
National Identity and Memorabilia

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We explore the nature of national identity and its relationship with citizenship and the purchase as well as the intent to purchase Singaporean memorabilia. This was carried out with a sample consisting of Singaporean citizens and tourists. Our research tended to support the notion that national identity may indeed consist of a conglomerate of variables including ethnocentrism, patriotism, national achievement, and a sense of place. While our findings in support of the positive relationship between national identity and intent to purchase are not surprising the negative relationships with citizenship and the purchase of memorabilia is unexpected and provide an interesting basis of speculation. It is possible that the scholarly accepted measurement of 'consumer ethnocentrism' does not in fact measure ethnocentrism but rather some other variable(s) related to attitudes to free trade.

Despite the research focus on globalization and its accepted importance, it is within and between the smaller national, cultural and ethnic groupings that most of the major problems in the world still exist (e.g. Economist 2002; Economist 2003, 2004; Krugman and Obstfeld 1994; Long 1999; Pecotich and Shultz 2006; Shenggen, Zhang, and Zhang 2004; Williamson 1965; Yang 2000). Developments in communication, the internet and transportation have made the world a smaller place, but nonetheless, human movement still involves the crossing of national and ethnic boundaries. In these contexts people as tourists, immigrants or citizens may carry multiple, perhaps conflicting, identities at different levels of aggregation, for example, national, cultural, ethnic, family, and place (Blank and Schmidt 2003; Cerulo 1997; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 2002; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Spencer 2005). Given that the study of marketing phenomena at an aggregate level is a legitimate topic for macromarketing scholars (Hunt 1976b, 1976a, 1977, 1981) the dearth of the literature in areas of national identity, pride and achievement is surprising. Our purpose is to take a step toward remedying this defect by reporting a study concerning the relationships between citizenship, national identity, purchase and the purchase intent of national memorabilia among a sample of citizens and tourists in Singapore. It is timely to discuss these related concepts in

the macromarketing developmental forum, particularly with the existence of increasing tension in views on economic integration and nationalism.

Literature Review and Conceptual Development

Research on human identity has a long history and has been approached from so many different points of view that integration is difficult (e.g., Blank and Schmidt 2003; Cerulo 1997; Chapman and Facey 2004; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 2002; Gecas 1982; Geisler 2005; Gieryn 2000; Howard 2000; LeVine and Campbell 1972; Monroe, Hankin, and Van Vechten 2000; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Spencer 2005; Yinger 1985). However, it seems that even from the earliest time human identity was considered to consist of three components: the biological, the individual and the social (Monroe, Hankin, and Van Vechten 2000). While the philosophical issues are intricate, identity is generally used to refer to a cognitive or mental representation of who a person is and provides a sense of uniqueness and continuity in time and space. It develops from birth and while its most powerful manifestations are developed in childhood and adolescence, individuals are postulated to go through various stages of identity development throughout their lives. There are many applicable theories such as Zajonc's (1965; 1969) drive theory of social facilitation which predicts how the mere presence of others influences social judgment and Erikson's (1968) theory of developmental stages to form a stable identity.

Whatever the variations of the theories, identities seem to develop from cognitive processes designed to help us understand a complex environment by the development of necessary categories for swift information processing. These categories fashioned in early childhood form the powerful basis of the personal and social identity. Personal identity generally refers to those attributes that distinguish one person from another. Social identity takes into account the social context of human existence and "refers to the social categories, attributes, or components of the self-concept that are shared with others and therefore define individuals as being similar to others" (Monroe, Hankin, and Van Vechten 2000, p. 421). More formally, emphasizing the emotional element, Tajfel (1978, p. 63) defined *social identity* as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [her] knowledge of his [her] membership in a social group (groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that

membership." These social identities form a part of human heredity, and derive from hierarchical group memberships such as nationality, race, and ethnicity. They are a source of powerful behavioral propensities resulting in stereotyping, discrimination and ethnocentrism.

In this study we focus on national identity and seek to explore its effects on the purchase of national memorabilia. Nations as groups are central to social identity. To illustrate this importance we simply need to reflect on our emotions at the mere mention of the word "treason." Tajfel's (1978; 1982) social identity theory suggests that humans as social animals seek to belong to groups, and they see their groups (in-groups) as being superior to other groups (out-groups). Strong emotions are associated with the nation and nationalism forms a very powerful motivator to human collective actions. We generally postulate that ethnocentrism, patriotism, pride in national achievement and sense of place form latent components of national identity, that they are a function of citizenship and are positively related to the purchase and purchase intent of national memorabilia (see Figure 1).

Ethnocentrism and consumer ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is a hundred year old sociological concept that holds 'one's own group is the center of everything and all others can be scaled and rated with reference to it' (Sumner 1906). According to LeVine and Campbell (1972) ethnocentrism includes tendencies to: (1) distinguish various groups; (2) preserve events in terms of the group's own interests (economic, political and social); (3) see one's way of life as superior to all others; (4) see one's own group as honest, strong and superior; (5) be suspicious of and disdain other groups; (6) and see other groups as dishonest, weak and inferior. An ethnocentric society is considered to be one in which individuals make evaluations of other nations based on their biased national perspectives in an attempt to maintain culturally-centered values and behaviors (Hult, Keillor, and Lafferty 1999; Pecotich and Rosenthal 2001; Samice 1994). In this way, ethnocentrism represents omnipotence, superiority, acceptance of culturally identical views and ideas and rejection of cultural dissimilar ideas or people (Shimp and Sharma 1987). In the marketing literature Shimp & Sharma, (1987, p. 280) refer to consumer ethnocentrism that they defined as "the beliefs held by American consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign made products". The concept helps to explain why some consumers prefer domestic goods, while others do not discriminate between domestic and imported products (Sharma, Shimp, and Shin 1995). It is also perceived as a non-tariff barrier capable of warding off international competition (Porter 1986).

O'Cass and Lim (2002) have observed that brands of a Western origin tend to be as popular and successful in Singaporean markets as they are in their domestic markets. The researchers found no relationship between the

ethnocentric tendencies of consumers and the preference or purchase intention for foreign brands. Also, no differences in ethnocentric tendencies across age or gender were found within their sample. Few Singaporean products have been successful in developing the type of consumer brand image necessary for entry into global markets. As a result, very few Singaporean brands are recognized throughout the world (Chowdhury 1999 ; O'Cass and Lim 2002).

Measured as one of four antecedents of national identity, Phau and Chan's (2003) replication of Keillor and Hult's (1999) study, analyzed the CET of four East Asian nations – Singapore, Korea, Thailand and Taiwan. Again, the CET of Singaporeans was found to have a low score (the lowest of the four nations taken into account). The researchers attributed this to the scarcity of natural resources (particularly land) and, due to the small domestic market, the infeasibility of locally manufacturing a wide range of products (Phau and Chan 2003). In this study we seek to explore the nature of consumer ethnocentrism by proposing that it forms a part of the broader construct of national identity that is positively related to Singaporean citizenship and the purchase of memorabilia (see Figure 1).

Patriotism

A precise definition of patriotism has been contested in the literature for more than fifty (50) years; some even believe it will never be adequately defined as language is not a neutral medium and its meaning is subjectively based on one's multidimensional belief system and the intentions/behaviors that arise from it (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Hurwitz and Peffley 1990). Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties, many researchers have attempted an explanation. The earliest research in this field holds that 'true' patriotism is a combination of 'love for one's country' and 'attachment to national values based on critical understandings' (Adorno et al. 1950). Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986) suggests that patriotism is a feeling of national belongingness and contributes to one's national identity. Patriotism comes under the umbrella of national identity and both share a positive in-group evaluation (Blank and Schmidt 2003; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). But unlike patriotism, nationalism is described as a belief in national superiority (Hechter 2000; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989) and an uncritical acceptance of national, state and political authorities (Adorno et al. 1950; Staub 1997). Patriotism is regarded as softer, more positive concept than nationalism (Blank and Schmidt 2003) and has been measured from this perspective by numerous researchers (Hurwitz and Peffley 1990; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989; Owen and Dedrick 1989).

It has long been recognized that patriotism is positively related to ethnocentrism (Adorno et al. 1950; Murdock 1931). More recent studies have confirmed this relationship can significantly affect product choices (Han 1988; Mihalyi 1984; Samice 1994; Sharma, Shimp, and

Shin 1995). This becomes manifest when (1) consumers purchase local products due to patriotic reasons or (2) when consumers avoid foreign products due to patriotic reasons. Hence, patriotism has been found to be positively related to ethnocentrism (Shankarmahesh 2006) and it is reasonable to postulate that it forms a part of the more general construct of national identity (Mihalyi 1984).

National Achievement

For a nation to have a good global reputation there is a need to demonstrate proficiency, not just declare it (Lehmann and O'Shaughnessy 1982). National achievements are desirable intra-national confirmations that foster pride amongst the masses (e.g. achieving the highest GDP per capital in the world or being rated the safest nation in the world in which to live). They can be described as news worthy 'stories' that get citizens thinking positively about their country, thus stirring patriotic feelings. Upon learning of a national achievement they are reminded of their nation's position in the world and they feel proud to be associated with the success. Such achievements warrant both national and international recognition and can be made by government, individuals, groups or companies. We postulate that national achievement forms an important component of national identity although an exhaustive search of the sociological, psychological and marketing literature has found no reference to national achievements or its relationship to national identity. Indirect support for this assertion may be found in Rusciano's (2003) research who found that negative national characteristics and actions are negatively correlated with pride (i.e. reservations about one's nation decrease as pride increases, and vice versa). Further, arguments in support may be extrapolated from sports marketing theory where a citizen is likened to a sports fan and a team to the nation the citizen belongs. Few products or services (e.g. Harley Davidson) generate levels of social association like that often related with sports (Underwood, Bond, and Baer 2001). Fans draw strength and a sense of identity from their affiliation with a team (Sutton et al. 1997; Wann and Branscombe 1993). A sports fan refers to a team as 'my team' – this of course does not imply ownership, but rather allegiance, loyalty, pride and strong association (which is consistent with Belk's (1988) concept of the extended self). Such feelings emerge (or are reinforced) when sports teams achieve success (i.e. wins games). Thus, there is a parallel between sports fans and a nation's citizens; both are characterized by the same types of feelings (i.e. high levels of commitment and emotional involvement). We suggest that if a sports fan's level of association can be affected by their team's achievements, the same principle applies to levels of national identity which can also be affected by national achievements.

Sense of Place

The concept that we widely label as a "sense of place" is an important area of research that spans many disciplines (Boyne and Hall 2004; Connell and Gibson 2004; Gieryn 2000; Hudson 2006; Kruger and Jakes 2003; Leann 2006; Lewicka 2005; MacKenzie 2004; Miller et al. 1998; Spencer 2005; Violich 1985; Violich 1998) and has not been uniquely explored in marketing. Kruger and Jakes (2003, p. 819) propose that place has been used in three ways: "As *location*, place can mean "the spatial distribution of social and economic activities" that results from different costs of doing business in different places. Place as *locale*, on the other hand, provides the setting or backdrop for everyday activity. *Sense of place* involves individual or group identification with a place resulting from interaction with it." Our use of the term is consistent with "sense of place" and is presented as a holistic group phenomenon that is developed on the basis of past experience, and carries social and cultural meanings that lead to a deep attachment to the place involved. We submit that "sense of place" is a component of national identity which is a highly salient place within which human beings exist (Figure 1). This position is consistent with the theories of "social facilitation," (Zajonc 1965), Erikson's (1968) "stages of development" and Tajfel's (1978) "intergroup relations."

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Method

The model in Figure 1 and its accompanying hypotheses were investigated by surveying Singaporean citizens and residents in Singapore. The study had two stages of research, beginning with focus groups then followed by a quantitative survey. Seven focus groups were conducted among a mix of 80 male and female respondents between 20 and 30 years of age. They were asked to describe their beliefs about national pride and patriotism, as well as, their attitudes towards Singaporean-made products and Singapore memorabilia. Their responses were useful for the adaptation of the measurement scales to the specific situation as well as to generate the items to measure *national achievement*.

Ethnocentrism was measured with the seventeen (17) item consumer ethnocentric tendency (CET) scale developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). Numerous studies have found that high CET scores indicate a consistent reluctance to purchase foreign products and tendencies to evaluate them negatively (Hult, Keillor, and Lafferty 1999; Pecotich and Rosenthal 2001; Saffu and Walker 2005; Sharma, Shimp, and Shin 1995; Shimp and Sharma 1987; Watson and Wright 2000). Non-ethnocentric consumers on the other hand, are believed to evaluate foreign products on their own merits (e.g. quality or price). In this context the reliability of CET was found to be .89.

The twelve (12) item scale developed by Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) was used to measure *patriotism* (e.g. I am proud to be a citizen of my country; and although at times I may not agree with the government, my commitment to my country always remains strong). Coefficient alpha reliability index was found to be a highly satisfactory .87. The scale for '*national achievement*' was developed on the basis of the focus group interviews described above. Respondents were asked first about what would make them proud as Singaporeans. Most respondents indicated that they were proud of Singapore because this was where they belonged or where they were born. They went on to say that they also feel proud because Singapore had achieved so much in such a short period of time, particularly when it is a small country. When asked specifically about the kinds of achievements that made them proud, comments included "...that Creative Technology is a world-leader in their business", "weathering the Asian Financial Crisis", "handling the outbreak of SARS well," and "hosting the global IMF conference". When respondents were asked about the kinds of achievements that *would* make them more proud of Singapore, comments included "a local film or celebrity breaking out into the international scene", "qualifying for the (soccer) World Cup", "compliments from foreigners on high standards living", and "Singapore being highly ranked in an international survey." In the absence of an established scale, these comments were used to generate a battery of illustrative items to construct a measure of 'national achievement' which was found to be roughly unidimensional (one factor exploratory factor analysis) with a reliability index of .92. *Sense of place* was measured using an adapted form of the identity component of Jorgensen and Stedman's (2006) measure and found to have a reliability of .88. The wording of items for all scales was adapted to suit the local context – mostly replacing references to America and Americans with Singapore and Singaporeans. All items were measured on 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

Memorabilia purchase intent was measured using three scales: (1) a four item, five point likelihood of purchase format with an alpha of .73; (2) four item five point agree disagree format in the proud to wear format with an alpha of .96; and (3) a ten item in five point likelihood to purchase format (alpha = .91). *Citizenship* was measured by a categorical zero one variable with Singapore at the high end. The respondents were also asked to indicate ownership and previous purchase of memorabilia. This was a simple frequency count. The data was collected using the mall intercept method. The sample comprised of 446 respondents with a net sample of 305 Singaporean citizens. Of the net sample, there were 49% males and 82% were 35 years of age and under.

Analyses and Results

The partial least squares (PLS) estimation procedure was used to test the model (Chin 1998; Fornell and Cha 1994; Lohmoeller 1989; Wold 1981). PLS is a general technique for estimating path models involving latent constructs indirectly observed by multiple indicators. It was developed by Wold (1981) to avoid the necessity of large sample sizes and 'hard' assumptions of normality. It was, therefore, considered particularly suitable in this study as our aims are largely exploratory. A PLS model consists of two sets of linear relations: the outer model involving the latent and the manifest variables; and the inner model where the hypothesized relationships between the latent variables are specified. A major advantage of PLS is that the outer model formulation explicitly allows for the specification of both reflective and formative modes as well as categorical variables. Reflective indicators are formed in the classic test theory factor analytic model. The formative indicators, however, are not assumed to measure the same construct nor are they assumed to be positively correlated. Rather they are an optimum linear combination forming the latent construct in the canonical analysis sense. We expressed the measures as reflective indicators in which case the factor analytic model applies. The citizenship variable was formalized as a categorical 0, 1 dummy variable with the tourists at the low-end and the Singaporeans at the high-end. The revised PLSGraph computer program (Chin and Fry 2003) was used to evaluate systematically the properties of the outer and the inner model as expressed in Figure 1.

Evaluation of complex models involves a logical examination of several fit indices to establish the predictive relevance (Lohmoeller 1989). The results in relation to the outer measurement model were all found to be satisfactory. For the latent variable *national identity* the bootstrap critical ratios (Chin 1998) are acceptable (greater than 1.96) for all variables. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Chin 1998; Fornell and Cha 1994) was a high .50 and the combined reliability was satisfactory .79. Our general proposition that the four components of *national identity* may be *ethnocentrism*, *patriotism*, *national achievement* and *sense of place* appears to have some exploratory support. For the rest of the latent variables the statistics were highly satisfactory – the AVE were all above .62 and the composite reliabilities above .83.

The postulated positive relationship between *citizenship* and *national identity* was not supported (Figure 1) - the standardized regression coefficient was significant ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$) but in the opposite direction. The mean proportion of variance explained (AVA), the R^2 was a low 0.03. A similar situation exists with *national identity* and *purchase of memorabilia* ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$ and AVA .06). The positive relationship between *citizenship* and *purchase of memorabilia* ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$ and AVA .06) was

supported. The direct relationships between *purchase of memorabilia* and *purchase intent* was significantly negative ($\beta = -.21, p < .05$) while the relationship between *national identity* and *purchase intent* was found to be significant ($\beta = .55, p < .05$). The R^2 was in this case .39 which was higher than the recommended minimum of .10 suggesting the effect size may be of sufficient magnitude to be of further interest (Falk and Miller 1992).

Conclusions

In this study we sought to explore the nature of *national identity* and its relationship with *citizenship* and the *purchase* as well as the *intent to purchase* Singaporean memorabilia. Our research tended to support the notion that *national identity* may indeed consist of a conglomerate of variables including *ethnocentrism*, *patriotism*, *national achievement*, and a *sense of place*. While our findings in support of the positive relationship between *national identity* and *intent to purchase* is not surprising the negative relationships with *citizenship* and the *purchase* of memorabilia is unexpected and provide an interesting basis of speculation.

It is possible as Phau and Chan (2003) maintain that Singaporeans lack a sense of patriotism and that their national identity is weak. They support their claim by citing the prevalence of Singaporean emigration to Australia during the 1980's. Another possibility is that our study did not arouse a high level of patriotic national feeling. Levels of patriotic feelings can appear in response to an outside threat (Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). This kind of patriotism typically results when something undesirable occurs (i.e. national involvement in a war) and individuals rally to support or condemn the action (Heatherington and Nelson 2003). Further, that Singaporeans may feel no guilt in purchasing foreign products is consistent with a national phenomenon labeled the 'kiasu' spirit. This uniquely Singaporean consumer trait implies a willingness to disregard commonly accepted standards of behavior to take advantage of bargains (Piron 2002). They are motivated primarily by price. Therefore CET is low. Perhaps the most interesting possibility involves the measurement of ethnocentrism. The operationalization of this variable by Shimp and Sharma (1987) is weak in the sense that their measure does not take into account the more powerful "in/out group" notions of the traditional formulation (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel 1982). It is possible that their measure which they label "*consumer ethnocentrism*" does not in fact measure *ethnocentrism* but some other variable related to attitudes to free trade. Consistent with this, our conglomerate which we labeled *national identity* may in fact not be sensitive enough to distinguish between the soft aspects of internationalism and sense of identity, and much stronger ethnocentric nationalistic tendencies that lead to discrimination most strongly manifested in periods of hostility.

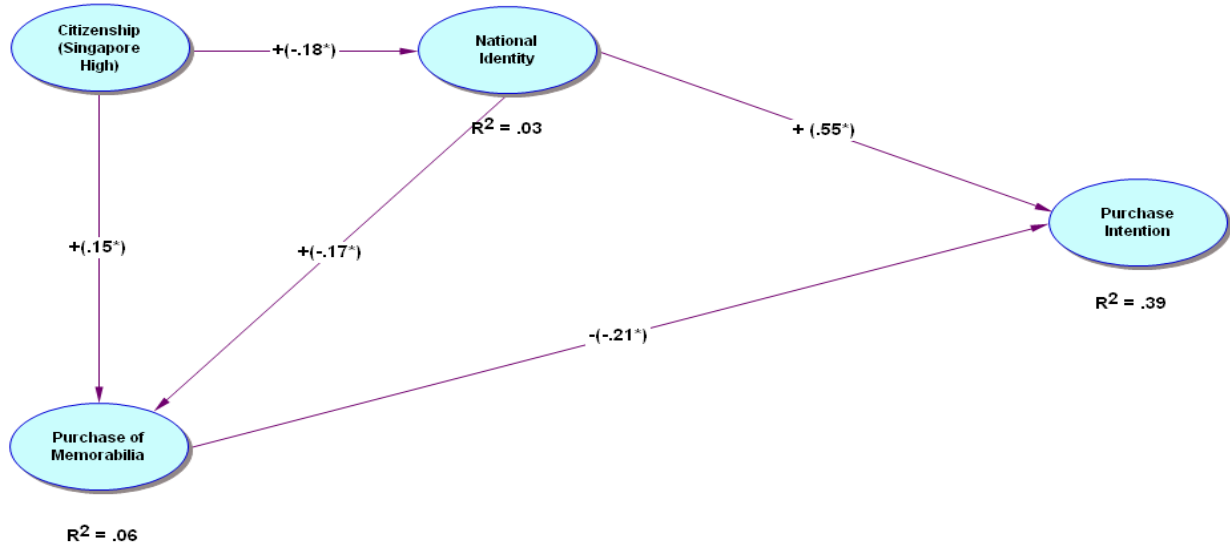
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Figure 1: National identity and Memorabilia^{1, 2}



Note: ¹ The + or - indicate the direction of the postulated relationship and the figures in parentheses are regression coefficients where * indicates significance at $p < .05$ (Bootstrap T Statistic).

² R^2 indicates the effect size or proportion of variance explained by the relevant regression equation.