"Yes, We Can" (Obama, 2008)

*"Grab Them By The P****"* (Trump, 2005)

Perception towards the president, country image and travel intentions

- A closer look at the United States of America -

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ABSTRACT

This study sheds a modern light upon one of the most researched topics at the juncture of international business, marketing and consumer behaviour in the last decades: the country image construct. This is done through examining the effects of the perception towards the president on the construct. Herewith it is the United States country image that is taken as an example, and accordingly the perceptions that are taken along are those towards (i) former president Barack Obama and (ii) current president Donald Trump.

Building on the profusion of existing definitions and the fact that the country image concept tends not to be characterized with much clarity (Wang et al., 2012), an extensive literature review firstly delineates the conceptual definition of the construct by making use of attitude theory. Hereafter, using perception theories from Polish psychology professor Bogdan Wojcizkse, this study explains how perceptions towards Barack Obama and Donald Trump can be understood and measured. Finally, considering travel intentions as an outcome variable of the country image construct, this study builds upon recent findings in a relatively novel research area that combines tourism destination image (TDI) research with country image research.

Key findings include (i) the existence of a statistically significant difference along each of the dimensions of perceptions between Barack Obama and Donald Trump, (ii) the existence of statistically significant relationships between (dimensions of) perceptions towards the president and the United States country image, and (iii) statistically significant evidence indicating that earlier relationships occur conform a standard-learning hierarchy as represented by Model B in Appendix 1. Generally, these findings might prove to be particularly useful for dilemmas related to federal campaign donations faced by companies operating in the tourism industry.

KEYWORDS: country image, country cognitions, country affect, perception towards the president, perceived morality, perceived sociability, perceived competence, approval ratings, favourability ratings, travel intentions, destination image research, Donald Trump, Barack Obama.

1. INTRODUCTION

When looking at the American presidential elections, it can be said that there is not much about them that can be predicted. Perhaps the only thing that can be predicted is the unpredictability within them. Back in 2008, the Americans voted their first black president into the White House. Eight years later, in November 2016, it was Donald Trump who became the first billionaire president in U.S. history. Perhaps it can be said that Trump embodies and prolongs this feeling of 'predictable unpredictability' through the messages in his tweets as well as through his statements in which he claims that the U.S. "*has to be unpredictable*" (Fuchs, 2017).

When it comes to both presidents they have one thing in common: their quotes often end up as well performing headlines. These quotes, whether campaign slogans (e.g. "*Yes we can",* Obama (2008)) or quotes from leaked video materials (e.g. "*Grab them by the p****"*, Trump (2005)), lead to feelings and emotions within the people receiving them. And regardless whether these feelings and emotions are positive or negative, they colour the perceptions of the 'receivers' towards the 'communicators'. Trump's comments for example, were followed by sharp criticism from Republican leaders and led many people to say that Trump, by then presidential candidate, should withdraw from the Republican ticket. However, following the rationale of predictable unpredictability, the American elections wouldn't be the American elections if this would have withheld Trump from becoming the next U.S. president not long after.

In the last half year we have seen that, along with a 180-degree turnaround in American (foreign) policies, Trump has urged world leaders to rethink their foreign policies, companies to rethink their international strategies and tourists and business travellers to reconsider their visit intentions. The latter was brought forward in a recent report published by flight application Hopper, which found that flight search demand from international origins to the U.S. had dropped 17% since Trump's inauguration and the consecutive implementation of the travel ban compared to the final weeks of Obama's presidency (Surry, 2017).

These developments raise a wide array of interesting questions from a country image perspective, one of the most studied topics within marketing literature. Questions that relate to if, and how, the U.S. country image was altered ever since Trump was elected. How, for example, would Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement reflect upon America's desired position as world leader in environmental protection? Or could Trump's 'America first' policy reflect in a strengthened economic image, or would these effects be diminished through associations with conservative, protective measures? Additionally, one might wonder how this compares to former U.S. president Barack Obama: do people outside of the U.S. perceive the U.S. country image differently under Trump than under Obama? And, referring back to the findings presented in the Hopper report, could these potentially different country images influence touristic travel intentions to the United States? This study sheds a 'modern' light upon the questions propounded above. In order to do so, it draws upon literature from other disciplines such as psychology, political science and tourism research (i.e. tourist destination image research).

1.1   Contribution

So how does this research add to our current knowledge and what are the potential (managerial) implications? This can be explained on the basis of two arguments that are closely related: a scientific argument and a political argument.

1.1.1   Science

The first argument, a scientific argument, focuses on the contribution of this research to country image research, one of the most researched topics at the juncture of international business, marketing and consumer behaviour in the last decades. In a recent examination of the status and evolution of this research stream, Lu et al. (2016) indicated that over 554 articles were published in academic journals over the past 35 years. Recently, and in conceptual terms, the focus within these publications has shifted from evaluating differences in product evaluations and preferences based on the mere notion of the national origin of a product to the *image* of the countries under consideration (Diamantopoulos and Roth, 2009).

Yet, none of the articles belonging to this (new) research stream seems to pay specific attention to possible changes in the general image of a country over time. The construct seems to be interpreted as a rather static construct instead of a construct that is continuously subject to the changes of the modern world. And although every country undoubtedly has a 'baseline', containing characteristics that are inextricably linked to it, the construct is likely to become more dynamic with the day due to the increased connectivity in the world. In addition, and possibly caused by the recent shift in conceptual focus of the research stream, not much seems to be known about the potential drivers for such short- and long-term changes in a country's image. In order to understand this, a more basic question should be asked first: what are the dimensions of the country image construct? Hereafter one could look at these changes and the events possibly causing them, such as the presidential transition.

This research therefore concentrates on clarifying the following three matters. At first the dynamics of the country image construct will be considered: should the country image construct be considered as dynamic or static? Secondly, the dimensions of country image will be discussed and elaborated upon. Thirdly, this research focuses on the effects of perceptions towards the former and current president on the country image construct.

Definitions have hereby been clearly delineated since the country image concept tends not to be characterized with much clarity (Wang et al., 2012). The conceptual definition that will be used throughout this research is based on attitude theory, more specifically on the cognitive and affective components of attitudes. Travel intentions are considered a behavioural consequence of the two components and are therefore treated separately. In addition to this, travel intentions are predominantly part of a different research area: tourist destination image (hereafter: 'TDI') research. The integration of the research areas TDI and country image is relatively novel; this study therefore aims to further increase our understanding in the integration of the two research areas.

1.1.2   Politics

The second argument is a political argument that has to do with the increased popularity of populist movements, and societies that are becoming more and more polarised. This can be been seen both in large countries such as the U.S. – where Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines than at any point in previous two decades (Dimock et al., 2014), as well as in smaller countries such as the Netherlands – where the 2017 government formation negotiations have become increasingly difficult (partly) due to the fact that the second largest party (the Party for Freedom led by Geert Wilders) is ruled out as a partner in government by all other parties.

However, scientific research about the possible effect(s) of 'populists' on the country brand is still lacking. When portraying this at the U.S. for example, one quickly finds out that there is not much academic literature to be found about the possible effects of Donald Trump on 'the American brand' (i.e. the country America as a brand). Hence, now that we live in a time where the leader of one of the most powerful nations in the world questions the relevance of this (i.e. academic) research and proposes severe budget cuts for institutions conducting it, one could say that the time has come for academics to show what they are capable off. This should be done by doing what they are good at: conducting research and publishing articles.

This could result in having more *a priori* academic knowledge about the possible relationship between (international) perceptions towards a president, country image and related behavioural consequences. Henceforth, building on the findings from the Hopper report, this could help companies as well as individuals to allocate their political support in their own best interest – such as the Marriott International Inc., who saw its revenues declining since Trump took office (Putzier, 2017). Having this knowledge in hindsight, the company could have restructured their $330,000 donation to both candidates. And considering the large dependency of U.S. politics on corporate donations this could have sparked an enthralling discussion (Opensecrets, 2017).

1.2   Research Questions

Following the above two arguments, one quickly understands the multidisciplinary character of this research, which is also reflected in the central research question:

"How does the perception towards the former and current U.S. president affect the U.S. country image and how does this subsequently affect travel intentions to the United States?"

In order to answer the central research question, as formulated above, the following sub questions have been set up:

1. *What is country image and how should it be operationalized?*

2. *What are perceptions towards the president and how should they be operationalized?*

3. *How could the American country image possibly affect the travel intentions to the United States?*

1.3   Structure

After having explained the research questions and research contributions in the first chapter, a deep dive into literature about these topics follows in chapter two. Herewith chapter two follows the structure of the sub questions. Next, chapter three explains the methodology used to test for the relationships mentioned above, after which the results will be presented in chapter four. The fifth chapter contains conclusions. The research is concluded with limitations and the possibilities for further research.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the outcomes of a thorough literature study, which finds its roots in a wide variety of sources such as academic articles, newspapers, and social media. The structure of the literature review is similar to the structure of the sub questions, but contains an additional section wherein all hypotheses have been brought forward and briefly elaborated upon. As such, this chapter contains four *sections* (indicated by two digits, i.e. 2.1/2.2/2.3/2.4), which in turn consist of several *sub sections* (indicated by three digits, i.e. 2.1.1/2.1.2/2.1.3/2.1.4).

Accordingly, this chapter starts with the conceptual definition and operationalization of the country image construct (2.1), which is followed by the conceptual definition and operationalization of the perception towards the president (2.2). Hereafter, the behavioural consequences of the country image construct will be examined through zooming in on travel intentions (2.3). In the final section of this chapter all hypotheses are brought forward (2.4).

2.1   THE COUNTRY IMAGE CONSTRUCT

Country image studies have been a significant and popular area of international business research for decades. As was brought forward earlier, Lu et al. (2016) indicated that over 554 articles were published in academic (peer-reviewed) journals in the past 35 years. Interestingly, the conceptual focus within these publications has gradually moved from the mere evaluation of differences in product evaluations and preferences based on the notion of the national origin of a product to a more complex construct, namely the *image* of the countries under consideration. As such, the focus within many of these publications is not anymore on *whether or not* consumers prefer products or brands from a country in comparison to another, but rather on the perceived images of these countries that explain *why* this is the case (Diamantopoulos and Roth, 2009).

The gradual shift in conceptual focus within these articles might have been the cause for reviews of pertinent literature to still provide contrasting - and often confusing - views with respect to the definition of the construct (Wang et al. 2012). However, two

authors *did* manage to clear up some of this confusion: Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009). In a state-of-the-art review of country image conceptualizations and operationalizations, they highlighted the existence of three distinct definitional domains in country image research. Each of the three domains could hereby be considered a 'sub-category' or 'sub-stream' of the research area, each of them capturing definitions with a slightly different core of interest. Herewith definitions in the first domain focus on the (general) image *of* countries (i.e. country image); definitions in the second domain on the image of countries *and* their products (i.e. product-country images); and definitions in the third domain focus on the images of products *from* a country. Building on this segmentation, the focus of this research lies within the *first* definitional domain and the definitions captured by it.

Studying these three domains in more detail reveals the differences in between them more explicitly. It becomes clear that this first group considers country image to be a generic construct that consists of generalized images created not only by representative products but also by the degree of economic and political maturity, historical events and relationships, culture and tradition, and the degree of technological virtuosity and industrialization. The second group focuses on the image of countries in their role as origins of products, thus implying that country image and product image are two distinct (but related) concepts, and secondly, that country images affect the images of the products from that country. The third and last group focuses exclusively on the image of the products of a country. Thus, as the authors remark correctly, in this third domain it is product image rather than country image that is actually captured.

Within publications belonging to this *first* definitional domain, 'country image' has been defined in several different ways. For example Martin and Eroglu (1993, p. 193) referred to country image as "*the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country*", Allred et al. (2000, p. 36) referred to "*the perception or impression that organizations and consumers have about a country. This impression or perception of a country is based on the country's economic condition, political structure, culture, conflict with other countries, labour conditions, and stand on environmental issues*", and Askegaard and Ger (1998, p. 52) referred to "*a schema, or a network of interrelated elements that define the country, a knowledge*

structure that synthesises what we know of a country, together with its evaluative significance or schema-triggered affect.''

Though at first sight these definitions seem to be somehow comparable, there is one key difference that distincts the first two definitions from the third definition. This difference has to do with the factors in the first two definitions referring solely to *cognitive beliefs* about a particular country, and the factors in the third definition to both *cognitive beliefs* as well as *affective evaluations*, therefore also capturing emotions and feelings about that particular country. Why this matters will be explained in next two sub sections.

2.1.1   A Cognitive Definition

In a further explanation of their definition, Martin and Eroglu (1993, p. 194) argue that three drivers influence the development of a country's image within an individual's mind: the first driver being direct experiences with the country (e.g. through travelling); the second driver being outside sources information such as advertising or word of mouth communication; and the third driver being (correct or incorrect) inferences such as opinions gained from using products originating from that particular country.

Though having been published about 25 years ago, the general thoughts captured by these three drivers still seem to apply anno 2017. The only thing that is likely to differ strongly between 1993 and 2017 is the exact interpretation of the drivers themselves. These differences are caused by the rapid advancements in digital technology through which the 'outside sources of information such as advertising and word of mouth communication' alike are communicated. The key driver having propelled this change is the Internet, in 1993 barely – if at all – accessible to the general public. Nowadays this is an entirely different ballgame with 93,1% Internet penetration in the Netherlands (UNdata, 2017). And with the Internet came social media – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. This helped news to spread much faster than it previously did through traditional methods such as newspapers and radio.

Perhaps it's this timeless interpretation that has led to Martin and Eroglu's (1993) definition having been used throughout many different academic articles. However, it should also be mentioned that this definition has one big limitation. This limitation flows forth from a research conducted by Boulding (1959), who found that images *always* comprise of both a cognitive as well as an affective component. When projecting this theory on the definition of Martin and Eroglu (1993), one quickly understands why this definition is not ideal to build the rest of this research upon. This has to do with the "*beliefs*" that the authors refer to. These beliefs are widely acquainted to be part of the cognitive component of images. Subsequently, this implies that the definition of Martin and Eroglu (1993) lacks the affective component of country image.

In addition to this, several other studies have showed that emotions (i.e. as being part of the affective component) could cause much stronger reactions than pure cognitions (e.g. Aylesworth and Mackenzie, 1998). All of these findings taken into consideration, this has led to a consensus amongst country image scholars regarding the two-component character of the country image construct (Alvarez and Campo, 2014), i.e. country image consisting of a cognitive as well as an affective component.

2.1.2   Adding Affect

As was explained in previous sub section, and building on Boulding's (1959) findings, adding an affective component to a definition consisting only of a cognitive facet should give a more heuristic approach towards the country image construct. However, this is apparently easier said than done, as only a few researchers explicitly included an *affective* component in their definition of country image. Two examples are the definitions by Askegaard and Ger (1998) and Verlegh (2001). The latter, Verlegh, defined country image as "*a mental network of affective and cognitive associations connected to the country*". In turn, Askegaard and Ger (1998, p.52) defined country image as a "*schema, or a network of interrelated elements that define the country, a knowledge structure that synthesises what we know of a country, together with its evaluative significance or schema-triggered effect.*" But though both these definitions are in line with the two-component view that forms the consensus within country image literature, also these definitions can't be used for the conceptual

specification of the country image construct, Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009) argue. They claim that none of the underlying constructs in both definitions (i.e. schemas and networks) are comprehensive enough to fully capture the domain of the country image construct. This also applies to the definitions of Martin and Eroglu (1993), who specify "*beliefs*" as part of the construct, and the definition of Allred et al. (2000) who refer to "*perceptions*". This causes considerable confusion regarding the conceptual specification of the country image construct and raises the question which underlying construct(s) country image now really consists of: "*beliefs*", "*networks*", "*perceptions*", "*schemas*" or perhaps none of them?

2.1.3   A Perfect Candidate

Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009) continue to say that "*perceptions*" do not contain a subsequent evaluation, and therefore do not include consumers' reactions; "*schemas*" refer to "*cognitive structures of organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience with specific instance*" (Fiske and Linville, 1980, p. 543) and do therefore belong to the cognitive component of image. The latter also applies to "*beliefs*", which are widely acknowledged to be part of cognitions.

However, these *beliefs* and the subsequent cognitions they are part of, are also part of a broader theory that doesn't suffer from above limitations: *attitude theory*. Attitudes, by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 6) defined as "*a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object.*" don't consist of a cognitive aspect only; they also include affective (i.e. specific feelings or emotions) and conative (i.e. actual/intended behaviour) components – making them a perfect candidate for the conceptual specification of the country image construct. However, the use of attitudes for the conceptualisation of the country image construct raises another challenge. This challenge has to do with the existence of different views upon how these different components of attitudes relate to each other.

2.1.4   Opposing Views

Recent publications in attitude theory show clear advances in our understanding of the conceptualization of attitudes and the interrelationships amongst

the components attitudes consist of. Whilst earlier publications approached these interrelationships as basically non-existent, i.e. considering the components as *independent* of each other, newer publications argue that the components are not independent of each other but rather *causally related* (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). Additionally, these newer publications state that a hierarchy-of-effects sequence exists amongst these components*, herewith assuming that "*self-reported behaviour and stated intentions to respond [...] [are] treated as dependent effects of affective and/or cognitive variables. Intentions (conations) therefore seem to be at a lower level of abstraction than cognitions or affect.*" (Bagozzi and Burnkrant, 1979, p.914).

Building on these recent publications positing that conations are at a lower level of abstraction than cognitions and affect, and the assumption that a hierarchy-of-effects sequence exists amongst the different components of attitudes, Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009) introduced a framework highlighting these possible interrelationships in four models. These four models contribute to our understanding in that they help explaining how country cognitions and country affect could possibly impact country conations. The core difference between these four models is the hierarchy-of-effects sequence, which is to be found back in Models B, C and D, albeit in a different appearance – but not in Model A. Model A considers attitudes to consist of two conceptually independent, yet empirically related constructs (i.e. the cognitive and affective component), which "*may vary independently and may independently affect intentions and behaviour*" (Liska, 1984, p. 66-67). In contrast to Model A, Models B, C, and D do "*emphasize the interrelationships among knowing, feeling, and doing*" and assume a "*fixed sequence of steps that occurs en route to an attitude*" (Solomon et al., 2006). The three models (i.e. B, C, and D) herewith each assume a different sequence of steps that occur en route to an attitude, named [1] the standard learning hierarchy (Model B), [2] the low-involvement hierarchy (Model C), and [3] the experiential hierarchy (Model D). They can be found in Appendix 1.

This research makes use of Model B, as it follows the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). This theory assumes that an individual first forms beliefs about a certain country by accumulating knowledge regarding relevant attributes such as the country's political system or climate (i.e. cognitive component). The consumer hereafter relies on these beliefs to develop feelings about that country (i.e. affective

component). Finally, the person engages in relevant behaviour (i.e. conative component). The standard learning hierarchy is perhaps the most frequent way consumers process country image information because [1] this resembles the process by which most attitudes are constructed, and [2] most of the outcome variables relevant for country image research are high-involvement decisions, such as travel intentions (Diamantopoulos and Roth, 2009).

2.1.5 Conceptual Conclusions

Following the theories presented in previous sub sections, there are two core conclusions that can be drawn with respect to the conceptual definition of the country image construct. The first conclusion applies to the definitional domain used throughout this study. This domain, i.e. the first, and the definitions captured by it, assumes that a country image consists of generalized images created not only by representative products but also by the degree of economic and political maturity, historical events and relationships, culture and tradition, and the degree of technological virtuosity and industrialization. Herewith these 'generalized images' should contain a cognitive as well as an affective component (Boulding, 1959).

Secondly, attitude theory is considered to be the best candidate to fully capture the country image construct as attitudes do not consist of cognitive aspects only, but also include affective (i.e. specific feelings or emotions) and conative (i.e. intended behaviour) facets (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). However, as the conative component tends to represent an outcome of the other two components and is also found to be on a lower level of abstraction, conations will be treated separately (Baguzzi and Burnkrant, 1979). The hierarchy-of-effects that is hereby believed to occur is that captured by Model B, the standard learning hierarchy, which assumes that cognitions lead to affect and affect in turn leads to conations.

2.1.6 Construct Operationalization

When reflecting upon the profusion of country image definitions presented earlier, and the large amounts of constructs that flowed from them, it is not very surprising that this would complicate the operationalization of the construct. Therefore, the aim of this sub section is to clarify matters around the measurement of the country image construct.

In a recent analysis about the existing measurement scales, Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009) found 30 studies containing a concrete measure for country image. Within these 30 studies, no systematic analysis of existing conceptualizations and associated measurement scales existed. This could explain the widespread use of copied scales and the finding that only 18 out of 30 scales were really different from each other. Of these 18 scales, about a third focused on cognitive components only, therefore failing to sufficiently implement the two-component view at the operationalization stage. So what then is the best way to operationalize the country image construct, taking these earlier comments into consideration?

As stressed in previous paragraph, additional emphasis should be placed on sufficiently implementing the distinction between the cognitive and the affective component in the operationalization stage. Building on the second conclusion in previous sub section, where it was indicated that the conative component is an outcome variable on a lower level of abstraction, conations are a separate construct and will therefore not be taken along into the operationalization of the country image construct. This view, which is consistent with *tourist destination image research* (Hosany et al., 2006, see section 2.4), results in [1] country cognitions and [2] country affect being the relevant components to operationalize. This has been done in 2.1.7 and 2.1.8.

2.1.7   Country Cognitions

Usually country cognitions consist of two dimensions: '*country-related cognitions*' and '*people-related cognitions*'. In turn, these two dimensions may each be best represented using two groups: character beliefs and competency beliefs (Heslop et al., 2004). Character beliefs hereby refer to features or traits of country or people; competency beliefs refer to capacities that are directly or indirectly foundational to designing and producing good products (Nadeau et al., 2008). As such, this leads to the construction of four groups: [1] country-related cognitions x character beliefs, [2] people-related cognitions x character beliefs, [3] country-related cognitions x competency beliefs, and [4] people-related cognitions x competency beliefs. This division was used in several articles such as Heslop et al. (2004), Nadeau et al. (2008) and, albeit somewhat differently, by Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009).

The first group (country-related cognitions x character beliefs) contains measures such as *active and admirable in world affairs* (Heslop et al. 2004; Lee and Ganesh, 1999), *levels of environmental protection* (Heslop et al. 2004), *quality of life* (Heslop et al. 2004), *individual rights and freedoms* (Heslop et al. 2004), *political stability* (Heslop et al, 2004, Orbaiz and Papadopoulos, 2003) and *standard of living* (Orbaiz and Papdopoulos, 2003; Parameswaran and Pisharodi, 2002). The second group (people-related cognitions x character beliefs) includes measures such as *friendliness* (Heslop et al. 2004; Lee and Ganesh 1999; Parameswaran and Pisharodi 2002), *pride in achieving high standards* (Lee and Ganesh 1999), *trustworthiness* (Heslop et al. 2004, Laroche et al. 2005) and *individualism* (Heslop et al. 2004). The third group (country-related cognitions x competency beliefs) includes measures such as *technically advanced* (Heslop et al. 2004; Laroche et al., 2005; Lee and Ganesh 1999; Orbaiz and Papadopoulos 2003), *level of economic development* (Lee and Ganesh 1999), *stability of the economy* (Heslop et al., 2004) and *wealth* (Heslop et al., 2004; Laroche et al. 2005). The fourth group (people-related cognitions x competency beliefs) contains measures such as *creativity* (Lee and Ganesh, 1999; Parameswaran and Pisharodi, 2002), *well educated* (Heslop et al. 2004, Laroche et al 2005), *industrious* (Lee and Ganesh), *technically skilled* (Lee and Ganesh 1990; Parameswaran and Pisharodi 2002) and *high work ethic* (Heslop et al. 2004).

In modelling these country cognitions as a set of interrelated dimensions, Edwards (2001) stated that the choice of measurement model specification is dependent on the study objective. This means that the measurement model in this study will be specified broadly for two reasons. The first reason being that this allows for a broad exploration of differences in country image caused by different perceptions towards the president. Secondly, this allows for an exploration of the degree to which these dimensions are subject to change.

2.1.8   Country Affect

As stated earlier in the analysis of existing measurement scales conducted by Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009), about a third of the 18 scales that were really different from each other focused on cognitive components only. This leads to 12 studies being left containing a measurement scale for the affective component.

Additionally, many authors include items such as "people are friendly" and "people are trustworthy" to the measurement specification of the affective component. However, as Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009) argue, these statements do not directly evoke respondents' emotions because a person might *think* that the people of a country are friendly and likeable but still not *like* that country. Therefore, and as one can understand from the previous sub section, these items have been captured under the cognitive component of country image. So how should country affect then best be measured?

Nadeau et al. (2008) state that similarity perceptions can be used for capturing the affective/evaluative component. This follows findings from Mittelstaedt et al. (2004, p. 7), who pointed out that similarity perceptions can help researchers to understand "the nature of country evaluations in a comparative context". As such, country and people evaluations have been measured using *culturally similar* (Parameswaran and Pisharodi 2002); *economically similar* (idem), *ideal country* (Laroche et al., 2005); likeable (Laroche et al. 2005) and *similar political views* (Parameswaran and Pisharodi 2002). Additionally, Wang et al. (2012) specifically selected four items that reflect on consumer affective evaluations of a 'country's behaviour', including its social and political values, as well as its international policy and relationship with other countries. As such, they use items such as 'based on your feelings, country XYZ is: *peace loving; friendly towards us; cooperative with us* and *likable*'. The items by Wang et al. (2012) will also be used in this research as measure for country affect.

2.1.9 Operational Conclusions

The measurement model for country cognitions has been specified according to measures that have been generated by two key categories (i.e. country-related cognitions and people-related cognitions). For country affect, specification of the measurement model is somewhat more complicated due the small number of measurement scales existing for the affective component and due to the fact that many measurement scales use measures that are actually part of the country cognitions. Following this observation, the four items that were used by Wang et al. (2012) will be used for the measurement of the affective component.

Having [clarified] [explained] the country image construct, the next section will look at the perception towards the president. Within that section, the different dimensions that comprise the perception towards the president will be elaborated upon, borrowing from social psychology theories about social perception.

2.2   PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE PRESIDENT

726,669 – this is the amount of likes of the Facebook page 'We Love President Donald J. Trump'. The page, that states that it is meant for "*America-first Nationalists for Trump! Trump is for us, so we stand behind him!*", allows its members to share materials such as photos, videos, articles and thoughts about the current president. A selection of two of these 'thoughts', expressed by Theresa and Kristin, were selected and presented below:

> "*Love President Trump. He truly cares about America and the fight against terrorism!! After witnessing the hateful ugliness shown by democratic liberals, I will never vote for any democrat again no matter what!!*" (Theresa Va, 22 May at 13:01, Facebook)

> "*If anyone thinks this moron is doing a good job just need to leave the planet. And withdrawing from the Paris accord is a nail in the coffin of our good status in the world. This idiot is a disgrace. An so are the people that support him.*" (Kristin Haskins Simms, 2 June at 07:29, Facebook)

As can be seen from the two Facebook reactions above, Theresa and Kristin differ in their perceptions of current president Donald Trump. This makes one wonder how it is possible that they have such different perceptions, which in turn raises a more basic question: how are perceptions formed and which dimensions do they consist of? Being able to answer these questions will help answering the second sub question that focuses on the perception towards the president. Additionally we will see how we will be able to measure respondents' perceptions towards former president Barack Obama and current president Donald Trump.

In addition to this, before examining literature about social perception (i.e. a sub-topic of social psychology), it is worthwhile mentioning that Kristin would luckily be able to find comfort in becoming member of another Facebook group called 'We really

miss you President Obama'. This page, having 590,551 likes allows its users to pay support through sharing materials such as photos, articles and thoughts about former president Obama and is sure to have many people with the same ideas as she.

2.2.1   Social Perception

Although Kristin and Theresa are fundamentally different when it comes to their perceptions of president Trump, they are actually more similar to each other then they think they are. These similarities are to be found in the way both Kristin and Theresa form their perceptions. The research area looking into these perceptions is called 'social perception' – or "person perception". Landy (2015, p.1) explains that "*person perception and stereotype content aim to identify the fundamental, default dimensions that structure the impressions that people form of individuals and the stereotypes they form of social categories*".

In the last few decades, extensive research has clearly established two core dimensions underlying human social cognition, both at the individual level and the group level: '*warmth*' and '*competence*'. Warmth refers to traits related to perceived intent, and includes friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness and morality. Competence on the other hand reflects traits that are related to perceived ability, including intelligence, skill, creativity and efficacy. Interestingly, these dimensions appear in spontaneous impressions of presidential candidates, entailing both competence and integrity (warmth, trustworthiness) (Fiske et al., 2007).

The first findings relating to the existence of these two dimensions date back to the studies of Asch (1946) and Rosenberg et al. (1968; 1972). The research by Asch, which has been widely cited, suggests that warmth-related judgements are of *stronger* influence on impressions of personality than competence-related judgements. Building on these findings, Rosenberg et al. (1968) were the first to divide 62 personality traits along a two-dimensional configuration for the properties of social desirability and intellectual desirability (i.e. intellectually good-bad and socially good-bad). Not long after this study, Rosenberg and Sedlak (1972) published a study that showed that co-occurrences of traits in person impressions were underlain by the two dimensions posited earlier (e.g. intellectually good-bad and socially good-bad). Later

publications, for example by Wojciszke et al. (1998) stated that the terms *'competence'* and *'morality'* were equally or even more appropriate as numerous traits marking the intellectually good-bad dimension have more to do with competence in general than with intellect; whereas many of the traits defining the socially good-bad dimension clearly pertain to morality. In addition to this, and to keep a good understanding of the terms, Fiske et al. (2007) mentioned that Wojciszke always uses the terms 'competence' and 'morality', instead of 'competence' and 'warmth', whereby morality traits overlap with the warmth-trustworthiness dimension mentioned elsewhere.

And although these two dimensions – competence and warmth, or competence and morality as Wojciszke et al. (1998) call them - emerge consistently, a large body of research indicates that warmth judgements are *primary* to competence judgements. This effect, that was dubbed the primacy-of-warmth effect, indicates that warmth judgements are primary to competence judgements. Additionally, as stated earlier, they carry more weight in affective and behavioural reactions. Darwin's evolution theory is said to be at the basis of this effect because another person's intent for good or ill (warmth/morality) is more important to survival than whether the other person can act on those intentions (competence) (Fiske et al., 2007). In addition to this, Wojciszke et al. (1998) found that the dimensions of morality and competence account for 82% of the variance in perceptions of everyday social behaviours.

The different terms used in the previous paragraphs could have created some confusion regarding the two dimensions. Landy (2015) clarified this by arguing that different researchers employ different names for these two dimensions, but states that their theorizing largely overlaps. However, he proposes that morality and sociability constitute distinct dimensions of social cognition, alongside competence, and therefore all three dimensions capture a "*fundamentally different and important aspect of another person or group's social functioning, and make independent contributions to a variety of social judgments*" (Landy, p. 8). This three-dimension model stating that morality, sociability and competence are distinct and interactive dimensions of social cognitions was adopted by other researchers such as Wojciszke (2016). This is important as the measurement scale of Wojciszke (2016) is at the basis of the presidential perception measured in this research.

2.2.3   Social Perception and Politics

Earlier publications demonstrated that voting for political candidates has shown to be significantly influenced by attributes related neither to morality nor to competence, such as physical attractiveness. Similarly, candidates appearing more frequently in the media appeared to augment their chances to be elected (Grush, McKeough & Ahlering, 1978). This suggested that political voting/approval is influenced by a mere likability factor in addition to judgements of their morality and competence (Wojciszke et al., 1998). In that same research, that Wojciszke and Klusek conducted amongst a national sample of Poles to describe the Polish president with 14 traits as well as to answer the standard Gallupian question about the president's approval, they found that three factors underlayed the ascriptions of personality traits of the president: *morality, competence* and *likability*. However, although likability correlated with the president's approval, it was only a weak predictor compared to the perceived morality and competence. Morality appeared to be the strongest predictor of approval ratings, which is in line with other findings that show that moral traits influence global evaluative impressions to a higher degree than competence related traits (i.e. primacy-of-warmth effect).

2.2.4   Conclusion

This section has explained more about the dimensions of person perception, warmth and competence, and the recent findings by Landy (2015) who concluded that social cognitions actually consist of three instead of two dimensions: morality, sociability, and competence. Bearing this in mind, one now understands that Theresa and Kristin have made different evaluations along these three dimensions – which is likely to have caused them to think differently of president Trump. This research will also make use of these three dimensions of perceptions, i.e. sociability, morality and competence. In order to measure respondents' judgements along these three dimensions, Wojciszke's (2016) measurement scale will be used.

2.3 U.S. TRAVEL INTENTIONS

"On Tuesday, the [New York City] tourism marketing agency, NYC & Company, plans to announce that its forecast for international visitors has turned from positive to negative since Mr. Trump was elected in November. The city now expects to draw 300,000 fewer foreigners this year than in 2016, when 12.7 million international visitors came, a decline that will cost businesses in the city that cater to tourists at least $ 600 million in sales, the agency estimates." (McGeehan, 2017)

A few months ago, Trump rolled out 'Executive Order 13769', an executive order that barred admission to the U.S. of all people with non-immigrant of immigrant visas from seven countries – Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen – for 90 days (McGraw and Kelsey, 2017). According to Trump the ban was imposed on *"certain dangerous countries"* and would *"help us protect our people"* (Baker and Liptak, 2017). Even though a federal judge in Seattle halted the first version of the ban soon after the release, the ban sparked confusion and protests across the U.S. and the rest of the world. Now that a few months have passed, the (unintended) consequences of the ban have become clear. Adam Sacks, president of Tourism Economics, said, *"the travel ban, such as it is, would affect less than 0.1% of all visitors. But the whole rhetoric around it has damaged the U.S. brand as a destination. [...] It's a very discretionary market. It takes very little for them to shift their travel plan and preferences."* (Isidore, 2017).

As Adam Sacks mentioned, "the rhetoric around the travel ban has damaged the U.S. brand as a *destination"*. Here Sacks - implicitly and possibly not deliberately - referred to a different academic area of country image: *tourism destination image* (TDI). The co-existence of these research areas is not particularly surprising, considering that the country image construct has been studied by several different disciplines including tourism, international marketing and international relations – each bringing in their own perspectives.

What is surprising however is that although the two constructs have developed separately, there has been little crossover of language or research paradigms – even though the constructs have many similarities and overlapping areas. This has probably

been the reason for recent publications to shed light on the topic of theoretical convergence of the two constructs, and findings are interesting. They are presented in the next section, which is introduced by a brief elaboration on *destination image research.*

2.3.1 Destination Image and Country Image

Destination image was defined by Baloglu and McCleary (1999, p. 870) as "an *attitudinal* construct consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about an object or *destination*". Destination hereby refers to a location visited by a tourist, being a city, region or country.

In 2005, Mossberg and Kleppe were amongst the first to initiate the discussion on converging Product Country Image (hereafter: 'PCI', i.e. the second definitional group of Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009)) research and TDI research. However Mossberg and Kleppe did not offer nor test a model. As such Nadeau et al. (2008) were the first to explore the theoretical underpinnings of PCI and TDI in order to assess the multidimensional nature of constructs involved. They found that foundation beliefs about the country and its people are directly relevant to destination beliefs and indirectly to intentions through the evaluation of the destination and the desired associations with the country. The authors state this is important because it situates tourists' intentions in the greater context of the host destination and broader country-image beliefs, evaluations, interests and intentions. As such, constructs developed in PCI literature about foundational country image attitudes have a direct relevance to the tourism context. These findings are built on a common link between the two research areas, which is the application of *attitude theory* to explain the influence of image beliefs on evaluations and behaviour.

Ritchie (2004) also captured this thought by stating that in today's interconnected world, tourism is increasingly affected by forces and events in its external environment, leading to small-scale crises having a considerable impact on destinations – whether the incident is in its immediate vicinity or not. Interestingly, Coshall (2003) found that the damaging effect might be short-lived as the tourism

demand recovers quickly once the crisis is overcome. Several studies (e.g. Qu, Kim & Im, 2011) found a greater influence of the cognitive component on the overall image for those places that are more developed and well known (e.g. U.S.). Kim and Yoon (2003) found that a greater weight of the affective image on the overall image in case of a developing country.

2.3.2   Conclusion

Building on one of the key findings of Nadeau et al. (2008) that constructs developed in PCI literature about the foundational country image attitudes have a direct relevance to the tourism context, it is expected that the political situation in the U.S. will influence the intention to visit the U.S. Important to mention here is that it will be assumed that the findings presented by Nadeau et al. (2008) also apply to the country image construct as it is perceived in this study, in contrary to 'PCI'. On the basis of this assumption lies the thought that attitude theory also forms the basis of the country image construct as applied in this study.

2.4   PROPOSED MODEL

Following the literature review in the previous three sections, this section translates these findings into concrete hypotheses that will be tested. As can be seen, four (groups of) hypotheses have been formulated along with several sub-hypotheses. They have been written out in full and elaborated upon below.

> ***Hypothesis 1***: a significant difference exists between the perceived morality, perceived competence and perceived sociability between (i) current U.S. president Donald Trump and (ii) former U.S. president Barack Obama.

This first hypothesis tests for a statistically significant difference between each of the individual dimensions perceptions consist of. It is expected that a statistically significant difference exists between each dimension. More specifically, and building on Asch's (1946) findings (i.e. who found that warmth-related judgements are of stronger influence on impressions than competence-related judgements) it is expected that the differences along the warmth-related dimensions of perceptions (i.e. morality

and sociability) will be bigger than the differences along the competence-related dimension of perceptions (i.e. competence). This has led to the formulation of hypothesis 1A, which can be found below.

> *Hypothesis 1A*: warmth-related dimensions of perceptions (i.e. sociability and morality) will show bigger differences than competence-related dimensions of perceptions (i.e. competence) between the Obama and Trump group.

Following the first main hypothesis that tests for potential differences between each of the components of perceptions, the second group of (sub) hypotheses tests whether significant (positive) relationships exist between each of the dimensions of perceptions (i.e. perceived sociability, perceived competence, perceived morality) and each of the two components of country cognitions (i.e. country-related cognitions and people-related cognitions). It is expected that these relationships will be positive since it seems logical that the better a president is perceived along one of the three dimensions, the more this will reflect in cognitions related to country- or people.

Important to stress here again, and also being applicable to the third and fourth (group of) hypotheses, is that this research builds upon the high-involvement hierarchy model by Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009), i.e. Model B presented in Appendix 1. This model follows the theory of reasoned action by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and assumes that an individual *first* forms beliefs about a certain country by accumulating knowledge regarding relevant attributes such as the country's political system or climate (i.e. cognitive component). The consumer *hereafter* relies on these beliefs to develop feelings about that country (i.e. affective component). *Finally*, the person engages in relevant behaviour (i.e. conative component). It should be noted that this hierarchy is leading for the formulation of (groups of) hypotheses 2-4.

> *Hypothesis 2A*: *perceived morality* has a significant positive influence on *people-related cognitions*.

> *Hypothesis 2B*: *perceived competence* has a significant positive influence on *people-related cognitions*.

Hypothesis 2C: *perceived sociability* has a significant positive influence on *people-related cognitions*.

Hypothesis 2D: *perceived morality* has a significant positive influence on *country-related cognitions*.

Hypothesis 2E: *perceived competence* has a significant positive influence on *country-related cognitions*.

Hypothesis 2F: *perceived sociability* has a significant positive influence on *country-related cognitions*.

The third group of hypotheses flows from Model B presented in 2.1.4, the high-involvement hierarchy model, and tests whether there is a significant influence of each of the two components of country cognitions on country affect. The two (sub) hypotheses have been formulated below.

Hypothesis 3A: country-related cognitions significantly influence country affect.

Hypothesis 3B: people-related cognitions significantly influence country affect.

The fourth and last hypothesis also flows forth from Model B presented in 2.1.4 and tests whether country affect significantly influences travel intentions. As stated above, this hypothesis flows from the general thought that an individual first forms beliefs (i.e. country cognitions), upon which feelings are developed (i.e. country affect) and after which a person engages in relevant behaviour (i.e. country conations). As such, the fourth hypothesis was formulated, which can be found below.

Hypothesis 4: country affect significantly influences travel intentions to the U.S.

2.4.1   Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 contains the conceptual framework that is at the basis of this research, revealing the relationships under study. The numbers within the figure indicate the respective sub questions they are relevant for.
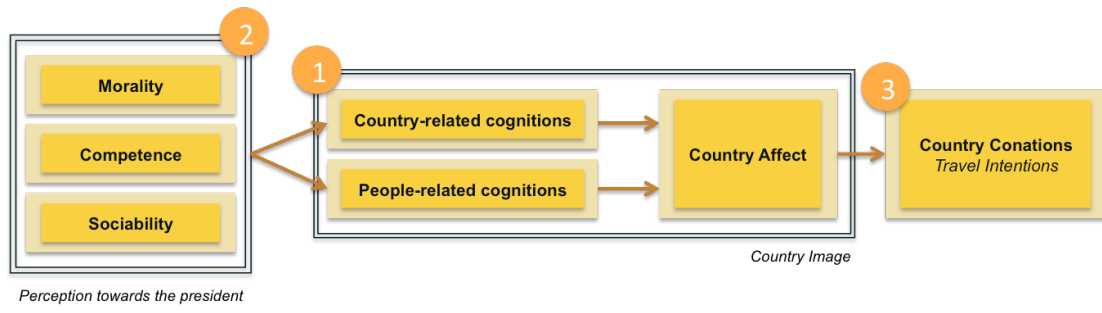
Figure 1 | Conceptual Framework

3 METHODOLOGY

In testing the hypotheses brought forward in previous chapter, two different analyses have been conducted. The first analysis, being less comprehensive than the second, was conducted to increase our understanding of the relationship between perceptions towards the president and the country image construct. For this analysis, approval- and favourability ratings were used. The second analysis is more comprehensive and used regression analysis to analyse the 7-point Likert scale data. Before presenting the results in chapter four, this chapter explains the methods used in these two analyses.

3.1 APPROVAL RATINGS: AN ACCURATE PREDICTOR?

The conclusions by Wojciszke et al. (1998, see 2.2.3) imply that low presidential approval ratings could be driven by low perceived morality and perceived competence. This made the author wonder whether it would be possible to use historical presidential approval data as measure for the level of perceived morality and competence of a president (i.e. as a part of the 'perceptions towards the president'). Connecting this historical approval data to a measure of country image might give a 'sneak preview' into the relationship between the perceptions towards the president and country image. Additionally approval ratings could be a more up-to-date and consistently measured indicator if connected to a measure for the U.S. country image. This results in the question what measurement could possibly be used for this purpose.

In answering this question, we refer back to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 6) who defined attitudes as "a learned predisposition to *respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner* with respect to a given object." Here the latter part of the definition is important (i.e. the part in italics) as it implies that favourability ratings might be our candidate. These favourability ratings measure the percentage of people who hold a 'favourable' or 'unfavourable' opinion towards a particular object (e.g. a country), and are further explained in the next sub section. In order to test for this effect, the correct data sources are needed for both the approval ratings and the favourability ratings. These means of measurement have been found in the following

two sources: a report that is being published on a yearly basis by Pew Research Center, containing information about the U.S. country image abroad; and secondly in the Gallup Daily Presidential Job Approval. Next sub section elaborates upon these data sources.

3.1.1   Information Input

The first source of information is the 'Pew Research Center' (hereafter called: 'PRC'), who states they are a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. One of the topics they conduct research about is country image. On a yearly basis they publish a report about America's image around the world. The last report ('*As Obama years draw close, President and U.S. seen favourably in Europe and Asia*') was published in 2016. This report is based on the results of a survey that was conducted amongst 20.132 respondents across 16 nations. It provides information about the opinions of Western European respondents towards the United States. This information is gathered through questions such as "*Please tell me if you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable opinion of the United States*" which are expressed in favourability ratings. This rating indicates how favourable respondents' opinions are towards the United States and has been compiled for all 16 participating nations. Some of these nations are in the baseline of the report and therefore partake in the survey on a yearly basis, e.g. the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Other nations, such as The Netherlands, are included every once in a while. In the most recent report (2016) the Netherlands was included; the outcomes indicated that 63% of the Dutch respondents hold a favourable view of the United States, against 32% that holds an unfavourable view.

The second source of information is the 'Gallup Daily: Presidential Job Approval'. Gallup is an American research-based, global performance management consulting company. On a daily basis, their poll tracks the percentage of Americans that approve or disapprove the job Donald Trump is doing as a president. This is done through telephone interviews with approximately 1.500 national adults, with a margin error of ± 3 percentage points. Gallup data was used, as it was the only polling agency from which poll data could be traced back for the desired period. Additionally, Gallup is

one of the most well known polling firms (Silver, 2011) and Wojciszke (1996, p. 320) also used the "*standard Gallupian question about the presidency approval*" in his research. As such, Gallupian data was traced back for 2009 – 2015 (i.e. Obama presidency) and modelled against the favourability ratings.

3.1.2   Methods

In order to test for the above relationship, 415 measurements of the Gallup 'presidential approval ratings' for the period 2009 – 2015 were gathered using Gallup Analytics. Each measurement hereby comprised of an average approval rating for six days, starting in January 2009 and ending December 2015. Using these 415 measurements, a yearly approval rating average was calculated which was named the *'Average Yearly Approval Rating'*. This number was set off against an average of the U.S. favourability ratings, measured on a yearly basis, for the United Kingdom (UK), France (FR), and Germany (DE). As mentioned earlier, these three countries were selected as they are, and have always been, in the baseline of the report - and as such a full range of data is available for the period of interest (2009 – 2015). Trend lines were used to compare the movements of the approval ratings and the favourability ratings. So what did these trend lines indicate? This is to be found in the next chapter.

3.2   A MORE THOROUGH ANALYSIS

The second analysis is more thorough and tests the hypotheses that have been formulated in the previous chapter. This section elaborates on the research design, the survey design, and the measures.

3.2.1   Research Design

In order to unveil the effects of the perception towards a president on country image and travel intentions, a survey was conducted. The main challenge here was the fact that respondents could potentially be biased when asked for their opinions about Trump and immediately after for Obama, or vice versa. In an ideal world these opinions would have been gathered with the same people and under the same circumstances for both Obama as well as for Trump (i.e. at the same moment in their presidency). However, as we don't live in an ideal world, a second-best option was

opted for. This option implied that two (almost) identical questionnaires were set out amongst two different groups. One group was presented a questionnaire containing questions about Trump in present tense, and another group was presented a questionnaire containing questions about Obama, which were formulated in past tense. When respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire, no clues were given about a possible comparison between both men. Additionally, the questionnaire for the Trump group, which was set out after the required sample for Obama was obtained, contained a final question '*I have not participated in any other survey related to this research*'. Respondents that had answered 'False' to this question were filtered out the Trump data set.

3.2.2 Survey Design

Both questionnaires consisted of four main blocks, containing ten questions in total. The first block, containing one matrix shaped question with 21 items, measured the respondent's perception towards either Barack Obama or Donald Trump. This question was based on a 21-item questionnaire devised by Wojciszke (2016), a widely known Polish professor of psychology. Wojciszke (2016) devised this scale based on ratings of 300 trait names in Polish and was published in Abele & Wojcizske (2007) and his 2010 book. The scale measures the three dimensions of perceptions: morality, competence and sociability. Herewith *morality* is measured by the following traits: 'sincere', 'respectful', 'moral', 'honest', 'fair', 'righteous' and 'trustworthy'; *competence* is measured through 'efficient', 'active', 'capable', 'energetic', 'competent', 'skilful' and 'intelligent; *sociability* is measured through 'warm', 'friendly', 'helpful', 'supportive', 'kind', 'sociable' and 'likeable'. Answers were given using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' (i.e. '1') to 'strongly disagree' ('7'). Taking the average score of the traits belonging to a particular dimension yields the rating of a person (in this case Trump or Obama) to that particular dimension.

After having measured respondents' perceptions towards either Trump or Obama in the first block, the second block contained five questions about the U.S. country image, which in turn consisted of several items. The first four questions herewith measured 'country cognitions' and the fifth question measured 'country affect'. The

difference between 'thinking' (i.e. country cognitions) and 'feeling' ('i.e. country affect) was hereby clearly brought forward. This is important since many studies failed to make this distinction in the operationalization stage. Bearing this in mind, the first four questions resembled the two dimensions presented in 2.1.7, i.e. 'country-related cognitions' and 'people-related cognitions', which each in turn were represented by a character beliefs and competency beliefs (Nadeau et al., 2008). These four questions (each representing one of the four groups presented earlier) contained five, resp. three, three and four items and were derived from a study conducted by Nadeau et al. (2008). The fifth question measured 'country affect' through four items, which were derived from a study by Wang et al. (2012), e.g. *'under current U.S. president Trump, I feel the U.S. is peace loving'*. This division also builds upon the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), which assumed that an individual first forms beliefs about a country and hereafter relies on these beliefs to develop feelings and subsequently engages in relevant behaviour, i.e. travel intentions – which will be discussed hereafter. Again, answers were recorded using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

The third block measured the travel intentions of respondents to the United States. This was done through two items that recorded whether the respondent would 'like' to visit the United States or not and whether the respondent would recommend others to visit the United States. Herewith a clear distinction was made between the Obama questionnaire and the Trump questionnaire, i.e. in the Trump questionnaire the question was posited in current tense, "Under current president Trump, I would like/recommend …", in the Obama questionnaire the question was posited in past tense, "Under former president Obama, I would have liked/recommended…". The fourth block contained a demographics section that shed light on the respondent's background. Three items measured age, gender, and level of education. The questionnaire was published online using Qualtrics software. As said earlier, in order to make sure that respondents would fill in only one questionnaire, the Trump questionnaire (which was published after the required sample size for Obama was achieved) contained a question at the end that asked the respondent whether he or she had already participated in another survey related to this research. Respondent's cases having answered 'false' to this question were removed from the data set. The questionnaires can be found in Appendix 2.

3.2.3   Measurement and Scales

Exploratory factor analysis was used to refine the scales and to summarize the country image data into three factors. The outcomes of the factor analysis reconfirmed the two dimensions by Heslop et al. (2004), i.e. country cognitions consisting of 'country-related cognitions' and 'people-related cognitions', since the items measuring these two dimensions of country cognitions loaded onto two factors (F1 and F2). The items measuring country affect also loaded onto one factor (F3).

As we can understand from Figure 2 on the next page, the item 'I think/thought of Americans as: -Technically skilled' has the highest loading on F1 (.864) and is herewith of most influence in the first factor. This in contrary to 'I think/thought of Americans as: -Having a high work ethic', which has the lowest factor loading on F1 (.735). In the second factor, F2, the item 'I consider(ed) the U.S. to: -Be active and admirable in world affairs' had the highest factor loading on F2 (.890) and the item 'I think/thought of the U.S. as: -Technically advanced' had the lowest factor loading (.634). For the third factor, we find that the item 'I feel/felt the U.S. is/was: -Friendly to us' has the highest factor loading (.929) and the item 'I feel/felt the U.S. is/was: -Peace loving' had the lowest factor loading (.827). Each of the three factors had an explained variance between 63% and 79%.

The three factors show a high reliability with Cronbach's Alpha values of .880, .913 and .909 respectively. The reliability of the outcome variable 'travel intentions' is .929. The sampling adequacy measure 'Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin' (hereafter: 'KMO') shows values higher than .8 for all components. Additionally, the reliability was tested for the dimensions of the perception towards the president, i.e. 'morality', 'competence' and 'sociability'. This yielded Cronbach's Alpha values of .979, .936 and .976 respectively.

Principal components analysis of country image	
People related cognitions	**F1***
I think/thought of Americans as:-Technically skilled	0.864
I think/thought of Americans as:-Well-educated	0.829
I think/thought of Americans as:-Creative	0.785
I think/thought of Americans as:-Achieving pride in high standards	0.779
I think/thought of Americans as:-Friendly	0.763
I think/thought of Americans as:-Having a high work ethic	0.735
Country related cognitions	**F2***
I consider(ed) the U.S. to:-Be active and admirable in world affairs	0.890
I consider(ed) the U.S. to:-Be a leader in individual rights and freedom	0.866
I consider(ed) the U.S. to:-Be politically stable	0.859
I consider(ed) the U.S. to:-Be a leader in environmental protection	0.826
I think/thought of the U.S. as:-Having a stable economy	0.764
I think/thought of the U.S. as:-Having a high level of economic developm	0.758
I consider(ed) the U.S. to:-Have a high standard of living	0.687
I think/thought of the U.S. as:-Technically advanced	0.634
Country affect	**F3***
I feel/felt the U.S. Is/was:-Friendly to us	0.929
I feel/felt the U.S. is/was:-Cooperative with us	0.899
I feel/felt the U.S. Is/was:-Likeable	0.895
I feel/felt the U.S. Is/was:-Peace loving	0.827

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis

*: Single factor obtained

Figure 2 | Exploratory Factor Analysis

The three factors that were obtained from the exploratory factor analysis (F1, F2, and F3) were used as variables for the regression analysis. As one can understand from the Figure above, F1 was coined 'people-related cognitions', F2 was coined 'country-related cognitions' and F3 was coined 'country affect'. Subsequently regression analysis was used to analyse the interrelationships between the variables, whereby normality was assumed.

3.2.4 Sample

In total, 126 questionnaires were collected, 67 of which about Barack Obama, and 59 about Donald Trump. The majority of the sample was between 26 and 35 years old and had obtained a Bachelors Degree. Interestingly, the sample consisted exactly of 50% male respondents and 50% female respondents.

4   RESULTS

Within this chapter, the results are presented of the two analyses described in chapter three. Starting with the least comprehensive analysis, that used approval ratings and favourability ratings, the relationship between sub questions 1 and 2 will be considered. Hereafter the results from the second analysis, that used *regression analysis* to analyse the 7-point Likert scale questionnaire data, will be presented.

4.1   Results First Analysis

Within Figure 3, the dark blue line represents the average yearly approval rating (in %), and the orange line the linear trend line relating to it. Additionally, the light blue line represents the average yearly U.S. favourability rating for the United Kingdom, France and Germany (in %); the red line is the linear trend line relating to it. The equations within the figure belong to the trend lines and indicate their respective slopes. When carefully studying Figure 3, a few conclusions can be drawn. First, the trend line for both the approval ratings as well as the trend line for the favourability ratings move in a similar downward (i.e. negative) direction. This implies that there is an inverse relationship between the amount of years Obama served in the White House on the one hand, and the approval ratings and favourability ratings on the other hand. Literature states that this decline in presidential popularity over time has to do with unrealistically high expectations of presidential performance giving way to more realistic assessments (Sigelman and Knight, 1983). Subsequently, this decrease in presidential popularity also reflects in the favourability ratings that other countries hold towards the United States.

Secondly, as the coefficients of the slopes indicate, there is a small difference in between them (-1.4 versus -1.2). This suggests that as time progresses, the popularity of Barack Obama in the U.S. decreases slightly faster than his favourability abroad. However, all in all one could carefully say that over the years, both the approval ratings and favourability ratings seem to follow a similar pattern (negative) and decrease at a comparable rate.

On a year-to-year basis both movements do not seem to follow a very similar pattern, however it seems that in the course of the Obama presidency the approval ratings and favourability ratings follow a similar (negative) pattern. Approval ratings are therefore a good predictor over a longer period of time for the movement of the country image measurement (favourability ratings), for a shorter period of time the predictive possibilities are rather limited. As such, making predictions about the development of U.S. favourability ratings in Western Europe on the basis of Trump's approval ratings in his first half-year, seems to be a bit premature. Taking into account the groundbreaking records of Trump's approval ratings, it is expected that Trump's favourability ratings abroad will not hit an all-time high. However, a critical note should be placed with this analysis as the U.S. favourability ratings abroad (external) have completely different drivers than (internal) approval ratings.
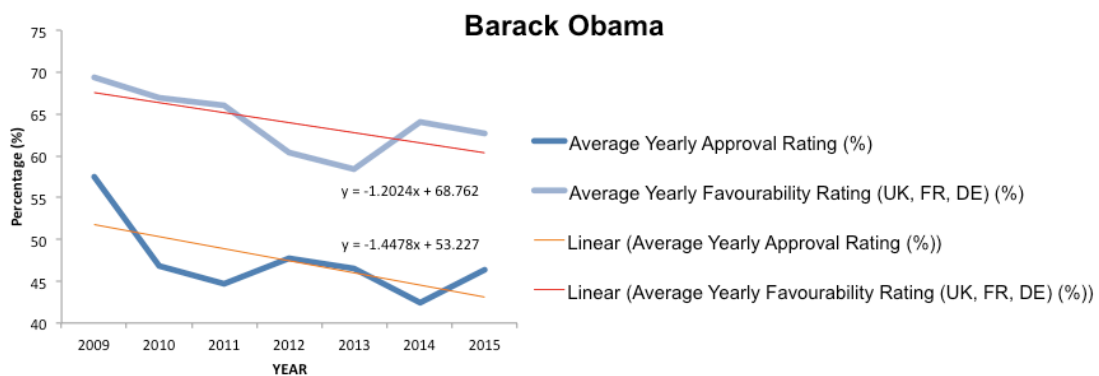
Figure 3 | A sneak preview

4.2   Results Second Analysis

This section discusses the outcomes of the second, more comprehensive, analysis – a questionnaire analysis. Step-by-step all hypotheses will be discussed and considered whether they are supported or rejected.

4.2.1   Perceptual Differences

An *independent samples t-test* was used to examine whether a significant difference existed between each of the dimensions of the perceptions towards (i) current U.S. president Donald Trump and (ii) former U.S. president Barack Obama. As can seen from Figure 4, there is a significant difference at the 0.01 level between

each of the dimensions perceptions consist of. Here equal variances may be assumed for both the competence dimension as well as the sociability dimension, but not for the morality dimension. The mean values in Figure 4 indicate that respondents' perceptions of Donald Trump are significantly more negative than the perceptions of respondents towards Barack Obama. Negativity has been defined here as an increased level of disagreement with the traits belonging to the three dimensions. Figure 5 hereby indicates that with a mean difference of -3.80850 the perceptions along the morality dimension differ the most. The smallest difference is to be found along the competence dimension of the perception (i.e. -2.23844). Though still significantly different, respondents apparently consider Donald Trump and Barack Obama more similar on the traits relating to the competence dimension compared to the traits relating to the two other dimensions of perception. These results indicate support for the first hypothesis, i.e. a significant difference exists between each of the dimensions of the perceptions towards Donald Trump and Barack Obama.

Group Statistics					
DUMMY PRESIDENT		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perception | Morality	OBAMA	67	2.1770	0.81955	0.10012
	TRUMP	59	5.9855	0.98963	0.12884
Perception | Competence	OBAMA	67	2.0085	0.68326	0.08347
	TRUMP	59	4.2470	1.33718	0.17409
Perception | Sociability	OBAMA	67	1.8742	0.55858	0.06824
	TRUMP	59	5.6562	1.02369	0.13327

Figure 4 | Group statistics

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Perception | Morality	Equal variances assumed	1.255	**0.265**	-23.621	124	**0.000**	-3.80850	0.16124
	Equal variances not assumed			-23.341	112.993	**0.000**	-3.80850	0.16317
Perception | Competence	Equal variances assumed	35.409	**0.000**	-12.038	124	**0.000**	-2.23844	0.18595
	Equal variances not assumed			-11.594	83.841	**0.000**	-2.23844	0.19306
Perception | Sociability	Equal variances assumed	14.561	**0.000**	-26.150	124	**0.000**	-3.78197	0.14463
	Equal variances not assumed			-25.259	87.137	**0.000**	-3.78197	0.14973

Figure 5 | Perception towards the president

Additionally, we find support for Hypothesis 1A, that suggested that the warmth-related dimensions of perceptions (i.e. morality and sociability) will show bigger differences than the competence-related dimension of perceptions (i.e. competence).

Results indicate that mean differences are bigger for sociability (-3.78197) and morality (-3.80850), than for competence (-2.23844). This supports Asch's findings (1946), suggesting that warmth-related judgements are of *stronger* influence on impressions of personality than competence-related judgements.

4.2.2 Perceptions and Country Cognitions

In looking at the influence of perceptions on country image, following the high-involvement hierarchy model (Model B) presented in 2.1.4, linear regression analysis was used to examine the possible effects of 'perception towards the president' on country cognitions. Again, herewith its important to emphasize that country cognitions consist of two factors, 'country-related cognitions' and 'people-related cognitions'. These two 'categories' of country cognitions were initially brought forward by Heslop et al. (2004) and were reconfirmed by the exploratory factor analysis presented in 3.2.3. Two multiple regressions were run to predict (i) country-related cognitions and (ii) people-related cognitions from perceived morality, perceived competence and perceived sociability. As 'predictors' both analyses included: main effects of perception dimensions, the dummy for president (Obama/Trump), and the interactions of the three perception dimensions with the Obama/Trump dummy.

The first [1] multiple regression (see Figure 6 on next page) statistically significantly predicted country-related cognitions, $F(7, 118) = 51.632$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = .754$. Of the predictors we find that predictors '**Morality**', '**President (D)**' and '**President*Sociability**' added statistically significantly to the prediction (resp. t = 2.460, p = 0.015, β = 0.493; t = -1.841, p = 0.068, β = - 1.301; t = 2.376, p = 0.019, β = 0.776), considering α = 10%. We find a positive unstandardized beta coefficient for the predictors 'Morality' (0.493) and 'President*Sociability' (0.776), thus indicating that a 1-unit increase within these predictors leads to an increase in the dependent variable with the value mentioned in between brackets (the unstandardized beta coefficient for that predictor). Note though that the last predictor (i.e. 'President*Sociability' will only increase the value of the dependent variable if 'President' equals Trump (i.e. when the dummy value is '1'). Additionally we find a negative unstandardized beta coefficient for the predictor 'President (D)' (-1.301),

indicating that if 'President' equals Trump, the value of the dependent variable (i.e. country-related cognitions) will decrease with the value mentioned in between brackets (the unstandardized beta coefficient for that predictor). Bearing these results in mind, we find full support for hypothesis **2D** (i.e. 'perceived morality has a significant positive influence on country-related cognitions'), partial support for hypothesis **2F** (i.e. 'perceived sociability has a significant positive influence on country-related cognitions'), and no support for hypothesis **2E** ('perceived competence has a significant positive influence on country-related cognitions'). This is in line with earlier findings presented by Fiske et al. (2007), who stated that warmth-related dimensions (i.e. perceived morality and perceived sociability) carry more weight in behavioural reactions. At the basis of this lies Darwin's evolution theory since another person's intent for good or ill (warmth) is more important to survival than whether the other person can act on those intentions (competence).

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.868[a]	0.754	0.739	0.74202

a. Predictors: (Constant), President*Competence, Morality, Competence, President (D), Sociability, President*Morality, President*Sociability

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	198.998	7	28.428	51.632	.000[b]
	Residual	64.971	118	0.551		
	Total	263.969	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Country Related Cogntions

b. Predictors: (Constant), President*Competence, Morality, Competence, President (D), Sociability, President*Morality, President*Sociability

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.182	0.344		6.338	0.000
	Morality	0.493	0.200	0.716	2.460	0.015
	Sociability	-0.391	0.273	-0.554	-1.430	0.155
	Competence	0.152	0.175	0.159	0.866	0.388
	President (D)	-1.301	0.707	-0.449	-1.841	0.068
	President*Morality	-0.315	0.254	-0.666	-1.241	0.217
	President*Sociability	0.776	0.327	1.558	2.376	0.019
	President*Competence	0.069	0.203	0.111	0.343	0.732

a. Dependent Variable: Country Related Cogntions

Figure 6 | SPSS output multiple regression #1

The second [2] multiple regression (see Figure 7 on next page) statistically significantly predicted people-related cognitions, $F(7, 118) = 9.549$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = .362$. Of the predictors we find that '**Sociability**', '**Competence**', and '**President*Sociability**' added statistically significantly to the prediction (resp. t = -1.668, p = 0.098, β = -0.546; t = 2.709, p = 0.008, β = 0.567; t = 1.942, p = 0.055, β = 0.759), considering α = 10%. We find a positive unstandardized beta coefficient for the predictors 'Competence' (0.567) and 'President*Sociability' (0.759), thus indicating that a 1-unit increase within these predictors leads to an increase in the dependent variable with the value mentioned in between brackets (the unstandardized beta coefficient for that predictor). However note that the last predictor (i.e. 'President*Sociability') will only increase the value of the dependent variable (i.e. people-related cognitions) if 'President' equals Trump (i.e. when the dummy value is '1'). Additionally, we find a negative unstandardized beta coefficient for the predictor 'Sociability' (-0.546), indicating that a 1-unit increase in the value of this predictor will lead to a decrease in the value of the dependent variable with the number mentioned in between brackets (the unstandardized beta coefficient for that predictor).

Bearing these results in mind, we find full support for support for hypothesis **2B** ('perceived competence has a significant positive influence on people-related cognitions'), partial support for hypothesis **2C** ('perceived sociability has a significant positive influence on people-related cognitions') and no support for hypothesis **2A** ('perceived morality has a significant positive influence on people-related cognitions'). Herewith it should be noted that hypothesis 2C is partly supported since the interaction term 'President*Sociability' indicates a positive statistically significant relationship, but the main effect 'Sociability' indicates a negative statistically significant relationship.

Moreover, it should be noted that R^2 for the first multiple regression is relatively high (0.754) when compared with R^2 for the second multiple regression (0.362). This means that within the first model, a larger part of the variation in the dependent variable (i.e. country-related cognitions) is explained by the independent variables than is the case for the second model (i.e. people-related cognitions).

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.601[a]	0.362	0.324	0.88812

a. Predictors: (Constant), President*Competence, Morality, Competence, President (D), Sociability, President*Morality, President*Sociability

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	52.720	7	7.531	9.549	.000[b]
	Residual	93.072	118	0.789		
	Total	145.793	125			

a. Dependent Variable: People Related Cognitions

b. Predictors: (Constant), President*Competence, Morality, Competence, President (D), Sociability, President*Morality, President*Sociability

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.611	0.412		6.339	0.000
	Morality	0.107	0.240	0.208	0.445	0.657
	Sociability	-0.546	0.327	-1.040	-1.668	0.098
	Competence	0.567	0.209	0.802	2.709	0.008
	President (D)	-0.746	0.846	-0.346	-0.882	0.380
	President*Morality	-0.189	0.304	-0.537	-0.621	0.536
	President*Sociability	0.759	0.391	2.051	1.942	0.055
	President*Competence	-0.256	0.242	-0.548	-1.055	0.294

a. Dependent Variable: People Related Cognitions

Figure 7 | SPSS output multiple regression #2

4.2.3   Country Cognitions and Country Affect

Now that more is known about the effects the dimensions of perceptions have on country cognitions, the next step is to see whether country cognitions significantly affect country affect – as was brought forward in the high-involvement hierarchy model (Model B) presented earlier. Another multiple regression was conducted to test for this effect; the results can be found in Figure 8. As 'predictors' were included: main effects of two types of cognitions, the dummy for president (Obama/Trump), and the interactions of the two types of cognitions with the Obama/Trump dummy.

The third [3] multiple regression statistically significantly predicted country affect, $F_{(5, 120)} = 55.932$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = .700$. Of the 'predictors' we find that both '**Country Related Cognitions**' and '**People Related Cognitions'** added statistically

significantly to the prediction (resp. t= 3.120, p = 0.002, β = 0.495, and t= 2.343, p = 0.021, β = 0.370), considering α = 10%. We find that for both these predictors, the unstandardized beta coefficient is positive, thus indicating that for every 1-unit increase within the value of this predictor variable, the dependent variable (i.e. country affect) will increase with 0.495 or 0.370 respectively. Put differently, this means that only a main effect is to be found of 'Country Related Cognitions' and 'People Related Cognitions' on the dependent variable 'Country Affect'.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.837[a]	0.700	0.687	0.87721

a. Predictors: (Constant), President*People Related Cognitions, People Related Cognitions, Country Related Cogntions, President (D), President*Country Related Cognitions

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	215.198	5	43.040	55.932	.000[b]
	Residual	92.340	120	0.770		
	Total	307.538	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Country Affect

b. Predictors: (Constant), President*People Related Cognitions, People Related Cognitions, Country Related Cogntions, President (D), President*Country Related Cognitions

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.242	0.448		0.540	0.590
	Country Related Cogntions	0.495	0.159	0.459	3.120	0.002
	People Related Cognitions	0.370	0.158	0.255	2.343	0.021
	President (D)	0.915	0.740	0.292	1.237	0.219
	President*Country Related Cognitions	-0.149	0.203	-0.250	-0.732	0.465
	President*People Related Cognitions	0.146	0.197	0.195	0.742	0.460

a. Dependent Variable: Country Affect

Figure 8 | SPSS output for multiple regression # 3

Bearing these results in mind, we find support for hypotheses **3A** (i.e. 'country-related cognitions significantly influence country affect') and **3B** (i.e. 'people-related cognitions significantly influence country affect'). Also we find that country-related cognitions have a stronger effect on country affect (.495) than people-related

cognitions (.370). This means that cognitions related to the country itself, such as 'The U.S. being active and admirable in world affairs' have a stronger effect on affect for the United States than cognitions related to the people of the U.S., such as 'Americans being well educated'.

4.2.4   Country Affect and Travel Intentions

After having found that the two types of cognitions significantly influence country affect, we hereafter need to point out whether country affect in turn significantly affects country conations (i.e. travel intentions) – as brought forward in the high-involvement hierarchy model (Model B) presented earlier. A fourth, and last, regression was conducted to test for this effect; the results can be found in Figure 9 on next page. As 'predictors' were included: main effect of country affect, the dummy for president (Obama/Trump), and the interaction of country affect with the Obama/Trump dummy.

We find that the fourth and last regression analysis statistically significantly predicted travel intentions, $F(3, 122) = 24.919$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = .380$. Of the 'predictors' we find that only '**Country Affect**' added statistically significantly to the prediction (resp. t= 1.988, p = 0.049, β = 0.209), i.e. only the main effect of 'Country Affect' on 'Travel Intentions' is statistically significant. Additionally, for this predictor, we find that the unstandardized beta coefficient is positive, thus indicating that for every 1-unit increase within the value of 'Country Affect', the dependent variable (i.e. 'Travel Intentions') will increase with 0.209. Hence, we can conclude that hypothesis **4** ('country affect significantly influences travel intentions to the U.S.') is supported; country affect indeed significantly affects travel intentions – finding support for the last step of the high-involvement hierarchy model represented by Model B in Appendix 1.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.616[a]	0.380	0.365	0.80127

a. Predictors: (Constant), President*CountryAffect, Country Affect, President (D)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.997	3	15.999	24.919	.000[b]
	Residual	78.328	122	0.642		
	Total	126.325	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Travel Intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), President*CountryAffect, Country Affect, President (D)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.145	0.304		3.772	0.000
	Country Affect	0.209	0.105	0.325	1.988	0.049
	President (D)	-0.555	0.511	-0.277	-1.087	0.279
	President*CountryAffect	0.212	0.132	0.553	1.600	0.112

a. Dependent Variable: Travel Intentions

Figure 9 | SPSS output for multiple regression #4

5   CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the previous chapters this study has aimed to shed a modern light upon one of the most researched topics at the juncture of international business, marketing and consumer behaviour in the last decades: the country image construct. This was done through looking at the effects that perceptions towards the president might possibly have on the construct. Herewith it was the United States country image that was used for this study along with the perceptions towards (i) former U.S. president Barack Obama and (ii) current U.S. president Donald Trump.

Building on the profusion of existing definitions and the fact that the country image concept tends not to be characterized with much clarity (Wang et al., 2012), an extensive literature review firstly delineated the conceptual definition of the construct. Two core conclusions were drawn here, the first relating to the definitional domain used in this study and the second relating to the use of attitude theory for the conceptual specification of the construct. The definitional domain that was used throughout this research was the first domain by Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009), which assumed that country image consists of generalized images created not only by representative products but also by the degree of economic and political maturity, historical events and relationships, culture and tradition, and the degree of technological virtuosity and industrialization.

The second conclusion related to the use of attitude theory for the conceptual specification of the country image construct since attitudes do not consist of cognitive aspects only, but also include affective and conative facets. Here the conative facet tends to represent an outcome of the other two components and is to be found on a lower level of abstraction. The hierarchy-of-effects that is hereby believed to occur is that captured by Model B, which is found in Appendix 1, i.e. the standard learning hierarchy, which assumes that cognitions lead to affect and affect in turn leads to conations.

After having cleared up confusion about the country image construct, it were the perception theories from Polish psychology professor Bogdan Wojcizske that helped explaining how perceptions towards Barack Obama and Donald Trump could be

understood and measured. Additionally, and building on findings by Landy (2015), we found that social cognitions consist of three dimensions: morality, sociability and competence. In order to measure respondents' judgements along these three dimensions, Wojciszke's measurement scale was used. This measurement scale contained seven items for each dimension of perception and formed the basis for the measurement of respondents' perceptions towards Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Bearing these theories in mind, this study subsequently aimed to test for the effects of perceptions towards the president on the country image construct. In order to do so, two analyses were conducted. The first analysis, being less comprehensive than the second analysis, made use of Gallup daily presidential job approval statistics and favourability ratings brought forward by a report published by PEW Research Center. The first analysis indicated that both approval ratings and favourability ratings follow a similar downward (i.e. negative) direction for the period that Obama was president, implying an inverse relationship between the amount of years Obama served in the White House and the approval ratings and favourability ratings on the other hand. Additionally, the analysis showed that the popularity of Barack Obama in the U.S. decreased slightly faster than his favourability abroad. However though, on a year-to-year basis both movements did not seem to follow a very similar pattern, making approval ratings a good predictor over a longer period of time for the movement of the country image measurement (favourability ratings), for a shorter period of time however the predictive possibilities are rather limited. Nonetheless, considering Donald Trump's all-time-low approval ratings in the United States, it is expected though that his favourability ratings abroad will also not be at an all-time-high.

For the second analysis, being more comprehensive than the first analysis, an independent samples t-test firstly indicated a statistically significant (at the 0.01 level) difference for each of the perception dimensions between Barack Obama and Donald Trump. These differences between each of the components of perception were the biggest along the morality dimension and the smallest along the competence dimension. Apparently respondents considered Donald Trump and Barack Obama more similar on the traits relating to the competence dimension compared to the traits relating to the other two dimensions of perception. This showed support for the hypothesis that the differences would be the largest amongst the warmth-related

dimensions of perceptions and the smallest amongst the competence-related dimensions of perceptions. This is in line with Asch's (1946) findings, which suggested that warmth-related judgements are of stronger influence on impressions of personality than competence-related judgements.

For the second part of the second analysis, multiple linear regressions were used. Here the results showed a statistically significant effect of 'Morality' (positive effect), the dummy 'president (D)' (negative effect) and the interaction term 'President*Sociability' (positive effect) on country-related cognitions. This supported earlier findings by Fiske et al. (2007) who stated that warmth-related dimensions carry more weight in behavioural reactions than competence-related dimensions. The authors argued that at the basis of this lied Darwin's evolution theory, building on the beliefs that another person's intent for good or ill (warmth) is more important to survival than whether the other person can act on those intentions (competence). Additionally, in the second multiple regression, we found a statistically significant effect of 'Sociability' (negative effect), 'Competence' (positive effect) and 'President*Sociability' (positive effect) on people-related cognitions. The third and fourth multiple regression indicated support for the hierarchy-of-effects represented by Model B, since the third multiple regression indicated that a statistically significant (main) effect of the two types of cognitions on country affect and the fourth multiple regression indicated a statistically significant (main) effect of country affect on country conations (travel intentions).

Implications of this study

Following the conclusions presented above, the last part of this chapter briefly addresses the implications of this study. These implications elaborate upon and add to the contributions discussed in the very beginning of this study (i.e. section 1.1). Similarly, these implications have been categorized in (i) scientific implications and (ii) political implications.

At first, starting with the scientific implications, the findings of this study imply that the country image construct should not be interpreted as a static construct, but rather as a construct that is continuously subject to the changes of the modern world. Though it *sounds* logical that every country has some sort of 'baseline' within

its own country image, containing characteristics that are inextricably linked to it, it should be emphasized that the construct is likely to become more and more subject to change due to the increased connectivity and increased global dynamics. This 'increased connectivity' is important since Martin and Eroglu (1993, p. 194) mentioned that the second driver influencing the development of a country's image within an individual's mind are 'outside sources of information' (such as advertising or word of mouth information). One quickly understands that with globally increasing Internet penetration and smartphone usage, the (digital) means to facilitate the development of country images within individuals' minds are more prevalent than ever before. Connecting these developments with the dynamic character of the country image construct could be important for future studies.

Secondly, the political implications of this study predominantly relate to being increasingly aware of the manner in which (international) perceptions towards a president could possibly influence a country's image abroad. This could have far stretching consequences for both companies and individuals. Building on the example of the lowered expected visitor numbers to New York City, this could mean that hotels may welcome fewer guests throughout the year (such as the Marriott International Inc. mentioned earlier). This results in these hotels being in need of fewer personnel, sourcing fewer goods and services, and other multiplier effects. Additionally, restaurants, shops and other companies benefiting from tourism might see fewer customers throughout the year, again with all related consequences. Being aware of this could help companies to allocate campaign donations in their own best interest, and individuals to think a few steps ahead of how their voting behaviour might ultimately influence the business they are in.

6   LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This final and sixth chapter briefly discusses the limitations of this research and the possibilities for further research. The first and biggest limitation had to with the manner in which the survey was conducted. The main challenge here was the fact that respondents could potentially be biased when asked for their opinions about Trump and immediately after for Obama, or vice versa. In an ideal world these opinions would have been gathered with the same people and under the same circumstances for both Obama as well as for Trump (i.e. at the same moment in their presidency). However, as we don't live in an ideal world, a second-best option was opted for. This option implied that two (almost) identical questionnaires were set out amongst two different groups. One group was presented a questionnaire containing questions about Trump in present tense, and another group was presented a questionnaire containing questions about Obama, which were formulated in past tense.

A second limitation had to do with country conations. As one can see from Appendix 1, and the figure that is depicted there, one component was not taken along in this research: country norms. These country norms, including nationalism and animosity, would further complicate the research and have therefore not been taken along.

This brings us at the possibilities for further research, which both relate to the limitations mentioned above. Firstly, when a similar study would be conducted in the nearby future, it would be wise to take the same group of respondents at exactly the same moment in time (i.e. the same number of days a president is in the office) and increase the sample size. Subsequently when analysing the data, more advanced statistical methods should be used to reveal the deeper relationships under study. In order to do so, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) could be possibly be used.

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APPENDIX 1 | Conceptual Models of Country Image

*Source: Diamantopoulos and Roth (2009)*

A. Two-Component View
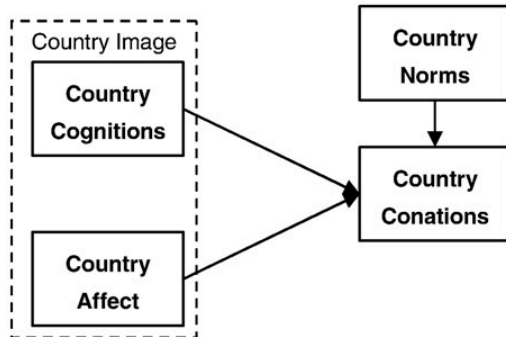
B. High-Involvement Hierarchy
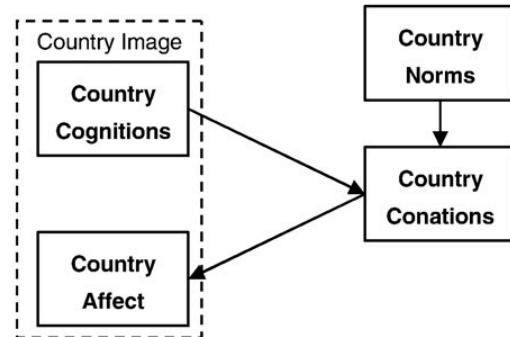
C. Low-Involvement Hierarchy
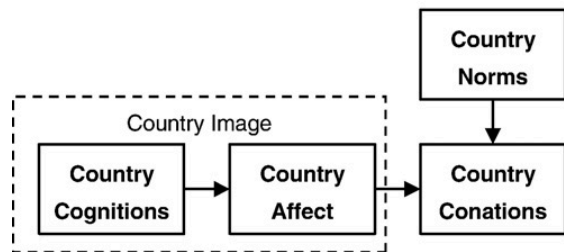
D. Experiential Hierarchy
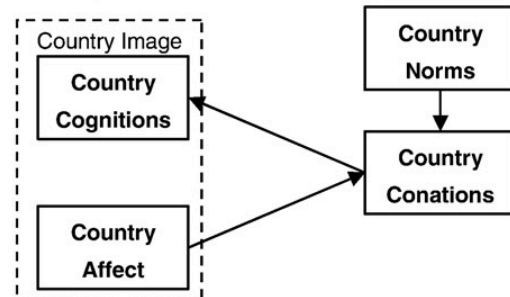
APPENDIX 2 | Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE #1: DONALD TRUMP

I consider Donald Trump to be:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Warm (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Friendly (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Efficient (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Active (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helpful (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Supportive (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Respectful (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Capable (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Energetic (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Moral (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kind (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sociable (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Competent (14)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skillful (15)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Honest (16)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Intelligent (17)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Likeable (18)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fair (19)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Righteous (20)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trustworthy (21)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under current U.S. president **TRUMP**, I consider the U.S. to:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Be active and admirable in world affairs (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be a leader in environmental protection (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be a leader in individual rights and freedom (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be politically stable (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Have a high standard of living (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under current U.S. president **TRUMP**, I think of Americans as:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Friendly (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Achieving pride in high standards (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Individualistic (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under current U.S. president **TRUMP**, I think of the U.S. as:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Technically advanced (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a high level of economic development (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a stable economy (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under current U.S. president **TRUMP**, I think of Americans as:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Creative (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Well-educated (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Technically skilled (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a high work ethic (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under current U.S. president **TRUMP**, I feel the U.S. is:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Peace loving (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Friendly to us (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cooperative with us (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Likeable (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under current U.S. president **TRUMP**, I would:

	Definitely yes (1)	Probably yes (2)	Might or might not (3)	Probably not (4)	Definitely not (5)
Like to visit the U.S. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Recommend others to visit the U.S. (2)	○	○	○	○	○

General Information

Q1 I am:

○ < 18 years (1)

○ 18 - 25 years (4)

○ 26 - 35 years (2)

○ > 35 years (3)

Q2 I am:

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

Q3 I have a:

○ Masters Degree or more (1)

○ Bachelors Degree (2)

○ HBO Degree (3)

○ MBO Degree (4)

○ High School Degree or less (5)

Q14 I have not participated in any other survey related to this research:

○ True (1)

○ False (2)

QUESTIONNAIRE # 2: BARACK OBAMA

I consider Barack Obama to be:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Warm (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Friendly (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Efficient (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Active (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helpful (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Supportive (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Respectful (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Capable (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Energetic (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Moral (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kind (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sociable (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Competent (14)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skillful (15)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Honest (16)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Intelligent (17)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Likeable (18)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fair (19)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Righteous (20)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trustworthy (21)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under former U.S. president **OBAMA,** I considered the U.S. to:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Be active and admirable in world affairs (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be a leader in environmental protection (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be a leader in individual rights and freedom (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be politically stable (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Have a high standard of living (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under former U.S. president **OBAMA**, I thought of Americans as:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Friendly (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Achieving pride in high standards (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Individualistic (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under former U.S. president **OBAMA**, I thought of the U.S. as:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Technically advanced (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a high level of economic development (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a stable economy (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under former U.S. president **OBAMA,** I thought of Americans as:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Creative (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Well-educated (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Technically skilled (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a high work ethic (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under former U.S. president **OBAMA**, I felt the U.S. was:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
Peace loving (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Friendly to us (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cooperative with us (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Likeable (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Under former U.S. president **OBAMA**, I would have:

	Definitely yes (1)	Probably yes (2)	Might or might not (3)	Probably not (4)	Definitely not (5)
Liked to visit the U.S. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Recommended others to visit the U.S. (2)	○	○	○	○	○

General Information

Q1 I am:

◯ < 18 years (4)

◯ 18 - 25 years (5)

◯ 26 - 35 years (2)

◯ > 35 years (3)

Q2 I am:

◯ Male (1)

◯ Female (2)

Q3 I have a:

◯ Masters Degree or more (1)

◯ Bachelors Degree (2)

◯ HBO Degree (3)

◯ MBO Degree (4)

◯ High School Degree or less (5)