

Country of origin and ethnocentrism: a review from the perspective of food consumption

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Abstract

Schnettler, B., Sánchez, M., Orellana, L., Sepúlveda, J. 2013. Country of origin and ethnocentrism: a review from the perspective of food consumption. As a consequence of the increase in the international food trade, numerous studies have been developed to focus on the consumers' preferences towards domestic and imported foods. These studies have been conducted from the perspectives of "country of origin effect" and ethnocentrism in consumption. In spite of the abundant literature on the subject, there is not a consensus on the importance of the country of origin on consumer preferences, and on the variables that affect an ethnocentric consumption behavior. The following research aims to present and analyze the results of relevant studies using the perspectives of "country of origin effect" and ethnocentrism related to food purchases. For both approaches, international studies are taken in consideration as well as studies conducted in Chile.

Keywords: Importation, preferences, market segmentation

INTRODUCTION

The increase in world trade associated with globalization has made the purchase decision process more complex for consumers, who have to decide between domestic products and imported alternatives (Dmitrovic *et al.*, 2009). While in the first stages of the transition to globalization international or multinational brands may be preferred for their novelty, quality and higher status (Batra *et al.*, 2000), the intensification of competition in the domestic market may awaken nationalist motives in consumption decisions (Reardon *et al.*, 2005; Shankarmahesh, 2006). In an attempt to understand this patriotic consumption

behaviour, at least two currents in research offer theoretical bases for investigation: studies referring to the "country of origin effect" and work focusing on ethnocentrism in consumption (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Shankarmahesh, 2006).

Both the studies conducted from the point of view of ethnocentrism and many of the investigations that have focused on "country-of-origin" conclude that consumers prefer domestic products or those from countries with a similar culture or level of development. Some authors have indicated that consumers in developed countries tend to be less

ethnocentric than their counterparts in developing or emerging countries (Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Lindquist *et al.*, 2001). However, the findings in studies with food indicate the opposite, because consumers from developed countries favour their own food (Alfnes, 2004; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Pouta *et al.*, 2010; Font i Furnols *et al.*, 2011; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Bernabéu *et al.*, 2012) and then imports from countries with a similar level of development (Orth and Firbasová, 2003; Alfnes, 2004; Ehmke *et al.*, 2008, Pouta *et al.*, 2010). In the case of developing countries, some studies conclude that in these countries the level of ethnocentrism is lower and that buying imported products increases the consumer's status (Batra *et al.*, 2000; Li *et al.*, 2012).

At the same time, although numerous studies performed from the point of view of the "country of origin" effect indicate that origin holds great importance in the food purchase decision (Orth and Firbasová, 2003; Roosen *et al.*, 2003; Alfnes, 2004; Verlegh *et al.*, 2005; Balestrini and Gamble, 2006; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Ehmke *et al.*, 2008; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Vukasovic, 2010; Font i Furnols *et al.*, 2011), other investigations report the opposite (van der Lans *et al.*, 2001; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Dekhili and d'hauteville, 2009; Yong *et al.*, 2010). The relative importance of this attribute might be associated with the product in itself (van Ittersum *et al.*, 2003) and with the attributes with which the country of origin is compared (Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Yong *et al.*, 2010). In addition, some investigations have detected different consumer segments on the basis of acceptance of foods from different countries of origin (Tomlins *et al.*, 2005; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Hersleth *et al.*, 2011; Font i Furnols *et al.*, 2011), which is why it is also impossible to generalize that origin is an attribute that decisively affects or not the decision to purchase made by all consumers and their preferences towards certain countries of origin.

One aspect for which there is also no consensus in the literature refers to the connection

between the importance consumers assign to the attribute country of origin and their demographic characteristics. While several investigations indicate that age and gender, among others characteristics, are related to the importance assigned to the origin of the food (Alfnes, 2004; Tomlins *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013), other studies report that consumers' demographic characteristics have a limited explanatory power on the origin effect (Balabanis *et al.*, 2002). At the same time, the literature refers to other characteristics that may be related to the importance assigned to origin in the purchase of food, such as the level of ethnocentrism (Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Ozretic-Dosen *et al.*, 2007; Chung *et al.*, 2009) and others related to purchasing behaviour (Dmitrovic *et al.*, 2009; Yeh *et al.*, 2010; Bernabéu *et al.*, 2012). Also, several investigations relate consumers' ethnocentric tendencies to some demographic characteristics; age, gender and education level (Balabanis *et al.*, 2002; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Kavak and Gumusluoglu, 2007; Clemente *et al.*, 2011; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013); but the literature explains this connection as these characteristics possibly being related to certain lifestyles (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Han and Terpstra, 1988; Balabanis *et al.*, 2002; Balabinis and Diamatopoulus, 2004; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Chrysochoidis *et al.*, 2007). There is also evidence that indicates that demographic characteristics are not sufficient to explain ethnocentrism in consumption (Bawa, 2004).

Based on these precedents, the objective of this research is to present and analyze the results of studies conducted from the perspectives of the "country of origin effect" and ethnocentrism in food purchasing. This paper first analyzes a number of studies about the importance of the country of origin on choosing food, mainly in developed countries. Next, the primary results of the studies that have

approached food preference of domestic origin from the perspective of ethnocentrism in consumption are exposed, while citing the most relevant works conducted internationally. Finally, studies conducted in Chile are highlighted, considering their focus on the country of origin effect, on the perspective of ethnocentrism or on a combination of both approaches.

“Country of origin effect” in food purchasing.

Country-of-origin of products and the influence that this has on consumer evaluations of products has been one of the most intensively studied subjects in marketing, with many hundreds of journal articles devoted to it (Knight *et al.*, 2007). The country of origin effect illustrates that consumers form different assessments towards products from various countries (Dekhili and D’hauteville, 2009). It implies that consumers use the origin as an attribute related to the quality of the product (Orth and Firbasová, 2003; Verlegh *et al.*, 2005; Balestrini and Gamble, 2006; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Loureiro and Umberger, 2007; Dekhili and D’hauteville, 2009), on its own or in combination with other attributes. The quality association derived from indicators of origin determines an effect on the value perceived by the consumer and consequently on their confidence, thus reducing the risk associated with the purchase (Loureiro and Umberger, 2007; Ozretic-Dosen *et al.*, 2007; Ahmed and d’Astous, 2008; Kim, 2008; Banović *et al.*, 2009; Jiménez and San Martín, 2010). However, Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) indicate that the “country of origin effect” is not simply a cognitive signal, but that it also has symbolic and emotional connotations. Indeed, the origin of products includes a set of meanings and symbols which the consumer associates with the country of origin (Luomala, 2007).

Numerous studies report on the importance of the country of origin in the food purchase choice (Orth and Firbasová, 2003; Roosen *et al.*, 2003; Alfnes, 2004; Verlegh *et al.*, 2005; Balestrini and Gamble, 2006; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Ehmke *et al.*, 2008; Chung *et al.*, 2009;

Vukasovic, 2010; Font i Furnols *et al.*, 2011). However, other investigations have determined that the origin of the food does not present a significant effect in consumer preferences (Grunert, 1997; van der Lans *et al.*, 2001; Gellynck *et al.*, 2005) or is an attribute of lesser importance in the choice (Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Dekhili and D’hauteville, 2009; Kemp *et al.*, 2010; Yong *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that these results are related to the importance lent to those attributes compared to the attribute origin. In Belgium, Verbeke and Ward (2006) found that consumer interest is generally low for traceability, moderate for origin and high for direct indications of quality like a quality guarantee seal or expiration date. In the US Yong *et al.* (2010) studied the relative importance of different attributes in beef. The order of importance of the attributes evaluated by these authors was price, tenderness guarantee, country-of-origin label, marbling and finally traceable-to-the-farm labelling. There is also evidence of rejection of domestic products and preference for imports when local foods are of poor quality (Tomlins *et al.*, 2005; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Knight *et al.*, 2008; Beriain *et al.*, 2009; Li *et al.*, 2012; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013). In other words the country of origin effect is only detected in certain products and with unequal intensity, and therefore it is impossible to generalize for any product or country (van Ittersum *et al.*, 2003). It has also been reported that consumers prefer foodstuffs produced in the home country (Umberger *et al.*, 2002; Bernués *et al.*, 2003; Alfnes, 2004; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Mennecke *et al.*, 2007; Loureiro and Umberger, 2007; Banterle and Stranieri 2008; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Umberger *et al.*, 2009; Kawashima and Puspito, 2010; Pouta *et al.*, 2010; Yong *et al.*, 2010; Font i Furnols *et al.*, 2011; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Bernabéu *et al.*, 2012) or imported from countries nearby or with a similar culture (Watson and Wright, 2000; Orth and Firbasová, 2003; Alfnes, 2004; Mennecke *et al.*, 2007; Ehmke *et al.*, 2008, Umberger *et al.*, 2009; Pouta *et al.*, 2010). This behaviour is indicative of ethnocentric tendencies. Ozretic-Dosen *et al.* (2006) and Kim (2008) indicate that the

“country of origin effect” increases ethnocentric sentiments in consumers. The level of economic development of the country of origin has been found to have an impact on consumer evaluations of imported foods: products originating from developed countries tend to receive higher overall evaluation than those from less developed countries (Alfnes, 2004).

The country-of-origin effect is associated with diverse marketing factors that affect consumer behavior, including familiarity (Ahmed and d’Astous, 2008; Michaelis *et al.*, 2008; Ha-Brookshire and Yoon, 2012; Gázquez-Abad *et al.*, 2012). Consumers develop country images through familiarity with foreign products (Roth and Romeo, 1992). Familiarity can be an important factor in explaining the propensity for using country-of-origin information and its effects on other variables (Moorman *et al.*, 2004). Consumers may consider not buying an unfamiliar foreign product because they may make unfavourable inferences about the quality of this product (Han, 1990). In fact, Rao and Monroe (1988) argue that familiarity with the product is likely to mediate the perceived quality effect. By contrast, Johansson *et al.* (1985) indicate that consumers familiar with a specific product class may be less likely to rely on country of origin as a cue in product evaluation. Also, these authors found that familiarity with a specific product of different national origins appears to affect evaluations, but does not necessarily result in more favorable perceptions.

There is evidence that the perception of foods of different origins depends on the consumer’s age (Alfnes, 2004; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013), gender (Alfnes, 2004; Wolf *et al.*, 2005; Tomlins *et al.*, 2005; Ahmed and d’Astous, 2008; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011), educational level (Wolf *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Beriain *et al.*, 2009; Sánchez *et al.*, 2012), zone of residence (Weatherell *et al.*, 2003; Alfnes, 2004) and ethnocentrism (Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Ozretic-Dosen *et al.*, 2007; Chung *et al.*,

2009). However, Balabanis *et al.* (2002) indicate that the consumers’ demographic characteristics have a limited explanatory power on the country of origin effect. At the same time, some studies conducted with different foods also relate the importance of the attribute origin to the frequency with which the food is consumed (Bernabéu *et al.*, 2012) and the frequency with which imported foods are purchased (Dmitrovic *et al.*, 2009; Yeh *et al.*, 2010). In parallel, some investigations have detected different consumer segments on the basis of acceptance of foods from different countries of origin (Umberger *et al.*, 2002; Tomlins *et al.*, 2005; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Hersleth *et al.*, 2011; Font i Furnols *et al.*, 2011). Oliver *et al.* (2006) detected different segments among European consumers in terms of their acceptance of foodstuffs of different origins, with some groups preferring imported products, others preferring national goods and others again who do not discriminate among products by their origin. Tomlins *et al.* (2005) distinguished four segments of consumers in Ghana according to their acceptance of different types of national and imported rice.

Ethnocentrism and food consumption

In the international literature, the origins of products and their effects are related to a series of emotive and normative variables (Balabanis *et al.*, 2002). The concept of ethnocentrism incorporates the emotional dimension of buying imported goods and the implications of such a choice as a threat to domestic industry or even national security (Herche, 1992; Balabanis *et al.*, 2002; Klein, 2002). Sharma *et al.* (1995) warn that ethnocentrism as a social phenomenon implies the distinction between what does and does not belong to the group, conceiving the way of life of the group to be superior to that of others and discriminating between groups. This behaviour is connected with reasons of group survival and is not limited to nations, but may be manifested in any group of individuals. Recently, Bizumic *et al.* (2009) proposed a reconceptualization of ethnocentrism, as an egocentric ethnic group, with four intergroup

expressions, namely preferences within the group, superiority, purity and exploitation; and two intragroup expressions, namely cohesion and devotion.

Siemieniako *et al.* (2011) note that consumer ethnocentrism research distinguishes several elements of the concept, including its antecedents versus its effects. Among the antecedents, they mention key variables such as patriotism, collectivism, nationalism, internationalism, cultural openness, conservatism, and sociodemographic factors. With regard to consequences, they note those related to product or brand preferences, attitudes toward producers, and attitudes toward place of origin. In addition, various investigations have demonstrated that ethnocentrism is a global phenomenon, but differences exist in the degree of ethnocentrism expressed by consumers depending on the country studied (Rojsek, 2001; Pereira *et al.*, 2002; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Tomlins *et al.*, 2005; Chrysochoidis *et al.*, 2007; Ozretic-Dosen *et al.*, 2007, Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013). People in developed or more modern countries tend to be less ethnocentric than their counterparts in developing or emerging countries (Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Lindquist *et al.*, 2001). Sharma (2011) and Zhou *et al.* (2010) studied the influence of ethnocentrism and country of origin effect in developed and emerging countries. They detected the relevance of other aspects like cultural values and economic situation to this relation. Li *et al.* (2012) showed less ethnocentrism for developing countries because they considered the foreign product as being of higher quality or representing a higher status level for the consumer. Batra *et al.* (2000) suggested that in developing countries a brand's country of origin not only serves as a "quality halo" or summary of product quality, but also possesses a dimension of 'non-localness' that, among some consumers and for some product categories, contributes to attitudinal liking for status-enhancing reasons. In addition there is evidence of differences between groups belonging to developed and developing countries (Hult and Keillor, 1999; Pereira *et al.*,

2002). Javalgi *et al.* (2005) conclude that the differences in the level of ethnocentrism found in those studies which consider more than one country are generally associated with culture, confirming the importance of the consumer's culture as an internal factor in the consumer decision making process (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009).

Ethnocentrism is an important factor in predicting the attitudes and perceptions of consumers towards foreign or imported products (Han, 1988; Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Mascareñas and Kujawa, 1998; Witkowski, 1998; Orth and Firbasová, 2003), influencing the purchasing habits of the consumer by generating loyalty to his own country and rejection of others (Balabanis and Diamatopoulus, 2004; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Dmitrovic *et al.*, 2009; Hamori *et al.*, 2010; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Čutura, 2012). Thus a preference for domestic products is associated with a high degree of ethnocentrism in consumption (Kaynak *et al.*, 2000; Chambers *et al.*, 2007). Dmitrovic *et al.* (2009) found that ethnocentrism in consumption in the western Balkans presents a significant positive correlation with value attached to domestic products, as has been detected in previous studies in the United States and Russia (Durvasula *et al.*, 1997) and in the United States and Korea (Suh and Kwon, 2002). Although in theory ethnocentrism is not a product-specific phenomenon (Herche, 1992), more recent studies indicate that ethnocentric consumers may have a more positive attitude to the purchase of imported products which they consider to be of prime necessity, and the opposite in the case of less important products such as luxury goods (Javalgi *et al.*, 2005). Cleveland *et al.* (2009) determined that ethnocentrism has a positive effect on the consumption of traditional products, such as foodstuffs, and also on hedonistic consumption related with local products (traditional snacks and restaurants). Camarena and San Juan (2010) investigated the preferences of Latin American immigrants in Spain for corn-flour, an essential element in their diets. Their results

show that consumers with a high degree of ethnocentrism display a more marked preference for flour from their country of origin over flour from other regions, with personal values and phobia of new foodstuffs being observed as important variables.

Shimp and Sharma (1987) developed a scale of 17 items to evaluate ethnocentric tendencies in consumers called the CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale). The purpose of the CETSCALE is to measure the degree to which consumers feel that buying imported products is unpatriotic and immoral because it damages the economy of their own country (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Herche, 1992; Balabanis *et al.*, 2002). Various researchers have studied the validity and reliability of the CETSCALE in different cultures. Netemeyer *et al.* (1991) applied the scale to samples of students from the United States, Japan, France, and Germany. Greater evidence of its validity was shown in cross-national samples in Japan, the United States and Sweden (males and females) (Hult and Keillor, 1999), and persons belonging to municipalities with over 1,000 inhabitants in the province of Granada, Spain (Luque-Martínez *et al.*, 2000). Lindquist *et al.* (2001) subjected a modified version of CETSCALE with 10 items to validation in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the scale does not present a similar level of fit in those countries. The best fit for the scale was obtained with five items in Hungary, six items in Poland and seven in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, Bawa (2004) indicates that the 10 item version is widely used and that it is an acceptable alternative to the complete original version. Other studies have applied the CETSCALE in Russia and Poland (Good and Huddleston, 1995; Supphellen and Rittenburg, 2001), China (Klein *et al.*, 1998), Holland (Ruyter *et al.*, 1998), Azerbaijan (Kaynak and Kara, 2001), China, India, and Taiwan (Pereira *et al.*, 2002) and in Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (Jung *et al.*, 2002; Ang *et al.*, 2004). These studies, not specifically designed to

validate the scale, have in addition enabled its validity and reliability to be tested.

Other research work on ethnocentrism has incorporated the construct into decision models to identify demographic variables which will reduce the ethnocentric effect in the purchase decision (Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Ruyter *et al.*, 1998). Older people have stronger ethnocentric tendencies than younger (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Juric and Worsley, 1998; Ruyter *et al.*, 1998; Witkowski, 1998; Balabanis *et al.*, 2002; Huddleston *et al.*, 2001; Alfnes, 2004; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Kavak and Gumusluoglu, 2007; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013). Various studies have determined stronger ethnocentric tendencies in women (Shimp and Sharma, 1985; Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Juric and Worsley, 1998; Ruyter *et al.*, 1998; Hult and Keillor, 1999; Klein and Ettenson, 1999; Balabanis *et al.*, 2002; Huddleston *et al.*, 2001; Alfnes, 2004; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Elchardus and Siongers, 2007; Chambers *et al.*, 2007; Kavak and Gumusluoglu, 2007; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Josiassen *et al.*, 2011; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013). Education and income tend to present a negative relation to ethnocentrism (Juric and Worley, 1998; Klein and Ettenson, 1999; Balabanis *et al.*, 2002; Javalgi *et al.*, 2005; Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Unahanandh and Assarut, 2013), since consumers with a better education and a higher income tend to be less conservative, less ethnically prejudiced, less patriotic and to place a more favourable value on imported products than domestic (Javalgi *et al.*, 2005). In the case of foodstuffs, it has been found that consumers resident in rural zones present a greater rejection of imported products (Alfnes, 2004), since these compete with the agricultural production of the region where they live. Nevertheless evidence exists to indicate that socio-demographic variables are not sufficient to explain the phenomenon of ethnocentrism in consumption (Bawa, 2004).

Country of origin and ethnocentrism in food consumption in Chile.

In Chile, many studies have been conducted to measure the country of origin effect on food purchasing decisions, such as beef (Schnettler *et al.*, 2004; Schnettler *et al.*, 2008ab, 2009ab, 2010ab; Villalobos *et al.*, 2010), rice (Schnettler *et al.*, 2008a, 2009c) and oil (Schnettler *et al.*, 2012). Also, some studies have focused on measuring ethnocentrism in food consumption (Schnettler *et al.*, 2011a) and others have measured both the effect of ethnocentrism and country of origin on food purchasing decisions related to rice (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010c), vegetable oil (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010d), sugar (Schnettler *et al.*, 2011b) and poultry (Schnettler *et al.*, 2011c). Below are presented and discussed the main results of these studies.

In a study to distinguish the attributes that consumers value when choosing beef in supermarkets in the city of Temuco, Schnettler *et al.* (2004) found that the meat's origin (national or imported) is more important (60%) than price (40%) when choosing the purchase; except in the younger people's segment. A discount of 15% in the price of the imported meat doesn't affect their preference for national meat.

Subsequently, Schnettler *et al.* (2008a) conducted a survey to a sample of 800 consumers in the cities of Temuco and Talca to determine the importance of food origin in the purchase decision. These authors concluded that the majority of those surveyed consume imported foods due to their lower price or good price/quality ratio. Using a conjoint analysis, it was demonstrated that the origin was more important than either the price or the packaging in the decision to purchase beef. For rice, however, the importance of these three cues was ranked similarly. In general, consumers preferred domestic alternatives, although there was a high rejection rate in the case of meat imported from Brazil in particular. In the same cities, regarding beef preferences, Schnettler *et al.* (2008b) distinguished consumer segments and evaluated the willingness to pay for Chilean beef. They found

that consumers preferred domestic beef, but were not willing to pay a considerably higher price for the preferred beef. Using a cluster analysis, three market segments were distinguished: the most numerous (50.5%) placed the greatest importance on the origin of the beef, the second largest group (32.3%) considered price slightly more important than packing and origin, whereas for the smallest group (17.3%), price was the most significant factor when purchasing beef. In the case of rice consumption, Schnettler *et al.* (2009c) distinguished five market segments. The largest group (35.4%) gave great importance on the origin of the rice; the second largest group (25.1%) gave greater relevance to the packaging, for the third and fourth groups (15.4 and 12.5%) the price of the product was the most important attribute, while the smallest group (11.6%) gave slightly higher importance to the origin of the rice than the other attributes. Only this final group preferred imported rice. Therefore, the results of this investigation make it possible to conclude that the origin of the rice is an important attribute for 47% of the consumers in Talca and Temuco, Chile. The other groups based their purchase decisions on the price or the product packaging. The highest proportion of consumers (88.4%) preferred domestic rice.

In a later study, Schnettler *et al.* (2009a) administered a personal survey to 770 consumers in the Bio-Bío and Araucanía Regions in Chile to determine the utility of information contained on the label of the beef. Although these authors determined that the packaging and expiry dates were the most useful aspects of the current information, respondents also considered of high importance the information about the country of origin of the beef. In the same regions, Schnettler *et al.* (2009b) examined the relative importance of information regarding animal treatment prior to slaughter, the country of origin and price in the decision-making process when buying beef. Using a conjoint analysis, these authors found that origin and information regarding animal treatment were more important than price. In general,

consumers preferred domestically elaborated meat and paying the lowest price. Animal welfare is perceived as a desirable condition, but consumers are not willing to pay significantly more when buying meat in order to gain information about animal handling. Through a cluster analysis, four segments were distinguished in each region, with consumers who consider origin as the most important attribute predominating.

Villalobos *et al.* (2010) determined the importance of a set of quality attribute differentiators associated with a beef cut on the choice behavior consumer. The evaluated differentiating characteristics were: price, origin, production method, and quality assurance. A total of 750 subjects were surveyed in the following cities: Talca, Rancagua and Santiago. Conjoint analysis was carried out to estimate the impact of the assessed attributes on the purchase decision of the consumers polled. Findings point out that the quality attribute differentiators significantly influence consumer choice behavior, with price and production system being the least important attributes for the majority of consumers polled (21.07% and 21.91% relative importance for the whole sample, respectively). In this context, the quality assurance attribute is shown as the most relevant which guides the decision-making process of beef consumers (29.75% relative importance for the whole sample). The country of origin was the second most important attribute (27.27%), consumers preferred beef from Chile and rejected the imported alternatives from Brazil and Argentina.

In Temuco, Schnettler *et al.* (2010a) evaluated the importance of 27 intrinsic and extrinsic attributes on the purchase of beef and the existence of different consumer segments. In the total sample ($n = 400$), they found that the consumers attributed greatest importance to the intrinsic cues related to the organoleptic quality of the meat and to health care. Among the attributes considered of secondary importance were the nutritional content, price,

packaging, easy preparation, country of origin, respect for the environment during the breeding and fattening process of the animal, and region of Chile where the meat was produced. Using a cluster analysis, three market segments were distinguished: the largest (54.5%) placed low importance on the cues related to the production system, origin and respect for the environment, the second group in importance (27.5%) valued both the intrinsic and extrinsic cues of the meat, while the smallest group (18.0%) placed low importance on the cues associated with the animal production system, like the country of origin.

Also, Schnettler *et al.* (2010b) studied the importance of the country of origin depending on the ethnic origin of the consumer. A personal survey was carried out of 400 Mapuche and 400 non Mapuche persons to determine the importance of the country of origin in the purchase decision for beef in people of different ethnic groups in the La Araucanía and Metropolitan Regions. Conjoint analysis revealed that country of origin was slightly less important than price (44.4% and 55.6%), with no significant differences by ethnic group, but a possible regional ethnocentrist effect was detected. Using analysis of hierarchical conglomerates, two principal consumer profiles were distinguished: the majority group (62.5%) assigned greater importance to the price, while the second group (28.1%) assigned greater importance to the origin. Although differences were distinguished in the magnitude of the preference for Chilean beef, and rejection of Argentinean beef, according to the degree of acculturation in Mapuche consumers, consciousness of the vernacular ethnic identity is not determining in the importance of the attribute of origin, since the majority of consumers prefer Chilean products, a result which is linked to symbolic processes of the construction of personal and local identities.

In studies focused on ethnocentrism in consumption, Schnettler *et al.* (2011a) distinguished different types of consumers

according to their level of ethnocentrism in relation to the consumption of foodstuffs in central-southern Chile. To do this, a modification of the CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale) was applied through direct survey of 800 habitual supermarket shoppers in two cities in central-southern Chile (Temuco and Los Angeles). The modified CETSCALE presented a sufficient level of internal consistency and there were three factors which included the 17 items of the scale. Five typologies of consumer with different degrees of ethnocentrism were distinguished by cluster analysis, based on the values of the factors and items in the CETSCALE. The composition of the typologies of consumers were related to the city and zone of residence, age, socioeconomic level, self-declared life-style, ethnic origin, knowledge of the origin of the foodstuffs purchased, frequency of purchase of imported foodstuffs and reasons for rejection in the case of a low purchase frequency. It may therefore be concluded that different levels of ethnocentrism exist in the consumption of foodstuffs, related with some socio-demographic characteristics of consumers and their attitudes to imported foodstuffs.

In the aforementioned cities, Schnettler *et al.* (2010c) evaluated the relative importance of country of origin, quality and price on the choice of rice, compared among supermarket consumers and identified consumer segments. Using a conjoint analysis, it was determined that the country of origin (55.4%) was more important than the quality (22.6%) and the price (22.0%), with significant differences between cities in the importance of origin and price. In general, consumers preferred Chilean rice over imports from Uruguay and the United States, lower-priced, Grade 1. Four consumer typologies were identified using hierarchical clustering. The largest (50.1%) placed great importance on origin, showed the greatest preference for the Chilean product and the greatest rejection of imports. The second typology (18.6%) gave the greatest importance to quality, although Chilean rice was also preferred. The third (16.5%) valued the price

above all, with preferences similar to the other typologies. The smallest group (14.8%) gave the greatest importance to the origin, but preferred the imported and Grade 2 products. Therefore, independently of the importance of the “country of origin” in the choice of rice, most consumers (85.2%) prefer the Chilean product, a behavior that increases with the consumer’s level of ethnocentrism.

Schnettler *et al.* (2010d) evaluated the relative importance of the country of origin, variety and price in the choice of oil in Temuco and Los Angeles, and consumer segments were identified and characterized based on preferences and demographic profile. Using a conjoint analysis, it was determined that origin (41.1%) was more important than variety (29.8%) and price (29.1%), with no differences between cities. A cluster analysis distinguished three segments. The largest (42.6%) afforded the greatest importance to origin and preferred Chilean sunflower oil. The second (35.3%) gave the greatest importance to variety, and preferred vegetable oil and imports from Argentina. The smallest group (20.9%) gave the greatest importance to price and preferred Chilean sunflower oil. All the segments chose the lowest priced alternative.

Also, the relative importance of country of origin, packaging and price on the choice of sugar was evaluated and compared among consumers in Temuco and Los Angeles, Chile, and consumer typologies were identified by Schnettler *et al.* (2011b). Using a conjoint analysis, it was determined that origin (56.4%) was more important than packaging (24.3%) and price (19.3%), with differences between cities. Two consumer typologies were identified using hierarchical clustering. The largest (73.8%) said origin was of great importance, exhibited a strong preference for the Chilean product and a strong rejection of the Colombian product. The second group (26.2%) said packaging was of greatest importance, although Chilean sugar was also preferred. The effect of “country of origin” is important in the choice of a basic product like

sugar, with the Chilean product being preferred by the majority.

Considering the recent entry of imported chicken meat into the Chilean market (2007), Schnettler *et al.* (2011c) evaluated and compared the relative importance of the country of origin, presentation and price in the choice of this product among consumers in Temuco and Los Angeles, together with the identification and characterization of consumer segments based on their preferences, demographic profile and ethnocentric behavior. It was determined by conjoint analysis that origin (45%) was more important than presentation (30.2%) and price (24.8%) in the purchase decision, with differences between the two cities in the importance attributed to origin and presentation. Using analysis of hierarchical conglomerates, four market segments were distinguished. The most numerous (56.8%) attributed great importance to origin; two groups (30.3% together) gave greater importance to presentation, while the minority group (13.0%) attributed great importance to the price. Three of the four groups preferred Chilean chicken meat to that imported from Argentina (83.6%); the predominant preference was for whole chicken; and all segments preferred a lower price.

Finally, considering the rejection by consumers of genetically modified foods, and that the country of origin is used as an indicator of quality, Schnettler *et al.* (2012) studied the relative importance of the existence of genetic modification (GM), the origin and the price in the purchase of sunflower oil in Temuco through a survey of 400 people; at the same time different market segments were identified and characterized. It was determined by conjoint analysis that the existence of GM (36.0%) was slightly more important than country of origin (33.3%) and price (30.7%) in the total sample, with a preference for product with no GM, of Chilean origin and at a lower price. Three segments were distinguished by analysis of hierarchical conglomerates. The majority segment (45.5%) attributed great

importance to the existence of GM and presented high rejection of transgenic vegetable oil. The second group (29.7%) assigned greater importance to the price and accepted Argentinean oil. The minority group (24.8%) attributed greater importance to country of origin and accepted Spanish oil. Regardless of the above distinctions, all groups expressed a greater preference for Chilean oil.

Even though in most of the cited studies the attribute "country of origin" dominated the preference structure of the consumers, in others it was an attribute of secondary importance. This finding corroborates the results of researches in developed countries, in which the relative importance of this attribute depends on what other attributes are compared to it. At the same time, although studies carried out in Chile indicate a majority preference for Chilean products, the domestic food industry must maintain competitive pricing in the internal market, while it is feasible to differentiate the product based on its origin, taking advantage of the ethnocentrism detected in consumers. It is also possible to suggest the need to develop differentiated marketing strategies, including a commercial mixture that emphasizes the Chilean origin of the food and another that incorporates lower prices or sales promotions.

In the studies that evaluated the relative importance of country of origin in the consumers' preference structure, differences were detected among segments classified by gender (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010a, 2011c), age (Schnettler *et al.*, 2004, 2008a, 2009bc, 2010d), occupation (Schnettler *et al.*, 2008ab, 2009c, 2010d), family size (Schnettler *et al.*, 2009c, 2012), lifestyle (Schnettler *et al.*, 2012), socioeconomic group (Schnettler *et al.*, 2008ab, 2009a, 2010bc), region of residence (Schnettler *et al.*, 2008ab, 2009ac, 2010bc, 2011bc), area of residence (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010a, 2011c), level of ethnocentrism (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010c, 2011bc), person who purchases the food (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010b), frequency of consumption of the studied food (Schnettler *et al.*, 2009b, 2010a), frequency of imported food

purchase (Schnettler *et al.*, 2010cd, 2011bc) and reasons for buying them or not (Schnettler *et al.*, 2008b, 2009c, 2010c, 2011b). These results point out to the need to use a wide number of variables to characterize the consumer segments according to the importance of country of origin in the food purchase choice, taking not just traditional sociodemographic characteristics, but also aspects of their purchasing behavior and psychographic characteristics.

CONCLUSIONS

The review about country of origin and ethnocentrism shows that there is not a consensus on the importance of the country of origin on consumer preferences, and on the variables that affect an ethnocentric consumption behavior.

RESUMEN

Como consecuencia del incremento del comercio internacional de alimentos, se han desarrollado numerosos estudios enfocados en estudiar las preferencias de los consumidores hacia los alimentos domésticos e importados. Estos estudios se han realizados desde la perspectiva del "efecto país de origen" y desde el punto de vista del etnocentrismo en el consumo. A pesar de la numerosa literatura existente, aun no existe consenso en la importancia que tiene el país de origen en las preferencias del consumidor, ni en las variables que inciden en un comportamiento etnocéntrico en el consumo. El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo presentar y analizar los resultados de los principales estudios realizados desde la perspectiva del "efecto país de origen" y del etnocentrismo relacionados con la compra de alimentos. En ambos enfoques se incluyen investigaciones realizadas en el ámbito internacional y se finaliza con una revisión de los principales estudios realizados en el ámbito chileno.

Palabras clave: Importación, preferencias, segmentos de mercado.

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