Živa Kolbl

BRAND STEREOTYPES: APPLICATION AND TRANSFER

BRIDGING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND MARKETING RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

The world around us provides several stimuli that are constantly targeting us and compete for our attention. Information overload is leading to widespread confusion and a lack of clarity while prioritising tasks, worse information recall, greater stress, and dysfunctional behaviour (as cited in De Houwer, 2003, Eppler & Mengis, 2004; Hu & Krishen, 2019; Lurie, 2004). People frequently rely on stereotypes because they need to simplify the world they encounter since their human cognitive capability is limited (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). Namely, individuals must rely on various mechanisms to more easily make sense of the surrounding environment. In this manner, *stereotypes* may be seen as 'energy-saving devices' helping persons simplify the information-processing and response-generation as they engage with stimuli (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). They are defined as an "oversimplified and generalized set of beliefs about the characteristics of a social group" (Macrae, Bodenhausen, & Milne, 1995, p. 13) and originate in social psychology. In fact, stereotypes are a type of schema, a "cognitive structure that contains units of information and the links among these units" (Fiske & Dyer, 1985, p. 839). Stereotypes may thus be seen as an "inevitable consequence of the psychological and cognitive need to categorize and simplify a complex social world" (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998, p. 629).

A principal characteristic of stereotypes is their applicability from the general to the individual, whereby they describe the properties of a group that, inevitability as part of the categorisation process, are also ascribed to every individual from that group (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). Let us consider one well-known stereotyped group of individuals: women with blond hair. It is commonly believed that blonds are pretty, but lacking in intelligence. Thus, when encountering an individual from that group one adopts the stereotypical thinking in relation to all women with blond hair to this individual. Therefore, every individual blonde we encounter is ultimately classed in the group of blondes and the group characteristics are automatically transferred over to them. In this way, this individual would be stereotyped as pretty, but lacking in intelligence. Despite the broad existence of stereotypical beliefs in society, they are not always accurate reflections of the reality (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). Stereotypes

usually represent a shared opinion in society, but might not always be accurate, objective descriptions. Thankfully, it is not necessarily the case that blondes are pretty, but lacking in intelligence. Thus, different combinations of beauty and intelligence are possible.

The notion of stereotyping stems from social psychology, yet can be applied to "every stimulus object that is ascribed to the stereotypical category" (Halkias, Davvetas, & Diamantopoulos, 2016, p. 3642). Accordingly, stereotypes have emerged with respect to different races, genders, nationalities and professions (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), which are only some of the social groups attracting the interest of social psychology.

While socially interacting we not only interact with other people and different social groups, but also with other social entities, like brands. Ever since Fournier's (1998) seminal article on brands as relationship partners, the recognition that brands may indeed be seen as people's significant others has triggered research in relationship marketing. Namely, prior research had shown that brands serve as relationship partners (Fournier, 1998, 2009; Fournier & Alvarez, 2011), extensions of consumers' identities (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012), even as candidates that move beyond the attitudinal "like–dislike" attitudes and enjoy consumer-brand love (Batra et al., 2012). Based on the idea that consumers perceive brands similarly to how they perceive other people (Fournier, 1998), social perception theories have also been applied to the branding context (Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012b).

Brand stereotypes are consumers' oversimplified and generalised beliefs about the social group of brands (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Kervyn et al., 2012b). The social perception model of stereotyping, namely, the SCM – the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002), has, among others, also been applied to the field of branding by introducing the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF; Kervyn et al., 2012b). The idea of the latter is that people may perceive brands (similarly to other people) as having good or bad intentions with respect to them, and as being able (or not) to actually deliver on these intentions that are being expressed. A new research stream appeared, which adopted the notion of

brand stereotyping and investigated the role of brand stereotyping in marketing. Associated studies show that brand stereotypes influence consumers' perceptions, evaluations and behaviour (e.g. Aaker, Garbinsky, & Vohs, 2012; Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012a; Kolbl, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, & Diamantopoulos, 2019). In the area of marketing, three types of brand-related stereotypes influencing consumer behaviour are well known: brand stereotypes (Kervyn et al., 2012b), brand buyer/user stereotypes (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016) and brand/country-of-origin stereotypes (Halkias et al., 2016).

Brand stereotypes are a promising area of research, as seen by the growing body of literature on the topic. Yet it is interesting that most research has considered brand stereotypes as predictors of brand-related outcomes and thereby analysed their role with respect to perceptual (e.g. perceived brand quality), relational (e.g. consumer–brand identification) and/or integrative (e.g. brand loyalty) variables. A small share of the literature on brand stereotyping adopts a holistic approach to understanding the role of brand stereotypes in consumer behaviour. Along these lines, this manuscript gives an overview of the literature on brand stereotypes and explains their drivers, as well as their influence on the outcome variables of interest. In so doing, I provide a thorough review of the literature on brand stereotypes and establish the basis for the subsequent conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3.

Despite looking at the influence of individual brand-related stereotypes on consumers' brand perceptions, evaluations and behaviour, the current literature does not consider the transfer of stereotypes to any great extent. It therefore remains unclear whether and how brand-related stereotypes co-occur and, more importantly, whether they are transferred from one type to another. Previous literature shows that consumer perceptions of entities are transferrable from one entity to another. Specifically, researchers have found that the way consumers perceive a country's image can transfer to a brand's image (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, & Palihawadana, 2011) and that consumers can make inferences about typical brand buyers/users according to their brand perceptions (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016). However, it remains unknown whether consumers' stereotypical assessments about associated social groups (e.g. a country and a brand) can transfer from one to the other.

In practice, the complete isolation of different brand-related types of stereotypes is highly unlikely. For example, when we think of a brand, accompanying types of stereotypes that co-exist always spring to mind. While thinking about the very familiar brand Mercedes-Benz, one may end up thinking about the brand, contemplating whether it has good or bad intentions towards him/her ("warmth") and whether the brand is actually able to deliver on these intentions ("competence") to its buyer/user. While Mercedes Benz is known for its high levels of competence, even encompassed in its brand slogan (i.e. "The best or nothing"), the "Diesel Gate scandal" which also includes the brand, puts a big question mark over Mercedes Benz's good intentions with respect to consumers. Still, when thinking about Mercedes Benz one typically also thinks about the brand's country of origin: Germany. Associations with Germany are easily evoked by, for instance, a German-sounding brand name or various country-related cues (e.g. a flag, a plate number, national symbols) in their brand communications. Further, one might conclude that since people stereotypically assess Germany as a very competent yet quite 'cold' country (Fiske et al., 2002), such perceptions could shift over to the way people perceive a brand that is based in this country. Thus, one would expect that consumers stereotypically view a brand coming from Germany as being very competent, but 'cold'. This logic is supported by the country–brand image transfer (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011), but (except for a few conference papers) has not been empirically supported in the literature on brand-related stereotypes.

Social psychology identifies several different models that grasp the content of stereotypes. Despite the variety of models, what these models share in common is two dimensions that account for roughly 80% of variance in perceptions of social behaviour (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). These two dimensions are warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002), representing the key dimensions and building blocks of the SCM. The latter is the most widely used and adopted model for investigating stereotypes and has also been applied to branding in the form of the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b). It is vital that different types of brand-related stereotypes are measured with a common conceptual denominator because this gives a theoretically sound basis for comparing different types of brand-related stereotypes.

This manuscript elaborates on the transfer between two types of brand-related stereotypes, namely country stereotypes and city-brand stereotypes. I introduce city-brand stereotypes as a special instance of a (destination) brand, thereby representing a novel investigation within brand stereotyping research. The main objective of this manuscript is to provide a systematic literature review on brand stereotypes and, in particular, to focus on the novel idea of transfers occurring between different types of brand-related stereotypes. In so doing, a theoretical model will be developed that links country stereotypes with city brand stereotypes and also empirically assesses both their transfer and impact on relevant outcome variables. Accordingly, the empirical investigation aims to answer three main research questions:

1. How are country stereotypes and city-brand stereotypes related?

2. How are the dimensions (i.e. warmth and competence) stressed in the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) transferred from the country to the city-brand stereotype?

3. What is the relationship between a city-brand stereotype and the outcome variables?

The overall aim of this book is to present an integrative overview of literature on brand stereotypes, elaborate on the ways they are measured while explaining in detail the model most widely accepted for measuring brand stereotypes, the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) and its adaptation to the branding context, the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b). The final goal of this manuscript is to offer insights into brand-related stereotype transfer and the adaptation of the brand stereotype construct to a city brand, which offers a new research context in the brand- stereotyping domain.

In Chapter 1, I commence the literature review by first introducing the construct of schemas. Schemas are essential in social cognition and allow us to understand how people form and store certain knowledge, which later helps people with information processing. Stereotypes are a type of schema and are

vital while trying to understand the cognitive beliefs societies hold about social groups or other entities. By drawing parallels from the social perception of people to the social perception of anthropomorphised entities (i.e. brands), I introduce the construct of brand schemas and brand stereotypes. Importantly, I also show how the construct of brand stereotypes differs from related constructs like the construct of brand personality. I then systematically provide an overview of studies related to brand stereotypes. Next, I introduce the two most often used brand-related types of stereotypes specific to marketing research: country stereotypes and brand buyer/user stereotypes.

The next two subchapters are devoted to explaining the antecedents and outcomes of brand stereotypes. When looking at the antecedents of brand stereotypes, I divide prior research into two streams: one focusing on brand attributes and the other analysing person attributes. By looking into the outcomes of brand stereotypes, I summarise the most relevant findings of previous literature that represent an important point of departure for the empirical investigation presented in Chapter 3. Insights into the stereotype transfer that occurs between different types of brand-related stereotypes are given at the end of the literature review.

In Chapter 2, I draw attention to the measurement of stereotypes and consider the previous approaches (implicit vs. explicit measurement) to assess them. I introduce the most widely accepted framework for measuring stereotypes in social psychology, namely the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002) and, in branding, the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn et al., 2012b). I also elaborate on the emotions elicited by different combinations of warmth and competence. This is the case of people's social perception of different social groups, as captured by the BIAS map (Fiske et al., 2002), as well as in consumer social perceptions of different brands, as encapsulated by the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn et al., 2012a).

In Chapter 3, I focus on the empirical investigation in support of the model linking two types of brand-related stereotypes, thus assessing the potential for a transfer between two types of brand-related stereotypes. This chapter starts with an introduction, moving on to an explanation of the conceptual model and hypotheses development where I largely focus on country stereotypes in a branding context, city branding, and introduce the non-investigated construct of city-brand stereotype. Subsequently, I expand on the potential of country stereotypes being transferred over to city-brand stereotypes as well as first theoretically justify and then empirically examine the influence of city-brand stereotypes on relevant outcome variables. In the following subchapters, I give details of the selected method, present the analyses and their results, which shape the last subchapter leading to a general discussion. In the latter, I initially rely on the study findings to draw theoretical implications, followed by managerial implications and then conclude by presenting the study's limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

Finally, in the conclusion I summarise the key pillars of this manuscript while drawing on the findings related to the three research questions, as presented in the introduction and findings of the empirical study summarised in Chapter 3. I also critically reflect on the current state of the literature in the field and describe possible fruitful avenues for further academic efforts concerning brand-related stereotypes.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I first introduce the schema and stereotype constructs and, by placing them in a branding context, elaborate on brand schemas and brand stereotypes. I next describe the process of anthropomorphism, the similarities and differences between brand stereotypes and brand personality, and introduce two more brand-related stereotypes. I then focus on the antecedents of brand stereotypes, as well as their outcomes, in the context of (international) marketing. I conclude Chapter 1 by introducing the idea of (brand) stereotype transfer.

1.1 SCHEMAS AND STEREOTYPES

The word schema comes from the Greek word *σχήμα*, which translates to a shape or a plan. Most definitions of schema point in the same direction: "A schema is a cognitive structure that contains units of information and the links among these units" (Fiske & Dyer, 1985, p. 839). Another common denominator of knowledge on schemas in social psychology is the notion that schemas are concepts, which refer to "cognitive structures of organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience with specific instances" (Fiske & Linville, 1980, p. 543). Importantly, schemas consist of the 'outer world', which includes different information or stimuli targeted at people, and the 'inner world', which embraces the individual's interpretation of this information based on previously accumulated knowledge (Crocker, 1984; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Fiske and Taylor (1991) suggest that schemas are actually learned in our interactions with the social environment around us. They therefore represent cognitive structures of accumulated knowledge related to a stimulus and its characteristic attributes, which are stored in people's memory (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). It is noteworthy that schemas navigate the comprehension of newly acquired information and, at the same time, guide the recovery of already stored information (Fiske & Linville, 1980).

Schema theory is the main pillar of social psychology (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), particularly when explaining people's memory and judgement processes. Researchers conclude that schemas are especially helpful in situations where

information is either incomplete or missing since "schema knowledge may fill in the missing details by suggesting default or most expected attributes based on previous experience, and by specifying attribute-to-attribute relations, enables effective inference making" (Halkias, 2015, p. 439). One of the primary attributes common to schemas is that they actually exist for several cognitive representations, such as concrete objects (i.e. physical objects) or more intangible occurrences (i.e. interpersonal relationships) (Crockett, 2015).

When people are targeted by external stimuli, they initially identify and label the stimulus by which they are targeted. This refers to the process of categorisation. It is only after the information regarding a stimulus/stimuli is successfully categorised that schemas come into play by bundling prior knowledge with the categorised information (Halkias, 2015; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008). Stereotypes are a special type of a schema, as will be outlined over the next few pages.

Stereotypes

The term *stereotype* has its roots in the Greek words *στερεός* (i.e. stereos), »firm, solid« and *τύπος* (i.e. typos), impression, which translates to a solid, firm impression about an idea or entity (Henry & Robert, 2013). As defined by social psychology, stereotypes are a "socially shared set of beliefs about traits that are characteristic of members of a social category" (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, p. 14). Here, it is important that these generalised sets of beliefs about groups of people apply to each individual, where »all individuals from the group are regarded as having the same set of leading characteristics« (Harré & Lamb, 1986, p. 348). Every time we encounter a lawyer, we therefore tend to stereotype this individual in the same manner as the group to which they belong (i.e. lawyers). Hence, we would stereotype him as a very competent, yet relatively cold person (Fiske et al., 2002).

In the past, stereotypes were often linked to rigid, inflexible, even faulty ways of thinking (Allport, 1954; Augoustinos & Walker, 1998; Stroebe & Insko, 1989), largely due to their undesirable consequences of prejudice and discrimination. Contemporary psychology, however, manages to present stereotypes in a more

positive light. Stereotypes serve as "energy saving devices" (Macrae et al., 1994) and are also described as "tools that jump out of a metaphorical cognitive toolbox, when there is a job to be done" (Gilbert & Hixon, 1991, p. 510).

The idea of having a handy cognitive tool in the form of a stereotype so as to simplify humans' cognitive workload started to gain the increased attention of researchers. The common denominator among researchers was and still is that stereotypes play a fundamental role in simplifying information processing and response generation (Allport, 1954; Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Macrae et al., 1994). The challenging, complex and globalised environment that is today's reality places people in a difficult position of fighting with/against information overload.

A recent investigation of the phenomenon shows that "modern computing systems now produce over 2.5 quintillion bytes of data every day; over 200 billion emails are sent per day; and the total amount of global scientific scholarly output is doubling every 9 years" (Alexander et al., 2016). All of these items of information compete for people's attention. The consequence is that people need to rely on mechanisms that simplify their reality and, in so doing, "free up limited cognitive resources for the performance of other necessary or desirable mental activities" (Macrae et al., 1994, p. 37). Stereotypes also help satisfy the natural human need for cognitive efficiency by structuring complex information into categories and therefore offer a shortcut to a simplified meaning (Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998). Thus, stereotyping is seen as a natural cognitive activity, which 'does good' cognitive work and is nowadays believed to be free of negative connotations, as was the case at the infancy of its investigation (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998).

Stereotypes are also viewed as mental representations of a certain group and its individual members, whereas the process of stereotyping refers to treating the individual elements as parts of higher-level categorical properties (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998; Hamilton, 2005). In fact, stereotypes are a type of a cognitive social schema which works as an instrument to organise human cognition (Puligadda, Ross Jr, & Grewal, 2012). Schemas are thus particularly relevant when old and new information cross paths. As noted, schema refers to the cognitive structure

that contains different elements of information as well as the links among these different elements of information (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). In this manner, stereotypes are based on the categorisation process in which people streamline, organise and systemise the information they receive (Tajfel, 1969; 1981). Importantly, stereotyping produces behavioural consequences and provides an explanation for in-group favouritism and out-group bias (Tajfel, 1981).

1.2 BRAND SCHEMAS AND BRAND STEREOTYPES

The marketplace is overwhelmed by numerous marketing stimuli competing for consumers' attention. Brands are trying their best to appear as unique and valuable significant others in the minds and hearts of consumers. However, there is a sea of brands' different types of communications, advertising and positioning tactics, as well as other marketing activities that enable them to deliver relevant marketing information to (potential) consumers. From the consumer point of a view, brands are becoming important organising mechanisms which insert some order and sense among all of the incoming market information targeted at them (Fournier, 1998).

A brand schema refers to "a memory-based, organized network of all the beliefs, the emotions, and the associations consumers attach to a specific brand and its attributes" (Halkias & Kokkinaki, 2013, p. 240). In principle, brand schemas entail all the associations consumers make with brands (e.g. a brand's positioning, functional/emotional/social brand benefits, physical or psychological brand information etc.) (e.g. Halkias, 2015; Halkias & Kokkinaki, 2013; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008). For example, the Coca-Cola brand schema would consist of a red-coloured can and the logo, a reasonable price estimate, Santa Claus and Christmas as highlights of their advertising campaigns, a sweet and frizzy taste, a refreshing drink, high sugar levels, an unhealthy drink, worldwide availability, emotional and innovative advertising campaigns, to name but a few. All of these attributes, with some referring to a brand's tangible characteristics (e.g. a sweet and frizzy taste), its functional aspects (e.g. a refreshing drink), emotional aspects (e.g. emotional and innovative advertising campaigns), social aspects (e.g. an unhealthy drink with high sugar levels) or even the brand's marketplace

presence (e.g. global availability), are summed up in a typical consumer's brand schema (Halkias, 2015).

Prior research shows that brand schemas are essential for consumers' processing and evaluation of brand-related communication (e.g. Boush & Loken, 1991; Sjödin & Törn, 2006). This manuscript focuses in particular on brand stereotypes, which are a special type of brand schema and will be discussed in detail in the following pages and subchapters.

Brand stereotypes

Stereotypical associations not only apply to people, but to "every stimulus object that is ascribed to the stereotypical category" (Halkias et al., 2016, p. 3642) and, thus, stereotypes also apply to brands. Brand stereotypes therefore represent consumers' beliefs about brands, which are perceived as intentional agents (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Consumers' stereotypical beliefs have been found to influence their perceptions of brands, their intentions and actual behaviour with regard to these brands. In a similar way as with social groups of people, brands are also prone to stereotypical assessments and their consequences.

In the reality of the marketplace, consumers are bombarded with an overwhelming number of marketing-related stimuli (Kervyn et al., 2012b; Puligadda et al., 2012). Given that branding is a priority in marketing (Keller, 2003), consumers are and will continue to be targeted on a daily basis by an overwhelming mass of information regarding brands.

Imagine a consumer enjoying a glimpse of Viennese life, walking down the streets of Vienna. On this journey, they will encounter numerous advertisements from brands in many different forms, stumble upon (im)polite service encounters in the stores while looking for advice and receive different brand offers that they might find interesting.

This consumer has already come across information of this sort before; similar information is already stored in their memory in the form of a "cognitive structure that contains units of information and the links among these units",

called schema (Fiske & Dyer, 1985, p. 839). Hence, the information or stimuli being perceived by a consumer as they walk down the streets of Vienna can be related to similar information they already hold in their memory. The old information will encounter the newly received information and the consumer will be able to categorise the stimuli; they will be able to do so using a brand as "an organizing mechanism that forms the central node or a web of associations" (Puligadda et al., 2012, p. 116).

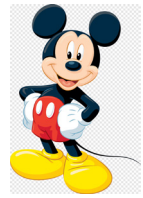
The information received will be filtered according to the consumer's previous knowledge about local (e.g. Manner, known as the "pride" of Viennese waffles) and global brands (i.e. Swarovski, which stands for the domestic brand shining globally), the impolite service encounters in some stores will be attributed to the (stereo)typical Viennese service style, and the different brand offers will be evaluated in a comparison made with the consumer's favourite brand.

1.2.1 The process of anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphising refers to seeing the human in nonhuman forms (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1995). People may assign human-like characteristics to non-human entities; for example, people see faces in the clouds and even attribute "human goals, beliefs, and emotions to animals" (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007, p. 468). Researchers (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007; Guthrie & Guthrie, 1995) suggest that people tend to anthropomorphise entities for three main reasons. First, due to the evoking of a companionship/relationship, meaning that people who are seeking more relational engagements can find the latter in such relationships with brands. Second, as part of making sense of their surrounding world and, third, due to a "cognitive and perceptual strategy akin to making a bet that the world is human-like" (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007, p. 469). What follows is the so-called partial anthropomorphism that occurs when people actually assign human characteristics to objects, events or entities and they indeed believe the latter hold some important human traits, although people do not perceive these objects, events or entities to be fully human (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1995). Thus, when people anthropomorphise entities, they resort to their previously stored knowledge about the entity, which in fact is also a certain kind of schema.

In the marketing context, anthropomorphism refers to the attribution of human-like characteristics and features to brands. The tendency to anthropomorphise brands can be divided into two directions. Namely, marketers often encourage consumers to humanise brands, yet it is also often the case that consumers actually see human aspects in brands (Aggarwal & McGill, 2011). For example, marketers can humanise their brands by using humanised brand names (e.g. Mr. Muscolo; Dr. Pepper; Dr. Oetker), brand characters (e.g. M&M's characters; Mickey Mouse by The Walt Disney Company; Michelin Man by Michelin) or by brand communication using first-person language, which reminds of the brand talking directly to us (e.g. The city of Amsterdam: I amsterdam; McDonald's slogan: I'm loving it; Lindt's campaign: Hello my name is and Emoji campaign). On the other hand, consumers may see human aspects in brands through facial or human-like imitations (e.g. smiling vs. threatening car lights, Amazon's smiling logo). Brand-related anthropomorphism examples are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Brand-related anthropomorphism

Type of brand anthropomorphism	Examples
Human-like brand names	  
Human-like brand characters	  
Human-like brand communication	I amsterdam  
Human-like imitations	amazon.com

Source: Google images, 2020

As soon as brands start enjoying human-like qualities, consumers may start interacting with them "in ways that parallel social relationships, and their interactions are guided by the norms that govern these relationships" (Aggarwal, 2004, p. 88). Ever since Fournier's (1998) seminal work on consumer–brand relationships, marketing has seen a paradigm shift towards the relational paradigm. Namely, the notion that "relationship principles have virtually replaced short-term exchange notions in both marketing thought and practice" (Fournier, 1998, p. 343) led to a change in research focus. Thus, products and brands were given a new, extended role in consumers' lives. Brands, defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, that is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (AMA, 2019), outgrew their initial roles as credibility and quality signals (Erdem, Swait, & Valenzuela, 2006). Therefore, brands are not only seen in the sense of a possessor–possession association, but as active relationship partners in whom consumers trust and feel passionate about (Batra et al., 2012), perceive as cool (Warren, Batra, Loureiro, & Bagozzi, 2019) and, as found in recent research, even love (Batra et al., 2012), hate (Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016) or feel addicted to (Cui, Mrad, & Hogg, 2018). Consumer–brand interactions therefore rise above the purely utilitarian aspect of brands (Aggarwal, 2004), and place them as one of the two pillars in a two-way consumer–brand dyad.

1.2.2 Brand stereotypes versus Brand personality

Prior research identified "clear links between [our] brand perception model and Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale" (Kervyn et al., 2012a, p. 171). The similarity in the brand stereotype and brand personality scales lies in the dimensions of the constructs; namely, the brand stereotype scale consists of two dimensions (i.e. warmth and competence), whereas the brand personality scale entails five dimensions (i.e. sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness). The competence dimension is therefore the dimension both measurement scales 'share'. Thus, there is undoubtedly similarity between the two constructs, as further stimulated by the constructs' common denominator. Both brand stereotypes and brand personality originate in social psychology and

were introduced to marketing on the basis of anthropomorphism. Similarly, they are both essential constructs for explaining how consumers refer to and bond with brands.

Despite the previously mentioned similarities, the two constructs should not be mistakenly treated as the same construct or as easily interchangeable constructs. Below (also see Table 2), I present the most important points of departure and, with them the related differentiation, between the constructs of brand stereotypes and brand personality.

Brand personality refers to "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347) and is a construct of particular importance for the consumer-brand relationship given its ability to stimulate consumers' responses related to brands (Ivens, Leischnig, Muller, & Valta, 2015). As shown in previous research, brand personality is meaningful for consumers' self-expression (Belk, 1988) and, amongst other important outcomes, influences consumer–brand identification (Kuenzel & Vaux Halliday, 2008), brand trust and brand affect (Sung & Kim, 2010).

In contrast, brand stereotypes are consumers' oversimplified and generalised beliefs about brands as intentional agents (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Kervyn et al., 2012b). A body of prior literature suggests that brand stereotypes influence consumers' perceptions, evaluations, intentions and actual behaviour (e.g. Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Ivens et al., 2015; Kervyn et al., 2012b; Kolbl et al., 2019). When assessing the conceptual links between the constructs, research shows that brand personality acts as an antecedent of brand stereotypes (Ivens et al., 2015). In short, brand personality positively influences the content of brand stereotypes as depicted through warmth and competence (Ivens et al., 2015).

Another point of differentiation between the constructs arises in the constructs' target focus. Whereas brand personality focuses on the individual's perception and captures the fit between self-perception versus brand perception (Aaker, 1997), brand stereotypes encapsulate social perception. Brand stereotypes

therefore reflect a generalised set of opinions that is shared in a certain society (Kervyn et al., 2012b).

With respect to the last point, there is a crucial difference in how brand personality and brand stereotypes are measured. Consistently with an individualised target focus, brand personality measures an individual respondent's perception on a Likert scale of agreement (i.e. Nivea is: Exciting: Aaker, 1997). In line with their conceptualisation, brand stereotypes also measure a respondent's perception, yet, if correctly measured, the items measuring brand stereotypes need to reflect the opinion of a society. Thus, respondents assess perceptions on a Likert scale in the following way: Most people in Slovenia think that Nivea is: well-intentioned (Fiske et al., 2002; Kervyn et al., 2012b).

Moreover, brand personality and brand stereotypes also have different end goals; brand personality concentrates on a smaller number of brands, which results in a detailed description of brands' attributes (Aaker, 1997), whereas brand stereotypes focus on a broader range of social objects, which leads to a broader image (Kervyn et al., 2012b).

Table 2: Key similarities and differences between brand personality and brand stereotypes

	Brand Personality	**Brand Stereotypes**
Definition	"The set of human characteristics associated with a brand" *(Aaker, 1997, p. 347)*	Oversimplified and generalised beliefs about brands as intentional agents *(Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Kervyn et al., 2012)*
Common denominator =	Anthropomorphism (seeing the human in non-human forms; *Guthrie & Guthrie, 1995*)	Anthropomorphism (seeing the human in non-human forms; *Guthrie & Guthrie, 1995*)
Nature of construct ≠	Descriptive *(Aaker, 1997)*	Intentional (*Kervyn et al., 2012)*
Dimensions ≠ =	Sincerity Competence Excitement Sophistication Ruggedness *(Aaker, 1997)*	Warmth Competence (*Kervyn et al., 2012)*
Perception focus ≠	Individual perception; represents the fit between self-perception vs. brand perception *(Aaker, 1997)*	Social perception; represents a generalised, shared opinion in society *(Kervyn et al., 2012)*
End goal ≠	Focusing on a smaller number of brands resulting in a detailed description of a brand's attributes *(Aaker, 1997)*	Focusing on a wider range of social objects, resulting in a broader overall landscape of images *(Kervyn et al., 2012)*
Relation to each other	Antecedent *(Ivens et al., 2015)*	Outcome (*Ivens et al., 2015)*
Notes: = depicts similarities between the constructs; ≠ depicts differences between the constructs		

In summary, despite the two constructs having some similarities, brand stereotypes and brand personality are two distinct constructs which both importantly contribute to what is known about consumers' perceptions of brands. Researchers are therefore encouraged to approach brand stereotypes and brand personality as mutually reinforcing, yet separate constructs in predicting consumer behaviour.

1.2.3 Brand-related stereotypes

Stereotypes originate in social psychology and were chiefly applied to social groups (Fiske et al., 2002). Due to stereotypes' ability to grasp the cognitive dimension of social perception (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995), in the area of (international) marketing stereotypes have also been successfully applied to countries as well as typical brand buyers/users.

1.2.3.1 Country stereotypes

Country stereotypes are an oversimplified and generalised set of beliefs about people living in a certain country (Chattalas, Kramer, & Takada, 2008; Samiee, 1994). An important aspect of stereotypes is that the content of a stereotype uniformly applies based on membership or categorisation criteria. In other words, the content of a stereotype consistently applies to each individual member that is assumed to fit with or belong to the stereotyped category (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). For example, one stereotypical belief about Germans is that they are very disciplined and efficient. Based on the stereotyping theory (Fiske et al., 2002), we would ascribe these characteristics every time we come across an individual of German origin. Placed in an international marketing context, prior research suggests that if we identify a brand's country of origin, the stereotypical beliefs associated with that country will be transferred to the brand level and therefore guide the way impressions are made about a certain brand/product coming from this country (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Liu, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005).

In fact, consumers first make associations about people in a particular country, organising their judgements into schemas along the warmth and competence

dimensions, which then influence their brand evaluations (Magnusson, Westjohn, & Sirianni, 2018). As two essential dimensions of the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), warmth and competence also grasp the content about country stereotypes and have been successfully applied in international marketing to measure the content of country stereotypes (e.g. Chattalas et al., 2008; Halkias et al., 2016; Maher & Carter, 2011).

As mentioned, research suggests that country stereotypes act as an important mechanism in consumers' evaluations of products and brands originating from these countries (Samiee, 1994). The warmth dimension of country stereotypes speaks about the warmth and friendliness of a country's people, whereas the competence dimensions reflects their capability and efficiency (Chattalas et al., 2008; Maher & Carter, 2011). More specifically, country warmth and competence both positively influence consumers' level of admiration for the country of origin, which is positively linked to willingness to buy products from that country (Maher & Carter, 2011). Interestingly, and despite some researchers even downplaying the importance of the warmth dimension in predicting consumers' product evaluations (Chen, Mathur, & Maheswaran, 2014), it is a country's warmth dimension that plays a viable role in a product failure situation. Researchers have found that warmth plays a stronger role in influencing consumers' purchase intentions in the case of product failure (Xu, Leung, & Yan, 2013).

This does not mean that the competence dimension suffers from suppressed diagnosticity while predicting consumer behaviour. Research shows that the competence dimension directly influences product evaluations due to its greater perceived relevance in stimulating positive effects for perceived quality (Chen et al., 2014). Interestingly, many studies speak about the diagnosticity of competence, which is consistently shown to be the more diagnostic (than warmth) for consumer outcomes (Diamantopoulos, Florack, Halkias, & Palcu, 2017; Halkias et al., 2016).

Country warmth and competence can, like in the case in stereotyping and brand stereotyping research, be linked in various ways as a result of different combinations of high/low warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002). Social

groups (e.g. people, brands, countries, destinations) can be categorised in four different clusters, where two are univalent (high warmth – high competence; low warmth – low competence) and the other two are ambivalent (high warmth – low competence; low warmth – high competence) (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske et al., 2002). Research suggests that most stereotypes towards outgroups are, in fact, ambivalent, and thereby represent a combination of high/low warmth and low/high competence (Cuddy et al., 2009). The results of a study on warmth and competence country perceptions (Cuddy et al., 2009) based on a European sample suggest three clusters: (1) a cluster of countries perceived as being low in competence and high in warmth (i.e. Italy, Portugal, Spain); (2) a cluster of countries perceived as being high in competence and low in warmth (i.e. Austria, Belgium, France); and (3) a cluster of countries seen as being very high in competence and low in warmth (i.e. Germany, United Kingdom) (Cuddy et al., 2009).

1.2.3.2 Brand buyer/user stereotypes

Stereotyping applies to different social groups and entities; thus, typical brand buyers/users can also constitute a social group that is a candidate for stereotyping (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016; Russell & Fiske, 2008). Brand buyer/user stereotypes therefore refer to a socially shared and oversimplified set of beliefs about the characteristics possessed by typical buyers/users of a certain brand (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016). Similarly, like with country stereotypes, the social perception of typical brand buyers/users is transferred from the brands consumers buy/use.

The SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), particularly the two dimensions of warmth and competence, which grasp the content of stereotypes also apply to brand buyer/user stereotypes. In this manner, Fennis and Pruyn (2007) suggest that if consumers perceive a brand as competent, yet cold, those who purchase it will be perceived along those lines. Therefore, buyers/users of this particular brand will also be stereotyped as competent, yet cold. The latter is also suggested by Antonetti and Maklan (2016) who propose that if Mercedes-Benz as a brand is perceived to be high in competence, but quite low in warmth, those who

purchase/use Mercedes-Benz products will also be stereotyped as being high in competence and low in warmth.

Research on the influence of brand buyers/user stereotypes on consumer behaviour remains very limited. Yet it is interesting that prior research shows that people are relatively reluctant to purchase responsible brands due to their association with the social stereotype of 'responsible consumers'. The authors conclude that the warmth dimension, which is the more expressed dimension in responsible consumption, "does not represent an appealing feature in a consumption context" (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016, p. 796). Consistent with the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), a combination of high competence and low warmth leads to envy, which encourages consumers to compete with a consumption group (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016) and is therefore seen as a more appealing feature (as opposed to warmth) in a consumption context.

1.3 THE ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND STEREOTYPES

To fully understand the role played by brand stereotypes in an international marketing context, researchers must shed light on both the antecedents and outcomes of brand stereotypes. Despite the scarcity of research on the antecedents of brand stereotypes, existing scientific investigations can be divided into two research streams. These streams differ in their central target of interest. The first research stream builds on brand-level attributes and principally focuses on brand-related attributes, whereas the second stream puts the individual in the centre of attention and models person-related attributes as predictors of brand stereotypes.

1.3.1 Brand attributes

The marketing literature investigating the antecedents of brand stereotypes has considered three types of brand attributes. First, the early investigations looked at brand type (for-profit vs. non-profit) (Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010; Bernritter, Verlegh, & Smit, 2016), then the influence of brand personality (Ivens et al., 2015) and consumers' perceptions of brands (perceived brand globalness

and perceived brand localness) (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Kolbl et al., 2019) on the content of brand stereotypes.

The research concentrating on brand type builds on the view that "consumers are open to the notion that marketplace entities can possess human-like traits" (Aaker et al., 2010, p. 225). Accordingly, a firm can be stereotyped in the same way as a brand (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Firms invest in as well as build on their reputation which, on one hand, is an outcome of high-quality added value for consumers related to competence and, on the other hand, an outcome of warmth, shown in consumers' trust and loyalty (Halpern, 2001).

Earlier research on for profit and non-profit firms reveals differences in human perceptions. Namely, non-profits enjoy a higher level of trustworthiness than for profits due to the direct financial connotation of the latter (Hansmann, 1981; as cited in Aaker, 2010), but this relationship is contingent upon the product category. Moreover, there is evidence of a different basis for promotion within for-profit and non-profit firms; whereas the reason for promotion in the first group usually relates to employees' competencies, the reason in the second group lies in employees' "attachment" to the organisation's mission (Aaker et al., 2010, p. 226). Thus, these two firm types are expected to differ in the levels of competence and warmth perceptions they inspire.

An experimental investigation of manipulating consumers' perceptions of warmth and competence with respect to these firm types shows that non-profits are perceived to be warmer (but less competent) than their for-profit counterparts; the lack of perceived competence attributed to non-profits explains why consumers are less willing to buy a product made by a non-profit firm versus one by a for-profit firm. Non-profits can overcome the latter by boosting the sense of competence in their signals (for example, through communication) (Aaker et al., 2010).

Building on differences in consumers' perceptions of for- and non-profits, in experimental studies researchers have also shown that "brand warmth (and not competence) mediates the effect of brand type (nonprofit vs. for-profit) on

consumers' intentions to endorse brands and branded content on social media" (Bernritter et al., 2016, p. 27). Therefore, endorsement of a non-profit brand indeed speaks about the warmth, good intentions and dedication to others (Aaker et al., 2010; Fiske et al., 2007). By endorsing a non-profit brand in social media, consumers also achieve a certain level of social status (Bernritter et al., 2016), which may be an important element of their identity construction (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen, 2012). Endorsement of a non-profit brand thus signals a consumer's good intention as reflected in warmth and offers a pathway to others' social approval.

Brand personality captures the human-like characteristics people associate with a brand (Aaker, 1997) and, as described in Chapter 1.2.2, conceptually differs from brand stereotypes (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Despite the vast research into brand personality and the growing body of literature on brand stereotypes, the question of how consumers' perceptions of brand personality translate into affective reactions continues to be unanswered, therefore calling for further research (Ivens et al., 2015). Brand personality was modelled as an antecedent of brand stereotypes, which mediate the effects of consumers' brand personality perceptions on brand-related emotions (Ivens et al., 2015). The results show that brand personality does indeed influence the way consumers stereotype brands, which further translates into brand-related emotions (Ivens et al., 2015).

Chronologically, the latest investigations on brand attributes as antecedents of brand stereotype content looked into consumers' brand perception and modelled perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness as two antecedents of brand stereotypes. Perceived brand globalness (PBG) is defined as "the extent to which consumers believe that the brand is marketed in multiple countries and is recognized as global in these countries" (Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003, p. 54). Brands can portray the globalness aspect through their visuals, packaging, overall communication and/or market presence (Swoboda, Pennemann, & Taube, 2012). In contrast, perceived brand localness (PBL) is the extent to which "a brand is being recognized as a local player and a symbol or icon of a local culture" (Swoboda et al., 2012, p. 72). Still, the localness aspect should not be misinterpreted; despite its 'local' connotation, the brand can still be present in

more than one country. The essence of localness actually lies in its symbolic, sometimes even iconic, role for a local country (Özsomer, 2012).

The two constructs are not mutually exclusive (Kolbl et al., 2019), but complementary in their nature. Both global and local brands are able to simultaneously build on consumers' localness and globalness perceptions of brands (Riefler, 2012). The localness aspect is typically relied on to either implement and/or nourish bonds between the brand and the local community, whereas the globalness aspect frequently evokes associations of a brand's strength in the global marketplace. PBG and PBL are both extremely important in international marketing because they positively influence a brand's quality and prestige (Steenkamp et al., 2003) and serve as drivers of: brand attitude (Halkias et al., 2016), consumers' brand value perception (Swoboda et al., 2012), and consumers' relational value (e.g. consumer–brand identification) (Sichtmann, Davvetas, & Diamantopoulos, 2019). In short, PBG and PBL guide the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of consumers (Kolbl et al., 2019; Xie, Batra, & Peng, 2015).

It should be highlighted that PBG and PBL were modelled as antecedents of the brand stereotype content in the following way: the global availability of a brand speaks about its ability and is hence expected to boost the competence dimensions, whereas a brand's embeddedness in the local culture will result in stronger perceptions of the brand's warmth (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Kolbl et al., 2019). This reasoning finds support in two different studies where different brands were stimuli (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Kolbl et al., 2019). However, it is vital to note that the cross-links between PBG/PBL and warmth/competence depend on the country setting (developed vs. developing country) and that: global brands not only portray the brands' ability in the marketplace, as reflected in competence, but can also reveal their good intentions (i.e. warmth) by being perceived as exciting, socially approved and forming part of a global consumer culture (Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004; Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008). At the same time, brands that build on the localness perspective naturally boost good intentions (i.e. warmth) through their tailor-making and authenticity (Ger, 1999), but adaptation to local desires invokes trustworthiness, which is an element of competence (Ger, 1999; Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004). Therefore, PBG

and PBL are both important drivers of the content of stereotypes as seen in both warmth and competence (Kolbl et al., 2019).

In conclusion, brand attributes in the forms of brand type (for-profit, non-profit; Aaker et al., 2010; Bernritter et al., 2016), brand personality (Ivens et al., 2015) and consumer-brand perceptions (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Kolbl et al., 2019) serve as antecedents of the content of a brand stereotype.

1.3.2 Person attributes

Previous research on brand stereotype antecedents (e.g. Aaker et al., 2010; Bernritter et al., 2016; Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Ivens et al., 2015; Kolbl et al., 2019) mostly focused on brands as the main entity of research. A second stream of research is still occupied with brands but, unlike the first stream, concentrates on person attributes in relation to purchasing behaviour (Bennett & Hill, 2012).

Given that human–brand interactions are strongly reminiscent of interpersonal interactions, it is plausible to assume that, like with the extant research in social and consumer psychology, the individual differences of a person interacting with a brand also play a role in predicting how people perceive the content of brand stereotypes (Bennett & Hill, 2012). Bennett and Hill (2012) thus investigate how differences in perceived warmth and competence vary depending on demographic factors (i.e. income, age, education). In particular, their study shows that "older and more educated consumers perceive brands in general as less warm" (Bennett & Hill, 2012, p. 201). Still, it is noted that the investigation did not reveal significant differences in brand perceptions based on income levels. However, further analysis showed that "impact of income on brand warmth perceptions is dependent upon education... consumers in the lower income bracket who competed college held lower warmth perceptions than did consumers in the same income bracket who did not attend college" (Bennett & Hill, 2012, p. 201). Differences in demographic variables therefore influence the content of brand stereotypes.

Nevertheless, these findings must be treated with caution for the following reason. Brand stereotypes both represent and measure a shared opinion in a society, whereas individual person attributes are a matter of every individual him/herself. Thus, the latter are moving away from a shared and generalised view of a society, which is an essential element of the conceptualisation and measurement of stereotypes.

1.4 THE OUTCOMES OF BRAND STEREOTYPES

Brand stereotypes also serve as important predictors of perceptual, relational and integrative outcomes, or as mediators of relationships between the previously mentioned antecedents and suggested outcomes. Importantly, the content of brand stereotypes (i.e. warmth and competence) shows unique diagnosticity depending on the research context involved.

For example, competence is more important than the warmth of a brand stereotype in driving purchase intentions (Aaker et al., 2012; Aaker et al., 2010), brand relationship quality and brand loyalty (Valta, 2013). On the other hand, brand warmth is more relevant than competence as a driver of consumer–brand identification (Kolbl et al., 2019; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), brand intimacy and passion (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019).

Further, Ivens, Leischnig, Muller and Valta (2015) corroborated the role played by brand stereotypes in predicting brand emotions and highlighted the role of brand warmth and competence as mediators of relationships between brand personality and brand-related emotions. In the case of brand scandals, research shows "an organization that caused a disaster would be judged more harshly if its warmth rather than competence reputation that was called into question" (Kervyn, Chan, Malone, Korpusik, & Ybarra, 2014, p. 256). A brand's perceived warmth and competence are also found to independently influence human taste perceptions (Bratanova, Kervyn, & Klein, 2015) while brand warmth positively impacts consumers' intentions to endorse a brand in social media (Bernritter et al., 2016). A recent investigation of branded applications reveals that "user's value in use translates well into app continuance and brand loyalty through corresponding brand competence and brand warmth" (Fang, 2019, p. 387).

In summary, the majority of previous studies stress the impact of brand warmth and competence on *brand loyalty* (Bennett, Hill, & Oleksiuk, 2013; Bratanova et al., 2015; Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Fang, 2019; Kervyn et al., 2012b; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; Valta, 2013) and/or on *purchase intentions* (Aaker et al., 2012; Aaker et al., 2010; Bennett & Hill, 2012; Bennett et al., 2013; Bratanova et al., 2015;

Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Ivens et al., 2015; Kervyn et al., 2014; Kervyn et al., 2012b; Kolbl et al., 2019). The remaining studies summarised in Table 3 looked at the impact of brand stereotypes on either consumer–brand relationship building (i.e. brand-related emotions, brand advocacy, brand attitude, consumer–brand identification, recommendation intention and continuance intention) or on other purchase-related variables (i.e. willingness to buy, switching intention, brand ownership).

Table 3: Overview of studies on brand stereotypes

Study	Journal	Stereotyped entity	Antecedent(s)	Mediator(s)	Outcome(s)
Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner (2010)	Journal of Consumer Research	Firms	• Organisation type (for-profit or non-profit)	• Brand stereotype warmth • Brand stereotype competence	• Admiration • Willingness to Buy
Aaker, Garbinsky, & Vohs (2012)	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Brands	• Brand warmth • Brand competence	• Admiration	• Purchase intentions
Bennett & Hill (2012)	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Brands	• Personal differences in demographic variables (Age, Education, Gender, Ethnicity, Income)	• Brand warmth • Brand competence	• Purchase intentions
Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone (2012)	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Brands	• Brand intention (warmth) • Brand ability (competence)	• Brand-related emotions (admiration, pity, envy, contempt)	• Purchase intentions • Brand loyalty

Study	Journal	Stereotyped entity	Antecedent(s)	Mediator(s)	Outcome(s)
Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen (2012)	International Journal of Research in Marketing	Brands	• Brand–self similarity • Brand distinctiveness • Brand prestige • Brand social benefits • Brand warmth • Memorable brand experiences	• Consumer–brand identification • Product involvement (moderator)	• Brand loyalty • Brand advocacy
Bennett, Hill, & Oleksiuk (2013)	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Brands	• Brand warmth • Brand competence	• Brand-related emotions (admiration, pity, envy, contempt)	• Purchase likelihood • Brand loyalty
Valta (2013)	Journal of Business Research	Brands	• Product category involvement • Brand dependence • Brand warmth • Brand competence	• Relational norms • Brand-relationship quality	• Brand loyalty
Kervyn, Chan, Malone, Korpusik, & Ybarra (2014)	Social Cognition	Brands	• Brand warmth • Brand competence		• Purchase intentions • Financial fine • Financial responsibility
Bratanova, Kervyn, & Klein (2015)	Psychologica Belgica	Brands	• Brand warmth • Brand competence	• Water taste • Chocolate taste	• Loyalty • Intentions to buy • Participation in advertising

Study	Journal	Stereotyped entity	Antecedent(s)	Mediator(s)	Outcome(s)
Ivens, Leischnig, Muller, & Valta (2015)	Psychology & Marketing	Brands	• Brand personality	• Brand stereotype warmth • Brand stereotype competence • Brand-related emotions (admiration, pity, envy, contempt)	• Brand attitude • Purchase intention • Recommendation intention
Bernritter, Verlegh, & Smit (2016)	Journal of Interactive Marketing	Firms	• Brand type (for-profit or non-profit)	• Brand stereotype warmth • Brand stereotype competence • Brand symbolism (moderator)	• Intention to endorse in social media
Davvetas & Halkias (2019)	International Marketing Review	Brands	• Perceived brand globalness • Perceived brand localness	• Brand stereotype warmth • Brand stereotype competence	• Brand affect • Brand passion • Brand intimacy • Purchase intention • Switching intention • Brand loyalty • Resilience to relational adversity
Kolbl, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, & Diamantopoulos (2019)	Journal of Business Research	Brands	• Perceived brand globalness • Perceived brand localness	• Brand stereotype warmth • Brand stereotype competence	• Consumer brand identification • Purchase intentions • Brand ownership
Fang (2019)	Information & Management	Branded apps	• Visibility • Persistence • Interactivity • Association • Selectivity	• Value-in-use • Brand competence • Brand warmth	• Continuance Intention • Brand loyalty

1.5 (BRAND) STEREOTYPE TRANSFER

The current studies on brand stereotypes (see Table 3) examine a single type of a stereotype in predicting either the antecedents or outcomes of brand stereotypes. The growing body of literature thus recognises brand stereotypes' viable role in predicting consumers' evaluations, attitudes and behaviours.

A primary tenet of the stereotyping theory (Fiske et al., 2002) is that stereotyping applies to different social objects. In this manner, a considerable body of international marketing research considers the role of country stereotypes (as summarised in point 1.2.3.1). Yet, no research in international marketing has hitherto investigated different types of stereotypes all at once. Hence, little is known about whether and how consumers' stereotypical judgements are transferred from one social object to another, for example, from a certain country to a brand that comes from that country.

Imagine Ula. Ula is a typical millennial or generation Y consumer: like her peers, she does not place too much emphasis on others' opinions and does not purchase products so that her perceived status in society will rise. Instead, she buys products that help her identify and express her extended self. The brands and products which are chosen represent a 'good value for money' decision as well as a good investment in the future (Ordun, 2015). Since Ula also values tradition, she would like to buy a set of Swarovski earrings for herself, just like her mother did when she graduated. Swarovski, a famous global brand specialising in jewellery and originating in Austria, has always been her favourite brand. It reminds her of her trips to Vienna, when she and her mother wandered through the streets and window shopped. The Swarovski store on Kärtner Street has always been their favourite. Has Ula developed stereotypes about the country she has so often visited together with her mother (i.e. Austria) and the brand that she identifies herself with (i.e. Swarovski) so strongly independent of each other? Do her stereotypes of Austria as a competent, yet relatively unfriendly country also influence her stereotypical assessments of brands?

Research suggests that transfers between related stereotyping objects do occur. For example, Antonetti and Maklan (2016) demonstrate that consumers' stereotypical perceptions of brands are transferred to their buyers/users. In this way, "if Mercedes is perceived as a brand high in competence but relatively low in warmth ... users of this brand will also be socially stereotyped as competent but not warm" (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016, p. 798). Thus, consumers' stereotypical assessments of brands do indeed transfer to their buyers/users. In a similar manner, country-of-origin research speaks about the transfer from a country to the brand level such that consumers perceive the products coming from the country to be aligned with their perception of the country itself (e.g. Dichter, 1962; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). A more fine-grained approach to transfers between different stereotyping entities will be developed and presented in the empirical section (see Chapter 3) of this book.

2 MEASUREMENT OF STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are generalised beliefs assigned to a stereotyped category and applicable to each member of that category. Stereotype is often used interchangeably for prejudice; however, the two constructs vary significantly. Prejudice is defined as a "valenced affective or evaluative response (positive or negative) to a social category and its members" (Correll, Judd, Park, & Wittenbrink, 2010, p. 45). The biggest difference between the two constructs therefore lies in their nature; while prejudices are affective and evaluative, stereotypes are cognitive and serve "either as the foundation for prejudice or as its justification" (Correll et al., 2010, p. 46). Accordingly, stereotypes have often been mistakenly changed for prejudices and viewed as wrong and stiff perceptions about social groups (Allport, 1954; Stroebe & Insko, 1989; as cited in Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). Instead, it is actually prejudice which may be the cause of discriminatory behaviour towards outgroups. Drawing the dividing line between prejudice and stereotype, with the first being relatively affective and the second cognitive, is also essential for their measurement.

Reportedly, one of the earliest attempts to measure stereotypes came at the start of the 20th century when Katz and Braly (1933) asked participants to detect the most typical sets of attributes of various ethnic groups (Katz & Braly, 1933). These researchers were thus able to identify sets of attributes assigned to the group that were based on student participants' common agreement. Later, these two researchers defined stereotypes as "a fixed impression which conforms very little to the facts it pretends to represent" (Judd & Park, 1993; as cited in Katz & Braly, 1965, p. 267). For a long time, stereotypes were therefore believed to be "necessarily erroneous" (Judd & Park, 1993, p. 109).

Judd and Park (1993) suggest that the works and redefinition of stereotypes within social cognition done by Allport (1954) and Tajfel (1969) have importantly shaped what is known about stereotypes. These authors redefined stereotypes into social categories, where "as probabilistic generalizations about a group or class of people, stereotypes are accordingly no more illogical or erroneous than generalizations about any other sort of category that perceivers might construct

and find useful" (Judd & Park, 1993, p. 109). The question of erroneousness thus became more of an empirical question, as an inherent element of the definition of stereotypes.

2.1 EXPLICIT VERSUS IMPLICIT STEREOTYPE MEASURES

Generally, two types of measures are used while assessing stereotypes: explicit and implicit. Explicit stereotype measures grasp the "degree to which the individual believes that members of a social category are characterized by a given attribute" (Correll et al., 2010, p. 52). For instance, most people believe that Germans are very competent, yet quite cold, which is a depiction of a stereotype. Hence, this stereotypical belief does not necessarily depict the reality, but is still shared within a certain society.

Researchers have captured explicit stereotypes in different ways. The measure most often used among the explicit measures is trait rating whereby participants rate a list of traits in connection to the target group (e.g. social group, country, brand etc.). Their task is to rate how well, usually on a Likert scale, a given trait represents the social group being investigated. Given that stereotypes are socially shared, it is vital that stereotypes reflect the shared rather than an individual opinion (Fiske et al., 2002). This makes it is very important how researchers actually pose the question to grasp stereotypes – an appropriate way of proceeding is to ask the following question: "Most people see [name of social group] as ...", rather than a misleading question in the individualised form of the first-person singular: "I see [name of social group] as ...", which reflects the individual (and not the social) perception.

Another way of examining the content of stereotypes is through adjective checklists where participants reveal the traits they see as being most stereotypical of a social group (Correll et al., 2010; Katz & Braly, 1933). Correll et al. (2010, p. 52) also suggests: *percentage estimates*, where participants "indicate, for each attribute, the percentage of the group they believe to be characterized by that attribute or likely to engage in that behaviour" and in so doing reveal participants' prevalence and *distribution measures*, where "a variety of stereotype measures

instruct the participant to specify the distribution of members of a group along some dimension of interest", resulting in a histogram task in which participants draw a histogram that reflects "the proportion of the group at each point along the dimension", which also allows researchers to assess the dispersion.

Explicit measures rely on self-reports in which participants express their own opinions and beliefs on the assumption that participants are indeed able to assess their knowledge in memory, can express it and do so as a reflection of a certain society which, in reality, is not always the case (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Stereotypes, particularly if negatively loaded, make participants reluctant to disclose them (Liu et al., 2005) and this might lead to social desirability bias, which is a drawback of explicit measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Explicit measures are therefore a direct measure of attitude as well as stereotypes and follow the proposition that stereotypes are cognitions operating in a conscious mode (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

In contrast to explicit measures, which require participants to be able to engage in accurate introspection (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995), implicit measures capture individuals' beliefs and attitudes indirectly such that participants are unaware of what is subject of research interest (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). In fact, some researchers suggest that implicit measures are superior to explicit measures given their "potentially superior ability to gather accurate construct measurement data despite consumers' reluctance or inability to provide them" (Dimofte, 2010, p. 933).

Implicit measures include *lexical decision task*, in brief, a word–nonword judgement task in which participants, for example, are exposed to social category labels and various combinations of letters. The latter are followed by a target letter string that includes nonwords and words which are stereotypic of a social category. Next, *response-compatibility tasks* seek to overcome the lexical decision task's downside of the effects being a result of "compatibility between the prime and target stimuli, rather than between the primes and the response option" (Correll et al., 2010, p. 54; as cited in De Houwer, 2003) by assessing the primes–response compatibility. The *implicit association test* is one of the most widely used

methods in social psychology, for assessing stereotypes in particular, by assessing the strengths of participants' associations between concepts by "observing response latencies in computer-administered categorization tasks" (Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009, p. 18).

Despite explicit and implicit types of measures having their own advantages and disadvantages, it is important to note that most studies in (international) marketing rely on explicit measures (see Diamantopoulos et al., 2017 for one exception of a study concentrated on country stereotypes). The focus of the next chapters is therefore to describe the most prominent and commonly used theoretical and measurement model, based on explicit measurement, which deals with the content of stereotypes and stems from social psychology, namely, the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002). The subchapter 2.3 introduces the SCM's application to the branding context in the form of the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b).

2.2 THE STEREOTYPE CONTENT MODEL

Examination of the content of stereotypes gave birth to the SCM, today one of the most noticeable and widely used frameworks for analysing social perceptions (Fiske et al., 2002). The SCM grasps cognitive perceptions about social groups in its two dimensions: warmth and competence. Warmth reflects the nature of another's intent, meaning that it captures the intentions one harbours towards a certain social group. Competence refers to another's ability to enact these intentions in that it captures how able one is to actually deliver on their intentions (Fiske et al., 2002). Previous research suggests the primacy of warmth, which draws on evolutionary theory – for survival, it is more important to know another's intent is for good or ill than that other's ability to act on those intentions (Cuddy et al., 2009). Moreover, the warmth dimension relates to the perceived motives of others and therefore determines approach–avoidance tendencies, which constitute a fundamental aspect of evaluation. This results in the warmth dimension being more "cognitively accessible, more sought by perceivers, more predictive and heavily weighted in evaluative judgements" (Fiske et al., 2007, p. 78). It is thus believed to be judged prior to assessing another's ability to enact the intentions, which is grasped by the competence dimension. Warmth is captured

by traits like nice, warm and kind, whereas competence is captured by traits such as capable, competent and efficient (Fiske et al., 2002).

Both warmth and competence are universal and reliable dimensions of social judgements across stimuli, cultures and time (Fiske et al., 2007). In fact, they account for roughly 80% of the variance in perceptions of social behaviours (Fiske et al., 2007). A large body of research on social cognition points in the same direction regarding the dimensions – namely, warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002) have also been characterised as communion and agency (Abele, 2003; Bakan, 1966; Wojciszke & Abele, 2008), morality and competence (Wojciszke, 2005), or as intentions and ability (Kervyn et al., 2012b), depending on the research context and target entity.

It is important to bear in mind that stereotype content typically reflects the separate dimensions of (dis)like and (dis)respect, implying mixed stereotype content (Fiske et al., 2002). The latter therefore moves away from the notion that antipathy regularly occurs as a dominant outcome of stereotypes. In summary, the warmth and competence dimensions of stereotypes are a result of interpersonal and intergroup interactions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

2.2.1 The BIAS map

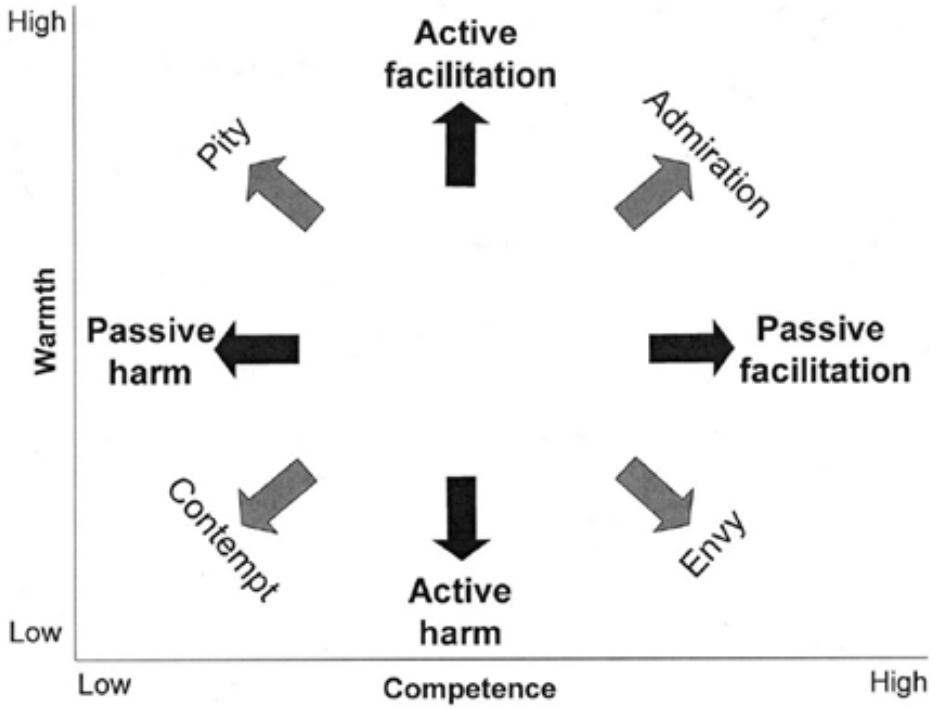
Mixed stereotype content includes two combinations of the warmth and competence dimensions, meaning that evaluations of high competence (warmth) are accompanied by evaluations of low warmth (competence), producing an ambivalent dynamic (Fiske et al., 2002). One option is that people perceive out-groups as competent, but not warm, which leads to envious stereotypes. For example, lawyers are typically viewed as being very competent, but quite cold (Fiske et al., 2002). The other option portraying the mixed stereotype content is when people perceive out-groups as incompetent, yet warm, which creates paternalistic stereotypes. Elderly people are often stereotyped along these lines. Stereotype content can also lead to univalent positive or negative stereotyped clusters where, in the case of positive and high ratings in the warmth dimension, are also accompanied by high ratings for the competence dimension, whereas it

is the other way around for the univalent negative cluster where both the warmth and competence dimensions are given low ratings.

The positively rated cluster of both warmth and competence (e.g. middle-class people) serves as a reference group for individuals who also see people belonging to this group as good candidates for their self-identification and societal comparison (Fiske et al., 2002). The univalent cluster of negative warmth and competence represents disliked and disrespected social groups that are often seen as being parasitic on society (e.g. welfare recipients; Fiske et al., 2002).

The four low vs. high combinations of warmth and competence described above invoke people's emotional reactions. Researchers thus propose the Behaviours from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes framework, also known as the BIAS map (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). The four different combinations of warmth and competence evoke four distinct emotions; namely, admiration/pride (elicited by high warmth and high competence evaluations), pity (elicited by high warmth and low competence evaluations), envy (elicited by low warmth/cold and high competence evaluations) and contempt/disgust (elicited by low warmth/cold and low competence evaluations). Moreover, Cuddy et al. (2007) link the elicited emotions to behavioural response in the form of active–passive and facilitation–harm concern also visualised in Figure 1. Admiration is linked to active and passive facilitation through people's help and cooperation; contempt is related to active and passive harm and expressed in the form of harassment and neglection; pity refers to active facilitation and passive harm through the form of help and neglection, whereas envy is related to passive facilitation and active harm and expressed via cooperation and harassment (Cuddy et al., 2007, 2008). In this way, the cognition–emotion–behaviour sequence is established.

Figure 1: The BIAS map



Source: Cuddy et al., 2007

2.3 THE BRANDS AS INTENTIONAL AGENTS FRAMEWORK

Based on the premise of anthropomorphism (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007) as well as relating to brands as if they represent a real being (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007; Fournier, 1998), researchers applied the well-known SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) to the branding context. The similarities between social perception and brand perception gave rise to the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn et al., 2012b). The BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b) is theoretically consistent with the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), although a modification is imposed due to brand perception. The BIAF (in contrast to the SCM) places brand perception (instead of social perception) in the centre of interest and adapts the two SCM dimensions to

fit the branding context. Thus, in the BIAF the warmth dimensions from the SCM correspond to a brand's intentions, whereas the competence dimension stands for a brand's ability (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Therefore, just as people stereotype social groups, they do so with brands as well, where researchers suggest that consumer–brand interactions closely imitate those that people establish with other people and can be grasped within the two similar dimensions of warmth/intentions and competence/ability.

The primary modification in the BIAF model is made due to the aspect of a brand's intentionality (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Brands are perceived to purposefully differ in their intentions (good vs. bad) and in their ability (high vs. low) towards people. On one hand, brands can portray "benevolent and cooperative or malevolent and exploitative intentions (warmth dimension) and, on the other hand, may either possess or lack the ability to enact these intentions (competence dimension)" (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019, p. 678).

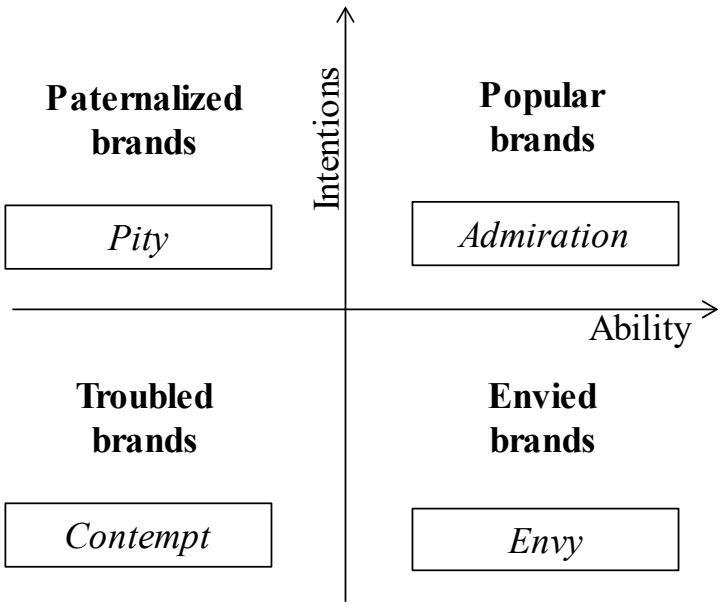
2.3.1 The BIAF dimensions, clusters and emotions

Consistent with social groups in the SCM, in the BIAF the brands also differ in their intentions and ability, thereby creating four different clusters. Namely, brands which are: (1) well-intentioned and able; (2) ill-intentioned and unable; (3) ill-intentioned and able; and (4) well-intentioned and unable. Brands' good- or ill-intentionality may be expressed in several ways. For example, child labour, which is associated with some of the biggest brands in the clothing industry, is a clear example of ill intentions in which brands engage. On the other hand, care for the environment as expressed in green packaging and recyclable materials can be perceived to be good intentions expressed by brands. Ability can also stretch between the poles of ability and inability; some brands portray their long-term presence in the marketplace (e.g. Heineken EST. 1873), which rigorously suggests a high level of ability, whereas other brands lack the latter because a long tradition implies survival based on consistently delivering quality.

Moreover, consistent with the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), these four clusters that combine brands' good/ill intentions and in/ability elicit four distinct emotions in

the BIAF like they do in the SCM Thus, it is the combination of good intentions and ability that elicits admiration; of good intentions and inability that causes pity; of ill-intentions and ability which triggers envy, whereas a combination of ill-intentions and inability prompts contempt. Prior literature suggests four clusters based on four emotions; admiration is related to popular brands (e.g. Johnson & Johnson, Hershey's), pity to paternalised brands (e.g. public transport, Veteran's Hospital), envy to envied brands (Mercedes, Rolex) and contempt to troubled brands (AIG, BP) (Kervyn et al., 2012b). These four clusters along with the allocating dimensions are presented in Figure 2. Following the cognition–emotion–behaviour sequence, the brand emotions which are elicited also predict brand-related behaviour; more specifically, purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Kervyn et al., 2012b).

Figure 2: Dimensions, clusters and emotions of the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework



Source: Keryn et al., 2012

3 EMPIRICAL ESTIMATION

Chapter 3 contains the empirical section of this manuscript after the need to investigate the unaddressed research gaps is presented and the model is conceptualised.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A wide body of literature on country stereotypes as well as growing literature on brand stereotypes (see Table 3 for an overview) investigates the influence country stereotypes and brand stereotypes have in international marketing. Research shows that country stereotypes impact consumers' perceptions of brands that come from these countries, shape their brand preferences, purchase intentions and actual ownership of brands stemming from these countries (e.g. Chattalas et al., 2008; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Halkias et al., 2016; Magnusson et al., 2018). Parallel to this, a different research stream places brand stereotypes in the centre of the investigation and shows they influence consumers' choices, brand-related emotions as well as consumer behaviour with respect to brands (e.g. Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Ivens et al., 2015; Kervyn et al., 2012b; Kolbl et al., 2019).

Yet it is surprising that the above-mentioned brand stereotypes have always been related to tangible products, thereby ignoring intangible entities like services or, of special interest in the current research, city brands. The latter refer to "amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers" (Buhalis, 2000, p. 97). Importantly, turning tourist destinations and cities into brands has been recognised as "the most powerful marketing weapon available to contemporary destination marketers due to increasing product parity, substitutability and competition" (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002, p. 335). Notably, the travel and tourism industry has become one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world – international tourism outpaced the global economy resulting in a 5% increase in international tourist arrivals in 2018, reaching the 1.4 billion mark and growing on the export earnings generated by tourism in the scope of USD 1.7 trillion (International Tourism

Highlights, 2019). This growth means that tourism destination management must be approached effectively with the goal of minimising any adverse effect on tourism (International Tourism Highlights, 2019). In addition, country cues are the most visible cues in tourism marketing (Martínez & Alvarez, 2010), making it reasonable to expect that consumers also form stereotypes about, not only countries, but also city brands, which have been overlooked by the research thus far.

The current absence of research on city-brand stereotypes is problematic for several reasons. First, it is unclear whether the stereotyping theory can also be applied to cities as brands and, second, whether the stereotype content can be transferred from country stereotypes to city brands. Both points are essential for understanding how to best manage tourist destinations and/or cities as brands (Buhalis, 2000; Kotler, 2001).

Brand-related (country- and brand) stereotypes are often investigated through the lens of the same conceptual model (i.e. the SCM and the BIAF; Fiske et al., 2002; Kervyn et al., 2012b), although their (common) impact on relevant outcomes, as well as their transfer, has yet to be investigated. Thus, the mechanisms by which city brands' stereotypical perceptions can be triggered by the stereotypes people hold about a certain country, which a city brand belongs to, still need to be revealed. Third, it is unclear how city-brand stereotypes influence outcome variables, such as consumer–city-brand identification, related to city brands and, through them, to purchase intentions and the ownership of products associated with the city brand itself. It is important to assess the link from consumers' stereotypical perceptions of city brands to consumers' actual attitude and behaviour consistently with previous research by demonstrating the cognition–attitude–behaviour sequence (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Kervyn et al., 2012b; Kolbl et al., 2019).

Drawing on the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) and the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b) as common conceptual denominators, as well as the city-branding literature (e.g. Lucarelli & Berg, 2011), this study: (1) applies the stereotyping theory to city brands (Fiske et al., 2002); (2) investigates the transfer of stereotype content between a

country and a city brand based on the irradiation theory (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011); and (3) links the content of city-brand stereotypes to consumer–city-brand identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) and thereby to actual ownership of products related to/coming from the city brand.

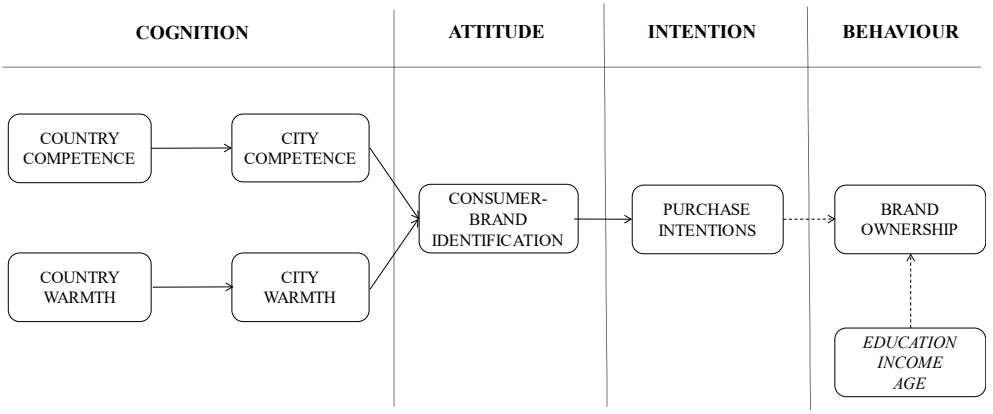
This study intends to make three contributions. First, this study applies the stereotyping theory to city branding and, in doing so, adds to the body of literature on (brand) stereotyping. Second, the present study investigates the transfer between two related types of stereotypes, namely country stereotypes and city-brand stereotypes, thus contributing to the identification and assessment of the 'spillover effects' between different types of related stereotypes. Third, the study identifies and empirically investigates the relevant outcome variables of city-brand stereotypes and therefore assists in the identification of variables which produce the cognition–attitude–actual behaviour sequence.

The rest of the empirical Chapter 3 is structured as follows. First, I introduce the notion of country stereotypes in the branding context, apply the stereotyping theory to the city-branding context and introduce the construct of consumer–brand identification with a city brand. Next, I derive theoretical expectations regarding the transfer between the two types of stereotypes and link stereotypical city-brand stereotype perceptions to consumer–city-brand identification and, through that, to both purchase intentions and actual ownership of products related to the city. I then describe the method used in the study and provide details of the sample and data description. Subsequently, I present the results of the empirical study and elaborate on them. I conclude with a discussion that sets out theoretically and managerially relevant implications based on the empirical investigation, discuss the limitations of this study and reveal future research directions.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The conceptual model of this study is illustrated in Figure 3 and draws from the stereotyping literature and applies the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002)/BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b) from social psychology and branding to city branding, thereby placing it in the tourism branding context. I hypothesise that the content of country stereotypes as reflected in warmth and competence will influence the content of city-brand stereotypes, expecting a positive transfer within both the warmth and competence dimensions. Next, I hypothesise that the content of a city-brand stereotype will exert a positive influence on consumer–city-brand identification with the selected city brand which, in turn, impacts the actual ownership of products/brands coming from the selected city. A positive relationship between consumer–brand identification and purchase intentions (and then further to brand ownership) is consistent with prior research (e.g. Kolbl et al., 2019; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013) and I therefore do not formally hypothesise it but still incorporate it in the conceptual model.

Figure 3: Conceptual model



3.2.1 Country stereotypes from a branding perspective

Research on country of origin refers to "the country which a consumer associates a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced" (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006, p. 29) and has demonstrated the important role country-of-origin cues play in (international) marketing for a long time. Prior research shows that country of origin cues add value to brands, lower the risk associated with the purchase of a brand, and speak to a brand's quality (Halkias et al., 2016; Maheswaran & Chen, 2009; Wilcox, 2015). In fact, the country-of-origin effect is related to the idea that people associate different countries and the people who come from these countries with different traits and attributes, which leads them to see products from these countries in a similar, transferable way (Maheswaran, 1994). Several researchers suggest that the stereotyping literature, originating in social psychology, is a promising conceptual framework for investigating country-of-origin effects (Halkias et al., 2016; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Maheswaran, 1994).

Stereotypes are defined as "a socially shared set of beliefs about traits that are characteristic of members of a social category" (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, p. 14) and when placed in a country context these beliefs about traits refer to people living in a certain country (Chattalas et al., 2008; Maheswaran, 1994). Research suggests that the stereotypical characteristics, attributes and/or traits assigned to the stereotyped group (i.e. country) will uniformly apply to each individual element of that stereotyped group (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). In this way, if the French are stereotyped as intelligent, yet rude, we will tend to stereotype each individual French person along these lines: as intelligent, yet rude – the general will be applied to an individual element.

Country stereotypes play a vital role as a basis for evaluating products and brands (Samiee, 1994) that come from or are associated with the country of origin. These associations happen in the following way: people categorise their judgements about countries and the people coming from these countries into mental schemas, which serve as a platform for influencing brand evaluations (Magnusson et al., 2018). The transfer between country stereotypes and

favourable brand evaluations occurs as follows: it is more favourable when consumers' country stereotypes are actually congruent with the positioning of a brand which comes from this country (Magnusson et al., 2018). Other studies also show that the more positive the dispositions consumers hold towards a country, the more positively they will evaluate products and brands emanating from this country, leading to a higher likelihood of purchasing such brands stemming from this country (Verlegh, Steenkamp, & Meulenberg, 2005).

Consumers' stereotypical judgements about countries can be allocated along the warmth and competence dimensions in the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002). A country's warmth dimension speaks about consumers' perceptions of a country and the good intentions, kindness and cooperativeness of its people, whereas the competence dimension reflects capability, efficiency and efficacy (Barbarossa, De Pelsmacker, Moons, & Marcati, 2016; Halkias et al., 2016). As suggested by previous research, it is companies and brands stemming "from countries whose industrial prowess we respect [a trait clearly akin to competence] and whose people we like and admire [a trait clearly akin to warmth]" (Barbarossa et al., 2016; as cited in Heslop & Papadopoulos, 1993, p. 67) that enjoy the highest evaluations for both a country's warmth and competence dimensions.

Both country stereotype dimensions play an important role in consumer-related outcomes. For example, a country's warmth and competence add to consumers admiration for the country of origin, leading to a greater willingness to buy products from that country (Maher & Carter, 2011). Interestingly, country warmth is more strongly related to expectations of products' hedonic properties, while country competence is more strongly associated with utilitarian expectations of products (Chattalas & Takada, 2013). In the event of product failures, it is the country warmth (not competence) dimension that is better at predicting consumers' purchase intentions (Xu et al., 2013). In terms of country-related affect, it is the competence country-related affect that is consistently transferred to consumers' product evaluations, whereas the warmth country-related affect does so by activating country product associations – the latter then, depending on their favourability, influence consumers' product evaluations (Chen et al., 2014). Country competence (but not warmth) is also positively and significantly related to brand attitude (Halkias et al., 2016).

3.2.2 City branding

Cities take their "form, content and meaning in people's minds. People 'meet' and 'understand' cities through accepting their own perceptions and processing these perceptions into their own understandable image of the city" (Kavaratzis, 2004, p. 10). Still, interactions with cities can occur either through people's direct dealings and experience or indirectly through media (Holloway & Hubbard, 2014). City branding refers to "the purposeful symbolic embodiment of all information connected to a city in order to create associations and expectations around it" (Holloway & Hubbard, 2014, p. 21; as cited in Berg, 2009).

The latest City Brand Barometer (City Brand Barometer, 2019) identifies "the cities with the strongest business brands, earning the best score overall when both their assets and buss were taken into account". The top three city brands are New York City, London and Singapore, whereas Vienna, which is in the spotlight of this research, enjoys 16th place with the goal of entering the top 10 in the next few years. As research shows, people are indeed able to easily recall certain famous city-brand slogans, logos or overall positioning, like "I amsterdam" for the city of Amsterdam, or I ♥ NY, for New York City (Kavaratzis, 2004). I ♥ NY became one of the most iconic logos and brands, turning a city that was on the brink in 1976 into the nation's most popular and successful tourism branding campaign. The campaign enjoyed great success not only in financial terms (tripling the state's visitor spending revenue from USD 500 million in 1976 to USD 1.6 billion in 1977), but in terms of the inhabitants' (and tourists') commitment to the city itself (The New York Times, 1987).

3.2.3 City-brand stereotypes

The way people relate to brands is quite reminiscent of the way they relate to other people (Fournier, 2009). Branding refers to the "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers" (AMA, 2019). Cities as brands/city brands (see Holloway & Hubbard, 2014 for a detailed review of the topic) are one type of brand that, according to the brand

perception literature, people correspond to, care about its features, benefits and, crucially, relate to (Fournier, 2009; Kervyn et al., 2012b). The stereotyping process "applies to every stimulus object that is ascribed to the stereotypical category" (Halkias et al., 2016, p. 3624), and in a marketing context has been applied to countries (e.g. Cuddy et al., 2009; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017), products from certain countries (e.g. Chattalas & Takada, 2013), organisations (e.g. Aaker et al., 2010) and brands (e.g. Kervyn et al., 2012b; Kolbl et al., 2019). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the social perception of brands also includes city brands.

City brands are to be stereotyped along two dimensions (warmth and competence) based on the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b), which is a social perception model of brands as intentional agents. The BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b) proposes that the original dimensions of warmth and competence from the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) should be replaced by intentions and ability while applying the model from a social to a brand perception. This implies the focus is placed on a corporate entity (i.e. in this case a city) as having its own good/bad intentions and in/ability to manifest these intentions with respect to people. For example, cities can be rated as well-intentioned if revealing a positive interest in supporting the socio-cultural environment of their communities or as ill-intentioned if they do not take sufficient care regarding pollution/the natural environment in the cities; high in ability if they manage to run an efficient and reliable transportation system, and low in ability if they are unable to provide an appropriate level of schooling and education.

Consistent with the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b), city brands vary in their intentions and ability, leading to four clusters: positive intentions, high ability; positive intentions, low ability; negative intentions, high ability; negative intentions, low ability; that elicit four different emotional responses of: admiration; pity; envy; contempt, respectively (Kervyn et al., 2012b).

3.2.4 The country to city-brand stereotype transfer

Stereotyping research indicates that stereotypical beliefs can be transferred from one social entity to another. This often happens in a marketing context where, for example, stereotypical assessments of brands can transfer to the buyers/users of these brands. Antonetti and Maklan (2016, p. 798) suggest that "if Mercedes is perceived as a brand high in competence but relatively low in warmth", there will be a transfer of such stereotypes to those who use the brand, who will therefore become stereotyped as high in competence, but relatively low in warmth. Similarly, the buyers/users of responsible brands that portray a high level of warmth are perceived as also being high in warmth themselves (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016).

A transfer between different entities or social groups is common. Other examples from the marketing field include: a brand's personality and its traits are often applied to its users' personality (Fennis & Pruyn, 2007); countries associated with animosity spill over onto a brand's perception, then suffering from prejudice and discrimination (Russell & Russell, 2010); attitudes to product categories transfer to individual brand attitudes (Posavac, Sanbonmatsu, Seo, & Iacobucci, 2014), and consumers' image of a country transfers to their perceptions of a brand's image (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011).

The process of the transfer of an image between entities can be explained with help of the irradiation perspective, which refers to "a subjective interlinkage of perceptions whereby the evaluation of a specific property transfers to the evaluation of another property and influences the latter" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011; as cited in Florack, Scarabis, & Primosch, 2007, p. 347). The irradiation perspective has its roots in "Gestalt psychology" and has mainly been applied to studies in German-speaking literature (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011). The irradiation approach states that "a consumer's image of a particular country shapes his/her perceptions of the image of a brand from the country" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011, p. 510; as cited in Lebrenz, 1996). The latter is supported by further research on the topic, where researchers demonstrate that

"brand image evaluations already encapsulate consumers' country-of-origin image perceptions" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011, p. 508).

In practical terms, this implies that the image one holds about a country – for instance, Germany, this image of Germany will 'radiate' out towards brand image evaluations such that consumers would develop the image of a technologically advanced brand in their minds. As the authors aptly put it, 'reverse logic' can also be applied – here, the image of a brand that sticks in the consumer's mind could expand to their image of the country that the brand comes from (particularly if the consumer has no prior experience with the country) (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011).

Drawing parallels from country/brand image with stereotyping research and according to the irradiation approach, country stereotypes will transfer or radiate to city-brand stereotypes. Thus, the way consumers stereotype a country itself (e.g. Austria) will be transferred to the way consumers stereotype a city in that country (e.g. Vienna). An important question that arises here is: Could reverse logic also apply to stereotyping such that city-brand stereotypes are transferred to country stereotypes? A primary tenet of the stereotyping process is that it applies from the general to the specific/individual (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998; Fiske et al., 2002). More precisely, by definition, stereotypes are sets of oversimplified and generalised beliefs regarding the characteristics of social categories, which are largely shared by a given society/population. Further, the content of a stereotype applies to each individual member within the stereotyped category (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). This makes it more likely to expect that the country stereotypes held by people will influence or be transferred to city-brand stereotypes.

The content of country and brand stereotypes is reflected in two dimensions: warmth (i.e. intentions to match brand perception) and competence (i.e. ability to match brand perceptions) (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Fiske et al., 2002; Kervyn et al., 2012b). Country warmth reflects a country's intentions towards people and is grasped by items like how good-natured or friendly it is perceived to be by people, while country competence deals with how people see a country's capability and efficiency (Cuddy et al., 2008). Importantly, both dimensions are

positively valenced, triggering more favourable actions regarding individuals in the stereotyped category (Cuddy et al., 2007; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017). Thus, the optimal combination for brands coming from a stereotyped country is one where both the warmth and competence dimensions are scored highly (C. Y. Chen et al., 2014; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Maher & Carter, 2011).

The same applies to city brands – brand warmth mirrors a brand's intentions towards consumers and is captured by notions of friendliness and good-nature, whereas brand competence portrays consumers' perceptions of a brand's ability and reflects consumers' assessments of the brand's capability and efficiency (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Brands that manage to be seen as high in their perceived intentions (i.e. warmth) as well as their perceived ability (i.e. competence) are defined as "popular brands" (e.g. Hershey's, Coca-Cola), which elicit consumers' admiration (Kervyn et al., 2012b). Based on the irradiation perspective, I hypothesise the following:

H1: Consumers' stereotypical assessments of a country's warmth will positively influence their stereotypical assessments of a city brand's warmth.

H2: Consumers' stereotypical assessments of a country's competence will positively influence their stereotypical assessments of a city brand's competence.

3.2.5 City-brand stereotypes as predictors of consumer–city-brand identification

Consumer–brand identification is defined as the "consumer's perceived state of oneness with a brand" (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012, p. 407). The construct captures a consumer's cognitive of evaluation of their perceived oneness with a certain brand and draws from social identity theory (Tajfel, 2010). Social identity theory suggests that individuals form their self-identity from their positively biased in-group. The in-group's identity is transferred to its members, who behave and act in line with the group's intentions (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

The notion of "we are what we have and possess" (Tuan, 1980, p. 472) has given rise to understanding of yet another role that brands play in consumers' lives. The extended self of a consumer therefore consists of the consumer him/herself, but also of possessions which belong to, or are displayed as, his/hers (Belk, 1988). The derived self-image has two components, "an individual component (which refers to the knowledge that the individual has of his social group(s) membership), as well as a social component (which includes the emotional attachment to that particular group membership)" (Kolbl et al., 2019, p. 616). In a consumption context, brands often represent a significant other that people seek to identify with (Fournier, 1998; Kolbl et al., 2019). Consumers are also attracted to brands they can relate to or act as extensions of their social identity (Forehand, Deshpandé, & Reed, 2002; Reed, Forehand, Puntoni, & Warlop, 2012). Brands represent a common ground for people who would like to form their new social self, present themselves to others, and satisfy their self-aspirational goals (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). In the city-brand context, the consumer–city-brand identification refers to the perceived state of oneness between a person and a city (brand).

Building on signalling theory (Kirmani & Rao, 2000; Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013), which postulates that consumers can rely on a brand's communicated cues to infer about the brand's quality, I conceptualise a city brand's warmth and competence as holding the potential to communicate cues that are essential in consumers' evaluation of consumer–city-brand identification. As Kolbl et al. (2019, p. 616) describe well, "brands that are perceived as credible and prestigious help consumers to increase their confidence regarding making the right purchasing decision". Therefore, a pronounced competence dimension will signal to consumers that the competent city brand is a good candidate for consumer–city-brand identification. At the same time, brands which are well-intentioned towards other people or for which consumers evoke perceptions of warmth, signalling consumers' self-worth (Baek, Kim, & Yu, 2010) and benevolent intentions, which also add to consumer–brand identification.

Prior research suggests that brands stereotyped as warm (yet surprisingly, not competent) make the best candidates for consumer–brand identification (Kolbl et al., 2019). Based on the premise that warm brands carry abstract and higher-order meanings related to values and ethics, it is reasonable to expect

that city brands scoring highly on the warmth dimension will be worthy of consumer–city-brand identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Yet, at the same time status, which is inherently related to the competence dimension, is frequently expressed via social signalling (Sichtmann et al., 2019). In the context of city brands, the competence dimension is likely to be particularly important due to the ability which cities as brands manage to communicate and actually implement in their strategies. I therefore hypothesise that:

H3: City-brand warmth will have a positive influence on consumer–city-brand identification.

H4: City-brand competence will have a positive influence on consumer–city-brand identification.

When placed in a destination context, identification with the brand of a city will invoke hospitable attitudes and behaviours expressed through residents' eagerness to share local knowledge and experience with visitors, friendliness to visitors and helpfulness to visitors (Choo, Park, & Petrick, 2011). Research (e.g. Kolbl et al., 2019; Tuškej et al., 2013) shows that consumer–brand identification positively influences purchase intentions and brand ownership. I therefore add these links to the conceptual model. Given that prior research has already established a significant and positive influence among them, I empirically test, but do not formally hypothesise, the links between consumer–city (brand) identification and purchase intentions, as well as the link from purchase intentions to brand ownership.

3.3 METHOD

Austria was chosen as the country to be researched and was selected for reasons of generalisability because it is a member of the European Union. It also represents one of the economically advanced countries according to World Bank Indicators (2020), with GDP per capita (PPP in USD) of 50,250 in 2018. Importantly, for the tenth time in a row the capital city Vienna has been chosen as the most liveable city on the planet, outranking 231 other cities in the world (Mercer, 2020). The survey "compares the political, social and economic climate, medical care, education, and infrastructure conditions such as the well-developed public transportation network, power and water supply" (Mercer, 2020). Thus, Austria and Vienna in particular provided a fruitful stimulus for respondents who were Austrian or had been living in Austria for over seven years and held Austrian citizenship.

The questionnaire was initially developed in English, but was later translated into German with the help of native speakers. Following good questionnaire translation practice, equivalence in meaning was ensured by taking the five stages into account (i.e. translation, review, adjudication, pretesting and documentation; Harkness, 2003). In so doing, the comparability of the research instrument from one linguistic context to another was ensured. Once translated, the questionnaire was pretested (N = 20) in order to make sure it was understandable. After two minor corrections to the sentence structure, the finalised version was created. The data were collected personally, with the help of trained assistants, by recruiting participants in shopping malls and other frequently visited areas.

The between-subjects study recruited 456 participants. All details of the sample characteristics are presented in Table 4. The data were collected based on a quota sampling rule in terms of age and gender. All constructs in the study were measured using scales established in previous research: country and city-brand stereotypes were adapted from the original scale of Fiske et al. (2002) and were consistent with earlier research on country and brand stereotyping (e.g. Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Kolbl et al., 2019). Consumer–city-brand identification was captured with the scale of Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012),

purchase intentions with the scale of Putrevu and Lord (1994), whereas brand ownership with a single item on a Likert scale. I also controlled for education, income and age (see Figure 3: The Conceptual Model).

Table 4: Sample characteristics

		%	N
Gender	Male	47.8	218
	Female	52.2	238
Area of residence	City	77.4	353
	Rural area	22.6	103
Education	Primary school	4.0	18
	Apprenticeship school	9.6	44
	High school	32.0	146
	University or more	54.4	248
Monthly income (in €)	Below 800	22.8	104
	800–1499	26.1	119
	1500–2500	30.0	137
	Above 2500	21.1	96
Age	Mean age (Standard deviation)	34.6 (14.1)	

Prior to completing the questionnaire, the participants were ensured of both the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. In addition, they were told there were no wrong or right answers and that the study was only seeking to investigate their perceptions. Importantly, the order of questions regarding the two different types of stereotypes (i.e. country stereotypes, city-brand stereotypes) was randomised in order to control for potential order/priming effects.

To avoid potential common method bias, the study accounted for both procedural remedies as well as statistical control procedures. In so doing, as described above, the participants were informed that right or wrong answers did not exist and that their answers would be anonymous and confidential (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010). Moreover, as suggested by (Podsakoff et al., 2012), the constructs were measured with scales using different scale endpoints, as well as formats for measuring independent and dependent variables. Regarding (post hoc) statistical control procedures, a variation of the marker variable procedure was applied (Malhotra, Kim, & Patil, 2006). This involved using the second-lowest positive correlation between the indicators measuring the study constructs (excluding the control variables) as a proxy for CMB. The zero-order correlations were subsequently adjusted by partialling out this proxy, revealing that over 90% of the correlations remained significant after this adjustment. Therefore, the CMB does not appear to threaten the validity of the results.

3.4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

3.4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

The conceptual framework was tested using covariance-based structural equation modelling (SEM) in LISREL 8.8, following a two-step approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988); first, examination of the measurement model and, second, assessment of the structural model used to test the relationships hypothesised in H1 to H4.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) resulted in a good overall fit (χ^2 = 540.38, df = 237, RMSEA = 0.05; NNFI = 0.97; CFI = 0.98). Standardised item loadings across the constructs ranged from 0.69 to 0.93 and composite reliabilities from 0.85 for country competence to 0.93 for consumer–city-brand identification (see Table 4). Moreover, average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.58 to 0.76 and all AVEs exceeded the corresponding squared inter-construct correlations (i.e. shared variances), thereby establishing discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (see Table 5).

Table 5: Measurement properties

Construct *(Source)*	**λ**	**CR**	**AVE**
Country Competence (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002)		0.85	0.58
Capable	0.74		
Efficient	0.76		
Competent	0.78		
Intelligent	0.65		
Country Warmth (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002		0.89	0.66
Warm	0.78		
Friendly	0.91		
Kind	0.91		
Good-natured	0.71		
City Competence (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002)		0.89	0.66
Capable	0.93		
Efficient	0.83		
Competent	0.92		
Intelligent	0.81		
City Warmth (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002)		0.90	0.70
Warm	0.90		
Friendly	0.91		
Kind	0.93		
Good-natured	0.85		
Consumer–City-brand Identification (adapted from Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012)		0.93	0.73
I feel a strong sense of belonging to [VIENNA].	0.89		
I identify strongly with [VIENNA].	0.91		
[VIENNA] embodies what I believe in.	0.78		
[VIENNA] is like a part of me.	0.86		
I feel a strong sense of belonging to [VIENNA].	0.82		

Construct *(Source)*	**λ**	**CR**	**AVE**
Purchase Intentions (Putrevu & Lord, 1994)		0.90	0.76
It is very likely that I will buy [PRODUCTS FROM VIENNA] in the future.	0.88		
I will purchase [PRODUCTS FROM VIENNA] the next time I need such a product.	0.69		
I will definitely try [PRODUCTS FROM VIENNA] in the future.	0.83		
Model fit			
χ^2	540.38		
Df	237		
RMSEA	0.05		
NNFI	0.97		
CFI	0.98		

Table 6: Descriptive statistics and discriminant validity

#	Construct	Loadings	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Country Competence	0.65–0.78	**0.76**					
2	Country Warmth	0.71–0.91	0.40**	**0.81**				
3	City Competence	0.81–0.93	0.39**	0.19**	**0.81**			
4	City Warmth	0.85–0.93	0.21**	0.39**	0.34**	**0.84**		
5	CCBI	0.78–0.91	0.06	0.01	0.25**	0.13**	**0.85**	
6	Purchase Intentions	0.69–0.88	0.11*	0.04	0.12*	0.15**	0.43**	**0.87**

Notes: CCBI: Consumer–City-brand Identification. Squared root AVEs are shown on the diagonals in bold. Correlations are shown below the diagonal. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed

3.4.2 Main effects

The second step was to estimate the structural model. The model revealed a good overall fit (χ^2 = 669.86; df = 308; RMSEA = 0.05; NNFI = 0.97; CFI = 0.97). The relevant parameter estimates are summarised in Table 6.

Table 7: Structural model estimation results

Estimated paths	**β (t-value)**	**R^2**	**Hyp. test**
Hypothesis test			
(H1) Country Warmth → City Warmth	0.42 (8.68)	0.17	✓
(H2) Country Competence → City Competence	0.42 (8.07)	0.17	✓
(H3) City Warmth → CCBI	0.04 (0.74)	0.06	n.s.
(H4) City Competence → CCBI	0.23 (4.45)		✓
CCBI → Purchase Intentions	0.49 (10.01)	0.24	
Purchase Intentions → Brand Ownership	0.32 (6.59)	0.11	
Control variables			
Education → Brand Ownership	0.02 (0.44)		
Income → Brand Ownership	0.01 (0.27)		
Age → Brand Ownership	-0.02 (-0.40)		
Model fit	χ^2=669.86, df=308, RMSEA=0.05, NNFI=0.97; CFI=0.97		

Notes: β = standardised coefficient; N = 456; Hyp. test = Hypothesis test; ✓ = hypothesised effect confirmed; n.s. = hypothesised effect not significant

As predicted by H1, country warmth is positively and significant related to city-brand warmth ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$), thus supporting H1. The same pattern is observed in terms of H2; country competence is positively and significantly related to city-brand competence ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$), therefore supporting H2.

Turning attention now to the effect of city-brand stereotypes on consumer–city-brand identification, the empirical results show that city-brand competence ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < .001$), but interestingly not city-brand warmth ($\beta = 0.04$, n.s.), positively and significantly influences consumer–city-brand identification. Thus, H3 is not supported, whereas H4 is. This finding that it is the competence dimension which positively influences consumer–city-brand identification is inconsistent with previous findings. The latter show that brand warmth positively and significantly influences consumer–brand identification (Kolbl et al., 2019; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Yet, the reason for the inconsistency may relate to a different stereotyping target (*tangible brands* in the studies of Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) and Kolbl et al. (2019) versus *city brands* in the current study), which will be considered in the discussion section.

The remaining paths from consumer–city-brand identification to purchase intentions and further to brand ownership are consistent with previous research. Namely, consumer–city-brand identification positively and significantly influences purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.49$, $p<0.001$), which, in turn positively influence brand ownership ($\beta = 0.32$, $p<0.001$). Regarding the control relationships, none of them significantly influences brand ownership (education: $\beta = 0.02$, n.s.; income: $\beta = 0.01$, n.s.; age: $\beta = -0.02$, n.s.). Overall, the model explains 24% of variance in purchase intentions which, according to Cohen (1988), refers to a large effect size, and 11% of variance in brand ownership, corresponding to a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Finally, the relative importance of the city-brand stereotype dimensions was also examined through their total effects on purchase intentions and brand ownership. While for city-brand warmth non-significant total effects on both purchase intentions (total effect = 0.019) and brand ownership (total effect = 0.006) are observed, the overall effect of city-brand competence on purchase

intentions is positive and significant (total effect = 0.114, $p < 0.001$) and the same applies to brand ownership (total effect = 0.037, $p < 0.001$).

3.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The investigation presented in this current study contributes to branding literature in marketing and city branding by: (1) applying the stereotyping model to cities as brands; (2) investigating the content transfer from country stereotypes to city-brand stereotypes; and (3) theoretically and empirically linking city-brand stereotypes to consumer–city-brand stereotypes. To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first to offer insights into whether and how stereotyping applies to city brands, and to investigate the potential for transfers between two related forms of stereotypes (country stereotypes and city-brand stereotypes). This study is also the first to explore the role of city-brand stereotypes on consumer–city-brand identification (and further to purchase intentions resulting in heightened brand ownership). Relevant theoretical and managerial implications emerge from the empirical findings and are explained in the following subchapters.

3.5.1 Theoretical implications

The first implication of this study's findings is that city brands can, despite hitherto not having been investigated in terms of stereotyping, comprise entities that may be seen as a good candidate for stereotyping processes. The content of city-brand stereotypes can indeed be described using the dimensions of warmth and competence, which is consistent with previous research on brand stereotypes (e.g. Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Kervyn et al., 2012b; Kolbl et al., 2019). Therefore, the theoretical underpinnings of the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), already successfully applied to brands through the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b), can also be extended to city brands, representing more complex types of brands. As suggested by research, unlike individual products, tourism destinations, including city brands, are more complex in their nature as they represent an amalgam of a country's, or in our example a city's, products and services (Buhalis, 2000; Chen & Tsai, 2007). The application therefore adds to tourism branding and especially city branding

by acknowledging that people indeed hold stereotypical beliefs about city brands, which hold further implications for consumer behaviour.

The second implication based on the findings draws on the suggested transfer between different types of stereotypes. As the research shows, there are two different types of stereotypes which are distinct (the proportion of shared variance in city-brand stereotypes' dimensions explained by country stereotypes' dimensions is small), yet positively related to each other. As revealed in the conceptual model, country and city-brand stereotypes relate to each other according to the irradiation perspective (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011). Notably, this implies that city-brand stereotypes are closely tied to country stereotypes, but represent their own entity, which can also be perceived autonomously. From a stereotyping perspective, this study enriches the current state of the literature by showing that indeed a transfer occurs between different types of stereotypes. This is consistent with the theory on stereotyping which suggests the stereotyping process applies from the general to the individual/specific (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). Thus, a country serves as a general entity, whereas a city itself (i.e. city brand) is an individual entity that belongs to the general entity (i.e. country). In this way and as supported by the irradiation perspective (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011), the way people stereotype countries is closely related to how they stereotype the cities to which these countries belong.

Moreover, the current research also reveals that the content of the general entity is reflected in the individuated entity – country warmth is positively and significantly linked to city-brand warmth, whereas country competence is positively and significantly related to city-brand competence. The irradiation perspective, which has hitherto been suggested for the transfer between country and brand image (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011), thus also applies to a stereotyping context in terms of the transfer of contents. High country warmth radiates to high city-brand warmth, whereas high country competence radiates to high city competence. The irradiation or congruity between related entities leads to consumers positively evaluating brand-related outcomes. For example, researchers find that "brands are evaluated more favourably when the brand is positioned in a manner that is congruent with the brand's home country personality stereotype than when brand positioning is incongruent" (Magnusson

et al., 2018, p. 318). Similarly, a related stream of research on country and brand image finds that the latter fully mediates the country image–purchase intentions relationship (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011).

The study's third implication refers to the role of city-brand stereotypes in outcome variables in a marketing context. Interestingly, the current findings show that city-brand competence (but, interestingly, not warmth) is a significant predictor of consumer–city-brand identification. Despite this initially quite surprising finding, given that it is not consistent with previous findings which reveal brand warmth to be a significant predictor of consumer–brand identification (Kolbl et al., 2019; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), the finding made in this study likely reflects the nature of the stereotyped object – the city brand itself. Thus, one explanation could be that tangible brands already depict a sufficient level of competence and are therefore better off stimulating consumers' perceived brand warmth when consumer–brand identification is desired. However, this finding is particularly interesting in managerial terms.

In the current study, one stimulus was city brand, representing a relatively intangible entity which, in order to become more graspable, must rely on aspects like intelligence, efficiency and/or capability to portray the city brand's competence. Research on country stereotypes indeed finds support for the competence dimension's diagnosticity (Chen et al., 2014; Halkias et al., 2016). Based on the notion that city-brand stereotypes are inherently related to the country in which they are based, it may well be that in the context of stereotyping country-related entities the competence (as opposed to the warmth) dimension plays a more diagnostic role in consumer-related outcomes.

Interestingly and aligned with earlier findings in support of the dominant diagnosticity of the competence dimension, the current study's findings also reveal direct positive effects of country competence on purchase intentions (and then on brand ownership). Thus, two different pathways show how country competence influences purchase intentions; one path refers to the direct link, implying that people's stereotypical assessment of country competence leads to high purchase intentions (and, further, to brand ownership). The second path

refers to the indirect positive effect of country competence on purchase intentions (and then to brand ownership) through city-brand competence. It should be stressed that this pattern can only be assigned to the competence dimension. Country warmth only influences purchase intentions through city-brand stereotype warmth, thus revealing the mediating role of city-brand stereotype warmth.

3.5.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this research provide several managerial implications. Perhaps the most important implication for management is the positive influence of city-brand competence on consumer–city-brand identification. Managers and countries that wish to develop or sustain an inviting city brand that people can identify with should portray the competence dimension of the city brand. One way of doing this could entail the advertising and positioning of the city which could, to name but a few, include competent slogans like that used by Baltimore: "A great place to grow."; employ capable spokespeople to promote their city brand; host events that portray competence: "Vienna 2020: Capital of Music"; introduce logos which reflect the competence dimension through the logo's shape, colour or typography. Given that consumer–brand identification with a city brand leads to higher purchase intentions and ownership of products from the city, it is important that brand managers understand the different pathways to achieving it. As suggested by this research, marketers are particularly encouraged to stimulate the competence dimension of both country as well as city-brand stereotypes. These two distinct, yet related competence dimensions, either individually or in a radiation manner, stimulate consumer–city-brand identification that leads to increased purchase intentions and, finally, heightened ownership of brands and products coming from, in the case of this research, Vienna.

Still, it is important to note that both country and city brands vary in levels of perceived warmth and competence (Cuddy et al., 2008; Kervyn et al., 2012b). Research shows that Austria, as perceived by other members of European nations, is high in competence and low in warmth, thus depicting an ambivalent stereotype (high in one dimension, low in the other) (Cuddy et al., 2009). The

current findings point in a similar direction; the competence dimension is rated significantly higher than the warmth dimension for both country as well as city-brand stereotypes. Findings of past research (Magnusson et al., 2018) reveal it is advisable that managers build on country and city-brand stereotypes in a congruent manner. This implies that if a country is stereotyped as competent, a city which wishes to brand itself as a city brand should build on that premise and thereby build on arousing the competence dimension related to the city-brand stereotype.

For example, Austria is perceived as a competent (i.e. scoring high for competence) and cold country (i.e. scoring low for warmth) and the city-brand Vienna is also consistently branded in this way. Its competent positioning is recognised ten times in a row as the best city in the world to live in (Mercer, 2020). Yet it is interesting that Mercer's rating mainly consists of factors that are naturally captured within the competence dimension (e.g. standards and availability of international schools, political stability, banking services). However, in terms of the warmth dimension, Vienna has been ranked as the unfriendliest city in the world for expats (Internations, 2017), who face language issues and social isolation. The findings of the current research therefore match the perceived stereotype about the city brand of Vienna. The question is whether marketers should always aim to play one dimension off against the other.

As suggested by previous research on stereotyping, this should not be the case. Vast research in a stereotyping context (irrespective of the stereotyped entity) reveals the combination of high warmth and high competence elicits a feeling of admiration (Fiske et al., 2002), which further positively impacts consumers' intentions and actual behaviour. Marketers should therefore strive to highlight both the warmth and the competence dimensions. However, earlier research suggests that warmth's primacy and quicker processing (Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2007) mean that "warmth judgments might be more malleable than competency judgements and consequently, may be easier to credential after a brand's competence has been established" (Aaker et al., 2012, p. 194). This implies that countries (and city brands) currently enjoying high levels of perceived competence will have an easier job promoting warmth than those which are currently lacking in the competence aspect. Still, countries (and city brands)

perceived as being high in warmth should further build on their friendliness, good intentions and kindness, particularly when positioning themselves as a tourism destination. The latter is often the case in developing countries that do not enjoy high levels of perceived competence, but due to high perceptions of warmth (e.g. friendly service, kind people, welcoming spirit) are still very desirable and successful tourism destinations (Martínez & Alvarez, 2010).

3.5.3 Limitations and future research

This study is to the best of the author's knowledge the first to: investigate the application of the stereotyping framework to city brands, assess the transfer of stereotype content from their related country stereotypes, and examine the role played by city-brand stereotypes in consumers' attitude, intentions and actual behaviour. Given that the present study is the first to appear in the field, its results are by no means conclusive and should be treated with care. Namely, the findings call for further validation and replication in different research contexts. Some ideas on how to further advance knowledge in the field are presented below.

The first limitation of the current research is that it empirically investigated a single country (i.e. Austria). Since Austria is a highly developed country and referred to as "one of the most prosperous and stable EU Member States" (Austria.org, 2020), the pronounced competence dimension is a reasonable (and expected) outcome. The same holds true for the city brand (i.e. Vienna), which by winning the title of best city in the world to live in for the 10th time, exhibits high levels of competence per se. Thus, replicating the presented conceptual model in a different setting, with a different country and city as stimuli would help develop knowledge on the topic. This is especially important due to the non-significant role of city-brand warmth on consumer–city-brand identification, which may, in the context of our study, be biased by the established competence dimensions in terms of the country as well as the city itself. A promising avenue for future replications would therefore encompass countries (and cities) with a pronounced warmth dimension, or countries (and cities) attracting ambivalent perceptions of the two. Spain, with its capital Madrid, or even the more artistically pronounced city of Barcelona, would make good examples in future research investigations.

The second limitation is the absence of boundary conditions. Due to the focus on: (1) applying the construct to a new entity (i.e. city brands); (2) the transfer of the content between country and city-brand stereotypes, and (3) the impact of city brands' stereotype on outcome variables, particularly on consumer–city-brand identification, the current research lacks an investigation of potential moderating variables. The latter might condition the relationship between country and city-brand stereotypes (e.g. participants' knowledge of or experience with the city brand) as well as the relationship between the content of city-brand stereotypes and consumer–city-brand identification (e.g. confidence in the accuracy/evaluation of city-brand stereotypes). Moreover, it would be interesting to explore how both country-level factors (e.g. developed vs. developing countries) and consumers' characteristics (e.g. personality traits) influence the relationship between the two stereotypes and/or their influence on outcome variables. In addition, future exploration of other outcome variables like intentions to visit the city or positive/negative online word of mouth, would help expand what is known about which dimension of a city-brand stereotypes marketers should stimulate so as to achieve the most effective positioning of their city brand (and country).

The third limitation refers to the uninvestigated role of emotions elicited by city-brand stereotypes. Earlier research on brand stereotyping identifies four distinct emotions that are elicited by four different warmth-competence combinations (Kervyn et al., 2012b). A combination of high warmth and high competence should elicit admiration, whereas a combination of low warmth and low competence should lead to contempt – however, there are also two ambivalent stereotypes which play an interesting role when it comes to emotions. Namely, a combination of high warmth and low competence elicits pity, whereas a combination of low warmth and high competence provokes envy (Cuddy et al., 2007). As prior research on country and destination image shows, it is important to investigate the cognitive, affective and symbolic country connotations to best understand consumer behaviour outcomes (Zeugner-Roth & Žabkar, 2015). Given that the current research relies heavily on the cognitive aspect, future research should, consistently with the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012b), also investigate how different combinations of warmth and competence elicit consumers' emotions.

In this way, researchers would be able to grasp both the importance of stereotypes as people's cognitive evaluations and their influence on brand-related emotions

Fourth, both country and city-brand stereotypes were assessed through self-report measures. The consistency of measurement ensured by using the same underlying conceptual denominator (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) enabled the two forms of stereotypes to be directly linked and compared. It is, however, important to note that stereotypes are sometimes difficult to admit to adhering to stereotypes, particularly when leaning towards the negative pole causes respondents to answer in a socially desirable way (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). On the other hand, it might also be the case that people simply cannot remember or are unaware of the stereotypes they abide by (Liu et al., 2005).

To overcome these barriers, researchers suggest relying on implicit measures (e.g. the Implicit Association Test) (Greenwald et al., 2009). Research also shows that "explicit judgments of country competence are better predictors of deliberate consumer choices, whereas implicit judgments of country warmth dominate spontaneous choice" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017, p. 1023). Therefore, future research should not only rely on one type (explicit vs. implicit) of measure, but engage in a more integrative approach to assessing stereotypes by measuring them both explicitly and implicitly.

CONCLUSION

All manner of stimuli in our everyday social interactions compete for our attention. The complex social world around us calls for simplicity and ease in information processing and response generation (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998). Social psychology draws from schema theory and, by focusing on stereotypes, offers a shortcut to the way people react to the social world surrounding them. People's natural psychological as well as cognitive need to simplify the reality they encounter, to meaningfully organise and categorise external stimuli with the help of knowledge stored in the mind gave birth to the stereotyping theory (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

This manuscript first motivates the reader by explaining why knowledge on stereotypes and brand stereotypes is essential in any researcher's toolbox. After drawing on schema theory, Chapter 1 elaborates on stereotypes. Given that stereotypes have long been seen as negatively loaded, I present the reasons for why such a viewpoint is incorrect and rests on weak grounds. As (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998, p. 629) aptly describe, "perhaps no other concept in social psychology has evoked so much ambivalence as that of stereotyping". After years of research, researchers now agree that stereotyping is vital in people's cognitive toolbox because it indeed helps people simplify the world around them (Fiske et al., 2002). In principle, stereotypes act as 'energy-saving devices' that free up valuable attentional resources to allow them to be used elsewhere, as required (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998; Macrae et al., 1994).

This manuscript builds on two important tenets: first, it recognises the human need to simplify and organise the social stimuli surrounding them. I therefore elaborate on schema and brand schema theory and, in particular, introduce stereotypes as well as brand stereotypes as comprising people's cognitive tools for accomplishing the desired simplification of external stimuli. Second, the human need to make the world around them human-like (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007) is also considered. Thus, people are prone to anthropomorphism and therefore assign human-like characteristics to non-human entities (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1995). This is particularly relevant for marketing research because

anthropomorphism is the basis on which the consumer–brand relationship is built upon. When consumers anthropomorphise brands, they also rely on a schematic approach – they first consider what they already know about the entity, which then guides their behaviour. In summary, these two tenets, namely the schema theory applied to stereotypes, and anthropomorphism applied to the way consumers perceive brands, importantly point in the same direction: they are both essential tools for understanding consumer behaviour. In this way, the manuscript bridges social psychology and marketing research, hence bringing an interdisciplinary approach to understanding today's consumers, their cognitive processing and the influence that stereotypes exert on consumers' attitude, intentions and actual behaviour.

The main interest of the present manuscript revolves around brand stereotypes, their application and transfer, when juxtaposed next to another type of brand-related stereotypes. The notion of anthropomorphism has led to understanding of the way that people nowadays perceive, relate to and interact with brands (Fournier, 1998). Brands have moved beyond their initial roles as quality signals (Erdem et al., 2006) and paved their way towards representing significant others that people form relationships with (Fournier, 1998, 2009). In the subchapters concerning brand stereotypes, I first introduce the process of anthropomorphism and explain how it refers to brands. I next provide a detailed description of brand personality, which is often mistakenly regarded as a construct interchangeable with brand stereotypes (Kervyn et al., 2012a). To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first systematic review of the two constructs' similarities and differences. The review will hopefully introduce some order in the current state of the literature, which is often missing clear boundaries between the two constructs.

In the marketing context, one also finds various brand-related stereotypes that are important in theory and for management. Research reveals at least two more brand-related types of stereotypes that shape consumer behaviour; namely, country stereotypes and brand buyer/user stereotypes. The country stereotypes are also vital building blocks of Chapter 3, which is why I initially introduce country stereotypes from a theoretical perspective at the start of the manuscript and then later provide an overview of country stereotypes from a

branding perspective. Whereas country stereotypes are widely researched (e.g. Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Halkias et al., 2016; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013), research on brand buyer/user stereotypes is in its infancy (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016), but offers a promising avenue for understanding how consumers stereotype typical brand buyers/users and the kind of influence the latter exert on consumers' brand-related attitude.

Despite the stronger focus on country and brand buyer/user stereotypes, this manuscript does not suggest these two types of stereotypes are the only or most important brand-related stereotypes. On the contrary, future studies should definitely consider additional types of brand-related stereotypes and their relationship in terms of occurrence and hierarchy. The latter offers a very challenging, albeit possibly rewarding path for future scientific investigations.

The main parts of Chapter 1 are subchapter 1.3 on the antecedents of brand stereotypes and subchapter 1.4 on the outcomes of brand stereotypes. By focusing on both brand stereotypes' antecedents and their outcomes, brand stereotypes are studied holistically. It is the holistic approach taken to the role played by brand stereotypes in marketing that makes this manuscript an important addition to the body of knowledge about brand stereotypes. Based on the prior literature (see Table 3 for an overview of studies on brand stereotypes), I divide the antecedents of brand stereotypes into two different research streams. The first stream concentrates on brand attributes, such as brand type (for-profit vs. non-profit; Aaker et al., 2010; Bernritter et al., 2016), brand personality (Ivens et al., 2015) and consumers' brand perceptions (perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness; Davvetas & Halkias, 2019; Kolbl et al., 2019). The second research stream relates to the antecedents of brand stereotypes and builds on person attributes like differences depending on demographic (income, age, education) factors (Bennett & Hill, 2012).

Earlier research also looks at the question of brand stereotypes' influence on outcome variables. Researchers' investigations show that brand stereotypes influence perceptual, relational and integrative outcomes in consumer behaviour. The common conceptual denominator (the SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) among all

the studies summarised in subchapter 1.4 on the outcomes of brand stereotypes (also see Table 3) allows for warmth and competence's diagnosticity for consumer behaviour in the marketing context to be assessed.

This manuscript summarises the diagnosticity of individual stereotypical dimensions: brand competence is particularly diagnostic of purchase intentions, brand loyalty and brand relationship quality (e.g. Aaker et al., 2012; Aaker et al., 2010; Valta, 2013). Yet it is noted that brand warmth is essential for driving consumer–brand identification (Kolbl et al., 2019; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) and stimulating brand intimacy and passion (Davvetas & Halkias, 2019). These findings indicate two distinct directions: brand competence (as opposed to brand warmth) tends to be especially relevant when a brand wishes to strengthen its functional bond with its consumers, whereas brand warmth is more strongly inclined (as opposed to brand competence) to empower the more intangible, relationship-building bonds between brands and their consumers.

Chapter 1 concludes by setting out the novel idea of the transfer occurring between brand-related stereotypes. Building on the irradiation theory (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011), an overview of different studies relying on the principle of irradiation is provided. The latter is based on the notion that the properties/attributes of one entity may be transferred (irradiated) to a related entity. It is the irradiation perspective that plays a valuable role in Chapter 3 where I explain how consumers' country stereotypes are transferred (radiated to) another stereotyped entity, namely, a city brand.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the measurement of stereotypes, which can either be explicit or implicit in nature. I first describe each of these two measures and give several examples of explicit and implicit measures. I then introduce the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), which serves as the most common conceptual denominator among the brand-stereotype studies. The SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) draws from evolutionary theory and concludes that the content of a stereotype can be grasped within two dimensions: warmth and competence. Given that warmth and competence (or as similarly labelled by other researchers) can explain over three-quarters of variance in perceptions of social behaviour, the SCM has emerged as

one of the most prominent and established models for capturing social behaviour (Fiske et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002), particularly for describing the content of stereotypes. In the next subchapter on the BIAS map, I elaborate on how different combinations of high/low warmth and high/low competence create four different clusters, with two being univalent (i.e. high warmth and high competence; low warmth and low competence) and the other two being ambivalent (high warmth and low competence; low warmth and high competence). The BIAS map links these four clusters to emotions elicited by various combinations of warmth and competence (Cuddy et al., 2007).

Chapter 2 concludes by applying the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) to the branding context. The Brands as Intentional Agents Framework adapts the model from fitting with people's perception of social groups (as in the SCM) to fitting with people's perception of brands (Kervyn et al., 2012a). The BIAF model's main characteristic lies in a brand's intentionality, which endows brands with intentions (adapted from the warmth dimension) and ability (adapted from the competence dimension) to elicit these intentions (Kervyn et al., 2012a). Like in the SCM, the BIAF includes four distinct clusters made up of the four combinations of positive/negative intentions, as well as high/low ability. These four clusters entail two clusters of univalent stereotypes and two clusters of ambivalent stereotypes. The last subchapter on the BIAF dimensions, clusters and emotions introduces emotional responses based on the four clusters. After thoroughly reviewing the measurement of stereotypes and the two most widely used measurement models for stereotypes in social psychology and marketing, I set the grounds for empirically estimating the conceptual model that is introduced in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 starts by introducing the research topic and presents gaps in the current literature. In the following subchapter on the conceptual model and hypotheses development, I first introduce country stereotypes from a branding perspective. Next, I present the essentials of city branding that act as a stepping off point to the introduction of city-brand stereotypes. The latter characterises a new application of stereotyping in the branding and marketing field. Stereotyping has hitherto always been related to a more concrete social group or brands, which are all very tangible entities. Yet, city brands are a more intangible entity in branding, while also accompanied by many tangible cues. This represents an interesting field for

investigation and this manuscript not only assess it conceptually, but empirically investigates the plausibility of such application. Another important contribution lies in the transfer between country to city-brand stereotypes in terms of their content. I show on the basis of the irradiation theory (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011) that it is indeed possible to predict the transfer of content from one type of stereotype to another. Before moving on to the subchapter on methodology, I also link city-brand stereotypes to consumer–city-brand identification and further to purchase intentions, as well as brand ownership.

The subchapter on method starts by explaining the selection of the stimuli. I therefore provide arguments for choosing Austria and Vienna as the study's stimuli and describe procedural details concerning the questionnaire. Since all the constructs in the study are positively correlated to each other and they are all drawn from the same source, I made sure that common method bias does not pose a threat to the results. This was done by introducing both procedural remedies and statistical control procedures.

The manuscript continues by describing the analysis and the results. The conceptual model, linking country stereotypes to city-brand stereotypes, where the latter are conceptualised as predictors of consumer–city-brand identification (which is further linked to purchase intentions and brand ownership), is tested in LISREL 8.8 following the two-step approach of Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The assessment of the measurement and structural model results in a good fit. The analysis of the main effects shows that three out of the four hypotheses are confirmed. In short, consumers' stereotypical assessments of a country's warmth (competence) positively influence their stereotypical assessments of a city brand's warmth (competence). Thus, H1 and H2 are both confirmed. Surprisingly, however, this study only finds support for a city brand's competence (but not warmth) positively influencing consumer–city-brand identification. Therefore, H3 is not supported, whereas H4 is.

By reflecting on the hypotheses, I also answer the three research questions posed in the introduction of the text. First, country and city-brand stereotypes are distinct, yet positively-related constructs. Second, the content of country

stereotypes may indeed be transferred or radiated to the content of city-brand stereotypes. Building on the irradiation theory, country stereotypes' warmth positively influences the warmth of stereotypes about a city brand, whereas country stereotypes' competence positively influences the competence of a city-brand's stereotype. The third question referred to how city-brand stereotypes relate to the outcome variables. The analysis shows that city-brand stereotype competence indeed positively influences consumer–city-brand identification, which further positively influences purchase intentions, whereas the latter positively influence brand ownership.

The final subchapter of this manuscript presents the study's most important theoretical and managerial implications, while also highlighting its limitations and potential directions for future research. Theoretically, with this manuscript and by conducting this research in particular I contribute to the body of literature on brand stereotyping by applying the stereotype construct to city brands. In so doing, I enrich what is currently known in the brand stereotyping domain by also including city brands, which constitute an entity less tangible than usual brands. Second, by revealing the mechanism of the transfer between country and city-brand stereotypes, I add to the stereotyping theory, especially to understanding how different brand-related stereotypes are associated with each other. Third, by finding that it is a city-brand's competence that positively fires consumer–city-brand identification, I add to knowledge on the diagnosticity of dimensions of a city-brand stereotype. Whereas in the case of tangible brands, it is the warmth (and not competence) that has a positive influence on consumer–brand identification, the situation is different city brands are being investigated: it is competence that positively influences consumer–city-brand identification. With respect to management, I offer different suggestions on which stereotype and, importantly, which stereotype dimension brand managers should focus on if they wish to achieve stronger consumer–city-brand identification, consumers' increased purchase intentions and greater brand ownership.

Each scientific work is prone to limitations, including this one. Given that the current study is the first to apply the stereotyping process to city brands, it is necessary for future research to validate and replicate the conceptual model in a different context. It would be interesting to see whether the market context

(developed vs. developing) changes the way consumers perceive different countries and city brands, as well as attitudes related to them. Future research should also address the boundary conditions that might strengthen or weaken the present relationship among the constructs. This study deals with a competent, yet quite "cold" country and city – different combinations regarding the stereotypical dimension would clearly provide interesting research stimuli. Further, as presented in Chapter 2, various combinations of warmth and competence elicit different emotions. It is therefore important to empirically investigate whether city-brand stereotypes are indeed capable of triggering consumers' emotional responses. Finally, since the majority of studies on stereotypes in a marketing context rely on explicit measures, the stability of effects also needs to be assessed through implicit measures (e.g. using the Implicit Association Test).

Remember Ula, our typical millennial or generation Y consumer, deciding on whether to buy a pair of Swarovski earrings while strolling through the streets of Vienna?

Based on the findings of the current study, Ula's stereotypical perceptions of Austria will radiate to her stereotypical perceptions of Vienna. Her view of Austria as being a highly competent but relatively cold country will influence the way she perceives the city brand of Vienna. Thus, Vienna is, like Austria, perceived as a highly competent city brand but simultaneously as quite cold in its intentions towards her and other people. This, however, does not stop her from identifying with the city brand of Vienna – on the contrary! It is Vienna's competence, efficiency and ability to successfully maintain the city's tradition, as well as the city's continuing capability to offer the best city to live in, in terms of economic standards for so many years in a row, that influence Ula's identification with Vienna. This identification convinces her that she would like to buy a pair of earrings from Swarovski. And, in fact, when she leaves Vienna, she will proudly wear her new Swarovski earrings – as a memoir of Vienna which, for so many reasons, will be forever imprinted in her heart.

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