy 11-fokú skála segítségével, ahol 1 - egyáltalán nem értek egyet, 11 - teljes mértékben egyetértek \***

Kérem, jelöljön meg egy megfelelő választ minden felsorolt elem számára:

	1 Egyáltalán nem értek egyet	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyetért
A Németországban gyártott termékek minőségi kidolgozásúak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kínában gyártott termékek minőségi kidolgozásúak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek innovatívak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kínában gyártott termékek innovatívak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek megbízhatóak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kínában gyártott termékek megbízhatóak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Büszke lennék, ha Németországban gyártott termékkel rendelkeznék.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Büszke lennék, ha Kínában gyártott termékkel rendelkeznék.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek magas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 Egyáltalán nem értek egyet	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyetért
A Kínában gyártott termékek magas státuszúak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek drágák.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kínában gyártott termékek drágák.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek felsőkategóriásak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kínában gyártott termékek felsőkategóriásak.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek technológiailag fejlettek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kínában gyártott termékek technológiailag fejlettek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Megbízom Németországban mint termék-előállítóban.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Megbízom Kínában mint termék-előállítóban.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**27 [k22]Mennyire ért egyet az alábbi állításokkal? Kérem, értékeljen egy 11-fokú skála segítségével, ahol 1 - egyáltalán nem értek egyet, 11 - teljes mértékben egyetértek \***

Kérem, jelöljön meg egy megfelelő választ minden felsorolt elem számára:

	1 Egyáltalán nem értek egyet	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyetért
Kedvelem Németországot.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kedvelem Kínát.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek megörik az árukat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 Egyáltalán nem ért egyét	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyért
A Kinában gyártott termékek magérik az árukat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek jó minőségűek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kinában gyártott termékek jó minőségűek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek kiváló tulajdonságokkal rendelkeznek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kinában gyártott termékek kiváló tulajdonságokkal rendelkeznek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Németországban gyártott termékek kiszámíthatóan jó minőségűek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A Kinában gyártott termékek kiszámíthatóan jó minőségűek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Kérem, jelöljön meg egy megfelelő választ minden felsorolt elem számára:

	1 Egyáltalán nem ért egyét	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyért
Nem vennék németországi termékeket, ha megvehetném a Franciaországban előállított ugyanolyan termékeket.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nem vennék kínai termékeket, ha megvehetném a Franciaországban előállított ugyanolyan termékeket.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hűsége vásárlója vagyok a Németországban gyártott termékeknek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hűsége vásárlója vagyok a Kinában gyártott termékeknek.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Németország mint termékgyártó az egyik választásom lenne termékek választásakor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kína mint termékgyártó az egyik választásom lenne termékek választásakor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1 Egyáltalán nem ért egyét	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyért
Nagyon szarvannék Kinában gyártott terméket vásárolni.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nagy kockázatot jelent Németországban gyártott terméket vásárolni.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nagy kockázatot jelent Kinában gyártott terméket vásárolni.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nem vennék németországi termékeket, ha megvehetném a bárhol máshol a világon előállított ugyanolyan termékeket.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nem vennék kínai termékeket, ha megvehetném a Magyarországon előállított ugyanolyan termékeket.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nem vennék kínai termékeket, ha megvehetném a	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Kérem, jelöljön meg egy megfelelő választ minden felsorolt elem számára:

	1 Egyáltalán nem ért egyét	2	3	4	5	6 Egyet is ért, meg nem is	7	8	9	10	11 Teljes mértékben egyért
Ha Németország márkanév lenne, a kedvenc márkám lenne.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ha Kína márkanév lenne, a kedvenc márkám lenne.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ha Németország márkanév lenne, márkahű lennék iránta.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ha Kína márkanév lenne, márkahű lennék iránta.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ha Németország márkanév lenne, magas minőséget képviselné.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ha Kína márkanév lenne, magas minőséget képviselné.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Demográfia

**30 [d1]Az ön neme \***  
Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

Nő  
 Férfi

**31 [d2]Kérjük, adja meg az életkorát. \***  
Kérem, írja ide a választát:

**32 [d3]Az ön állandó lakhelye \***  
Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

Budapest  
 Megyeszékhely  
 Egyéb város  
 Község, falu

**33 [d8]Az ön iskolai végzettsége**  
Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

alapfokú  
 középfok, érettségi  
 főiskola, alapszak  
 egyetem, mester szak

**34 [d41]Az állandó lakhelye mellett van önnek ideiglenes lakhelye, tartózkodási helye? \***  
Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

Igen  
 Nem

**35 [d42]Most gondoljon az ideiglenes lakhelyére, tartózkodási helyére, ahol a hét legnagyobb részét tölti. Kivel/kikkel él itt együtt? \***  
**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**  
\*Answer was "igen" at question 34 [d41] (Az állandó lakhelye mellett van önnek ideiglenes lakhelye, tartózkodási helye?)  
Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

Szüleimmel élek együtt  
 Kollégiumban lakom

Albérletben vagy saját lakásban lakom többekkel együtt  
 Albérletben vagy saját lakásban lakom a párommal együtt  
 Albérletben vagy saját lakásban lakom egyedül

**36 [d43]Kérjük, hogy most gondoljon a családjára. Ne csak azokra gondoljon, akikkel egy háztartásban él, hanem a tágabb családjára. Eszerint jelölje be azokat a családtagokat, akik részei az Önök családjának. \***  
Kérem, válasszon ki **mind**ent, ami érvényes:

együttélő édesapa  
 együttélő édesanya

**37 [d5]Milyenek tartja a saját életszínvonalát? \***Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

- az átlagnál sokkal rosszabb  
 az átlagnál valamivel rosszabb  
 átlagos  
 az átlagnál valamivel jobb  
 az átlagnál sokkal jobb

**38 [d6]Mennyi pénzből gazdálkodik havonta? Gondoljon az összes nettó jövedelemre, amivel havonta rendelkezik, benne ösztöndíj, munkadíj, szülői támogatás.**Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

- 20 000 Ft-nál kevesebb  
 20 000 - 40 000 Ft  
 40 000 - 60 000 Ft  
 60 000 - 80 000 Ft  
 80 000 - 100 000 Ft  
 100 000 - 150 000 Ft  
 150 000 Ft-nál több

**40 [d9]Élt már hosszabb ideig, 3 hónapnál tovább külföldön? \***Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

- Igen  
 Nem

**41 [d10]Milyen az önbizalma?****Az alábbi skála segítségével adja meg választát, ahol 1 - jelentősen átlag alatti, 2 - átlag alatti, 3 - átlagos, 4 - átlag feletti, 5 - jelentősen átlag feletti \***Kérem, válasszon **egy**et az alábbiak közül:

- 1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5

**42 [d11]Kérjük adja meg Neptun kódját a plusz pontok adminisztrációjának céljából.****A MEGADOTT KÓDOT KÜLÖN KEZELJÜK, A PONTSZÁMOK RÖGZÍTÉSÉT KÖVETŐEN TÖRÖLJÜK ÉS AZ ADATOK ELEMZÉSÉNÉL NEM VESSZÜK FIGYELEMBE! \***

Kérem, írja ide a választát:

**Appendix 4. – Guide for expert interviews of third research phase**

1. What are the relevant components of country image in the evaluation of a country?
2. What constitutes “country image”? What are the components and dimensions of interior and exterior country image?
3. How can these components be organized and ranked based on their effect on the evaluation of a country?
4. Is the construct “country image” equal to the brand equity of a country?
5. How can brand equity be interpreted in relation to a country and what value does it carry for stakeholders?
6. Can the “country-of-origin image” be treated as a factor of brand equity?
7. What measurable effects does the image-building activity of a country have in the target audience’s behavior?
8. By what means can the image-building activity of a country and the effects thereof can be measured and quantified? What quantifiable effects does this have in the economy (e.g. in the stock of foreign direct investments), in tourism (e.g. in the number of foreigners visiting a given country), in culture (e.g. in the “exportability” of a national culture)? What additional fields can be subject to the effect thereof?
9. How the value of country image be quantified?

## Appendix 5. – Final research phase - questionnaire

### Questionnaire

1. What comes to your mind when someone mentions Croatia/Germany to you?

---

2. What might influence your willingness to travel there?

---

3. If you've been there before: what kind of experiences have you had during your stay there?

---

4. Please, evaluate the following statements! To answer them, put an 'X' in the box that is closest to your opinion. (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = neutral; 7 = strongly agree; NA = I don't know/ I'm not answering)

About Croatia/Germany	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
I have heard of the country								
Some characteristics of the country come to mind quickly								
I can recognize brand names from the country								
This country has a highly developed economy								
This country has a high level of industrialization								
This country has a free-market system								
People in this country are highly literate								
People in this country are likeable								
People in this country are highly helpful								
This country is a democratic country								
This country has a high level of technological research								
This country offers its people high standard of living								
Labor costs are high in this country								
This country has a welfare system								
This country has a civilian non-military government								
Products from this country are technically advanced								
Products from this country have quality workmanship								
Products from this country are expensive								
I like this country								
I consider myself loyal to traveling to this country								
This country would be my first choice for traveling								
I trust this country as a travel destination								
If this country were a brand, it'd be my favorite brand								
If this country were a brand, I'd be loyal to it								
If this country were a brand, I'd pay more for it								
I know a lot about this country								
I know a lot about the history of this country								
I know a lot about this country's citizens								

APPENDIX

I know a lot about the culture of this country									
I know a lot about the economic situation of this country									
I know a lot about the political situation of this country									
I hear a lot about this country from media									
Media can influence my opinion about this country									
This country is distant from my country									
I feel this country psychologically far from my own country									
This country is a big country									
This country is one of the biggest countries of the world									
This country is not similar to my own country									

5. Please, evaluate the following beliefs! To answer them, put an 'X' in the box that is closest to your opinion. (1 = low/poor; 3 = average/neutral; 5 = high/good; NA = I don't know/ I'm not answering)

About Croatia/Germany	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
<b>Natural environment beliefs</b>								
Attractive natural environment								
Wilderness								
Climate								
Variety of activities								
Peaceful/quiet								
<b>Built environment beliefs</b>								
Culturally interesting								
Profile of attractions								
Ease of finding interesting places								
Accommodation								
Quality of service								
Selection of restaurants								
Ease of getting around								
Shopping facilities								
Safety								
For the whole family								
Sport facilities								
Nightlife entertainment								
<b>Evaluation of destination</b>								
Proud to visit								
Memorability of experience								
Relative to expectations								
Overall rating								
Originality of experience								
Overall satisfaction								
Value for money								
Knowledge of destination								
<b>People character</b>								
Likeability								
Friendliness								
Helpful								
Courteous								
Trustworthiness								
Honest								
<b>People competencies</b>								
Work ethic								

Industriousness									
Individualism									
Education level									
Language skills									
<b>Country competencies</b>									
Workers skill level									
Availability of skilled workers									
Technology level									
Stability of economy									
Political stability									
Level of democracy									
Level of bureaucracy									
Level of corruption									
<b>Country character</b>									
Quality of life									
Rights and freedom									
Wealth									
Environment/pollution controls									
Role in world politics									
Political stability									
<b>Evaluation of people and country</b>									
Enjoy being with the people									
Overall rating of people									
Overall rating of country									
Knowledge of country									
Alignment with own country									
<b>Travel intentions</b>									
Willingness to travel									
Willingness to recommend									
Willingness to return									
Willingness to extend stay									

***Demographic information***

**Gender:**

Male

Female

**Your age:** \_\_\_\_\_ years

**Your residence:**

Budapest

Megyeszékhely

Egyéb város

Község, falu

**Education:**

- Alapfokú
- Középfok, érettségi
- Főiskola, BA/Bsc
- Egyetem, MA/Msc
- PhD, doktori, MBA
- 

**How do you evaluate your financial situation compared to other people around you?**

- Much worse than the average
- A little worse than the average
- Average
- A little better than the average
- Much better than the average
- 

**How do you evaluate your self-confidence compared to other people around you?**

- Much lower than the average
- A little lower than the average
- Average
- A little higher than the average
- Much higher than the average
- 

**Do you speak foreign languages?**

- No
- Yes  language: 1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**How many times do you travel abroad a year?**

I couldn't travel abroad during the last year

---

1-2 times	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-4 times	<input type="checkbox"/>
more times	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**Have you ever lived abroad? (at least 3 month period)**No, never Yes 

How long? \_\_\_\_\_ months

How many times? \_\_\_\_\_ times so far

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## Publications related to the topic of the dissertation

<b>Book chapter</b>	Malota Erzsébet - Kelemen Kata (szerk.)(2011): Nemzetközi marketing a hazai gyakorlatban. Pearson Publishing, Harlow, Essex. pp. 53-57.
<b>Article</b>	
Barbara Jenes	Az országimázs alakításának lehetőségei. Marketing és Menedzsment, 2005/2. szám, pp. 18-29.
Barbara Jenes	A környezettudatos magatartás és az országimázs kapcsolata. Marketing és Menedzsment, 2007/6. szám, pp. 34-44.
Barbara Jenes	Olimpia és imázsépítés: Peking 2008. Marketing és Menedzsment, 2008/3. szám, pp. 16-24.
Barbara Jenes Erzsébet Malota Judit Simon	Az országimázs mérhetősége elméletben és gyakorlatban. A magyar országimázs felmérése az egyetemisták körében 2008-ban Marketing és Menedzsment, 2008/5-6. szám, pp. 137-149.
Barbara Jenes	A 'pusztaromantika' helye a magyar országimázsban Kilátások az Országmárka Tanács megalakulása kapcsán Marketing és Menedzsment, 2009/2. szám, pp. 64-72.
<b>International conference (presentation/proceedings)</b>	
Barbara Jenes Erzsébet Malota Judit Simon	Reconsidering the Measurement of Country Image and Country Branding – Theory and Practice „Marketing Theory Challenges in Transitional Societies” Conference, Zagreb (HR), 2008. szeptember 26-27. pp. 99-107.
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<b>Hungarian conference (presentation/proceedings)</b>	
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