Simple, Minimalistic & Unique

How to Market Swedish Fashion Abroad

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Turn back to the front page and take a thoughtful look at the picture. This image illustrates the essence of Swedish fashion and Sweden's country image in a simple way. The young girl and boy that shares a sweater conveys the equality and consideration that is associated with Sweden but also the modern and trendy Sweden. The black and white combined with a simple sweater and a seemingly natural look of the two portrays how Swedish design is perceived as sleek, stylish and minimalistic. Using a simple setting and the down-to-earth tone of the image wraps up how Sweden's country image is not only perceived but also showing us the heritage of Swedish fashion.

Front page photography by Andreas Öhlund.

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We hope you enjoy this contribution and find it useful. Enjoy your reading!

<center>
Gothenburg, January 2013

Randa Omran & Tobias Sernhede
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Abstract

In the struggle of being visible and providing brands with a niche of their own in an increasingly homogeneous and competitive globalised market, marketers can make use of the brand's country image or nation brand to help differentiate it on an international market (SI, 2010a). The aim of this thesis is to bring forth the key attributes and aspects of the Swedish country image to be used when marketing Swedish fashion apparel in Europe. The research model chosen, is based on Roth and Romeos Product Country Match model (PCM) and the nation brand of Sweden is studied through the corporative brand platform as set by the Swedish promotion abroad (NSU) in cooperation with the Swedish Institute (SI) (Roth and Romeo, 1992; SI, 2010b). Through applying the PCM model, key attributes of the Swedish image can be utilised to differentiate and strengthen Swedish fashion brands among the rest. Such a positive impact will not only serve the individual brands, but also the Swedish economy overall. In order to fulfil the aim of the thesis, three focus groups were conducted with Europeans between the ages of 19 and 27, in which they were asked questions regarding their perception of what is typically Swedish, as well as the attributes of importance when purchasing fashion apparel. Our findings imply that Sweden has a positive image in general and in specific once related to fashion apparel. There is a match between the aspects of importance to European respondents in terms of buying clothes, and the key attributes of Sweden. Swedish fashion apparel is perceived to attain high quality and good design, while design and quality is perceived as important to the respondents when purchasing clothes. This high match implies that Swedish country image or nation brand, as it can also be called, can benefit fashion apparel brands in their marketing in Europe. Since Swedish design is considered positive and regarded as being: minimalistic, stylish, unique, organised and ingenious, and Swedish quality which is also perceived as positive is considered price worthy, then fashion apparel brands can benefit from accentuating these aspects of the Swedish country image and nation brand.

Keywords: Swedish fashion, International Marketing, Country Image, Nation Brand, Country of Origin (COO), Product Country Match (PCM)

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1 Introduction

This chapter aims at introducing the reader to this study. The introduction will map out the topic of interest to this thesis and explain the fundamentals of this research on which the problem background and problem discussion are based. Further follows the problem background and discussion in which concepts of importance to this study are mapped out. This chapter will be concluded with a summarisation of the main concepts of importance, a distinct and clear aim and the research questions on which this research is established.

Globalisation has increased competition around the world in which countries have gained associations, attributes and images in the same way as brands. There is a competition in between countries in terms of consumers, foreign investors, the level of tourism the country attracts, and the emphasis media provides the nation (Yasin and Osman, 2007). It is through this understanding that it becomes of utter importance for nations to nurture their country brand as well as work on its improvement in order to benefit the country's economy and uphold its position globally (Yasin and Osman, 2007).

The board for Swedish promotion abroad (NSU), has in cooperation with the Swedish institute (SI), mapped out an image of Sweden to aspire to by Swedish companies, organisations and institutions (SI, 2010a). The idea is that through associating the companies, brands and organisations with values which are typically Swedish such as being Progressive, or Swedish core values such as openness, authenticity, rethinking and thoughtfulness, the companies can lever from the already existing values prescribed as Swedish and benefit from them (SI, 2010b, pp.2). This behaviour is entitled Nation Branding; a term used and referred to in marketing and promotion industries (Ying, 2006), but when put into relation to fashion apparel as a product category, it can also be referred to as the country image or a country of origin effect (COO) (Roth and Romeo, 1996).

Governmental organisations such as the Swedish Institute (SI) and the partially governmental organisation of the Swedish trade council through its merge with Invest Sweden Agency (Invest Sweden, 2013). They are amongst the Swedish organisations which proceed from a corporative brand-platform in terms of strengthening the Swedish country image, i.e. the Swedish Nation brand, in their work (SI, 2010a). However, a strong Swedish brand is as important to the Swedish economy overall, as it is to individual Swedish fashion apparel brands since companies can lever the positive associations and attributes of the country image to their products (SI, 2010b). In order to do so successfully, it becomes important to gain knowledge on which aspects of the Swedish country image that is of important to highlight and accentuate in the specific product category of fashion apparel.

1.1 Problem Background

Swedish fashion and fashion brands have increased their selling all around the world (Thellenberg, 2012). The acceleration and speed of the number of Swedish fashion and fashion brands on the international market during the last decade has led to Swedish fashion to be called a wonder (SI, 2012). Sweden has in this way had an increasingly influential role in the fashion sphere in the last ten years:

> *"In the space of a decade, Sweden has emerged from seeming sartorial abyss to purveyor of understated, sophisticated cool"* (Rankin, 2008)

Internationally known, Swedish fashion brands with labels such as Acne Jeans, J. Lindeberg, Nudie Jeans, Fillipa K, Cheap Monday, WeSC, Whyred, Tiger of Sweden and more have all contributed to what has been referred to as the "Swedish fashion wonder" (SI, 2012).

Swedish fashion has also been acknowledged as unique as an interesting statement made by Yvan Rodic, a fashion blogger and photographer based in London was cited in an article in CNN 2012.

> *"Sweden is the only country that has created a unique fashion aesthetic that's recognisable around the world."* (Rodic, 2012)

With this background it seems like Swedish fashion is here to stay and Sweden has risen from an almost non existing player on the international fashion market to a major key player on the fashion scene. Despite Sweden's rather low population and size in comparison with other countries worldwide, the Swedish fashion industry keeps pace with global trends, but without giving into the mainstream fashion and keeps a distance to allow more space for individual creativity (Quinn, 2012). All this previously mentioned information on Swedish fashion brands, can indicate that Sweden as a country is more associated with fashion today, than it was 10 years ago.

In terms of fashion apparel brands, many of the most well-known, high end fashion brands are European. Names such as Gucci, Prada, Fendi and Chanel all have European origin (Demir, 2012). During the annual Swedish fashion week, Swedish fashion was perceived as growing, however, in comparison with other European fashion brands, Swedish fashion has a way to go in order of being referred to as among the best in Europe. Swedish radio has compared Swedish fashion brands with some of the most high end European brands through referring to their cities of origin.

> *"While not quite up there with London, Milan and Paris, the importance and attention directed towards Swedish fashion Week is growing with scores of international fashion journalists attending over the four days providing worldwide exposure for the Swedish fashion labels."* (Sveriges Radio, 2013)

While Swedish fashion is on its way upwards, globalisation is increasing, causing a tightened competition between companies on the international arena and Swedish fashion apparel brands are also affected by this (Yasin and Osman, 2007). Since the competition in between fashion brands in Europe is evident due to Sweden competing with other European well-known brands, it becomes of utter importance to map out efficient marketing strategies for Swedish fashion brands in Europe. Effective marketing strategies are one of the measures Swedish fashion brands can use to improve as well as uphold their position abroad. An evident marketing strategy in international marketing is the use of the nation brand (Yasin and Osman, 2007), to help differentiate and strengthen the product brand; a synergy effect referred to as Co-Branding in the marketing industry (Grossman, 1997).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Since Swedish fashion brands have escalated in number on the international market, it becomes of utter importance to map out efficient marketing strategies abroad. Evident marketing strategies used in international marketing are the use of the nation brand as a differentiator, as well as the use of country of origin effects, or the country image as it also can be called (Yasin and Osman, 2007; Roth and Romeo, 1992).

Theorists have long been studying the effect of country image or the country of origin effects on various products. The main takeout is that people can perceive products from a specific country in different ways due to their personal view on the country's history, politics, culture, and their previous interactions with the country or with people from that country. Thus, peoples associations, stereotypes, values, attitudes as well as knowledge about a country can affect their perception on products related to that specific country (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

The relationship between the product and the country can be based on various grounds. The product can have a "made-in" label of a specific country (Khalid and Baker, 1998), it can be branded in a way providing associations to a certain country, or it can be labelled in a way that adheres to a specific country. Either way, based on previous studies in this field, it is evident that consumers value and perceive products differently once a country is associated to the product (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

It is argued by Roth and Romeo that certain product categories have a better match with certain countries than others. A country with specific country features can be considered better suited and provides a more favourable match to a certain product category than others. Thus, depending on the country, the country image can stand for a variety of things, both positive as well as negative to the specific product category at hand (Roth and Romeo, 1992). This information can adequately be used by companies choosing to pursue international marketing since it accentuates the importance of a high match between the product category and the country image at task.

Referring back to our case of Swedish fashion apparel brands on the international arena, it becomes apparent that the Swedish country image and nation brand, based on the previous information and previous theories on the subject, does affect consumers' perception of the fashion

apparel provided and/or sold (SI, 2010b). Further, for Swedish fashion brands to succeed internationally, it becomes of utter importance to achieve a thorough understanding of the relationship between consumer perception of the Swedish country image and their perception of fashion apparel. Once an understanding of this relationship is achieved, it becomes easier for the Swedish fashion apparel brands to know which aspects and features of the Swedish country image they should highlight and accentuate to gain benefit in their marketing to consumers in Europe.

With the previously mentioned in mind, it becomes apparent that in case it is found beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to take use of the Swedish country image when marketing the brands in Europe, marketers as well as the Swedish nation brand can gain from this information as it can create synergy effects of co-branding.

Marketers can benefit from knowing that the Swedish image is useful for the fashion brands and use this information when conducting appropriate marketing strategies abroad. The Swedish nation brand, on the other hand, can gain from the fashion apparel brands usage of the Swedish image in their marketing strategies abroad, since the Swedish image can become strengthened and more visible on the international arena.

Thus, to investigate whether and in what way the use of the Swedish nation brand is beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands when marketing themselves abroad is important for marketers interested in good marketing strategies as well as governmental organisations interested in strengthening the Swedish nation brand.

1.3 Aim

The aim of our thesis is thus to investigate whether and in what way the use of Swedish nation brand is beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands when marketing themselves in Europe. In case it is beneficiary, the aim is to map out which aspects of the Swedish country image that most beneficial to highlight when marketing in Europe.

1.4 Delimitations

While it is of importance for fashion apparel brands to gain knowledge on what to emphasise in regards to the Swedish nation brand internationally; an international study would have required investigation among consumers worldwide, and since this is not possible neither due to time resources, the authors have chosen to focus on the continent of Europe. This study is hence limited to regard the Swedish fashion brands´ marketing in Europe.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Is it beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to market themselves as Swedish in Europe?

2. What aspects of the Swedish country image are beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to use when marketing themselves in Europe?

1.6 Essential Conceptualisations

Country of Origin (COO): The country of origin is a denomination of a products or companies engagement with a nation. It is based on the prominent stereotypes connected to the "made-in" label of a product or company. Companies and brands can thus work on either being associated with a nation from which they originate, or use marketing strategies which help market them as deriving from other parts of the world. The country of origin effect is thus the effect of associating a product, brand or company with nation's characteristics. It has, amongst theorists been defined as "Information pertaining to where the product is made" (Chattlas, et al., 2008).

The "made in" label which country of origin relates to, can refer to two various notions (Essoussi and Merunka, 2007):

Country of Design (COD): The country of design is referred to as the country in which a product is designed (Chen and Su, 2011).

Country of Manufacture (COM): The country of manufacture is explained as the country in which a product has been manufactured (Chen and Su, 2011).

Nation brand: The rich nations of the world are actively working on building and strengthening their Nation brands to stimulate foreign investors, increase tourism, improve trade and uphold stable and successful relationships with other nations worldwide (SI, 2010b). Positive nation brands can function as a "national insurance policy", as stated by Simon Anholt, from which a country can gain value and which can help provide the nation with economic stability (Anholt, 2002). Simon Anholt summarises the Nation brand and portrays it as "Using modern marketing techniques to reshape public opinion of a country" (Anholt, 2002; Kahn, 2006).

Co-Branding: Creating synergies in between two brands can be titled as co-branding. The two brands can thus benefit from each other's associations and attributes and create stronger brands as a result of this type of synergy (Grossman, 1997). Since Co-Branding refers to synergies in between two brands; national brands, countries of origin and country images can adequately be perceived as brands in the same way as product brands to acquire synergy effects. Hence, a national brand and country image can acquire synergy effects from product brands such as fashion apparel.

Country Image: Is the image of the nation brand from the eyes of the consumers. The way people perceive a brand is what determines a brands image and thus, a country image is the image of the nation brand in the perception of the people (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

Product Country Match model (PCM): This model, provided by Roth and Romeo is a tool for investigation on the level of match in between a certain country image and a product category. Since different product categories can have varying degrees of match in relation to a country´s image, this model can be used to map out the aspects of a country image that is beneficial to the product category of interest (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework which constitutes the foundation of this thesis. In order to answer the research questions presented in the previous chapter, the theories presented will be used as tools to form the questions from which conclusions will be drawn. Some of the theories are used to acquire an understanding of the subject of Nation Branding, Country Image, Country of Origin, Co-Branding and Product branding; while other theories will set the base of the questions, such as the Product Country Match model.

There are several interrelated factors in this theoretical chapter which are all influencing each other. Since many denominations will be used, to better explain the relationship between them, the authors have provided an overview of their relationship in figure 2.1.
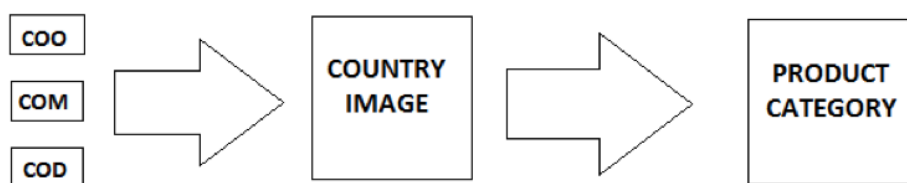
Figure 2.1. COO, Country Image, Product Category and their relation

The first part will discuss the meaning of Country of Origin (hereafter denominated COO), Country of Manufacture (hereafter denominated COM) and Country of Design (hereafter denominated COD), in relation to their effect on consumers' perception of products from any given country. The three factors combined can be perceived as a cluster and an aggregate name for the three factors, once put into relation to the way consumers perceive products, is that of Country Image.

After explaining this first part of the theoretical relationship we will turn our focus on the relation between country image and products from any given country. Since much research have been made in this field with various approaches, an aggregated list of previous research will be provided to show the points of differentiation and similarities between previously conducted research in this field.

The next part is about the Swedish brand, how it is perceived abroad and how Sweden wants its brand to be perceived abroad. This chapter will finish up with a short theory segment about Co-Branding, in order to pinpoint how to use the Swedish associations while marketing a Swedish fashion apparel brand abroad.

The last part will map out one very important theoretical tool for understanding Country Image and Product-Category Matches. This tool of investigation will be explained in detail whereas what it means and how it has been used by its founders Roth and Romeo to portray the level of fit between product-categories and consumers perception of countries through the country's country image (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

2.1 Country of Origin (COO)

As the aim of this research revolves around the use of the Swedish nation brand and thus country branding, this theory on COO is important to comprehend since it will explain the basic function of COO and its effect on country image. There have been several different definitions of COO over the years as it has evolved and changed as new theories and research have been conducted. One such definition, which has changed is that the COO is where the headquarters of the company and/or where the brand is geographically located (Johansson et al., 1985; Ozomer and Cavusgil, 1991). Khalid and Baker present an overview of several authors´ definitions of COO (1998). One of them is that COO refers to "the final point of manufacture which can be the same as the headquarters for a company" or where the product is manufactured and/or assembled. Khalid and Baker also present an explanation of the contrast between the labels of "made in" and "assembled in" (1998). An example is presented where Sony, a Japanese company, label their products as "made in Japan" when the products are manufactured in Japan, but for example, when they are assembled and manufactured in Singapore they label them "assembled in Singapore".

One of the forerunners in the field of COO, Nagashima, conducted two surveys in the late 60's about consumers' attitudes towards countries from where products origin that was presented in an article by Nagashima (1970). Nagashima´s studies conclude that the certain stereotypes that consumers attach to a product of a specific country are of great importance to understand when preceding international marketing. The way consumers perceive a certain country can affect the way they perceive products and/or services from that specific country. Nagashima describes COO as the perceptions, stereotypes, reputations and images that are associated with the products of a country (Nagashima, 1970). It is thus argued that a country's politics, history and characteristic's affect consumer attitudes towards products and services from that specific country. (Nagashima, 2006).

Zhang (1997) argues that COO is an important factor in international marketing. Zhang also argues that there are several characteristics of the consumer which affect the effect of COO. Education is one example, since consumers with less education showed more aversion towards foreign products. Also gender had an effect on the way people perceive the effects from COO. This effect does also vary in different countries.

These different factors which are described to affect the COO are also compiled by Khalid and Baker, where they further discuss demographics and stereotyping as influencers of COO (Khalid and Baker, 1998). According to several researchers, there is a difference in attitudes regarding foreign products and COO between males and females (Good and Huddleston, 1995; Heslop and Wall, 1985; Lawrence, 1992; Sharma, et al., 1995). Females in general, show a greater positive attitude towards domestic products in contrast to males. But in contradiction, Dornoff (1974) found that gender was an unimportant factor and Schooler (1971) explains that "females rated foreign products significantly higher than males". Regarding age, Schooler (1971) and Smith (1993) says that old people are viewing foreign products more positively than younger people. Another demographic affecting COO is education and authors such as Schooler (1971), Anderson

and Cunningham (1972) as well as Good and Huddleston (1995), has shown in their studies that the higher level of education, the more positive are the attitudes toward foreign products. In consensus to it, has been found that "as the education level increased, the level of consumer ethnocentricity displayed by the respondents decreased" (Khalid and Baker, 1998), where ethnocentricity is about the belief of superiority in one's own ethnic group. Income level is also related to positive attitudes towards foreign products and the higher the income, the more likely it is that a consumer buys a foreign product (Wall et. al, 1990; Good and Huddleston, 1995; Sharma et. al, 1995).

However, this has been challenged and other studies show that income is not of significant value to the attitudes of foreign products (Han, 1990; McLain et al, 1991). Another influencing factor on the effect of COO is stereotyping. Nagashima (1970) studies showed that Japanese businessmen ranked consistently products made in Germany highest, but also products from the United Kingdom, the USA, Japan and France where ranked high. But this stereotype effect on the COO is changing overtime as shown in Nagashima's study from 1977 where the products from Japan, West German and France were viewed more positively in contrast to the study published 1970 by Nagashima.

There are several studies done on this subject and they are in most cases showing a consistent result of that stereotyping has an effect on COO although it varies from countries, products, brands and product categories (Nagashima, 1970; Etzel and Walker, 1974; Darling and Kraft, 1977). Stereotyping's effect on country of origin is also to a great degree affected by patriotism where research show that consumers in the US, Japan, France, Poland, Russia, Turkey and Canada all prefer their domestic products more than foreign (Johansson et al., 1994; Nagashima, 1970; Baumgartner et al., 1978; Narayna, 1981; Wall and Heslop, 1986; Gudum and Kavas, 1996; Good and Huddleston, 1995). Also consumers in Europe generally show a greater positive attitude towards products made in Europe (Schweiger et al., 1995).

2.1.1 Country of Manufacture (COM) and Country of Design (COD)

Since the meaning of COO can be understood in several ways, it becomes important to map out the main ways of understanding COO. COO can be divided into two types except COO, namely Country of Design (COD) and Country of Manufacture (COM) (Essoussi and Merunka, 2007; Chen and Su, 2011; Insch and McBride, 2000; Acharya and Elliott, 2001; Hamzaouy and Merunka, 2006).

Chen and Su (2011) explains this division by "The proliferation of hybrid products in international markets has encouraged a recent research partitioning of the global country-of-origin concept into COD and country-of-manufacture (COM)". COM is also sometimes abbreviated the country of assembly (COA) (Insch and McBride, 2000; Acharya and Elliott, 2001). There is also a third way of dividing COO proposed by Insch and McBride (2000) and it is about labelling it the Country of Parts (COP), or which country is manufacturing certain parts in a complete product.

What sets COM apart from COO, can be explained by the way German Mercedes manufactured cars in Brazil and the way French Renault manufactured cars in Romania (Essoussi and Merunka, 2007).

Although the globalisation of the production, where a product can consist of several parts from various countries make the product's COO less clear for the consumer; it still gives managers more control over the production and make the production more cost-effective (Essoussi and Merunka, 2007). Insch and Mcbride (2000), suggests that COO should be examined on a product-by-product basis although it may not be applied to all countries. There are also differences between the effect of COO regarding products with focus on design or function. In general consumers think that for private goods, such as televisions, the COM is more important, and when it comes to products with symbolic meanings such as cars, the COD is more important (Hamzaoui and Merunka, 2006). It is also of high importance that the COD is transferred to the brand image and the COM congruity is important as the consumers' evaluation of the products decrease as it becomes harder for the consumer to identify the COM (Hamzaoui and Merunka, 2007)

2.2 Country Image: An Aggregated Appellation

Since the phenomenon of COO can be understood in various ways, an aggregated appellation of country image is chosen, not the least since it is central to the research model of this thesis which will rest upon the PCM model that will be explained in forthcoming sections of this theoretical chapter.

The phenomenon of COO can be studied and explained through different lenses. Narayana explained that "the aggregate image for any particular country's product refers to the entire connotative field associated with that country's product offerings, as perceived by consumers" (Narayana, 1981, pp. 32). Aaker portrays the COO as "a non-product related characteristic". He also describes how the historical background of a brand, together with its origin, can be sufficient for developing brand associations. It is also argued that brand managers can use the brands origin and communicate it to make it more unique (Aaker, 1996).

Another well-used definition of the COO is that it is "the impact that cognitive, affective, and normative associations with a particular country have on consumer attitudes" (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). Although all the previous perspectives on perceiving and defining country of origin are important to bear in mind for this study, the wide range of denominations make it of high importance to choose one most suitable appellation while regarding the phenomena of country of origin.

People can perceive products from a specific country in different ways due to their personal view on the country's history, politics, culture, and their previous interactions with the country or with people from that country. It is also affected by the way they perceive the specific countries products, ideas of how the products from that country would be etc. The relationship between the countries of origin in relation to the products from that specific country can thus be affected by many variables. The definition of country image is a collected appellation to all these

varying descriptions on country of origin in this theoretical chapter. All previously mentioned perspectives are possible to collect under one name: Country image (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

Roth and Romeo (1992) also define country image as "the overall perception consumers' form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perceptions of the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses." A study conducted by Han and Terpstra (1988) showed that the rating of a country's image is not consistent in all dimensions, as for example, a country can have a high rating in design but not in workmanship or vice versa. "This suggests that country image is specific to the dimensions being measured" (Roth and Romeo, 1992). Han and Terpstra (1988) also found out that the rating of a country's image generally tend to be consistent in a product category.

2.2.1 Previous Research Through the Lens of Country Image

Previous studies in the field have touched upon several outcomes of relevance for this thesis. Eight studies assessed the issue of country image. Due to various scaling techniques used in the previous studies and thus a lack of data comparability, it will become difficult to compare the results in any other way than through a qualitative estimation, therefore a qualitative summarisation of the previous studies in this field is put forth in the figure 2.2 as provided by Roth and Romeo in their article (Roth and Romeo, 1992).

TABLE I
Country Image Dimensions

Study	Country Image Dimensions	Production & Marketing Image Dimensions
Nagashima (1970, 1977)	Price & Value	
	Service & Engineering	*Innovation*
	Advertising & Reputation	*Prestige*
	Design & Style	*Design*
	Consumer's Profile	
White (1979)	Expensive	
	Price	
	Technicality	*Innovation*
	Quality	
	Workmanship	*Workmanship*
	Inventiveness	*Innovation*
	Selection	
	Serviceability	
	Advertising	
	Durability	
	Reliability	
	Brand recognition	*Prestige*
Naryana (1981)	Quality	*Workmanship*
	Recognition	
	Prestige	*Prestige*
	Production Form	*Innovation*
	Expensiveness	
	Popularity	
	Functionality	*Design*
Cattin, Jolibert & Lohnes (1982)	Pricing	
	Reliability	
	Workmanship	*Workmanship*
	Technicality	*Innovation*
	Performance	
Jaffe & Nebenzahl (1984)	Product-technology	*Innovation*
	Marketing	*Prestige*
	Price	
Johansson & Nebenzhal (1986)	Economy	
	Status	*Prestige*
Han & Terpstra (1988)	Technical Advancements	*Innovation*
	Prestige	*Prestige*
	Workmanship	*Workmanship*
	Economy	
	Serviceability	

Figure 2.2. Previous Research of Country Image Dimensions Table. (Roth and Romeo, 1992)

The studies included in this figure all relate to various countries and thus, country images, as well as a wide array of various products and thus product categories. While the previous researchers have chosen to study the country image in relation to products from various angles using approaches such as price, reputation, functionality and popularity amongst many things, the qualitative review of the eight previously conducted studies conclude four dimensions which are most common through all studies and related to the way consumers perceive a countries marketing strengths and weaknesses. These four dimensions were those of: innovativeness, prestige, design and workmanship. Innovativeness regards the use of new technology; Prestige involved reputation, status, level of luxury and exclusivity; Design regarded the style and the variety in appearance and Workmanship included the dimensions of quality, reliability and manufacture amongst other things. To regard the previous studies conducted through the lens of these four common dimensions is positive, not the least since it can work as a base for future research regarding the match between product categories and country image.

Although previous research have used a single measure of product quality while studying the effect of country of origin on products (Crawford and Garland, 1988; Hong and Wyer, 1989; Howard, 1989), it is of high relevance to point out that a country image consists of several dimensions.

2.3 The Brand of Sweden

This part is about how nations can be seen as individual brands and in particular how the nation brand of Sweden is perceived and maintained. The relevance of this theory is to give the focus group credibility by comparing their view of Sweden and how Sweden is perceived in the rest of the world, with how Sweden wants to be perceived. How Sweden wants to be perceived is overseen by the committee of Sweden's promotion abroad (SI, 2010a). But also, in order to know what associations the Swedish nation brand can give when using it in marketing. This section is divided in two separate parts. One is about the international Country Brand Index which measures how different countries around the world are ranked according to different categories, and the other is about how Sweden and some of its interest groups want to portray the Swedish country image and thus nation brand in order to make a unified marketing of Sweden.

2.3.1 Country Brand Index

The Country Brand Index is a global study of nation brands. It is published annually by FutureBrand which is a part of McCann Worldgroup (Futurebrand, 2012a;2012b). Futurebrand's Country Brand Index holds several international awards and is also acknowledged by the Swedish Institute (SI, 2012). The Country Brand Index measures and ranks global perceptions of the world's nations in regards to factors such as economic vitality, cultures, industries and public policy initiatives. The methodology behind this index is based on a collection of quantitative data from 3600 opinion-formers, frequent international business and leisure travellers in 18 countries around the world. This in addition to "a carefully selected and diverse panel of experts in policy and governance, international relations, economics and trade, international law, national security, energy and climate change, urban and regional planning, immigration and the media" (Futurebrand, 2012b). The quantitative data collection is supported by a hierarchical decision model (HDM) which has been developed by FutureBrand and can be seen in figure 2.3.
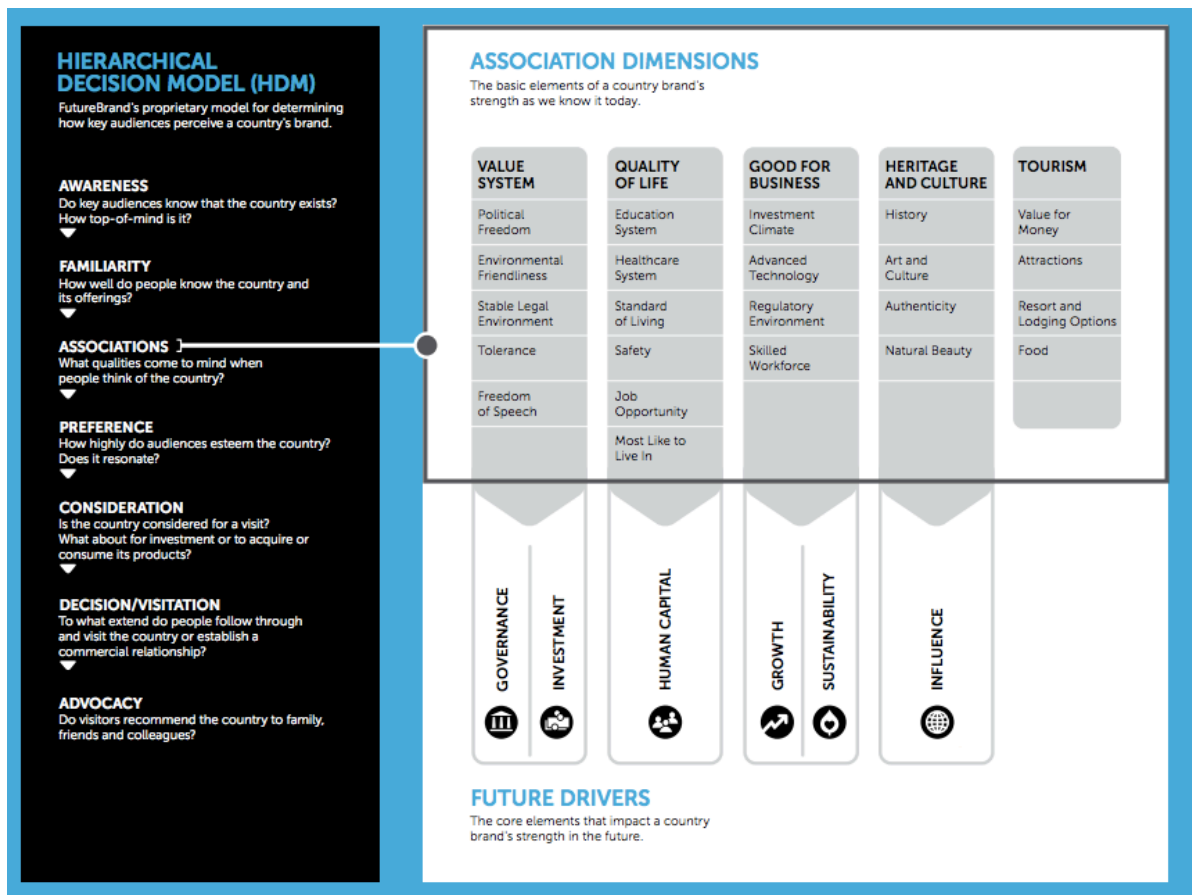
(Figure 2.3. Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM) (Futurebrand, 2012b)

In this model (figure 2.4), FutureBrand focus on five categories that FutureBrand believes are the basic elements for strengthening a country's brand. Those are the Value System, Quality of Life, Good for Business, Heritage and Culture and also Tourism. There are also six future drivers, that are related to a corresponding basic element, which are considered to have impact on the country's brand strength in the future. In this year's Country Brand Index, 2012/2013, Sweden is ranked on

fourth place which is a rise from last year's seventh place. Sweden is considered to be a global symbol of stability in a tumultuous world and this description Sweden shares with Germany. The three countries that are ranked higher than Sweden are, from first to third place, Switzerland, Canada and Japan. Sweden is ranking very high in Value System (2nd), Quality of Life (4th) and Good for Business (12th) as is evident in figure 2.4. However, Sweden is ranked a first place in several sub-categories, such as Freedom of Speech, Education System and Healthcare System.
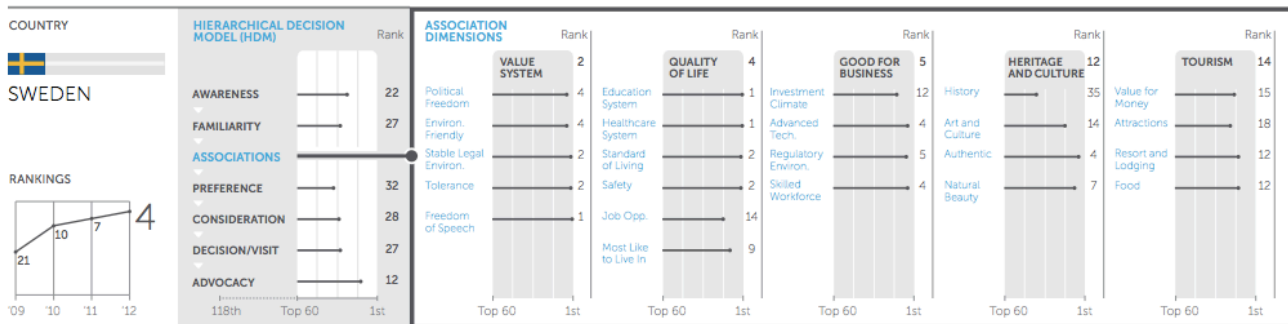
(Figure 2.4. Sweden's Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM) (Futurebrand, 2012b)

2.3.2 How Sweden Wants its Nation Brand to be Perceived

The committee of Sweden's promotion abroad (Nämnden för Sverigefrämjande i utlandet) and hereafter denominated NSU, consists of the Swedish Export council, Invest Sweden, the Swedish Ministry of Economy (Näringsdepartementet), the Swedish Institute (SI), the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Utrikesdepartementet) and Visit Sweden (SI, 2010a). NSU's main goal is to develop and create a common platform in order to promote the Swedish nation brand abroad, the first version of this platform was created during 2005-2006. The platform is on the first hand aimed at people whom has an assignment to represent Sweden abroad. The main reason to have a common platform for marketing the Swedish nation brand is to have a common guiding star for long and short term prioritisation, a more effective cooperation between the members of NSU and also a way to evaluate and follow up on the Swedish nation brand. The common perception of Sweden as being a country of good enough mentality, has been overthrown in this platform and rather NSU's research shows that Sweden is looked upon as a new thinking, open and progressive country (SI, 2010c). The Swedish country image is based upon a combination of common values and the main value is that Sweden is a progressive country that focuses on the environment and people. In this, there are four characteristic traits that further develop the meaning of Sweden as a progressive country. These characteristic traits are called core values, and these are described here in the way that NSU has chosen to present them (SI, 2010c).

New Thinking:

New thinking is about seeing things in a new perspective; to see possibilities and also believe in a better future. Examples on how this is reflected by the Swedish nation brand and its country image, are that Sweden has a very knowledge-intensive industry and society. Sweden also has paternity leave. Furthermore Sweden has renowned designers, fashion and a large music industry.

Openness:

Openness is to embrace the free mind and the differences among people, cultures and lifestyles. Openness is also about giving the individual the right of thoughts and opinions, as well as letting people move around freely in the nature. Some examples of Swedish openness are open-minded and travelling people, the Swedish right of public access (allemansrätten) and the freedom of information legislation.

Consideration:

Consideration is about caring for each individual. Offering safety and security but also respecting everyone and not put anyone out in the cold. Consideration is also about feeling emphatic and sharing and caring about everyone. An example of Swedish consideration is the effort in becoming more equal in regards to gender and cultures. The equality ombudsman. Also giving everyone the opportunity to learn in all ages. But Sweden's consideration is not limited to its border, as Sweden also has an international involvement and contributes with both aid and peace work.

Authenticity:

Authenticity is about being natural and simple. Also, authenticity is about being honest, trustworthy and informal. Some example of Swedish authenticity are a strong quality traditions, living traditions and culture legacy, informal style and trustworthiness in business, close relation to Sweden's nature and season, northern Europe's last wilderness, high etiquette in food managing and treatment of livestock.

All these four core values, together with the image of a progressive Sweden, is what NSU perceives Sweden as, and it is also what they want marketing efforts of Sweden´s nation brand to be based upon.

2.4 Co-Branding

The link between the Swedish nation brand, and a fashion apparel brand from Sweden will be explained through this theory. This theory is about how two brands in a marketing context can benefit from each other, or how to use the different brands associations together and reach a synergy effect (Grossman, 1997). The higher purpose is to, for example, gain a larger customer base, get a better market position, introduce a new type of product and also make a larger profit (Doshi, 2007).

Using co-branding is also a way to strengthen brands equity and also to energise a brand by adding and strengthening the associations of a brand through co-branding it with another brand (Aaker, 2011). Having this said, if a co-branding is to exist, then precautions has to be taken in order to avoid differences in association that are damaging to one or several of the brands in the co-branding constellation. The idea of co-branding between a nation's brand and a company's brand has been explored and researched in several previous occasions (Innes et al.m 2007; Slavinka, 2011; Dordevic 2008).

2.5 Product Category and Country Image Match

This theory will be the main theory and model used in this thesis, as it is used as a tool for investigating whether and in what way the use of the Swedish country image is beneficiary for marketing Swedish fashion brands in Europe.

There have been several studies conducted revolving around the relationship between consumers perception on products and the country of origin for those products. It is argued by Roth and Romeo that certain matches between product categories and countries fit better than others. The characteristics of countries can in this way affect the consumers' stance on products from that specific country (Roth and Romeo, 1992). This is presented in a model which can be viewed in figure 2.3.

COUNTRY IMAGE DIMENSIONS

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
IMPORTANT	I FAVOURABLE MATCH	II UNFAVOURABLE MATCH
NOT IMPORTANT	III FAVOURABLE MISMATCH	IV UNFAVOURABLE MISMATCH

DIMENSIONS AS PRODUCT FEATURES

Figure 2.5. Product Category and Country Image Match. (Roth and Romeo, 1992)

A favourable match indicates that the product category works well together with the country image characteristics of a specific country. An unfavourable match between the product category and the country image means that there are important dimensions for the product category which the country image does not fulfil. A favourable mismatch, on the other hand claims the opposite that the

country image is positive, yet the positive features are not important for the specific product category. Cell four which revolves around an unfavourable mismatch, indicates that the country image is negative as well as not important for the product category dimension. (Roth and Romeo, 1992, pp.482).

Hence, the conclusions that can be attained from this model are that there are certain dimensions of both the product category as well as the country image which must match in order for consumers to perceive the relationship between the country at stake and its products as positive or negative. The degree of positivity and negativity towards the product category and country match is determined by the way consumers perceive the country, (hence the country image), and the way they perceive the product.

This can equally entail that in order to market a certain product in a certain country; the marketer could make great use of the model above and acquire information on the consumer's perception of the country through studying its image. Also, the consumer's perception on what dimensions and features which are of importance to them in relation to the product should be mapped out. Not before then, can the marketer acquire an overall estimation of whether the features and dimensions of the country fit or match the features and dimensions of the product at hand.

This tool also helps in portraying which aspects and dimensions of the country image that are more important to highlight when looking to market a certain brand, since some products and product categories match certain country image dimensions.

2.6 Summary of Theoretical Framework

This is a summary of the theoretical framework chapter where all sections will be presented and their interrelation will be explained to provide a comprehension regarding how the various theories fit into this thesis and research.

The COO is one of the foundation theories that this thesis is based upon. COO explains how different products from different countries are perceived. Country Image is a theory revolving around how a certain country is perceived and not only valued by the country's products. The Country Image can also be seen as a nation brand where it is looked upon as a brand that has certain associations attached to it. This brand in the case of Sweden is actively worked on and maintained in order to achieve a high recognition around the world. These nation brands are measured by the Country Brand Index which evaluates the different nation brands around the world. The Swedish nation brand according to the Country Brand Index is cohesive with how the Swedish organisation NSU wishes the Swedish brand to be perceived.

The Country Image is used in the Product Country Match model where negative and positive perceptions of the country's image is matched with what consumers find important and not important respectively with different product categories. Different Swedish brands in relation to the Swedish nation brand can be seen as a co-branding effort in the case that the different product brands tries to find associations from their own brand that can provide a match with the Swedish brand and thus gain from it.

3 Methodology

This chapter explains the strategy for collecting primary data, as well as provides all details regarding the way the case study was conducted. It will provide information about the data and sample collection as well as the methods used for evaluating the collected data. The reliability, validity and generalisability of this research will also be discussed as the discussion concludes in the chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

The main approach of this research is of hermeneutical nature and contains both exploratory as well as descriptive elements however it is mainly exploratory (Patel and Davidson, 2011, pp. 28). The exploratory elements are based on the fact that there are gaps in the knowledge of this subject regarding fashion apparel and that sources of information have been varied (Patel & Davidson, 2011, pp. 12). The descriptive segments of this research are based on the descriptive nature of adhering to prominent perceptions of the Swedish country image (Patel and Davidson, 2011, pp. 13). The exploratory and descriptive elements are thus joined to consolidate to the study.

Having this said, the relationship between the theoretical framework of this research and its upcoming results are of a deductive character with influences of abduction (Patel and Davidson, 2011, pp. 23). Deduction implies that conclusions regarding specific cases are drawn from a specific theory on the matter. Abduction, on the other hand, is combined by inductive and deductive features and pertain taking use of an existing theory from a specific case and explore it on new cases in order to develop it (Patel and Davidson, 2011, pp.25). With this in mind, the theoretical framework which has constituted the base of our research strategy, along with other sources of information, work as the fundaments for the upcoming results in this thesis.

3.1.1 Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research approach has been used to attain relevant and necessary information for this thesis. Since it is the consumers who benefit fashion apparel companies and ultimately give the answer to whether a marking strategy is successful or unsuccessful, it becomes apparent that consumer perceptions are the main focus for this research. According to Silverman (2006, pp. 34) "the choice between different research methods should depend upon what you are trying to find out". A qualitative approach also suits the purpose of revealing consumer perceptions since the qualitative approach avoids statistical techniques and aims at revealing a nuanced and non-statistical picture of consumer perceptions (Silverman, 2006, pp. 33). According to Silverman (2006), there are several methods for conducting qualitative research, through observation, textual analysis, interviews and audio and video recording (Silverman, 2006, pp.19).

3.1.2 Focus Groups

Our research was conducted through structured focus groups. The choice of conducting focus groups instead of personal interviews was due to mapping out the overall, wide perceptions of the respondents and because there was no need for specific, detailed nor personal information in one specific subject. Rather, the aim for the focus groups was to attain a sense of the various directions the discussion between the respondents took in order to achieve a nuanced picture of their ideas and thoughts as well as the way they vary (Wibeck, 2000, pp.39). The decision to keep the focus groups structured was due to us seeking information on specific topics and thus, using questions as the benchmark for discussion was an adequate way for this purpose (Wibeck, 2000, pp.45).

According to Wibeck (2000), the choice between individual interviews and focus groups depend on the depth and width of the information one seeks to attain (Wibeck, 2000, pp 39). Focus groups enable respondents to speak in an informal way regarding the topic at hand and thus, focus groups offer a width in which respondents' ideas, opinions and thoughts can come forth. Due to a natural group dynamic, various ideas can easily be found since the informal discussion that takes place during focus groups, resemble a natural gathering and discussion (Wibeck, 2000, pp 39).

The level of moderator interference during the focus groups is what determines whether focus groups are structured or unstructured. The level of structure thus depends on the type of outcome the moderators seek. Unstructured focus groups are adequate to use when moderators are unspecified in the results they are seeking and therefore the discussions through the group can take any direction and run freely. However, structured focus groups add more structure to the discussion through moderator interference such as through questions or comments (Wibeck, 2000, pp.45).

3.2 Research Strategy

The information needed to answer our research questions and fulfil our aim of this study, can be gained through primary as well as secondary sources. The research strategy presented in this section is therefore divided into Information *Needs Through Primary Sources* and *Information Needs Through Secondary Sources*.

3.2.1 Information Needs Through Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of information have been of significant importance while conducting the research. Books as well as Internet sources in the form of articles and reliable websites have worked as the base for this research.

Among the secondary data used to further consolidate the research results on the consumer perception of Swedish country image, was that of the Country Brand Index which was thoroughly explained in the theoretical chapter. As previously explained, the Country Brand Index is used to measure the perception of the country image based on the Hierarchical Decision Model

(HDM) (Futurebrand, 2012a; 2012b). The latest Country Brand Index made by Futurebrand, is that of year 2012/2013, which will work as a complement to the results attained through the focus groups on Swedish country image (Futurebrand, 2012b). The information attained through the Country Brand Index is compared to that of the focus groups result on Swedish country image, and used to achieve an aggregated stance on consumer perceptions of the Swedish country image in relation to fashion apparel in the analysis chapter of this thesis.

3.2.2 Information Needs Through Primary Sources

In order to answer the research questions presented in the beginning of this thesis, the authors have taken use of the model that was thoroughly presented in the previous theoretical chapter, the Product Country Match model (PCM), as obtained through the work of Roth and Romeo (1992). In regards to the main research question "Is it beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to take use of the Swedish nation brand in their marketing in Europe?", the PCM model is adequately used as a tool for answering this question. However, in order take use of the PCM model, two main topics are of interest and information regarding these must be provided in order of attaining a yes or no answer to the main research question. These are:

1. The consumers' perceptions of Sweden, its positive as well as negative aspects.
2. The consumers' perceptions and preferences regarding fashion apparel, what is important and not important to them when purchasing clothes.

Not until information on the two topics above is provided, can the PCM model be used. Through mapping out whether there is a match between the positive aspects of the consumer perception of Sweden and the aspects of importance to consumers when buying fashion apparel, the first research question can be answered. Through the PCM model, this match is referred to as a "favourable match", as seen in figure 3.1.

COUNTRY IMAGE DIMENSIONS

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
IMPORTANT	I FAVOURABLE MATCH	II UNFAVOURABLE MATCH
NOT IMPORTANT	III FAVOURABLE MISMATCH	IV UNFAVOURABLE MISMATCH

DIMENSIONS AS PRODUCT FEATURES
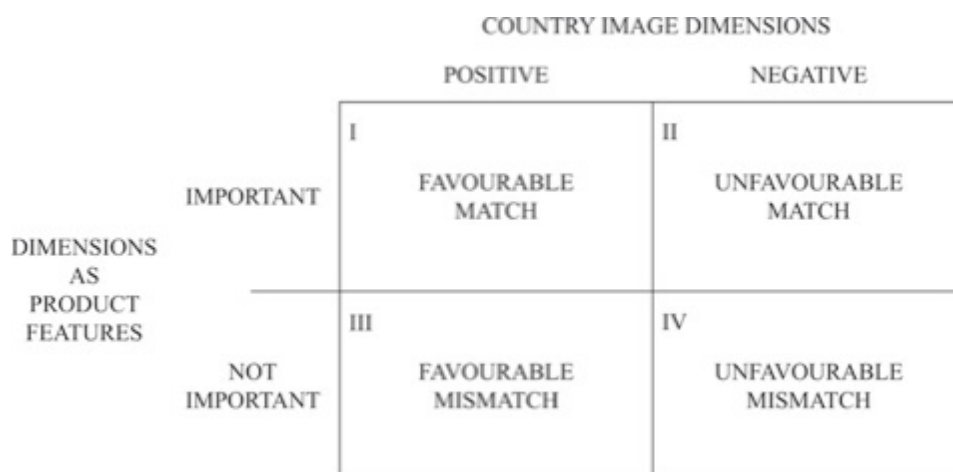
(Figure 3.1. Product Category and Country Image Match. (Roth and Romeo, 1992)

If the answer to the first research question is positive, and there is a "favourable match" evident between the positive features respondents prescribe Sweden and the qualities they find important when purchasing clothes, then it becomes manageable to answer the second research question regarding which aspects of the Swedish country image that is beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to use when marketing themselves in Europe.

Through investigating which aspects of the positive Swedish country image that match and yield meaning to the features important to consumers while purchasing fashion apparel, the second question is answered. All in all, the part in the figure, representing the "favourable match" is what is of most interest to this thesis and has helped in providing the answer to the second research question.

3.3 Pilot Study

A first sample of the questions used during the structured focus groups, were created according to the research strategy and contained the two topics of interest described under the previously mentioned *Research Strategy From Primary Sources.* The pilot studies that where conducted are of an exploratory character since they mainly aim at gaining as much information from the respondents as possible regarding their comprehension of the research questions (Patel and Davidson, 2011, pp. 12).

The questions were tested through individual in depth interviews with three randomly chosen students as respondents from Gothenburg University of Business and Law. The respondents were of Swedish origin since the pilot studies where only aimed at testing and developing the questions. The answers provided were thus not of importance to our results as they were only intended for the improvement and development of the questions.

Through the in depth interviews, the authors could see which questions that needed altering since some of the questions were understood in a way which the authors did not intend once writing the questions. The reason for conducting the pilot studies through in depth individual interviews instead of through focus groups was that the latter would fail in providing a nuanced and personal understanding of each question's implication. In depth interviews provided this and each question could thus be discussed in a more personalised and detailed way. The questions were altered from one respondent to the other and by the third respondent the authors had a list of questions that was rather simplified and followed an adequate order.

The last respondent out of three, consolidated the questions, since the in depth interview proved there to be no misunderstandings and provided sufficient results. These three pilot studies were of utter importance in simplifying and altering the questions which set the fundament in conducting the focus groups.

3.4 Data Collection

The two main topics and areas of interest mentioned in the previous research strategy provided, along with alterations through the pilot studies, a finalised and structured list of questions. This list of questions functioned as the base from which discussions proceeded in the focus groups and also worked as the base for our data collection. The list of questions follows, along with an explanation of its relevance.

Questions which aim at mapping out the consumers' perception of the Swedish country image:
1. What does Sweden represent?
2. Are there positive aspects which Sweden does represent? /Are there negative aspects which Sweden does represent?
3. How do you perceive Swedish design?
4. How do you perceive Swedish quality?
5. How do you perceive Swedish innovations?
6. How do you perceive the relationship between Sweden and prestige?

This first part of the questions aimed at stirring a discussion surrounding the Swedish country image. In case the discussion did not take the direction regarding the feature of design, quality, innovation and prestige, the authors interfered through adding questions regarding these key factors. This was done, as explained in the theoretical section, to create a consistent theme in regard to the PCM model, and also to provide themes of comparison to the discussion regarding the Swedish country image and fashion apparel.

Questions which aim at mapping out the consumers' perception of clothes/fashion apparel:
1. What do you think of clothes/fashion? Does clothes and fashion interest you?
2. What do you find valuable when purchasing clothes?
3. What is least important to you when you purchase clothes?
4. Which of these 4 dimensions do you value most/ are most important to you: Prestige, workmanship, design and innovation?
5. What products/ product categories is Sweden associated with?
6. How important is the country of origin when you purchase clothes? Is the COO important for you when you purchase clothes?

These questions focus on creating a discussion between the respondents regarding what they value when purchasing clothes /fashion apparel. Again, in the cases when the discussion did not take a natural direction of in some way relating to or mentioning prestige, workmanship, design and innovation, the authors intervened through adding a question regarding these four aspects to create a consistency, necessary when compiling and analysing the collected data through the PCM model

(Roth & Romeo, 1992). The last question, regarding the country of origin, aims at creating a discussion to show the authors the way in which the respondents reflect upon COO. Do they consider the country of manufacture as the country of origin or do they consider the country of design to be the clothes´ COO. The relationship between the two aspects of COO was the aim of this last question.

Questions that will be asked to better portray the fit/match between Swedish country image and fashion apparel:
      1. What do you associate Swedish clothing/fashion with?
      2. Does it entice you to know that a fashion apparel brand is Swedish?
      3. How do you perceive Swedish fashion brands in relation to other brands internationally?
      4. What do you find positive/negative with Swedish fashion apparel?

In this last part of the focus groups, respondents were asked the questions above which directly connects to Swedish fashion apparel. In comparison to the two previous parts of the focus groups, which related to the topic of Swedish image and fashion apparel/clothes respectively, the respondents had here a chance to discuss around the main topic of interest, Swedish fashion apparel. While the two prior parts of the questions provide the data necessary to take use of the PCM model, this last question-section, tackles the topic of Swedish fashion apparel directly and work as a check point to verify the results achieved through the PCM model.

Questions to further consolidate our empirical outcome:
      Favourable match: What aspects, important to you regarding fashion apparel does Swedish country image fully regard/represent?
      Unfavourable match: What is important regarding fashion apparel which Sweden does not represent?
      Favourable mismatch: What aspects, unimportant to you regarding fashion apparel does Swedish country image represent?
      Unfavourable match: This will not be dealt with in depth due to it not providing answers of importance to our research questions.

These questions were asked at the end of the focus groups. Since these questions have a high level of complexity, the respondents were given the opportunity to discuss upon them to provide the research with the interesting alternative to the PCM model, which in this case is, to directly ask the respondents about what they perceive to be a favourable and unfavourable match, as well as favourable and unfavourable mismatch. Although the questions are complex, there was no meaning in simplifying them further since that would dispel their use. Rather, these questions can be perceived as complementary to the two first parts of the focus groups.

3.5 Sample Selection

The population elements for this research are focus group respondents and they were chosen through judgmental sampling. This sampling methodology indicates that the authors chose respondents to participate in our research, based on our judgment of their suitability to act as representatives of their population of European Fashion apparel consumers (Malhotra and Birks, 1999, pp. 364).

Since the aim of this thesis revolves around whether and in what way Swedish fashion brands should market themselves in Europe, respondents originating from Europe were chosen. The two first focus groups, containing of 4, respectively 5 persons from Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, England and Spain were exchange students at Gothenburg University of Business and Law and had not been in Sweden for more than 6 months. They were all between the ages of 20 and 27 and they were chosen randomly. The respondents were thus exchange students at the same University and some of them were familiar with each other. As it is argued by some authors that familiarity between focus group respondents can limit the discussions in the focus groups and thus have a negative effect on the results attained through the focus group discussions (Hair et al., 2006), other authors indicate the opposite and emphasise that homogeneity in the groups ease the exchange of ideas and opinions through the focus group discussions, as homogeneity simplifies the exchange of ideas (Wibeck, 2000, pp. 51).

Due to similar results achieved in focus groups one and two, which indicated a level of saturation of answers, the third and last focus group was conducted with three respondents which had never visited Sweden. The choice of using respondents which had never been to Sweden, was to compare their ideas and opinions regarding Sweden and Swedish fashion brands with the respondents from focus group one and two, which have been in Sweden for approximately 6 months. This was hence done to test if there is any difference in results attained from the two first focus groups, in which respondents had been influenced by Sweden during their stay in the country, and the third and last focus group, in which respondents never had visited Sweden. These respondents originated from Ukraine, Lithuania and Russia and were between the ages of 18 and 19. The last focus group was conducted through using the video and audio service Skype over the Internet which enabled the three respondents to sit at one place and discuss the questions with the authors over Skype.

3.6 Compiling the Collected Data

The discussions attained through the focus groups were, as a first step in the analysis process, separately analysed in means which are mainly qualitative and in which the most repeated and obvious patterns were mapped out. The reason for analysing the focus groups separately as a first step, as evident in the results chapter further in this thesis, is to portray the nuances of discussion in between the respondents in regards to the differences between the focus groups, and also to test if

there are similarities between them. The results from focus groups are thus presented separately in the results chapter but analysed commonly in the forthcoming analysis chapter.

Since three focus groups were conducted lasting around one hour each, the discussions took on many shades and directions, many of which are important for this thesis and created patterns of interest to bring forth in relevance to theory as well as to the aim of this thesis.

The information gained from the focus groups surrounding the respondents perception of the Swedish country image, was qualitatively analysed. Repeated ways of referring to the Swedish image were noted and divided into positives and negatives. The most frequently mentioned, key characteristics were written down and analysed through the online-tool Wordle.net; an Internet tool which offers presentations through quantitative text analysis (Millward, 1995), presenting the most repeated features prescribed to Sweden by the respondents. This enabled the qualitative analysis of the focus group discussions to be portrayed in main positive and negative attributes. The key characteristics as well as the Wordle.net presentations are brought up in the analysis chapter of this thesis.

The information gained from the focus groups regarding the respondents' perceptions and preferences concerning fashion apparel, including what is important and not important to them when purchasing clothes, were collected and analysed in the same way as the previous part. At first, the focus group discussions were analysed in order of finding patterns of interest to what is important, respectively unimportant, to the consumers when purchasing clothes. After this qualitative analysis of the discussions, key characteristics of importance/unimportance when purchasing fashion apparel were noted and presented through the text analysis tool, Wordle.net.

The use of this tool which relies on quantitative means of text analysis is to create a representative figure of the results, with main positives/negatives, respectively, important/ unimportant attributes of fashion apparel and country image.

The last parts of the focus group discussions, relating to Swedish fashion apparel were analysed and compiled in the same way as the two previous parts and through using the PCM model and inserting the key words gained through the textual analysis tool, an overall picture of the results were attained.

3.7 Reliability, Validity and Generalisability

A high qualitative research can be justified through a methodology of conduction which has a high level of validity, reliability and generalisability. The three terms are important in high qualitative research and have been taken into consideration during the entire research process (Wibeck, 2000, pp. 119-124).

3.7.1 Reliability

The issue of reliability revolves around "the degree to which the findings of a study are independent of accidental circumstances of their production" (Kirk and Miller, 1986; cited in Silverman, 2006, pp. 282). Thus, in order of an outcome of any given research to be reliable, accidental circumstances revolving the study should not affect the outcome, and scientists independent of one another should be able to acquire the same results through the study of the same material, irrespective of surrounding circumstances (Wibeck, 2000, pp.120).

In order of increasing the reliability in this research, both of the authors attained the focus group meetings and followed a structured list of questions. This led to that the respondents in the various focus groups, were provided the same questions and since both authors worked as moderators, continuity in tone of voice and structure of discussion could be upheld. Since there were two moderators during the focus groups, circumstances revolving moderator-effects on the respondents such as, tone of voice and attitudes while asking the respondents questions, could be minimised as two persons were involved in keeping the discussion circumstances to most extent similar.

To increase the reliability of the results attained through our research, the three focus group results were compared to each other. If a contradiction and variation in type of answers attained between the three focus groups were evident, then the differences between them are mapped out to improve the reliability. A review of the three focus group answers combined, is what sets the reliability of this study and not one specific respondent or group per se.

Further, to improve the reliability of this research, the information gained through the focus groups were unified on the basis of our research strategy and theory. Results from the three focus groups were consistently unified in order to be categorised. Unison prior to categorisation of results is important in order of attaining a reliable outcome (Wibeck, 2000, pp. 120).

3.7.2 Validity

It has been discussed whether credibility is a better term to use when discussing validity. Silverman defines validity as "another word for truth" (Silverman, 2006, pp. 47). Validity and credibility aims at providing truthful, credible, as well as valid answers to the questions of investigation. To actually investigate the question at hand and refer to things with their right name is what validity and credibility is merely about (Wibeck, 2000, pp. 120).

Measures taken by us to improve the validity and credibility of this research started with choosing the respondents for the focus groups. To eliminate the risk of social group pressure in which respondents are not truthful in their discussions and hold back things to say, the authors made sure the three focus group respondents, were familiar with each other and that the groups were homogenous (Wibeck, 2000, pp. 51). Also, the focus groups provided lively and open discussions in which the authors found the respondents to speak in an informal and open hearted matter surrounding the topics brought forth. This also proved in the variety of opinions brought forth by the respondents, which, many times opposed each other. This strengthens the validity of the data attained through our research.

To further improve the validity of the research, two focus groups were held in the school building in group rooms which the respondents were familiar with. Since lecture halls and seminar rooms could impose feelings of strictness, the decision to use small group rooms to conduct two of the focus groups was to emphasise the level of informality and open hearted discussion which was aimed at. Emphasising and encouraging debates among a group of students, in which many were familiar with each other, in small group rooms to which the respondents were also familiar, eased the process and thus improved the validity of the results attained.

Further, the results attained concerning Swedish country image, through the qualitative research of focus groups, were compared with the secondary data from the Swedish Country Brand Index (Futurebrand, 2012b). This comparison of results attained through different methodological techniques increase the validity of the results attained remarkably.

3.7.3 Generalisability

Generalisability, often also referred to as transferability, is mainly discussed in terms of quantitative research since the task of quantitative research such as surveys, is to declare the expansion of an idea or certain opinions (Wibeck, 2000, pp.123). The sample chosen for surveys does thus represent and speak for the population as a whole. Although, through the use of focus groups, generalisation in the previous sense is not possible since the focus lays on the qualitative findings instead of quantitative such. Having this said, the qualitative focus groups conducted in this study and the results attained through them, do say much about the certain category of respondents chosen and thus, rather than claiming a complete generalisation to the population, we can claim there to be "loose generalisations" as described by Wibeck (2000, pp.123). This sort of generalisation means that the results attained through the focus groups do generalise the type of opinions and sorts of reflections at hand amongst European consumers in between the age of 18 and 27. The decision to include respondents from various European countries as well as Swedish and non-Swedish residents, increased the level of generalisability and transferability of this research.

4 Results

In this chapter the results from the focus groups will be discussed and the findings relating to our research will be presented. This chapter will be divided into three parts in accordance to how the focus groups where conducted. The first part will present the focus groups' main perceptions of Sweden, divided into positives and negatives. In the second part, the focus groups' perception and preferences regarding fashion apparel will be mapped out along with their thoughts on what is important and not important for them regarding fashion apparel. The last part will present the focus group's comprehensive perception regarding Swedish fashion apparel. A summary of the most prominent findings will conclude each part.

4.1 Focus Groups

A brief presentation of the different focus groups composition is portrayed in figure 4.1, in which the respondents´ name, age and origin is mapped out. All focus group meetings were held in December 2012. The names presented are feigned in consideration to the participants´ privacy.

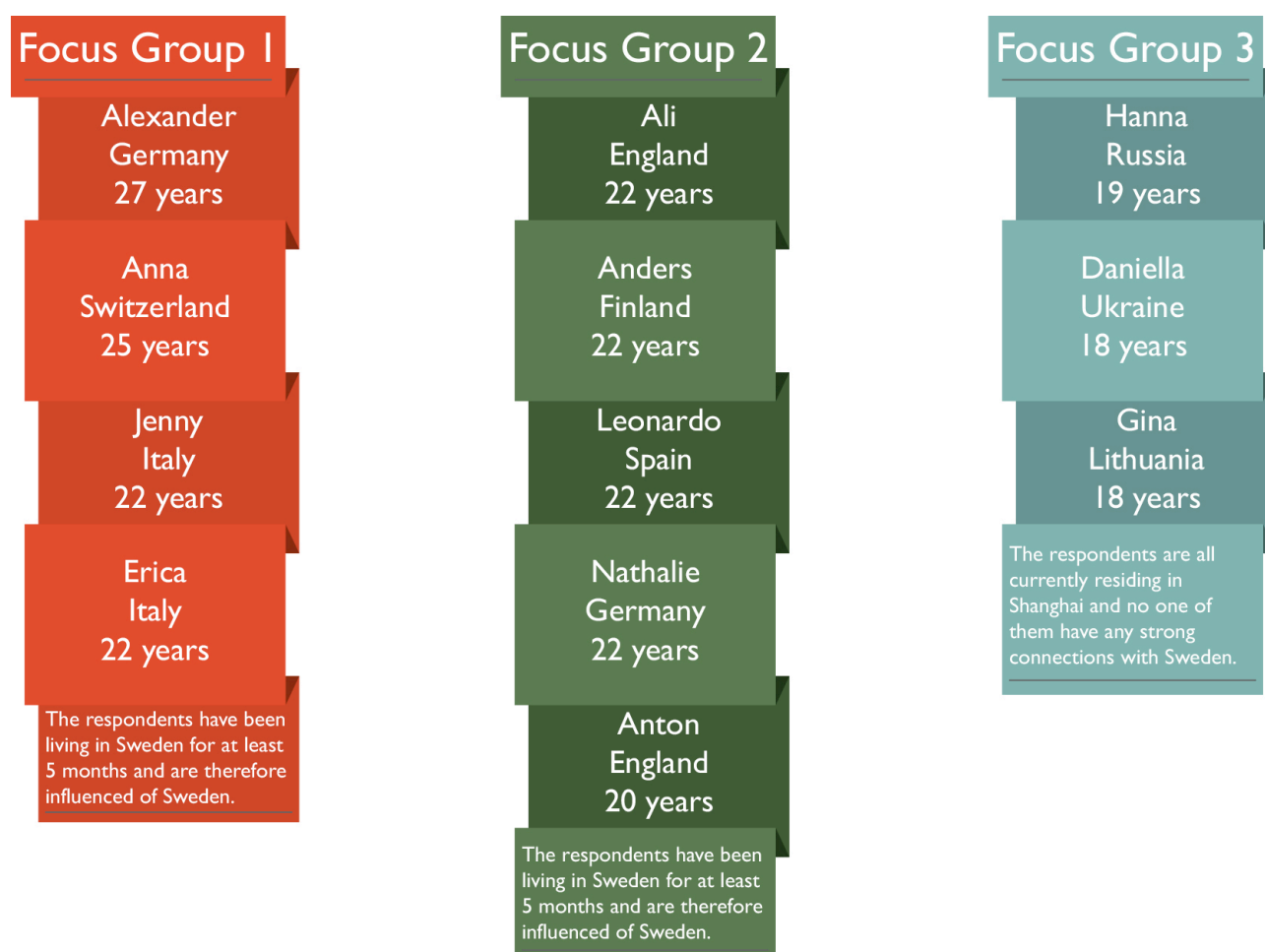| Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3
Alexander Germany 27 years	Ali England 22 years	Hanna Russia 19 years
Anna Switzerland 25 years	Anders Finland 22 years	Daniella Ukraine 18 years
Jenny Italy 22 years	Leonardo Spain 22 years	Gina Lithuania 18 years
Erica Italy 22 years	Nathalie Germany 22 years	The respondents are all currently residing in Shanghai and no one of them have any strong connections with Sweden.
The respondents have been living in Sweden for at least 5 months and are therefore influenced of Sweden.	Anton England 20 years	
	The respondents have been living in Sweden for at least 5 months and are therefore influenced of Sweden.	

Figure 4.1. Focus Groups

4.2 Main Perceptions of Sweden

The discussions attained through the focus groups regarding Sweden's country image will be presented in the upcoming sections. The results will be presented within the framework of the Product Country Match model (PCM), as regarded in the theoretical chapter of this thesis (Roth and Romeo, 1992), and the results will therefore be divided into positive and negative perceptions regarding Swedish country image. An aggregated result of the respondents most frequently mentioned products and brands associated with Sweden also be presented.

4.2.1 Focus Group 1's Main Perceptions of Sweden

In this focus group, respondents' were mainly positive toward Sweden and the negative attitudes and associations were rather few.

Positive:
This focus group starts by discussing the political and social situation in Sweden, in which all the respondents agree on Sweden being a well-developed country in regards to economy, infrastructure and social welfare. Sweden is also compared to Switzerland, which is argued to share many common features.

> *"We see Sweden as a role model as regards to equality, especially for women, and the infrastructure is really well organised."* (Jenny)

When discussing Swedish products, a general positive attitude was depicted. The discussion starts of by the respondents talking about design and style. It is apparent that Sweden has a characteristic design that differentiates Sweden from other countries.

> *"Style, ingenuity and smart things come out of Sweden. Not the least stylish things."* (Alexander)

> *"..Also innovation and creativity and design of course."* (Anna)

> *"I think that Sweden has kind of its own style in products."* (Anna)

Attributes describing Swedish design was revolving around key words such as minimalistic, sleek, clean, fashionable and light colours. But it was also considered that Swedish design was not only about the looks but also about function. The respondents described Swedish products as very functional and practical, and a prime example was IKEA with their furniture which, are not only

well designed, but also very practical for consumers. It was also believed that Swedish products deliver good quality in relation to its price.

> "I think your products are not only fashionable but practical and useful." (Erica)

> "Your best known products around the world are really down to earth and affordable to everyone." (Anna)

Jenny also says that she thinks that Sweden is expensive. She says that clothes in general are cheap in Sweden, and compares them with her home country Italy. She describes the most expensive shops in Sweden as being similar to the mainstream shops in Italy.

Negative:

When it comes to the negative perceptions of Sweden there is a general agreement regarding the social interaction with Swedes and that they can be a bit cold, although there is also a consensus among the group members that once you get to know Swedes, you find them great. This is regarded as a cultural difference and it is mentioned that Swedes in general are considered very polite and hospital. Another consensus among the group is that the price level in Sweden is very high in contrast to their home countries, except the country of Switzerland, which is perceived to be cheaper than Sweden. Anna perceives Swedes as not proud of their country.

> "Swedish people are not proud at all, I do not know I perceive them in this way. But it can also be a good thing that you do not brag about a lot of things and it is a way of being polite I think because Swiss people are the same." (Anna)

For example it is later explained that services such as Skype and Spotify were not known as Swedish by the respondents, until they came to Sweden. Further, it was stated that Sweden is not associated with exclusivity as it is associated with mass production, yet high quality.

Product associations with Sweden:

All respondents agree on that furniture and clothes are associated with Sweden, but when Alexander mentions services, the rest of the group agree with him and give examples such as Spotify and Skype. Some brands associated with Sweden were H&M, IKEA and Volvo.

4.2.2 Focus Group 2's Main Perceptions of Sweden

This focus group was found to also have a positive attitude towards Sweden. However, on some matters they were found a bit more neutral towards Sweden. One of the respondents, a male named Ali indicated that many of the students get to experience the best of Sweden when they first get to know the country, "we are going through the honey moon phase right now", he said as a possible explanation to why the respondents may be this positive towards Sweden.

Positive:

It is generally comprehended that Sweden is a modern country when it comes to politics, social well fare and infrastructure. Swedes are viewed as very sporty and active which is concluded through the high number of active people seen in public. This observation is also fortified through the high density of sport stores in the city of Gothenburg.

When the discussion takes the turn to regard Swedish products; they start off by discussing quality and practicality. Although, as the discussion continues, it is also said that Swedish quality is not viewed as the best in the world, however it is believed that you get very good quality for the price you pay.

> *"There is a balance between the quality and the price of products here which works in a good way."* (Nina)

> *"The quality here, it is not amazing but it is not substandard either, it is practical and it gives you what you want."* (Ali)

> *"The quality is really good, just like the price you pay."* (Anders)

They also think that Sweden offers a wide range of products and they are astonished by the fact that Sweden has so many international company for being such a small country. When it comes to Swedish design, it was evident that the word "minimalistic" is frequently mentioned, as well as "modern" and the colour white. Nina mentions this when talking about Swedish clothing.

> *" It is very minimalistic and has a clear form. It is structured without a lot of stuff with swirls on it."* (Nina)

Sweden was regarded as an example for innovation, especially in the fields of engineering and pharmaceutics. Examples of companies such as Astra Zeneca and SKF were provided. Nina thinks that Sweden is innovative but in a slightly different aspect as she believes that Swedish companies has a high social responsibility and that the way they incorporate this in their business is rather innovative.

> *"They have a higher sense of social corporate responsibility, so maybe they put innovation as one core thing as a part of their sustainability programme. Maybe that is why they are so innovative."* (Nina)

Negative:

Sweden is perceived as an expensive country with very high taxes. This perception was agreed on by all respondents. The social atmosphere in Sweden is also mentioned and they all in some way think that Swedes can be a little bit cold in the beginning.

> *"Very cold people in the beginning compared to where I come from. They are like, very quiet and very polite except from when they are drunk."* (Leonardo)

There is also a main complaint about the opening hours of stores as the opening hours are regarded as few. When the discussion regards whether Sweden represents exclusivity, the answer is a definite no, and Ali thinks that apart from Volvo, Sweden does not have anything exclusive. However, in general, the respondents did not have much negative to say about Sweden. This was explained by Leonardo as due to their short stay in Sweden, meaning that a longer stay may result in more negative perceptions.

> *"We are not the best to ask as we are living here for a short time as Erasmus students."* (Leonardo)

Product associations with Sweden:

When it comes to product associations the associations mentioned are cars, furniture and clothes. Ali adds "typical Nordic clothes", to the associations. Other associations mentioned are food, such as fish and also Swedish candy. Swedish music is also discussed and names such as ABBA and Swedish House Mafia are brought up. When it comes to brand associations, Sony Ericsson, Volvo, H&M, IKEA, SKF and Saab were discussed upon. Although Ali thought that IKEA was a company from the United States and explained this association to IKEA selling typical American food in their food court such as hot dogs.

4.2.3 Focus Group 3'sMain Perceptions of Sweden

This focus group had little knowledge about Sweden in general and what Sweden represents. This is evident in their answers but still, there are some aspects concerning Sweden which were brought up during the focus group.

Positive:

When it comes to design they thought that Swedish design represented minimalism and the colour white. Swedish quality was described as normal at first, but Gina discussed it further and compared it to Chinese quality with which Swedish quality was considered superior. It was also mentioned that Swedish knifes and furniture have a good quality.

Negative:

Since they did not have good general knowledge about Sweden, their answers tended to be very general and unspecific. Answers such as"Swedish people have such a difficult language. I can't understand, it is like a birds language" as Gina said. Hanna mentioned that Swedish weather is very cold. Exclusivity was not something they associated with Sweden and regarding innovation they simply stated that they did not know.

Product associations with Sweden:

H&M, Daim and IKEA were the only brands they associated Sweden with. Knifes, chocolate and furniture were also associated with Sweden as well as skiing.

4.2.4 Summary of the Focus Groups' Main Perceptions of Sweden

What is most apparent is that, when talking about Swedish design, the words: minimalistic, sleek, style and the colour white, were constantly reoccurring. Even in focus group 3 where they in general had a very bad knowledge about Sweden, could the words be mentioned. The summarised positive and negative perceptions of Sweden's country image as comprehended from all three focus groups can be found in figure 4.2. The most frequently mentioned words and associations are aggregated and ranked in the order of size, from big to small according to how frequently they were used by the respondents.
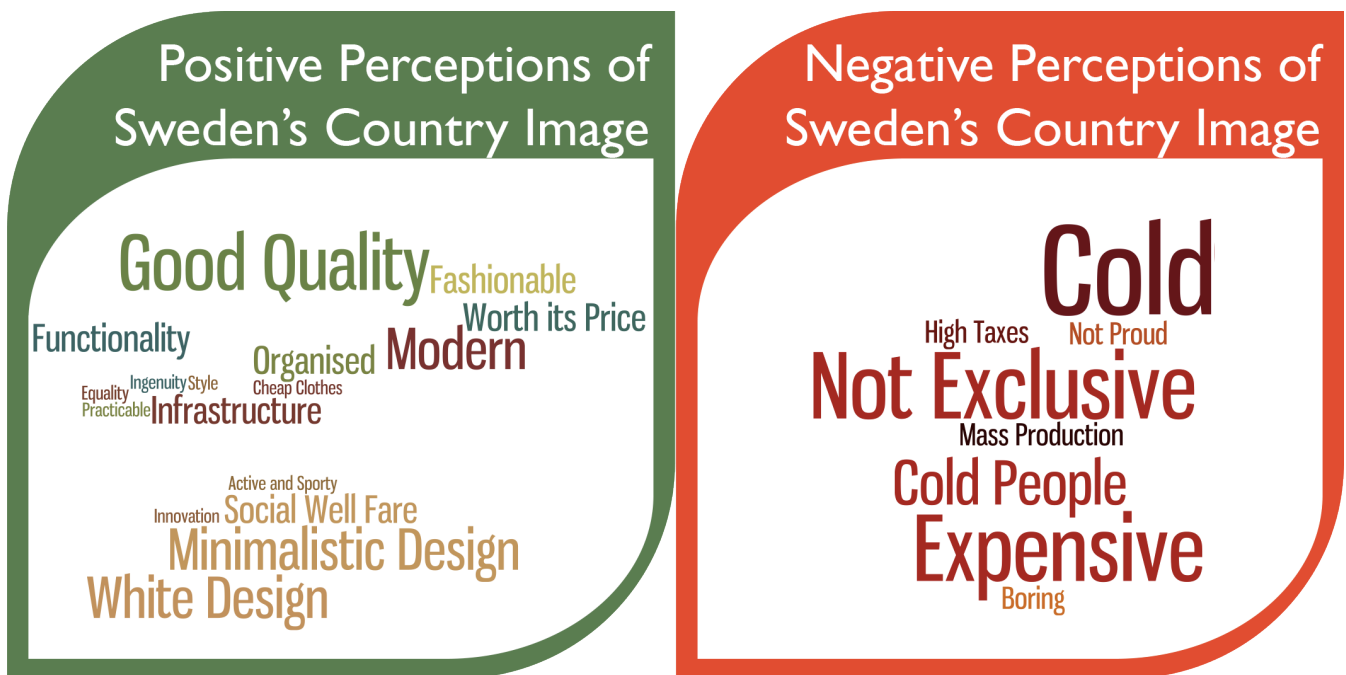
Figure 4.2. Positive and Negative Perceptions of Sweden's Country Image

Positive:

As pointed out before, the Swedish design has very specific attributes attached to it and this is something all focus groups agree to. Anna says "I think that Sweden kind of has its own style in products". Swedish products are also perceived as very functional and practical. The discussion around quality is a little bit divided, since some respondents say that Swedish quality is good, while other say that it is average and normal. However, no one says that Swedish quality is bad and there is a general consensus regarding price. The relationship between price and quality is good as you get good quality for the price you pay. Both focus groups 1 and 2, talks about Sweden and innovation in positive terms, where focus group 3 says that they do not know. Sweden is also perceived as very modern with a high level of social welfare as well as a modern government and infrastructure.

Negative:

Exclusivity was frequently reoccurring in all three focus groups as something which is not associated with Sweden. The price and that it was expensive in Sweden was also a hot topic but it was also concluded that the price in relation to quality is in a good balance as Nina says "There is a balance between the quality and the price of products here which works in a good way". Other than that, it is mentioned that Swedish people can appear cold but in general there were not that much concise negative perceptions about Sweden. However taking into consideration Ali´s comment "we are going through the honey moon phase right now", which indicates that they are having a more positive attitude towards Sweden and in the case of focus group 3, the lack of concise negative criticism can be explained by the lack of knowledge about Sweden. Another thing that was unclear as to if it was negative or not, was that Anna perceived Swedes to be "Swedish people are not proud at all, I do not know I perceive them in this way.".

Product associations with Sweden:

The brand associations to IKEA and H&M were mentioned in all three groups. Volvo was mentioned in at least two groups. The product category of clothes was mentioned in at least 2 focus groups as well as Swedish candy. The product category of furniture was mentioned in all three focus groups. Anna sums up the products associated with Sweden by saying "your best known products around the world are really down to earth and affordable to everyone". All mentioned products and brands associated with Sweden are summarised in figure 4.3, in which the included words´ size reflects how frequently the words were mentioned.

Figure 4.3. Most Prominent Brands and Products Associated With Sweden

4.3 Perceptions and Preferences Regarding Fashion Apparel

In this part the focus groups' perception and preferences regarding fashion apparel will be presented, in accordance to the PCM model as explained in the theoretical chapter (Roth and Romeo, 1992). Therefore, the results in this section will be divided and presented in important and unimportant features regarding fashion apparel.

4.3.1 Focus Group 1's Perceptions and Preferences Regarding Fashion Apparel

The respondents of this focus group were all interested in clothes in a fashionable sense and not only in a practical sense.

Important:
When it comes to what is important they all agree that quality is of high importance. But it is also mentioned that clothes should be comfortable and look nice. Quality is most important to the respondents, as the focus group members were asked to rank the four variables of design, quality, innovation and status in accordance to its importance. Also design is ranked highly. It was discussed that, the ranking can change depending on the piece of clothing one is intending to buy.

> *"I mean, your decision also depends on what you are going to buy. You buy in different ways when you buy a winter jacket compared to when you just buy a t-shirt or a nice dress. For me, how I buy depends on what I buy. For example, quality is more important for a winter jacket than a t-shirt. When I'm going to buy nice shoes, maybe they are not that comfortable but they look nice and comfort isn't the most important thing in this moment, so really it depends on what I'm going to buy."* (Anna)

When asked about what innovation meant to them in regards to clothes the respondents did not have a clear and concise answer, and everyone interpreted it in their own way; but mostly it was in some ways related to design. Innovation was also associated with how clothes where manufactured and the trend that clothes and accessories are made out of recyclable materials. Regarding the country of origin, they were all focusing more on the country of design and its importance to their purchasing intentions. All respondents accept the fact that clothes often are made in low-wage countries. However, it is mentioned that even if country of design is more important than country of manufacture, it is hard to tell where a fashion apparel brand originates from. The importance of country of origin regarding country of design and country of manufacture varies depending on the product type.

> *"I think there are products to which the place of manufacture is more important than the design. When it is something, let's take for example the famous army Swiss knife, imagine I really want an army Swiss knife; then I do not care about the design. When I want to be sure that the quality is really good, then I do not want to buy one that is made in China."* (Anna)

This is further elaborated when they talk about skiing jackets and say that they rather want a ski jacket made in Sweden, than one made in Brazil.

Not Important:

In general, all respondents agreed on that they do not care whether a garment is trendy or not, as they care more about the beauty of the piece in their own eyes. This is also evident when they all rank status rather low in regards to what influences their clothes purchasing decisions.

4.3.2 Focus Group 2's Perceptions and Preferences Regarding Fashion Apparel

Not all respondents in this focus group are genuinely interested in fashion. Two of the respondents in this group are not interested in fashion and they originate from England. This is also pointed out by Ali.

> *"I do not think Britain is known for being the best dressed country in the world. I think the only thing we like to wear is suits and that is about it."* (Ali)

Important:

The word practicality is mentioned several times when it comes to what is important to the respondents in terms of purchasing clothes. Comfort, quality and price is mentioned. Price is important in relation to quality. High price should reflect high quality. Also, the design and brand is considered important. When the focus groups members were asked to rank design, quality, innovation and status in regards to how important the factors are when purchasing clothes, design was ranked the highest. Second to that was quality and then exclusivity and last, innovation. This focus group also discussed that different factors are important to different products.

> *"I think it depends on the products like suits and shoes, you want quality there and you never buy the cheapest shoes you can find. You buy shoes that last and look good but for t-shirts, you do not care about the quality. It is just going to look good for this summer."* (Leonardo)

Regarding the word innovation, this focus group were confused and had difficulties interpreting it in a good way in relation to clothes. They start by talking about innovation as a form of corporate

social responsibility. The focus group members believe that innovation could be a way for companies to use their products in new and unique ways to support the company's natural and social environment.

Not Important:
Innovation is not important in any broad sense, however, the country of origin is considered as not important when it comes to country of manufacture, except if it is in their home countries. Also, neither status nor exclusivity is regarded as something important.

4.3.3 Focus Group 3's Perceptions and Preferences Regarding Fashion Apparel

Everyone in this focus group showed a strong interest in fashion and clothes.

Important:
Quality and design are most frequently mentioned. Quality was mentioned in relation to price in this group also. The way in which clothes fit was perceived as important by the respondents. Country of origin is also important both for country of design and country of manufacture, however this depends on what they buy.

Not Important:
The two least important factors when it comes to clothes purchases are exclusivity and innovation with innovation as last priority. But also price is mentioned as something which is of no importance along with the brand.

4.3.4 Summary of the Focus Groups' Main Perceptions and Preferences Regarding Fashion Apparel

All three groups have different characteristics; however, they still share the same values when it comes to what is important to their clothes purchase decision. What is constantly ranked the highest is design and quality, which both come in on first and/or second place, except in one case where Alexander from focus group 1 ranked quality first and status second. Innovation is constantly ranked last except from two respondents, Jenny and Erica in focus group 1.

One common thing mentioned in all focus groups, is that quality and price should match and a low price is expected follow a lower quality. And in the same way does a higher price reflect better quality. It was also found, that depending on what type of apparel the respondents are buying, different factors were deemed important. For example, quality is of higher importance when you buy shoes than when you buy a t-shirt.

Regarding country of origin, there is a general consensus that the globalised world has made it less important when it comes to the decision on which clothes to purchase. Especially when it comes to country of manufacture, as it is believed that all clothes are manufactured in low-wages countries. Having this said, country of design was regarded much more important than the country

of manufacture. Concerning this, it was said that there is a trend towards clothes being more and more similar all over the world. Sweden is however perceived as a bit unique. Concerning this topic, Anna says, "For me in terms of globalisation, I love that things and styles adapt to each other and become similar, but I think that Sweden has kind of its own style in products".

The importance of country of manufacture varies, depending on the product it regards. The Swiss army knife was given as an example. Also ski jackets were given as an example where the products trustworthiness was questioned.

Innovation was perceived as unimportant to the respondents, even though it was associated with corporate social responsibility. An example of such a innovation would be to make environmental friendly products, or give the opportunity to the consumer to take a social responsibility by, for example, buying two pairs of shoes, one for the consumer and one for someone in need.

Status was also disregarded as something important in relation to quality and design. Even though the brand of the garment one intends to buy was perceived to be of importance, this was due to its relation to quality and design. The summarised result of what is important and not important across all focus groups can be seen in figure 4.4. The most frequently mentioned words are sized in accordance to their frequency.

Figure 4.4. Important and Not Important for Purchasing Clothes

4.4 Perceptions on the Match Between Swedish Country Image and Clothes

The questions asked to the respondents which will be presented in this section function as a comprehension of the questions posed in an earlier stage. The associations connected with Sweden and what is important when purchasing clothes will be presented here. But also general attitudes about Swedish fashion apparel brands.

4.4.1 Focus Group 1's Perceptions on The Match Between Swedish Country Image and Clothes

The main characteristics of Swedish fashion apparel, which were generally applied to Swedish design overall, are that Swedish design is stylish, clean and minimalistic. Swedish fashion is also considered to be unique with a lot of variety and diversity.

> *"...it is sleek; they do not have all these kind of things on. It is still clean clothing and it is not very made up. It is clean and not puffy."* (Alexander)

They also believe that Swedish fashion apparel is unique and original and Swedish people are described as trendsetters.

> *"...young people start new trends and they later come to other countries and they try new things out. Let's take a simple example like coloured pants for males, you never saw it before in Switzerland or in other countries, but in Sweden, they wore coloured pants here much earlier than other countries and I think that people are also have the courage enough to wear it in Sweden. And after a while, you start seeing the pants in other countries but think Swedes are curious to try new things."* (Anna)

They also believe that Swedish clothing is not considered classy but rather down to earth and trendy. That people wear more daring things like coloured pants is connected with the attitude of people, as is believed that Swedes do not hold much prejudice. The respondents could all agree on that it is positive for a fashion brand to be Swedish. In regards to how Swedish fashion brands compare in an international context, the respondents mentioned that even if it is affordable, you still get very good quality for your money although Swedish design is a little bit too disguised on the world market, except for H&M. Some Swedish fashion brands that they knew of were H&M, Tiger of Sweden, Monkey, Lindex and they mentioned Karl Lagerfeld as a designer.

4.4.2 Focus Group 2 Perception's on The Match Between Swedish Country Image and Clothes

All respondents think that Swedes are trendy and care about how they dress. It is also mentioned that the classic fashion is not so evident in Sweden as in countries like Spain, Italy or France, although the clothes here are still perceived to be very fashionable. Swedish clothes are considered modern, affordable and of good quality, however but not superb quality. In relation to the price of the clothing, Swedish clothes are perceived to have good quality. Swedish fashion is also perceived as practical, yet not exclusive and a comparison to H&M was given.

> *"There are brands like H&M which offer clothes that look good, are practical and everyone has them. If you buy H&M´s clothes, you can't expect to have something exclusive because at least three other people will have them."* (Nina)

The respondents were all mainly positive to fashion apparel brands which are Swedish. The respondent which were not positive, were neutral to this. In an international comparison regarding fashion apparel, they did not perceive Swedish fashion as neither better nor worse in relation to other European brands. However, Swedish fashion was regarded higher in comparison to Asian and African brands.

> *"If I compare Swedish brands with other countries brands, such as England, Spain or Italy, I would not make a distinction because they're all good. I would make the distinction that it is positive that it is Swedish or Spanish or English compared to like Chinese and other Asian brands. But within Europe, I wouldn't make a difference."* (Nina)

They also say that it depends on what you are buying, if they would want a Swedish brand or not, since Swedish fashion has its associations. Classic fashion is for instance not associated with Sweden. But when it comes to modern, stylish and trendy clothing, the respondents associated these keywords strongly with Sweden.

> *"...when I'm buying a suit, I'm not going for a Swedish brand. If there are exclusive clothes, you take a particular country, but if you think of general clothes, then H&M is the only brand I think about. Also Stadium, you know Stadium has good ski clothes."* (Ali)

4.4.3 Focus Group 3's Perceptions on The Match Between Swedish Country Image and Clothes

Since this focus group was, in comparison to the other focus groups, much less knowledgeable about Sweden, they did not have strong associations between Sweden and fashion apparel. The first thing they mentioned was H&M, but simultaneously, it the brand was associated with hipsters. Having this said, Swedish clothes were associated with quality and it was also perceived that the Swedish quality was better than Swedish design. Another common agreement is that Swedish fashion does not entail any shiny decorations and referred to as "shiny bling bling" as stated by Gina.

When asked the question of whether it would be positive that a fashion apparel brand is Swedish, they all said that they had never seen a Swedish fashion apparel brand except H&M. However they still answered that they would still be interested in the brand in a positive way. This focus group also believed that Swedish fashion is not expensive and has a nice design but the quality might not be the best. However, when comparing the quality with the price, they agreed on that the price was worth it.

"It is not the best quality exactly, but it is worth the money you pay." (Anna)

4.4.4 Summary of the Focus Groups' Perceptions on The Match Between Swedish Country Image and fashion apparel

The main things that were mentioned throughout all the focus groups were that Swedish design is all about being stylish, minimalistic and sleek. Swedish quality is also mentioned throughout the focus groups as something positive, although not necessarily superior. Regarding the question of whether it is positive that a fashion brand is Swedish; there was a general consensus that it was positive and in some cases neutral, but never perceived as negative. The discussion regarding price in relation to quality and that they balance each other, was also mentioned in all focus groups. They do not perceive Swedish fashion as very expensive, and neither of superior quality. The quality of Swedish clothing was perceived as good, and relatively high in relation to the price you pay. As this part is directly related to the aim and research questions of this thesis, it will be further summarised and analysed in the next chapter.

5 Analysis

This chapter will discuss upon the results attained in the previous chapter. An analysis of the results will be provided according to the research strategy, in which theory and contribution to the research questions are essential parts. Furthermore, this analysis will provide the base from which conclusions in the next chapter will be drawn.

5.1 Variety of Match

In order to gain an adequate and reliable answer to the research questions of this thesis, results attained from the conducted focus groups need to be analysed through the PCM model, as explained in the theoretical chapter of this thesis. To conduct such an analysis and take use of the PCM model as used by Roth and Romeo (1992), the respondents positive as well as negative perceptions of Sweden are put in relation to the important and unimportant features of fashion apparel. This is done in four parts in accordance with the PCM models favourable match, favourable mismatch, unfavourable match and unfavourable mismatch.

5.1.1 Favourable Matches

The features in fashion apparel that are important to the respondents and which Sweden is perceived to represent are referred to as a Favourable Match, and the results attained from the respondents can be compared through the figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Positive Perceptions of Sweden's Country Image compared to Important for Purchasing Clothes

Amongst all the characteristics and features mentioned by the respondents, a few attributes mentioned in regards to the positive perceptions of Sweden were repeated as being of importance when purchasing fashion apparel; these are mapped out as favourable matches.

Favourable Matches:
- *Quality:* Good materials, worth its price
- *Design:* Discrete design, fashionable (trendy, modern)
- *Functionality:* Fit, comfort, practicality

5.1.2 Favourable Mismatches

Turning our focus to regard the positive attributes which were prescribed to Sweden by the respondents and the features which were of unimportance when purchasing clothes, the two can be compared through the figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2. Positive Perceptions of Sweden's Country Image compared to Not Important for Purchasing Clothes

Amongst all the characteristics and features mentioned by the respondents, the main positive attributes prescribed to Sweden which were considered unimportant to consumers in fashion apparel are referred to as Favourable Mismatches.

Favourable Mismatches:
- *Innovative*
- *Active*
- *Sporty*
- *Good Social Welfare*
- *Equality*

5.1.3 Unfavourable Matches

The aspects of importance to consumers in fashion apparel put in contrast to the negative perceptions of Sweden can be seen in figure 5.3.
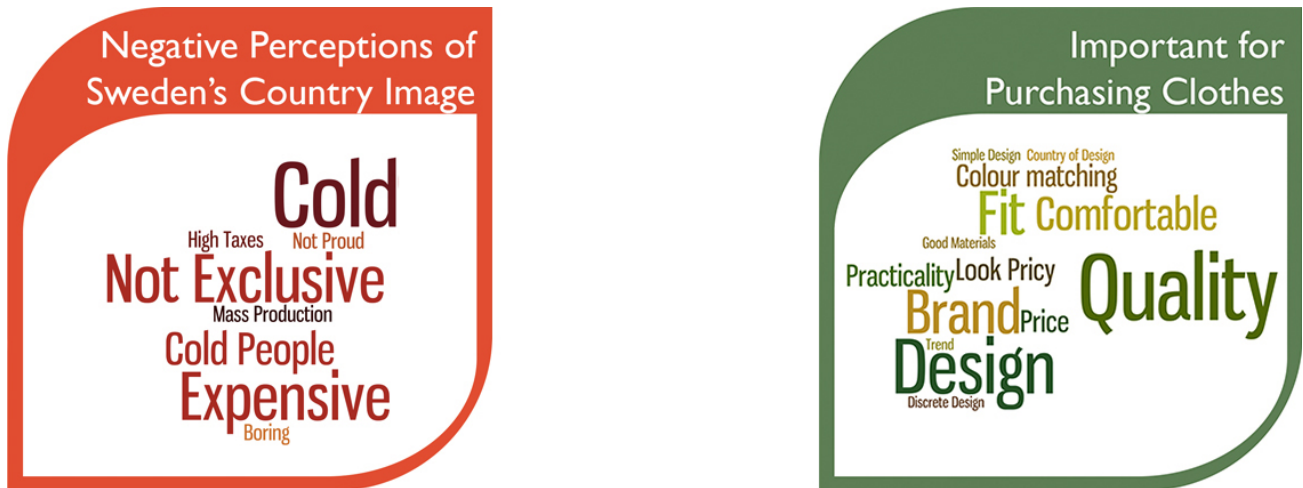
Figure 5.3. Negative Perceptions of Sweden's Country Image compared to Important for Purchasing Clothes

Key words of importance to respondents in fashion apparel which Sweden does not match are referred to as Unfavourable Matches and are mapped out below.

Unfavourable matches:
- *Expensive* (however price is important, clothes should look pricy)
- *Not exclusive* (however clothes should look pricy)
- *Not proud* (country of design is important, and the brand is important)

5.1.4 Unfavourable Mismatches

In order to map out out the keywords which belong inside the unfavourable mismatch box of the PCM model, the negatives on Swedish image are compared with the unimportant attributes of fashion apparel. Even though the unfavourable match does not help in knowing which parts of the country image that should be accentuated in marketing activities in Europe, since it focuses on the unimportant features of both Sweden and fashion apparel, it still is important to gain an entire picture of Sweden's image and what the respondents perceive as unimportant in regards to fashion. Through the figure 5.4, it becomes apparent that Sweden is perceived not exclusive, to have cold people (socially as evident in results chapter), cold weather, is associated with mass production (probably due to H&M associations), that the county of manufacture is unimportant, that Swedish people are not proud of their country and that Swedish clothes are regarded as not exclusive.

Figure 5.4. Negative Perceptions of Sweden's Country Image compared to Not Important for Purchasing Clothes

Unfavourable Mismatches:
- *Sweden is cold* (weather context)
- *The people of Sweden are cold* (in a social context)
- *High taxes* (social welfare context)
- *Mass production*
- *Not exclusive*

5.1.5 Filled in PCM model

Since the key attributes of the results have been categorised and mapped out in accordance to the PCM models four parts; favourable match, favourable mismatch, unfavourable match and unfavourable mismatch we can now precede with the next step of the analysis. To simplify a discussion regarding the results attained in this research, the authors have chosen to portray the results in relation to the PCM model, as explained in the research strategy section in our thesis. Through inserting the main keywords mapped out above, the results become joined in one figure (fig. 5.5).
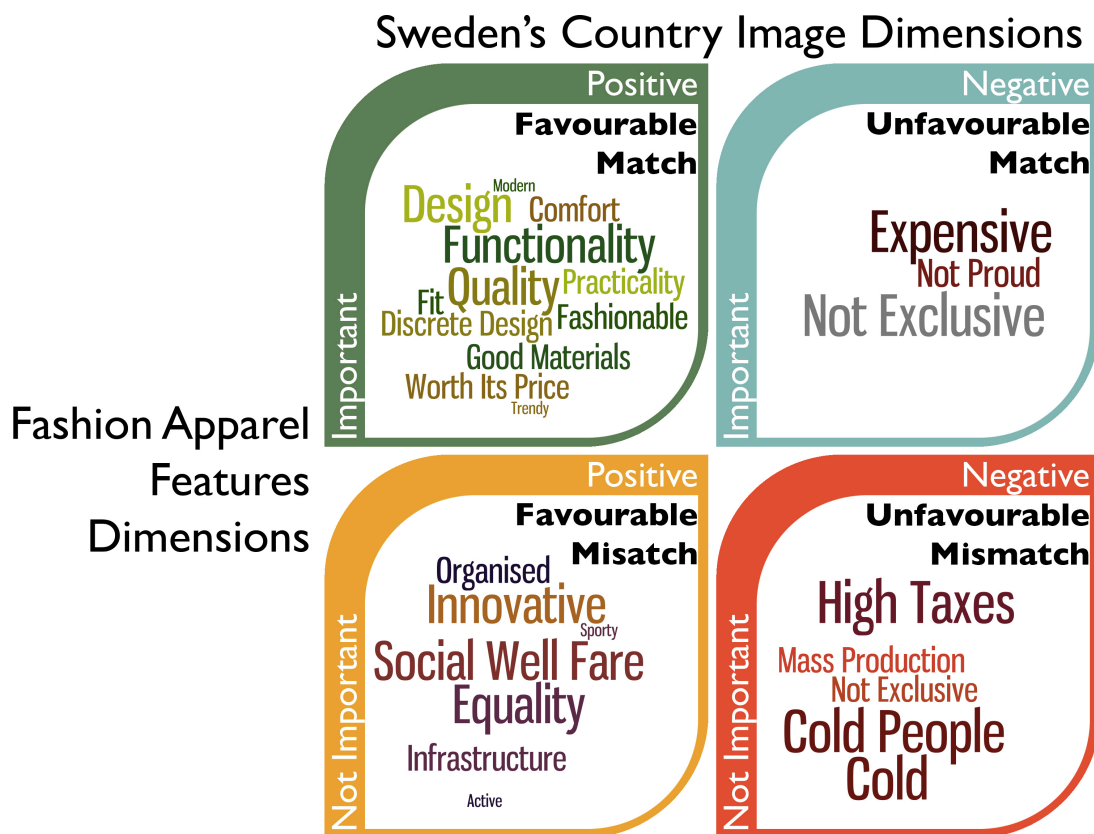
Figure 5.5. Filled in PCM model

5.2 Analysis of First Research Question

The first research question of this thesis is; *Is it beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to market themselves as Swedish in Europe?*

As can be seen from the filled in version of the PCM model in figure 5.1, once the results attained on Sweden's country image are put in contrast to that of fashion apparel, results show that the same attributes used to characterise the Swedish country image, are reoccurring as important by the respondents when purchasing fashion apparel. The Swedish country image does thus strengthen the product feature dimension of fashion apparel and vice versa. The main matching

key attributes were those of quality and design, features both important to consumers in fashion apparel, as well as ascribed as features which are typically Swedish.

This harmony in results indicate that fashion apparel brands, which market themselves as Swedish, are automatically ascribed features of "good design" and "good quality". Since these characteristics are most important to consumers in search for fashion apparel, it naturally concludes that using the Swedish country image can be beneficiary for clothes brands on the European market. This outcome thus answers the first research question.

Since it takes much effort to prescribe a country a certain image and form the consumers stand on what is typically Swedish, fashion apparel brands can gain much on surfing on a wave which already exists and knowing when it is beneficiary for them to use their Swedish image as a marketing strategy in Europe, and when it is not.

The positive image which respondents ascribed Sweden is supported and consolidated through the results attained by the Country brand index by Futurebrand, which, as explained in the theoretical chapter, ranked Sweden's country image highly regards to value system, quality of life and as good for business (Futurebrand, 2012b). Also, Sweden achieved high ranking in terms of freedom of speech, education system and healthcare system.

While these attributes ascribed Sweden through the brand index, are not divided in terms of product quality and product design in specific, one cannot neglect the positivity of the country image. Respondents did, however, discuss Swedish attributes such as equality, good social welfare and infrastructure which can be perceived matching the country brand index´s high ranking in regards to freedom of speech, value system and quality of life (Futurebrand, 2012b).

When comparing the characteristics prescribed to Sweden by the respondents to the Swedish nation brands core values as set by the Committee of Sweden's Promotion Abroad (NSU) and the Swedish Institute, many similarities and matches are found. While the Swedish core values revolve around the attributes of new thinking, openness, consideration and authenticity (SI, 2010c; Swedish image as attained from the respondents do present many matches. The core value of new thinking is manifested through respondents' perception of Sweden being innovative; the core values of openness and consideration are evident in the respondents' perception of Swedish welfare and equality; and at last, the core value of authenticity is evident in the respondents' perception of Sweden as unique and provides ingenuity in style.

Having this said. The Swedish country image is to most degree positive through the results attained by the respondents and the positive Swedish image is consolidated by the results attained on the Swedish country image from the country brand index. There is also a match in between the core values on what values Sweden aspires to represent in order to strengthen the Swedish nation brand, which indicates that Sweden is perceived in the way is aspired to by the Committee of Sweden's Promotion Abroad (NSU).

While the results from the focus groups alone are adequate for making loose generalisations only as previously explained in the methodology chapter, the results attained through the country brand index fortifies and validates the focus group results further and thus, the

loose generalisations become more secured and can thus regard European consumers perceptions of the Swedish country image.

　　　　With this said, through results attained and analysed, it becomes apparent that the Swedish country image is perceived in a positive matter in general and is suitable as well as beneficiary for marketers to use in their marketing of Swedish fashion apparel in Europe since it can strengthen the attributes of importance for consumers in clothing.

5.3 Analysis of Second Research Question

The second research question in our thesis is; *What aspects of the Swedish country image are beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to use when marketing themselves in Europe?*

Through analysing the filled in version of the PCM model, it becomes apparent which aspects of the Swedish country image that are important as well as unimportant to consumers' choice of fashion apparel. As previously mentioned, the key attributes marketers can press on in terms of Swedish image, which also is rated important for consumers when purchasing clothes, are "quality" and "design". These two words characterise Sweden and are also the most important attributes for consumers in regards to fashion apparel. The Swedish image is in this way very useful when marketing fashion apparel brands in Europe since the Swedish image will strengthen the image of the fashion apparel at hand in the eyes of the consumers.

　　　　Having this said, the answer to the second research question of this thesis is quality and design as elaborated from the PCM model and its *favourable match*. The attributes of quality and design as attained from the favourable match, will be elaborated further in this text, but first a an analyse of the favourable mismatch, unfavourable match and unfavourable mismatch will take place.

　　　　The message conveyed through the PCM model´s *favourable mismatch*, is that even though the Swedish image has a positive tone in terms of fashion, not all attributes prescribed as Swedish are of importance to consumers in the context of clothes purchase, neither are all attributes of value to the consumers in terms of fashion apparel. Sweden is perceived as innovative as well as sporty and active and these attributes are not necessarily of importance to the consumers in regards to fashion apparel. To market a fashion brand as sporty, active and innovative might therefor not be the best way to go for marketers in the category of fashion apparel and clothes. However, *fashion apparel brands that do want to be associated with the attributes of being sporty, innovative and active such as Sports brands or brands which wish to accentuate its innovativeness, can thus gain much on marketing themselves as Swedish*. Therefore, Even though being innovative, sporty and active are not characteristics best suited for fashion apparel in the eyes of European consumers, and imply a favourable mismatch, this is not always the case. It all depends on the type of attributes a certain brand gains on being associated with certain values, attributes or characteristics.

　　　　The results attained on what is described as an *unfavourable match*, are rather weak. The reason for them being weak is due to contradictory results on the matter. While Sweden is

perceived as expensive and not exclusive, respondents demanded good prices on clothes and fashion apparel which look pricy. At first glance, there seems to be a mismatch between the respondents demand on clothes and the qualities prescribed to Sweden. However, if the results are studied in detail and analysed, one can clearly see a pattern of contradictory ideas on this matter. This is evident in the fact that a low price on fashion apparel is important for some consumers while Sweden is perceived as expensive. However, it is also repeatedly stated by the respondents that price on clothes indicate quality and quality is stated to be one of the most important features when purchasing clothes. Further, Sweden is not perceived as exclusive, but this must not entail a negative tone since respondents do not find exclusivity as important when purchasing clothes.

In this way, there are no clear attributes important to the respondents in terms of clothes purchase which Sweden does not represent. The takeout from this analysis on the unfavourable match if applied in practice is thus that *the Swedish country image seems to be ideal in regards to the marketing of fashion apparel in Europe.*

The unfavourable mismatch, however, brought up associations of Sweden regarding its weather as cold, its taxes as high and the social behaviour of its population in terms of swedes being perceived as cold. These associations have no direct implication on Swedish fashion apparel since they regard Sweden in general. What did have direct implication on the area of Swedish fashion are the associations of mass production and non-exclusivity. The respondents perceived the country of manufacture to be unimportant to them when purchasing clothes and at the same time, Sweden was associated with mass production, probably due to respondents associations with H&M. Since the country of manufacture is perceived unimportant, Sweden being mass producers according to their perception is also unimportant. In the same way, since Sweden is perceived as non-exclusive and not proud of their country, fashion apparel brands and the status related to fashion, is also perceived unimportant.

Having discussed the variety of associations ascribed Sweden and the varying degrees of match in relation to fashion apparel, we will now turn our focus to the best suited matches to help explain in a rather detailed way what aspects of the Swedish country image marketers should accentuate and highlight in their marketing of Swedish fashion apparel in Europe.

A more nuanced discussion surrounding the aspects of the Swedish country image that are beneficiary to highlight can come from analysing the features and characteristics surrounding Swedish "quality" and "design" as attained from the favourable match. If a fashion apparel brand chooses to use Swedish country image in their marketing in Europe, it is of utter importance to know which associations the Swedish image conveys.

Through taking a closer look at the results attained in the results chapter, one can find many attributes adjoining the keywords design and quality. Besides the attributes which were mentioned under the favourable match, Swedish quality, design and functionality is further explained below.

- *Swedish quality:* Worth its price
- *Swedish design:* Sleek, minimalistic, stylish, white, ingenious, organised, unique
- *Swedish functionality:* Innovative, active and sporty

As mapped out in the previous results chapter, Swedish design and quality was discussed in terms of *minimalistic* design, *fashionable* design, *modernity*, *functionality* as well as the colour *white*. Swedish fashion was also considered *functional*, *practical* and *unique*. All these attributes are thus linked with Sweden and Swedish fashion. To market Swedish fashion brands as minimalistic, functional and modern will thus reinforce the use of Swedish country image and in the same way, taking use of Swedish country image will entail attributes of minimalism, functionality and modernity to a clothes brand. These aspects are thus the ones most useful for Swedish fashion apparel brands to use when marketing themselves in Europe according to the results attained in our study.

5.4 Analytical Reflections

Other, rather interesting outcomes attained, which can be useful for marketers interested in marketing Swedish fashion apparel abroad, is that consumers are aware of that clothes can be made in countries which are characterised with low wages, child labor and poverty, however most of them do not put any emphasis on this due to various reasons. Results show that the focus of the consumers lie on the country that the fashion apparel is marketed as, which is usually the country of design. This results in what seems to be a common comprehension amongst consumers, that the country of origin is apprehended as the country of design.

Marketers can therefore gain from the overall positive effects of relating to Sweden and thus acquiring positive attributes through the Swedish country image, regardless of where the clothes are manufactured. Consumers relate more to, and are more affected, by the country of design than the country of manufacture.

Another important subject to analyse upon is the fact that two of the focus groups had been living in Sweden for approximately six months while one focus group had never visited Sweden. Despite these differences in between the groups, they all seemed to have little knowledge about Sweden in terms of its country image or Swedish brands. This was noticed a bit more in the last focus group since they had never visited Sweden and in which the discussions took on a more general discussion as to regard the Swedish weather as cold amongst other things. The knowledge was many times limited to regard H&M, Volvo and Ikea in all focus groups and the attributes of these brands are rather similar and can help explain why the respondents mainly discussed upon the Swedish image as being price worthy, functional, minimalistic as well as keeping a good quality.

To what extent these attributes prescribed as typical Swedish, actually rest upon the rather few Swedish brands they are familiar with is unsure, however, based on the similarity in attributes prescribed to Sweden along with the products they associated Sweden with in all focus groups, one can state that there is a relationship between the Swedish brands they are familiar with and their perception of what is considered as typical to Sweden.

Also, a statement rather important to reflect upon in this context is that Swedish people are perceived as not being proud of their origin. This also translates to Swedish brands.

Many respondents reflected upon that it took them a long amount of time to know that some brands were Swedish. With this in mind, taking use of co-branding when marketing Swedish brands abroad in general, and fashion brands in specific can help strengthen the Swedish nation brand since more people will acknowledge what is Swedish, as well as benefit from the associations and values ascribed Sweden.

6 Conclusions

This last chapter will present the most prominent findings of our research. The aim will work as the fundament on which this conclusion is based, starting by a presentation of the main outcomes in regards to the research questions of our study. Further, theoretical contributions and managerial implications will be mapped out, along with recommendations for future research which will conclude this chapter.

6.1 Conclusions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate whether and in what way the use of the Swedish nation brand is beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands when marketing themselves in Europe. In order to fulfil this aim, two research question were developed and the conclusions will be revolving around the two research questions. The main conclusions in consideration to the theoretical framework, research questions and analysis will be presented and discussed.

6.1.1 Is it beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to market themselves as Swedish in Europe?

Yes it is beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to market themselves as Swedish in Europe. In the introduction chapter and the problem background, the first quote says "In the space of a decade, Sweden has emerged from seeming sartorial abyss to purveyor of understated, sophisticated cool" (Rankin, 2008). This quote shows us that Sweden has not always been considered a country related to fashion, but has over the years, and much more so lately, become more powerfully associated with the fashion industry. When the focus groups where carried out, respondents perceived the Swedish nation brand with striking similarity to how Sweden is perceived in an international context as described through the Country Brand Index which ranks Sweden amongst the highest in value system and quality of life. This indicates that the focus groups have grasped the overall opinion of Sweden. It was found also, that Sweden gains on being perceived as an innovative, open and versatile country with consideration to others.

Having this said, authenticity, simplicity and being down to earth, are all characteristics Sweden gains on portraying through its nation brand and it seems as it has succeeded since the Swedish image is perceived in this way as proved through our outcomes. When the focus groups discussed about Sweden and clothes, there were a general consensus that Sweden is in fact a country with high associations to clothes and fashion. For successful co-branding, the inherent association of one brand must either match, or be of similar nature to the brand which it wishes to co-brand with, in order to achieve a positive outcome. This indicates that depending on the type of fashion apparel brand at hand, and its inherent or desirable associations, it can be beneficial for a

Swedish fashion brands to market themselves as Swedish. What these associations are will be discussed in the next section.

6.1.2 What aspects of the Swedish country image are beneficiary for Swedish fashion brands to use when marketing themselves in Europe?

As previously mentioned in the analysis, the aspects of Sweden's country image that are beneficiary when marketing a fashion brand in Europe are tied to the match that can be found in the favourable match box of the PCM model. The main aspects of match regarded the features of quality and design. Having this said, quality and design can inherit various associations; an example is the perception of Italian design and its associations with classic fashion. But when it comes to Swedish design it is proved to be associated with being modern, minimalistic, white, sleek, unique and stylish. These are frequently mentioned words to describe Swedish fashion and thus, a fashion brand wishing to be labelled as Swedish should strive to use these attributes. And in the same sense, a fashion apparel brand wishing to benefit from these attributes ascribed Sweden, should incorporate the Swedish image in their marketing activities in Europe.

Quality proved to be an important aspect in regards to the respondents' expectations of clothes, as well as a positive attribute in regards to their perception of Sweden. Swedish quality was not perceived as superior, it was perceived as standard. However, the clothes were perceived as worthy of their price since quality matches price in their perception. One explanation to this can be found in their brand associations to Sweden. H&M and IKEA were the two most prominent company ambassadors of Sweden since the focus groups related Sweden with these brands. Having this said, quality and design are not the only buzz words associated with Sweden; functionality is also strongly related to the country. This indicates that, in order to create synergy effects in co-branding between a fashion apparel brand and the Swedish nation brand, the fashion apparel brand itself has to inherit some or all of these traits in order to benefit from them or, the Swedish brand must portray itself as Swedish in order to gain these positive associations to its brand.

6.2 Contributions

The contributions of this thesis are first and foremost for marketers of Swedish fashion brands in Europe. This work provides a foundation for marketers and can work as a compass in regards to what aspects of the Swedish country image to accentuate and highlight in the marketing activities in Europe. But it is also a contribution towards the strengthening and confirmation of the Swedish brand and Sweden's country image. In this study, the authors have been able to find a connection between how this study's focus groups perceive Sweden and how Sweden is perceived in an international context in relation to how the Swedish nation brand wishes to be perceived.

6.2.1 Managerial Implications

This part is for the decision makers and other key-persons in the decision chain regarding marketing of Swedish fashion brands. When marketing fashion in association with Sweden, it is important to use the associations of design, quality, and functionality in a correct way. Regarding design, the design should convey minimalism, sleekness and trendy design. The price and positioning of the product should not be placed in the exclusive segment, as this is not associated with Sweden, but rather adapt to the conveyed image of Sweden as products that are worth its price with a high quality in relation to price. In regards to functional fashion such as sport clothes, there is a high degree of congruence with the Swedish country image as sporty, active and functional. This indicates that clothes such as skiing clothes, are a perfect example of when Swedish functionality and fashion are combined. Since skiing is perceived as a typical Swedish sport. But not only is it important to know when to use Sweden's country image in combination with a fashion brand; it is just as important to know when there is incongruence between a country's image and its associations in regards to a company brand. An example is a high profiled fashion brand which focuses on classic style. This type of brand can position itself as rather expensive and of high status. Swedish products on the other hand, are not associated with high status in regards to being exclusive.

6.2.2 Theoretical Contribution

In order to gain better use and understanding of the PCM model it could benefit from being developed further as this model was conveyed over 20 years ago from this time. The PCM model could gain from being adapted and become more product category specific, and also way it works when matching associations between product category and country image could be improved. The static nature of the model was deemed too inflexible by us when ranking different associations and thus, the authors used different word sizes when retailing the associations in order to convey which associations that had a stronger meaning. The authors argue that the use of sliding scales would be more useful where more common denominated factors are closer to respective extremities in the model. In effect, the model would act like a diagram where the x and y axis represent the dimension of product category and the country image and the end of each line represent either positive/ negative or important/not important features. This would thus provide a positioning diagram where each association will represent a dot on the diagram and therefore, it will give a greater accuracy of how the associations are matched when overviewing the model.

Another change necessary is the type of basic associations used for the model, as for example innovation might not be the best association linked together with fashion apparel. Therefore, the authors argue that also the basic associations that are related to the model are adapted in regards to different product categories, and in result providing more precise and accurate answers. But also in a product category such as fashion, there is a coherent view of Sweden and its fashion and design. This could and should be further researched upon and also used by NSU in their

efforts of marketing Sweden abroad as NSU should articulate and pin down their marketing efforts in accordance to different product categories, as it is not advised to market fashion products and industrial engineering products in the same way.

6.4 Future Research

Recommendations for future research would be to in most ways expand the research done on this thesis. As discussed earlier, the research done in this thesis can be seen as the foundation and more bits and pieces can be added. For example research can be conducted on different types of categories inside the category of fashion apparel, as well as make specific research for specific countries. Future research could also expand this conducted study to regard other continents. Another idea for future research regards how the Swedish government can incorporate fashion and clothing in the Swedish brand and in this way further support the expansion of the Swedish fashion industry abroad.

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