

DEAR GOD, MAY I BUY A NEW IDENTITY?

*How religion and consumerism interact: a comparative analysis
between the United States and the Netherlands*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to provide a micro perspective of the influence of religion on consumption patterns. Specifically, this research aims to explore what effect the level of religiosity has on someone's level of brand reliance. This paper seeks to explain the reasons why such a relationship exists. With the help of online questionnaires this research offers an international comparative analysis of the effects of religiosity on brand reliance in the US and the Netherlands. Theoretical embedding supports the hypothesis that higher levels of religiosity correspond to lower levels of brand reliance. Moreover, this study argues that citizens without a religious denomination utilize brands as a surrogate religion, with which they express the self towards others via sign-value. Taking Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a point of departure, this research proposes a different emphasis in the hierarchy of needs between religious and non-religious citizens. Supported with statistical research, it is argued that varying intergroup religiosity account for a different levels of brand reliance because religion and brands are substitutive systems.

Key words: *brand reliance, religion, hierarchy of needs, surrogate religion, sign-value, United States, the Netherlands*

PREFACE

The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion, or religion surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense as he needs

sunlight, calcium, or love.

Abraham Maslow, 1962.

It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.

Joanne Kathleen Rowling, 1965.

How it both frightens and intrigues me at the same time; the idea that the choices we think we make were already made for us. While some would explain this by the existence of God, others would say that there are no such things as predetermined choices. Yet, no one can deny that there are certain factors that at least *influence* the decisions you make in life, no matter how substantial or seemingly unimportant. Personal interest in consumer patterns prompted me to investigate one of the elements that could possibly influence consumer choices, while not from a very well-known perspective. That is, of particular interest to me was to understand what individual characteristics would mean for personal choices. In other words; what makes you buy other products than I do? How is it possible that your neighbor walks the street with expensive clothes, while you do not seem to care about brands?

This research aims to answer this question by specifically focusing on the influence of an individual's level of religiosity, regardless of whether someone is an atheist or a convinced follower of a church. When you think your religion has nothing to do with your choice of products, this research invites you to think again. Being an innate part of culture, your possible belief in a religion has an enormous, yet sometimes unconscious, impact on the decisions you make in daily life: what you eat, how you dress, who you judge. Similarly, when you do not believe in a God or the transcendent, your disbelief will guide you in the choice between brands and generic products.

Written from a comparative perspective, this research compares the highly religious United States with the secular Netherlands. As a graduate in American Studies and citizen of the Netherlands, I take special interest in the workings of both cultures. Researchers often select particular countries for comparison because they already have certain expectations about the outcomes. This makes

comparisons of two (seemingly) culturally different countries such as the US and the Netherlands even more interesting, because even expectations are occasionally proven wrong. Therefore, this research will deal with the explanations of similarities and differences that emerged with respect to the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance.

After reading this research, you might have gained a better understanding of our consumption patterns and the way in which it is influenced by many factors. Interpretation of this research might provide the reader with a better understanding of religion, spirituality as religion, and the highest level of needs: self-actualization. After all, those who understand for what reason they make decisions are the ones able to live with peace of mind.

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1. INTRODUCTION

That there is some kind of connection between religion and consumer culture seems to be almost undeniable; a festivity once held to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is now the world's biggest consumer festivity in which gift-giving and family dinners are spoken of in one breath. The link between consumerism and religion is quite apparent on a social level, where consumerism has found its way into what were once merely religious festivities such as Christmas. Every year around this time we exchange the church for the shopping mall, bread and water for luxurious meals, and personal reflection for massive parties. But not merely during Christmastime does "religion sell;" items such as "I love Jesus" bumper stickers, rosaries, T-shirts and many more have found a large consumer market. Religious artifacts and related goods are capable of gathering an enormous clientele when directed to the right people in the right country, such as the United States. In other words, because religion has the ability to sell related goods to a large group of people, marketers quickly jumped on the possibility to make money. Moreover, religious movements made use of the opportunity to put themselves on the market, by trying to attract citizens who are still undecided or unsatisfied within their current religious denomination. Many movements have tried to satisfy the civil demand for a particular faith, making use of contemporary marketing techniques to stand out from the crowd. A similar trend has been noted by O'Shaughnessy, who states that "everything from religion to government services is presented and segmented as various offerings from which the public is to choose" (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002, p. 533). US society can no longer be imaged without television sermons, elaborate internet sites, and regional adverts that recommend a particular religious belonging.

Many books have been written on religion's ability to sell, exploring the relationship between religion and consumerism from an economic, macro point of view. However, this relationship can also be explored from another and less obvious point of view: an exploration on a micro level of what the relationship between religion and consumerism means for individuals. Instead of thinking that the economic incentive is the only reason for the well-established connection between religion and consumer culture, we can also investigate whether there are connections between the two that are based on a completely different incentive. That is, has our

degree of religiosity the ability to influence our shopping pattern on a daily basis, even when the products are completely unrelated to religion? Does our (non-) religious backpack consciously or unconsciously lead us to particular consumer products?

1.1 Literature review

Nowadays, brand reliance research is a branch mostly reserved for marketers and economists because of its direct tie to business performance. As has been described earlier, many books and articles have been written on the relationship between religion and brands from a marketing perspective, or, a sociological perspective from which “religion sells.” In other words, the way in which religion and its artifacts found their way onto the (American) marketplace is a song sung by many, such as R. Laurence Moore in *Selling God* (1994) and Mara Einstein in *Brands of Faith* (2008). Unfortunately, interdisciplinary research on brands and their relationship to social context is not as numerous as it could have been. While several studies have sought to explain how consumers employed brands to express their social status with, the consumers’ incentive to actually utilize these brands for the benefit of their social position is an under-examined topic.

Ergo, not much literature exists on the relationship between religion and brands from an individual point of view. That is, the influence of an individual’s religion on his or hers choice of commodities unrelated to religion. One of the few articles written about this topic is written by Khan, Misra, and Sing (2013). This research asks the question whether the simplest of daily choices, such as a choice between coffee brands, reflects part of the individual’s values set. This set of values is measured by the extent to which one’s psychological traits match with a conservative ideology and was used in multiple regressions to predict brand consumption (Khan, Misra, & Sing, 2013, p. 327). After analysis of their empirical results, the authors note that the more conservative the individual’s ideology is, the more the person relies on national brands (as opposed to non-branded products) and the slower someone accepts new products (Khan, Misra, & Sing, 2013). In other words, personal values such as the conservative traits do in fact influence consumption patterns, which is a valuable insight to take along with us in this thesis. However, Khan’s research is conducted merely with groceries, i.e. mostly functional products and not with conspicuous commodities. In contrast, this measures how (non-)religious value traits cause people to respond differently to functional products

and conspicuous, self-expressive products. Specifically, my research enables me to inquire why some rely on brands more than others, therefore doing research on a micro level instead of a macro level.

1.2 Brands: Opiate of the Non-Religious Masses?

One of the researches that recently explored the connection between religion and consumer culture was summarized in an article titled “Brands: Opium of the Non-Religious Masses?” written by Prof. Dr. Sachar, Dr. Fitzsimmons, Dr. Erdem and Dr. Wells (2010). This article suggests that brands in particular are the kind of products that could be related to religion. That is, the authors argue that the degree to which someone adheres to branded products is connected to the individual’s religiosity. In order to thoroughly analyze the relation between religion and brand reliance, the authors explored this field of study from both a state and individual level. For the state level analysis, Sachar and others used data such as brand-store density and church attendance from certain regions in the US in order to crudely confirm that a relationship between religion and brand reliance indeed exists. They indeed found that a negative relationship exists within the American context. However, it is the individual level analysis which is particularly interesting because it widens the possibility to expose underlying motivations for consumption. Therefore, this section will elaborate on the four micro level experiments in which Sachar and others make use of individual responses to support their claims. The first two studies determine whether the relationship between religion and brand reliance is either negative or positive. Studies three and four explore what particular aspect should be seen as the prime motivator behind the abovementioned relationship. Since experiment number two is primarily used as a point of departure for the Dutch survey, the results of the other three studies will be discussed only briefly.

The first experiment created by the authors was called “Experimental Manipulation of Religiosity” and brings to light interesting results. The experiment is designed to determine whether individuals are more tempted to favor brands over non-brands when religion is projected on them. That is, the authors want to find out whether there is a difference to be noticed in the presence of religion at the individual level with and without prime projection. For this matter, the presence of religious beliefs is manipulated via a method called prime manipulation. Half of the participants answered questions concerning religion before commencing with the real

questionnaire, while the others are primed with neutral questions, for example concerning their daily routines. Following, the participants continued with a questionnaire (that will be described further on in this chapter). The test shows that prime religious manipulations have a significant effect on the individual's brand reliance, when the data is separated between functional ($\beta = -0.03$, $t = -0.05$, $p = .96$) and self-expressive ($\beta = -1.99$, $t = -2.74$, $p = .01$) brands. The authors found out that individuals who are religiously primed before starting the questionnaire are more inclined to choose non-branded products over brands within the self-expressive category, while the effect of religious priming is smaller in the functional category.

A logical next step would be to inquire whether religion as a personal characteristic brings about the same results. Therefore, the second experiment named "Dispositional Measures of Religiosity" has two objectives. The authors seek to replicate the results from experiment one, but without using prime manipulation; religiosity would be seen as a personal characteristic, differing among participants. This experiment strives to explore the incentive behind the relationship between religion and brand reliance, which the authors propose to be the individual's need for self-expression. A total of 356 participants took the internet-based survey as drafted by Sachar and others, of which 70.2 percent were female. A total of 68 percent of these participants describes themselves as Christian, another 19.1 percent as non-religious, and a minority group consists of Jewish, Buddhists, Muslims, and others (12.9 percent). The first part of the questionnaire is identical to the choice-model of experiment one, in which a decision between two products should be made. Afterwards, the participants continue with a measure of extraversion, the Religious Commitment Inventory-10, and conclude the survey with demographic questions.

1. Measurement of Brand Reliance

The first part of the questionnaire measures the participant's brand reliance with the help of a total of six choices between twelve products, subdivided in three functional product choices and three self-expressive choices. That is, a self-expressive product can be explained as a product with which the individual has the possibility to express her identity, beliefs and feelings via the connotations given to the commodity in question. Functional products do not bear high connotative value for

individual use and are therefore viewed as mostly functional. In each product choice, the participant has to choose between a brand and a comparable non-branded product. The products themselves are similar in all fronts except price, which is displayed underneath a picture of the products. A pretest is held among 44 participants to ensure that the products used are indeed identified as specifically functional or self-expressive. The self-expressive choices are between a Ralph Lauren and target brand sunglasses; Fossil and a target brand watch; and between Adidas socks and Walmart soccer socks. The functional choices had to be made between Pepperidge Farm and Kroger brand bread; Energizer and CVS brand batteries; and generic ibuprofen versus CVS brand ibuprofen.

2. *Measurement of Extraversion*

As soon as participants are finished with the product-choice part of the survey, they proceed with a measurement of extraversion. In this part of the questionnaire, the individual's personal traits are assessed with the help of eight questions that reflect directly on a person's characteristics. The ultimate goal here is to find out how extravert individuals see themselves by scaling their response to a statement like "I see myself as someone who ... is reserved". The authors hypothesize that individuals who seem more extravert tend to have a higher probability to self-express.

3. *Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10)*

With the help of the instrument called RCI-10, the authors measure the degree to which individuals consciously live by and act on behalf of their religious norms and values in their daily lives. Participants had to react to ten statements about religious activities by filling out a Likert rating scale of "1" to "5," in which 1 meant disagreement and 5 full agreement with the statement in question. For example, participants are asked whether they agreed with the statement that their "religious beliefs lie behind [their] whole approach to life" and whether they "make financial contributions to [their] religious organizations." All even-numbered questions concern interpersonal religious commitment and uneven numbered questions test intrapersonal religious commitment. Via this

way, the research is able to gather information about the religious commitment of its participants.

4. *Demographic questions*

Since the study sees someone's religiosity as a personal characteristic instead of being the result of prime manipulation, it is useful to record the participants' demographics. That is, there might be differences to be found in levels of brand reliance when observing different factors, such as age, sex and education.

Similar to experiment one, the results of this survey show that a high level of religiosity is connected to low brand reliance for self-expressive products ($\beta = -0.26$, $z = -3.24$, $p = .001$), while this does not apply to functional products ($\beta = 0.00$, $z = 0.04$, $p = .97$). The same negative relationship between religiosity and brand reliance did emerge in experiment one as well: higher levels of religiosity corresponds to lower levels of brand reliance. Specifically interesting in this second experiment is the questionnaire's section with questions that relate to the participant's need for self-expression. Sachar and others believe that brands and religion are two substitute ways in which an individual can express 'the self'. They propose that an increase in extraversion causes higher temptation to express the self towards others. Hence, the authors propose the need for self-expression to be a prime motivator in the relationship between religion and brands.

The third and fourth studies aim to test whether "the need for expression of self-worth mediates the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance" (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010). These particular experiments are designed to find support for the argument that the need to express self-worth—as a specific aspect of self-expression—can be satisfied by both brands and religion. However, the authors believe that satisfaction by the one factor decreases use of the other. As stated by Sachar and others, these studies show that "one important reason that religion may reduce brand reliance is because it provides a source of self-worth that reduces individuals' needs to express self-worth through brands. [They] find that individuals who think about religion as a source of self-worth show less brand reliance than those in [not belonging to a religious denomination]" (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010, p. 12). In other words, the presence of religious beliefs

compensates for the need to express self-worth via brands. The exposure of self-expressive function of religion and brands in an American context, together with the other findings of the study, makes repetition of this study in a different context uniquely interesting.

1.3 Repetition of US survey, but with adaptations

This thesis makes use of the abovementioned US research as a point of departure. There are several arguments for utilization of this survey, which shall be elaborated upon in this section. The first reason why this American research is used is because the US research will provide an international comparative dimension. That is, the US research focuses on the relationship between religion and consumerism within the US context, therefore leaving other countries out of consideration. Given the notion that the cultural context of these countries is entirely different, it is interesting to see whether the conclusions of the US survey will hold within a Dutch context. Additional research on religion and brand reliance can test previous research and can strengthen the findings or brings interesting differences to light. Chapter two shall elaborate upon the different cultural context between the Netherlands and the US.

The second reason for making use of the US research is because of the topic relevance. Even though a large amount of literature consistently revealed that culture plays an important role in the formation of consumer behavior, just a minimal amount of articles focus particularly on the influence of religion on consumer behavior (Mokhlis, 2009). Cutler found that between 1956 and 1989 only thirty-five articles with a religious focus were published in academic marketing literature, of which only six specifically focused on the relation between consumer behavior and religion (Mokhlis, 2009, p. 76). According to Mokhlis, religion is “an important cultural factor to study because it is one of the most universal and influential social institutions that has significant influence on people’s attitudes, values and behaviors at both the individual and societal levels” (Mokhlis, 2009, p. 75). Religion, as an integral part of culture has immense influence on the decisions individuals make during life, including decisions about marriage, eating and drinking patterns, public opinion, and many more. Just because these norms and values vary among different religious groups and its influence differs with each person’s dedication, it is extremely useful to closely examine the relationship. Building on the work by Sachar and others this research focuses on a particular aspect of consumerism, namely

brands (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010). With such implied associations between brands and religion as inspiration, this research takes as its aim to understand what kind of relationship exists between brands and citizens in the Netherlands.

Moreover, the US survey has left certain aspects unexplored which are a personal motivation for this thesis and also shows why this American research is so interesting. For example, the US research lacked an explanatory section in which the empirical outcomes are placed within a theoretical framework. While this may not have been the objective of the US study, more attention could have been given to the explanations of *why* religious persons are less brand reliant than less-religious citizens. Another aspect that was not clarified and differentiated profoundly is the religiosity-categorization in the survey. Participants of the US questionnaire were obliged to categorize themselves under large religious denominations while in fact their personal situation might ask for more specific answers. In that way, the survey did not allow great detail on the basis of religious belongings. That is, the authors forced participants to choose between being a) a religious person, b) a non-religious person, and c) an atheist. For this reason a categorization used by Bernts, Dekker and de Hart is introduced in this thesis; the non-religious choice is now specified into a choice between something-ists and agnostics (see paragraph 1.8.1). In this way, this thesis also keeps in mind people who feel they are not religious but see themselves merely as (highly) spiritual. However, having acknowledged the supremacy of this latter categorization, this thesis adopts a categorization identical to the US survey in order to ensure comparability. Therefore, the categorization by Bernts, Dekker and de Hart will only be discussed in the discussion chapter (Ch. 5) of this research.

Therefore, this thesis will depart from where the American research left off. In order to understand why some consumers could prefer brand items over generic products, I argue that Maslow's hierarchy of needs functions as an interesting framework. Human needs are the ultimate drivers behind the decision to purchase goods, and existence and variety of these needs are therefore essential elements in this research. The American psychologist Abraham Maslow was best known for creating a categorical hierarchy of all natural, inherited human needs, which became an iconic concept within the marketing sector (Maslow, 1943, p.384). Maslow suggested that the human desire for objects could be ordered into five levels, which he often drew pyramid shaped. While many levels may have been added as a critique

on Maslow's pyramid, its shape and major components can still function as embedding for our understanding of human needs. That is, this research suggests that the hierarchy of needs of religious citizens differs from the hierarchy of non-religious people, and could for this reason explain different consumption patterns between individuals.

1.4 Maslow's Pyramid

At the bottom of the hierarchy, Maslow situated physiological needs; basic human needs such as the need for water, food, breathing, and sleep (Maslow, 1943). One level higher, he defines the need for safety; a bodily need of shelter, family, resources, and property. The third level in the pyramid is a collection of all needs connecting to love and the social; for example, the need for a life partner, friendship, and family. Most often these levels are viewed as encompassing intrinsic human needs. On the superior level, we find a level related to egoistic and esteem needs. This fourth level talks of the needs for mutual (social) respect, personal achievement, and personal recognition. These four levels Maslow describes as D-needs or deficit needs, meaning that a lack of satisfaction of any of these needs will result in the feeling that you ought to stay searching for achievement. Only once you have satisfied these needs, you feel at peace.

As the fifth and highest level of the pyramid, Maslow identifies the need for self-actualization. He talks of this level when human beings have the need to fully "use and exploit [their] talent, capacities, and potentialities, etc. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and doing the best that they are capable of doing" (Goble, 2004). This level he describes as B-cognition or being-values; knowing to be something rather than pursuing to be (Maslow, 1943, p. 380). However, the subjects of Maslow's study—those who are self-actualized—are a mere fraction of the world's population. This is a particular state of mind and satisfaction of needs that the average man and woman shall never achieve, because the levels of the hierarchy of needs are *meta-motivated*; the satisfaction of a higher level of needs shall not bother the individual's mind until the lower needs are fully satisfied. Meaning that many people will remain trying to satisfy the needs of the four lower levels.

1.4.1 Needs & religion

Maslow studied healthy citizens who, according to him, possessed the characteristics of a self-actualized person. Interestingly, just one of Maslow's subjects of study was

found to be orthodox and only one thought of himself as an atheist. All others had neither accepted nor fully denied the possible revelations of a church, while they all described their lives as spiritual. Moreover, their sense of justice and unethical behavior came forth from their own involvement in a meaningful world, rather than from institutionalized religion.

However, Maslow acknowledged that the characteristics of self-actualized people in many respects showed great resemblance with the teachings of the institutionalized religions. It was as if the way to self-actualization was preached by the missionaries and the clergymen in the form of norms and values, being:

the transcendence of self, the fusion of the true, the good and the beautiful, contribution to others, wisdom, honesty, and naturalness, the transcendence of selfish and personal motivations, the giving up of 'lower' desires in favor of 'higher' ones,... the decrease of hostility, cruelty, and destructiveness and the increase of friendliness, kindness, etc. (Goble, 2004, p. 43).

Therefore, we might say that the search for self-actualization—while not always conscious—is similar to the ultimate reality and ultimate happiness as preached by what we in the west understand to be 'religion.' Following, it could be stated that the hierarchy of needs of religious people is somewhat similar to the pyramid as described by Maslow, with self-actualization being the top level.

However, my question in this respect is to which extent human needs are intrinsic and in which level(s) they are shaped by culture? If needs, and therefore the hierarchy, is partly shaped by culture, that could mean that hierarchies can differ between people. Hence, according to Maslow, the five levels can be organized or shaped differently in different cultures or religious denominations. This raises the question whether this hierarchy of needs of those following a western form of 'religion', is shaped in a similar fashion for those who do not follow a religious denomination. In other words, is it possible that people who are not religious place more emphasis on any of the other levels but the fifth, causing them to feel the need to satisfy other needs over those of self-actualization? People following a religious denomination might have a differently shaped hierarchy of needs than those who do not or are atheist, which in place influences his or hers consumption pattern.

Still it has to be noted that this argument may not be fully applicable to every religious denomination. For example, brands may play a large role in a particular Pentecostal belief while this is not important for Calvinist Protestant families. Levels can be ordered differently for different people, and what shapes exactly these hierarchies of needs have is hard to determine. In other words, This argument will be further discussed in combination with the survey results in chapter five.

1.5 Research Question

This thesis has as its aim to create a comparative analysis of two surveys, namely the US survey held by Dr. Sachar and others and a Dutch survey I held myself. Comparative analysis of the two surveys in combination with necessary literature research enables me to elaborate on the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance. In order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between religion and brands I would like to propose the following research question:

How and to which extent does religiosity influence an individual's shopping pattern in the Netherlands with respect to someone's preference for brands?

This research explore what effect the level of religiosity has on someone's level of brand reliance; i.e., if and when a Dutch individual is more tempted to choose brands over non-brands and why. Therefore, I will explore the differences and/or similarities that are to be found between the Dutch and US surveys. In doing so I will gain insights into the Dutch case via comparison with the American one. In fact, differences and similarities can reveal valuable information about the overall relationship between religiosity and brand reliance as well as specifics about this relationship in the Dutch and US context.

Firstly, this research explains that the outcomes of the two surveys will be comparable even though the cultural package of the participants differs substantially. Quite notably, these similar consumer patterns come forth from different motivations. Secondly, as an explanation of the relation between religiosity and brand reliance, I will introduce Maslow's hierarchy of needs. That is, this research argues that religious citizens have a different hierarchy of needs than non-religious and atheist citizens because of the different guides in life: religion, system of values,

and surrogate religion. Thirdly, I would like to combine Maslow's hierarchy with the idea that non-religious citizens make use of the guide called surrogate religion. Therefore I argue that modern, western societies might have found other ways to express themselves than via the traditional, institutionalized religions; via brands as surrogate religion.

1.5.1 Sub-questions

This research question is aided by several sub-questions, most of which are framed to discover additional knowledge about the explanatory factors behind this relationship:

- *Is the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance positive or negative, and why?*
- *Which mechanism(s) drive(s) this relationship?*
- *Is there a significant difference between functional and self-expressive products to be found in the survey?*
- *Does someone's income have a significant effect on an individual's brand reliance?*
- *Can differences between the US / Dutch survey be explained with the existence of a different cultural package and national mentality between these countries?*
- *How can similarities between the US / Dutch survey be explained?*
- *What are the factors underlying this particular relationship between religiosity and brand reliance?*
- *Which factor/phenomena explain a possible difference in brand reliance between religious- and non-religious citizens, and self-proclaimed atheists?*
- *Concerning the Dutch survey: Is there a difference to be found in someone's brand reliance when it comes to gift-giving? I.e., is someone tempted to choose a brand over a non-brand when it comes to buying a present? Is there any difference between a gift to a well-known person or a far relative?*

1.5.2 Hypotheses

On the basis of literature research, this research proposes to find the following outcomes:

1. *People who describe themselves in the Dutch survey as “religious” shall be less inclined to choose brands over non-brands (i.e., smaller brand-reliance);*

The first hypothesis is drawn in relation to the US research, which concludes that high levels of religiosity corresponds to low levels of brand reliance. Specifically, this Dutch research suspects that the very same conclusion may be drawn on the basis of Dutch survey. This thesis offers the idea that religious people have a lower intention to purchase brands because they have articulated a particular level of needs that transcends the level of self-expressive needs. In fact, I propose that religious people have a different hierarchy of needs than non-religious and atheist citizens.

2. *High levels of religiosity are not necessarily connected to low brand reliance when the item is not to be displayed to others (e.g., functional products such as batteries, ibuprofen);*

The second hypothesis is based upon the insight that brands have sign value. This provides the consumer with an aura of associations that can be used to shape the individual’s inner and specifically outer image. While the brand images displayed towards society shape the individual’s identity, hidden items have no such power—regardless of whether they are brands or generic products. Therefore, this research expects to find that your level of religiosity is not an explanatory factor for brand-preference when it comes to functional products; religious and non-religious citizens alike buy brands within the functional category.

3. *There will be a difference between the US and Dutch survey in terms of preferring brands over non-brands, as the Netherlands can be seen as one of the most secular countries in the world while the US can be described as one of the most religious in the West. That is, the outcomes of the surveys could indicate a higher brand-reliance in the Netherlands than in the US;*

This hypothesis is embedded in the belief that the US and Dutch cultural context are dramatically different; where the US is seen as one of the most religious countries, the

Netherlands as one of the most secular. While the conclusion in essence could be the same as in the US survey—namely, higher religiosity corresponds to lower brand reliance—the secular Dutch society could possess even higher brand reliance. That is, different mentalities with respect to prioritization of status, the gathering of material richness, and the centrality of religion might lead to the conclusion that Dutch are more brand reliant than Americans.

- 4. When it comes to gift-giving, brand reliance of a self-proclaimed religious person is smaller than that of a non-religious person when these individuals are purchasing items for their own use;*

The fourth hypothesis is drafted because of the idea that an individual has both an inner and outer image. This outer image is partly shaped by the products that are showed towards the public and partly by the way he or she acts. This research argues that gift-giving is an important act via which it can be derived whether the public image the participants likes to present (gift-giving) lines up with the image that is shaped via brand images.

- 5. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs can explain the different brand-reliant consumer behavior between religious and non-religious and atheist citizens.*

The final hypothesis is based on Maslow's concept of the hierarchy of needs. This universal concept can explain different consumer behaviors because it allows for cultural differences and therefore variation in the hierarchies. That is, the hierarchy of needs of these groups have a different structure and each group—religious and non-religious and atheist—employs a different emphasis of importance on each of the levels.

1.6 Structure

Basically, this research consists of three parts; a part based on literature and academic theories, a part that consists of the statistical analysis of the US and Dutch surveys, and a third part which discusses the two previous sections. In this discussion the statistical results of this study shall be analyzed with the help of a literary context that concern consumerism and brands.

In the first introductory part of this thesis, a theoretical and literature-based

embedding for the exploration of the relationship between religion and brand reliance will be provided. Firstly, a description of the meaning and functioning of brands will be presented, followed by an explanation of religiosity. That is, the vast dimensions of these concepts need explanation of the way in which they were applied in this research. Secondly, chapter two will encompass explorations of the cultural background of respectively the Netherlands and the US in order to be able to place the statistical data into context. In this way, differences and similarities that come up in comparative analysis might be explained.

The second part of this study consists of empirical data that will function to support or reject with my theoretical base and argument (chapter 3 and 4). The way in which the Dutch survey is created is presented on a step by step basis, followed by a statistical analysis of this survey. The section is accompanied by a (partly) comparative discussion of the US and Dutch survey results (chapter 5), in which is referred to and made use of the literature of part one. In chapter 6 the three parts meet in a conclusion.

1.7 Brand reliance

Before commencing with the data analysis of the surveys some definitions must be clarified, such as what is actually meant by brands. The etymology of brands is something widely discussed and on which's definition hardly any consensus is to be found. It is said the concept of brands was born in the Wild West of the United States, where cattle was marked—or, branded—with a hot iron figurine to protect them from being stolen. Simultaneously, it guaranteed a buyer that the animal was from this particular breeder instead of from another, granting the consumer the quality he was used to (Kapferer, 2008, p. 11). Over the years, many perspectives of the semiotics of brand came into existence; all of them differing on one facet or the other.

One of the aspects that most in contemporary societies agree upon is the idea that brands do not always have to be products. Today, everything can be a brand, ranging from humans, e.g. Steve Jobs, to sports clubs such as FC Barcelona (Kapferer, 2008, p. 1). They all have acquired such a symbolism and global acknowledgement that they can maintain an enormous fan base. As the examples above suggest, most researchers have come to agree upon the idea that a brand can be seen as an interactive system supported by three pillars; a product or service, a

catchy name, and a concept (Merz, 2009, p. 329). Together these pillars form a symbol with associations. It is this concept in which the consumer finds the brand's value. Gardner and Levy were early to write a bright description of the two sides of brands:

a brand name is more than the label employed to differentiate among the manufacturers of a product. It is a complex symbol that represents a variety of ideas and attributes. It tells the consumers many things, not only by the way it sounds ... but, more important, via the body of associations it has built up and acquired as a public object over time.... The net result is a public image, a character or personality that may be more important for the overall status (and sales) of the brand than many technical facts about the product (Gardner & Levy, 1955, p. 34).

In other words, it is not merely the tangible object that the consumer yearns for, but the prospect of the intangible benefits that come along with it as well. The fact that a consumer would prefer a brand over any other commodity, could have multiple reasons. For once, we seem to be too heavily engaged in our daily lives to consider every possible option available to us. Therefore, the brand functions as a risk reducer and short-cut of the human brain by speaking to our minds with its trustful concept (Kapferer, 2008; Cialdini, 2009). While in some instances this perceived risk may be economic as it concerns price, it could also be a social or psychological risk that we connect to our notion of our self-image or self-worth (Kapferer, 2008, p. 7). The emotions, images, and associations connected to the brand could become an expression or reinforcement of our feelings of self-worth as soon as we buy the brand. In other words, the brand should “provide the consumer with a means of self-expression, self-identification and self-actualization” (Aaker, 1994, p. 348).

The extent to which we feel the need to make use of this (in)tangible characteristics of brands, perhaps even for a longer period of time, is what we call brand reliance. As further research might verify, it could seem to depend on one's personal characteristics whether or not this need is apparent.

1.8 Religiosity in all its forms

In order to understand what role religion can play in society and how it can influence an individual's decisions, a working definition of religiosity needs to be explored. A definition of such a concept is not easily given nor easily agreed upon. It is neither said to be omniscient and all-embracing nor is the working definition excluding other variations of this definition.

1.8.1 Religiosity

Religiosity can be outlined as a factor that could be responsible for interpersonal difference, or in other words, religiosity could explain for differences in behavior or personal traits on the individual and social level. While the academic world has multiple definitions of the term itself, most scholars agree on a basic premise that religiosity is related to the centrality of and devotion to religious beliefs and practices in daily life, with which one God or a structure of transcendence helps to guide a person through life (Hood, Chill, & Spilka, 2009). Moreover, it suits to state that this definition does not automatically means to connect the individual and the divine, but instead refers to a relationship between the individual and a particular perspective on life.

Yet, it has to be said that the notion of 'religiosity' should be seen as something that is not per definition connected to a church. That is, individuals might still be viewed as religious because of their belief in transcendence or supernatural explanations of life, while not believing in any of the institutionalized religions (Bernts, Dekker, & Hart, 2007, p. 38). This idea can be acknowledged by the *God in Nederland* survey, according to which the "amount of people that call themselves religious is larger than the amount that sees itself as ecclesiastical" (Translated from Dutch, original in: Bernts, Dekker, & Hart, 2007, p. 39). Therefore, those who identify themselves as religious in this survey do not necessarily have to adhere to a religious denomination.

Moreover, it is important to describe what is meant by non-religious and atheism as well. It has to be noted that it was necessary to replicate this categorization in the Dutch survey from the US research for the sake of comparability. Participants of the survey who self-identify as non-religious most often see themselves as having no affiliation to any church or denomination, while this does not mean that they are not spiritual. On the other hand, self-identified

atheists are seen as people who neither belong to a religious denomination nor think of themselves as spiritual. Yet, I believe the US categorization is insufficient as it is based on a narrow definition of religious and non-religious people. Therefore, this research argues that the non-religious category should have been divided into somethings-ists and agnostics in order to conceptually separate religion from spirituality, as introduced by Bernts, Dekker and de Hart. In their *God in Nederland* (2006) survey the authors categorized Dutch society in according to four concepts:

- **Theists** (24%): *belief that there is a God that cares for every individual;*
- **Something-ists** (36%): *belief that there must be something, a high power, that has a grip on life;*
- **Agnostics** (26%): *those unsure about the existence of a God or something supernatural;*
- **Atheist** (14%): *belief that there is no God nor anything supernatural controlling life.*

By specifying the non-religious category into something-ists and agnostics the definitional difficulties surrounding religiosity can be accounted for. Additionally, there are some interesting differences between the categories with respect to their position towards hedonism and transcendence as sources of the meaning of life. These are particularly compelling for this study because of their connection to consumerism. Hedonism could be described as a situation in which citizens are more tempted to purchase goods, services and experiences merely for the sake of entertainment; it makes them feel good (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2013, p. 96). The figures in this research show that hedonism plays a less important role in the lives of the religious than the non-religious. Transcendence in the form of religiosity and spirituality is the most important dimension for institutionalized religions (theists) while hedonism is significantly less meaningful. According to Kronjee and Lampert, Dutch citizens without a strong transcendent orientation are more inclined towards individualism, hedonism, and materialism (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006, p. 175). This research is the first indication of support for the argument that the religious and non-religious categories are accompanied by a different hierarchy of needs.

This research acknowledges Clifford Geertz's idea that religion works within a cultural system and understands that these cultural packages differ across

nations, regions, and even families (Geertz, 1993). What people view as religion and the extent to which they adhere to this religion or find hail in hedonism therefore depends on their cultural context. In order to explain possible differences and similarities in the survey outcomes this study must explore the cultural backgrounds of the Netherlands and US.

2. DUTCH AND AMERICAN MENTALITY IN PERSPECTIVE

An individual's needs and personal relationship with religion are for most part influenced by one's cultural context. Therefore, this chapter provides the reader with valuable insights into the Dutch and American culture. The question that should be kept in mind when reading this chapter is how differences and similarities between the US and Dutch surveys can be explained with the help of the countries' cultural context.

First of all, this chapter provides an insight into how the certain cultural aspects in the Netherlands can influence daily choices. Therefore, an overview of religious influences that left their traces in Dutch mentality is given. Next, one of the most influential doctrines in contemporary Dutch mentality will be explained, namely Calvinism. Specifically the values of soberness, hard work and investment are still influencing people's daily decisions. Lastly, the US socio-cultural context shall be described in relation to religion. Both Dutch and US histories of religious denominations have been long and interesting and countless books have been written on their histories. Yet, it is not the intention of this research to provide the reader with another historiographical overview of all religions in the Netherlands. Therefore merely those contemporary trends and topics that are deemed necessary for the understanding of this study shall be described.

2.1 The Netherlands and Religion

Dutch society and everything connected to it has practically always been subjected to cultural change: all these different religious influences could possibly explain why the Dutch are highly tolerant and not directly connected to a religion in particular. While the Dutch found themselves under the reign of Catholic Spain at one point in history, many kingdoms, dukes, and bishops had controlled the former Netherlands as well. All occupants left their (religious) traces in national history before the Dutch could finally declare themselves independent. Utilizing their very good waterway system and direct

connection to the sea, the Netherlands had a leading role in connecting many European countries with the rest of the world. Hence, traders and travelers all brought their beliefs along: from the north Anabaptism was introduced, Calvinism first came from the south (France) and later on from England and Germany as well, while humanism was born in the Netherlands itself (Knippenberg, 1992). Since the Dutch found many different religious influences in the recent past, their current society is characterized by large plurality. That is, religious plurality is a central and persistent pattern found in national history since the reformation. Taken together with the absence of a state religion, it led to the idea that *de jure* choosing between religious denominations and churches was an individual choice and one that increasingly became a voluntarily search, while *de facto* this only became the case from the late sixties of the 20th century onwards. Yet, traces of the Christian religion as a kind of state religion are still to be found in contemporary Dutch society; the euros still bear “God be with us,” and Dutch laws begin with “by Gods grace” (Rijksoverheid, 2013).

2.1.1 The Netherlands and religious transformation

The role of religion in the Netherlands has been transformed over the years. No longer is the church a visible identity marker, but one’s identity can be hand-shaped and certain aspects of religion can be added. In first instance, as described in the secularization thesis it seems science degraded religion to an unimportant part of modern society and marked religion as a disappearing phenomenon. Many different studies come to the same conclusion: the Netherlands must be one of the most secular countries in the world. When describing secularization as the decline church membership and church attendance, this trend indeed seems to have emerged in the Netherlands according to Bernts, Dekker and de Hart. In the last forty years, the two largest religions in the Netherlands—i.e., Catholicism and Protestantism—have seen a decrease in followers by half while the number of unaffiliated religious citizens has increased with almost fifty percent (Bernts, Dekker, & Hart, 2007, p. 14). Moreover, the *God in Nederland* survey shows that most churches show that young members are relatively underrepresented while they seem to be overrepresented in the unaffiliated category. Ultimately, this could lead to a decrease in members in the big churches (Bernts, Dekker, & Hart, 2007, p. 16).

However, contemporary evolvments show that the secularization thesis must be viewed with caution: at least some sort of alteration towards a less dramatic

version of the definition should be in place (Becker & Hart, 2006). Sometimes religion is described from the perspective that it is something indissoluble from institutionalized religion and church attendance. Yet, there is a broader interpretation of religiosity that denies the idea that religion and spirituality are always connected to something institutionalized (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006; Houtman, 2008). Instead, this broad definition is applied by academics who describe the changes in Dutch society differently. They recognize that citizens are still in search of transcendent experiences and sacred belongings while no longer connected to an institutionalized religion (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). In what they call the spiritual revolution, the authors argue that a society that despises social roles and emphasize the individual well-being will most likely prefer religiosity in the form of spirituality instead of institutionalized religion (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). Indeed, according to research by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP), beyond the church walls religiosity seems to flourish in the Netherlands. As stated by one of its writers dr. De Hart, the survey can be summarized as “more religiosity, less churches” (Translated from Dutch, original in: Becker & Hart, 2006, p. 71). In other words, secularization in the Netherlands could also be described as the fragmentation of religion in modern society (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006).

Therefore, transformation instead of secularization seems to be the word that fits the current social context in the Netherlands. Namely, it is against the background of internationalization, mechanical inventions and spreading knowledge that religion has come to play a different role in the Dutch society. These influences modified Dutch citizens due to these transformations and social changes. It is in this context that citizens became more critical, assertive and consumptive, according to Kronjee and Lampert (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006, p. 172). Since the general level of education increased it caused scientific and critical reflections on religious dogmas, making citizens less sure about the well-known institutionalized religions. Following, a critical attitude became more widespread and caused people to pick and choose elements following their own counsel from the system of different lifestyles that developed in the Netherlands. A lifestyle became more of an individual choice, where for decades individual identity was something structured according to one's social position. The family you were born in gave the social stigma you most often had to deal with for the rest of your life. In the recent past there was hardly such a thing like social mobility between classes as social relations were firmly maintained;

nevertheless, there existed a drive to distinguish oneself (van Ginkel, 1997).

On the basis of this claim, one could think that the Dutch attach a lot of value to status and would use their social position for their prestige. This is not the case; the Dutch disapprove of those who think that they can claim authority on the basis of their social status (Hofstede, 2001, p. 16). According to Geert Hofstede, the Dutch society can therefore be seen as a feminine one, in which standing out from the rest is not per se something to be proud of (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 34). Therefore, the Dutch choose to conceal their social origin, even though they might have experienced social mobility. In stark contrast to Americans, a Dutch citizen would be less likely to reveal the fact that he or she came from a lower social position to the members of the social class to which the citizen now came to belong. In other words, the term identity is used in relation to conformity—belonging to a group—whereas with status the individual has a different intention, namely trying to distinguish his or herself from others. Therefore, one could state that it is not so much status that the Dutch citizens would try to express towards the outer world, but merely his or hers identity.

In past times church-membership and family virtues would have given individuals their identities and therefore certainty of a social group. Recently it seems as if the Dutch are in search of other ways to distinguish themselves. Having the possibility to choose certain elements of a lifestyle for yourself is an example. The modern motto could be that a choice of lifestyle should mirror one's identity instead of the notion that one's identity is solely based upon birthrights or church membership. A category introduced by Kronjee and Lampert called “unaffiliated spirituals” implies the idea that more than a quarter of Dutch citizens find the use of churches to be beyond the scope of modern times; they are searching for a substitute for the safe church walls (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006, p. 173). That is, the opportunity is taken to scan the rich religious diversity in society for norms and values that would benefit their contemporary lives and could lead them to a new path in their lives (Becker, Hart, de, & Mens, 1997) In contemporary Dutch society, an alternative way in which people can give shape their identity is via the consumption of symbols and signs. Especially those who have not inherited a religious denomination or family profession from their parents seem specifically interested in this new phenomenon.

2.1.2 Youth in a competitive society

It could be stated that especially youth and young-adults are sensitive for the symbolism of brands and therefore more inclined to purchase them. That is, in order to stand out in the current youth culture and competitive labor market the Dutch youth has to persuade society that they are more special than others in order to succeed. Everyone is unique, but being unique in your own confined social circle does not seem to be enough anymore. The whole society, or world, needs to actually acknowledge that one individual is more special than another. It seems as if every young individual has to turn his or herself into a brand (Quart, 2003, p. 6).

Yet not only young adults, but for example elderly citizens in search of a job opportunity have to deal with the hardships of an economic rough time as well. The market value of each individual has to increase in order for these jobseekers to attract the attention of business recruiters. Moreover, this pressure even seems to increase because all the coming and goings of citizens is made public via social media, where the amount of comments and likes influences the self-image (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011, p. 801). The internet allows both young and old to come in contact with practically everyone, citizens find their inspiration with people they have never met before, and thoughts and opinions are shared on websites. Next to all positive effects, the internet brings a kind of hypersensitivity about that specifically influences the youth; what other people do and how they think of you as an individual are influencing the decisions of many. According to Kronjee and Lampert, our closest friends and relatives also have the highest possibility to influence our daily choices (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006, p. 12). Along with the arousal of a society in which new consumer products are invented every hour, escaping the temptation to buy is extremely difficult.

2.1.3 Calvinist traces in mentality

While too many religions were apparent in the Netherlands for any state religion—except for the Royalty's influence—to find foothold, one belief had influenced many citizens, irrespective of their denomination. Calvinism is one of those teachings that can still be found in the Dutch mentality and strongly influences the citizens' consumption patterns. While the Dutch Republic and Calvinism were not terms that could be used interchangeably, we could argue for the existence of a confederacy which tolerated other lines of thought but did not take one as its public image

(Selderhuis, 2012). Even though Calvinism charmed many citizens in different layers of society, it never became a state religion. Nevertheless, the doctrine seemed to appeal not only to the lower classes of society; even among the nobility there resided convinced Calvinists (Selderhuis, 2012, p. 32). Therefore, Calvinism left its traces in Dutch society; specifically, in the Dutch mentality.

According to Max Weber, specifically early seventeenth century Protestantism has the characteristics that would work well within rational capitalism. According to Weber, the other religions of the world are too much concerned with mysticism and the supernatural, where Calvinism is more ‘sober’ and concerned about salvation in the world beyond. Weber explains that there exists a Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which means that people believe their destiny was determined even before they are born (Weber, 1958, p. 33). In other words, some are predestined to be among the blessed souls and others were condemned. This dogma inclines to encourage humans to be highly individualistic, while it leaves space for societal concerns (Weber, 1958). Additionally, Calvinists understand that no sacrament of penance could change one's fate; something that is commonly accepted in Catholic Church. Moreover, according to what Weber no one is able to know to which of the categories he or she belongs (Weber, 1958, p. 28). This is a psychological worry on all minds. Weber suggests that precisely because of this burden people would go and search for signs that could show them that they belong to the elect; most would find these signs within material wealth. Most people seem to put their anxieties to rest because they believe that those who will find material wealth are blessed, as if they are marked by God. For some, the doctrine of predestination is altered into a belief that motivates people to focus on gathering wealth, reinvesting money, or in objects signifying wealth (Aldridge, 2000, p. 30). The Calvinist faith grew into the belief that “God helps those who help themselves;” you and you alone create your own salvation (Weber, 1958, p. 28).

In other words, Calvinist teachings such as working hard and finding a successful life in material wealth still influence Dutch citizens in their consumption patterns. Taken together with the religious pluralism and absence of state religion, the Dutch seem to be less bound to religion than Americans, which could demonstrate the hypothesis that the Dutch have a higher level of brand reliance.

2.2 Investigating the US culture

After the insights gained into Dutch mentality, this paragraph seeks to investigate in what way the US cultural and religious context might influence individual consumer decisions. The United States is one of the most technologically advanced states in the world, levels of education are high, and the economy is doing relatively well. These patterns are similar to those seen in the Netherlands, yet the US is seen as highly religious while the very same elements seem to have caused secularization in the former country. Before proceeding with this chapter, it should be stated that talking about the US in its entirety is somewhat similar to seeing Sweden and Italy as one entity; all American states have their specific histories and particularities. Therefore, elaborating on the US will be at the expense of some details, and yet it can still present interesting trends.

While the history of the United States is relatively short, religiosity has characterized American identity since the beginning of times. Many migrants left behind the state religions of Europe and traded it for the new land across the Atlantic, in which religious freedom seemed to be for granted. Immigrants from all over the world came to the new land and all brought their beliefs along, transforming America into a potpourri of religions. Even though many academics thought that secularization would find the US just as it had found Europe, religion seemed to stay at the heart of the public American domain where its varying beliefs influence the daily lives of many citizens (Bruce, 2002, p. 13). The diverse religious landscape and the way religion interacts with politics in the US was sketched in a survey held by the PEW Research Center (PEW Research Center, 2008). According to the US Religious Landscape Survey, a stunning 78.4 percent of all adults questioned stated to belong to one of the many forms of Christianity, while only five percent has said to belong to another faith and 16.1 percent stated to be not affiliated with any religion at all (PEW Research Center, 2008, p. 6). The reasons for these high levels of religiosity are elaborated upon in the next paragraphs.

2.2.1 Changes in the American marketplace

One of the reasons why the US can be seen as one of the most religious countries in the world is because of the existence of a religious marketplace. Since the diversity of religions is such an unmistakable feature, the US is often described as a marketplace from which a religion may be chosen that fits the individual's characteristics. Therefore,

many religions have to attract their ‘consumers’ and keep them from switching to another church. The idea that the religious market is constantly moving and directing citizens from one religion to another is something confirmed in the Landscape Survey (PEW Research Center, 2008, p. 10). Partly, this can be explained because of immigrants bringing their religious beliefs. Yet, only together with the noticeable market-like behavior of churches the existence of a dynamic religious landscape can be accounted for. According to the Landscape survey, almost twenty-eight percent of the “US adults have changed their religious affiliation from that in which they were raised, looking only at changes from one major religious tradition to another, e.g., from Protestantism to Catholicism, or from Judaism to no religion.” (PEW Research Center, 2008, p. 22).

Therefore, the market-theory might be applicable on US society; just like there is an elaborate car market, there seems to be a market for religion as well (Blasi, 2009, p. 7). Since the supply of different religions is abundant, churches have to compete among each other for members. That idea is illustrated by the PEW research Center. According to the Landscape survey, for all those leaving one of the big faiths of US society, others seem to come back in return. Moreover, religious groups that grow in number simply get more new members than they are losing, but they lose members all the same. At the same time, the groups who are losing members are just not as successful at drawing in possible newcomers to cope with the loss. Nevertheless, the big winner in this competition seems to be the amount of citizens who describe themselves as unaffiliated. The statistics reveal that more citizens are moving towards this group than are departing from it, with more than three to one. Yet, the possibility still exists that many of these unaffiliated citizens choose to become a member of a religious group the moment they reach adulthood. Moreover, it seems that those with no religious affiliation are more likely to be men than women; one in every five men states to have no religious affiliation while merely thirteen percent of the women claim the same (PEW Research Center, 2008, p. 17).

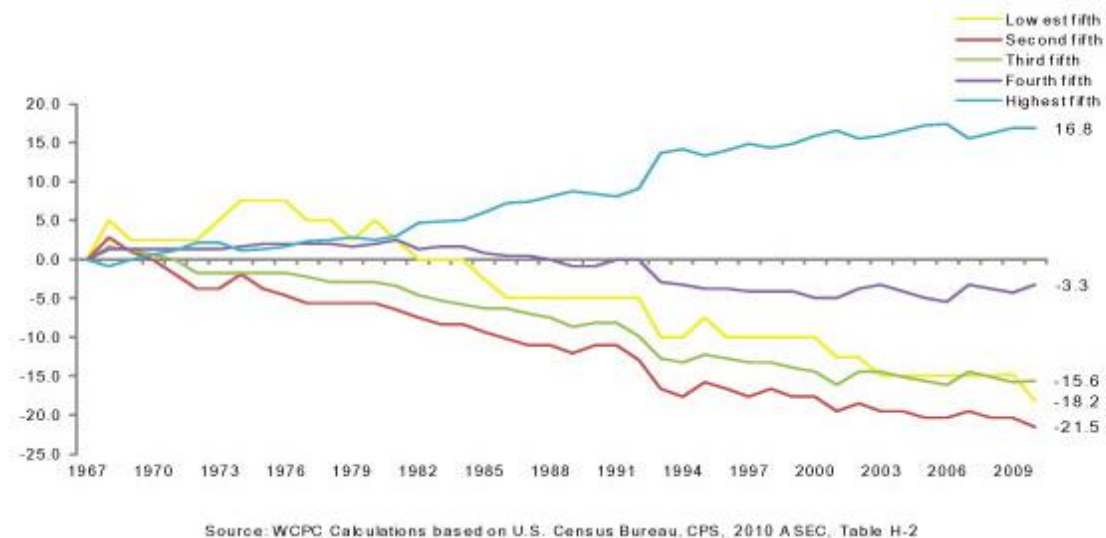
2.2.2 American masculinity and insecurity

Another reason why the US is such a religious country is because of what Geert Hofstede calls masculine society and its insecure social environment. Meaning, that US citizens have a drive to be the best and stand out from the rest of society. According to Hofstede, Americans are keen on trying to achieve higher status through working. Therefore, they do not keep back from displaying achieved successes and share their

stories with whoever will listen (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Of course, the notion of the hardworking man comes from founding father Benjamin Franklin, who became the ultimate example of the self-made American man. That is, as a self-educated polymath he found grace in working hard and was proud of the way he worked himself up on the social ladder to one of the best known figures in American history. In other words, with hard work one could rise in social status and along the way may happily display having done so.

However, US society also holds characteristics which brings people insecurities and could possibly be the reason for the country's high levels of religiosity. While the equality of men was one of the pillars onto which Founding Fathers had hoped American society should thrive, social inequality in the US is immense (Martin, 2011); in the last fifty years the rich earned more while the lower segments' share of total income decreased, see figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Percentage Change in Share of Income Earned by Each Fifth of US Households: 2010



Additionally, the safety net provided by social security is not as self-evident in the US as it is in Europe, bringing along a notable level of uncertainty. According to Professor van Tubergen, high levels of insecurity causes people to find someone or something that can provide comfort (Tubergen, 2013). In one of his articles he concludes that “(i) economic and existential; (ii) past and present; and (iii) individual and contextual insecurities are important in explaining (cross-national) variation in religiosity (Tubergen, 2013, p. 359). This statement can be supported by sociologist Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1993). That is, Geertz claims that the religious symbols have the ability to help us bear certain hardships we encounter in life as they show us that there are

answers, even though their comprehension might be beyond our own capabilities. While religion cannot actually take away the uncertainties in life, it might help us get at peace with our discomforts, by helping us consider that the (negative) experiences might be part of a bigger order of existence.

Therefore, in a country of (ongoing) social insecurity such as the US levels of religiosity may be higher than in countries where social security is well arranged, like the Netherlands. Cultural and social particularities like insecurity could be one of the factors that contributes to high religiosity in the US, and therefore could lead to lower brand reliance, according to Sachar and others. Yet, since Dutch society has different cultural and social characteristics and therefore different levels of religiosity, it is necessary to investigate whether the negative relationship found in the experiment by Sachar and others between religiosity and brand reliance emerges as strongly in the Netherlands as well.

3. THE DUTCH SURVEY: MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is meant to expose the relationship between brand reliance and religiosity, by which religiosity is measured as being something that can chronically differ between individuals. Furthermore, the study is also able to contribute to the expectancy that self-expression could be an important determining factor in the relationship between brands and religion (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010, p. 2). That is, in the US survey Sachar and others expected that that people who are high in religiosity will have lower needs for brands, and vice versa. Moreover, the authors expected that this hypothesis would be most evident with citizens who seemed to have the highest level of extraversion and therefore most inclined to express themselves.

3.1 Procedure

Similar to the US survey, I chose to held my survey internet-based, spreading it via several popular network sites (Facebook, Twitter, Kruidvat forum), via the University of Groningen's Theology faculty mailing list, and via requests on national Theology Faculty websites. I acquired a representative range of both religious and non-religious citizens from across the Netherlands. The questionnaire was activated on November 5, 2013 and was open for exactly one month, closing on the 5th of

December, 2013. In order to extract the necessary data from the public, the Dutch survey needed to include a measurement of brand reliance, a measurement of extraversion, a Religious Commitment Inventory-10, and basic demographic questions (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010).

3.1.1 Sampling technique

My methodology consists of a technique called simple random sampling, in which the data from a random subset of the population is used as a representation of the entire population. Since it is both unpractical and costly to ask every citizen of the US or the Netherlands about their religious background and brand preferences, the only possible solution is to create a sample. Specifically, this sample is comprised of participants who were given the choice whether or not to engage, making this survey self-selective. However, one must realize that this representation is still an estimate of the actual, desired data and can therefore never be hundred percent accurate. The data of the sample subset will differ from the entire population only by chance, as it is just a matter of chance on which individuals are to be selected or self-selected for the sample.

3.2 Material and structure

In order to make a valuable comparison between the survey on religion and brand reliance held in the US and mine held the Netherlands, it was necessary to recreate the cross-sectional survey created by Dr. Sachar and others as precise as possible. Therefore, I acquired the exact survey used in the American research and transcribed the whole questionnaire according to Dutch understandings (See appendix I). I first translated the texts from English to Dutch in order to do away with a possible language barrier that would restrain some Dutch citizens from participating. That is, this Dutch survey is based on a sample of the population, so in order to gain a representative sample group I needed every Dutch citizen to be able to participate.

The Dutch survey was created with help of the website <http://www.qualtrics.com>. In total, 238 residents of the Netherlands took the online questionnaire, of which 33 did not have Dutch ethnicity. In order for the experiment to behold a reflection of Dutch mentality, participants without Dutch citizenship were not included in the data set.

The main purpose of this research is to illustrate that one's religiosity is one of the elements that is partly responsible for differing strengths of brand reliance.

However, I also want to find out if and to what extent other variables influence someone's brand reliance apart from religiosity. Therefore, the questionnaire gathered information on the following variables:

1. Brand reliance is the dependent variable;
2. Religiosity as an independent variable;
3. Income as an independent variable;
4. Extraversion as an independent variable;
5. Sex as an independent variable;
6. Age as an independent variable;
7. Education as an independent variable.

Following, I created an econometric model to analyze the data set. The model suggests that the above variables are interdependent and influence one's brand reliance in a complex manner. After statistical analysis I will review whether all the variables actually belong in this model. The econometric model I used is the will be provided in paragraph 4.1. Extraversion was added as an independent variable because the US researchers suggested that the relationship between brand reliance and religiosity might be explained because they share the ability to let the individual express feelings of self-worth (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010). That is, the level of extraversion is interpreted as the desire with which an individual wants to express his or herself to others. Similarly, age was added because of the suspicion that the youth may be more susceptible for buying brands because of its identity-shaping ability. All variables will be further identified in the next chapter, as further identification is necessary in order to do a proper statistical analysis. I made use of Microsoft Excel 2010 to form the dataset, and used Stata12sm for the statistical analysis.

3.2.1 Measurement of Brand Reliance

Similar to the US survey, participants of the Dutch survey were given six choices between two products; a choice between a brand and a non-brand commodity. I chose the items according to the survey as made by Sachar and others, replacing all-American products which were not for sale in Dutch stores with comparable items. Simultaneously, it was made sure that the chosen brand and non-brand products differed on no level other than price. Of the six product choices, three choices were

functional items while the other three consisted of self-expressive items. The product choices were:

1. *Advil Liquid Caps Ibuprofen* (brand) or *Kruidvat Liquid Caps Ibuprofen* (generic);
2. *Duracell batteries* (brand) or *Kruidvat batteries* (generic);
3. *Albert Heijn Crackers* (generic) or *Wasa Crackers* (brand);
4. *Ralph Lauren sunglasses* (brand) or *Kruidvat sunglasses* (generic);
5. *Kruidvat watch* (generic) or *Fossil watch* (brand);
6. *Adidas socks* (brand) or *Hema socks* (generic).

The sum of the amount of choices for brands minus the times a participant chose a generic product will express the individual's brand reliance.

3.2.2 Measurement of Religiosity

The Religious Commitment Inventory-10 is a universal set of questions which therefore did not need any adjustment in order to be suitable for the Dutch survey (See Appendix II). However, it should be stated that this research made use of a simple way to categorize the participants. Admittedly, the fact that the research made use of pre-set categories could raise some objections, especially when dealing with such a delicate and nuanced matter such as religion. Yet, in order to be able to make valuable inter-group comparisons, the questionnaire asked participants to categorize oneself within the group that would fit them most. That is, the following question enabled participants to categorize themselves according to whether or not they thought of themselves as religious, namely:

“Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are...”

Participants could choose between the following answers:

- A. A religious person;
- B. Non-religious;
- C. An absolute atheist.

This self-proclaimed categorization could not stand alone, since people often think of themselves differently than what their actions reveal. Moreover, citizens can see

themselves as religious while simultaneously their commitment can be low. Therefore, to provide the reader with a reflection of religious commitment in Dutch society as well, this research makes use of the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 that has been elaborated upon in Chapter 1.2. Similar to the US study, the individual outcomes of the latter inventory provides this research with the religiosity term which was used as a variable in this statistical research.

3.2.3 Other measurements

The Dutch survey made use of the same questions measuring the individual's level of extraversion as were used in the US survey. Only the demographic questions needed modifications, since some questions were formulated with reference to the American context. After modification, participants had a wide arrange of choices to specify their religious denomination or ethnicity with, as I added more religious denominations to this question to get a more specific result. Moreover, I adjusted and expanded the choice of ethnic background to the Dutch geographic location, exchanging American-Indian and Native Hawaiian for Western-European and Eastern-European, among others.

3.2.4 Gift-giving

Even though there is no data available from the US study on brand reliance and gift-giving, I decided to include questions on this topic for the following reasons. This study hypothesizes that self-expressive products can be used to give shape to a person's self-image. Yet, the person's public image is only partly shaped by the way he or she looks; the public image should also be reflected in how this person *acts*. That is, a large part of consumer purchases is not meant for self-use, but is meant to be presented as a gift. The question that should be asked is whether a person's self-image is acknowledged by society via the gift that is presented. The answer requires that two extra choices had to be added to the Brand Reliance measurement in order to investigate whether the relationship between brand reliance and religiosity is any different in a gift-giving situation. Moreover, the questions also differentiated between gift-giving to a dear friend (7) and gift-giving to a far relative (8). If the questionnaire shows different outcomes between the normal, brand reliance measurements and the gift-giving measurements, then the self-image and public image do not seem to line up. This measurement can reveal differing levels of importance that participants ascribe to their public-image. The gift-giving choices

presented in the questionnaire as follows:

7. *Iphone earphones* (brand) or *Energy system earphones*(generic);
8. *Douwe Egberts coffee mug* (brand) or *Blokker coffee mug* (generic).

3.3 Participants

The specific target groups were similar to the US survey, namely self-proclaimed religious citizens, next to non-religious people, and atheists. Ultimately, a total of 202 Dutch citizens participated in the survey, of which 83 were self-proclaimed religious (41.09%), 98 non-religious (48.51%), and 21 absolute atheists (10.40%). Of all the participants filling out the survey, 63 percent was female. The ages ranged from 18 to 79, where the mean is 32 and the median is 22 (SE = 0.008). The sample consisted of which 12 participants (5.91%) had (less than) high-school degree, 17 participants (8.42%) had some college education, 36 (17.82%) had a college degree, 54 (26.73%) had an undergraduate degree, and a total of 68 participants (33.66%) had graduate degree. A total of 15 participants (7.43%) did not specify their level of education. While almost sixty percent saw themselves as either non-religious or atheist, over fifty percent said often or occasionally to take moments of meditation or the like.

3.4 Possible bias and limitations

Due to the fact that this survey is internet based we have to consider a possible bias in the data set. That is, there exists the possibility that a certain group of citizens is not in the position to enter the World Wide Web or is unwilling to do so. Therefore, the required dataset might be biased on the fact that not every citizen had an equal chance to engage in the online questionnaire. Moreover, this might be a problem as this particular group might have characteristics that deviate noticeably from the group that did take the online survey. However, the GVU published important information on the possible biases in random sampling¹. Comparison of its own WWW User Surveys to other WWW User data showed that “the main area where GVU’s Surveys show a bias exist in the experience, intensity of www-usage, and skill sets of the users, but not in the core demographics of the users” (GVU-Center, 1998). In other words, the group of unskilled internet users differs from skilled

¹ The graphic, Visualization, & Usability Center’s (GVU) is part of the Georgia Tech Research Cooperation.

internet users only in their skill level and experience with the internet, but different skill levels have no influence on the group's demographic characteristics.

A possible limitation to this research is that the data set gathered does not allow me to specific one of my independent variables into categories, namely age. While my research contains data from participants of varying ages, the largest age category is that of 20 – 40 years. Therefore, it would seem that the remaining age groups are too small to retrieve a reliable regression from. Therefore, I chose to add age as a continuous variable, even though the relationship between age and brand reliance cannot be explained as elaborately as when age would have been categorical.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE DUTCH SURVEY

This chapter will elaborate on the Dutch questionnaire that was held especially for the sake of this research.

4.1 Equation 1: brand reliance

The following equation was made to analyze the Dutch dataset with:

$$BR_i = \beta_1 REL + \beta_2 INC_x + \beta_3 EXT_i + \beta_4 G + \beta_5 A + \beta_6 EDU_x \quad (1)$$

in which BR_i is individual brand reliance, sometimes divided into $BR_{self-expressive}$, $BR_{functional}$, or BR_x to indicate that the analysis makes use of brand reliance measured specifically of the self-expressive and functional product groups or that the brand reliance was for category x . Brand reliance is a dependent, ordinal variable.

- (i) $\beta_1 REL$ is an independent interval variable and is measured with help of the Religious Commitment Inventory-10. Individual religiosity is the sum of the ten questions and every question ranged from 1-5.
- (ii) $\beta_2 INC_x$ is an independent ordinal variable translating for income, divided into categories ranging from low, average, or high income based on the average Dutch (2012) standardized, single person household income of €23,400,=.
- (iii) $\beta_3 EXT_i$ is an independent, continuous variable ranging from 1 till 5 which measures an individual's level of extraversion, with 1 being the lowest amount of self-proclaimed extraversion and 5 the highest.

Extraversion is measured by the mean of eight “Extraversion Questions” in the survey.

- (iv) β_4G is an independent dichotomous variable in which 0 corresponds to female and 1 to male.
- (v) β_5A is a continuous, independent interval variable for the participants age, ranging from 18 – 79 years.
- (vi) β_6EDUx is an independent ordinal variable for Education, divided into categories ranging from High School Diploma till Graduate degree, which corresponds to the indicator variable categories Edu1 – Edu5.

4.2 Explanation

The equation described above is used as a point of departure of possible variables that could influence someone’s brand reliance. That is, there might hypothetically be other variables that together with religiosity determine brand reliance. Step by step, this research tries to explore whether these independent variables influence brand reliance, if they interact with each other, and if they interact with religiosity. For this matter, a dataset was created from the outcomes of the online Dutch survey.

As a starting point, the US survey’s notion of how to calculate brand reliance was made use of. According to Dr. Wells, (individual) brand reliance can be defined as the sum of the number of brand versus generic choices in the survey, as well as brand reliance per category. In other words, brand reliance could be rewritten as:

- (i) $BR_i \equiv BR_{i,b} - BR_{i,g}$ (individual brand reliance)
- (ii) $BR_c \equiv BR_{b,c} - BR_{g,c}$ (category specific brand reliance)

in which b translates for the individual’s i choice for a branded product, while g stands for the choice for a generic product in product category c . Thus, while the first equation (i) signifies individual variation in brand reliance, the category specific brand reliance (ii) corresponds to the average brand reliance of the whole survey sample in category k . Additionally, since the participants of the surveys had to make choices between either self-expressive products (e.g., sunglasses) and functional products (e.g., ibuprofen), a variable specifically for indicating the individual brand reliance in either of these categories was created, and were called $BR_{self-expressive}$ and $BR_{functional}$. Moreover, all independent variables are referred to as individual heterogeneity, meaning that each variable ($\beta_1REL, \beta_2, INCx, \dots etc$) should be viewed

as different individual characteristics of participant x . An overview of the used variables can be found in Appendix II: figure 6.

4.3 Outliers

An important robustness check for any survey analysis would be to see whether the dataset contains possible outliers. In this survey, this is done using the Cook's measure. This measure checks whether an observation has an extreme value in relation to the predicted value and whether this observation has a large influence on the statistical outcomes. It exposed a total of seven observations marked as outliers and had a large degree of influence on the statistical analysis, and were therefore removed from the dataset. Therefore, the analysis is done with a total of 195 observations.

4.4 Results of data analysis

The most important relationship to investigate is between brand reliance and religiosity. Before describing the relationship between these two variables into detail, some general remarks were made using basic tools such as group average and correlation.

First, all observations are categorized according to survey question twenty-three in which the participant was asked to categorize oneself either as (1) atheist, (2) non-religious, or (3) religious person; a self-proclaimed categorization proposed by the US survey. This categorization enables an easy handling of the data, on the basis of how the participants viewed themselves and not on the basis of their actions. The latter variable will be utilized after the general remarks.

4.4.1 Pivot table

First of all, the relationship between self-categorized religiosity and choice for products has been made visual with the help of a pivot table, with which a cross tabulation was made. This cross tabulation gives the reader a basic insight into the interrelation of the two variables. Each question of the first section in the survey (see Appendix I: Q3 – 11) has its own pivot table, summarizing how many participants chose a brand or a generic product (see Appendix II: Table 6 – 13 for all pivot tables). Interesting visuals came forward. For functional-products (Q3-5), there seems to be no obvious difference between (1) atheists, (2) non-religious and (3) religious citizens in their choice between a (1) branded product and a (2) generic product. However, in the category of self-expressive products (Q6-9), a clear visual trend is visible; self-proclaimed religious

individuals always chose the generic product over the branded product, and the lowest overall brand reliance in comparison with atheists and non-religious citizens.

4.4.2 Group average

Subsequently, BR_i was divided into $BR_{functional}$ (product categories 1-3) and $BR_{self-expressive}$ (categories 4-6) (see table 1). Following, the average individual brand reliance of all three religiosity focus groups was compared. The averages show remarkable difference between the overall brand reliance for functional products as opposed to that of the self-expressive products. That is, while all averages are negative, the intergroup difference is strikingly less evident within the functional product categories than in the expressive categories. In other words, even though all three groups seem to prefer generic products over branded products (denoted by the negative average), there seems to be great intergroup difference specifically in the self-expressive category. Expectations are that non-religious citizens could be less brand-reliant than atheists, and religious citizens even less brand reliant than non-religious citizens.

Table 1: Average group Brand Reliance

<i>Type of Group</i>	<i>Average BR_i</i>	<i>Average BR-functional</i>	<i>Average BR self-expressive</i>
Atheist	-0,5263	-0,4737	-0,0526
Non-religious	-1,8762	-0,6082	-1,268
Religious	-1,9747	-0,367	-1,6076

4.4.3 Correlation

The correlation can tell something about the relationship between two variations. Namely, a minus-sign indicates a negative relationship while a positive coefficient suggests a positive relationship. In other words, what this sign signifies is what happens to the one variable when the other variable increases (or decreases). For example, the minus sign in the relationship between religiosity and BR_i suggests that individuals with a higher religiosity have lower brand reliance. Therefore, before doing any regression, more could be learned about the kind of relationship that exists between two variables. Of course, while these correlations give an insight into the existing relationship, this test does not claim its significance.

Table 2: Correlation between variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Correlation</i>
BRi & Religiosity	-0.00911
BRi & age	-0.11708
BRi & income	0.242942
BRi & education	-0.10086
BRi & extraversion	0.131485
BRi & Sex (female =0)	0.224947
BRself-expressive & age	-0.20293
BRself-expressive & religiosity	-0.10143
BRself-expressive & sex (female =0)	0.277173
BR-functional & religiosity	0.083758

Table 2 shows that religiosity, income, extraversion and sex seem to have a positive relationship with individual brand reliance, while age and education show a negative relation. The brand reliance of self-expressive products shows similar correlations. Further analysis will show whether these relationships hold and whether they are significant.

4.4.4 ANOVA and linear regression

After these general observations statistical analysis was proceeded with. Now, the relationship between the independent variable (BR) and the independent variables should be described. Firstly, an attempt was made to make a simple ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) in which BR_i is the dependent variable and religiosity of the participants is the independent variable. After making sure Stata recognizes the independent variable as categorical, the religiosity variable came out insignificant ($p = .9139$).

However, as soon as the product choices were divided into *functional* products and *self-expressive* products and respectively $BR_{i\text{Functional}}$ and $BR_{i\text{self-expressive}}$ were created, the regression shows a different set of outcomes. Namely, an ANOVA of $BR_{i\text{Functional}}$ with religiosity shows that $p = .1953$, while an ANOVA with $BR_{i\text{self-expressive}}$ shows that $p = .1287$. The probability value (or, p-value) shows statistical significance when, $p < .05$, assuming the null-hypothesis to be true at a ninety-five percent confidence interval. In all BR_x cases, $p > .05$ and therefore are insignificant results. Therefore, a simple ANOVA cannot explain enough about the relationship between brand reliance and religiosity.

I used a similar analysis for the other variables, assisted by a linear regression to find out the coefficient. I found the following:

Table 3: Variables in direct relationship

<i>Variable name</i>	<i>BR_i</i>		<i>BR-functional</i>		<i>BR-self</i>	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Religiosity	-	.9139	+	.1953	-	.1287
Age	-	.1165	+	.7518	-	.0061
Sex	+	.0023	+	.3925	+	.0002
Income	+	.0041	+	.0062	+	.0016
Education	-	.7051	+	.3799	-	.8176
Extraversion	+	.0607	-	.9077	+	.0023

At first glance the coefficients in table 3 show similarity with the BR_i correlations in table 2; the sign in the direct relationship is confirmed with the ANOVA as described in figure 4. Next, in this figure BR_i is divided into two other variables according to the type of products: $BR_{functional}$ for functional products and $BR_{self-expressive}$ for self-expressive products. It should be noted that there is considerable difference in both coefficients and significance of direct relationships between the three different BR_x variables. In other words, a different influence might be expected of the independent variables depending on the type of products the participant is dealing with.

Nevertheless, the statistics described above are simple linear models, with no interaction in between independent variables. This research asks for a multiple regression model since there are more variables at hand that can influence the other variables, bringing along different results. Therefore, the section below describes and interprets the coefficients of the variables that *together* could be of influence on a person's brand reliance.

4.4.5 ANCOVA: Analysis of Covariance

The US survey's objective was to find out if there is a significant relationship between religiosity and brand reliance, and whether one of the drivers behind this relationship could be related to the individual's extraversion. Therefore, this paragraph will look at the influence of religiosity on brand reliance as it interacts with the other independent variables.

The question that arises is whether the significance of religiosity holds when we look at the brand reliance of different product categories. Performing an ANCOVA for BR_i with all independent variables except for education

provides a p-value for religiosity of .7194, which is not significant. Similarly, ANCOVA with $BR_{functional}$ as dependent variable provides $p = .2615$ for religiosity and is not significant either. However, an ANCOVA with $BR_{self-expressive}$ shows that religiosity has a p-value of .0624. One of the hypotheses of this research is that religiosity could have a significant influence on self-expressive products and not on the choice between functional products. Therefore, $BR_{self-expressive}$ is used as dependent variable in further analyses of this research, while using $BR_{functional}$ as a control variable in order to see whether the hypothesis holds.

After this simple ANOVA, the other variables which could influence someone's brand reliance was added one at a time. This gives the following outcomes (See Appendix II: figure 7 - 9 for Statistical outcomes) for $BR_{self-expressive}$:

Table 4: Added variables and p-values

<i>Variable names</i>	<i>P-value added Variable</i>	<i>P-value Religiosity</i>
BR-self + religiosity	-	.1287
BR-self + reli + age	.0163	.4083
BR-self + reli + age + sex	.0001	.1587
BR-self + reli + age + sex + income	.0003	.1059
BR-self + reli + age + sex + income + extraversion	.0024	.0624
BR-self + reli + age + sex + income + extraversion + education	.9504	.0574
BR-self + reli + age + sex + extraversion + (Income & Education)	.7580	.0936

The ANCOVA shows that both religiosity and the added variables are significant at the ten-percent level in the relationship with $BR_{self-expressive}$, where religiosity is almost significant at the five percent level. The addition of education as independent variable positively alters the significance level of religiosity, but the added variable itself is not significant. Lastly, the table shows an interaction variable between income and education (in table: Income & Education), which is necessary in order to find out whether these variables interact and influence brand reliance. For example, this interaction variable tests whether high education is connected to high income and they together

explain the level of brand reliance. Even when the variables income and education are connected its significance does not change but even negatively influences the relationship between religiosity on brand reliance. Whether BR_i , $BR_{self-expressive}$, or $BR_{functional}$ is taken as the dependent variable, in all instances the ANCOVA with education shows an insignificant p-value. Therefore, this variable was left out in further analyses.

Using ANCOVA with the independent variables religiosity, income, extraversion, sex and age on the dependent variable BR_i shows insignificant p-values for religiosity, namely $p = .7194$. When replacing BR_i for $BR_{functional}$ in the same regression, the p-value for religiosity was $p = .2615$, thus insignificant. In other words, after the application of different robustness checks on the Dutch survey data, religiosity, income, extraversion, sex and age all have a significant effect on an individual's brand reliance for self-expressive products, while not for his or hers brand reliance for functional products. Especially extraversion seems to interact heavily with religiosity, according to table 4. After this analysis, it seems that the final model is the following:

$$BR_{self} = \beta_1 REL + \beta_2 INCx + \beta_3 EXT_i + \beta_4 G + \beta_5 A \quad (2)$$

As can be seen in figure 2, age, income, extraversion and sex are significant on the five percent level. Religiosity is significant on the ten percent level, and almost on the five percent level.

Figure 2: ANCOVA BR self-expressive

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	110.73325	6	18.4555416	9.21	0.0000
sumreli	7.05407367	1	7.05407367	3.52	0.0624
age	24.0556214	1	24.0556214	12.00	0.0007
sex	34.5792464	1	34.5792464	17.25	0.0001
income	32.8811097	2	16.4405548	8.20	0.0004
extravers~n	19.0283756	1	19.0283756	9.49	0.0024
Residual	340.792174	170	2.00465985		
Total	451.525424	176	2.56548536		

4.4.6 Gift giving

Since the two questions concerning gift giving have different conditions—namely gift-giving to a close friend (1) and gift-giving to a stranger (2)—the questions are analyzed separately. Interestingly, the relationship between religiosity and $BR_{gift-giving}$ is not significant for the first question ($p = .934$). However, the second question reveals a negative, significant relationship between religiosity and $BR_{gift-giving}$ ($p = .049$). In other words, it seems that a higher level of religiosity corresponds to lower brand reliance when one decides which present to purchase for a not so well-known person (See Appendix II: Figures 11-12).

4.5 Discussion of US and Dutch results

In order to test the hypotheses presented in paragraph 1.4, a comparative analysis of the US and Dutch survey must be presented. The statistical outcomes of the Dutch study are presented next to the US statistics, see table 5:

Table 5: Overview US statistics and Dutch statistics

<i>Model parameter</i>	<i>US Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>US p-value</i>	<i>Dutch Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Dutch p-value</i>
BR-selfexpressive * religiosity	-.29	0.08	.0005	-.0160	.009	.062
BR-functional * religiosity	.00	0.08	.99	.011	.009	.261
Low Income	.61	0.41	.14	.	.	.
Average Income	.81	0.41	.05	-.204	.298	.494
High Income	1.09	0.42	.01	.758	.282	.008
Sex (Male)	.43	0.16	.01	.935	.225	.000
Age	-.16	0.05	.00	-.029	.008	.001
Extraversion	-.32	0.09	.0002	.018	.006	.009
Some college	.37	0.34	.27	-.537	.954	.574
College degree	.14	0.35	.68	-.533	.843	.528
Undergraduate degree	.24	0.36	.50	-.505	.799	.528
Graduate degree	.10	0.37	.77	-.859	.795	.282

Note: There reference group for education reflects individuals with less than a high-school degree. The reference group for income reflects individuals with a low income (base value) in the Dutch statistics.

Both researches show a clear and significant negative relation between religiosity and brand reliance for self-expressive products, while not for functional products. An increase in the level of religiosity should be followed by a decrease in brand reliance. Yet, the US religiosity data is significant at the five percent level against a ten percent level in the Dutch survey.

The statistics belonging to income, sex and age all show a trend similar to those of the US research. Brand reliance seems to increase alongside an increase in income. Of course, this could be explained by the fact that brands are practically always more expensive than generic products and a bigger budget should allow for more expensive purchases (concept of utility). Both researches show that being a male seems to be accompanied with higher brand reliance than when the participant is not a male ($\beta = .43$ and $\beta = .935$). A possible explanation could be that women base their judgment on multiple sources of information or more characteristics than males do. The latter might go for the simple choice and are lead by the unwritten rule that “brands are good” (Cialdini, 2009, p. 29). Moreover, the negative relation between age and brand reliance is indicated in both researches; the older, the

less brand reliant. Yet, this relationship seems to be less evident in the Dutch society ($\beta = -.029$) compared to the US society ($\beta = -.16$). As a general explanation could be given that older citizens might have a different prioritization, e.g., more money has to be reserved for maintaining the family (Chen & Chu, 1982), or that age tempers the need for expressive function of brands. Explaining where the difference between the two coefficients comes from is something outside the scope of this research.

A noteworthy difference can be found when interpreting data related to extraversion. The US research states that a higher level of extraversion should indicate an increasing desire to express the self to others (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010, p. 10). The authors suggest that people who score low on the religiosity measurement use brands as a way to self-express. Thus the interaction between the two supports their hypothesis. Moreover, the authors state that “the negative relationship between religiosity and the reliance on self-expressive brands is strongest among individuals who are highest in extraversion” (Sachar, Erdem, Fitzsimons, & Wells, 2010, p. 2). In other words, high levels of religiosity in combination with high level of extraversion is related to lower brand reliance. When both extraversion and religiosity are translated into indicator variables and regressed in a direct interaction, the Dutch survey finds similar outcomes. That is, the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance is strongest ($\beta = -2.58$) when religiosity is low and extraversion is high ($p = .029$), as can be seen in figure 5. The first column of the figure describes the interaction variables with that are composed as follows. The first variable indicates the level of religiosity, i.e. 1 stands for atheist, 2 for non-religious and 3 for religious participants. The second part of the interaction variable consists of the level of extraversion of the participant, i.e. 1 – 5 where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest.

Figure 3: Regression with indicator variables religiosity and extraversion

brself	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Intervall]	
reli#indicextrav						
1 2	0	(empty)				
2 3	-.2269696	1.862995	-0.12	0.903	-3.905189	3.45125
2 4	-1.93084	1.834261	-1.05	0.294	-5.552327	1.690647
2 5	-2.579533	1.168228	-2.21	0.029	-4.886034	-.2730323
3 3	1.384602	1.664912	0.83	0.407	-1.902529	4.671733
3 4	-.4123064	1.634506	-0.25	0.801	-3.639406	2.814793
3 5	0	(omitted)				

Yet, when extraversion is viewed as an independent variable, without direct interaction with another variable, the results are quite different (see Appendix II: Figure 11). Namely, extraversion as independent variable indicates that a higher level of extraversion leads to a higher level of brand reliance as the coefficient is positive ($\beta = .18$). Simultaneously, the US dataset describes a negative relationship with extraversion ($\beta = -.32$), see table 5. However, I have no explanation for this difference, except for the fact that the US study held back a clear description of how parts of their dataset, such as extraversion variable, were used and calculated.

Lastly, the fact that education does not seem to have a significant influence on brand reliance in both the US and the Dutch study is interesting. While this variable does not seem to have a significant effect on brand reliance in either of the researches, the fact that the coefficient's sign of education differs between the two datasets is noteworthy. Namely, the US research reports that higher education leads to higher brand reliance, while the Dutch data supports the premise that a higher education corresponds to lower brand reliance. Earlier it has been stated that modernization went hand in hand with a generally higher education, which causes citizens to become more critical of their surroundings. Yet both datasets show that when it comes to the consumption of either self-expressive or functional products, ones level of education does not influence the overall brand reliance.

5. DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Interpretation of the Dutch survey data shows a noteworthy difference between the consumption pattern of religious citizens and that of non-religious and atheist citizens, when it comes to a choice between brands and generic products. People with high religiosity have less interest in buying brands and people who buy brands are often less religious. According to the data, especially extraversion, age, and sex have a strong relationship with brand reliance. High income also shows a strong influence on brand reliance. The Dutch survey results suggest a negative relationship between religiosity and brand reliance. This relationship implies that religion and brands are substitutive systems. That is, the results of the surveys suggest that religious people feel less need for the function of brands, as their religion has a similar satisfactory function. The focus of this discussion is to find out why different consumption patterns exist between the participants with respect to brands. In this chapter it is argued that the consumption pattern differs between religious and non-religious citizens because these groups have a different hierarchy of needs. These hierarchies are given shape by the individual's system of guidance, which is either a religion, system of values, or a surrogate religion. Moreover, this chapter provides arguments for the belief that brands can function as a surrogate religion.

5.1 Three guides: a different hierarchy of needs?

To find out why consumption patterns between groups can differ, a closer inspection of Maslow's pyramid of needs is needed. While this pyramid was subject of discussion in other researches, the concept of Maslow's hierarchy can still be used as a helpful framework in explaining the satisfaction of needs for different groups in society. Maslow considers his pyramid to be not as rigid as it looks but that "some needs can be satisfied in a completely different order or form from one person to the other, differing significantly from his hierarchy" (Goble, 2004, p. 7). Therefore, the hierarchy allows for interpersonal and intergroup variation. Intergroup variation can be accounted for by the existence of three guides in life, which are religion, system of values, and surrogate religion.

One thing that seems to be clear for Maslow is the fact that if an individual does not have a religion, he or she either has a system of values or a surrogate-religion to live by. Without any of the three guides, a human cannot be psychologically healthy (Gullette, 1979, p. 4). Thus, those who do not follow a religious denomination are expected to either have a system of values or a surrogate religion as their guide in life. Following, a question arises: since hierarchies of needs can vary between groups and since everyone follows either of the three guides, can the guides—religion, a system of values, and a surrogate religion—all come with a different hierarchy of needs?

In order to try and answer this question, literature obliges me to investigate the three guides more closely. Earlier was noted that the hierarchy of needs of religious people looks similar to the specific pyramid proposed by Maslow. The next paragraph will inquire what is meant by a value system and whether it could influence someone's consumption pattern. Afterwards, the elements of a surrogate religion will be elaborated upon. Specific attention will be paid to the role of brands as surrogate religion.

5.2 A system of values

Religion being the first possible guide, the second guide in life is what Maslow calls the system of values; a much discussed concept in socio-cultural research. A system of values is nothing other than a combination of neural portrayals of personal needs, which are structured hierarchically: bodily needs, interpersonal social relationship requirements, and institutional expectations from the individual (Rokeach, 1973). An enlightening explanation of values comes from Kamakura and Novak, who state that a value is:

an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite mode of conduct or end-state of existence. We use our culturally learned values as standards to determine whether we are as moral and competent as others, to guide our presentations to others, and to help us rationalize beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that would otherwise be personally or socially unacceptable (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5).

According to Pitts and Woodside, people with different value structures purchase products on the basis of different criteria. For example, one chooses between cars with the help of the criteria ‘space’. However, their research suggests that different value structures do not account for “different purchase intentions towards product classes and brands” (Pitts & Woodside, 1983, p. 1). In other words, there is no evidence that a different system of values makes your purchase intentions towards brands any different than someone with a different set of values. Therefore, the system of values does not seem of interest as an explanation for my thesis as it does not directly influence consumption patterns. The next paragraph will consider the position that brands can come to play in societies.

5.3 The Sacralization of the secular

Maslow stated that in order to be a healthy individual one is in need of a religion, a system of values, or a surrogate-religion. However, modern societies seem to be difficult contexts for the world’s religions to prosper. While a prime reason for keeping faith in religions is its continuous and stable presence in our vast history, it seems that religions have a hard time finding actual points of reference in these modern societies (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009). Religions particularly seem to struggle keeping foothold in the stressful, modern western societies; a societies in which individualism seems to thrive over collectivism. Additionally, the fact that consumerism came to take an important position in daily lives seems to be a perfect example of the secularization of the sacred thesis (Belk R. V., 2013, p. 8). Whether our choices are consciously made or not, this western lifestyle could be the reason why some seem to be in search of a shorter route to happiness and to new points of reference: not via religious denominations, but via consumption.

This idea is formulated as the sacralization of the secular (Belk R. V., 2013, p. 8). According to Belk, the thesis argues that “we have a deep-seated need for the spiritual and transcendent and that we increasingly find it in popular culture and consumption institutions” (Belk R. V., 2013, p. 69). The thesis suggests that we ascribe certain characteristics of the sacred on to a secular object or subject which then possess some kind of higher meaning. Thus, some citizens seek ultimate meaning in a way that is more up-to-date

than via institutional religions: a surrogate religion (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009). At certain occasions brands are able to fulfill this need for transcendence. Therefore, I would like to discuss the idea that brands have the capacity to function as a surrogate religion.

5.4 A guide in life: surrogate religion

5.4.1 Brands as surrogate religion

Brands have characteristics that in many respects are similar to those of religions, which is why this thesis argues that brands can function as a surrogate religion. Those people who do not belong to a religious denomination, may have a surrogate religion instead. In order to see these similarities, let us consider Clifford Geertz's perspective of religion. Geertz states that religion can be seen as part of a cultural system with which we are able to understand and explain social processes. He believes that the way in which someone adheres to religion is influenced by his or hers cultural package. The culture into which one is born simultaneously is the soil on which he or she will grow a worldview and which is the fundament onto which one builds decisions (Tipton & Douglas, 1982, p. 280). In other words, the degree of our religious commitment is dependent upon our cultural context. Special emphasis will be given to the social meaning of symbols in this process of shaping a worldview as Geertz elaborates upon in his definition of religion, because symbols are both utilized by religions and brands. That is, he defines religion as:

- 1) a system of symbols which acts to
- 2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by
- 3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and
- 4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that
- 5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (C. Geertz, 1973, p. 90).

Brands act just like religion in many ways. Just like religion, brand symbolism can be seen as models. According to Geertz, symbols function as “models *of* and models *for*,” meaning that brands can function as models *of* what seems to be reality while simultaneously being employed as models *for* being at peace

with our nomos (C. Geertz, 1973, p. 93). This part of the definition is resembled perfectly in a quote from Fioroni and Titterton. The position brands take in the lives of consumers can be of such importance that they see the brand as a guide:

Consumers choose those products which represent ideals they admire or, in any case, provide a projection of what they would like to be or how they wish society could be. Brands must therefore propose a direction for collective anxieties and desires as much for individual ones, by showing a way, a ‘teaching path’ to follow. Thus a brand becomes a compass in this social complexity, a real pole start of modernity. (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009, p. 21)

The rest of the definition concerns the brand image, or even the so-called brand soul, which is formulated around a specific subject. Many researchers have argued that the brand’s personality “enables the consumer to express his or her own self, an ideal self, or specific dimensions of the self” (Aaker, 1994, p. 347). Thus, not merely functional value but the complete aura surrounding the brand is consumed (Gardner & Levy, 1999).

As has been said before, religions have the capacity to merge our worldview and our ethos in order to make a most ideal world, by providing values and points of reference. The world’s religions have always presented this utopic image of the world via myths and stories throughout history to set an example. Brands can be seen as a surrogate religion because they effectively do the same. That is, big business is attempting to achieve this mythological aura around its brands in order to give consumers a sense of transcendence (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009). Even though the effect is only temporary, the feeling of transcendence in essence is precisely what consumers are searching for. For example, Fiorini and Titterton take an advertisement from Nike to point out the resemblance between religion and brands; an advertisement in which some kind of ultimate reality is strived for (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009, p. 9). Promoted under the slogan *Test your Faith*, Nike advertised one of its running shoes with which someone could enjoy a mystical experience. What the campaign actually wanted express was that everyone can push the limits of one’s body (*Just do it*). Following, the consumer

comes to identify itself with the runner in the campaign while making use of the emotional meaning behind it and “identifying itself with the brand, seeing it as a means of living a transcendental experience” (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009, p. 15). Products that essentially are unrelated to religion, receive a religious-like aura.

While not included in Geertz’ definition, group-forming can be considered a characteristic that religion and brands have in common as well. People increasingly come together in groups because of the purchase of a particular product. It are their shared commitment and values which cause consumers to seek for meeting places, such as the internet. The community that gathered around Apple is a perfect example. The CCO behind Apple, Steve Jobs, is elevated to the status of hero and admired by many. As if surrounded by a mystical aura the products are used a status symbol because the community believes in their sign value. In other words, brands consist of multiple signs and symbols, whose importance will be described in the next paragraph with the help of Baudrillard’s value system.

5.4.2 Sign value of brands

It is generally accepted that brands are able to satisfy human needs with a measure of importance similar to the levels in Maslow’s hierarchy. That is, a brand should be able to distinguish itself from direct competition. It is because of this competition that a brand seeks to satisfy one of the consumer’s higher needs, without the person ever realizing it. The reason why brands, and not just any consumer product, have the ability to satisfy needs in the esteem-level is because brands have acquired sign and symbolic value.

Jean Baudrillard was one of the sociologists who observed that particular products were consumed in a different way or for a different purpose than other products. Basing his ideas on the work of Georges Bataille, Baudrillard reasoned that human needs were framed and shaped instead of being intrinsic. Moreover, he argued that every bought item always stood in relation to something social and therefore has fetishistic characteristics. Commodities always reveal characteristics about the person purchasing it since products possess something Baudrillard calls sign-value. In other words, Baudrillard believes some commodities have changed into a sign or have attained sign-value, which can be explained as an object’s value within a *system* of objects (Merrin, 2005). For example, branded sunglasses

may have a relatively higher social value in comparison with generic sunglasses because the former signifies a certain status even though the use-value of the objects are completely the same.

Consumers who purchase an object with sign-value may have certain subjective feelings towards it, which Baudrillard explained as being a kind of fetishism (Tybout & Calkins, 2005, p. 14). He argues that marketers and adverts ascribe certain cultural myths to the goods and services in order to lure the consumer into purchasing them, stating that the sign-value of commodities can help shape the consumer's (social) identity (Baudrillard, 1981). Specifically, Baudrillard emphasized that fetishism is a concept used to understand and criticize the way in which consumer goods are ascribed value that exceeds their innate, use-value (Dant, 1999, p. 41). It is because of overvaluation and dislocation of desire that a consumer good acquires social significance. As Baudrillard put it quite pointedly:

what else is intended by the concept 'commodity fetishism' if not the notion of false consciousness devoted to the worship of exchange value (or, more recently, the fetishism of gadgets or objects, in which individuals are supposed to worship artificial libidinal or prestige values incorporated in the object)? (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 89).

With false consciousness, he means nothing other than the fact that the consumer product hides true and real social relations behind the language and manufactured images of its appearance and function (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 22). Knowing this, we could state that brands have the capacity to grant consumers a certain social position and the satisfaction of esteem-needs. According to Merz, consumers specifically connect to brands that reflect their personality, providing "a means to self-expression, self-definition, and self-enhancement" (Merz, 2009, p. 334). Brands therefore tend to satisfy as well as create needs in the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy. This relates to the findings in the Dutch and US survey which show that higher levels of extraversion often correspond with higher brand reliance. Participants who score high on the extraversion scale probably have high needs to self-express.

5.4 The paradox of desire

However, the elaboration on sign value cannot fully explain my hypothesis that non-religious citizens have different emphases on the fourth and fifth level than religious participants. The reason why it is extremely complicated to satisfy fourth level needs is directly connected to the existence of brands and our own paradoxical workings of desire. As John Storey argues, desire can never be fully satiated because it is something eternally recreated in our imagination. He states that “anxiety is brought on by the disappearance of desire. In other words, anxiety is the result of getting too close to what we desire, thus threatening to eliminate lack itself and end desire” (Storey, 2009, p. 85). Moreover, investigating desire more closely is extremely thought-provoking because according to Slavoj Žižek its nature is retroactive. What Žižek means is that “what I desire is organized by processes of fantasy which fix on an object and generate a desire which appears to have drawn me to the object but which in fact did not exist until I first fixed upon the object; what appears to be a forward movement is always retroactive” (Storey, 2009, p. 85). Specifically the idea that someone’s desire is merely created because he or she laid eyes upon an object can partly explain why brands are remarkably successful. Moreover, those who are unfamiliar with satisfying desires that exceed the material are more likely to be tempted in purchasing brands for the satisfaction of esteem-needs. On the other hand, renouncing ‘lower’ material desires in favor of ‘higher’ ones, as has been stated before, is something preached by many of the world’s religions. Therefore, the paradox of desire might be part of the reason why non-religious and atheist groups might be more inclined to purchase brands over generic products.

Of course this thesis does not claim that people cannot be both religious and brand reliant at all. Yet the surveys show a trend that for the vast majority of participants this is not the case. This uncommon situation could be explained by the idea that religious citizens purchase brands not for their self-expressive function—as this is satisfied by religion—but for other reasons such as quality.

5.5 Answering the question

In order to understand the negative relationship between religiosity and brand reliance, this research attempts to explain why religion and brands are substitutive guides. In this paragraph I will return to the question put forward in paragraph 5.1, namely:

Can a religion, a system of values, and a surrogate religion all come with a different hierarchy of needs?

In paragraph 1.4 it is argued that the hierarchy of needs of religious people in Western societies seems to be similar to the one proposed by Maslow. The second part of the question concerns the pyramid of those people having a system of values. However, as argued in paragraph 5.2, the system of values does not have a significant effect on consumer choices per se, i.e. on the choice between a brand and a generic product. That is, this system only influences the criteria by which people choose between products. Therefore, the difference should be found between the hierarchy of needs of those belonging to a religious denomination and those (unconsciously) following a surrogate religion.

The strive for self-actualization could be used as a point of departure when describing how the hierarchies are shaped differently for varying groups of consumer. Since non-religious subject groups do not adhere to the scripts of religions, the path to self-actualization is not as enlightened as it is for religious citizens. Possibly, the path to self-actualization is therefore harder to find—not per se more difficult to tread. This does not mean that religious people find self-actualization more often; yet, the sight of possible revelation (in the level of self-actualization) makes the fourth level in the pyramid less important to satisfy because of the visibility of a higher need. Even when the consumer is not consciously in search of self-actualization itself, it can search for non-material ultimate happiness, hereby placing a smaller accent on the fourth level. Of course this idea is subjected to exemptions as the hierarchy of needs can also differ within one of the participant's categories, i.e. religious and nonreligious.

Therefore, this research suggests that the shape of the hierarchy and emphasis of needs of non-religious and atheist citizens is different from those

of religious citizens. Because non-religious and atheist citizens do not utilize religion as their guide in life, they shall either adopt a system of values or a surrogate religion. Brands as a surrogate religion rely heavily upon their symbolic and fetishized function to provide consumers with self-expressive guidance. Therefore, most often the fourth level is considered important for those citizens who do not belong to a religious denomination.

There is a need to distinguish spiritual non-religious citizens (something-ists) from the agnostics and atheists because the groups have different motives to employ brands. Given today's consumer culture it is likely that agnostics and atheists find more hail in satisfying the fourth level. An ever-growing variety of products emerge that could satisfy a need within the esteem-level, or even create the illusion that there are still more needs to satisfy within this level. That is, the current consumption markets seeks to seduce consumers by providing them with a meaning in life via brands, massive festivals and commercial channels (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006). In the words of Kronjee and Lampert:

central are the image, the brand, and the consumption of the product and bodily experience. It is all about the experiences that one can connect to it. That which gives an effect and brings an experience is viewed as good. That is, the effect has no relation to society or any kind of transcendence but is solely meant for the individual. The self, the individual stimulations and those who stand close are the most important source of the meaning of life for non-religious citizens (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006, p. 192).

Only a fraction of the Western population seems to be able to look beyond this material level. The rest will doubtlessly give notice to the call for esteem-need satisfaction. An excellent way to satisfy the need for status and personal acknowledgement is via the purchase of brands.

Yet, this seems not entirely true for the something-ists, as they do believe there is some kind of transcendence that has an influence on life. This category is good exemplification of Belk's sacralization thesis and Heelas and Woodhead's prediction of a Spiritual Revolution. Altogether, this is supported by findings in the Dutch survey. Namely, while the amount of people adhering

to an institutionalized religion is decreasing, the amount of those believing in ‘something’ or are unsure about it is increasing (Bernts, Dekker, & Hart, 2007, p. 62). While almost sixty percent of the Dutch participants saw themselves as either non-religious or atheist, more than fifty percent said often or occasionally to take moments of meditation or the like. Therefore, it may be stated that among those who do not consider themselves religious there are people who are (at times) spiritual. Together with other non-religious groups, these people might (unconsciously) make use of a surrogate religion, which according to Tybout and Calkins happens within consumer culture. That is, they state that “consumers employ brands to achieve the experience both of transcendence and immanence, to infuse their lives with a lived experience of the sacred. There exists a blurring of the boundary between institutional religion and secular consumption” (Tybout & Calkins, 2005, p. 45). The identity-shaping abilities of brands can play an important role in the lives of those who do not consider themselves religious, but in a slightly different way than it does for agnostics and atheists. However, since this category is relatively spiritual, the way to self-actualization might be better lighted than the path of the agnostics and atheist. The former group might consider material to be less important than spiritual wealth. This could be seen as the explanation of the different brand reliance coefficients of religious participants, non-religious participants, and atheists, as can be read from figure 11 in Appendix II. Thus, citizens who could be considered being a part of this something-ist category might be more brand reliant than the religiosity-category but less brand reliant than the atheist category.

6. CONCLUSION

This research is based on the conviction that the micro perspective on the relationship between religion and consumerism deserves more attention. It builds on a publication by Sachar, Erdem, Cutright and Fitzsimons called “Brands: The Opiate of the Nonreligious Masses?” in order to make a comparative analysis. The study takes as its objective to explore and explain the possible influence of the individual’s religiosity on his or hers reliance on consumer items, and brands in particular. The research question is: *How and to which extent does religiosity influence an individual’s shopping pattern in the Netherlands with respect to someone’s preference for brands?*

6.1 A different emphasis in the hierarchy of needs

As the centrality of the consumption of products and services keeps growing, hardly anyone one can escape making decisions about which products to purchase. Yet, the belief that we consciously decide between products is a myth; the underlying reasons why we rather purchase one product over the other are hidden for the most of us. Focusing on brands in particular, this research explores these hidden reasons and brings them in connection to religiosity. Whether you are a member of a church, do not believe in anything supernatural, or feel you are somewhere in between, your level of religiosity directly influences your shopping pattern. More specifically, ones religiosity influences personal brand reliance.

This research uses an online survey to determine the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance. Subsequently, the results from the Dutch sample group are compared with the results from a US survey made by Sachar and others. The data that concerned income, age, and sex have an outcome and interpretation similar to that of the US survey. Higher income stood in relation to higher brand reliance, while higher age was connected to lower brand reliance. Moreover, males are more likely to be brand reliant because of their utilization of psychological shortcuts. A remarkable difference can be found in the data concerning the variable extraversion, which provided opposite results. These outcomes lead to interesting inferences regarding the role of religion and brands in general.

An important element in the explanation that different levels of (non-)

religiosity cause different levels of brand reliance is the argument about the hierarchy of needs. That is, all guides in life—being religion, system of values, and surrogate religion—can come with a different degree of religiosity. Moreover, they all seem carry a differently shaped hierarchy of needs and different emphases on the five levels as described by Maslow. Both US and Dutch survey dataset describes a significant influence of religiosity on brand reliance for self-expressive products, while not for functional products. This means that there is something characteristic about these self-expressive products that cause high inter-group diversity for its use; some care for this characteristic more than others. Brands seem to explain this diversity. Those citizens who are frequently tempted to purchase brands over generic products seem to purchase brands because they feel this need more than others. The reason why brands, and not merely any consumer product, have the ability to satisfy these needs is because brands have acquired sign-value. That is, they possess the capacity to say something about the person purchasing it. The need to make use of brand images is to satisfy the needs in the fourth level of Maslow's pyramid; the esteem-level. That is, the esteem level asks for satisfaction of self-esteem, recognition, achievement, and the respect from and for others. Brands have attained many associations that could signify wealth, confidence, social class, or the like. Therefore, by purchasing and above all displaying brands an individual is attempting to satisfy his or her needs within the esteem level.

However, not everyone seeks to satisfy this level to the same extent and with similar dedication. Baudrillard argues that consumer choices are related to the individual's social context, so there is something cultural that leads to this difference: religion. The ultimate goal in life as preached by most religions is to reach self-actualization, which is described as being the fifth and highest need in the hierarchy. Most western religions preach that higher needs should be more important than lower, material needs. Therefore, striving for self-actualization should be more important than satisfying human, bodily needs of the esteem-level. In other words, this study argues that there is a difference to be found between the hierarchies of needs for all different levels of religiosity. Specifically, I believe the categorization by Bernts, Dekker and de Hart is an elaborate and highly valuable categorization of religiosity, as

opposed to the distinction made by Sachar and others. That is, taking into consideration the growing amount of spirituals and the declining quantity of church-members in both the US and Netherlands, I believe it is only just to distinguish between theists, something-ists, agnostics, and atheists in this research.

Citizens without a religious denomination (unconsciously) place more emphasis on the satisfaction of the fourth need and have a hedonistic perspective, which is partly due to an overwhelming product market that can hardly ever be satisfied. Indeed, the current system of consumption is led by offerings instead of consumer demands. In other words, more goods and services enter the market every day, offering a staggering amount of alternatives and improvements for already existing products. Moreover, according to the paradox of desire, more needs are created merely because of the exposure to the products that can still be acquired. Therefore, esteem-needs can no longer wholly be satisfied, and dissatisfaction of the fourth level means that the fifth level is not actively strived for. Consequently, citizens primarily occupy themselves with seeking to satisfying this level and keep purchasing brands to make use of their self-expressive function. Because they do not adhere to a religious script, their road to self-actualization is therefore less bright and harder to attain. Their emphasis in the hierarchy of needs remains on satisfying the fourth level.

On the other side, religious citizens feel that a different emphasis in the hierarchy of needs is in place. This group generally feels that striving for satisfaction of the higher need, self-actualization, is more important than the lesser esteem needs. Religions with an otherworldly orientation therefore emphasize the importance of the fifth level and see the material levels as less important. I go even further by claiming that this difference can be described in more detail by distinguishing more categories: theists, something-ists, and agnostics and atheists. That is, while theists have the lowest reliance on brands and agnostics and atheist together the highest, this study shows that the presence and acceptance of spirituality influences brand reliance in much the same way as institutional religion does. The acceptance that there might be something supernatural or transcendent makes the level of self-actualization more visible and esteem-satisfaction less necessary. The group of something-

ists therefore has higher brand reliance in comparison with the theists, but lower brand reliance in respect to the agnostics and atheists. Yet, it must be said that there of course exist differently shaped hierarchies even within the religious categories due to differing cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is not within the scope of this research to determine how exactly these hierarchies are differently shaped. This thesis suggests that in general the religious hierarchy places less emphasis on the satisfaction of the hedonic fourth level because of they are conscious of the idea that there are higher needs to be satisfied.

6.2 Extraversion and surrogate religion

Another personal characteristic that influences individual brand reliance is the level of extraversion. Apparently, everyone is in need of some sort of structure in order to keep psychologically healthy. Yet, whether people find this structure in a religion or in a surrogate religion comes with different consequences. As has been stated, brands can be seen as a surrogate religion. However, brands do not lead people towards the path of self-actualization like religion does, but function “simply” to express identity and tempt individuals into buying even more of these identity-markers. Therefore, people who are seen as highly extravert and do not adhere to a religion have the most need to express their identities towards others via brands. Extraverts who do characterize themselves as religious similarly feel the need to self-express, yet they do so only in a context where it complements their aim for self-actualization or their system of values (see paragraph 4.5 and 5.3).

6.3 Similar yet different

After this general conclusion on the relationship between religiosity and brand reliance this paragraph concentrates on the specific outcomes of the surveys, namely the particularities of the Dutch and US citizens in this relationship. In fact, analysis of the differing cultures of the Netherlands and the US made clear that there exists a similar relationship between religion and brand reliance. However, citizens of the two countries make identical decisions on the basis of a different reason.

Interestingly, analysis of the Dutch and American socio-cultural

contexts points towards the notion that Americans and Dutch who do not see themselves as religious make use of brands in a different way. Important here are the Calvinist traces in Dutch mentality. While the doctrine itself is almost never mentioned by name, Dutch mentality has come to peace with the idea that one should work hard in order to be successful in life and be concerned with what happens in this world, or in other words, that one should take a down-to-earth perspective. While Americans believe that finding material wealth is considered having a successful life, in the Netherlands it is not considered normal to flaunt about it. However, it seems that Dutch citizens without a strong transcendent orientation find special interest in hedonism and materialism over living sober. Still, the Dutch are less tempted to display brands because they signify their current wealth, but merely because brands signify aspects of their identity or are associated with a certain quality of life.

As a masculine society, the US teaches citizens to be proud of social mobility and gathered wealth and to make sure others know of it via the display of brands. Being a self-made man, working your way up in society is something that should be acknowledged both by yourself and by others. Yet, this does not mean to say that religious Americans are not proud of possible social mobility, yet they seem to express this less via brands. In this religious marketplace, surrogate religion seems to collect a growing share of consumers, taking the challenge and facing its religious competition.

Additionally, the current increase in use of social media and influence of remarks made by family and friends seems to influence both American and Dutch youth—more than elderly citizens—to make use of brands in order to gain respect of others, increase self-esteem and look more achieved. This is confirmed by the survey results (chapter 4.5). Taken together with the growing consumer market, it becomes increasingly difficult not to admit to the identity-shaping abilities of brands where you did not inherit a religious identity marker from your family.

As a reader, now you should acknowledge that not only the size of your purse determines whether you decide to purchase a brand or a generic product; your age, sex, and most interestingly your level of religiosity have largely made that decision for you.

6.4 Limitations

In order to make the comparative, statistical analysis as precise and valuable as possible I attempted to emulate the US survey and statistical analysis as best as I could, whenever the data allowed me. However, in hindsight it could have been interesting to have categorized participants according to the concepts put forward by Bernts, Dekker en de Hart, namely theists, something-ists, agnostics, and atheists. That is, this categorization would have given a more detailed description of a society's religiosity as it incorporated the factor of transcendence. That would have allowed me to distinguish between institutionalized religion and religiosity as in spirituality.

Secondly, the sub question *"How can similarities between the US/Dutch survey be explained?"* proved to be too big of a question to investigate within the scope of this research. The possible answers for this question deserved a worthy analysis of the Dutch and American contexts. Finding out how similarities between the statistics could have emerged while both cultures are seen as extremely different, is asking for a thorough and extensive analysis that would not fit this thesis.

Moreover, it seems that not all hypotheses formulated at the start of this study are as meaningful in their current form. That is, only the first hypothesis can be accepted on the basis of this research as it states that: *"people who describe themselves in the Dutch survey as "religious" shall be less inclined to choose brands over non-brands (i.e., smaller brand-reliance)."*

The third hypothesis, which mentions: *"there will be a difference between the US and Dutch survey in terms of preferring brands over non-brands, as the Netherlands can be seen as one of the most secular countries in the world while the US can be described as one of the most religious in the West. That is, the outcomes of the surveys could indicate a higher brand-reliance in the Netherlands than in the US."* However, this hypothesis cannot be accepted. With the data available to me, I cannot make nor support a claim that the Dutch are *more* or *less* brand reliant than the Americans. Instead, I may state that the patterns that emerged in the US survey, also emerged from the Dutch dataset. In itself this is a remarkable find, as I suspected the patterns would be different on the basis of cultural context. Despite its secular character, however, the Netherlands has a large amount of unaffiliated

spirituals, or something-ists. Because they are not per se church members, the Netherlands is not counted as ‘religious’ in most researches because most definitions of religion are connected to church affiliation.

The fourth and last hypothesis considers gift-giving: “*when it comes to gift-giving, brand reliance of a self-proclaimed religious person is smaller than that of a non-religious person when these individuals are purchasing items for their own use.*” In its current form, this hypothesis should be partly rejected as it has a problem similar to that of the second hypothesis. That is, analysis revealed a negative, significant relationship between religiosity and $BR_{gift-giving}$ ($p = .049$) for vague relatives. In other words, the pattern is similar to the one when purchasing items for self-use. Yet, it seems that religiosity has no significant influence on brand reliance when purchasing a gift for a friend. The hypothesis could be rewritten as: “When it comes to gift giving, the pattern described in Hypothesis 1 does not exist.

6.5 Room for further research

Future research could focus on the act of gift-giving, as this research could be a motive to believe that there is such a thing as situational dependent brand-reliance. That is, the fact that the two scenarios of gift-giving presented actually showed different results, indicates that religiosity does not always influence an individual’s brand reliance for self-expressive products. Specifically, more should be made of explaining this trend.

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APPENDIX I: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

U staat op het punt te beginnen met de enquête die ik heb opgesteld ten behoeve van de scriptie voor mijn Master "Religie, Globalisatie, en Conflict" aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Graag wil ik u bedanken voor de tijd die u vrijmaakt voor het invullen van deze enquête, dat wordt echt zeer gewaardeerd. Het invullen van dit vragenlijstje zal ongeveer 5 minuten in beslag nemen.

Q1

U heeft zich vrijwillig aangemeld om mee te werken aan een onderzoek die betrekking heeft tot de persoonlijke gebruiken, voorkeuren en ervaringen van de Nederlandse bevolking. In het eerste gedeelte van de enquête zal u gevraagd worden een keus te maken tussen een aantal goederen. In het tweede gedeelte zullen een aantal persoonlijke vragen worden gesteld over uw individuele normen en waarden.

Wanneer u 18 jaar of ouder bent en graag uw medewerking zou willen verlenen voor mijn Master onderzoek, gelieve dat hieronder aan te geven. Zo niet, mag u de enquête nu sluiten.

- Ja, ik wil graag doorgaan met het invullen van de enquête.
- Nee, bedankt.

Q2

Stel, u bent onderweg van werk naar huis wanneer u plotseling wordt overvallen door een hevige hoofdpijn. U realiseert zich dat u geen medicijnen bij u heeft en ook geen voorraad hebt in huis, dus u stopt onderweg bij de dichtstbijzijnde drogist om iets te kopen tegen de hoofdpijn. Welk product geniet uw voorkeur?

Q3

Ik zal waarschijnlijk het volgende product kopen:

Advil Liquid Caps. 400mg, 20 stuks. €7,60



Kruidvat Liquid Caps. 400 mg, 20 stuks. €3,99



Q4



U besluit ook wat batterijen te kopen. Welk product kiest u?

Duracell Plus AA, 4-pack. €5,50**Kruidvat Alkaline AA**, 4-pack. €2,99

Q6 Vervolgens bedenkt u zich dat u nog even langs de supermarkt moet voor een aantal kleine producten. Geef hieronder aan welk van de producten u hoogstwaarschijnlijk zou hebben gekocht, uitgaande van het budget en product-voorkeur dat u op dit moment heeft.



Ik zal waarschijnlijk het volgende product kopen:

Albert Heijn Basic Knäckebröd, 250 gr. €00,45**Wasa Knäckebröd**, 205 gr. €00,98



Q7 U bedenkt zich dat u de stad nog in moet ter voorbereiding op uw vakantie volgende week. U loopt de hoofdstraat zodat u genoeg keus heeft aan winkels. Selecteer op de volgende pagina's de producten die u hoogstwaarschijnlijk zou kopen, gezien uw huidige budget en voorkeuren.



Ik zal waarschijnlijk het volgende product kopen:

Ralph Lauren zonnebril , UV bescherming.



€99,-



Kruidvat Pro-Vision zonnebril, UV400. €7,99



Q8



Ik zal waarschijnlijk het volgende product kopen:

Kruidvat True-Spirit Horloge, €8,99

TRENDY HORLOGE

Mooie horloges. Keuze uit diverse kleuren en modellen.
Spaarwaterdicht. Quartz uurwerk. 3 jaar garantie.



True-SPIRIT



Fossil horloge, €139,-



Q9



Ik zal waarschijnlijk het volgende product kopen:

Adidas enkelsokken 3-pack. €9,00.



Hema enkelsokken, 3-pack. €4,50



Q10



Een van uw beste vrienden viert binnenkort zijn/haar verjaardag en u bedenkt zich dat u nog het cadeautje moet halen waar hij/zij om gevraagd heeft, namelijk oordopjes voor de Iphone die uw vriend(in) bezit. U hebt een budget van 10 euro. Welk product besluit u te kopen?

Iphone Earpods. €29,00



Energy Sistem Oordopjes. €5,99



Q11



U vergezelt uw buurman naar de verjaardag van zijn vriend. U kent deze jarige eigenlijk niet, maar besluit toch een cadeau te kopen om niet met lege handen op de verjaardag aan te komen. Uw budget is 5 euro. Welk product besluit u te kopen?

Douwe Egberts Koffie kopjes, 2 stuks Totaal €7,90.



Blokker Koffie kopjes, 2 stuks. Totaal €2,10.



Hieronder staan een aantal persoonlijke kenmerken die wel of niet betrekking kunnen hebben op uzelf. Bijvoorbeeld, bent u het ermee eens dat u iemand bent die graag veel tijd doorbrengt met anderen? Kies voor elk van de beweringen een nummer dat correspondeert met de mate waarin u het eens of oneens bent met de bewering.

"Ik zie mijzelf als iemand die..."

Q12

graag praat

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens

Q13

gereserveerd is

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens

Q14

bruist van de energie

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens

Q15

andere mensen kan enthousiasmeren

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens



Q16

vaak de neiging heeft op de achtergrond te staan (stil)

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens

Q17

een assertief persoon is

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens

Q18

die soms verlegen is, zich inhoudt

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens

Q19

spontaan en sociaal is

- Volledig mee oneens
- Een beetje mee oneens
- Neutraal
- Een beetje mee eens
- Volledig mee eens



De volgende vragen zijn demografisch. Ik ben met name geïnteresseerd in uw persoonlijke houding tegenover religie. Probeer u de onderstaande vragen zo eerlijk mogelijk te beantwoorden. De gegevens zullen anoniem blijven en niet individueel worden gepubliceerd. Uw antwoorden zullen van onschatbare waarde zijn voor mijn begrip van verschillende religieuze perspectieven.

Q20

Behoort u tot een religieuze groep? Zo ja, tot welke van de onderstaande stromingen rekent u zich?

- Geen enkele
- Nederlands Hervormd
- Gereformeerd
- Islam
- Boeddhisme
- Hindoeïsme
- Katholicisme
- Remonstrants
- Jodendom
- Overig Protestants (Luthers, Doopsgezind)
- Anders

Q21

Heeft u thuis een religieuze opvoeding gehad?

- Ja
- Nee

Q22

Afgezien van bruiloften, begrafenissen en doopsels, hoe vaak bezoekt u tegenwoordig religieuze activiteiten?

- Meer dan 1 x per week
- 1 x per week
- 1 x per maand
- Alleen op specifieke feestdagen
- 1 x per jaar
- Minder dan 1 x per jaar
- Nooit of praktisch nooit



Q23

Onafhankelijk van of u een kerk bezoekt ja of nee, hoe zou u zichzelf beschrijven?

- Een religieus persoon
- Geen religieus persoon
- Een absoluut atheïst

Q24

Zoekt u uw rust in momenten van gebed, meditatie, bezinning, of dergelijke?

- Vaak
- Soms
- Bijna nooit
- Alleen in tijden van crisis
- Nooit



Q25 Heeft hieronder aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de beweringen.



	Totaal niet van toepassing op mij	Een beetje van toepassing	Neutraal	Gedeeltelijk van toepassing	Helemaal van toepassing op mij
Mijn geloofsovertuiging is de basis van de manier waarop ik in het leven sta.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben graag bezig een beter begrip te creëren over mijn religie.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind het belangrijk om tijd vrij te maken voor persoonlijke, religieuze reflectie.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religie is vooral belangrijk voor mij omdat het mij leidt tot de antwoorden op de vragen van des levens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik lees graag artikelen en boeken die betrekking hebben tot mijn geloofsovertuiging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Totaal niet van toepassing op mij	Een beetje van toepassing	Neutraal	Gedeeltelijk van toepassing	Helemaal van toepassing op mij
Ik heb er plezier in bezig te zijn met nevenactiviteiten die betrekking hebben tot mijn religieuze achtergrond.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik breng graag tijd door met de mensen met dezelfde geloofsovertuiging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben graag goed geïnformeerd over mijn religieuze groepering en heb enige invloed in de beslissingen die daar genomen worden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mijn geloofsovertuiging beïnvloedt mijn dagelijkse doen-en-laten.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik help mijn religieuze organisatie met financiële contributies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Als laatste zijn er nog een paar korte vragen.

Q26

Wat is uw leeftijd?

Q27

Wat is uw geslacht?

- Man
- Vrouw

Q28

Wat is uw etniciteit?

- Nederlands
- Aziatisch
- Anders: West-Europees
- Anders: Oost-Europees
- Amerikaans
- Australisch
- Afrikaans
- Anders.

Q29

Het gemiddelde gestandaardiseerde *inkomen per huishouden* in Nederland (2012) is €23.400,=. Hoe zou u uw familie's inkomen beschrijven?

- Onder het gemiddelde
- Ongeveer gelijk aan het gemiddelde
- Boven gemiddeld

Q30

Welke van de volgende opleidingen beschrijft op dit moment het best uw educatieve kwalificaties?

- Middelbaar school examen
- Onafgeronde vervolgopleiding
- Afgeronde vervolgopleiding (MAVO / LTS / HBO)
- Universitaire graad (Bachelor)
- Universitaire graad (hoger dan Bachelor)
- Anders

Q31



Heeft u ooit (tijdelijk) buiten Nederland gewoond?

- Ja
- Nee

APPENDIX II: DATA

Color legend:

	Lowest value
	Middle value
	Highest value

Table 6: Survey Choice 1: Ibuprofen: Functional product

Reli	3 (Brand)		4 (Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Q1
	Count	Count of Q1	Count	Count of Q1		
1	3	15,79%	16	84,21%	19	100,00%
2	13	13,68%	82	86,32%	97	100,00%
3	14	17,72%	65	82,28%	79	100,00%
Total	30	15,54%	163	84,46%	195	100,00%

Table 7: Survey Choice 2. Batteries: Functional products

Reli	3(Brand)		4(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Q2
	Count	Count of Q2	Count	Count of Q2		
1	10	52,63%	9	47,37%	19	100,00%
2	41	43,16%	54	56,84%	97	100,00%
3	36	45,57%	43	54,43%	79	100,00%
Total	87	45,08%	106	54,92%	195	100,00%

Table 8: Survey choice 3. Crackers: Functional products

Reli	3(Brand)		4(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Q3
	Count	Count of Q3	Count	Count of Q3		
1	11	57,89%	8	42,11%	19	100,00%
2	59	62,11%	36	37,89%	97	100,00%
3	54	68,35%	25	31,65%	79	100,00%
Total	124	64,25%	69	35,75%	195	100,00%

Color legend:

	Lowest value
	Middle value
	Highest value

Table 9: Survey choice 4. Sunglasses: Self-expressive products

Reli	1(Brand)		2(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Q4
	Count	Count of Q4	Count	Count of Q4		
1	8	42,11%	11	57,89%	19	100,00%
2	21	22,11%	74	77,89%	97	100,00%
3	14	17,72%	65	82,28%	79	100,00%
Total	43	22,28%	150	77,72%	195	100,00%

Table 10: Survey choice 5. Watch: Self-expressive products

Reli	1(Brand)		2(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Q5
	Count	Count of Q5	Count	Count of Q5		
1	17	89,47%	2	10,53%	19	100,00%
2	44	46,32%	51	53,68%	97	100,00%
3	32	40,51%	47	59,49%	79	100,00%
Total	93	48,19%	100	51,81%	195	100,00%

Table 11: Survey choice 6. Socks: Self-expressive products

Reli	1(Brand)		2(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Q6
	Count	Count of Q6	Count	Count of Q6		
1	3	15,79%	16	84,21%	19	100,00%
2	15	15,79%	80	84,21%	97	100,00%
3	9	11,39%	70	88,61%	79	100,00%
Total	27	13,99%	166	86,01%	195	100,00%

Color legend:

	Lowest value
	Middle value
	Highest value

Table 12: Survey choice 7. Gift giving (to friend) self-expressive products

Reli	1(Brand)		2(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Reli
	Count	Count of Reli	Count	Count of Reli		
1	36,84%	7	63,16%	12	100,00%	19
2	31,58%	30	68,42%	65	100,00%	97
3	26,58%	21	73,42%	58	100,00%	79
Total	30,05%	58	69,95%	135	100,00%	195

Table 13: Survey choice 8. Gift giving (to unknown), Self-expressive products

Reli	1(Brand)		2(Generic)		Total Count	Total Count of Reli
	Count	Count of Reli	Count	Count of Reli		
1	15,79%	3	84,21%	16	100,00%	19
2	27,37%	26	72,63%	69	100,00%	97
3	18,99%	15	81,01%	64	100,00%	79
Total	22,80%	44	77,20%	149	100,00%	195



Figure 4: Summary of Data

```
. summarize
```

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
sumreli	179	22.60894	12.896	0	50
intrareli	178	23.94382	13.23654	10	50
interreli	178	21.52809	13.18113	10	50
bri	195	-1.784615	2.473524	-6	6
brigg	195	-.9333333	1.32021	-2	2
brfunct	195	-.4974359	1.678777	-3	3
brself	195	-1.287179	1.598836	-3	3
age	181	31.28729	13.21511	18	79
sex	181	.3701657	.4841883	0	1
income	181	2.232044	.796709	1	3
education	180	3.772222	1.209047	1	5
extraversion	195	39.98462	18.56015	1	74
outliers	177	.0045959	.0047463	1.85e-08	.0196359

Figure 5: ANCOVA with all variables

```
. anova brself c.sumreli c.age sex income c.extraversion education
```

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	108.990101	10	10.8990101	5.51	0.0000
sumreli	7.25664968	1	7.25664968	3.67	0.0574
age	18.2334016	1	18.2334016	9.21	0.0028
sex	35.1654322	1	35.1654322	17.76	0.0000
income	26.3864167	2	13.1932083	6.66	0.0017
extravers~n	17.8324735	1	17.8324735	9.01	0.0031
education	1.39460909	4	.348652272	0.18	0.9504
Residual	300.92401	152	1.97976322		
Total	409.91411	162	2.53033401		

Number of obs = 163 R-squared = 0.2659
 Root MSE = 1.40704 Adj R-squared = 0.2176

Figure 6: ANCOVA without Education variable

```
. anova brself c.sumreli c.age sex income c.extraversion
```

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	110.73325	6	18.4555416	9.21	0.0000
sumreli	7.05407367	1	7.05407367	3.52	0.0624
age	24.0556214	1	24.0556214	12.00	0.0007
sex	34.5792464	1	34.5792464	17.25	0.0001
income	32.8811097	2	16.4405548	8.20	0.0004
extravers~n	19.0283756	1	19.0283756	9.49	0.0024
Residual	340.792174	170	2.00465985		
Total	451.525424	176	2.56548536		

Number of obs = 177 R-squared = 0.2452
 Root MSE = 1.41586 Adj R-squared = 0.2186

Figure 7: Regression without Education variable

```
. regress brself sumreli age i.sex i.income extraversion
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs =	177
Model	110.73325	6	18.4555416	F(6, 170) =	9.21
Residual	340.792174	170	2.00465985	Prob > F =	0.0000
Total	451.525424	176	2.56548536	R-squared =	0.2452
				Adj R-squared =	0.2186
				Root MSE =	1.4159

brself	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
sumreli	-.0160748	.0085693	-1.88	0.062	-.0329908 .0008412
age	-.0292784	.008452	-3.46	0.001	-.0459627 -.012594
1.sex	.9348095	.2250794	4.15	0.000	.490499 1.37912
income					
2	-.2044826	.2981039	-0.69	0.494	-.7929447 .3839796
3	.7586145	.2817028	2.69	0.008	.2025284 1.314701
extraversion	.0178329	.0057882	3.08	0.002	.006407 .0292589
_cons	-1.372305	.420661	-3.26	0.001	-2.202697 -.5419134

Figure 8: ANCOVA Functional products

```
. anova brfunct c.sumreli c.age c.extraversion sex income
```

Number of obs = 177 R-squared = 0.0763
 Root MSE = 1.62209 Adj R-squared = 0.0437

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	36.9513988	6	6.15856647	2.34	0.0338
sumreli	3.33999923	1	3.33999923	1.27	0.2615
age	.661557128	1	.661557128	0.25	0.6167
extravers~n	.627266883	1	.627266883	0.24	0.6260
sex	2.83310267	1	2.83310267	1.08	0.3009
income	31.0702452	2	15.5351226	5.90	0.0033
Residual	447.297189	170	2.63115993		
Total	484.248588	176	2.75141243		

Figure 9: ANCOVA of Gift-giving: Question 7

```
anova q7 c.sumreli c.age c.extraversion sex income
```

Number of obs = 175 R-squared = 0.0253
 Root MSE = .457898 Adj R-squared = -0.0096

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	.912557502	6	.152092917	0.73	0.6297
sumreli	.001462792	1	.001462792	0.01	0.9335
age	.075796083	1	.075796083	0.36	0.5485
extravers~n	.210413014	1	.210413014	1.00	0.3179
sex	.168532305	1	.168532305	0.80	0.3712
income	.381360916	2	.190680458	0.91	0.4047
Residual	35.2245854	168	.209670151		
Total	36.1371429	174	.207684729		

Figure 10: ANCOVA Gift-Giving: Question 8

```
anova q8 c.sumreli c.age c.extraversion sex income
```

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Model	1.86736629	6	.311227715	1.84	0.0944
sumreli	.662383293	1	.662383293	3.91	0.0496
age	.03994773	1	.03994773	0.24	0.6278
extravers~n	.270435462	1	.270435462	1.60	0.2080
sex	.204334308	1	.204334308	1.21	0.2735
income	.310290146	2	.155145073	0.92	0.4019
Residual	28.4412051	168	.169292888		
Total	30.3085714	174	.174187192		

Number of obs = 175 R-squared = 0.0616
 Root MSE = .411452 Adj R-squared = 0.0281

Figure 11: Regression with Religiosity divided in three categories

```
. regress brself i.reli age i.sex i.income extraversion
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs =	181
Model	135.51499	7	19.3592842	F(7, 173) =	10.24
Residual	327.159043	173	1.89109274	Prob > F =	0.0000
Total	462.674033	180	2.5704113	R-squared =	0.2929
				Adj R-squared =	0.2643
				Root MSE =	1.3752

brself	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
reli					
2	-1.127339	.3878869	-2.91	0.004	-1.892939 - .361739
3	-1.359272	.3967872	-3.43	0.001	-2.142439 - .5761045
age	-.0275879	.0082509	-3.34	0.001	-.0438733 - .0113026
1.sex	.8330259	.2162368	3.85	0.000	.406224 1.259828
income					
2	-.1587001	.2852711	-0.56	0.579	-.72176 .4043599
3	.7339535	.2697812	2.72	0.007	.2014672 1.26644
extraversion	.0163539	.0055138	2.97	0.003	.0054708 .0272369
_cons	-.5647797	.5160641	-1.09	0.275	-1.583372 .4538128