

BETWEEN PATRIOTISM AND GLOBALISM: ETHNOCENTRIC AND MULTICULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

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Abstract: *In an era of intensified globalization and changing geopolitical power relations, consumer behavior increasingly reflects a complex interaction between economic, cultural, and political factors. This paper explores consumer attitudes toward domestic and foreign products in several Western Balkan countries, with a particular focus on the relationship between ethnocentric and multicultural orientations. The research analyzes how patriotism, dogmatism, and cultural openness shape consumer preferences, especially in environments marked by political or economic tensions. The aim of the paper is to determine the extent to which personal characteristics and socio-political contexts influence purchase decisions and perceptions of product origin. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach through an online survey conducted among consumers in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Slovenia (N=420). The analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation and regression methods, t-test and χ^2 test, to examine the relationships between key variables. The results confirm that ethnocentric attitudes remain strongly present in societies exposed to political and economic pressures, often accompanied by animosity towards products from "hostile" countries. In contrast, cultural openness and international experience tend to mitigate ethnocentric tendencies and encourage more inclusive consumer choices. The research contributes to a better understanding of how ideological, emotional and cultural dimensions influence the consumer decision-making process in transitional and geopolitically sensitive regions,*

providing useful insights for policymakers and marketing experts in their efforts to align national economic interests with the realities of the global market.

Key words: *ethnocentrism, multiculturalism, dogmatism, political/economic crisis, countries of the region*

JEL classification: *F00, M31, F60*

1. INTRODUCTION

"We are all different, which is great because we are all unique. Without diversity, life would be very boring." — Catherine Pulsifer.

In today's world, which remains in transition toward a multipolar order — marked by lingering remnants of unipolar influence and the rising role of new global actors — consumer behavior is becoming increasingly complex and influenced by factors that extend beyond purely economic considerations. On the other hand, digital transformation, which does not just mean the implementation of new technologies, implies a profound change in the way consumers and organizations function, communicate, and make decisions (Erceg & Đalić, 2024). Also, political decisions made at the global level, such as the imposition of sanctions, tariffs, or other forms of economic pressure, have the potential to shift consumer attitudes and shape market choices worldwide. In such a context, understanding consumer attitudes toward products of different geopolitical origins gains importance, particularly within regional frameworks where historical,

cultural, and political tensions frequently influence consumer preferences.

“Ethnocentrism emerges as an act of self-protective reflection by local economies, producer organizations, or governments against what is perceived as external ‘aggression’, rendering ethnocentrism both a pro-group and an anti-group construct.” (Rocha Miguel, 2021, p. 15).

This paper focuses specifically on examining ethnocentrism and multiculturalism in the consumer behavior of countries in the region. Based on the assumption that consumer choices are not solely driven by rational evaluations of price and quality, but also by deeper psychological, cultural, and ideological values, we explore how attitudes such as patriotism, animosity, dogmatism, and cultural openness influence consumer perceptions of domestic and foreign products. Particular emphasis is placed on attitudes toward products originating from countries with which there are pronounced political or economic conflicts, as well as the potential emergence of consumer animosity.

The subject of this research is the examination of consumer attitudes in regional countries toward domestic and foreign products under conditions of geopolitical tension, with a focus on expressions of ethnocentric and multicultural viewpoints. The aim of the research is to determine the extent to which individual characteristics, such as levels of dogmatism, patriotism, and cultural openness, influence tendencies toward ethnocentric purchasing behavior and the formation of negative attitudes (animosity) toward products from ‘hostile’ countries. Moreover, this paper seeks to answer whether there is a clear division between ‘open’ and ‘closed’ consumers, and how their purchasing decisions differ in the context of a multipolar world.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding consumer behavior in politically and economically sensitive contexts requires consideration of key concepts such as consumer ethnocentrism, patriotism, animosity toward foreign products and other countries, dogmatism, and multicultural openness. These concepts provide the theoretical foundation for analyzing the influence of individual attitudes and the broader socio-political environment on consumer choices.

The concept of ethnocentrism has been recognized in literature for over a century. Sumner (1907) defined ethnocentrism as a sociological concept describing a perspective in which one’s culture is valued and considered superior to others. Although primarily a sociological term, ethnocentrism has

found a significant place in marketing literature, where it is discussed in the context of consumer ethnocentrism. Specifically, Sabina del Castillo et al. (2024), Gašević et al. (2019), and Ma et al. (2020) define this term as the tendency of consumers to prefer products from their culture or country over imported products, based on the belief that they are of higher quality, more authentic, or more ethical than foreign products, which can significantly influence purchasing and consumption decisions. Alam et al. (2022) argue that the essence of ethnocentrism lies in the belief that purchasing foreign products is wrong because it harms the domestic economy, causes job losses, and fosters disloyalty. In this sense, Onin et al. (2022) emphasize that individuals with high levels of ethnocentrism feel as though they are betraying their country if their moral values conflict with their beliefs, as buying imported products threatens domestic production and hinders their country’s development. Conversely, Aguilar-Rodríguez et al. (2021) suggest that ethnocentrism not only affects consumer beliefs and attitudes but also how they evaluate the quality of foreign products, known in economic literature as the country-of-origin effect.

Considering that ethnocentrism expresses love for one’s homeland, it is often associated with patriotism. Bakti et al. (2020) and Slijepčević et al. (2025) argue that ethnocentrism is linked to an individual’s patriotic feeling, which dictates that purchasing domestic products is desirable. A review of the literature reveals that consumer ethnocentrism is often associated with various economic, psychological, and sociodemographic factors that shape its intensity and expressions in consumer behavior. Specifically, Zeugner-Roth et al. (2015) indicate that consumer ethnocentrism is conditioned solely by economic motives, while Charulakshmi & Chandran (2022) associate it with psychological factors and perceive it in the context of consumer purchase decisions based on country of origin.

Hypotheses:

H₀: The level of ethnocentrism differs among consumers from countries in the region.

H₁: Attitudes toward ethnocentrism differ between men and women.

H₂: Time spent abroad influences the level of consumer ethnocentrism.

H₃: Consumers who have spent time abroad positively perceive and evaluate foreign products available in their country.

H₄: There is a statistically significant relationship between consumer types and the evaluation of foreign products used in their country.

In addition to a pronounced preference for domestic products, ethnocentrism often entails a negative attitude, even animosity, toward products from other countries, especially those with which there are political or historical tensions, thereby emphasizing its emotional and ideological dimension.

"Animosity can be defined as 'residual' antipathy associated with past or ongoing military, political, or economic events, which negatively affects consumer awareness by reducing their willingness to purchase and consume foreign products." (Huang et al., 2020, p. 82)

This definition clearly indicates that both animosity and ethnocentrism can be observed through political and economic dimensions. Tensions between countries often serve as a trigger for strengthening patriotic feelings, consumer ethnocentrism, and animosity toward foreign products and the countries they originate from. For instance, Waseem & Zahid (2024) argue that a financial or economic crisis in a country can result from economic (failure of the financial market), political (government instability, imposition of sanctions, tariffs), and institutional factors (control and regulation of the banking sector). On the other hand, Güneş (2021) links economic crises exclusively to political factors, emphasizing that macroeconomic vulnerability, combined with political instability often arising from deteriorating policies, can lead to an economic crisis. These crises and forms of political-economic instability resonate in consumer behavior. Güneş (2021) also notes that political instability not only limits the rational decision-making ability of policymakers, especially when it escalates into a political crisis but also further undermines economic sentiment – either through declining consumer confidence or reduced investment appetite – which can ultimately lead to economic downturn. In conditions of uncertainty and macroeconomic vulnerability, consumers often become more sensitive, cautious, and inclined to make decisions motivated by emotions, ideological beliefs, and a sense of belonging, rather than solely rational criteria such as price and quality. In such contexts, there is an increased tendency toward consumer ethnocentrism and a more pronounced negative attitude (animosity) toward foreign products, particularly those from politically or economically "hostile" countries. The same applies to economic development – models based on extractive institutions are not sustainable in the long term, unlike those based on inclusive institutions (Milenković, et al., 2024).

H₅: Consumers exhibiting stronger ethnocentric attitudes express a higher level of animosity toward products from countries with which their

home country has political or economic conflicts, which is also reflected in a negative attitude toward purchasing products from these countries.

Based on the aforementioned, it is evident that consumer ethnocentrism and animosity toward other products and countries are largely based on stable and deeply rooted beliefs and attitudes, naturally leading to their association with dogmatism. Paul et al. (2021) define dogmatism as a personality trait characteristic of individuals who believe that the information, knowledge, experience, and concepts they possess are accurate. These individuals consider their opinions the only correct ones, even when facts may indicate otherwise. *"In the context of marketing, dogmatism can be defined as the tendency to set standards without considering evidence or evaluations from other individuals regarding a particular brand."* (Paul et al., 2021, p. 1). These definitions suggest that dogmatism is in individuals who exhibit rigid attitudes and resistance to information from outside their established belief system. Such a psychological profile fosters the development of consumer ethnocentrism, as dogmatic individuals tend to value their culture, products, and economic system as superior, simultaneously rejecting foreign alternatives without openness to an objective assessment of their value or quality. This connection is particularly evident in conditions of social, political, and economic tensions, where pronounced dogmatism further intensifies ethnocentric attitudes and contributes to the formation of animosity toward "others," i.e., countries perceived as threats.

H₆: Dogmatism conditions the emergence of ethnocentrism and animosity toward products from countries with which there is a political or economic conflict.

In contrast to ethnocentrism and consumer animosity, cultural openness—often interpreted through the lenses of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism - implies a different worldview and relationship with "the other." Multiculturalism is a concept that increasingly attracts the attention of researchers, particularly within the context of a modern, globally interconnected society. Vora et al. (2019) view multiculturalism through the lens of psychological acculturation, referring to the cultural changes that occur in an individual as a result of sustained, direct, and intercultural contact.

Given that multiculturalism involves the acceptance and understanding of other cultures, this concept holds a particularly important place in contemporary marketing. As globalization continues to shape consumer habits, companies seek to develop advertising and promotional strategies targeted at diverse ethnic groups, in

order to increase brand identification and foster customer loyalty (Meng et al., 2023). Similarly, Fazli-Salehi et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of marketing in multicultural societies, especially through cross-cultural advertising, in which businesses target different ethnic audiences – an increasingly vital approach in a world marked by rising diversity and multiculturalism.

Despite the growing presence of multicultural strategies in marketing, the question remains whether contact with other cultures truly leads to greater cultural openness, or if it merely reinforces an individual's attachment to their cultural identity. Some authors argue that multicultural identity does not always emerge through the acceptance of the foreign, but rather through a deeper understanding and appreciation of one's cultural heritage. In this context, Vora et al. (2019) highlight that individuals become multicultural primarily through the process of enculturation (learning one's cultural heritage), rather than through acculturation (adopting a new culture). This raises a thought-provoking question: if multiculturalism is grounded in strengthening one's cultural identity, can it, paradoxically, become a basis for developing ethnocentric attitudes?

H7: The level of ethnocentrism and animosity toward products from countries involved in political or economic conflict is influenced by an individual's willingness to accept, communicate with, and cooperate with people from other countries or cultures – i.e., cultural openness.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this research is based on a combination of theoretical and empirical analysis. The theoretical analysis includes a systematic review of relevant domestic and international literature, aiming to precisely define key concepts, compare them, and examine them from various scientific perspectives. Within the theoretical approach, methods such as analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, historical method, as well as inductive-deductive methods were applied. This part of the research serves as a foundation for the formulation of research hypotheses.

The empirical part of the research was conducted using a quantitative methodology, specifically through a survey method. The study was carried out on a randomly selected sample of respondents from six countries in the region: Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska). From each country/entity, 60 respondents were surveyed, resulting in a total sample size of 420 participants.

The collected data enabled analysis of the relationship between individual psychological characteristics (such as dogmatism, patriotism, and cultural openness) and consumer attitudes toward domestic and foreign products in the context of contemporary political and economic tensions. For the purposes of the empirical research, a questionnaire consisting of a total of 21 questions was developed and distributed. These questions were organized into several thematic groups covering different aspects of respondents' attitudes and behaviors. The first group of questions related to respondents' demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, place of residence, type of settlement, marital status, education level, employment status, sector, income level, and number of family members. These questions allowed for detailed profiling of respondents, which is important for understanding the context of their attitudes and behaviors. The next group of questions addressed the topic of visits abroad, as well as the reasons why respondents purchase or do not purchase foreign products. These questions provided insight into respondents' experiences related to stays abroad, the duration of time spent in those countries, and their motives for purchasing products from foreign markets. The aim was to explore how international experiences and the availability of foreign products shape consumer habits and attitudes toward foreign products. The third group of questions focused on respondents' dogmatism and cultural openness. The level of dogmatism was analyzed using the Dogmatism Scale (DOG Scale) (Puhalo, 2013, p. 103). Through these questions, respondents' readiness to accept and cooperate with people from other countries and cultures, as well as their tendency to adhere to their beliefs without questioning, were examined. Additionally, the questionnaire included two scales related to specific attitudes. The first scale measured ethnocentrism (Original GENE Scale – Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale) (Jiménez Guerrero, 2025, p. 17), i.e., attitudes indicating belief in the superiority of one's culture or country over others. This scale aids in analyzing how ethnocentric attitudes can shape purchasing decisions and opinions about foreign products. The second scale investigated animosity toward countries with which there is a political and economic crisis (Animosity Scale) (Barutçu et al., 2016, pp. 112–113), i.e., negative attitudes and tendencies to avoid products from countries labeled as “hostile” or with which there are disagreements stemming from political and economic conflicts.

The data collected through the survey method were analyzed using *IBM SPSS Statistics software, version 26*. The analyses included descriptive

statistics, cross-tabulations, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, multiple regression analysis, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Given that a certain number of questions in the questionnaire were presented in the form of scales, their internal consistency was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The recorded values of this coefficient ranged from 0.79 to 0.91, indicating a high and satisfactory level of internal reliability of the scales.

A total of 420 respondents participated in the empirical research, with 60 respondents from each of the following countries: Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska. Analysis of the gender structure showed that the sample was balanced in

terms of gender, with a slight predominance of female respondents. The total number included 195 males and 225 females. By country, the gender distribution was as follows: in Serbia, there were 26 males and 34 females; in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 29 males and 31 females; in Republic of Srpska, 27 males and 33 females; in Montenegro, 33 males and 27 females; in Slovenia, 22 males and 38 females; in Croatia, 29 males and 31 females; and in North Macedonia, 29 males and 31 females. These results indicate that in most countries, the number of female respondents slightly exceeded the number of male respondents, except in Montenegro, where males constituted the majority. This distribution allows for a comparative analysis of attitudes across genders within different national contexts and contributes to a better understanding of potential differences in the perception of multiculturalism, ethnocentrism, and consumer behavior.

Table 1. Sample Structure by Age, Education, Employment Status, Sector, and Type of Settlement

| Variables | | Number of respondents | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | Republic of Serbia | | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | | Republic of Srpska | | Montenegro | | Slovenia | | Croatia | | North Macedonia | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Age | 15-24 | 12 | 20.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 26.7 | 5 | 8.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 25-34 | 13 | 21.7 | 6 | 10.0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 20.0 | 9 | 15.0 | 6 | 10.0 | 4 | 6.7 |
| | 35-44 | 13 | 21.7 | 30 | 50.0 | 33 | 55.0 | 10 | 16.7 | 15 | 25.0 | 22 | 36.7 | 9 | 15.0 |
| | 45-54 | 8 | 13.3 | 12 | 20.0 | 12 | 20.0 | 18 | 30.0 | 20 | 33.3 | 22 | 36.7 | 25 | 41.7 |
| | more than 54 years | 14 | 23.3 | 12 | 20.0 | 15 | 25.0 | 4 | 6.7 | 11 | 18.3 | 10 | 16.7 | 22 | 36.7 |
| TOTAL: | | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| Education level | Primary education | 1 | 1.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Secondary education | 13 | 21.7 | 2 | 3.3 | 2 | 3.3 | 21 | 35.0 | 1 | 1.7 | 1 | 1.7 | 0 | 0 |
| | College/higher professional school | 8 | 13.3 | 6 | 10.0 | 10 | 16.7 | 2 | 3.3 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 11.7 | 11 | 18.3 |
| | Faculty – Bachelor's degree | 21 | 35.0 | 17 | 28.3 | 18 | 30.0 | 21 | 35.0 | 38 | 63.3 | 22 | 36.7 | 24 | 40.0 |
| | Master's degree | 9 | 15.0 | 15 | 25.0 | 13 | 21.7 | 14 | 23.3 | 15 | 25.0 | 16 | 26.7 | 10 | 16.7 |
| PhD | 8 | 13.3 | 20 | 33.3 | 17 | 28.3 | 2 | 3.3 | 6 | 10.0 | 14 | 23.3 | 15 | 25.0 | |
| TOTAL: | | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| Employment status | Unemployed | 18 | 30.0 | 2 | 3.3 | 3 | 5.0 | 3 | 5.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Employed on a fixed-term contract | 11 | 18.3 | 17 | 28.3 | 11 | 18.3 | 31 | 51.7 | 34 | 56.7 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6.7 |
| | Employed on a permanent contract | 25 | 41.7 | 39 | 65.0 | 46 | 76.7 | 26 | 43.3 | 26 | 43.3 | 56 | 93.3 | 52 | 86.7 |
| | Entrepreneur – owner of own business | 3 | 5.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6.7 |
| | Retired person | 3 | 5.0 | 2 | 3.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6.7 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL: | | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| Average monthly income | No income (0 euros) | 14 | 23.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 13.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Up to 170 euros | 1 | 1.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6.7 | 2 | 3.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 170 - 420 euros | 4 | 6.7 | 2 | 3.3 | 2 | 3.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 420 - 670 euros | 8 | 13.3 | 7 | 11.7 | 9 | 15.0 | 9 | 15.0 | 4 | 6.7 | 10 | 16.7 | 4 | 6.7 |
| | 670 - 920 euros | 7 | 11.7 | 12 | 20.0 | 24 | 40.0 | 7 | 11.7 | 29 | 48.3 | 12 | 20.0 | 17 | 28.3 |
| 920 euros and above | 26 | 43.3 | 39 | 65.0 | 25 | 41.7 | 32 | 53.3 | 25 | 41.7 | 38 | 63.3 | 39 | 65.0 | |
| TOTAL: | | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| Sector | Not employed | 20 | 33.3 | 4 | 6.7 | 3 | 5.0 | 3 | 5.0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6.7 | 0 | 0 |
| | Public sector | 30 | 50.0 | 56 | 93.3 | 54 | 90.0 | 41 | 68.3 | 56 | 93.3 | 53 | 88.3 | 52 | 86.7 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Private sector | 10 | 16.7 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5.0 | 16 | 26.7 | 4 | 6.7 | 3 | 5.0 | 8 | 13.3 |
| TOTAL: | | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| Type of settlement | Urban area | 53 | 88.3 | 53 | 88.3 | 54 | 90.0 | 59 | 98.3 | 35 | 58.3 | 56 | 93.3 | 45 | 75.0 |
| | Rural area | 7 | 11.7 | 7 | 11.7 | 6 | 10.0 | 1 | 1.7 | 25 | 41.7 | 4 | 6.7 | 15 | 25.0 |
| TOTAL: | | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |

Source: Author's research

The sample of respondents in this study is characterized by certain common demographic traits across the countries in the region. Regarding the age structure, the most represented groups were middle-aged and older adults, with the 35 to 54 age group prevailing in most countries, while the younger population (under 25) was less represented, except in some countries such as Montenegro. The educational structure of the sample indicates a dominance of highly educated respondents. The majority of participants hold a bachelor's degree, with a significant share of master's and doctoral degree holders. This suggests a relatively educated sample, which may influence more critical and informed consumer behavior. Concerning employment status, most respondents are employed, primarily on permanent contracts. Employment in the public sector is most prevalent in almost all countries, indicating a certain level of job security and stability among the respondents. The unemployment rate is relatively low, except in Serbia, where a somewhat higher number of unemployed individuals was recorded. Regarding monthly income levels, the majority of respondents in the surveyed countries earn above the regional average, with the largest group earning more than €920 per month. The lowest income levels and the highest proportion of individuals without income were recorded in Serbia, further highlighting the higher unemployment rate observed in the sample from this country. In contrast, other countries, particularly Slovenia, Croatia, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, show dominance of higher income brackets, which may reflect better economic conditions or more stable income sources in those areas. Most respondents live in

urban settlements (Kosovska Mitrovica, Leposavić, Niš, Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Sarajevo, Maribor, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Osijek, Podgorica, Sutomore, Skopje, Ohrid), with urban residency especially pronounced in Montenegro, Croatia, and the Republic of Srpska. An exception is Slovenia, where a slightly higher share of respondents comes from rural areas compared to other countries. Regarding marital status, there is some diversity across countries, but three family statuses predominate: married, cohabiting, and single respondents. In most countries, the largest share consists of married individuals, whereas in certain countries (such as Montenegro and North Macedonia), there is a noticeable higher share of respondents living in cohabitation or unmarried. The number of divorced and widowed respondents is very low, which may be related to the age structure of the sample. As for household size, households with three to four members are most common, aligning with the average family size in the region. Larger households with five or more members are also present in significant numbers, especially in Serbia, Republic of Srpska, and North Macedonia. Smaller households (one or two members) are less frequent but present in all countries, potentially indicating the presence of single young adults or elderly household members living alone. This profile – a highly educated, predominantly public-sector employed, urban-based sample—provides a solid foundation for analyzing consumer behavior in the context of ethnocentrism, cultural openness, and attitudes toward products from politically and economically problematic countries.

H₀: The level of ethnocentrism differs among consumers originating from countries in the region

Table 2: Level of Ethnocentrism among Consumers from Different Countries

| Frequency of Respondents' Answers (%) | | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|--|---|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|----------|---------|-----------------|
| Other countries should take my country as a model. | 1 | 16.7 | 11.7 | 10.0 | 11.7 | 33.3 | 10.0 | 28.3 |
| | 2 | 11.7 | 40.0 | 41.7 | 43.3 | 25.0 | 40.0 | 35.0 |
| | 3 | 46.7 | 33.3 | 28.3 | 25.0 | 41.7 | 35.0 | 23.3 |
| | 4 | 20.0 | 15.0 | 20.0 | 13.3 | 0 | 15.0 | 6.7 |
| | 5 | 5.0 | 0 | 0 | 6.7 | 0 | 0 | 6.7 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| People in my country enjoy one of the best lifestyles compared to anywhere else. | 1 | 10.0 | 21.7 | 16.7 | 13.3 | 25.0 | 11.7 | 35.0 |
| | 2 | 20.0 | 40.0 | 35.0 | 31.7 | 10.0 | 26.7 | 58.3 |
| | 3 | 36.7 | 21.7 | 20.0 | 38.3 | 56.7 | 16.7 | 0 |
| | 4 | 25.0 | 8.3 | 20.0 | 10.0 | 8.3 | 40.0 | 6.7 |
| | 5 | 8.3 | 8.3 | 8.3 | 6.7 | 0 | 5.0 | 0 |
| My country should be a model for the world. | 1 | 11.7 | 18.3 | 11.7 | 20.0 | 41.7 | 21.7 | 41.7 |
| | 2 | 16.7 | 31.7 | 35.0 | 26.7 | 16.7 | 38.3 | 50.0 |
| | 3 | 36.7 | 36.7 | 38.3 | 25.0 | 40.0 | 30.0 | 8.3 |
| | 4 | 25.0 | 13.3 | 15.0 | 21.7 | 1.7 | 10.0 | 0 |
| | 5 | 10.0 | 0 | 0 | 6.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Most other countries are backward compared to my country. | 1 | 20.0 | 36.7 | 30.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 28.3 | 58.3 |
| | 2 | 23.3 | 43.3 | 35.0 | 31.7 | 33.3 | 40.0 | 26.7 |
| | 3 | 41.7 | 15.0 | 25.0 | 30.0 | 41.7 | 21.7 | 8.3 |
| | 4 | 13.3 | 5.0 | 10.0 | 13.3 | 0 | 10.0 | 0 |
| | 5 | 1.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.7 |
| Most people would be happier if they lived like the people in my country. | 1 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 11.7 | 20.0 | 25.0 | 16.7 | 21.7 |
| | 2 | 15.0 | 46.7 | 33.3 | 23.3 | 8.3 | 16.7 | 20.0 |
| | 3 | 33.3 | 25.0 | 35.0 | 33.3 | 58.3 | 16.7 | 45.0 |
| | 4 | 25.0 | 10.0 | 15.0 | 20.0 | 8.3 | 35.0 | 13.3 |
| | 5 | 13.3 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 3.3 | 0 | 15.0 | 0 |

Source: Author's research

The results presented in *Table 2* reveal varying response frequencies (1 – strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – neither agree nor disagree; 4 – partially agree; 5 – strongly agree.) among the participants, indicating key trends in the level of ethnocentrism. Respondents from the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska show a high level of ethnocentrism. However, a significant part of the respondents also believe that other countries should follow their example and that life in their country is better than elsewhere. Additional cross-analysis showed that positive attitudes towards these statements were predominantly expressed by respondents from Kosovo and Metohija, more precisely from Kosovska Mitrovica and Leposavić. This may indicate that, despite facing political and economic challenges, these individuals maintain a strong emotional and identity attachment to their country. Such attitudes may arise from long-term political and social pressure, which often contributes to the strengthening of identity and the reinforcement of ethnocentrism as a means of preserving collective belonging and social

stability. Moderate levels of ethnocentrism were observed in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with a higher number of respondents expressing the view that other countries should emulate theirs and that people would be happier living there. The lowest levels of ethnocentrism were observed in Slovenia, Montenegro and North Macedonia, as most respondents disagreed or had a neutral view of the superiority of the country and lifestyle.

In conclusion, the highest level of ethnocentrism was recorded among respondents from the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska. Moderate ethnocentrism is present among respondents from Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, while the lowest level of ethnocentric attitudes was observed among respondents from Slovenia, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

H₁: Attitudes toward ethnocentrism differ between men and women

Table 3: T-Test Results – Gender/Ethnocentrism Variables

| Variables Ethnocentrism | Gender | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|---|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | Sig. (2-tailed) | Sig. (2-tailed) | Sig. (2-tailed) | Sig. (2-tailed) | Sig. (2-tailed) | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Other countries should take my country as a model. | male/female | 0.077 | 0.105 | 0.332 | 0.060 | 0.293 | 0.737 | 0.107 |
| People in my country enjoy one of the best lifestyles compared to other places. | | 0.704 | 0.359 | 0.766 | 0.634 | 0.000 | 0.968 | 0.020 |
| My country should be a model for the world. | | 0.527 | 0.019 | 0.038 | 0.034 | 0.274 | 0.693 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Most other countries are backward compared to my country. | | 0.588 | 0.821 | 0.106 | 0.008 | 0.856 | 0.444 | 0.055 |
| Most people would be happier if they lived like the people in my country. | | 0.886 | 0.048 | 0.247 | 0.001 | 0.006 | 0.937 | 0.192 |

Source: Author's research

Based on the T-test results (Table 3), significant differences in attitudes between men and women in certain countries can be observed, with these differences primarily manifesting in several key areas. In Slovenia, Montenegro, the Republic of Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia, statistically significant differences exist between men's and women's attitudes toward ethnocentric issues, indicating a gender imbalance in the perception of their country's superiority relative to others. For example, in Slovenia, women are more inclined to believe that most people would be happier living in their country, whereas, in Montenegro, men and women hold differing views regarding the perception of other countries' progress compared to their own. In the Republic of Srpska and Montenegro, statistically significant differences were also recorded concerning the belief that their country should serve as a model for the world, with women being somewhat less likely to support this statement compared to men. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, and

Montenegro, differences in the perception of lifestyle in their countries relative to others were found. Women in Slovenia and North Macedonia are significantly more likely to hold the view that the lifestyle in their country is the best, while in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, these differences are less pronounced. In conclusion, in several countries (Slovenia, Montenegro, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Srpska, and North Macedonia), significant differences in certain aspects of ethnocentrism were observed, suggesting that gender may influence how individuals perceive their country relative to others. In Serbia and Croatia, no statistically significant gender differences in ethnocentric attitudes were detected. The absence of statistically significant gender differences in ethnocentric attitudes in Serbia was also noted by Gašević (2022) in his study on the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on purchasing behavior.

H₂: Time spent abroad affects the level of ethnocentrism among consumers.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis – Ethnocentrism Variables and Time Spent Abroad

| Variables Ethnocentrism | Time | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|--|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) |
| | | 0.074 | -0.307** | 0.533** | 0.026 | 0.459** | -0.262** | -0.008 |
| People in my country enjoy one of the best lifestyles compared to anywhere else. | How much time have you spent abroad so far? | 0.154 | -0.232** | 0.289** | -0.121 | 0.364** | -0.162 | 0.085 |
| My country should be a model for the world. | | 0.012 | -0.180 | 0.277** | -0.062 | 0.264** | -0.356** | 0.115 |
| Most other countries are backward compared to my country. | | 0.132 | -0.106 | -0.199 | -0.298** | 0.383** | -0.405** | -0.246** |
| Most people would be happier if they lived like the people in my country. | | 0.421** | -0.378** | -0.127 | 0.444 | 0.337** | -0.159 | -0.248** |
| Life in my country is much better than in most other places. | | 0.522** | -0.106 | 0.345** | 0.012 | -0.095 | 0.125 | 0.088 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: Author's research.

The results presented in *Table 4* indicate that the time spent abroad affects the level of ethnocentrism differently depending on the respondents' country of origin. Positive correlations were recorded in Slovenia and the Republic of Srpska, suggesting that a longer stay abroad may further reinforce ethnocentric attitudes. A similar trend is observed in Serbia, particularly regarding statements that life in this country is better and that people would be happier living there. These positive correlations imply the assumption that people, by spending time abroad and observing characteristics of other cultures, have come to appreciate the advantages and richness of their own country and culture, which has further strengthened their sense of belonging and pride. Such attitudes may also represent an emotional response to feelings of alienation or a need to reaffirm one's identity in reaction to experiences abroad. This finding aligns with the view of Vora et al. (2019), who argue that cultural openness can influence ethnocentric attitudes.

On the other hand, negative correlations were found in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and North Macedonia, suggesting that a longer stay abroad leads to a reduction in ethnocentrism. Cross-tabulation revealed that in all countries, the majority of respondents travelled abroad for tourism, to visit relatives or friends, or to work abroad for some time. This result may be due to greater exposure to diverse cultures, experiences, and values abroad, which contributes to a more open worldview and a reduction in stereotypes and prejudices toward other countries and peoples. *The differing trends shown reflect the complex relationship between mobility, identity, and perceptions of one's country, which can be shaped by the socio-political, historical, and cultural circumstances of each individual country.*

H₃: *The time respondents have spent abroad affects their perception and evaluation of foreign products available in their country*

Table 5: Correlation Analysis – Time Spent Abroad and Evaluation of Available Foreign Products

| Variables | | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|--|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) |
| <i>How much time have you spent abroad so far?</i> | <i>Please rate the quality of foreign products available in your country.</i> | 0.069 | -0.483** | -0.251** | -0.073 | 0.498** | -0.301** | 0.182 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's research

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation (*Table 5*) between time spent abroad and the perception of the availability of foreign products in the domestic market, different patterns can be identified among the analyzed countries. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Srpska, and Croatia, a statistically significant negative correlation was recorded, indicating that respondents who spent more time abroad rated the availability of foreign products in their country lower. One possible explanation for this result is that living abroad sharpens awareness of the wide range of products available in more

developed markets, leading returning respondents to notice a lack of variety, quality, or availability compared to what they experienced abroad. On the other hand, Slovenia exhibits the opposite trend – a statistically significant positive correlation suggests that longer stays abroad lead to higher appreciation of the availability of foreign products “at home.” This finding may indicate that respondents, despite being exposed to other markets, recognize and value the high level of product offerings and standards available in Slovenia, further confirming the relative development of the market in that country.

In Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia, correlations were not statistically significant, implying that time spent abroad does not have a noticeable impact on the perception of foreign product availability. This may suggest that living abroad does not significantly alter attitudes toward the domestic market's offerings. Cross-tabulation revealed that respondents who spent time abroad mostly purchased products as gifts or personal souvenirs, indicating that they had the opportunity to visit stores and directly experience foreign

markets and product assortments. *In conclusion, it can be assumed that the differences among countries result from a combination of factors such as the level of development of the domestic market, prior exposure to global brands, personal consumer experiences abroad, and the general level of consumer expectations.*

H₄: *There is a statistically significant relationship between consumer types and the evaluation of foreign products used in their country*

Table 6: Correlation Analysis – Type of Consumer and Evaluation of Foreign Products Used in the Domestic Market

| Variables | | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) |
| Type of Consumer. | Please rate the foreign products you have used in your home country. | 0.144 | -0.407** | -0.428** | 0.193 | 0.519** | 0.254** | 0.237** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's research

The results presented in *Table 6* show that positive correlations were recorded in Slovenia, Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro, with statistically significant correlations found in Slovenia, Croatia, and North Macedonia. These results suggest that consumers oriented toward brands, innovation, or rational purchasing are more likely to evaluate foreign products more favorably. We assume that such consumers tend to engage in more research, make comparisons, and recognize the quality and diversity offered by foreign products.

Conversely, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, negative and statistically significant correlations were identified. This implies that the more consumers exhibit loyalty to a specific type of purchasing orientation (e.g., price-sensitive or locally oriented), the more negatively they evaluate foreign products.

This result may be attributed to a stronger preference for domestic products, a greater critical attitude toward imported brands, or lower exposure to international markets. This finding aligns with

the study conducted by Aguilar-Rodríguez et al. (2021), who emphasize that consumers are often attached to domestic products due to their perception of the quality of foreign goods. Specifically, if consumers have had negative experiences with foreign products, they are likely to return to domestic brands or give them preference in future purchases, relying on the known quality and sense of security that domestic products provide. In the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro, although positive correlations are present, they are not statistically significant, which may indicate diversity in consumer preferences without a clearly defined general trend.

Furthermore, cross-analysis shows that consumers who rated foreign products positively most frequently cited their belief in superior quality, curiosity, and a desire to try something new as primary motives for purchasing.

Accordingly, we assume that the positive correlations are likely a result of consumer openness to international influences and their inclination toward exploration and innovation.

The correlation and regression analyses were preceded by a factor analysis through which the factors of ethnocentrism and animosity were constructed.

All items from the applied scales were used to form these factors, and the factor matrix in both cases did not contain any negative loadings,

indicating that no items were excluded and all were considered in the factor formation process.

H₅: Consumers who exhibit stronger ethnocentric attitudes express a higher level of animosity toward products from countries with which their home country has political or economic conflicts, which is reflected in a negative attitude toward purchasing products from those countries

Table 7: Correlation Analysis – Ethnocentrism/Animosity

| Variables Animosity | Ethnocentrism ¹ | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) | Pearson Correlation (ρ) |
| I dislike countries with which we have political and/or economic conflicts. | <i>Level of ethnocentrism observed among consumers</i> | 0.399** | 0.176 | 0.419** | 0.509** | 0.560** | 0.286** | 0.024 |
| I feel anger toward countries with which we have political and/or economic conflicts. | | 0.446** | 0.345** | 0.559** | 0.351** | 0.305** | 0.002 | 0.362** |
| I will never forgive the behavior of those countries toward my country during the political/economic crisis. | | 0.470** | 0.274** | 0.531** | -0.087 | 0.347** | 0.216 | 0.130 |
| If two products are of the same quality, but one is from my country and the other from a foreign country with which we have a conflict, I would pay 10% more for the product from my country. | | 0.363** | 0.412** | 0.343** | 0.080 | 0.788** | 0.241 | 0.466** |
| I never buy products from countries with which we have political or economic conflicts. | | 0.363** | 0.243 | 0.230 | 0.533** | 0.570** | 0.015 | 0.262** |
| The political/economic conflict influences the intention to purchase products from those countries. | | 0.397** | 0.405** | 0.370** | 0.709** | 0.687** | -0.007 | -0.507** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's research

¹ In this analysis, ethnocentrism was examined through a factor composed of variables, that is, statements used to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism.

The results presented in *Table 7* demonstrate the relationship between ethnocentrism and animosity. Slovenia records the highest correlations among all variables, indicating that strong ethnocentric attitudes are closely linked to negative emotions and concrete behaviors toward countries in conflict.

It is likely that these attitudes stem from the historical and political context in which Slovenian citizens strongly develop an identity in opposition to “others,” especially in light of EU integration and relations with non-EU countries.

The Republic of Srpska and the Republic of Serbia also show a stable and significant association between ethnocentrism and animosity.

These results may be attributed to long-standing political tensions and the legacy of war, which generate negative emotions and rejection of foreign products from countries with which there is a conflict. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a moderate and statistically significant positive correlation between ethnocentrism and animosity was observed, indicating that respondents with stronger ethnocentric attitudes exhibit a higher degree of hostile emotions and resistance toward countries involved in political or economic crises.

For respondents from Montenegro, mixed results were observed – significant positive correlations for some attitudes, but a negative correlation for the statement “I will never forgive.”

This may suggest emotional ambivalence: respondents feel animosity but do not necessarily harbor long-term aversion toward these countries. Additionally, a very high correlation with the statement that political/economic crises affect purchasing behavior points to a concrete change in behavior consistent with emotions.

Croatia stands out as a country where correlations are generally weak and statistically insignificant, suggesting that ethnocentrism among respondents is not strongly linked to animosity or rejection of products from countries with political or economic tensions.

These findings may be due to a higher degree of market openness, stronger EU integration, and greater consumer rationality.

The results suggest that in environments characterized by heightened feelings of threat, identity insecurity, or historical conflicts, there is a stronger connection between ethnocentrism and animosity. In such cases, national identity is often constructed through distancing from others, which also reflects on consumer behavior.

Cross-analysis further revealed that respondents expressing animosity most frequently cited not purchasing products from those countries because they do not want to support countries they perceive as hostile and that emotions are a strong driver of decisions - especially in a socio-political context where national loyalty is equated with consumer choices.

Besides this, the most common reasons consumers avoid foreign products include higher prices, transportation costs, tariffs, and support for the domestic economy. These findings align with the research by Güneş et al. (2021), who argue that political and economic instability affects not only the rationality of consumer decisions but also significantly influences the perception of foreign products.

H₆: Dogmatism influences the emergence of ethnocentrism and animosity toward products from countries with which there is a political/economic crisis.

In the continuation of the analysis, dogmatism was examined as a factor created through factor analysis.

Since the factor matrix results were positive for all items, all eight statements were included: “Only one worldview can be true.”, “Those who are convinced of the truth of their views have no need to prove them to others.”, “I try to adhere to the only correct worldview.”, “I am so convinced of the correctness of my beliefs and attitudes that I have no need to question them.”, “One must firmly hold on to one’s beliefs despite everything that happens.”, “There are great truths that explain everything that happens in the world.”, “I cannot trust a person who has changed an important view.”, “We cannot make compromises with our political opponents.”

Table 8: Regression Analysis – Dogmatism – Ethnocentrism – Animosity

| Variables | | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. |
| | | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta |
| <i>Model (group 1)</i> | | R=0.671 r ² =0.450 | R=0.631 r ² =0.399 | R=0.747 r ² =0.557 | R=0.361 r ² =0.130 | R=0.441 r ² =0.195 | R=0.422 r ² =0.179 | R=0.689 r ² =0.474 |
| Dogmatism * | Ethnocentrism ** | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.005 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | | 0.671 | 0.631 | 0.747 | 0.361 | 0.441 | 0.422 | 0.689 |
| <i>Model (group 2)</i> | | R= 0.821 r ² =0.667 | R=0.459 r ² =0.211 | R=0.843 r ² =0.687 | R=0.263 r ² =0.069 | R=0.456 r ² =0.208 | R=0.024 r ² =0.012 | R=0.237 r ² =0.056 |
| Dogmatism * | Animosity ** | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.042 | 0.000 | 0.068 | 0.079 |
| | | 0.821 | 0.459 | 0.843 | 0.263 | 0.456 | -0.024 | 0.237 |

*independent variable

**dependent variable

Source: Author's research

The results of the regression analysis presented in Table 8 show that the regression models consisting of dogmatism as the independent variable and ethnocentrism and animosity as dependent variables are statistically significant in all cases and countries, except for Croatia (0.068) and North Macedonia (0.079) in the dogmatism/animosity model. In the statistically significant models, dogmatism explains the variance of ethnocentrism and animosity at different levels, ranging from 6.9% in Montenegro (Model group 2) to 68.7% in Republic of Srpska (Model group 2).

In most analyzed countries, dogmatism has a significant and positive effect on ethnocentrism. The highest beta coefficients were recorded in Republic of Srpska ($\beta = 0.747$), Republic of Serbia ($\beta = 0.671$), North Macedonia ($\beta = 0.689$), and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ($\beta = 0.631$), indicating that individuals who strongly believe in the correctness of their views and show less openness to alternative worldviews tend to express more ethnocentric attitudes. In other words, rigidity in thinking may contribute to stronger identification with one's nation and the desire to see it as superior to others. In Montenegro, Slovenia, and Croatia, somewhat lower but still positive and statistically significant coefficients were observed. Regarding the influence of dogmatism on animosity toward countries with which there are political or economic tensions, the results are also significant in most countries, but with somewhat greater variation. The strongest influence was observed in Republic of Srpska ($\beta = 0.843$), Republic of Serbia ($\beta = 0.821$), Slovenia ($\beta = 0.456$), and the Federation of Bosnia and

Herzegovina ($\beta = 0.459$), whereas in Croatia and North Macedonia, the relationship was statistically insignificant ($\beta = -0.024$) and ($\beta = -0.273$), respectively. These results suggest that in most cases, dogmatic beliefs can contribute to the development of negative emotions and attitudes toward other nations, especially when inter-country relations are burdened by political or economic tensions.

Particularly interesting are the results showing that in Republic of Srpska, the influence of dogmatism on animosity is even stronger than on ethnocentrism, which may indicate a specific context where ideological rigidity contributes more to the formation of negative feelings toward other states than to the glorification of one's own. A similar pattern applies to the Republic of Serbia, where both effects are pronounced, but animosity is somewhat more strongly affected by dogmatism. Given that cross-analysis established that in this case, most respondents come from the Kosovo and Metohija region and Banja Luka, this result is unsurprising, as these territories continuously endure strong political and economic pressures, which may contribute to heightened sensitivity regarding national identity issues and increased propensity for negative emotions toward countries perceived as sources of threat or injustice. "Dogmatic beliefs can help strengthen social bonds and provide the stability and clarity with which individuals organize and motivate their behavior, especially when facing difficulties and problems in life." (Friedman & Jack, 2018, p. 159).

In conclusion, it can be assumed that dogmatism, as a tendency toward closed-mindedness and

rigidity in thinking, represents the psychological basis for both ethnocentric and animosity-related attitudes. However, the intensity and form of this influence depend on the broader socio-political and historical context of each country.

H7: The level of ethnocentrism and animosity toward products from countries with which there is a political/economic crisis is conditioned by an individual's willingness to accept, communicate, and cooperate with people from other countries/cultures – cultural openness

Table 9: Regression Analysis – Cultural Openness – Ethnocentrism – Animosity

| Variables | | Republic of Serbia | Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Republic of Srpska | Montenegro | Slovenia | Croatia | North Macedonia |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. | Sig. |
| | | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta | Coefficients Beta |
| <i>Model (group 1)</i> | | R=0.439 r²=0.211 | R=0.561 r²=0.322 | R=0.661 r²=0.357 | R=0.423 r²=0.278 | R=0.074 r²=0.027 | R=0.046 r²=0.022 | R=0.299 r²=0.131 |
| Cultural openness* | Ethnocentrism** | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.064 | 0.074 | 0.002 |
| | | -0.439 | -0.561 | -0.661 | 0.423 | -0.074 | 0.046 | -0.299 |
| <i>Model (group 2)</i> | | R= 0.589 r²=0.347 | R=0.411 r²=0.239 | R=0.784 r²=0.541 | R=0.459 r²=0.153 | R=0.248 r²=0.124 | R=0.125 r²=0.097 | R=0.481 r²=0.299 |
| Cultural openness* | Animosity** | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.041 | 0.054 | 0.000 |
| | | -0.589 | -0.411 | -0.784 | 0.459 | 0.248 | -0.125 | -0.481 |

*independent variable

**dependent variable

Source: Author's research

Results presented in Table 9 indicate that most of the employed models are statistically significant, except for the case of Slovenia (model from group 1) and Croatia (both groups). In the statistically significant models, cultural openness as an independent variable predicts the variance of ethnocentrism and animosity at different levels, ranging from 12.4% in Slovenia (Model group 2) to 54.1% in the Republic of Srpska (Model group 2).

Regarding the impact of cultural openness, the results clearly show a negative association between cultural openness and ethnocentrism in most of the analyzed countries. The strongest negative effects were recorded in the Republic of Srpska ($\beta = -0.661$), Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ($\beta = -0.561$), Republic of Serbia ($\beta = -0.439$), and North Macedonia ($\beta = -0.299$) suggesting that individuals with higher levels of cultural openness—those open to other cultures, ideas, and lifestyles—are less likely to exhibit ethnocentric attitudes. However, in Slovenia and Croatia, the relationship is not statistically significant, which may point to specific cultural-political factors in these countries that moderate this relationship. For instance, relative stability and a higher level of European integration in Slovenia and Croatia may contribute to normalized intercultural contact, thereby making

the protective role of cultural openness in reducing ethnocentrism less pronounced.

An interesting deviation is observed in Montenegro, where, unlike other countries in the analysis, a positive relationship between cultural openness and ethnocentrism was recorded ($\beta = 0.423$). This finding may appear contradictory, as most theoretical frameworks expect a negative link – that higher cultural openness corresponds to lower ethnocentrism. However, this peculiarity may reflect complex identity dynamics within Montenegrin society. We assume that individuals who declaratively show openness towards other cultures simultaneously strongly value and emphasize their national identity. In other words, openness to diversity does not exclude a pronounced sense of pride and attachment to one's culture but, for certain groups, may even reinforce national identity reaffirmation when encountering other cultures. Additionally, cross-analysis and contextual considerations suggest that these respondents are culturally curious but also express a need to preserve and affirm local values, which statistically manifests as this positive association. This result aligns with the findings of Vora et al. (2019), who argue that individuals may develop ethnocentric attitudes even through cultural openness.

When examining the relationship between cultural openness and animosity toward countries with which there are political or economic tensions, a predominantly negative association is also observed in most countries. The strongest negative effects were noted in the Republic of Srpska ($\beta = -0.784$), Republic of Serbia ($\beta = -0.589$), North Macedonia ($\beta = -0.481$) and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ($\beta = -0.411$). These results indicate that individuals who are open to other cultures are less likely to feel hostility, intolerance, or resistance toward other countries, even when historical or current tensions exist between them.

An interesting exception is Montenegro, where, contrary to expectations, the beta coefficient is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.459$), which might indicate more complex relationships between cultural orientation and foreign policy attitudes in that country. In this case, cultural openness is not necessarily associated with tolerance toward political adversaries but rather with greater exposure to information that strengthens political stances and potential animosity. In Slovenia and Croatia, the link between cultural openness and animosity is weak and borderline significant (Slovenia) or insignificant (Croatia), possibly indicating a more politically neutral public discourse or lower emotional engagement of citizens with foreign policy issues.

In conclusion, these findings confirm that cultural openness is a strong psychological predictor of lower ethnocentrism and reduced animosity, especially in contexts where political tensions and national issues are highly present. However, the cultural and social context of each country may modify this relationship, and thus the results should be interpreted in light of local specificities.

CONCLUSION

The previously presented results indicate that consumer ethnocentrism is an extremely complex phenomenon influenced by numerous factors. The highest level of ethnocentrism was recorded among respondents from the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska, followed by a moderate level of ethnocentrism among respondents from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, while the lowest level of ethnocentric attitudes was observed among respondents from North Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia (H_0). Based on the analysis results, several important conclusions related to the tested hypotheses can be drawn:

1. The results show that in most of the observed countries (except in the Republic of Serbia

and Croatia), there are moderate but statistically significant gender differences in ethnocentrism, with men more frequently expressing stronger ethnocentric attitudes. This suggests a possible link between traditional gender roles and expressions of national loyalty (H_1);

2. In countries such as Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia and Montenegro longer stays abroad negatively correlate with ethnocentrism, suggesting that intercultural contact may reduce feelings of superiority toward one's culture. However, in some regions like the Republic of Srpska and Serbia, positive correlations indicate that time spent abroad may reinforce attachment to the homeland, especially among respondents from politically pressured territories (H_2);
3. Statistically significant positive correlations in Slovenia show that respondents who have stayed abroad are more likely to positively evaluate foreign products. Cross-tabulation revealed that these individuals often purchased foreign products as gifts or souvenirs, implying exposure to foreign offerings and the formation of positive attitudes toward them (H_3);
4. There is a statistically significant relationship between consumer types and the evaluation of foreign products used in their country, with the strongest positive association in Slovenia, Croatia and North Macedonia. The negative correlations were recorded in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska. Additional analysis determined that the most positive evaluations came from innovative and brand-oriented consumers who choose foreign products out of curiosity and perceived quality (H_4);
5. Consumers exhibiting stronger ethnocentric attitudes also express higher levels of animosity toward products from countries with which their home country has political or economic conflicts. The correlation between ethnocentrism and animosity is particularly strong in Slovenia, Republic of Srpska, Republic of Serbia, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, indicating that national identification and negative feelings toward "hostile" countries go hand in hand (H_5);
6. Regression analysis shows that dogmatism significantly predicts both ethnocentric and animosity attitudes. The strongest influence of dogmatism on ethnocentrism was observed in the Republic of Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Serbia.

Its effect on animosity was pronounced in Serbia and the Republic of Srpska. These results confirm that rigid and ideologically closed beliefs encourage not only the glorification of one's culture but also the rejection of "hostile" nations (H_6);

7. Cultural openness significantly and negatively predicts ethnocentrism and animosity, especially in the Republic of Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of Serbia. However, Montenegro represents an exception, where a positive association between cultural openness and both ethnocentrism and animosity was observed, which may indicate a specific local context where openness to different cultures does not exclude strong identification with one's culture, and where openness to other cultures does not necessarily imply negative attitudes toward countries with which political or economic tensions exist (H_7).

The observed trends indicate that ethnocentrism and animosity are multidimensional phenomena influenced by psychological, cultural, and socio-political factors. Ethnocentrism is particularly pronounced in countries that have been and continue to be subjected to strong political and economic pressures, such as the Republic of Srpska and Serbia, especially in the Kosovo and Metohija region. While dogmatism and low cultural openness increase the likelihood of rejecting foreign products and peoples, international experience, innovativeness, and openness to diversity contribute to understanding, tolerance, and acceptance. Regional differences highlight the importance of local context – especially in territories under political or economic pressure – suggesting that politics, history, and collective memory still strongly shape consumer attitudes in the Balkans.

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