Coventry
University

Coventry University Repository for the Virtual Environment (CURVE)

Author names: Kipnis, E. , Kubacki, K. and Siemieniako, D.
Title: The changing landscape of consumer ethnocentrism: evidence from Kazakhstan and Poland
Article & version: Extended conference abstract
Original citation & hyperlink:
Kipnis, E. , Kubacki, K. and Siemieniako, D. (2009, May) 'The changing landscape of consumer ethnocentrism: evidence from Kazakhstan and Poland'. Paper presented at the Immigration, Consumption and Markets Conference, Lille, France.

Available in the CURVE Research Collection: January 2012

http://curve.coventry.ac.uk/open

The Changing Landscape of Consumer Ethnocentrism: Evidence from Kazakhstan and Poland

Eva Kipnis
Coventry University Business School
Coventry University
Priory street, Coventry CV3 6BU
United Kingdom
E-mail: yeva.kipnis2@coventry.ac.uk

Krzysztof Kubacki
School of Economic and Management Studies
Keele University
Staffordshire, ST5 5BG
United Kingdom
E-mail: k.kubacki@mngt.keele.ac.uk

Dariusz Siemieniako
Bialystok Technical University
Management Department
16-001 Kleosin
Poland
Emails: dsiem@pb.edu.pl

The Changing Landscape of Consumer Ethnocentrism: Evidence from Kazakhstan and Poland

Theoretical context

Shimp and Sharma (1987) described consumer ethnocentrism as the belief held by consumers about the appropriateness and morality of purchasing foreign-made products. It has become an established area of marketing research over the last 30 years, with majority of earlier work focusing on consumers' emotional favouritism of domestic brands based on their country-of-origin. Though, we should not assume that a positive attitude towards products from one country always suggest a negative attitude towards products from another country, and therefore preference for local products does not necessary involve rejection of brands perceived as foreign (Balabanis *et al.*, 2001).

However, previous research implies that consumers' brand perceptions and evaluations were dichotomised along "foreign or domestic" continuum. Nevertheless, in a globalising world and constantly changing ownership structures crucial becomes a question of what meaning consumers assign to foreign/domestic brand and what makes a brand 'foreign'. Marketing strategies employed by international marketers often make reference to local and national symbols and values in order to appeal to target markets which may be receptive to ethnocentric messages, blurring the boundaries between foreign/domestic even further (Beverland and Lindgreen, 2002; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Kaynak and Kara, 2001). Furthermore, cross-cultural marketing research indicates significant difference in consumer behaviour in the emerging markets (Keller and Moorthi, 2003). Recognising the limitations posed by myopic view of simply transferring theories and frameworks developed in the West into consumer research in the emerging markets, calls are made for the theories and models developed in the Western cultural settings to be validated if not extended (Steenkamp and Burgess, 2002). Therefore in this paper we consider evidence from studies on ethnocentrism carried out in the emerging markets of Poland and Kazakhstan.

Research methods

The data presented in this paper are parts of two research projects: the first one, exploring the ethnocentric tendencies and relationships of consumers with chocolate brands in Kazakhstan; and the second one, investigating the characteristics of Polish consumers' ethnocentric attitudes and behaviours by studying their relationship with various brands of beer. All Polish data were collected on a university campus in Poland in late autumn 2007 in a group of 10 university students. Two focus groups were established, one consisting of 4 males and one group of 6 females (all aged between 22 and 23). Each group met on two occasions, three weeks apart. In Kazakhstan the data was collected in summer 2006 in a group of university lecturers and students. A workshop discussion was conducted, group consisting of 16 participants (7 males and 9 females, all aged between 15 and 65). The group met on two occasions, two weeks apart.

Results and conclusions

Interestingly, although these countries differ significantly in cultural and economic backgrounds, groups of consumers in both Poland and Kazakhstan base their evaluations of brands' "localness" on their perceptions of how well the brand and producer are integrated in their society and culture. In other words, for these consumers it is irrelevant who owns the brand or what the brand's country-of-origin is. Rather, evaluations are dominated by

considerations of whether the brand identity embraces the values of the domestic culture and tradition. For example, when considering the well-known beer brand Carlsberg, Polish consumers have projected positive ethnocentric tendencies toward it, as *"it is different in Poland, more made like ours, more Polish"*. What appeared to be important for Polish respondents was the fact the brand was making positive contribution to the Polish economy (*"must be made by a Polish brewery"*) and was made *"with Polish water"*. They wanted to see the brand embracing elements of Polishness in its character and physicality. Similarly, Kazakhstan consumers projected positive ethnocentric tendencies toward foreign chocolate brands that *"are becoming part of our country: they understand our tastes and what we are; they don't expect us to become them"*. It is important to note that both these observations indicate the need for brand identity to reflect "cultural openness" toward the host country. These new observations into consumer ethnocentrism add a valuable insight into the importance of marketing strategies for identity construction. They indicate that consumers project ethnocentric emotional favouritism toward foreign brands which emphasise the value of their 'local connection'.

Our study provides new insights into consumer ethnocentrism phenomena. It indicates that globalisation not only led to wider internationalisation of markets but also, most importantly, it resulted in consumers developing reformed ethnocentric tendencies, whereby these tendencies are projected toward brands which, although maintaining their identity of a foreign or global origin communicate a connection with domestic culture and traditions. The importance to develop a fuller understanding of brand belongingness discourse is reflected in recent research, as perceptions of branded products can both fuel confrontation between groups within and across nations and resolve these differences (Cherrier, 2009; Cayla and Arnould, 2008; Strizhakova et al, 2008). Nevertheless, this research is limited by the samples used and the methodologies employed, and therefore cannot be uncritically generalised. The findings described here will be used to further investigate consumer ethnocentrism in emerging economies of Central and Eastern Europe in order to deepen our understanding and applicability of the theories and concepts developed in the Western cultural settings.

References

Balabanis, G., Diamantopoulos, A. and Mueller, R. (2001), "The Impact of nationalism, patriotism and internationalism on consumer ethnocentric tendencies", *Journal of International Business Studies,* Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 157-175.

Beverland, M. and Lindgreen, A. (2002), "Using country of origin in strategy: the importance of context and strategic action", *Brand Management*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 147-167.

Cayla, J. and Arnould, E.J. (2008), "A Cultural Approach to Branding in the Global Marketplace", *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol.16, pp.86-112.

Cherrier, H. (2009). "Anti-consumption discourses and consumer-resistant identities", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol.62, pp.181-190.

Javalgi, R.G., Khare, V.P., Gross, A.C. and Scherer, R.F. (2005), "An application of the consumer ethnocentrism model to French consumers", *International Business Review,* Vol. 14, pp. 325-344.

Kaynak, E. and Kara, A. (2001), "An examination of the relationship among consumer lifestyles, ethnocentrism, knowledge structures, attitudes and behavioural tendencies: a comparative study in two CIS states", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 20, p. 455–482.

Keller, K.L. and Moorthi, Y.L.R. (2003), "Branding in developing markets", *Business Horizons*, May-June, pp.49-59.

Shimp, T.A. and Sharma, S. (1987), "Consumer ethnocentrism: construction and validation of the CETSCALE", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 24, August, pp. 280–289.

Steenkamp, J-B. E.M. and Burgess, S.M. (2002), "Optimum stimulation level and exploratory consumer behavior in an emerging consumer market", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol.19, pp.131-150.

Strizhakova, Y., Coutler, R.A. and Price, L.L. (2008), "Branded Products as a Passport to Global Citizenship: Perspectives from Developed and Developing Countries", *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol.16, pp.57-85.