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SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

# CONSUMER ANIMOSITY AND WILLINGNESS TO BUY RUSSIAN PRODUCTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Ljubljana, December 2022                                      GORAN PRONJ

# AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**COO** – Country-of-origin

**US** – The United States

**BORA** – Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy

**BO** – Brand Origin

**CI** – Country Image

# INTRODUCTION

Economic globalization throughout the world has given consumers many options to choose from and exposed them to many different marketing tactics and stimuli. The thesis is focused on researching the impact a product's country of origin has in a foreign market. More precisely, it will research the construct of consumer animosity in a present-day context. Ultimately, the field lies within the concept of consumer ideologies – a set of ideals and values that influence the consumer decision-making (Chan & Ilicic, 2019).

Consumer animosity represents repulsion or avoidance of products based on their brand or manufacturing origin, due to antipathy that has been caused by either past or present conflicts. Animosity is triggered by emotions and not objective product evaluation, therefore such behavior represents an affective response in regards to a certain transgression or an offence (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

Prior research has shown a correlation between consumer animosity and product avoidance, including boycotts in more severe cases. Impact of consumer animosity on product judgments is unclear and the findings on the matter are reviewed as well. Nevertheless, consumer animosity does result in lower willingness to buy, including in the cases where the offending country has a favorable image in that market.

The empirical research also examines potential demographic differences regarding the levels of animosity and its impact. However, unlike consumer ethnocentrism, animosity does not display itself with the same tendencies. For example, education was not found to have a significant impact on animosity, whilst the opposite tends to hold for consumer ethnocentrism.

Consumer animosity may emerge as a serious threat for international businesses and may heavily impact a brand's strategic positioning in that market. Animosity can be either stable (a remnant of past antipathy) or situational (triggered by an event) (Jung, 2002; Ang, 2004). The issue with the latter is also its unpredictability, as businesses are not capable of accurately predicting these hypothetical conflicts. That is another reason why foreign investors require confidence and consider bilateral relations and the overall political climate before deciding to invest somewhere abroad. Therefore, political risk is a central concern of foreign investors. If the animosity feelings become strong enough, they may even impact the home-country's businesses that have entered the offending-country's market, which was not particularly examined in the field's literature so far (Jensen et al., 2012).

Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused a tectonic shift in international relations globally, with tensions rising between the two countries to levels not seen since the end of the Cold War. The political tensions have immediately translated to economic woes. However, it is not only Russian businesses that have been impacted – the American companies operating in

Russia are facing pressures too. Many American businesses have entered the Russian market since the fall of communism, yet today they are facing strong pressure at home to discontinue doing business in Russia (Biron, 2022). Those that have showed doubt are also facing calls for their boycott. Considering the situation, the purpose of the thesis is as follows:

1. To examine the degree of anti-Russian sentiment among American consumers through the measurement of the consumer animosity construct and to explore how consumer animosity influences their purchase behavior;

2. To link the theoretical framework of consumer animosity to practical solutions;
3. To consider managerial implications to both Russian and American businesses that have found themselves being affected by the diplomatic fallout;

The main goal of the research is based in its purpose – to successfully build a theoretical review on top of which an empirical research is added. The review of existing literature represents secondary data collection, while a survey questionnaire is used for obtaining primary data. The secondary data collection is required for establishing a foundation of the empirical research, its methodology, measurement and the statistical analysis.

The thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter deals with the literature review, starting from the base point – foundation of country-of-origin (hereinafter COO) effects research. The literature review will explore the field's development, as well as its criticism and the ways the academia has responded to the theory limitations. The chapter will also shortly analyze the construct of consumer ethnocentrism, as consumer animosity has emerged as a separate branch through its validation being a separate, independent construct from ethnocentrism. Finally, the literature review will delve into the emergence and the development of the consumer animosity construct, research into its antecedents and its outcomes. It will provide an overview of its taxonomy as well as the methodology deployed in its measurement.

The second chapter introduces the empirical section of the thesis, where the research of consumer animosity in the United States is described. The conceptual model is presented, developed based on the findings of the literature review. The research hypotheses are defined and the rest of the information relevant to the research methodology is presented.

The third chapter presents the primary data collected, with descriptive statistics as well as a statistical analysis of the data, after which hypotheses testing is conducted.

The fourth chapter provides a discussion of the results obtained through the statistical analysis and hypotheses testing. The primary data analysis offers a foundation for the discussion with the goal of providing main implications of the results and an overall conclusion of the study, together with a consideration of its limitations and suggestions for future research.

# 1 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND CONSUMER ANIMOSITY LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1 Overview and the development of the COO studies

The increasing rate of economic globalization and the development of e-commerce allowed for the emergence of a 'global consumer' and as foreign made products became widely available so did the concept of country-of-origin effects gain momentum in academic research (Pegan, Vianelli & Luca, 2019). The first study was conducted by Schooler (1965, as cited in Dinnie, 2004), establishing the connection between a product's made-in label and the consumers' perception regarding the product characteristics, while numerous studies have emerged since then, examining the concept from different angles (Dinnie, 2004). The theoretical framework was built upon cue utilization. The consumer receives information from two types of cues through the decision-making process: intrinsic (inherent to product nature) and extrinsic (price, brand or country of origin) (Pegan et al., 2019, p. 3-5). Therefore, the COO studies focus on the role of extrinsic cues of a product, with the researchers often equating the country of origin to other aforementioned extrinsic cues (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). The initial studies were focused on single cues, which would be considered rather simplistic if conducted today in the same manner (Dinnie, 2004).

Dinnie's meta-analysis provides a thorough, chronological description and analysis of the field's development, as well as criticism of the researching process. Even though Schooler's 1965 study paved the way for future research it also suffered from deficiencies that proved to be almost symptomatic of the COO literature. Constant use of student samples, issues with generalizability to wider populations, as well as over-emphasis on tangible products versus intangible services are the main problems Dinnie (2004) has cited. Considering Dinnie's literature review (2004) is quite comprehensive up to 2004, it was used as a foundation and the starting point for further research in the thesis.

Nagashima (1970; 1977) took the first longitudinal approach in the field. As his follow-up research found deteriorating scores for US products that were evaluated, empirical evidence of COO being a dynamic construct emerged. Further confirmation came from Papadopoulos, Heslop, Graby and Avlonitis (1987) ten years later. Besides these studies however, little attention has been given to longitudinal studies within the field, even though all available longitudinal researches indicated changing attitudes. Darling and Puetz (2002a; 2002b) have conducted a study on the attitudes of Finnish consumers towards products from selected countries and have found significant and consistent changes, while the study itself was conducted in five year increments from 1975 until 2000, thus being a rare example of a study spanning across such a long period.

According to Dinnie (2004), one of the most widely cited studies in the country-of-origin literature is Han's (1989) examination of the role of country image in consumer evaluations of TV sets and cars. When faced with unfamiliar products consumers are

unable to detect their true quality, thus they may refer to country image as a halo which influences their attitudes towards the brand. However, Han (1989) also notes that other studies have shown that the product's price has a significant role in product evaluation. In contrast, once the consumers become familiar with products from a certain country "country image may become a construct that summarizes consumer's beliefs about product attributes and directly affects their brand attitude" (Han, 1989). Han's suggestions refer more to national macroeconomic policies than to individual marketers and managers of export oriented brands. In another widely cited study, Roth and Romeo (1992) propose a framework for managing country-of-origin effects through matching product category and country image perceptions. In other words, the sample consumers were willing to buy German or Japanese cars because those countries received high scores on workmanship. However, Dinnie (2004) criticized this study for not including the cultural dimension of country image introduced by Han (1990).

The first two periods as defined by Dinnie (2004) were rather incoherent in conclusions. On the other hand, those decades did establish the foundations of the field and enabled its development. Hence, the third period saw to re-conceptualize the field, and to solve problems of generalizability to wider populations, as well as inconsistencies in the studies and research as it happened with Roth and Romeo (1992) and Han (1990). Dinnie (2004) refers to Papadoupulos' and Heslop's (1993) research as a landmark text. Papadoupulos and Heslop criticized the concept as misleading as it assumes only one place of origin of a product and instead proposed the (accepted) term "product-country image" or PCI. The concept is simple, yet effective – even though a product might be manufactured in one country it is the brand's origin that determines which country it is tied to (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993).

Before Dinnie (2004), Peterson and Jolibert (1995) conducted the first comprehensive meta-analysis of the field and found that study conditions that tend to produce large effect sizes are those that depart the most from reality and that there is therefore a need for additional empirical research that builds on the present investigation to comprehensively address both the antecedents and consequences of the country of origin effect under a variety of circumstances (Dinnie, 2004). In an effort to respond to Peterson's and Jolibert's criticism and to increase the generalizability of the COO research, Nebenzahl, Jaffe and Lampert (1997) sought to establish universal taxonomy of the field, albeit unsuccessfully.

Dinnie (2004) concludes that his review of the literature has revealed that the overwhelming majority of country-of-origin studies have been quantitative rather than qualitative in nature, which he labeled as "methodological poverty". Only two of all the studies analyzed were qualitative (Dinnie, 2004). As previously noted, most studies have also leaned on consumer durables, with little regards to services even though Javalgi, Cutler and Winans (2001) have found relevance for it.

## 1.2 Increased criticism and the relevance gap

Samiee, Shimp and Sharma (2005) have studied how much consumers actually recognize a product's or brand's origin, using the categorization theory and attribute diagnosticity as a foundation for their research. Samiee, Shimp and Sharma (2005) concluded that the importance and the relevancy of the country of origin studies has been inflated, as their past research has also shown that the brand origin recognition is most often based on the product's name. In other words, if the brand name is French for example, the consumers associate its origins with France regardless where it really comes from. Whether inflated or not, these findings also offer managerial and marketing implications, however those might not be considered wholly ethical. After finding that the Brand Origin Recognition Accuracy (BORA) is indeed low among the consumer sample, Samiee, Shimp and Sharma (2005) further criticize the COO studies for experimentally manipulating COO cues so that the sample is often presented with very little differentiating information other than the brand's origin, which in their stance inflates the true significance country of origin has in consumer behavior.

By 2006 over 400 academic articles dealing with COO effects have been published, however only the aforementioned research by Samiee, Shimp and Sharma (2005) question the field's relevancy (Usunier, 2006). Usunier (2006) states that the root of the relevance gap problem lies in the very first study conducted by Schooler (1965), an opinion shared to a degree by Dinnie (2004). The experiment isolated the cues meaningful and impactful to a purchasing decision such as brand name, price and quality, thus inflating the role of COO by forcing the respondents to think about the country of origin (Usunier, 2006). Contradicting to the introduction of this thesis, Usunier (2006) suggests that the COO studies are less relevant exactly because of globalization, as multinational companies tend to de-emphasize their product's country of origin, mainly due to outsourcing to developing or newly industrialized nations with cheaper labor and lower quality perceptions. He goes as far as proposing the COO studies have emerged from the 'besieged fortress' scenario, originating from economic fears caused by the rise of Asian nations' exports as to confirm the superiority of Western manufacturing quality. Another claim made by Usunier (2006) is that it is financially more feasible for the academics themselves to replicate studies than to question the validity of the COO as a field, but also that the high degree of specialization among researchers excessively narrows down the research topic.

Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2008) also examined to which degree the consumers accurately identify the COO and have found even lower accuracy than Samiee, Shimp and Sharma (2005). The study concludes that if the consumers are not aware or not able to accurately identify the country of origin of production (COOP), then same applies to the product's alternatives, thus COOP cannot play a significant role as an extrinsic cue in purchasing decisions (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008). The study also implies that further research should take into account the limited knowledge consumers actually have on country of origin and that the actual significance COO has could be tested by a

qualitative research – interviewing consumers immediately after a purchase or asking them about the country of origin of the products they already own (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008).

Even as the debate regarding COO relevancy did not subside, the research from this period brought new insights about the field, such as generally low BORA metrics or the importance of linguistic cues (Usunier, 2011). Brand development itself has many facets, and building a brand's image around the country of origin poses as one of them.

Diamantopoulos, Matarazzo, Montanari and Petrychenko (2021) have investigated the monetization of COO effects, drawing on equity theory and suggested that brands that do benefit from a very strong country image are able to implement premium prices more easily, and that that calls for communicating their country of origin through packaging and advertising. Drozdenko and Jensen (2009) reported the same results in their study of the impact COO effects have on pricing. This stance also goes in line with the findings of Magnusson, Westjohn and Zdravkovic (2011) that country image does matter regardless of the fact that most studies conducted so far have found overall low BORA scores. Directly signaling a brand's origin manipulates the consumer to add that as a cue into their evaluation, thus the cue itself becomes more significant and impacts the purchasing decision and product judgment. Halkias, Florack, Diamantopoulos and Palcu (2021) have found that origin labeling does 'break' into the consumers' perceptual space, even if the labeling is subtle.

In a more recent review, Lu, Heslop, Thomas and Kwan (2016) examine the current state of COO research. The analysis shows a downward trend in not only the number of COO articles published after 2010, but their overall influence, measured by the proportion of publications found in top-tier journals. The study also concluded a positive trend: half of the common critiques of COO studies are no longer relevant as the field is becoming less US-centric, more theory driven and with increased methodological sophistication (single cue studies are becoming quite rare) (Lu et al., 2016). On the other hand, theoretical development of the field is stagnating and some theories such as the categorization theory are too frequently used. According to Lu et al. (2016), Maheswaran and Chen (2006) suggest shifting from cognitive to emotion-based theories, while Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar and Diamantopoulos (2015) believe constructs such as consumer affinity, cosmopolitanism, animosity and national dis-identification are sparking new directions. At last, reproducibility and generalizability remain as significant deficiencies of the field – as long as legitimacy of the findings drawn from the research is question the debate regarding the relevancy of COO studies cannot be brought to an end. (Lu et al., 2016).

Most recently, Samiee and Chabowski (2021) have conducted an analysis with the goal of identifying the most influential COO studies up to date to then develop a spatial representation of the field's knowledge structure. They identified three research chains. Their key features are presented below:

*Table 1. Spatial presentation of Research chain 1 according to Samiee and Chabowski (2021).*

| Research chain 1 | |
|---|---|
| Emphasis | 1. Product category<br>2. Consumer evaluations |
| Theoretical basis | 1. Categorization theory<br>2. Role of brands |
| Key topics | 1. Consumer involvement<br>2. Consumer perception |
| Notes | Country image is important in conditions of lower familiarity and involvement. Cognitive, conactive and normative influences considered important (Samiee & Chabowski, 2021). |

*Adapted from Samiee and Chabowski (2021).*

*Table 2. Spatial presentation of Research chain 2 according to Samiee and Chabowski (2021).*

| Research chain 2 | |
|---|---|
| Emphasis | 1. Animosity<br>2. Brand origin (BO) |
| Theoretical basis | Dominated by Social Identity Theory. Applied alone or in combination with: cognitive dissonance, attribution theory, group conflict theory, attitude theory, affinity theory, sponsorship theory, or attachment theory. |
| Key topics | 1. Importance of production country (developed countries focus on BO and manufacturing country, while developing countries focus on country-image (CI) and price as relevant)<br>2. Product type (functional vs. identity)<br>3. Social identity theory (focused on the relevancy of consumer identity) |
| Notes | It is acknowledged that affinity has stronger impact than animosity (Samiee & Chabowski, 2021). |

*Adapted from Samiee and Chabowski (2021).*

*Table 3. Spatial presentation of Research chain 3 according to Samiee and Chabowski (2021).*

| Research chain 3 | |
|---|---|
| Emphasis | 1. Country image <br> 2. Consumer-based perceptions |
| Theoretical basis | No single influential theory; Categorization Theory and Associative Network Theory most common. |
| Key topics | 1. Branding <br> 2. CI |
| Notes | Not as extensive as the first two. |

*Adapted from Samiee and Chabowski (2021).*

Samiee and Chabowski (2021) suggest further research should focus on examining the cognitive process to explain how and why consumers deny usage of a product from a particular country. Brands that originate in countries with strong reputation should emphasize it and 'educate' the consumers as an attempt to increase BORA within the market, while those that come from countries with tarnished or weak reputation should move away from signaling their COO. The current goal of the COO field is to provide market-oriented outcomes meaningful on a firm-level global marketing strategy (Samiee & Chabowski, 2021). Traditional COO research has assumed that COO information is available and processed by the consumers who then use it as a cue during product evaluation. Consequently, COO information was made readily available in research, thus 'forcing' consumers to evaluate products based on that particular cue, which inflated the COO effects and measured them incorrectly (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008; Samiee et al., 2005). Despite heavy criticism emerging from mid-2000s, the field did not lose relevancy and managed to bridge some major deficiencies (Lu et al., 2016).

## 1.3 Literature review of consumer animosity studies

### 1.3.1 Foundation and the theoretical background

As a model of foreign product purchase, consumer animosity was first tested by Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998) in China, where attitudes of Chinese consumers about Japanese products and Japan itself were explored. The study proposed that the remnants of antipathy (whether past or ongoing) will have a negative effect on willingness to buy. Four general constructs were employed: Japanese product quality, willingness to buy Japanese products, consumer ethnocentrism and animosity towards Japan. The results have shown that consumer animosity does emerge as a distinct construct from consumer ethnocentrism (Klein et al., 1998). Posing as first of its kind this research is regarded as fundamental within the animosity branch of country of origin studies.

A year later, Klein and Ettenson (1999) have also tested discriminant validity between consumer ethnocentrism and animosity, showing that the profile of an ethnocentric consumer is indeed different from the one harboring animosity towards products from a certain nation (in their case Japan), thus making a step further in confirming consumer animosity as a branch distinct from consumer ethnocentrism. The main difference being that highly ethnocentric consumers tend to avoid all foreign products, while consumer animosity targets products from a specific country of origin, regardless whether that particular consumer harbors ethnocentric tendencies or not (Klein & Ettenson, 1999). Animosity is an antecedent of the negative, affective facet of the general country image, as defined per Hoffman, Mai and Smirnova (2011), while Klein et al. (1998) define it as "the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events" (Klein et al., 1998, p. 90).

Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) have analyzed the impact country of origin has based on the information processing model of consumer decision-making, a framework developed by Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989, in Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). The framework distinguished three different mechanisms: cognitive, affective and normative. It is important to note that according to Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), the boundaries between these three mechanisms are not clear and that they interact between each other during the process of decision making experienced by the consumer. The cognitive mechanism refers to using the COO as a signal for product quality and quality attributes, and these are largely shaped by the product-country image – a mental representation of a nation's people, products or culture (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). For example, the preference for German cars is based on the product-country match: perception of German craftsmanship together with the fact that Germany boasts a highly developed economy matches the requirements for manufacturing a high quality, durable and reliable car. Just as favorable are attitudes that occur within "hedonic" products that have a French-sounding brand name (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

The second mechanism refers to affective aspects of the COO effects, formed directly through personal experiences or indirectly through mass media, art or education. Therefore the product use or ownership can also be linked to the consumer associating it with a group, role, self-image, and even self-actualization (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). This reaction is invoked by "fundamental values systems, individuals' mindsets, and consumer social contexts, that is, the three facets that are at heart of what we call consumer ideologies" (Dmitrović, Vida & Reardon, 2009). Consumer animosity represents a manifestation of consumer ideologies (Dmitrović et al., 2009), which is the focal point of this research. Despite the recognition of emotions in the definition of animosity, Harmeling, Magnusson and Singh (2015) criticize the fact that the majority of researchers have used a simple valence-based approach which does not allow for differentiation of the effects that wide range of emotions have on their behavior. The affective mechanism of animosity represents a response to the cognitive mechanism of animosity – a belief that a certain country is causing damage to one's own, which is defined as animosity beliefs

(Harmeling et al., 2015). Harmeling et al. (2015) divide the affective response into two types of anger emotions: agonistic (retaliation driven) and retreat (avoidance) emotions. Their research found that these two types of emotions result in a different coping behavior – agonistic emotions result in negative word of mouth, while retreat emotions in negative product judgments. Both, however, result in product avoidance.

The normative mechanism delves into the consumers' personal or societal norms. Buying domestic is seen as an action that supports the national economy, which also holds for the view that buying foreign is an act of support for the economy of the country the product originates from. Therefore, purchasing a product coming from a country that perpetuates objectionable political actions may be experienced as amoral. Boycotts represent the ultimate consequence of anger in consumer animosity, however they are not only influenced by the affective mechanism, but also the normative one (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

The importance of these three mechanisms lies in their interdependent nature, that is, the fact that the interplay of all three aspects result in a certain behavior, even as they investigate different angles of the consumers' psychology when analyzed separately. As suggested by Usunier (2006), COO studies should cross the too rigid specialization boundaries established in the academia and see to conduct research in a more interdisciplinary level. Therefore, adding the angle of consumer psychology to the field is a step in the right direction when it comes to finding the true relevance of COO research, as it can explain constructs such as consumer animosity with more detail.

1.3.2  Development of the consumer animosity studies

Klein (2002) has found that the consumer animosity model is applicable not only in a 'high-anger', but also a 'low-anger' context – the initial study was from Nanjing, a city which suffered a brutal Japanese occupation during World War II, therefore the anger remained at high levels, predicting consumer animosity and its concomitant consequences. On the other side anger levels were much lower in the USA where the 2002 study was conducted (US consumer views of Japanese products), yet the animosity of consumers and its implications nonetheless persisted, however to a notably lesser degree. This claim is supported by Nijssen and Douglas (2004), as their study has found that animosity is a strong predictor of reluctance to buy in more moderate circumstances as well – German occupation of the Netherlands in their case. Their study also confirmed that animosity persists in small, import-dependent nations as well, but also that foreign products are judged more favorably in cases where no domestic alternative is available (Nijssen & Douglas, 2004). Klein (2002) has also introduced the Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase (see Figure 2), where animosity (as a separate construct from consumer ethnocentrism) influences willingness to buy independently from product judgments, whereas consumers that score high on the CETSCALE tend to negatively judge foreign/imported products as well.

*Figure 1. Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase*
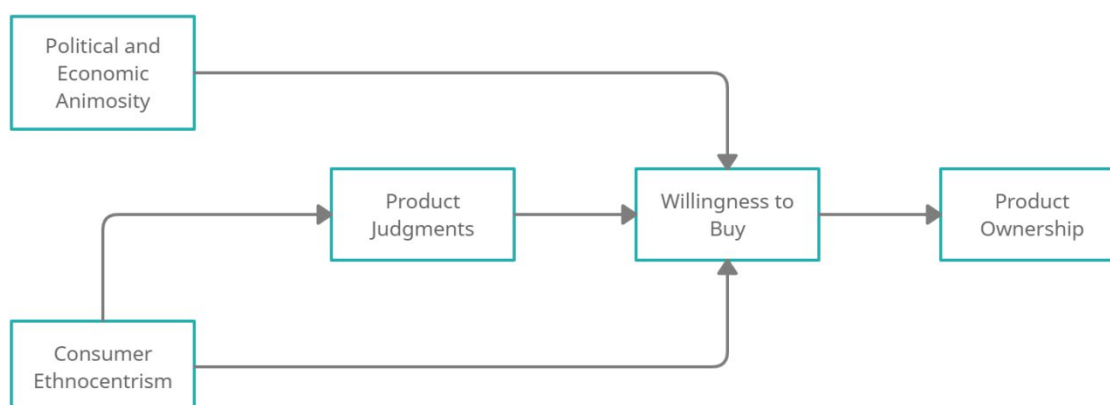


*Source: Klein (2002).*

Klein also notes that the notion of product judgments being separate from willingness to buy within the consumer animosity model requires further exploration, as to see whether the consumers are truly able to separate their anger from actual product assessment, as well as to see the limits at which the consumers are willing to forego their principles in order to obtain a highly desirable product (Klein, 2002). The ability to evaluate certain products positively, while maintaining animosity towards its place of origin may be explained by the theory of attitude specificity, as the nature of consumer attitudes is not one-dimensional (Amine, 2008). However, further research showed that this notion is unlikely to hold and that consumers are more likely to go in the direction of cognitive consonance (Hoffmann et al., 2011; Russell & Russell, 2010; Shoham, Davidow, Klein & Ruvio, 2006).

Consumer boycotts represent the final manifestation of consumer animosity. They do not simply develop over time, but are rather caused by an escalation of political tensions (or similar events), they do not last indefinitely, but depending on their intensity and success, are able to significantly hurt a brand, or even force it out of the market. Boycotts are in line with the construct of consumer animosity in the sense that they disregard both product judgments (objective evaluations of quality) and ethnocentric sentiments, while posing as a reaction to a perceived external threat. This claim is supported by Ettenson and Klein (2005), who studied a boycott of French products by Australian consumers and found a positive correlation between the animosity and reluctance to buy, regardless of the persisting high quality perceptions of French products. Furthermore, ethnocentric tendencies remained constant, therefore the reluctance to buy cannot be explained by a general sentiment of avoiding all foreign products. The study showed that the lower willingness to buy French products is distinctly a consequence of intensified political turmoil between the nations, and not a consequence of an increased ethnocentrism in Australia (Ettenson & Klein, 2005).

Ali (2020) studied boycott intentions of Kurdish consumers towards products from Turkey. It is the first study to examine the Turkish-Kurdish conflict from a consumer perspective.

The study found high animosity levels towards Turkey. Boycott participation, boycott motivation and purchase aversion were positively correlated with animosity. However, the correlation between product judgments and animosity was weak. That is another, recent, example of the inconsistency of research findings regarding the impact consumer animosity has on product judgments.

Shoham et al. (2006) have investigated another political/armed conflict from the marketing point of view, specifically the conflict between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs. The study found three antecedents of consumer animosity: dogmatism, nationalism and internationalism, with the latter being inversely related to animosity. These three antecedents explained 44 per cent of the variance in animosity when combined (Shoham et al., 2006). The unique point of this study is that it attempts to extend the animosity model to include intra-country ethnic tensions as well, with the results of the study showing such a possibility. However, Shoham et al. (2006) have found that animosity has a much stronger negative impact on product judgments, in contrast to the findings of Ettenson and Klein (2005) and Klein (2002). The explanation for this is based on the intensity and persistence of animosity – less recent and less intense escalations do not negatively impact product judgments, while the opposite holds for situations marked by intense and recent turmoil. From another angle, Gineikiene and Diamantopoulos (2017) state that nostalgia has a role in the animosity of Lithuanian consumers towards Russian products. Despite the animosity being present due to substantially negative past events, nostalgia acts as a mediator between animosity and purchase behavior. However, that is not the case in Ukraine, where current/recent negative events are present. This study is a great example of how stable and situational animosities have differing effects on consumer behavior. It also confirms the aforementioned explanation of animosity and product judgments offered by Shoham et al. (2006). Nonetheless, this somewhat blurs the clarity of previous findings within the Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase (Figure 2 earlier), regarding the process of product judgments and quality evaluations.

Regarding the intensity and persistence of animosity, Little and Singh (2015) have explored consumer animosity through focusing events research. Focusing events are "sudden, attention-grabbing occurrences that used as a basis for future foreign policy change or interest group mobilization" (Little & Singh, 2015). Focusing events are extensively used in political science research and are not present in marketing literature. The study found that the level of animosity depends on the nature of the focusing event. A purposeful action with intended negative consequences by the offending country leads to higher animosity levels and significantly lower willingness to buy than a seemingly unintended diplomatic fallout (Little & Singh, 2015). Therefore, not all diplomatic transgressions that spark animosity cause strong consumer backlash. The ability to guide consumers to believe that the transgression was unintended can shield the brand from the negative effects of animosity. However, such strategies easily fall under the bar of what is considered ethical conduct.

Hinck (2005) captured a somewhat unique phenomena in Germany post-reunification: at first the locally made products were shunned in the East, but over time a reversal in consumer preferences occurred and so the Eastern brands managed to regain their market share over the West German ones. He could not find the explanation in pricing (some Eastern products were more expensive), quality (some goods were perceived as inferior), familiarity or lower risk (Hinck, 2005). Furthermore, as some foreign brands were quite successful in East Germany he states that there are several phenomena occurring simultaneously, and that consumer ethnocentrism is not sufficient to explain them all, pointing to the consumer animosity construct being present as well. Hinck (2005) points to the fact that the unification was a painful and a very radical process for the population in the East, while not much had changed for those living in the Germany's West, thus the 'Osties' began to feel like 'second-class citizens' in their own country which might explain the repulsion towards the Western brands. Not only did the study find strong domestic animosity, contrasted with a surprisingly low ethnocentrism in the geo-historical context, but also highly positive product judgments regarding the West German brands, which implies that animosity does present itself as a construct separate from quality evaluations, as stated by Klein's Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase (2002). However, considering other studies as well it cannot be said this always holds, but it does explain product judgments and the impact animosity has on them is subject to the situational context within which it occurs. Hinck's study (2005) also supports the findings made by Shoham et al. (2006) showing that intra-national animosity may occur in homogenous populations as well, which further implies that political animosity is able to produce very negative effects and that it should not be disregarded as 'weak' when compared to war animosity.

One of the things Hinck (2005) notes is that his findings do not confirm Klein's (1998) analysis that showed there was no significant difference between different age groups, which Klein and Ettenson (1999) confirmed themselves in a follow-up study a year later. Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007) also confirm the notion that younger consumers experience less animosity than the older ones, therefore findings of this particular hypothesis seem to be consistent. Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007) have also found no impact of the place of residence or gender on the experienced animosity, concluding that the modern nation state 'homogenized' consumers within their national borders. However, this may hold for Greece, as the country's population is neither large nor particularly diverse, and therefore cannot be taken for granted. For example, a replication of Klein's (1998) initial study, but in a different region of China, one that was not so brutally affected by the war could possibly shed some light on this statement. Another contradiction Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007) had with Klein and Ettenson (1999) was that they found education level to be positively related with animosity. They explain this by concluding that the better educated Greeks follow the news more regularly, yet the true answer remains unclear and calls for further research.

Regarding the inconsistencies, Shoham et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of consumer animosity studies in order to establish results that would provide a clearer picture. Shoham et al. (2016) state that the previous studies tended to exclude the indirect effect animosity and ethnocentrism had on willingness to buy by omitting product quality judgments, thus their analysis points out that the influence of the constructs might be stronger than previously thought, as well as that consumer animosity does have a directly negative and a significant effect on quality judgments, which they back with the cognitive dissonance theory.

Most studies consider animosity as a general hostility and tend to include a couple of items that measure anger. This approach "conflates cognitions and emotions within the same variable" (Antonetti, Manika & Katsikeas, 2019), disregarding the complexity of anger as an emotion. Antonetti et al. (2019) claim that the way emotions have been treated in animosity studies has been inconsistent. That might be the reason why the effects animosity has on product judgments is unclear. Their study examined animosity beliefs through "threat emotions" (anger and fear) and "extreme emotions" (contempt, disgust). The results found that in situations where animosity feelings are not intense enough to elicit contempt and disgust, the effects of animosity prove to be milder. That indicates the potential for companies to mediate the conflict their country of origin has with the consumers in the "offended" market. However, in case of extreme emotions the consumers tend to carry implicit negative evaluations of the country. Such phenomenon negatively impacts product judgments, contrary to the effects of threat emotions that have been widely used to explain animosity beliefs. Therefore, in cases of extreme emotions there is very little room for marketers to alleviate the poor perceptions their brand is receiving due to its origins (Antonetti et al., 2019). The study by Antonetti et al. (2019) attempts to tackle a very visible gap that is present in animosity literature from a somewhat different angle. A longitudinal study that begins in a time of crisis could test these findings. First, by measuring product judgments in a time of extreme emotions and then again, later, once those feelings dissipate into milder, threat emotions.

Research of the effects animosity has on tourism has gained some attention in recent years. Disregarding services in general COO research has been identified as one of the main shortcomings of the field's literature by Dinnie (2004). Alvarez and Campo (2019) indicate that the existing studies of this kind entirely focus on "traditional enemies" (e.g. Russia-USA or Japan-China). They further postulate that animosity is a multidimensional concept that does not exclusively arise from bilateral conflicts. Therefore it is necessary to approach the research without these preconceived notions. To address animosity in a broader manner, the survey contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions collected the reasons for dislike of a particular country. The results of this study support the findings of Hoffmann et al. (2011), who stated that animosity has three universal drivers: perceived threat, antithetical political attitude and negative personal experiences. However, the animosity levels do not directly impact the intention to visit, but rather the destination image, which acts as a mediator and is a direct predictor of visit

intentions (Alvarez & Campo, 2019). A year prior, Stepchenkova, Su and Shichkova (2018) had the same conclusion in a similar study.

Farah and Mehdi (2021) conducted the most recent literature review of consumer animosity studies. They note that different sources of animosity have been found over time, mentioning cultural and colonial animosity and stating that even though political and economic animosity are more common, religious and personal animosity also have a potentially very strong effect on consumer behavior. They further state that the major impediment of consumer animosity studies is the inability to exactly determine the trigger behind the construct. The historic (past) animosity feelings may not be as impactful as current ones that are caused by an ongoing political or economic dispute (Farah & Mehdi, 2021). Perhaps the answer may lie in the intensity of emotions the animosity beliefs trigger, as pointed out by Antonetti et al. (2019).

### 1.3.3    Extension to consumer racism, stereotyping and consumer affinity

Ouellet (2007) approached the animosity construct from a different angle, by exploring the concept of consumer racism, defining it as "an alternative explanation of animosity-like phenomena" (Ouellet, 2007). Furthermore, 'neoracism' is described as racism that shifted away from race to culture or ethnicity, and defined as the most prevalent form of racism in the modern society. Racism always comes from the dominant ethnic group and targets one or more dominant minorities. Overt forms of racism have become socially unacceptable, however subtle manifestations are difficult to erase and they still persist – whom to employ or promote, choose as a tenant, or whom to shop from. Although closely tied to consumer animosity, according to Ouellet (2007), consumer racism and animosity are two different constructs. The difference lies in product evaluation: animosity does not have a negative effect on product judgments, while consumer racism does. Secondly, animosity is socially acceptable, while racism is undesirable (Ouellet, 2007). However, consumer animosity, racism and ethnocentrism are often intertwined.

Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) have already noted that the studies of consumer animosity did not have consistent findings on product judgments and have in some cases found a correlation between animosity and decreasing evaluation scores. This does not directly imply that consumer racism is not a separate construct from animosity and it is plausible that the negative views Israeli Jews have when evaluating Israeli Arabs' products for example (Shoham et al., 2006), are in fact a consequence of racism and not animosity, even though both are present and coexist, intertwining the overall effects these attitudes have on consumer behavior. From this perspective it is also difficult to disentangle stable animosity as defined per Jung et al. (2002) and Ang et al. (2004) from racism, especially on a macro-level and between two nations. The findings of Ahmed and d'Astous (2008) in the case of Taiwanese animosity towards China can potentially be considered as an argument in favor of differentiating consumer racism from animosity, as these two

countries share both racial and cultural heritage, thus the reluctance to buy cannot be explained by the former construct.

Russell and Russell (2010) have studied the impact country stereotypes have in regards to consumer animosity. They base their research first on the fact that country associations have an impact on country image and product evaluations, arguing that Klein et al.'s (1998) conclusion that animosity does not impact product judgments does not hold, citing the example provided by Shoham et al. (2006). The first study shows there is a negative relationship between product evaluation and brands perceived as 'stereotypically American'. It is worth noting that this study is conceived in a way that it directly opposes Klein et al.'s (1998) Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase. The second study was of qualitative nature – consumers were evaluating a new foreign brand of energy drinks through two different advertisements: one firmly indicating a US origin and one not indicating it at all. The study found that those consumers that harbor strong feelings of animosity towards the USA will negatively evaluate and react to the brand that is perceived strongly stereotypically American. Therefore, linking a brand to country stereotypes may induce prejudice and discrimination towards the product.

On the other end, Maher, Clark and Maher (2010) introduced the construct opposite of consumer animosity – consumer admiration or affinity. Just as animosity is an emotion that can be experienced by the consumers, so is admiration. Maher et al. (2010) state that animosity itself can be displaced by the affinity and that little attention has been paid to the other end of the spectrum. They further state that the determinants of animosity lie in nationalism (exclusionism), while consumer affinity has its antecedents in internationalism (cosmopolitanism). The study supported the hypothesis that internationalism will be positively related to affinity, however it found no relationship between internationalism and animosity, just as it was the case in the study conducted by Ishii (2009), therefore it is the second study analyzed in the literature review that established no correlation between the two. Asseraf and Shoham (2016) concluded that animosity and affinity should be accounted for simultaneously, as their research has shown that affinity outweighs animosity when it comes to the impact on product judgments and ownership, suggesting that the 'halo effect' is stronger when it comes to affinity. The research also showed that affinity and animosity are able to coexist as two different constructs that are independent from each other (Asseraf & Shoham, 2016) and thus affinity should not be disregarded in favor of animosity in marketing strategies, as its impact might be stronger.

### 1.3.4   Consumer ethnocentrism

A research conducted in 1979 by Chasin and Jaffe concluded that industrial products manufactured in Eastern Europe were inferior to the ones manufactured in the USA, in the eyes of American industrial buyers, thus the research is regarded as a first study that also had a close connection with the construct of consumer ethnocentrism (Dinnie, 2004). Results of the survey showed that 38% of the participants would not buy a product from

the USSR, no matter the price difference of a product of the same quality as the American one (Chasin & Jaffe, 1979). This kind of formulation implies the isolation of COO as an independent extrinsic cue. Even though industrial buyers are regarded as more rational and better informed, Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) have found that these effects do not differ in magnitude when compared to the general consumer goods of the mass market. In simple terms, consumer ethnocentrism is best explained as a preference for domestic over foreign goods and services. Shimp and Sharma (1987) successfully developed a scale that measures the tendency of consumers to behave 'ethnocentrically'. Since consumer ethnocentrism involves ingroup/outgroup orientation, its theoretical background lies in social identity theory (Dinnie, 2004). On the opposite of end of consumer ethnocentrism consumer dis-identification is found, introduced by Josiassen (2011), displayed through the attraction-repulsion matrix (see Figure 1), which encompasses consumer responses that are not merely related to quality expectations. However, this does not mean that these constructs have no influence on quality judgments. From a certain angle it could be said that consumer animosity extended from the construct of consumer ethnocentrism – the pioneer study of animosity, conducted by Klein et al. (1998) later validated the construct of animosity as separate and independent from ethnocentrism through the use of structural equation modeling and by testing discriminant validity (Klein & Ettenson, 1999). In other words, in cases when a consumer is not ethnocentric, they can still harbor animosity towards the products of a certain country and translate those emotions into behavior (product avoidance). On the other hand, Shoham, Gavish and Rose (2016) state that the tendency to study consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism in isolation may have overstated the impact that the each construct has on marketing outcomes.

*Figure 2. Attraction-Repulsion Matrix*
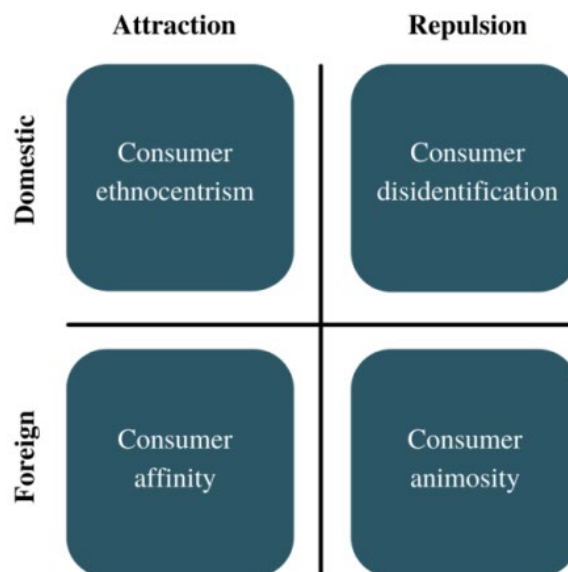


*Source: Josiassen (2011).*

1.3.5   Typology of consumer animosity

As consumer animosity research steadily gained attention Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) have published a review of literature, identifying three groups of studies. The first group refers to the initial academic studies of animosity conducted by Klein et al. (1998) and Klein and Ettenson (1999), where the construct was given a theoretical foundation and where discriminant validity was established in relation to consumer ethnocentrism. The second group of studies represent replications of the initial ones, while the third group attempts to extend to field's coverage to include intra-national animosities, most often stemming from intra-ethnic conflicts within heterogeneous populations in a given country, for example Israel (Shoham et al., 2006), or Bosnia and Herzegovina (Cicic et al., 2005, as cited in Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). The initial study by Klein et al. (1998) distinguishes war and economic animosity, while Jung et al. (2002) and Ang et al. (2004) introduced a taxonomy that also extends from the initial separation into stable vs. situational animosity. More precisely, Jung et al. (2002) and Nijssen and Douglas (2004) talk about 'war animosity' and 'economic animosity', while Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) also add 'religious' and 'personal mentality' animosity (Amine, 2008). This is also the first time that consumer animosity research has been approached from a micro-level of personal animosity, while all other studies exclusively focused on national (macro-level) animosity.

Dividing animosity into stable and situational is supported by Ettenson and Klein (2005), as they had found that negative attitudes towards France had dropped among Australian consumers after the political tensions eased (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). Stable animosity does not occur solely as a result of past military conflicts, but also political ones, as shown in the case of Taiwanese animosity towards China, as a response to the Chinese aspirations for annexing the island (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008). The taxonomy by Ang et al. (2004) defines four dimensions of animosity: stable vs. situational (as described above), and personal vs. national animosity. Personal animosity arises from an individual's negative experiences with a particular country, while the national animosity refers to a much broader conflict (Ang et al., 2004), thus these two dimensions can also be viewed as micro vs. macro animosity by their nature.

Cai, Fang, Yang and Song (2012) discuss the notion of implicit versus explicit animosity, defining the former as "a negative attitude toward an offending nation that is inaccessible by introspection and usually operates implicitly or automatically" (Cai et al., 2012). The study found implicit animosity to be a valid separate construct, not correlated with ethnocentrism, unlike explicit animosity, however the study only used a sample of 106 students, thus further research is required for the construct to be widely introduced into the typology of consumer animosity.

Ang et al. (2004) arrange the animosity in a more general, yet comprehensive way, while Jung et al. (2002), Nijssen and Douglas (2004) and Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007)

delve into its antecedents. Based on qualitative pre-studies, Nes, Yelkur and Silkoset (2012) attempt to define the taxonomy without any preconceived notions regarding the animosity targets (countries) or the reasons for the negative emotions. Besides the already established war and economic animosity, Nes et al. (2012) add political and people animosity dimensions, presenting the Extented Animosity Model (see Figure 3). Reasons for the former are rooted in a given country's internal political regime, while the latter in the dislike of a nation's mentality or perceived hostility. However, "Communist government" is one of the common answers given as a reason for political animosity, which implies a more Anglo-centric approach of the research, which puts cross-national generalizability of the taxonomy in question.

*Figure 3. Extended Animosity Model*
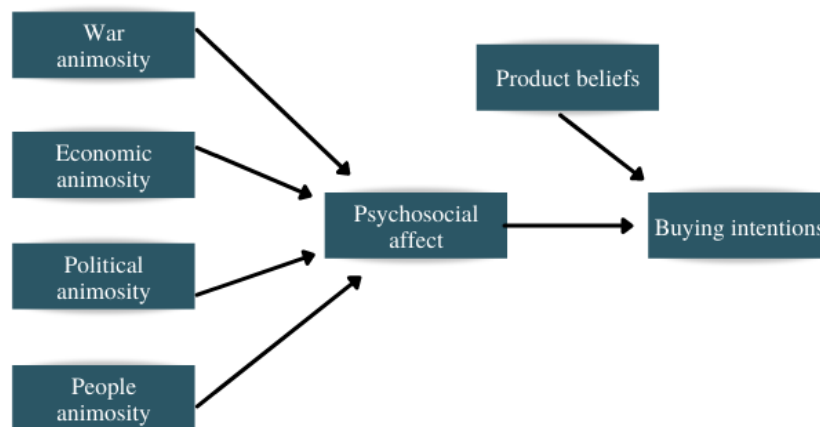


*Source: Nes et al. (2012).*

### 1.3.6 Antecedents of animosity

Ishii (2009) examined the antecedents of consumer animosity and ethnocentrism on a sample of 600 Chinese consumers. The studied countries were Japan and the US and all of the hypotheses were supported, except the one negatively correlating internationalism with animosity. Therefore Ishii's study links patriotism with ethnocentrism and exclusionism with animosity as their antecedents (2009). The structural equation model used in the study contained three demographic determinants as control variables – age, gender and education level. Patriotism was defined as love and attachment for the country, while exclusionism as uncritical acceptance of national authority combined with the belief in one's own national superiority. Internationalism or cosmopolitanism, as the third dimension, operates as the opposite of exclusionism and is portrayed by the rejection of xenophobic attitudes and by the willingness to cooperate with other nations. According to Karasawa (2002, as cited in Ishii, 2009), all three represent independent dimensions of nationalistic feelings and that they can be translated into consumer nationalism as antecedents of ethnocentrism and animosity.

Yang, Snell and Tsai (2015) examined these antecedents from a transnational perspective, researching attitudes of overseas Chinese consumers, in an attempt confirm the definitions provided by Ishii (2009). Once again, patriotism and nationalism were found to have a positive prediction for animosity, while cosmopolitanism had no effect, implying that no matter how open to other cultures a person might be they are nonetheless able to exhibit hostile attitudes toward a country in light of a conflict and both in circumstances of stable as well as situational animosity.

### 1.3.7 Measurement of the construct of consumer animosity

There are also several issues with the research of consumer animosity, and the first one is being shared with the general COO studies as discussed prior to this chapter – even if the consumers possess negative feelings about a country are they aware where all of their products are coming from? Another issue is the lack of attention given to FMCGs or low involvement goods in general (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007), where BORA scores are known to be low (Samiee et al., 2005). Second, even as the initial studies claim product judgments are independent of animosity and that products can be evaluated highly even if their origin is a target of animosity, according to Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) not all research has been consistent with that conclusion.

Finally, the animosity construct cannot be operationalized on a general level as it is always situation or context specific, thus item generation must be executed accordingly. The issue with item generation lies in the lack of exploratory research, as the surveyors tend to identify the sources of animosity themselves. That is a problem similar to the one in single-cue COO studies. Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) have conducted an exploratory study themselves, finding that the USSR occupation of Austria post World War II did not translate into stable animosity against Russia today. Yet if presented with a question specific to that the feelings of animosity directed at Russia would potentially have been exacerbated and such a study would overestimate the impact animosity has on the purchase of Russian products. For this reason, Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) reject the unquestionable adoption of the scale used by Klein et al. (1998) and propose an exploratory study to be conducted prior to the actual animosity research.

Despite all the aforementioned studies showing a clear negative relationship between the consumers' feelings of animosity towards a particular country and their willingness to buy those products, Hoffmann et al. (2011) point to the fact that there is no single valid and reliable instrument to measure the construct cross-nationally and cross-culturally. The study also criticizes the MIMIC model proposed by Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) as being unfeasible for being too country-specific: the main goal of their research is to introduce a scale that can be easily applied for most countries and within as many different situations as possible, because despite the country-specific causes of animosity, certain drivers of the construct can be defined as universal (Hoffmann et al., 2011). Based on the initial exploratory research, the study proposes threefold conceptualization of the universal

drivers of the animosity construct: perceived threat, antithetical political attitudes and negative personal experiences. Construct validity of the scale is based on ethnocentrism, patriotism and cosmopolitanism, similar to the study conducted by Ishii (2009).

Hoffmann et al. (2011) state that the initial definition of animosity by Klein et al. (1998) excludes the personal dimension of the construct, proposing the concept to be defined in a broader manner as "general antipathy of consumers toward a particular country that influences purchasing behavior" (Hoffmann et al. 2011, p. 237). They further state that animosity does not arise solely from war or economic tensions, which are country-specific, therefore they rather define those as a facet of the 'perceived threat' dimension, but also note that the model by Klein et al. (1998) is misspecified as it implies that animosity influences war and economic animosity, instead of vice versa, according to Jarvis, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2003, as cited in Hoffmann et al., 2011). The study also finds that animosity does negatively influence product evaluations, as consumers strive for cognitive consonance and adjust their attitudes accordingly, which goes against the findings of Klein et al. (1998), but in line with the approach that Shoham et al. (2006) took. Hoffmann et al. (2011) suggest that additional qualitative studies should be conducted to explore if any other drivers of animosity have not been identified, as well as to test whether the model is applicable in the context of situational animosity, but also between subgroups within a country.

Ma, Wang and Hao (2012) have studied the impact cultural similarity has on animosity and ethnocentrism using Hofstede's Culture Index and they found that cultural similarity has a positive impact on product judgments and willingness to buy, but also a weakening effect on war and economic animosity, as well as ethnocentrism. However, such measurement resulted in somewhat skewed results, as it directly opposes the findings of Hinck (2005) or Nijssen and Douglas (2004). This could be explained by the fact that the study omitted and/or degraded the significance of what Hoffmann et al. (2011) define as 'universal drivers' of animosity – perceived threat and antithetical political views. The analysis suggests that no matter how similar two cultures might be the presence of animosity among them is persistent, perhaps even common, which is best depicted by Hinck (2005) where both the subject and the object of animosity exist within the same country, same nation and the same culture.

Latif, Pitafi, Malik and Latif (2019) also examined the effect individual cultural values have on animosity, using Hofstede's Culture Index. Each Hofstede's dimension was used as a separate antecedent to animosity, therefore measuring animosity as a second-order construct. All of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions (collectivism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, power distance) were found to be predictors of animosity, except long-term orientation. This was the first study of consumer animosity to investigate cultural antecedents of the construct. Unfortunately, the entire sample consisted of university students, thus the study ignored the common criticism that the COO studies in general have received over the decades. It would be necessary to solve the generalizability problem of

this study in order to have its findings more widely accepted in the measurement of the animosity construct.

### 1.3.8 Chronological overview of consumer animosity studies

To conclude the literature review, Table 4 provides a visual categorization of the more distinguished research and presents their individual contribution to the field's theory.

*Table 4. Chronological overview of consumer animosity studies.*

| Author(s) | Contribution |
|---|---|
| Klein et al. (1998) | Pioneer study. |
| Klein and Ettenson (1999) | Discriminant validity from consumer ethnocentrism established. |
| Klein (2002) | Animosity present in low-anger context. Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase introduced. |
| Jung et al. (2002) and Ang et al. (2004) | First taxonomy of the construct. |
| Nijssen and Douglas (2004) | Presence of animosity in low-anger context confirmed. |
| Ettenson and Klein (2005) | Animosity manifests with boycotts. |
| Hinck (2005) | Intra-national animosity can occur in homogenous populations. |
| Shoham et al. (2006) | Construct extended to include intra-national animosity. |
| Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) | Meta-analysis. Taxonomy extended. Standard methodology questioned. |
| Ouellet (2007) | Consumer racism branched out from consumer animosity. |
| Ishii (2009) | Study focused on identifying antecedents of animosity. |
| Russell and Russell (2010) | Study focused on the impact stereotypes have on consumer animosity. |
| Maher et al. (2010) | Consumer affinity introduced as a separate construct. |
| Hoffmann et al. (2011) | Universal drivers of animosity identified and a universal scale introduced. |
| Nes et al. (2012) | Introduced the Extended Animosity Model. |
| Little and Singh (2015) | Animosity triggers explored through political science theory. |
| Asseraf and Shoham (2016) | Affinity has a stronger impact than animosity on consumer behavior. |
| Shoham et al. (2016) | Meta-analysis concluding animosity has a negative impact on product judgments. |

(table continues)

*Table 4. Chronological overview of consumer animosity studies (cont.).*

| | |
|---|---|
| Diamantopoulos and Gineikiene (2017) | Nostalgia can mediate stable animosity. |
| Stepchenkova et al. (2018) and Alvarez and Campo (2019) | Animosity has a role in tourism, impacting destination image, but not travel intentions. |
| Antonetti et al. (2019) | Different negative emotions investigated as antecedents of animosity. |

*Source: own work.*

## 2 EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CONSUMER ANIMOSITY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The bilateral relations of the United States and Russia have historically been tense since the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War, with the tensions reaching their peak during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. As the Soviet Union dissolved the relations with the newly established Russian Federation (which poses as a successor state of the USSR itself) somewhat warmed up, only to experience a sharp downturn in the previous decade after Russia's annexation of Crimea, a Ukrainian territory, in 2014. Both countries perceive one another as a threat to peace and stability and the relations are entailed with chronic distrust (Smith, 2019). With both political and economic animosity being apparent, this empirical study should be able to test the consumer animosity construct. Even though consumer animosity and its effects have been shown to persist in low-anger and moderate circumstances as well (Klein, 2002; Nijssen & Douglas, 2004; Hinck, 2005), the situational animosity definitely reflects more explicitly negative attitudes than the stable animosity (Ettenson & Klein, 2005). Thus, considering the ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, consumer animosity ought to be clearly present and have its effects on consumer behavior.

According to Statista (2022), the trade between the US and Russia significantly grew over the years, with the imports reaching an all-time high in 2012, amounting to 34.62 billion USD, up from 0.48 billion in 1992. However, Russian imports had begun to dwindle past that point, reaching less than half of the 2012 value in 2016 – 14.54 billion USD, aided by the sanctions the United States imposed after Russia's annexation of Crimea. Nonetheless, the value of imports strongly recovered in 2021, which is now, once again, expected to sharply decrease. Russia mostly exports mineral fuels, precious metal and stone, iron and steel and agricultural products to the US, as well as certain services in transportation, travel and financial services sector (1.8 billion USD in 2019), which are likely to be heavily impacted by the recent sanctions (Office of The United States Trade Representative, n.d.). Many consumer brands and retail chains that are widely known in the United States have withdrawn from Russia, such as McDonalds and Starbucks, while those that have not have experienced calls for their boycott (Mondelez, Hilton, Citibank, Caterpillar, John Deere and others) (Biron, 2022). Therefore, it is not only Russian businesses that are experiencing difficulties, but the American (from this point of view domestic) businesses

as well. Since a certain degree of antipathy is evident at this time. The principal task of this empirical research is to test what kind of a relationship between animosity and consumer behavior exists in the US towards Russian products by linking the theoretical background to the empirical research.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused stark reactions in the United States, bringing diplomatic tensions to a point not seen since the end of the Cold War. The animosity does not impact Russian businesses only, but also American ones that have operations in Russia, with an increasing pressure coming from consumers that call for the aforementioned boycotts of those companies until they cease conducting business in the Russian Federation (Biron, 2022). Reflecting upon the situation raises questions on how should the impacted businesses respond? To which degree does political animosity harbor economic animosity and to what extent do these attitudes influence consumer behavior? Considering these questions the objectives of the empirical study are as follows:

- To examine the degree of anti-Russian sentiment among American consumers by measuring the consumer animosity construct;
- To examine the attitudes toward boycotting Russian products, as well as American businesses that are still operating in Russia;
- To consider managerial implications to both Russian and American businesses that have found themselves being affected by the diplomatic fallout;

The study is conducted using quantitative research methods, as it can be classified as a replication study based on the research that was executed so far and presented in the literature review in this thesis. Quantitative research methods enable statistical testing of the formulated hypotheses through the operationalization of variables and the analysis of certain relationships between them. The primary data is collected through a survey questionnaire, composed of various closed-ended questions.

The questionnaire begins with a filter question to make sure only the US residents participate and it consists of three parts. The first set of questions refers to attitudes towards Russia and its citizens, consumer ethnocentrism and general animosity. The second part is dedicated to measuring willingness to buy Russian products and the consumers' boycott intentions. The third part is a set of demographic questions. The variables measured in the questionnaire and operationalized through statements that are measured on a seven-point Likert scale, where respondents express their level of agreement with the statements ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". The (quantitative) data collected is subject to statistical analysis with the help of JASP – an open-source statistical software supported by the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands.

## 2.1 Conceptual model and research hypotheses

Based on the suggestions and the implications provided by the studies conducted so far and reviewed in the theoretical section of the thesis, a conceptual model of the study can be

derived. The model seen below is mainly based on the studies that had been conducted by Nes et al. (2012) and Hoffmann et al. (2011), as well as Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007), all of which have their roots in Klein et al. (1998), the pioneer study of consumer animosity. As in Klein et al. (1998), both consumer animosity and consumer ethnocentrism negatively and independently influence willingness to buy the foreign products, as shown in Figure 2.

However, the influence of product judgments has been omitted. The issue with the notion that consumer animosity negatively impacts product judgments is that different studies produced conflicting results (Klein, 2002; Amine, 2008; Shoham et al., 2006; Russell & Russell, 2010). In cases that would exhibit strong situational animosity, product judgments cannot significantly contribute to the analysis and provide practical managerial or theoretical implications. If poor evaluations of products were to be found, it could be more of an effect of the country-image rather than consumer animosity and in that case animosity effects *could* only potentially contribute to those low scores. However, none of these findings would impact the implications or the effects of animosity. As already noted, animosity draws an affective response, while product judgments rely, at least to a degree, on objective evaluation. That is why cognitive dissonance appears in cases where high animosity is present together with a favorable country-image. Yet, the effects of animosity are the same regardless of product judgments – the consumers want to punish the offending country and are prepared for boycott, regardless of the hypothetical product's features. In this case, even domestic brands are assumed to be a potential target of boycotts, as animosity feelings are maintained by the offending-country's transgression of the individual consumer's normative position within the information processing model. As explained in the review of literature, Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) state that the boundaries between the three mechanisms are not fully clear and that they interact between each other in order to form the process of consumer decision-making. Consumer animosity is centered around the affective mechanism, but it is also influenced by both the normative and the cognitive aspect too.

The determinants of general animosity have been adapted from Nes et al. (2012) and consist of economic, political, military/war and people animosity (Figure 3). General animosity consists of two variables, as used in studies conducted by Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) and Hoffmann et al. (2010). The concept of willingness to boycott has been added next to willingness to buy, adapted from Hoffmann et al. (2011). Consumers engage in boycotts in order to express severe dissatisfaction with a certain country (Nes et al., 2012) (by punishing its manufacturers and exporters), thus adding such a concept to the study can potentially better explain the severity of the situational animosity. Demographic antecedents have been added as well, to consider whether age and gender influence the outcomes. The demographic factors are consistent with the very first study on animosity by Klein et al. (1998).

*Figure 4. The conceptual model of the empirical research*
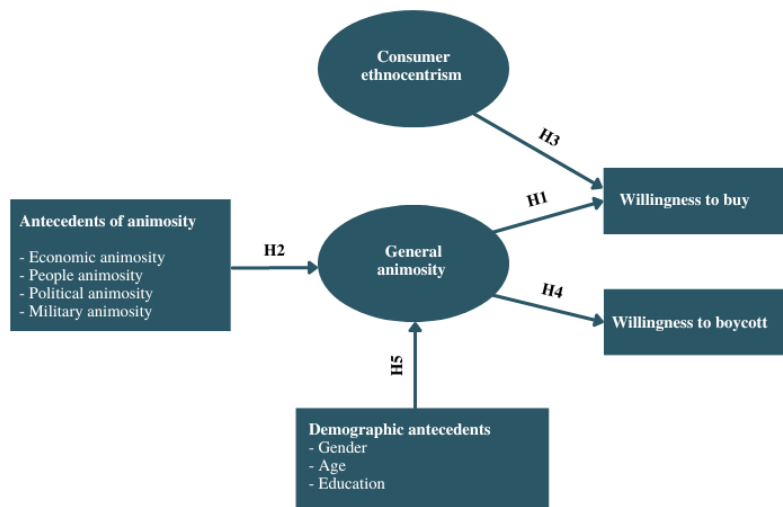
*Adapted from Nes et al. (2011); Hoffmann et al. (2011); Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) and Klein et al. (1998).*

Upon the development of the conceptual model of the study, hypotheses are derived. The first hypothesis deals with the core notion of consumer animosity construct – its consequence is manifested in lower willingness to buy a certain country's products. The following four hypotheses aim to test the conceptual model by examining the relationship between a set antecedents of animosity with general animosity itself. This part of the model has been adopted from Nes et al. (2012). Economic, political, military/war and people animosity should positively correlate with general animosity, thus proving these concepts are indeed determinants of consumer animosity. The following, sixth, hypothesis delves into the construct of consumer ethnocentrism, which should show lower willingness to buy *any* foreign product, whether animosity is present or not. As Klein et al. (1998) state, consumer ethnocentrism manifests in a tendency to avoid all foreign products, while consumer animosity targets products from a specific country, which is, in simple terms, the main difference between the two constructs. Finally, general animosity should be positively correlated with willingness to boycott as well, as an expression of severe dissatisfaction with examined country's actions. The last two hypotheses delve into the question of consumer animosity and its variability based on demographic characteristics of the respondents, precisely their age and gender.

As mentioned above, the first hypothesis embeds the core notion of the consumer animosity construct – a construct which explains the consequences that the affective mechanism (a dimension of information processing model in consumer decision-making (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999) has on willingness to buy a certain country's products. The animosity manifests itself in the form of negative emotions which are defined as "the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events" (Klein, Ettenson & Morris, 1998, p. 90). The first, pioneer study by Klein et al.

(1998) tested this hypothesis, as well as other subsequent studies that replicated or extended the construct (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). Based on these conclusions, we hypothesize:

H1: Consumer animosity toward Russia is negatively related to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products.

Nes et al. (2012) have conducted a qualitative pre-study in order to determine the composition of the animosity construct, upon which they defined four different dimensions of animosity that were used to develop the research model. The negative impact on buying behavior comes from the moral obligation not to support the economy of the offending nation, namely to achieve the avoidance of feelings of guilt. Nes et al. (2012) further build their research model based on the cognitive dissonance theory, image congruity theory[1] and boycott literature. First of the four animosity dimensions is defined as Economic animosity, which is premised as a determinant of general animosity. Thus, based on the aforementioned, we hypothesize:

H2a: Economic animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Hoffmann et al. (2011) state that the initial definition of animosity by Klein et al. (1998) excludes the personal dimension of the construct, proposing the concept to be defined in a broader manner as "general antipathy of consumers toward a particular country that influences purchasing behavior" (Hoffmann et al. 2011, p. 237). Studies subsequent to the original one have over time adopted the usage of the personal dimension, where Nes et al. (2012) and Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) define it somewhat differently from Hoffmann et al. (2011), naming it 'people animosity' instead of using 'negative personal experiences' as an antecedent of general animosity. Based on the findings of Nes et al. (2012) and Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) we hypothesize:

H2b: People animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

The third dimension of animosity is defined as 'military/war animosity' and it refers to a country's involvement in wars and its role in destabilizing the host country's security. However it can also refer to past conflicts, such as World War II for example. Based on the findings of Nes et al. (2012), we hypothesize:

H2c: Military animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

The final, fourth dimension, as defined by Nes et al. (2012) is named politics/government animosity and it mainly refers to the political system of the animosity target country. Based on these findings the political animosity should be a determinant of general animosity, thus we hypothesize:

H2d: Political animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

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[1] The match between brand image and the consumer's self-concept (Sirgy & Su, 2000).

Just as animosity is perceived as a factor that causes lower willingness to buy products from a certain country the same holds true for the construct of consumer ethnocentrism. However, the drivers of this construct are different from the drivers related to consumer animosity. According to Ishii (2009), the antecedents of ethnocentrism are rooted in patriotism, while according to the information processing model of consumer decision making, ethnocentrism relies more on the normative dimension, unlike animosity that mostly relies on the affective one (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). In simple terms, consumer ethnocentrism is best explained as a preference for domestic over foreign goods and services. Shimp and Sharma (1987) successfully developed a scale that measures the tendency of consumers to express ethnocentrism and behave in accordance with the construct. Based on these conclusions, we hypothesize:

H3: Consumer ethnocentrism is negatively related to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products.

Since the events of invasion of Ukraine began, many countries around the world introduced economic sanctions directed at the Russian Federation, including the United States. As mentioned previously, American corporations also started to face pressure to cease their operations in Russia and those that did not act quickly faced calls for their boycott. Boycotts are a manifestation of extreme and severe dissatisfaction (and anger) caused by certain aggravating actions coming from a country (Nes et al., 2012), in this case the Russian Federation. Based on this, we hypothesize:

H4: General animosity is positively related to consumers' willingness to boycott Russian products.

Based on the analysis of the results brought by the research conducted so far, there is a tendency among female consumers to display lower levels of animosity. Similarly, younger consumers also tend to show lower levels of animosity. Examples of these two effects can be found in studies such as Klein and Ettenson's (1999)[2] or Hinck's (2005) studies. On the other hand, Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007) found no difference between genders, but supported the hypothesis where age is a determining factor (younger consumers are less likely to harbor animosity feelings). Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007) also found that education has a positive impact on animosity levels, a contradiction to the initial findings of Klein and Ettenson (1999). Therefore, based on these findings we hypothesize:

H5a: Female respondents will display lower consumer animosity scores.

H5b: Respondents younger than 35 will display lower consumer animosity scores.

H5c: Respondents with Bachelor's degree or higher will display lower animosity scores.

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[2] The first study (Klein et al., 1998) did not find any difference between age groups, but the follow-up study (Klein & Ettenson, 1999) did, as did many subsequent studies.

All of the aforementioned hypotheses are rooted in either basic or the extended definitions and models of consumer animosity construct and provide insights into the consequent consumer behavior. In addition, the testing of these hypotheses provides the opportunity for discussion regarding the consumer animosity in the United States specifically and the implications for Russian and American businesses.

## 2.2 Research methodology

This part of the thesis will focus on describing the research methodology employed to conduct the study. As noted, a survey questionnaire was deployed as a method of primary data collection. The questionnaire design and the process of data collection will also be described in the chapter.

### 2.2.1 Measurement of the constructs and operationalization of variables

COO literature shows an abundance of studies and is even criticized for hyper-production by Dinnie (2004) and Usunier (2006). However, as the construct of consumer animosity is a relatively new branch within the field, there are fewer studies and they often extend the initial model defined by Klein et al. (1998). As the conceptual model describes, this study will also be based on the extended model of Animosity Model of Foreign Product Purchase, thus the variables are operationalized based on several different studies. As mentioned already, besides the filter question, the questionnaire is composed of three parts, the first part measuring consumer animosity through the defined determinants, as well as consumer ethnocentrism. The second part measures willingness to buy and the willingness to boycott Russian products (and American brands that continue doing business in Russia). The third part refers to participants' demographic data.

Consumer animosity is measured as a second-order construct, preceded by a set of determinants defined as economic, people, politics/government and military/war animosities. These determinants are adopted from a study conducted by Nes et al. (2012), with minor alterations placed in order to tailor the study to the specificity of the context. Namely, the third item of "People Animosity" employed in the study ("My personal experiences with the people from this country are negative" (Nes et al., 2012)) has been omitted. Instead, an item from the study by Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) is employed for the sake of those respondents that did not have any personal experience with the people from Russia in order to avoid item non-response. Similarly, the third item measuring "Politics Animosity" ("There is too much corruption in Russia" (Nes et al., 2012)) has been omitted and an item employed by Hoffmann et al. (2011) was used, as it is more appropriate for the study. Hoffmann et al. (2011) argue that the universal driver for political animosity across all nations is the level of perceived threat, thus such a question has been used in the questionnaire. An item used in the pioneer study by Klein et al. (1998) has been added to the two items that measure "Military/War Animosity" in order to ensure that all the individual determinants are measured by the same number of items. Nes et al. (2012) use these determinants to measure the "Psychosocial affect" of animosity, while

Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) and Hoffmann et al. (2011) use it to measure "General animosity" as a comprehensive variable of the consumer animosity construct determined by the four aforementioned dimensions.

*Table 5. Operationalization of Consumer Animosity Constructs.*

| Item | Label | Adapted from |
|---|---|---|
| **Economic Animosity** | | |
| Russia is out to exploit the economy of my country and other countries. | ECAN1 | |
| Russia is taking advantage of my country and other countries. | ECAN2 | Nes et al. (2012) |
| Russia has too much economic influence in my country and other countries. | ECAN3 | |
| **People Animosity** | | |
| I don't like the mentality of the people in Russia. | PEPAN1 | Nes et al. (2012) |
| I feel that the people in Russia are hostile and not open to foreigners. | PEPAN2 | |
| Russians have a bad attitude towards Americans. | PEPAN3 | Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) |
| **Politics/Government Animosity** | | |
| I dislike government policies of Russia. | POLAN1 | Nes et al. (2012) |
| I dislike the political system of Russia. | POLAN2 | |
| Russia is a threat to world peace. | POLAN3 | Hoffmann et al. (2011) |
| **Military/War Animosity** | | |
| I dislike Russia's involvement in wars. | WARAN1 | Nes et al. (2012) |
| I dislike military operations of Russia. | WARAN2 | |
| Russia should pay for its invasion of Ukraine. | WARAN3 | Klein et al. (1998) |
| **General Animosity** | | |
| I feel anger towards Russia. | GENAN1 | Hoffmann et al. (2011); |
| I dislike Russia. | GENAN2 | Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) |

*Source: own work.*

Operationalization of consumer ethnocentrism is displayed separately below in Table 6. It is often measured next to consumer animosity to support the hypotheses, as those consumers that express high ethnocentrism are bound to avoid all foreign products, including those of the country that is the target of animosity – but for different reason. Consumer ethnocentrism is measured by the widely adopted CETSCALE developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987), which consists of 17 items. The scale has been adapted to contain only 3 items, as consumer ethnocentrism is only the supporting and not the main construct of the whole study.

*Table 6. Operationalization of the Construct of Consumer Ethnocentrism.*

| Item | Label | Adopted from |
|---|---|---|
| **Consumer ethnocentrism** | | |
| A real American should buy American-made products. | ETH1 | |
| Only those products that are unavailable in the USA should be imported. | ETH2 | Shimp and Sharma (1987) |
| Americans should not buy foreign-made products because this hurts American business and causes unemployment. | ETH3 | |

*Source: own work.*

Willingness to buy was operationalized on a scale adapted from Klein et al. (1998) and reduced to three variables. Initially these measurements were modified from Darling and Arnold (1988), Darling and Wood (1990) and Wood and Darling (1993) (in Klein et al., 1998). Considering the severity of the diplomatic fallout, an additional measurement was introduced to the conceptual model of the study: willingness to boycott, adapted from what Hoffmann et al. (2011) labeled as "boycott intentions". These three variables were tailored to fit into the specific context of the study. Willingness to buy scale ensures comparability of this study to other similar studies executed previously, therefore the willingness to boycott scale has a role only to further explain the phenomena and its effects with more detail.

*Table 7. Operationalization of the Willingness to buy and Willingness to boycott scales.*

| Item | Label | Adapted from |
|---|---|---|
| **Willingness to buy** | | |
| I would feel guilty if I bought a Russian product. | WTB1 | |
| I do not like the idea of owning Russian products. | WTB2 | Klein et al. (1998) |
| If two products were of the same quality, one American and one Russian, I would pay 10% more for the American product. | WTB3 | |
| **Willingness to boycott** | | |
| We should boycott Russian products. | WBCT1 | Hoffmann et al. (2011) |
| We should boycott American brands/corporations that did not withdraw from Russia. | WBCT2 | |
| We should put curbs on Russian imports, even if that causes further increase in inflation. | WBCT3 | |

*Source: own work.*

The third part of the questionnaire required the respondents to provide answers to some demographics questions. The respondents were asked about their gender (Gender), age group (Age), employment status (Status) and the attained level of education (Education).

### 2.2.2 Questionnaire design and data collection

The first step of the empirical research required the conceptual model to be developed, which enabled the development of the questionnaire. Considering the specific nature of each case that is studied within the field of COO research and specifically consumer animosity, different approaches were considered. The first option was to replicate the study of Hoffmann et al. (2011) and deploy the "universal set of questions" into the questionnaire. However, upon careful consideration, it was decided that a more tailored approach would yield better results. No matter how convenient the idea presented by Hoffmann et al. (2011) might be, having a universal scale for every situation does not capture the phenomena in an optimal way.

Since the study by Nes et al. (2012) is quite extensive and includes a qualitative pre-study that delves into the antecedents of animosity, those constructs were used to examine the determinants within our context, while the changes that were made have been described in the previous sub-chapter. To conclude, instead of measuring the psychosocial affect of the respondents, the study measures 'general animosity' as done by Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) and Hoffmann et al. (2011) for the sake of simplicity of the main construct's measurement. Consumer ethnocentrism is also measured in the first part of the survey. The second part measures the willingness to buy and willingness to boycott Russian products. The latter was adopted from Hoffmann et al. (2011) and slightly changed, as already mentioned. The final, third, section collects respondents' demographic data. The questionnaire was deployed in English, and the full version can be seen in Appendix 2.

Prior to the actual data collection, a small pilot study was conducted with a total of five participants. As no issues with the questionnaire were recorded (besides one spelling error) the process of data collection begun in May, 2022. A total of 146 responses were collected using convenience sampling (out of 477 total surveyed), since the study was being conducted in a geographically distant location. The questionnaire was sent out through social media (Facebook) using the snowballing method, where it was further deployed to friends or family members, co-workers and university colleagues. A survey platform "1ka" was used to design the questionnaire, a service developed by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. All potential respondents were informed (in a written form) about the purpose of the survey, the way their data will be handled, the questionnaire length and the fact that the responses being recorded are anonymous. Consent was obtained implicitly. The completion of the questionnaire required 3 minutes on average. The primary data collection can be considered to have been collected ethically, despite the implicit consent, as the respondents were informed about the purpose of the questionnaire

and their anonymity. This procedure goes in line with the suggestions provided by Langer and Beckmann (2005) and Lehner-Mear (2019) in their study of ethical conduct during online research.

# 3   DATA ANALYSIS

The third chapter of the thesis deals with data analysis of the empirical study of consumer animosity in the United States towards Russian products. The studied phenomenon is captured using quantitative research methods, based on which the hypotheses were formulated. The collected primary data was processed using "JASP", a statistics software developed by the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. By analyzing the relationships between the established variables, hypotheses can be accurately confirmed or rejected.

## 3.1  Sample characteristics

The data used considers only those respondents that completed the questionnaire in full – in total 146 questionnaires were used in the analysis. The last section of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, namely about the respondents' gender, age group, attainted level of education and the employment status. The visual representation of the sample characteristics can be seen in the Figures 5 to 8.

The gender distribution is somewhat uneven, however the misbalance is not drastic: 64% of the respondents identified as female, 31% as male and 4% identified as non-binary/non-conforming or preferred not to respond, as presented in Figure 5.
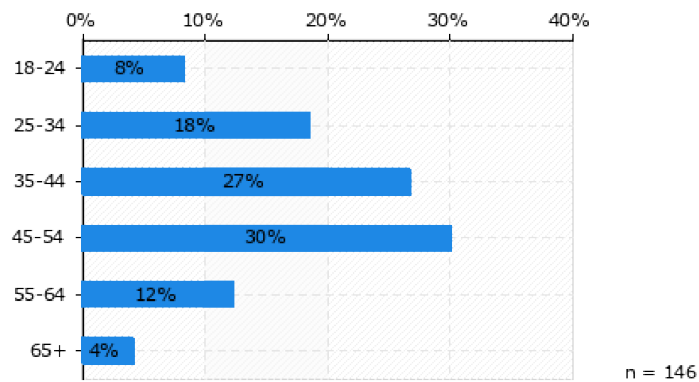
*Figure 5. Demographic characteristics of the sample: Gender*
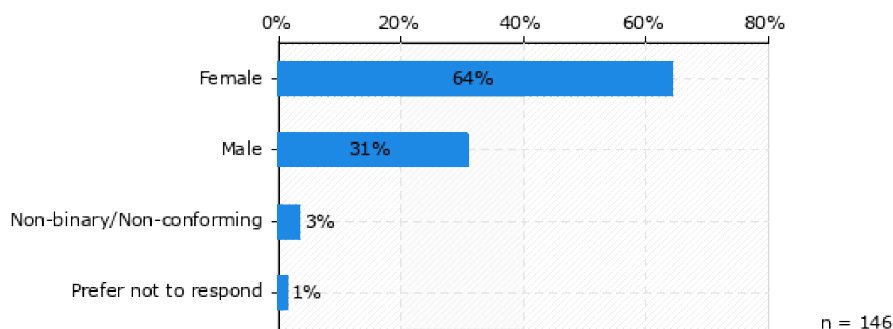


*Source: own work.*

The respondents were split into six age groups: 18-24 (8%), 25-34 (18%), 35-44 (27%), 45-54 (30%), 55-64 (12%), 65+ (4%). Therefore, over half of the respondents were between 35 and 54 years old with significant age group variance overall, as presented in Figure 6.

*Figure 6. Demographic characteristics of the sample: Age*



*Source: own work.*

The level of attained education is split into five categories: (1) less than high school, (2) high school, (3) Associate's degree or equivalent, (4) Bachelor's degree, (5) Master's degree or equivalent or higher. The education level of the sample was almost evenly divided, except that no respondents had less than high school completed, as presented in Figure 7. 27% had completed high school, 23% had an Associate's degree or equivalent, and the rest had a tertiary education degree (25% each for the two remaining groups).

*Figure 7. Demographic characteristics of the sample: Education*
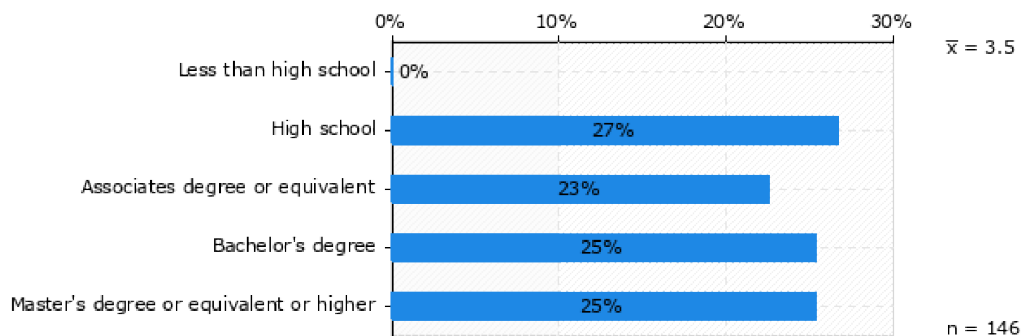


*Source: own work.*

The majority of the respondents were (1) employed/self-employed, with 81% of the sample, 3% were (2) unemployed, 5% were (3) students, 5% were (4) retirees, and 5% had an (5) other status. The data is presented in Figure 8. Studies within the COO field are often criticized for the use of convenient student samples (Dinnie, 2004), which was avoided in this particular case.

Figure 8. Demographic characteristics of the sample: Employment status
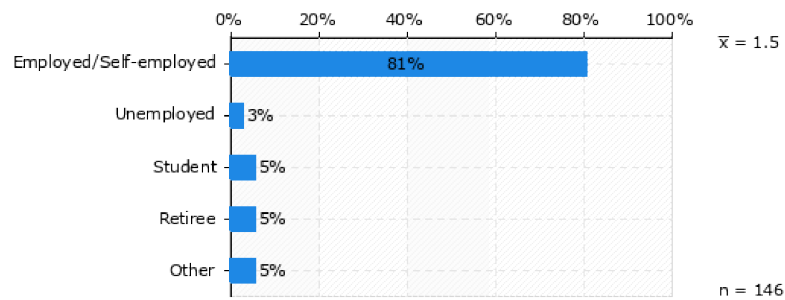


Source: own work.

## 3.2 Statistical analysis

The following section presents the statistical analysis of the study and its main findings and implications. First an Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted, together with measures of reliability, after which descriptive statistics are presented and serve as a foundation for hypotheses testing.

### 3.2.1 Reliability of the measurement scales and Exploratory Factor Analysis

The measurement scales were adapted and slightly modified from the existing literature, as presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7. Thus, as the items have already been used in similar studies they have been tested for reliability and validity. Exploratory factor analysis has been performed with the help of JASP (statistics software) and applied to all of the measured items, forming factors based on eigenvalues greater than 1. The factor loadings were estimated using principal axis factoring with oblique (oblimin) rotation, as it is reasonable to assume the factors are correlated, hence the hypotheses formulation. Factor loadings, together with Cronbach's alpha, are presented in Table 8, for each construct in this study's conceptual model.

Table 8. Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha of the measurement scales.

| CONSTRUCT | SCALE ITEM | Factor loadings | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Economic Animosity** | Russia is out to exploit the economy of my country and other countries. | 0.517 | |
| | Russia is taking advantage of my country and other countries. | 0.509 | 0.838 |
| | Russia has too much economic influence in my country and other countries. | *0.486* | |

(table continues)

35

*Table 8. Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha of the measurement scales (cont.).*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **People Animosity** | I don't like the mentality of the people in Russia. | 0.825 | |
| | I feel that the people in Russia are hostile and not open to foreigners. | 0.946 | 0.915 |
| | Russians have a bad attitude towards Americans. | 0.732 | |
| **Politics/Government Animosity** | I dislike government policies of Russia. | 0.508 | |
| | I dislike the political system of Russia. | 0.506 | 0.886 |
| | Russia is a threat to world peace. | 0.833 | |
| **Military/War Animosity** | I dislike Russia's involvement in wars. | 0.903 | |
| | I dislike military operations of Russia. | 0.724 | 0.858 |
| | Russia should pay for its invasion of Ukraine. | 0.511 | |
| **Consumer ethnocentrism** | A real American should buy American-made products. | 0.708 | |
| | Only those products that are unavailable in the USA should be imported. | 0.937 | |
| | | | 0.844 |
| | Americans should not buy foreign-made products because this hurts American business and causes unemployment. | 0.706 | |
| **General animosity** | I feel anger towards Russia. | 0.587 | |
| | | | 0.829 |
| | I dislike Russia. | 0.510 | |
| **Willingness to buy** | I would feel guilty if I bought a Russian product. | 0.897 | |
| | I do not like the idea of owning Russian products. | 0.794 | |
| | | | 0.920 |
| | If two products were of the same quality, one American and one Russian, I would pay 10% more for the American product. | 0.785 | |

*Table 8. Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha of the measurement scales (cont.).*

| **Willingness to boycott** | We should boycott Russian products. | 0.869 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | We should boycott American brands/corporations that did not withdraw from Russia. | 0.775 | 0.880 |
| | We should put curbs on Russian imports, even if that causes further increase in inflation. | 0.695 | |

*Source: own work.*

A cut-off point for factor loadings is somewhat debatable. According to Field (2009), values above 0.4 can be interpreted. The factor loadings can be considered sufficiently high for all the items measured. A total of five factors were extracted through the analysis. The four dimensions that are defined as antecedents of animosity form two factors, with People Animosity being extracted as a separate factor, which implies that the antecedents cannot be observed as a uniform set of variables. This might be explained as a quantification of some of the comments received during the data collection: these individuals wanted to draw a clear difference between their attitudes towards the Russian state regime and the country's people. General animosity, consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to buy together with willingness to boycott form the remaining three factors. These five factors form 69,8% of cumulative variance in the dataset, which exceeds the 60% mark suggested by Hinkin (1998).

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct as a measure of reliability. The coefficients range from 0 to 1 and there is no consent on the coefficient cut-off point (Geč & Perviz, 2012). However, Ferligoj, Leskošek and Kogovšek (1995, p. 157) recommend the following guidelines on coefficients:

- $\alpha \geq 0.80$          Exemplary
- $0.70 \leq \alpha < 0.80$      Very good
- $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.70$      Moderate
- $\alpha < 0.60$          Barely acceptable

All of the measured constructs shown in Table 8 have reached exemplary values, indicating high internal consistency of the scales and therefore can be regarded as reliable. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) on the other hand are much more strict in the observation, suggesting a minimum criterion of 0.8 for applied research, which all of the constructs would be able to meet as well.

### 3.2.2 Descriptive statistics

The primary data provides descriptive statistics of the measured variables which enable the analysis of the main findings. Upon computing the mean of each variable, composite scale

of each measured construct and the standard deviation, hypotheses testing is executed. As explained through the conceptual model of the study, consumer animosity is measured as a second-order construct, preceded by a set of determinants as defined by Nes et al. (2012). The four determinants (economic, people, political and military animosity) explain the impact each individual driver has on general animosity feelings. The respondents expressed their level of agreement with each individual statement on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". The presence of animosity feelings can be identified for responses above (and including) 5. The highest scores (6.3/7) were recorded for Politics/Government and Military/War Animosity, thus both determinants can be regarded as main sources of the situational animosity that occurred after the onset of the invasion of Ukraine. That is further indicated by relatively low scores for People Animosity, with the mean of 3.9 on the composite scale. Economic Animosity is also high, with the composite scale mean of 5.3. Standard deviation for the first two determinants (Economic and People Animosity) is relatively high, i.e., 1.51 and 1.52, respectively, showing somewhat high variability within the sample. On the other hand, standard deviation for Politics/Government and Military/War Animosity is just slightly above 1, i.e., 1.07 and 1.08, respectively, showing a more moderate deviation from the mean, thus consequently indicating more uniform answers.

*Table 9. Descriptive statistics of animosity determinants.*

| CONSTRUCT | SCALE ITEM | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Economic Animosity** | Russia is out to exploit the economy of my country and other countries. | 5.2 | 1.54 |
| | Russia is taking advantage of my country and other countries. | 5.4 | 1.48 |
| | Russia has too much economic influence in my country and other countries. | 5.2 | 1.52 |
| | **Composite scale** | **5.3** | **1.51** |
| **People Animosity** | I don't like the mentality of the people in Russia. | 3.8 | 1.50 |
| | I feel that the people in Russia are hostile and not open to foreigners. | 3.7 | 1.54 |
| | Russians have a bad attitude towards Americans. | 4.1 | 1.53 |
| | **Composite scale** | **3.9** | **1.52** |

(table continues)

*Table 9. Descriptive statistics for animosity determinants (cont.).*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Politics/Government Animosity** | I dislike government policies of Russia. | 6.3 | 1.07 |
| | I dislike the political system of Russia. | 6.3 | 1.09 |
| | Russia is a threat to world peace. | 6.3 | 1.05 |
| | **Composite scale** | **6.3** | **1.07** |
| **Military/War Animosity** | I dislike Russia's involvement in wars. | 6.3 | 1.05 |
| | I dislike military operations of Russia. | 6.3 | 1.10 |
| | Russia should pay for its invasion of Ukraine. | 6.3 | 1.08 |
| | **Composite scale** | **6.3** | **1.08** |

*Source: own work.*

The means for consumer ethnocentrism scales are significantly lower than those for consumer animosity, with more moderate means. The overall composite scale mean is at 3.4, with standard deviation of 1.55, showing notable differences among the respondents. Table 10 shows all three variables used to measure the construct of consumer ethnocentrism, with means, standard deviations and the composite scale scores.

*Table 10. Descriptive statistics for the construct of consumer ethnocentrism.*

| CONSTRUCT | SCALE ITEM | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Consumer ethnocentrism** | A real American should buy American-made products. | 3.6 | 1.53 |
| | Only those products that are unavailable in the USA should be imported. | 3.3 | 1.46 |
| | Americans should not buy foreign-made products because this hurts American business and causes unemployment. | 3.4 | 1.66 |
| | **Composite scale** | **3.4** | **1.55** |

*Source: own work.*

General animosity scales were adopted from Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2007) and Hoffmann et al. (2011), consisting of two variables. It is noticeable that the high scores the factors underlying animosity received have translated to general animosity, with a composite scale mean of 4.9, with the first variable "I feel anger towards Russia" receiving

the higher mean (5.2). However, correlations will be statistically analyzed prior to hypotheses testing. The standard deviation was somewhat higher for this scale, compared to the previous ones, as identified in Table 11.

*Table 11. Descriptive statistics for General animosity construct.*

| CONSTRUCT | SCALE ITEM | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| General animosity | I feel anger towards Russia. | 5.2 | 1.64 |
| | I dislike Russia. | 4.5 | 1.76 |
| | **Composite scale** | **4.9** | **1.70** |

*Source: own work.*

Both scores can be considered high, with means of 4.7 and 4.8 on the composite scales, respectively. However, increased standard deviations can also be observed with 1.93 and 1.76, respectively. Observed individually, higher mean (5.0) was recorded for the statement "We should boycott Russian products" than for the statement "We should boycott American brands/corporations that did not withdraw from Russia" (4.6). However, both are relatively high and without a large difference between the means. Table 12 shows the descriptive statistics for willingness to buy and willingness to boycott constructs.

*Table 12. Descriptive statistics for willingness to buy and willingness to boycott constructs.*

| CONSTRUCT | SCALE ITEM | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Willingness to buy** | I would feel guilty if I bought a Russian product. | 4.4 | 1.95 |
| | I do not like the idea of owning Russian products. | 4.4 | 1.95 |
| | If two products were of the same quality, one American and one Russian, I would pay 10% more for the American product. | 5.2 | 1.88 |
| | **Composite scale** | **4.7** | **1.93** |
| **Willingness to boycott** | We should boycott Russian products. | 5.0 | 1.83 |
| | We should boycott American brands/corporations that did not withdraw from Russia. | 4.6 | 1.63 |

*Table 12. Descriptive statistics for willingness to buy and willingness to boycott constructs (cont.).*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | We should put curbs on Russian imports, even if that causes further increase in inflation. | 4.7 | 1.81 |
| | **Composite scale** | **4.8** | **1.76** |

*Source: own work.*

Since the descriptive statistics have been presented above, hypotheses testing can be conducted next. This will enable accurate conclusions to be drawn from the study.

## 3.3    Hypotheses testing

The core notion of the research was to measure the extent to which US consumers harbor animosity towards Russia, in order to empirically examine prior theoretical findings in the literature but using a different research context. These feelings and attitudes were captured through a set of determinants first and then their impact was measured with willingness to buy and/or boycott Russian products. It is important to note that high levels of animosity were found in the sample, especially regarding Political and Military/War Animosity constructs.

Hypotheses output is presented in Appendix 3.  The correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficient, which showed mostly strong and statistically significant correlations between the variables. However, ANOVA showed no disparities between different groups of respondents – age, gender and education did not significantly impact the respondents' attitudes toward Russia.

H1: Consumer animosity toward Russia is negatively[3] correlated to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a positive and a statistically significant relationship between consumer animosity and the willingness to buy Russian products (r=0.610, *p*<.001), with large strength of association of the effect size. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and H1 is **supported**: American consumers are less likely to purchase Russian products due to the levels of animosity feelings present.

H2a: Economic animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a positive and a statistically significant relationship between Economic animosity and General animosity toward Russia (r=0.442, *p*<.001), with medium strength of association of the effect size. Despite the

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[3] *In our dataset, the positive correlation implies lower willingness to buy, since the formulation of questions on that particular scale is conducted in such a way that higher score implies lower willingness to buy.*

strength of association not being large, it is nonetheless sufficiently high to **support** H2a and conclude that Economic animosity has an impact on overall General animosity levels.

H2b: People animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a positive and a statistically significant relationship between People animosity and the General animosity toward Russia (r=0.532, *p*<.001), with large strength of association of the effect size. The composite scale of People animosity shows a below average mean of 3.8, however the statistical analysis also reveals a positive correlation between the antecedent and the General animosity levels. Therefore, the results are in favor of **supporting** H2b.

H2c: Military/War animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a positive and a statistically significant relationship between Military/War Animosity and the general animosity toward Russia (r=0.585, *p*<.001), with large strength of association of the effect size. Therefore, the results are in favor of **supporting** H2d.

H2d: Political animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a positive and a statistically significant relationship between Politics/Government Animosity and the general animosity toward Russia (r=0.532, *p*<.001), with large strength of association of the effect size. Therefore, the results are in favor of **supporting** H2c.

H3: Consumer ethnocentrism is negatively related to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a negative and a statistically significant relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to buy (r=0.446, *p*<.001), with medium strength of association of the effect size. Despite the composite scale revealing the levels of consumer ethnocentrism are lower than the levels of consumer animosity toward Russia, there is a negative correlation between the two factors, as proposed. Thus, H3 is **supported**.

H4: General animosity is positively related to consumers' willingness to boycott Russian products.

Pearson's correlation coefficient has established that there is a positive and a statistically significant relationship between consumer animosity and the willingness to boycott Russian products (r=0.572, *p*<.001), with large strength of association of the effect size. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and H4 is **supported**: American consumers are willing to boycott Russian products as a result of their feeling of animosity toward Russia.

H5a: Female respondents will display lower consumer animosity scores.

H5b: Respondents younger than 35 will display lower consumer animosity scores.

H5c: Respondents with Bachelor's degree or higher will display lower animosity scores.

Demographic characteristics of the sample were tested as predictor variables of consumer animosity. As observable in Table 13 below, none of the results show statistical significance and consequently hypotheses H5a, H5b and H5c are **not supported**. The predictors were tested against the general animosity scale and as concluded no significant effect was found. Females displayed a mean score of 4.92 (1.51) for General Animosity, while males displayed a mean score of 4.57 (1.71). Despite that, age is a predictor of Political animosity, with respondents expressing progressively higher scores over the age categories (F-value=2.506, $p<.033$) (see Appendix 3).

*Table 13. ANOVA results for demographic predictors Gender, Age and Education on General Animosity.*

| Predictor variable | | General animosity |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | F-value | 0.510 |
| | Significance | 0.676 |
| Age | F-value | 0.449 |
| | Significance | 0.813 |
| Education | F-value | 1.396 |
| | Significance | 0.246 |

*Source: own work.*

Female respondents also showed substantially higher Military/War animosity scores than male respondents, contrary to the hypothesis. Independent samples t-test shows that the difference is statistically significant (t-value=2.858, $p<.002$).

# 4 DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Interpretation of the results

The findings of the study revealed high levels of consumer animosity toward Russia on the convenience sample of consumers in the United States. Politics/Government and Military/War animosity are particularly high and can be described as situational with a strong degree of certainty. Animosity levels were also found to impact willingness to buy and willingness to boycott Russian products. The latter is a confirmation of the consumers' severe dissatisfaction with the *offending country's* actions. Boycotts represent the ultimate consequence of consumer animosity.

Measuring animosity as a second order construct enables a more intricate analysis of the drivers of animosity. Namely, the levels of Politics/Government and Military/War animosities are substantially higher than the levels of Economic and People animosities (as

previously shown in Table 9), which suggests that even though some degree of stable animosity persists, the results are fervently situational. People animosity cannot be considered high, yet the affective response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine appears to be vigorous, implying support for the cessation of business operations with the Russian Federation. The correlation between general animosity and all of its antecedents is statistically significant and shows large (or at least medium) strength of association of the effect size. Same correlation was found between general animosity and willingness to buy and willingness to boycott constructs.

The study also examined whether certain demographic characteristics are able to predict and influence general animosity levels. Age only had a statistically significant impact on Politics/Government animosity, which does not suffice to even partially support H5b. Education was found to have no impact on animosity levels either, which is in line with the study conducted by Klein and Ettenson (1999), but in contrast to another, later, study by Nakos and Hajidimitriou (2007). Gender had no statistically significant effect on animosity levels, except that Military/War animosity had an effect contrary of the hypothesis – females displayed higher levels of animosity than males. The war might have had a somewhat higher impact on females, causing a stronger affective response, as some research suggests that women tend to be more emphatic and more collaborative than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Kamas & Preston, 2021). Nonetheless, it is important to note that both genders did express high war animosity levels.

A short consumer ethnocentrism scale that was deployed in this research showed that the construct appeared separately and independently from consumer animosity. Descriptive statistics suggest the levels of consumer ethnocentrism among the respondents are low to moderate. However, those respondents that harbor high levels of ethnocentrism also tend to avoid buying Russian products, as expected.

To summarize, all of the results imply that consumer animosity toward Russia is presently high to an extent that the consumers would potentially avoid purchasing Russian products and even boycott the country's exports. The latter also latently signals support for the US government's economic sanctions directed at the Russian Federation.

*Table 14. Overview of the hypotheses testing.*

| Hypothesis | Statement | Support |
|---|---|---|
| H1 | Consumer animosity toward Russia is negatively correlated to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products. | **YES** |
| H2a | Economic animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity. | **YES** |
| H2b | People animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity. | **YES** |

(table continued)

*Table 14. Overview of the hypotheses testing (cont.).*

| H2c | Military/War animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity. | **YES** |
|-----|---------|---------|
| H2d | Political animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity. | **YES** |
| H3 | Consumer ethnocentrism is negatively related to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products. | **YES** |
| H4 | General animosity is positively related to consumers' willingness to boycott Russian products. | **YES** |
| H5a | Female respondents will display lower consumer animosity scores. | **NO** |
| H5b | Respondents younger than 35 will display lower consumer animosity scores. | **NO** |
| H5c | Respondents with Bachelor's degree or higher will display lower animosity scores. | **NO** |

*Source: own work.*

## 4.2 Managerial implications

Researching consumer animosity in the United States can provide key insights for companies considering or planning to enter a new market, as their origin can pose as an additional liability. The implications are relevant not only for Russian businesses that are planning to enter the US market, but also for those that have already established business operations within the country. Considering that the results of the study found distinctly high animosity levels among US consumers towards Russian products, certain consequences for those businesses are guaranteed.

In situations of strong situational animosity, such as this one, the brand can either attempt to disidentify with the home-country or face boycott. On the other hand, in times of political turmoil, extensively disidentifying or siding with the host-country could potentially anger the consumers in the domestic market. In undemocratic regimes, such as the one in Russia, the company could also face challenges with the local authorities for such actions. Efforts to disidentify can be completely irrelevant in the face of economic sanctions. Just like consumer boycotts, government sanctions are a manifestation of severe dissatisfaction and diplomatic fallout that translates into the business reality, with the aim to punish the offending-country for the experienced transgression. In situations where animosity translates into economic sanctions there is practically nothing that any company could do to improve their position. The only possible option would be to bypass the sanctions by leaving the domestic market and re-locating the company headquarters to a country that allows investment from Russia. That is possible only for companies that fully export their services, such as the ones in the IT sector.

However, most Russian exports to the US are not consumer, but industrial goods and raw materials. That means that these exports are directly hit by economic sanctions, thus further exports to the US market cannot be made until these sanctions are lifted. As noted previously, there is practically nothing that can be advised to those businesses to alleviate the damage, as sanctions are a matter of a country's legal framework and not consumer animosity, which this study researched.

Any potential entry into the US market, from the point of view of a Russian brand, currently cannot be advised. However, as animosity feelings are mostly tied to the affective mechanism of the information processing model of consumer decision-making, they are more volatile than affinity feelings or ethnocentric tendencies, for example. As a consequence, animosity tends to subside over time, given that diplomatic tensions ease and the sanctions are lifted, as the ongoing conflict becomes resolved. That does not imply absence of animosity in the future, but the tendency of the hostility easing over time. Only then marketing strategies would be able to implement tactics that tackle consumer animosity, such as disidentification with the home-country. Disidentification can be aided by different entry strategies, for example through joint-ventures or strategic alliances with domestic companies (Fong, Lee & Du, 2014).

Managerial implications of this study are not only suitable for Russian businesses, but the American ones as well. Consumer animosity in this case affects both Russian businesses in the US and the US businesses operating in Russia. Even though the survey data reveals that not all consumers that are in favor of boycotting Russian products are in favor of boycotting American businesses that did not withdraw from Russia, the difference is not drastic – the statements reached scores of 5.0 (1.83) and. 4.6 (1.63) respectively, on a 7-point Likert scale. Naturally, the response needs to take financial implications into the account, but also to consider on which values the company culture relies on. Profits cannot always be prioritized over social responsibility and ethical conduct. These results imply that there is strong pressure on American business to withdraw from Russia. Therefore, they should communicate their intentions to the consumers in an honest and a transparent manner.

This empirical study shows that consumer animosity is a serious business risk and a strategic threat to any company, regardless of the nature of their business. It also shows that the effects of animosity can spill over to target domestic companies that operate in the *offending* market. The study found no socio-demographic differences regarding the animosity levels. Accordingly, market segmentation cannot be utilized in this case to mitigate the negative effects that consumer animosity brings.

## 4.3 Contribution, limitations and suggestions for further research

This study is not unique regarding the country of research or the target of animosity. However it portrays the effects of consumer animosity in a different light. It is quite a

unique phenomenon to see the extent of the willingness for boycotts, as it is reaching any business that is operating in Russia and not just Russian-based companies. Consumer animosity therefore has a capability to extend even further than what its manifestation was regarded to be. Consumer animosity studies do not tend to examine the effects the construct might have on the domestic market's international companies, as no such research was found during the literature review. Thus, paying attention to a different angle of the same construct contributes to the implications of the study field. The pressure American businesses have faced is significant enough to be examined and analyzed within the boundaries of consumer animosity construct. The study provides useful insights to international businesses by exhibiting somewhat an extreme example of consumer behavior influenced by animosity. Its consequences provide another, perhaps overlooked angle of business risk that arises in foreign markets. Even if such a scenario might be only hypothetical, being prepared for it would help mitigate the damage, might it occur.

Effect that consumer animosity has on product judgments is debated. The study did not include that particular dimension in the research – evaluations of Russian products' quality were not investigated. As already noted, in cases that exhibit strong situational animosity such as this one, product judgments cannot significantly contribute to the analysis and provide practical managerial or theoretical implications. The results show that even domestic companies that continue to operate in Russia are experiencing increased animosity from the consumers, which is completely independent of product judgments. Notwithstanding, a more complex study could investigate this angle too, but the effects consumer animosity has on product judgments needs to be carefully measured at this point. Producing a simple replication study by adding two to three items that measure quality perceptions would not contribute to the shortcomings of the field's literature. On the contrary, it could further dilute the findings. A follow-up study that focuses on the type of anger emotions experienced would be useful, as it could either confirm or reject the findings provided by Antonetti et al. (2019).

The study has shown presence of consumer animosity, as well as its impact, however convenient sampling with 143 respondents cannot be representative of the whole population. Despite the use of convenient sampling, students constituted only 5% of the sample. That contributes to the field from a methodological point of view, since many past studies have been criticized for 'methodological poverty', especially in the initial stages of the field's development.

Conducting a follow-up study with a higher degree of generalizability would be useful. In addition, it would be valuable to investigate the attitudes towards boycott of domestic companies that did not withdraw from Russia in more detail. As consumers increasingly demand that companies exhibit social responsibility, it would also be beneficial to explore the expectations consumers have of their own country's international companies in a consumer animosity context. Some of the conclusions might contribute to the expansion of the theoretical framework.

The other limitation of the study would be that the three hypotheses related to demographic characteristics were not supported (H5a, H5b and H5c). Contrary to the most previous findings, females did not display lower animosity levels and neither did the younger respondents compared to those aged 35 and over. The reasons might lie in the sampling method, but could also be elsewhere. As the sample was not representative, making conclusions based on demographic differences would be futile.

## CONCLUSION

Consumer animosity is one of the principal branches of the country-of-origin research. As research of country of origin effects gained momentum, consumer animosity emerged as a separate construct in the late 1990s, independent from consumer ethnocentrism. Consumer animosity is diametrically opposed to consumer affinity. It is characterized by repulsion of certain products or services based on their brand or manufacturing origin, while consumer affinity is characterized by the opposite – a preference for certain products or services based on their brand or manufacturing origin. Presence of consumer animosity is found throughout the world, either as stable (a remnant of past antipathy) or situational (triggered by a recent event).

Animosity toward Russia in the United States is taxonomically intertwined. It is stable based on historical relations that have often been 'on edge' since the onset of Cold War. More recent events, such as the annexation of Crimea in 2014, as well as Russia's human rights record have both contributed to maintaining the animosity feelings. Invasion of Ukraine has affirmed those feelings by adding a situational context to the animosity. Both stable and situational animosity have their consequences, however the intensity of stable animosity differs based on the context, while situational animosity tends to be significantly more intense. Situational animosity evolves to stable animosity over time, as conflict is resolved and the bilateral relations improve or return to their previous status-quo.

Unlike consumer ethnocentrism, consumer animosity research does not rely on a standardized measurement scale. Some attempts have been made to develop universal measurement items, although they have not been largely adopted. The determinants of animosity have been expanded however, from including two dimensions (political and war animosity) to mainly including four (either people or personal experience and economic animosity have been added). The exact trigger behind the construct is yet to be certainly determined and defined, which remains as a limitation of the theoretical framework.

Consumer animosity studies have also evolved to include an intra-national dimension, but its consequences have always been analyzed from the angle of offending-country's businesses, yet this example shows that consumer animosity may have grave effects on the home-country international companies as well. It is a facet of consumer animosity that has not been given substantial analysis, despite the consequences being notable. The thesis has contributed to the existing literature of the field by examining the construct from that angle as well.

The study implications are limited by some methodological constraints – the sampling method was convenient and not representative of the whole population. Consequently, no demographic antecedents were registered based on gender, age or education level, which is not in line with most, but not all, previous consumer animosity studies. Despite these methodological constraints the presence of animosity in our sample can be confirmed with certainty, as well as its concomitant effects.

The research findings in this study were in line the theoretical foundation. Consumer animosity was defined as a second-order construct, meaning that various factors underlie general animosity. It is clear that the political and military/war dimensions prevail in general animosity feelings, which can be attributed to the reasons that caused the escalation of situational animosity in the first place. The true levels of dissatisfaction are best portrayed through the construct's consequences and it this case the support for a consumer boycott was high enough to confirm the animosity feelings are indeed on a very high level.

As consumer animosity belongs to the wider field of COO effects it also falls under the relevancy gap debate. Since the onset of the increasing criticism of COO literature, the field did move forward on some accounts, by expanding theoretical frameworks and improving the research methodology, such as moving past the once frequent use of student samples. However, the true effect of the COO constructs on consumer behavior remains debated. The empirical research of the thesis has shown clear and statistically significant correlations between a triggering event, the onset of negative emotions that impact attitudes and the impact these attitudes have on willingness to buy the products from the offending-country. The consequences are far-reaching, not only for the Russian exports to the United States, but for the US companies that have heavily invested in expanding into the Russian market and are now faced with strong pressure to withdraw. This example is portraying consequences that irrefutably stem from consumer animosity and justifies the efforts that the academia has made to develop the field, despite the strong criticism it has received.

In summary, these findings allow me to conclude that the thesis objectives have been successfully fulfilled. The degree of anti-Russian sentiment was measured and quantified, the theoretical foundation was linked to practical solutions, and real-world managerial implications were outlined based on the analysis of both secondary and primary data.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summery in Slovenian)

Animoznost porabnikov predstavlja zavračanje ali izogibanje izdelkom na podlagi izvora blagovne znamke ali izvora izdelave, zaradi antipatije, ki so jo povzročili pretekli ali sedanji konflikti. Animoznost je sprožena afektom in ne objektivom ocenom izdelka, zato takšno vedenje predstavlja afektivni odziv na določeno transgresio.

Ruska invazija na Ukrajino je povzročila ostre odzive v Združenih državah, s čimer so diplomatske napetosti dosegle točko, ki je ni bilo od konca hladne vojne. Animoznost potrošnikov ne vpliva samo na ruska podjetja, ampak tudi na ameriška katera poslujejo v Rusiji. Narašča tudi pritisk potrošnikov ki pozivajo k bojkotu teh podjetij, dokler ne prenehajo poslovati v Ruski federaciji. Ob razmisleku o situaciji se porajajo vprašanja, kako naj se prizadeta podjetja odzovejo. V kolikšni meri politična animoznost skriva tudi ekonomsko animoznost in koliko ta stališča vplivajo na vedenje potrošnikov? Ob upoštevanju teh vprašanj je namen magistrskeg dela naslednji:

1. Preučiti stopnjo protiruskega sentimenta med ameriški porabniki merjenjem konstrukta animoznosti porabnikov in raziskati, kako animoznost porabnikov vpliva na njihovo nakupno vedenje;

2. Povezati teoretični okvir animoznosti porabnikov s praktičnimi rešitvami;

3. Zagotaviti managerske implikacije za ruska in ameriška podjetja, ki so se znašla prizadeta zaradi diplomatskih izpadov;

Pregled literature je omogočil razvoj konceptualnega modela in raziskovalne metodologije. Primarni podatki so bili zbrani z vprašalnikom z uporabo priročnega vzorčenja. Glavne ugotovitve raziskave se temeljijo na statistični analizi primarnih podatkov.

Raziskava je razkrila visoko stopnjo animoznosti porabnikov v ZDA. Posebno velika so bila politična in vojna animoznost. Statistična analiza je potrdila povezavo med animoznostjo in pripravljenostjo nakupa ruskih izdelkov ter pripravljenostjo na njihov bojkot. Porabniki so pripravljeni tudi bojkotirati ameriška podjetja, ki se niso umaknila iz Rusije. Vendar pa ni bilo ugotovljenih bistvenih razlik med demografskimi značilnostmi vzorca.

Empirična raziskava je uspešno uporabila teorijo na kateri se temelji konstrukt animoznosti porabnikov in jo je povezala z upravljavskim posledicami. Vpliv, ki bi ga animoznost porabnikov lahko imela na domača podjetja, ki imajo svoje podružnice na trgu *države kršiteljice*, doslej ni bil raziskan, vendar je študija pokazala, da je pritisk zelo močan in da zahteva odziv teh podjetij. Ta podjetja so zdaj pred odločitvijo, ali se umaknejo iz Rusije in izgubijo ta trg ali pa se soočijo z negativnimi posledicami doma.

**Appendix 2: The questionnaire**

0. Are you a United States national or currently residing in the United States? Yes/No.

1. The set of questions below refers to your attitudes toward Russia and its citizens. Please choose your level of agreement with each statement individually.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Russia is out to exploit the economy of my country and other countries. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Russia is taking advantage of my country and other countries. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Russia has too much economic influence in my country and other countries. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I don't like the mentality of the people in Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I feel that the people in Russia are hostile and not open to foreigners. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Russians have a bad attitude towards Americans. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I dislike government policies of Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I dislike the political system of Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Russia is a threat to world peace. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I dislike Russia's involvement in wars. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I dislike military operations of Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Russia should pay for its invasion of Ukraine. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

2. The set of questions below refers to your general attitude towards any imported products. Please choose your level of agreement with each statement individually.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| A real American should buy American-made products. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Only those products that are unavailable in the USA should be imported. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Americans should not buy foreign-made products because this hurts American business and causes unemployment. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

3. The set of questions below refers to your affective stance towards Russia. Please choose your level of agreement with each statement individually.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel anger towards Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I dislike Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

4. The set of questions below refers to your willingness to buy Russian products. Please choose your level of agreement with each statement individually.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would feel guilty if I bought a Russian product. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not like the idea of owning Russian products. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| If two products were of the same quality, one American and one Russian, I would pay 10% more for the American product. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

5. Almost done! The set of questions below refers to your boycott intentions of Russian products. Please choose your level of agreement with each statement individually.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| We should boycott Russian products. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| We should boycott American brands/corporations that did not withdraw from Russia. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| We should put curbs on Russian imports, even if that causes further increase in inflation. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

5. Demographic questions:

| Gender: | Female |
|---|---|
| | Male |
| | Non-binary/non-conforming |
| | Prefer not to respond |
| Age: | 18-24 |
| | 25-34 |
| | 35-44 |
| | 45-54 |
| | 55-64 |
| | 65+ |
| Level of attained education: | Less than high school |
| | High school |
| | Associates degree or equivalent |
| | Bachelor's degree |
| | Master's degree or equivalent or higher |
| Employment status: | Employed/Self-employed |
| | Unemployed |
| | Student |
| | Retiree |
| | Other |

**Appendix 3: Hypotheses output**

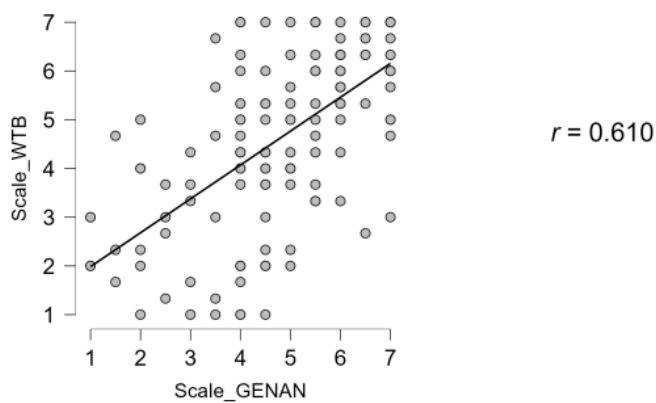**H1: Consumer animosity toward Russia is positively correlated to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products.**

Pearson's Correlations

| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_GENAN | - | Scale_WTB | 146 | 0.610*** | < .001 |

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

**Scatter plots**

**Scale_GENAN vs. Scale_WTB**



$r = 0.610$

**H2a: Economic animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.**

Pearson's Correlations
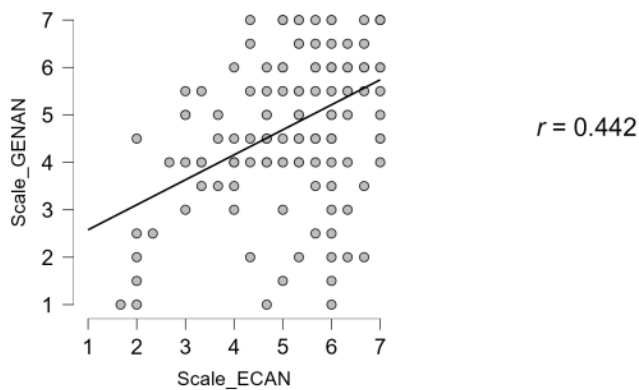
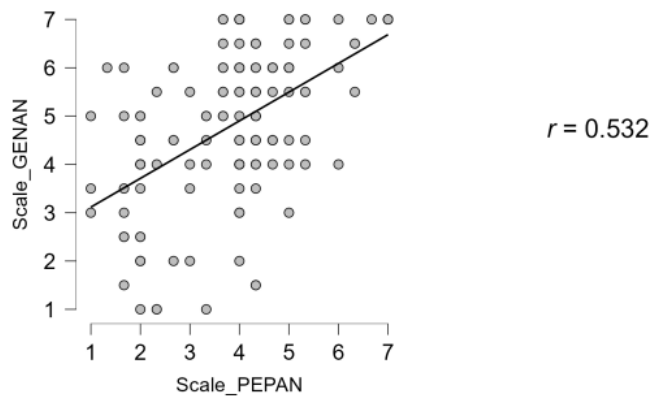| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_ECAN | - | Scale_GENAN | 146 | 0.442*** | < .001 |

*Note.* All tests one-tailed, for positive correlation.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, one-tailed

**Scatter plots**

**Scale_ECAN vs. Scale_GENAN**



$r = 0.442$

5

## H2b: People animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's Correlations

| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_PEPAN | - | Scale_GENAN | 146 | 0.532*** | < .001 |

*Note.* All tests one-tailed, for positive correlation.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, one-tailed

### Scatter plots

**Scale_PEPAN vs. Scale_GENAN**



$r = 0.532$

## H2d: Military/War animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's Correlations
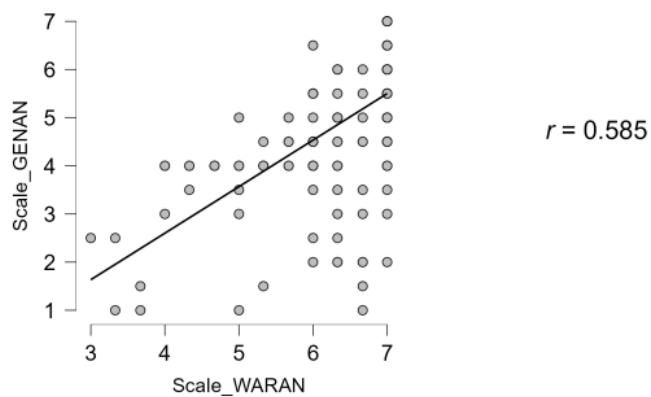
| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_WARAN | - | Scale_GENAN | 146 | 0.585*** | < .001 |

*Note.* All tests one-tailed, for positive correlation.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, one-tailed

### Scatter plots

**Scale_WARAN vs. Scale_GENAN**



$r = 0.585$

6

## H2c: Political animosity toward Russia is positively related to general animosity.

Pearson's Correlations
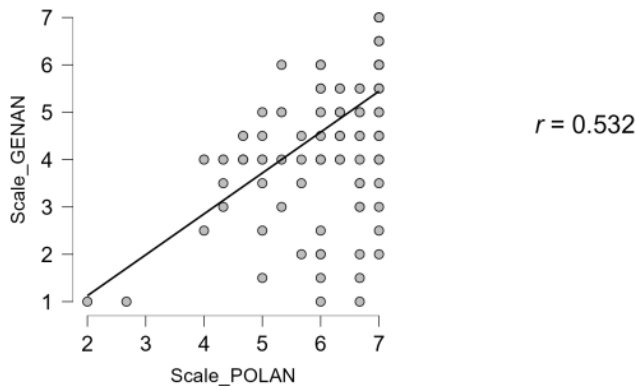
| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_POLAN | - | Scale_GENAN | 146 | 0.532*** | < .001 |

*Note.* All tests one-tailed, for positive correlation.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, one-tailed

**Scatter plots**

**Scale_POLAN vs. Scale_GENAN**



$r = 0.532$

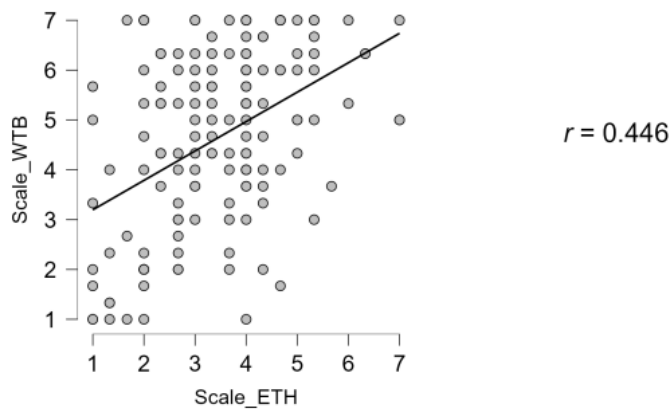## H3: Consumer ethnocentrism is negatively related to consumers' willingness to buy Russian products.

Pearson's Correlations

| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_ETH | - | Scale_WTB | 146 | 0.446*** | < .001 |

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

**Scatter plots**

**Scale_ETH vs. Scale_WTB**



$r = 0.446$

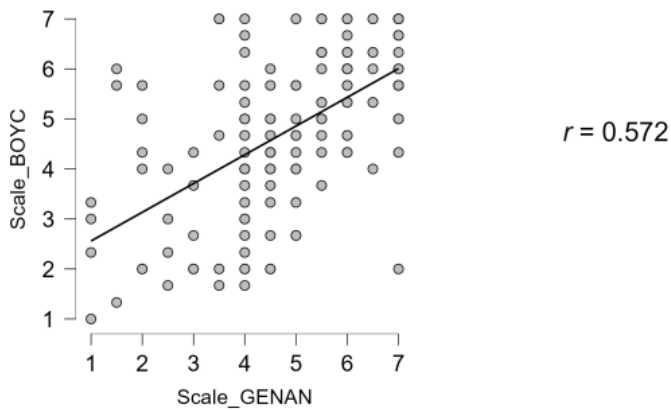**H4: General animosity is positively related to consumers' willingness to boycott Russian products.**

Pearson's Correlations

| | | | n | Pearson's r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_GENAN | - | Scale_BOYC | 146 | 0.572*** | < .001 |

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

**Scatter plots**

**Scale_GENAN vs. Scale_BOYC**



$r = 0.572$

**H5a: Female respondents will display lower consumer animosity scores.**

Independent Samples T-Test

| | t | df | p | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_GENAN | 1.214 | 137 | 0.227 | 0.220 |

*Note.* Student's t-test.

**Descriptives**

Group Descriptives

| | Group | N | Mean | SD | SE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale_GENAN | 1 | 94 | 4.926 | 1.512 | 0.156 |
| | 2 | 45 | 4.578 | 1.715 | 0.256 |

**Descriptives Plots**

**Scale_GENAN**
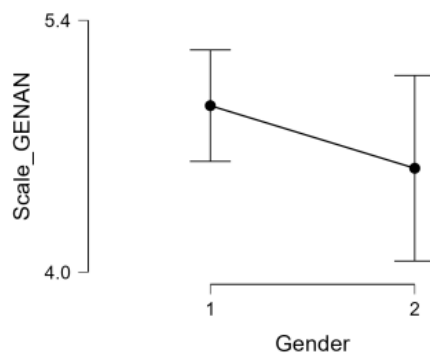
## H5b: Respondents younger than 35 will display lower consumer animosity scores.

| Cases | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p | η² |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 5.654 | 5 | 1.131 | 0.449 | 0.813 | 0.016 |
| Residuals | 352.416 | 140 | 2.517 | | | |

*Note.* Type III Sum of Squares

**Descriptives**

Descriptives - Scale_GENAN

| Age | Mean | SD | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5.000 | 1.796 | 12 |
| 2 | 4.759 | 1.778 | 27 |
| 3 | 4.718 | 1.271 | 39 |
| 4 | 5.000 | 1.566 | 44 |
| 5 | 4.417 | 1.896 | 18 |
| 6 | 5.083 | 1.158 | 6 |

**Descriptives plots**
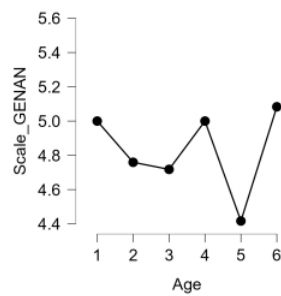


## H5c: Education will have no impact on consumer animosity scores.

ANOVA - Scale_GENAN

| Cases | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p | η² |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education | 10.259 | 3 | 3.420 | 1.396 | 0.246 | 0.029 |
| Residuals | 347.811 | 142 | 2.449 | | | |

*Note.* Type III Sum of Squares

**Descriptives**

Descriptives - Scale_GENAN

| Education | Mean | SD | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4.603 | 1.647 | 39 |
| 3 | 5.273 | 1.133 | 33 |
| 4 | 4.608 | 1.749 | 37 |
| 5 | 4.824 | 1.613 | 37 |

**Descriptives plots**
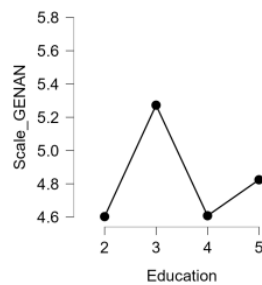
**Differences among age groups regarding Political Animosity, ANOVA results**

ANOVA - Scale_POLAN

| Cases | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 11.159 | 5 | 2.232 | 2.506 | 0.033 |
| Residuals | 124.691 | 140 | 0.891 | | |

*Note.* Type III Sum of Squares

## Descriptives

Descriptives - Scale_POLAN

| Age | Mean | SD | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5.696 | 1.579 | 12 |
| 2 | 5.988 | 0.976 | 27 |
| 3 | 6.222 | 0.893 | 39 |
| 4 | 6.447 | 0.807 | 44 |
| 5 | 6.537 | 0.909 | 18 |
| 6 | 6.890 | 0.170 | 6 |

## Descriptives plots